



Sea Dog

Dayle Campbell Gaetz
illustrated by Amy Meissner

ISBN: 978-1-55143-406-3

AR Quiz # 106570

About the Book

When Kyle searches for treasure on the beach after a big storm, he's in for a huge surprise. The treasure he uncovers is a half-drowned dog, tangled in kelp. Kyle and his mom take the dog home and nurse her back to health. Kyle names her Treasure and plays with her every day. But one day Treasure runs up to a strange man on the beach. The man says the dog's real name is Otter and she belongs to him.

About the Author

Dayle Campbell Gaetz grew up on the west coast and has always lived near the sea. As a child she loved to play on the beach. Now she enjoys walking her dog along the beach. Since growing up she has always had a boat to row, paddle or sail. Her love of the sea, of dogs and of "messing about in boats" all come together in *Sea Dog*.

About the Writing

Every morning after moving to Campbell River, Dayle walked on the beach with her dog. Every day she saw a woman with a big black dog who always carried a large stick in his mouth. The dog loved to play in the water, no matter how cold.

One day the woman told Dayle how she found the dog washed up on the beach after a violent windstorm. The dog was so weak the woman thought it must be very old or very sick. But he recovered quickly, and the first time she brought him back to the beach he swam out so far all she could see was a tiny speck bobbing on the waves. The dog headed straight for a white fishing boat. But the boat was too far away, and finally he came back.

The dog had been with her for eight years when Dayle met them, and his owner always wondered if he fell off a fishing boat in that storm.

It got Dayle thinking about the person, possibly a fisherman, who might have lost his dog overboard. He must have been devastated. How happy he would be to find out his dog had survived! Dayle wondered what sort of man he might be, and Cap'n Bill began to take shape. Then she considered who might find a fictional dog that fell from a boat. That's when Kyle stepped into the picture.

Teaching Ideas—Curriculum Connections*Prereading Ideas*

- Kyle's dad doesn't live with Kyle and his mom anymore, and Kyle misses him. When Kyle finds a cold wet dog on the beach, he brings her home and takes good care of her. He names her Treasure, and she helps him feel less lonely. But then Treasure's real owner shows up. Bill is overjoyed to see his dog because he missed her so much. He lives all alone since his daughter moved away.
- Do you think Kyle should give Treasure back to her first owner?
- Ask students if they like to go boating with family and friends. Do they always wear a lifejacket? Should you wear a lifejacket even if you are a good swimmer? When Cap'n Bill gets a new puppy, he buys her a lifejacket so she will be safe on his sailboat. But when she outgrows the lifejacket he doesn't buy a new one because she "swims like an otter." If Bill had bought a new lifejacket for Otter, what might have happened when she fell overboard in the storm?

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. Why was Kyle happy and sad when he found the toy sailboat?
2. Have you ever felt happy and sad at the same time?
3. Why did Bill want to sell his sailboat?
4. Kyle should have felt happy when Bill told him he could keep Treasure. What made Kyle feel so sad he wanted to cry?
5. If you were Kyle, would you give Treasure back to Bill? Why or why not?

Suggested Activities**Vocabulary words**

On a basic illustration of a sloop like the *Lady Tia*, have students find and print in the correct names for parts of a sailboat mentioned in the story: bow, hull, tiller, boom, cleat, mast, lines, rigging, mainsail, jib. They can print *Lady Tia* on the bow, or choose a name they'd like to name a boat of their own. They might want to add a background of sea and sky, perhaps seals and gulls, and then paint the completed picture.

Language Arts

Use small boxes or fold cardstock to form cubes approximately six inches on each side. Cut squares of white paper slightly smaller than the cube sides. Use the paper to draw your own cover illustration for a scene from *Sea Dog*. Print the book title and author's name. Color your illustration and paste it on one side of the cube.

Print the word "Characters" at the top of a new sheet of paper. Draw two characters from the book and use cartoon bubbles to show what they say to each other. Fill in the background and color.

Print the word "Setting" at the top of a new sheet. Draw a picture that shows where an important scene takes place. Examples: Kyle's house near the beach; Bill's sailboat at the dock or at sea.

For the remaining three sides, tell what happens in the story. If more pages are needed, they can be taped one above the other. For students with weak writing skills, this could be a class activity or students could draw a series of scenes that show what happened in sequence. Variation: Students can tell in words or by drawing what might happen next, i.e., after the story ends. Will Kyle and Bill become friends? Will they both still love Treasure even if they don't live in the same house? Draw an illustration for the epilogue or a cover illustration for the sequel.

Science*Beach Study and Art Activity*

Discuss the items, living and non-living, Kyle found on the beach (eg., glass fish float, running shoe, toy sailboat, jellyfish, driftwood, seaweed and a dog). List what you might expect to find on a beach when the tide is out. For example: starfish, jellyfish, sand dollars, moon snails, sea lettuce, eel grass, kelp, driftwood, clamshells, shore crabs. Also, on a rocky shore, oysters, barnacles and periwinkles.

Draw and color a selection of these items. Cut out and paste onto a background drawing of a beach scene or underwater scene (intertidal zone).

Sea Mammals Study

Discuss similarities and differences between dogs, seals and otters (on inland waters around Vancouver Island, otters will be river otters, even though they live in the sea). How did Kyle know the animal he found was not a seal when he could only see a small part of its head? (p. 10). When Cap'n Bill saw a black speck on the water, how did he decide it wasn't a seal or an otter? (p. 30).

Learn more about sea mammals. What makes them different from land mammals? Why don't seals have ears? Do otters have ears? How about sea lions and whales? This can lead to further study. What are two differences between seals and sea lions? If river otters live in the sea, how are they different from sea otters?

Some sea mammals, like otters and seals, spend time on land as well as in the water. Others, like whales and dolphins, never get out of the water. How have their bodies adapted in different ways to living in an ocean environment?

Writing

- Read some of the descriptive language in the book, looking for sensory images including sight, sound and touch. Good examples are on pages 28 and 31. Pages 56–57 describe what the windstorm was like for Cap'n Bill on his sailboat. How did Kyle's experience of the storm differ from Bill's? You might need to re-read chapter one to find out.
- Discuss types of storms: wind (gales, hurricanes, cyclones), rain, snow blizzards, lightning.
- Describe a storm you have experienced. What did you see? What did you hear? What did you feel or even smell related to the storm? Were you safe in your house or did you get caught outside by a bad storm? If you were indoors, what do you think it would be like for people or animals out in the storm?

Other Titles and Websites of Interest

A Sea Lion Called Salena by Dayle Campbell Gaetz (Pacific Education Press)

A Salmon for Simon by Betty Waterton (Groundwood)

Moonsnail Song by Sheryl McFarlane (Orca picturebook)

Exploring the Seashore in British Columbia, Washington and Oregon; A Guide to Shorebirds and Intertidal Plants and Animals by Gloria Snively (G. Soules Book Publishers)

Kingfisher Press books and curriculum materials at www.kingfisherpress.ca

Other Books by the Author from Orca Book Publishers

Alberta Alibi

Barkerville Gold

Crossbow

Mystery from History

No Problem

Something Suspicious in Saskatchewan

Spoiled Rotten

Awards and Reviews

CCBC Our Choice selection

“A beginner’s chapter book made doubly appealing by Amy Meissner’s beautiful drawings.”
—*Times Colonist*