The Case of the Smiling Shark

Author: Tessa Krailing
Range: Story in a familiar setting
Theme: Crime doesn’t pay
Teaching Notes authors: Thelma Page and Vicki Yates

Synopsis
The children offer to help Mrs Gale clear out a pond, but discover that someone is watching them – Marietta thinks he has a face like a shark. When Wesley discovers a pound coin in the pond, the shark man tries to take it.

Group or guided reading

Introducing the book

- Read the title and ask: What does a title that begins ‘The Case of …’ sound like? Has anyone seen or read any Sherlock Holmes stories? What kinds of stories are they?
- Read the blurb on the back cover. Does this sound like a real shark?
- Find the headings for Chapters 1 and 2. Why might there be sunken treasure in a pond? What might this have to do with a detective story?

Strategy check

- Point out that authors often choose names to fit the personalities of the characters. What is the teacher called in this story? Find the name in Chapter 1.
- What is the name of the children’s gang? How does the author explain the choice of name?
- Read the heading for Chapter 3 on page 26. Find out if the children remember the nursery rhyme: “Lucy Locket lost her pocket, Kitty Fisher found it. There was not a penny in it, But a ribbon round it”. What might this rhyme have to do with the story?

Independent reading

Focus: Explain that you want the children to think about these questions while reading: What decision did Mrs Gale and Mrs Locket make? Do you think it was the right one?

- Ask the children to read the story independently while individuals read aloud to you.
- Notice whether children are aware of who is speaking and vary their tone accordingly.

Returning and responding to the text

- Ask the children to say what decision Mrs Gale and Mrs Locket made.
- Read pages 48–50 again. Why did they decide not to call the police?
- Why was the shark man afraid of his own mother? Ask the children to find the evidence on page 55.
- Do you think Mrs Gale and Mrs Locket were right not to call the police? What would you have wanted them to do?
- Read what Foxy says on page 55. What does ‘took the smile off his face’ mean? How did Mrs Gale do that?
- Do you think Gordon will steal again? Why do you think that?
Speaking and listening activities

- Find out how Mrs Locket speaks on page 26. Ask a child to read what she says in that kind of voice.
- How would someone younger sound? Ask a volunteer to read what Mrs Locket said in a ‘younger’ voice.
- What did Mrs Gale say to Class 4G six times a day? (page 4) Why would she use this phrase?
- If you were exasperated with someone or something, would you use the phrase ‘giddy limit’?
  What would you say?
- Encourage the children to role play different parts of the story with appropriate tone and expression.

Further reading activities

- Ask the children to read *Here Comes Trouble* by Tessa Krailing (TreeTops Level 12 Pack A), providing enough copies for them to read it themselves. Ask them to notice how names are used in this story to reflect personality.
- Find ‘shark-like teeth and black oily hair’ on page 18. How does this comparison help us to imagine what the man was like? Ask the children to work in pairs to find some more comparisons (similes) on pages 3, 9, 21, 22, 35, 55. Find ‘like a lump of mud’ on page 22. Ask the children to think of an alternative comparison to describe the muddy coin.

Suggestions for using ICT

- Encourage the children to find out more about Tessa Krailing using the Internet (ensure they have access to child-friendly sites only).
- Help the children to find out more about another ‘detective’ story – the Cottingley Fairies – using the Internet (ensure they have access to child-friendly sites only).

Writing activities

- In this story Mrs Gale’s dilemma was whether or not to call the police. Work together to create ideas for stories that include a dilemma.
- Have the children been in a situation where they couldn’t decide whether or not to tell their parents, or a teacher?
- Make notes on situations that have arisen, or invent some that could arise and ask how the children feel they might respond.
- Ask the children to plan their own story that contains a dilemma. Suggest they: introduce the characters; describe the situation or event that created the dilemma; say what the character decided to do, and why; decide how the story will be resolved.
- Ask the children to write their stories.