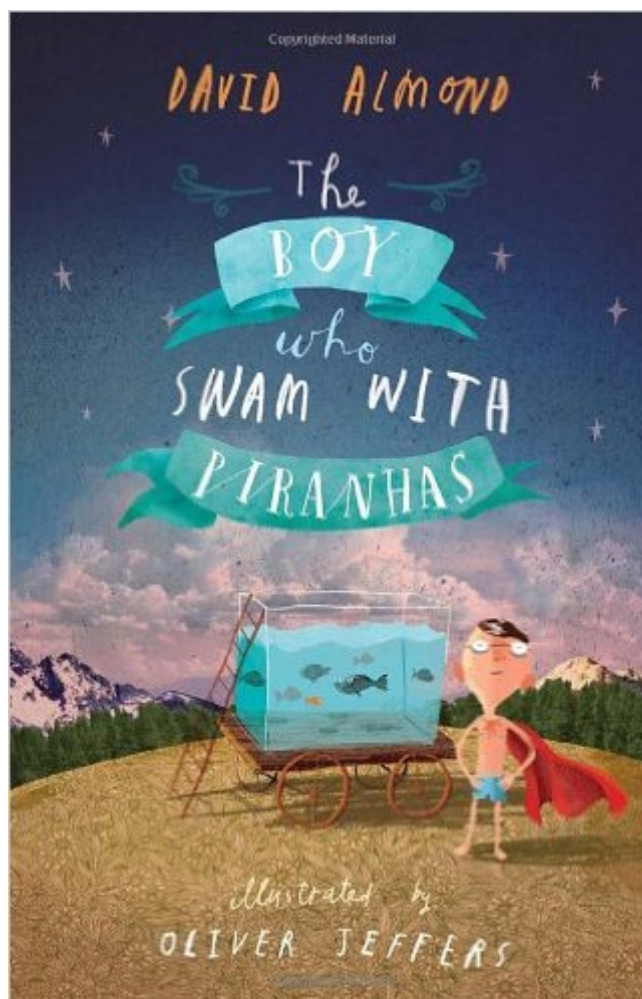


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# The Boy Who Swam With Piranhas



## Synopsis

A boy escapes home to seek his own way in the world in a whimsical new outing by the award-winning David Almond, illustrated by Oliver Jeffers. Stanley Potts's uncle Ernie has developed an over-the-top fascination with canning fish in the house, and life at 69 Fish Quay Lane has turned barmy. But there's darkness in the madness, and when Uncle Ernie's obsession takes an unexpectedly cruel turn, Stan has no choice but to leave. As he journeys away from the life he's always known, he mingles with a carnival full of eccentric characters and meets the legendary Pancho Pirelli, the man who swims in a tank full of perilous piranhas. Will Stan be bold enough to dive in the churning waters himself and choose his own destiny?

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 550L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 256 pages

Publisher: Candlewick (August 6, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0763661694

ISBN-13: 978-0763661694

Product Dimensions: 5.4 x 0.9 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (10 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #176,025 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) [#28 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Runaways](#) [#164 in Books > Children's Books > Animals > Fish](#) [#553 in Books > Children's Books > Arts, Music & Photography > Performing Arts](#)

Age Range: 9 - 12 years

Grade Level: 4 - 7

## Customer Reviews

I read this book aloud with my 4th grader and it was perfect. (Yes, we still read books together and it's great fun!) I had seen this book reviewed somewhere and put it on the must-read list. It hasn't disappointed me, or my son, who loves anything to do with fish, fantasy, adventure, quirky characters, kids trying something unknown, kids trying to escape some situation, adults attempting to teach kids a lesson, etc. The quirkiness of the characters comes out along with their unique use of the English language...or the characters' attempt at simply incorporating phrases and cliches in their

everyday speech that, well, show that they're not a high-brow crowd. I found that usage putting a smile on my face since it was clever and my son understood most of it, or it created a great discussion with him about a cliché or phrase that he wasn't familiar with...but is now thanks to this book!The fantasy elements are well described and believable. Even though the chapter endings didn't seem like serious cliff hangers at all, my son was eager for us to continue reading this book every single time we had to put it down. Compact, short chapters helped us read a lot in a little time which was rewarding while reading aloud.If this book is a movie script masquerading as a book, I know we would enjoy seeing the movie too!Bottom line, I think most kids who enjoy quirky stories (isn't that most of 'em?) will enjoy this book. And, adults that like a little out-of-the-ordinary dialogue to spice things up will enjoy reading this aloud to their kids.

The Boy Who Swam With Piranhas, written by David Almond, is a fantastic tale about a boy whose uncle decides to turn his house, which the young protagonist, Stanley Potts, lives in, into a fish canning factory. The boy runs away to a circus where he finds his destiny, and happiness, at a hook-a-duck stall. My favorite part is when Stanley jumps into the piranha tank, which he survives. My favorite character is Stanley Potts. This is a fiction book for children ages 8-13 and it is funny, good and simple, and I rate this marvelous story 5 out of 5 stars.Review by Luke N., age 10, Greater Los Angeles Area Mensa

I enjoy David Almond very much and while I've only read a handful of his books to date; I've found them to share themes of death/grief and either father/mother to child relationship. So I looked forward to this one though I hadn't heard anything about it beforehand. The book is much lighter than the previous books I've read by the author and while I still find the same themes present it is only in a smaller way. The book starts with a boy being orphaned quite horrifically and then going to live with an aunt and uncle who, obviously love him, but he's treated with neglect and the uncle is near abusive. This is all kept in a high over the top humorous manner with the entrance of the DAFT Squad who investigates all suspicious goings on. The second half of the book has Stanley running off with the circus, an age-old dream of childhood. (though I think it went out with not Almond's but perhaps my own generation). The story is hilarious and like all of Almond's works, very British. Candlewick publishes the US editions but they don't Americanize the text, so you get a very big dose of crazy, off the wall British humour. While the book holds many characters, Stanley is the one the reader gets to know the best and watching out for his welfare and caring about what happens to him enhances the reading experience. The bad guys get theirs in the end and each character

receives their own kind of redemption for a satisfying and (funny) ending.

I initially picked this book because it is illustrated by Oliver Jeffers and Mr. Jeffers has tweeted/Instagrammed about it. This book is for a special sort of reader as it is an odd book. It's part Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (the author is British and there are some British terms and such in the book) and part Tim Burton with a little bit of Lemony Snicket thrown in for good measure (sometimes the author talks directly to the reader). The main character is a boy, Stanley Potts who, like other Roald Dahl characters, is mistreated by his uncle (whom he lives with) and even though his aunt tries to make life better. There is an annoying subplot with a man from DAFT (Department for the Abolishun of Fishy Things - yes it's spelled that way in the book) and I think some children will have trouble reading and comprehending his speech as it is all misspelled. I think readers could have gotten the gist without all the misspellings but maybe not. Further, there is an odd character at the carnival called Tickle Peter. People are supposed to try to tickle Peter and make him laugh and Mr. Jeffers has drawn what appears to be an almost naked man wearing leopard print boxer shorts with suspenders and a Hitler style mustache - very creepy! I could do without this character and his request to be tickled. I enjoyed the book, I'm just not sure I know a student reader who is perfect for this book just yet but I will be on the lookout!!

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