

SIMON'S HOOK

It was a bad hair day for Simon. First his sister lost her gum. Then she found it ... in his hair.

When she tried to fix it, she went SNIP SNIP and a big chunk of his hair was gone.

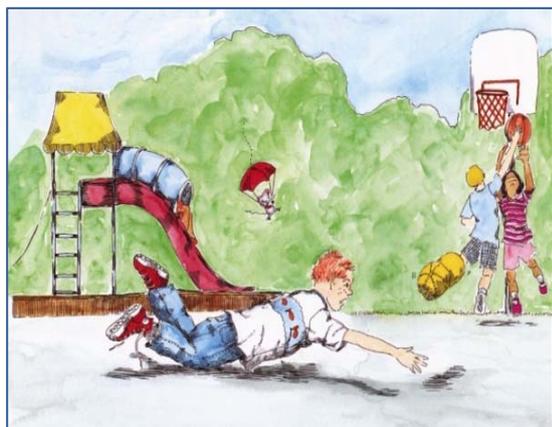
He grabbed his hat and ran outside, hoping no one would see.

And no one did see ... until Simon fell and lost his hat.

That's when Joey yelled, "What happened to your hair?"

Everybody turned to look.

"Who cut it?" Nicole asked.



"What did they use, a lawn mower?" Miguel said as he laughed.

"Hey, Lawn Mower Head!" Joey said.

Simon grabbed his hat and started to leave.

"I've got chores to do".

"I've got to go home," he said as he stomped away.

"Don't forget to cut the lawn," said Nicole.

Everyone laughed – everyone but Simon.

Simon ran and ran. He ran until he couldn't

see his friends anymore.

"Why do they make fun of me?" he yelled. "Why don't they just LEAVE ME ALONE!"

Simon was so mad he didn't see Grandma Rose ... until he run into her.

"Whoa!" she cried. "What's the hurry?"

"I'm going home," Simon cried.

"Why?" asked Grandma Rose. "What's wrong?"

"I'm having a bad day," said Simon, "a bad hair day."

"What's wrong with your hair?" she asked.

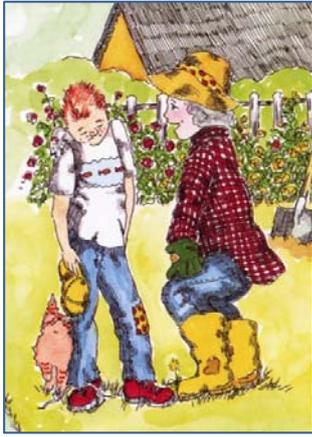
Simon took off his hat.

"Oh," said Grandma Rose. "I see."

Simon told her about the gum and his sister's hair cut. Then he told her what happened at the park.

"Mmmm, that's too bad," she said.





"Yeah, and they'll tease me again," said Simon. "And I don't know what to do."

Grandma Rose shook her head.

"You do have a problem."

Then she asked him something really strange.

"But why do you bite?"

"Bite?" cried Simon. "I didn't bite anyone!"

"No, no, no. That's not what I mean. I know you didn't bite anyone," she said. "What I mean is ... well ... wait here. I'll be back in a minute."

Grandma Rose disappeared into her garage. When she returned she was wearing a fishing outfit. On the end of her fishing line was a piece of paper.

What's she doing? First she talks about biting. Now she's going fishing!, wondered Simon.

"You see, Simon," Grandma Rose said as she cast out her line, "when people tease you it's like they're throwing out a hook to see if you'll chase it and bite."

"Ohhhhh," Simon said as he watched the hook fly through the air.

"Now I see what you're doing. It's a lesson."

"That's right," said Grandma Rose with a wink. "It's a ... fishing lesson."

"Today they make fun of your hair," she said as she dangled the hook in front of Simon. "They called you Lawn Mower Head, and you bit"

"I sure did," he said.

"Well then," said Grandma Rose, "grab the hook."

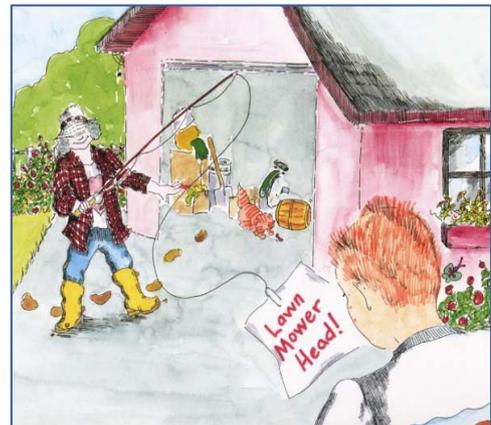
Grandma Rose pulled Simon around the patio. "I've caught you," she said. "You're not a free fish anymore."

"But what else can I do?" cried Simon as he flew through the yard.

Grandma Rose put her fishing pole aside and sat down.

"Well, I know a story that might help," she said. "It's a fishing story. Would you like to hear it?"

"Sure," said Simon.

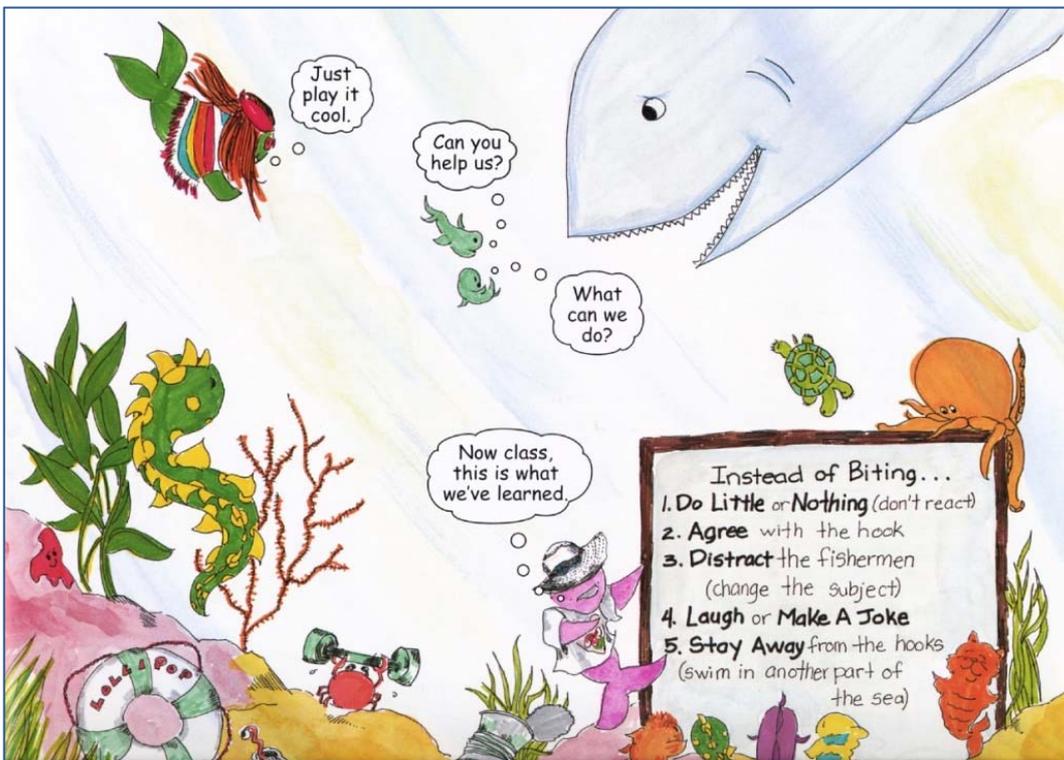
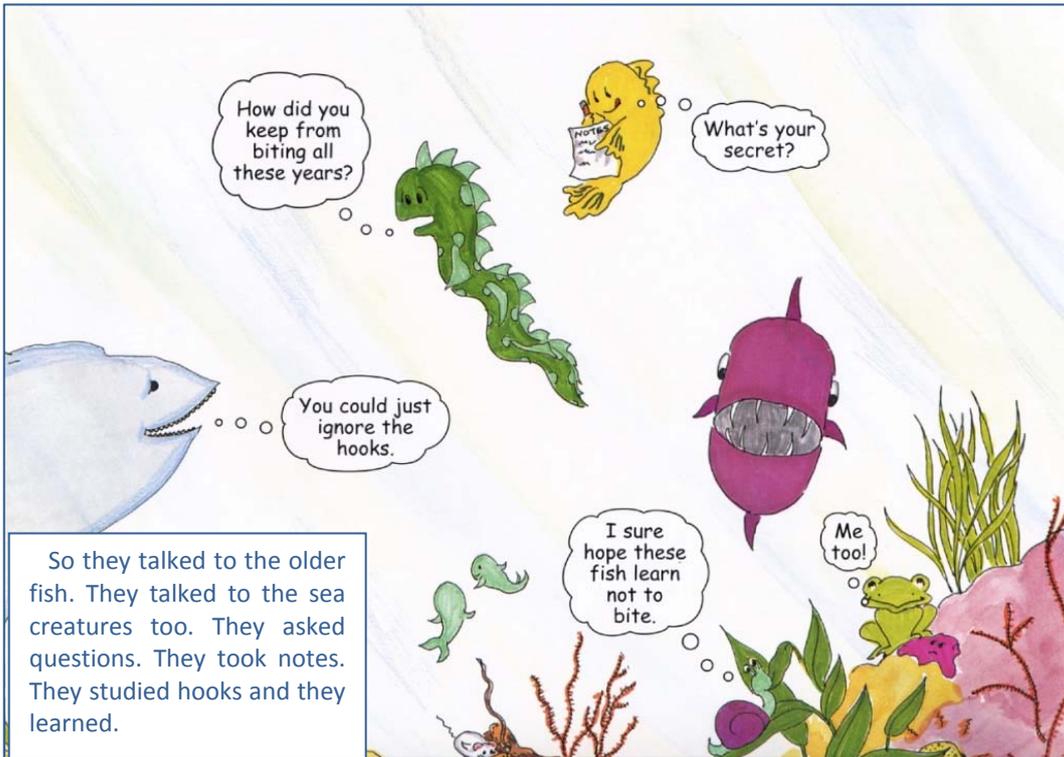


Grandma Rose took a sip of lemonade and began to talk.

"Once upon a time there was a famous fishing spot. People came from miles around to tease the fish with their hooks. When the fish bit, the people would reel them in. Many fish were caught."



Fish watched as their friends were caught. Soon there would be no fish left. They had to learn how not to bite. And they had to learn fast.



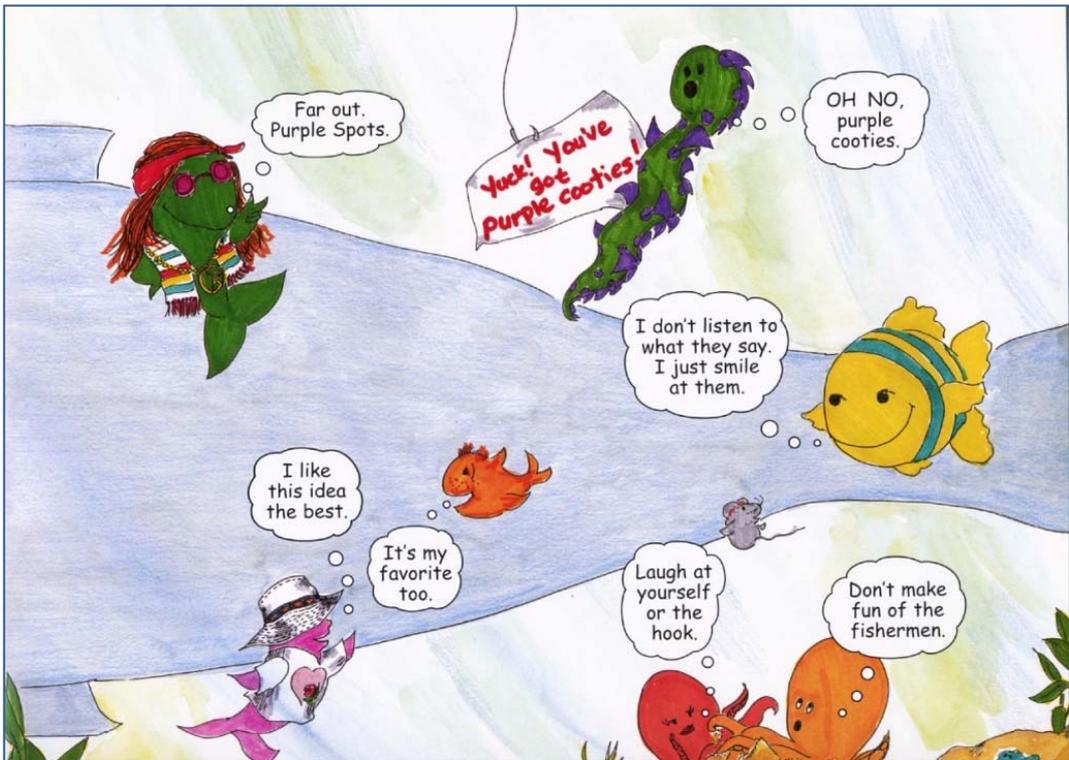
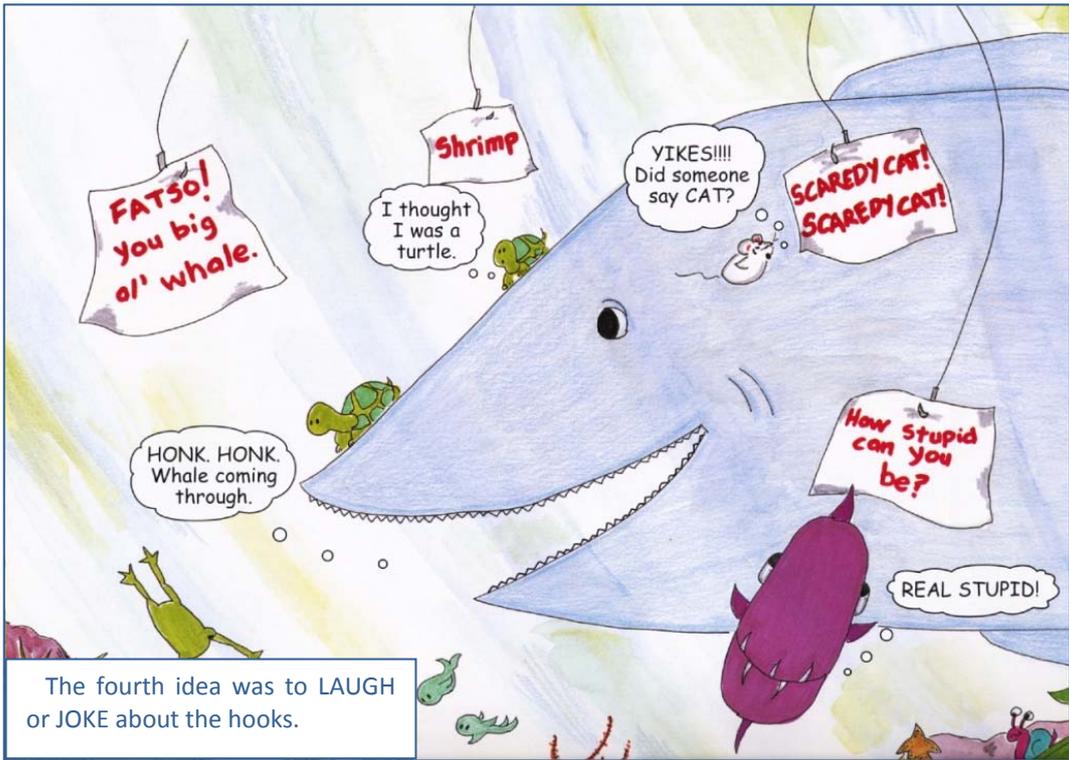




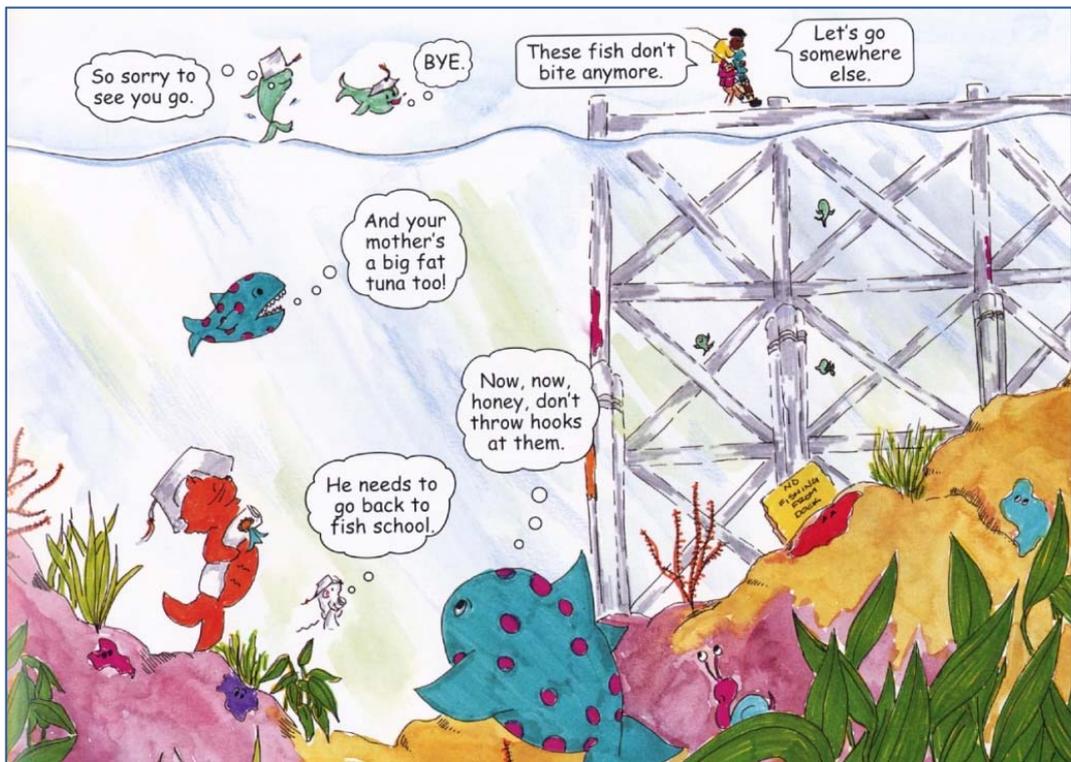
The second idea they had was to AGREE with the hooks.













Grandma Rose leaned back and smiled.

“And that’s how the fish learned to stay free,” she said.

Simon thought. He thought about the hooks and the fish. He thought about how the fish learned not to bite.

Then he said, “They can tease me all they want. I won’t bite. I’m going to be a FREE FISH too!”

“Good for you,” said Grandma Rose.

Simon jumped up and ran to the playground. He couldn’t wait for someone to say something about his hair. He didn’t have to

wait for long. As Simon ran up someone yelled.

“Hey, Lawn Mower Head is back!”

“Yep, I’m back,” said Simon.

“How’s the hair?” Miguel asked.

“It’s still on my head,” said Simon, “at least what’s left of it.”

Simon and Miguel laughed.

“Did you mow the lawn?” Nikole asked.

“No way!” Simon cried.

“It might end looking like this,” he said pointing to his head.

Now everyone laughed.

“Come on, let’s play,” said Joey as he threw Simon the ball.

Simon was a FREE FISH.



