

The Bad Seed

by Jory John, illustrated by Pete Oswald

The Bad Seed has been really *baaaaaaad*. He has been late, unhygienic, and loud in the library. He even tells long jokes with no punch lines. He started out as a good seed, but was traumatized into becoming so bad that all the other seeds whisper about him when he walks down the street. But---now he has decided that he doesn't want to be bad anymore, and he is "ready to be happy." It's hard work, and he has setbacks. But he is trying, and the other seeds are starting to notice.

Jory John will be familiar to Vermont readers as the author of *Penguin Problems*, the 2018, Red Clover first runner-up, and the co-author of *The Terrible Two*, the 2017 Dorothy Canfield Fisher Book Award. He has written many other acclaimed picture books, including the darkly riotous *All My Friends Are Dead* and *K Is For Knifeball: an Alphabet of Terrible Advice* which he wrote with Avery Monsen.

Pete Oswald has illustrated a number of picture books, but his day job is being the Production Designer for movies such as *Angry Birds* and *Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs*. He also creates landscape studio art.

Book trailer

On YouTube here.

Websites

- <http://www.joryjohn.com/> If you enjoy dark and trenchant humor, visit the links on the "Etc." page.
- <http://www.peteoswald.com> On the "Press" page, there is a two minute video called "The Artist" that shows his studio in a storage rental unit, and a link to a "Good for Utah" video which discusses his work on *Angry Birds*.

Big Ideas and Enduring Understanding

The negative effects of bad experiences can be slowly overcome with diligence.

Overarching Questions

How can you control your responses to life experiences?

Sample Text-Dependent Questions

- What could the Bad Seed have done differently after the spitting incident, instead of turning bad?
- What might have prompted the Bad Seed to decide he didn't want to be bad anymore?
- What else could the Bad Seed do to show the other seeds he isn't bad anymore?
- What do the other seeds do when the Bad Seed acts out? What could they do instead?

Common Core ELA Standards

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.3 Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

Suggested Activities

- Write a list all the different kinds of seeds which appear in the book. Identify which ones are edible.
- If allergies allow, serve a seed snack tray.
- Ask readers to illustrate seeds of their choice demonstrating "Bad Seed" and "Good Seed" behaviors.
- Do you know your radicles from your plumules? Use the directions at "Pocket Seeds" to easily observe sprouting

- seeds, learn their anatomy, and how to measure how changes to light, heat, and moisture alter their growth.
- Use seeds as counters for ordering, grouping, sorting, making patterns and basic math equations. If edible seeds are used and hands are washed you can end with a snack.
- Dramatize a read aloud by assigning students (or teams of students) to demonstrate good and bad seed behaviors while a narrator reads.

Companion Books

Stories about changing behaviors

Juster, Norton. *The Dot and the Line: a Romance in Lower Mathematics*.

Trivizas, Eugene, and Helen Oxenbury. *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig*.

Seed books

Carle, Eric. *The Tiny Seed*.

Cave, Kathryn, and Gisèle Wulfsohn. *One Child, One Seed: A South African Counting Book*.

Christensen, Bonnie. *Plant a Little Seed*.

Ehlert, Lois. *Planting a Rainbow*.

Robbins, Ken. *Seeds*.