



There Was an Old Sailor

Claire Saxby

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This playful, rhyming picture book offers a fresh and fun new take on the song 'There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly.' In Claire Saxby's telling, a white-bearded, big-bellied sailor sets things in motion by swallowing a krill. He then goes on to swallow progressively larger sea creatures, each meant to catch the preceding one. Every new introduction is followed by a retelling of all the previously eaten animals, and 'I don't know why he swallowed the krill --- It'll make him ill.' The sailor's tale finally ends when he swallows a whale, 'then with a burp ... set sail.' The burp allows all the other creatures to be released out of his mouth and back into the sea, presenting the surprise of a happier ending for the sailor than for the old lady in the song.

The story is perfectly complemented by Cassandra Allen's jaunty, simple and playful illustrations, which provide a terrific source of visual clues for pre-readers looking to recognize words. The rhyming and repetition will make this a favorite read-aloud choice for storytime, as children will happily participate in reading the repeated sections, which are so easily and quickly memorized. In addition, there is a 'Fishy Facts' spread at the back of the book that contains a true fact about each animal in the story (including 'A blue whale can eat millions of krill a day!'), which would make for a fantastic introduction to a discussion on the size of sea creatures and the food chain.

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