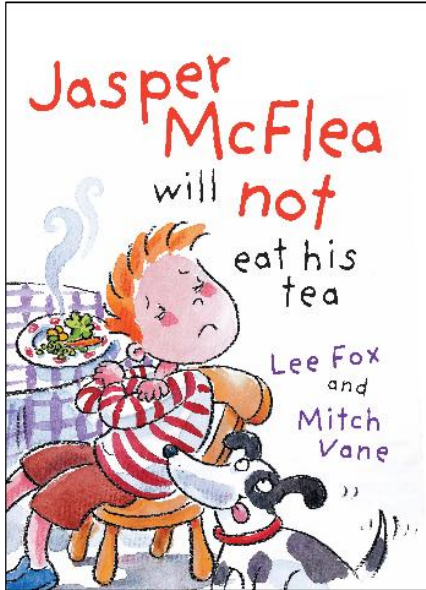


JASPER MCFLEA WILL NOT EAT HIS TEA

Author: Lee Fox

Illustrator: Mitch Vane



ISBN: 9780734410627 | HB | \$28.99

ISBN: 9780734410993 | PB | \$16.99

Pub date: March 2009

Teacher's Guide by Robyn Sheahan-Bright

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INTRODUCTION

Jasper McFlea is like many children – he’s awfully particular about what he eats. In fact, the only thing he likes to eat is pasta! His parents despair of tempting his taste buds, and although his twin sister Ginger tries to interest him in the foods she likes to eat, Jasper simply won’t budge.

And so he gets thinner and weaker and even his beloved cricket game begins to suffer. Before long Jasper’s interest in life itself is threatened by his lack of energy. Luckily, though, he is sent to a Dr McTavish, who offers him some golden advice: ‘You don’t have to eat food, you just have to taste it.’

And so Jasper begins to taste the things his parents put in front of him, and soon he’s hooked – not only on pancakes but on fruit, salad, stew, and even greens. And Jasper McFlea becomes a new boy.

This is a lively read-aloud text with a message that families will relate to. It’s also full of word games, and the pictures are vibrant and hilariously entertaining.

TOPICS & THEMES

Several **topics and themes** are covered in this work which might provoke class discussion:

- **Food and Diet**

Activity: Discuss students’ favorite foods. Discuss their most despised foods as well! Read the texts of other related books such as Lauren Child’s *I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato!* (2003) or *Green Eggs and Ham* by Dr Seuss (1960).

Activity: Discuss the need for nutritional variety in diet. Ask your students what they think is a ‘balanced diet’. Read Anna Zamorano’s *Let’s Eat* (1996) or Eric Carle’s *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (1969) to get them thinking about different types of foods.

Question: Ask students to make a list of foods that they think are not good for them.

Activity: Invite students to write a simple explanation for these words relating to food: diet; nutrition; feast; gourmet; chow; salad; soup; brunch. Then ask them to write a list of other words relating to food and eating.

Activity: Have a ‘healthy food’ day. Invite your class to bring along foods which are good for them. E.g. Create a fruit platter, or a platter of vegetables with a healthy avocado dip, or muesli bars rather than packets of chips.

Activity: Choose recipes for some meals mentioned in the book, and have a cooking class. Eg Make a healthy soup; or a nutritional sauce to eat with pasta; pancakes; ice blocks made out of freshly squeezed juice; or a salad.

- **Child Behavior**

Lee Fox's previous book *Ella Kazoo will not Brush her Hair* (2006) dealt with a child who was, like Jasper, similarly reluctant to conform to expectations! These two books offer an entertaining approach to issues parents and children confront every day.

Activity: Discuss with your class the things they like doing. And the things they don't. Read related books such as Lauren Child's *I am Not Sleepy and I Will Not Go to Bed* (2008).

Activity: Find other picture books about child behavior and different tastes, and discuss some of the issues they raise.

- **Families**

Activity: Jasper is a twin to Ginger, and although she looks like him and plays cricket with him, their eating habits are very different. If your students have any siblings, ask them to write down the things in which they are alike and how they are different.

LANGUAGE & LITERACY

- **Rhyming** is one of the pleasures of reading this book.

Activity: Think of other words which rhyme with the words here, and then come up with your own rhyming sentences. Encourage students to make their sentences logical.

Mc Flea/ tea/ see/ decree	Food/mood/rude/ dude	Fruit/toot/boots/swim suit	Game/fame	Tomorrow/sorrow
Peas/please/	Greens/beans	Stew/ spew/clue/you	Wicket/cricket/ticket	Quickly/sickly
Dinner/ thinner/ winner/spinner/	Scene/ queen	Pasta/faster/forecast er/disaster	Chow/now	Lunch/brunch

- This is also **an alphabet book** with Jasper having 'to eat everything from avocado to zucchini'.
- **Activity:** Complete an alphabetical list of foods mentioned in the book, and then fill in the rest with foods that you know of. E.g. A is for avocado; B is for ?; C is for ?; P is for pasta ; Z is for zucchini.

- **This story (like every story) opens with a ‘hook’** which is suggested in the title. Jasper’s fussy eating habits will be the ‘problem’ to be explained and resolved.

Activity: Invite the students to start a new story beginning with ‘*Jasper McFlea...*’ For example: ‘*Jasper McFlea has a sore on his knee...*’ Or they could choose another name and rhyme it. E.g. *Mary McGee does not like to ski*. Then have them write their own simple rhyming story based on this idea. See also the previous book in Lee Fox’s series for younger readers *Ella Kazoo Will Not Brush her Hair* illustrated by Cathy Wilcox. This title doesn’t rhyme but is based on the same premise. Think of other titles like this one. Encourage students to draw on their own experiences and to write about something they have witnessed or done themselves.

Activity: How many words beginning with the letter ‘P’ can you find in this text?

- **This text could also be used to discuss and test comprehension**, for it contains some commonly used expressions, and some phrases they may not have heard before.

Activity: Ask your students to explain what these mean: 1. Ginger tucks in. 2. Jasper bowls a mean spinner. 3. He’s a big drama queen. 4. You’re on the wrong wicket. 5. Good eating’s the ticket. 6. Canny decree.

VISUAL LITERACY

- **Drawings are executed in ink and are painted in bright, vibrant watercolours.**

Activity: Paint a picture in these two mediums.

Activity: Examine other illustrations by Mitch Vane. What do you like about her style?

- **The pictures are full of details which are not mentioned in the text.**

Activity: Answer these simple quiz questions: 1. What is the name of the family dog? 2. What colour hair do Ginger, Jasper and their parents have? 3. What is the picture on the front of Ginger’s purple sweater? 4. What are the pictures on Jasper’s bedroom wall? 5. How many boys are in the picture of Jasper’s cricket team sitting on a bench, apart from Jasper? 6. Who does his mother give Jasper’s leftovers to?

Answers: 1. Buffy. 2. Red. 3. A flower or a daisy. 4. Cricket and cricket heroes. 5. Three others. The picture also includes Ginger who is a girl. 6. Buffy, their dog.

Activity: Observe the image of Jasper on the cover of this book. What does his body language tell you about his attitude?

CONCLUSION

This is a simple, entertaining book which is a great read-aloud, and can be used in language and literacy classes. It also has an underlying message about food and nutrition. The pictures are loads of fun and students will enjoy the combination of rhythmical language and eye-catching images.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR and ILLUSTRATOR

LEE FOX is the author of the hilarious picture book *Ella Kazoo Will Not Brush Her Hair*, illustrated by Cathy Wilcox (Lothian, 2006). *Ella Kazoo* is the first in a series of three and was shortlisted in the Early Childhood category of the 2007 Children's Book Council of Australia Awards. Prior to becoming a writer, Lee was a production assistant for a commercial radio station, a Mormon, a cook in a childcare centre and the store manager on a remote Aboriginal community – and she has five children. Her writing career began in 2000, with several articles published for *The Age*. Lee's novel for children ages twelve and over, *Other People's Country*, was published in 2008. As well as writing, running a small business and looking after her young daughter, Lee shares her writing journey and experiences with students of all ages.

http://www.bookedout.com.au/authors/Lee_Fox/index.html

MITCH VANE has worked as a freelance illustrator for over twenty years, five of which were based in a studio in London. She has worked in many areas of illustration including advertising, design, editorial and painting, and for many years taught illustration and life drawing classes. In 2007 she designed a quirky series of stamps for Australia Post. Mitch enjoys using a variety of mediums including acrylics, pastels, watercolour and pen and ink, and she loves drawing funny pictures. Most of her work has at least a hint of humour in it. She has drawn cartoons that appear alongside Danny Katz's weekly column in the *Age* for the last thirteen years, and they have also collaborated on the much-loved Little Lunch series. Mitch has also illustrated a variety of other children's books including *Just Like Me*, *The Patch*, *Wednesday Was Even Worse*, the *Boyz Rule*, *Aussie Bites* and *Aussie Nibbles* series, *Scratch Kitten* and many, many more. She has two children and works from her garden studio (well ... shed) in Melbourne. You can check out more of her work at www.mitchvane.com

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Teachers may wish to read more about the nutritional content of foods at:

CHOICE Food for Kids <http://www.choicefoodforkids.com.au/>

The Food Guide Pyramid http://kidshealth.org/kid/stay_healthy/food/pyramid.html

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