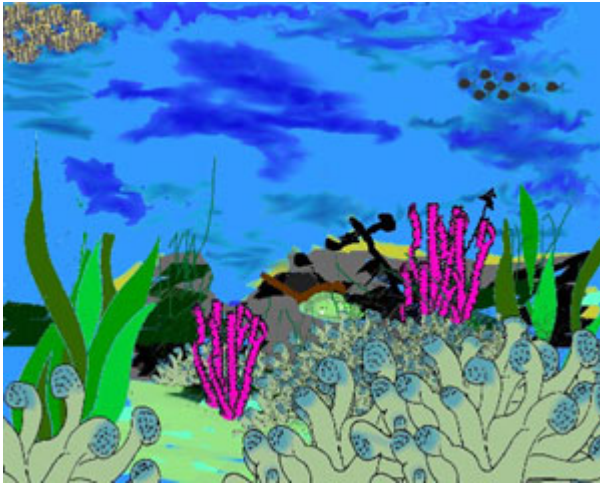


**Guppy Goop & The Adventure of the Big Bad Fish** Written and Illustrated by **Chato B. Stewart** . What does it take to learn a good lesson, anyway?



Once upon a pond... in a sea not far from here... just under the water off the coral reef, lived a small guppy named Guppy Goop.

The coral reef could be a dangerous place. That's why each and every guppy played at the center of the reef.

It was an old sandy sea bass bed that was made into Sea Bass Park.

Guppy Goop and his friends loved to play fishball in the park.

Fishball was kind of like kick ball. They used a pearl from an oyster for the ball.

Guppy Goop and his guppy pals were only worried about one thing, the Big Bad Fish that lived over the fence behind the park.



There were stories about the Big Bad Fish... the type of stories told that would keep guppies up at night.



It was said that he was a Big Bad Fish, had large glowing eyes, and black scaly skin... with razor-sharp teeth on top... and two large fangs on the bottom. That he would swallow you up in one gulp... and that he was meaner than a tiger shark with a toothache! And that fish that go to that cave were never seen again...

He was the coral reef's Big... Bad... Fish!

Now, Guppy Goop was from a small fish family. He only had about five hundred fish brothers and sisters. Oh...and an uncle that was a hermit crab.

One of his older fish sisters won an extremely rare black pearl ball at the Fishbowl fishball tournament. This black pearl was the envy of every fishball player!

And all Guppy Goop wanted... the one thing he really, REALLY wanted more than anything else... was JUST ONCE... to play Fishball with his sister's black pearl ball trophy!



One day, Guppy Goop's whole family (that is, everyone except Guppy Goop...) went on the annual upstream swim. He wandered aimlessly around the house...and wandered into his sister's room... and there it was... the black pearl trophy.



Even though Guppy Goop knew it was the same as stealing his sister's trophy, he thought: "She won't know I took it. I'll just use it for today, and I'll put it back before she's home from the swimming trip. Besides, it doesn't really seem so wrong if... I don't get caught."

When Guppy Goop got to Sea Bass Park all the other guppies gathered round and asked, "Are you really going to let all of us play with that black pearl trophy ball, Guppy Goop?" He just smiled from gill to gill and yelled "Lets... Play... Fishball!"

The game was going swimmingly... it was Guppy Goop's best game ever!

His team had a fish on each shell. And now, Guppy Goop was at home shell, with a chance to win the game.

The black pearl was pitched. He could see his fisheye reflection.

He swung his fish tail with all his might and hit the black pearl. It went up... and up...



and up. It was going, going, gone!!



Right into The Big Bad Fish's back yard. Every Guppy who was watching gasped big fish bubbles...

"Oh no... it's gone forever now," said Blue the Sheephead Guppy. "You're in big trouble now," said Sam the Seahorse. Flounder Guppy cried out, "Oh my flat flounder bottom! Now your sister is going to stuff you in a tuna can!"

"What am I going to do?", said Guppy Goop.

Guppy Goop knew if he went over the fence to get the black pearl back, he'd be a goner for sure. Remember the stories: The Big Bad Fish, large glowing eyes, black scaly skin, razor-sharp teeth, and two large fangs. You know, the Big... Bad... Fish!

"Maybe if I just go ask him for it... he will give it to me." Guppy Goop said.

"Wait!" yelled Flounder, "you can't go there now. He's a stranger, and it is getting dark. It's not safe!" Flounder was right. It was late. Nothing could be done about it now. So Guppy Goop started to swim home.