

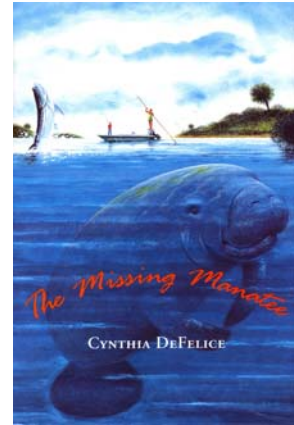
FARRAR STRAUS GIROUX
Teachers' Guide

The Missing Manatee
by Cynthia DeFelice

Grade Level:
Grades 3–5

Themes:

- Boats and boating
- Family Life
- Florida
- Manatees
- Tarpon fishing



Introduction:

After overhearing his mother's side of a phone conversation with his father telling him not to come back home, Skeet Waters takes off to think in the comfort of his boat. While meandering through the Florida inlets, he finds a manatee that has been shot in the head. He spends most of his spring break searching for the killer and learning some hard lessons in life.

Discussion

1. Skeet's parents are separated. How does this affect him? What role does Memaw play in his life?
2. Why do you think Skeet's mother has all the rules for him while boating? Are they reasonable? Why or why not?
3. Skeet seems to have a lot of freedom—going out by himself on his boat, riding his bike all around town, etc. Why? Do you have many freedoms?
4. Why are some animals “protected species”? Discuss such terms as endangered, protected, refuge and related laws.

Activity Suggestions

1. What is the draw to tarpon fishing? Research this fish and design a sales pitch to give to the class enticing them to go fishing with you.
2. Are there any protected or endangered species in our state? If so, what are they and how are they protected. Share what you learned with the class.
3. Use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast your family to Skeet's.
4. Write a story about one of your more memorable spring breaks.

THE MISSING MANATEE



About the Author

Cynthia DeFelice has written many novels for middle-grade readers, including *The Apprenticeship of Lucas Whitaker*, an ALA Notable Book, and *The Ghost of Fossil Glen*, recipient of the Texas Bluebonnet Award. She lives in upstate New York.

For more information on Cynthia DeFelice:

Web sites:

www.fsgkidsbooks.com

Includes a biography of the author and additional information about her books.

www.cynthiadefelice.com

Contains more information about the author and her books.

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