



## Not Norman: A Goldfish Story

By Kelly Bennett

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**"A sweet story that could be used as a springboard to discussion of the pitfalls of making snap judgments about pets — or people." — SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL**

Norman the goldfish isn't what this little boy had in mind. He wanted a different kind of pet — one that could run and catch, or chase string and climb trees, a soft furry pet to sleep on his bed at night. Definitely not Norman. But when he tries to trade Norman for a "good pet," things don't go as he planned. Could it be that Norman is a better pet than he thought? With wry humor and lighthearted affection, author Kelly Bennett and illustrator Noah Z. Jones tell an unexpected — and positively fishy — tale about finding the good in something you didn't know you wanted.

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## Not Norman: A Goldfish Story By Kelly Bennett Bibliography

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### Editorial Review

#### From School Library Journal

Kindergarten-Grade 2—A little boy is sorely disappointed when he receives a goldfish for his birthday. "I wanted a pet who could run and catch. Or one who could climb trees and chase strings. A soft, furry pet to sleep on my bed at night. Not Norman." However, as Norman performs acrobatics and makes the child laugh, listens attentively during his show-and-tell presentation when the rest of the class does not, sings along during band practice, and comforts him when he is awakened by a scary noise at night, the boy comes to love and appreciate the pet he at first disdained. The story is told in simple, straightforward language, and the clear lines and vibrant colors of the digital graphics are reminiscent of Taro Gomi's work. This is a sweet story that could be used as a springboard to discussion of the pitfalls of making snap judgments about pets—or people.—*Grace Oliff, Ann Blanche Smith School, Hillsdale, NJ*

#### From Booklist

K-Gr. 3. The African American boy who narrates this boy-meets-fish story wants a pet for his birthday, but not a *goldfish*. Too bad. Though he suspects that Norman is the lamest, tamest pet around, he takes his fish to school to "talk him up real good during Show-and-Tell" in hopes that someone else will want him. But after cleaning Norman's bowl, rescuing him from puppies, and noticing that Norman listens to him talk and even quiets his fear of night noises, he realizes that there is no pet he would rather have. Repeated several times during the story, the title phrase "Not Norman" takes on a new shade of meaning in the verbally clever turnaround that concludes this amusing picture book. Distilled to essential shapes and flat colors, the lively digital artwork expresses both action and emotion with flair. This eye-catching book makes a satisfying read-aloud choice for pet day or any day. *Carolyn Phelan*

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#### About the Author

Kelly Bennett loves fish. "Fish are fun and funny," she says. "Just watching them makes me laugh." When she's not writing, Kelly creates tile mosaics and digs in her garden. She has two grown children, Max and Lexi, and lives in Texas with her husband, Curtis, and their goldfish—whom she would never trade.

Noah Z. Jones loves drawing fish of all shapes and sizes, but especially smallish orange ones named Norman. This is his first children's book. He lives in coastal Maine with his wife, Diane, and their tuna-lovin' cat, Mabel.

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##### Jasmine Myers:

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**Maureen Smiley:**

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