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The Pout-Pout Fish in the Big-Big Dark

Ariel Woodbury

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Mr. Fish feels out of place on his first day of school. All the other fish know where to go to find their lockers and classes, and everyone else seems better than he is at doing things. He starts counting his troubles, and as things seem to get harder for him, he keeps repeating his troubles to himself. He decides to quit, but his teacher, Miss Hewitt, comes to tell him that she will teach him everything he needs to know and that his perceptions about his problems are the opposite of reality. Mr. Fish learns that everyone can do if they work hard enough.

The plot of this book is very simple, but children who are starting new things that they are worried about will identify with Mr. Fish in his trouble to belong. Some parents might not like the repeated message of the troubles, even though the opposite of them are shown to be true at the end of the book. The illustrations are cute and provide some opportunity for kids to reinforce their knowledge of numbers and shapes. This book is a good story to reassure readers that they can do hard things and belong, even if they don’t feel like they can at the beginning.