

# ***Memoirs of a Hamster***

**AUTHOR:** Devin Scillian  
**ILLUSTRATOR:** Tim Bowers  
**PUBLISHER:** Sleeping Bear Press  
**COPYRIGHT DATE:** 2013  
**ART MEDIUM:** unknown?

**GENRE:** Fantasy

**LIFE SKILLS:** Curiosity, Friendship, Truthfulness

## **SYNOPSIS:**

A hamster gives up the good life in his cage to explore the house after the cat leads him to believe he is missing out. He learns that the cat simply wants him out of his cage and that life is pretty good right where he is.

## **BOOKTALK:**

What do you suppose hamsters think about? If they could escape from their cages, where do you think they would go? Find out where Seymour the hamster tries to go.

## **AUTHOR**

Devin Scillian website <http://devinscillian.com/>

Devin lives in Michigan. In addition to writing children's books, Devin is also a songwriter and local TV news anchor. He is also an artist and hopes to one day illustrate a book he writes. It took him ten years to publish his first book, *Fibblestax*.

## **Other books written by the author:**

*A is for America: An American Alphabet*  
*Brewster the Rooser*  
*Cosmo's Moon*  
*D is for Down Under: An Australia Alphabet*  
*Fibblestax*  
*H is for Honor: A Military Family Alphabet*  
*Memoirs of a Goldfish*  
*One Kansas Farmer: A Kansas Number Book*  
*One Nation: America by the Numbers*  
*Pappy's Handkerchief*  
*P is for passport: A World Alphabet*  
*S is for Sooner: An Oklahoma Alphabet*  
*S is for Sunflower: A Kansas Alphabet*

## **ILLUSTRATOR**

Tim Bowers website <http://www.timbowers.com>

Tim Bowers attended the Columbus College of Art and Design in Ohio. He began working at an illustration studio, where he helped create storyboards for advertisements. He also worked as a greeting card illustrator before beginning to illustrate children's books. Tim has illustrated 35 children's books so far.

### **Other books illustrated by the illustrator:**

*Acoustic Rooster*

*The Bravest of the Brave*

*Cool Dog, School Dog*

*Dinosaur Pet*

*Dogku*

*Dream Big Little Pig*

*First Dog*

*Fun Dog, Sun Dog*

*Gorgonzola: A Stinkysaurus*

*Knuckleball Ned*

*Matilda's Humdinger*

*Maestro Stu Saves the Zoo*

*Memoirs of a Goldfish*

*Not Your Typical Dragon*

*Princess Pig*

*Shampoodle*

*Sherman Crunchley*

*Snow Dog, Go Dog*

*Suppose You Met a Dinosaur: A First Book of Manners*

### **CHALLENGING WORDS (...due to pronunciation, spelling and/or defining):**

commotion, concentrate, hydrated, matathon, memoir, shimmied

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Have you heard the expression, "The grass isn't always greener on the other side"? What does this mean? Seymour gives up something pretty great in the search of something better, but does he find it?
2. Why does Pearl keep telling Seymour about the rest of the house?
3. What was the "sweetest thing" Seymour has ever heard?
4. What makes Seymour the "luckiest hamster in the world"?
5. Do you think Seymour changed by the end of the book? How?
6. What do you think a hamster's dream cage would be like?

## ACTIVITIES with CORE STANDARDS

### Language Arts

- Write several journal entries for Seymour. This could be during the story, or what happens after.

**W.2.5** With support, conduct short research on a topic. Find information on a topic of interest (e.g., cardinals). Identify various visual and text reference sources. Organize, summarize, and present the information, choosing from a variety of formats

- Compare and contrast *Memoir of a Goldfish* and *Memoir of a Hamster*

**2.RL.4.2** Compare and contrast versions of the same stories from different authors, time periods, or cultures from around the world.

### Mathematics

- There are 14 nights covered in this book. If the book starts on a Monday, what day would it end?  
When Seymour wrote his will, how many items in total did he leave to his family?

**2.CA.2** Solve real-world problems involving addition and subtraction within 100 in situations of adding to, taking from, putting together, taking apart, and comparing, with unknowns in all parts of the addition or subtraction problem (e.g., by using drawings and equations with a symbol for the unknown number to represent the problem). Use estimation to decide whether answers are reasonable in addition problems.

### Science

- Research hamsters. What do they like to eat? What is their natural habitat? How do you care for a hamster as a pet? What does it need?

**Standard 3: Life Science - 2.3.1** - Observe closely over a period of time and then record in pictures and words the changes in plants and animals throughout their life cycles-including details of their body plan, structure and timing of growth, reproduction and death.

**RELATED INTERNET SITES:**

<http://www.timbowers.com>

<http://devinscillian.com/>

**ACTIVITY SHEET CREATED BY:**

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