SHARK STORIES

TRACI SWAIN

MEDIA KIT

SharkStories.com

Biography

Traci Swain's love of writing began after taking creative-writing courses at a summer camp when she was 12. Working in the publishing industry for more than a decade allowed her to help foster the joy of reading for many students. *Finding a Friend* was Traci's debut book and was an immediate teacher favorite. She hopes her stories will help encourage a love of reading, inspire creativity, and build confidence.

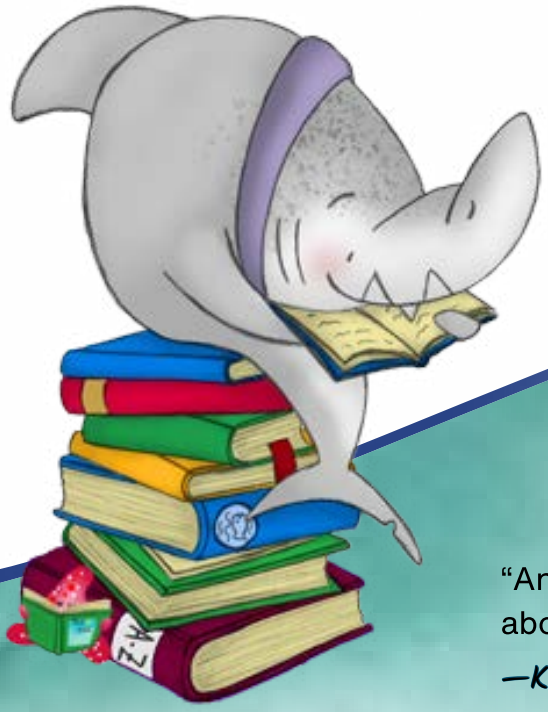
When Traci isn't creating books, she spends her time traveling, hanging with family and friends, and checking things off her bucket list. Her biggest feat to date—climbing Mount Kilimanjaro.

Shark Stories™ are inspirational narrative nonfiction books based on real-life sharks. They are filled with educational lessons and inspire kids to learn how to overcome obstacles, embrace their uniqueness, and discover the power of being themselves. Each book in the series offers guidance to young readers and helps them navigate through life's challenges. The fun and engaging text coupled with the vibrant illustrations bring these picture books to life.

Finding a Friend

BOOK DESCRIPTION

Finding a Friend is Traci's debut book and the first title in the Shark Stories series. It is an inspirational narrative nonfiction story about a real-life shark named Deep Blue. She is a happy, kind, lovable great white shark who sets a goal to find a friend and learns that with determination and a little help from others, anything is possible.



"Animal lovers will enjoy the facts in this whimsical tale about an inseparable duo."

—Kirkus Reviews

"Spending time reading *Finding a Friend* is just like spending time with a good friend. They both make you smile, laugh, and see the world a little differently. Traci's wit and positivity comes through on every page and I even got to learn a little more about the world under the sea. The use of speech bubbles makes this book fun and engaging for all readers. I look forward to Deep Blue's ongoing adventures."

—David Vozar, Author & Illustrator, Chippy the Dog

Page Count: 40
Genre: Narrative Nonfiction Picture Book
Publisher: Letter Links Press, LLC
Publication Date: 5.18.21
ISBN: 978-1-7364802-0-5 (Paperback); 978-1-7364802-1-2 (E-Book)
Price: $14.99 and $9.99
Available Formats: Paperback and E-Book

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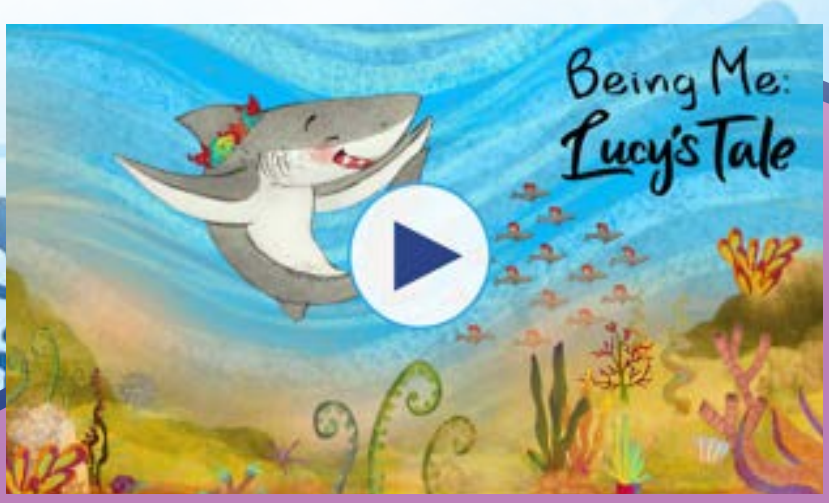
Being Me: Lucy's Tale

BOOK DESCRIPTION

Being Me: Lucy's Tale is the second title in the Shark Stories picture book series. It is a touching and empowering story about being yourself and embracing your uniqueness.

Lucy is your typical great white shark: strong, bold, and fearless. There's just one problem—she has a bent, floppy tale...and her very own bully. She is challenged throughout the story, but she never gives up because she knows that only she has the power to make her life as wonderful as she wants it to be.



"This is such a fin-tastic book! The color-coded captions and rhyming pattern are kid-friendly and makes for great bedtime reading or a classroom read-aloud. Lucy's positive messages of perseverance and empowerment are great reminders for us all. The ending was satisfying and relatable for everyone—the important part isn't winning, it's trying your best and not giving up." ***—Helen Kato, First Grade Teacher***

"An affirming tale of self-love—from a marine perspective." ***—Kirkus Reviews***

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Publisher: Letter Links Press, LLC
Publication Date: 12.20.22
ISBNs: 979-8-9892099-0-3 (Paperback); 979-8-9892099-1-0 (E-Book)
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Ask the Author

Where did you get the initial idea for this series?

During the pandemic, I was sitting on my couch watching a documentary about sharks, and it featured Deep Blue and Lucy. The clip with Deep Blue really stuck out to me. Scientists were in the water, observing tiger sharks feasting on a whale carcass. Then suddenly, all of the sharks swam away. The scientists were confused about why the sharks all simultaneously left, but then they saw this huge shadow, and then this large mass appeared. It was Deep Blue. They say that the rule is that when a larger shark comes around, the smaller sharks are supposed to swim away or give them the right-of-way. I thought, "Oh, that must be so sad and lonely. She must be looking for a friend." And that's how I came up with the concept for *Finding a Friend*.

You have some great secondary characters in both books. How did Deep Blue's sidekick, Cushy, come to join the journey?

Kadysha is the illustrator of the Shark Stories series. In our beginning conversations for *Finding a Friend*, I let her know that this was based on a real-life shark. She asked if I wanted the character to look exactly like the real shark or if I wanted it to be more cartoonlike, and I remember saying that I wanted it to be a fun version of this particular shark. I wanted her to have something that makes her stand out from any other characters that you'll see, and I wanted her to be easily recognizable. So I said, "Maybe you can put a flower in her hair or something on a headband?" Kadysha came back and said, "I put a starfish on her headband," and I was like, ta-da! I was so happy with that creative addition. Cushy has become really popular. She might be just as popular as Deep Blue. Kadysha brought that creative flair to *Being Me: Lucy's Tale* as well when she designed a multicolored coral crown for Lucy.

How did you make *Finding a Friend* and *Being Me: Lucy's Tale* fun read-alouds as well as educational texts?

Both books are narrative nonfiction. I trickled in real-life things about the different characters. So, like with the Panamic cushion star in *Finding a Friend*, I share, for example, that a starfish can regrow a body part, which is an interesting and cool fun fact. There are a ton of lessons throughout each story and a glossary in the back of each book. So, teachers and parents can use these stories to share various activities with their kids.

What lessons do you hope students take away from the books in the Shark Stories series?

I hope that children learn something new that they find interesting and supercool. I hope that the books teach kids to be good people and have empathy for others, and that it reminds them to be grateful for all of the good things that they already have in their lives.

Fun Facts About Traci

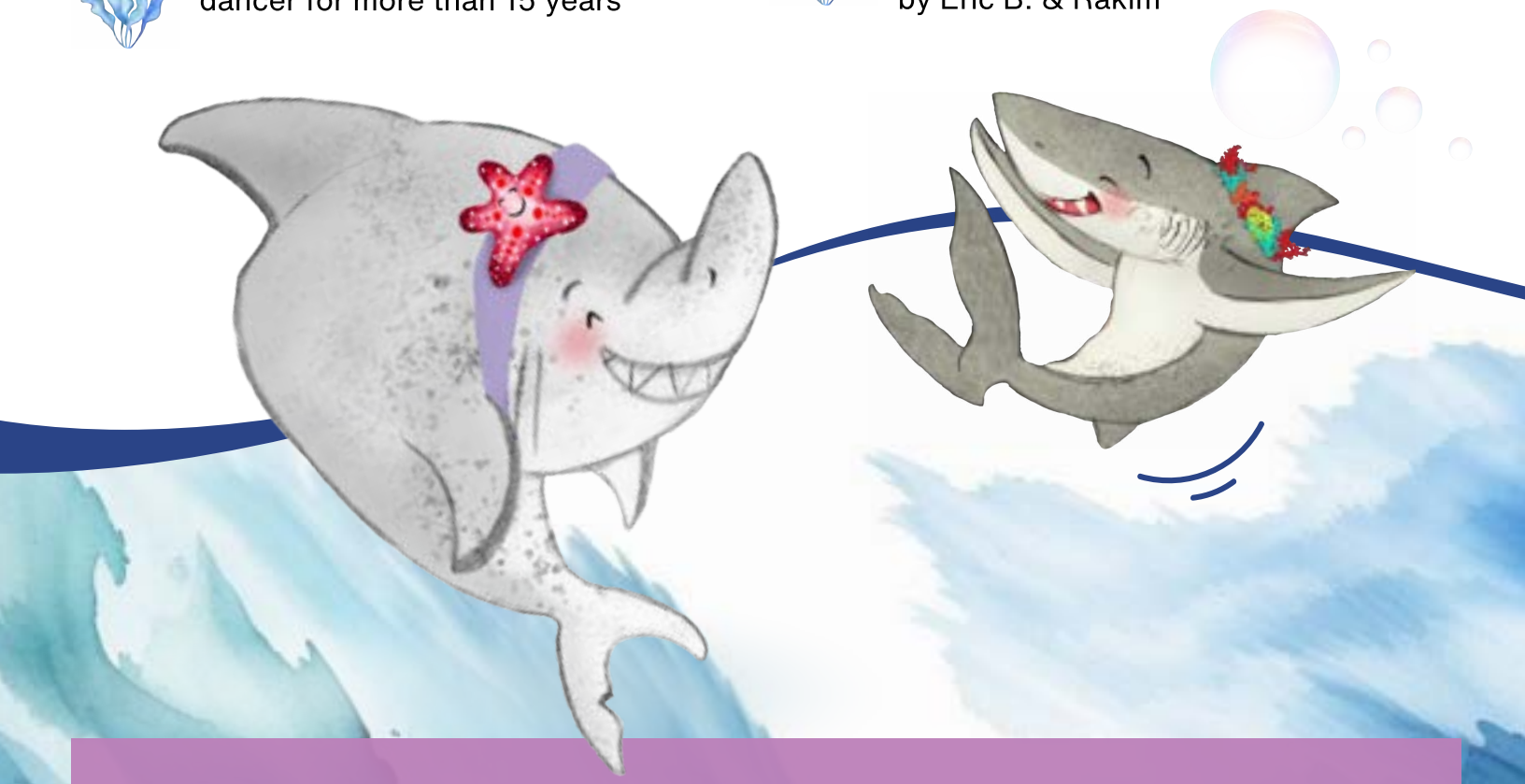
Zodiac sign: Libra

Hometown: The South Bronx, New York (Spent her summers in Talladega, AL)

Past profession: Professional dancer for more than 15 years

Favorite snacks: Utz Potato Chips (plain, salt & pepper, and honey barbeque), Bumble Bee Snack on the Run! tuna salad, and Peanut M&M's (she calls them "M&M's Peanut")

Go-to songs at karaoke night: "Wanted Dead or Alive" by Bon Jovi or "I Know You Got Soul" by Eric B. & Rakim



Finding a Friend and *Being Me: Lucy's Tale* are both available on Amazon. Educators can also find *Finding a Friend* on the Scholastic Book Clubs website.

For author visits and collaborations send an email to: MyFriend@SharkStories.com

Connect on Social Media:

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