

## ***Jamie Brown is ~~NOT~~ Rich***

by  
Adam Wallace

### **Outline:**

After years of extreme poverty, Jamie and his family are donated a generous amount of money from an estranged relative provides life-altering changes. The Brown family live in the rundown Grand Hotel on Hovel Street, surrounded by equally underprivileged families. Although incredibly poor, Jamie has lived a rich life with his eccentric friends and loving parents.

Everything is turned upside-down the day his family receive a letter from his mother's great, great uncle containing a check with a 'truckload of dollars'. Jamie's family is moved into a huge mansion in Snootyville where he is sent to a posh grammar school.

Jamie, along with his mother and father and baby sister, Katie, find themselves in a foreign world where they don't know the rules and the people may as well be speaking another language.

*Jamie Brown is ~~NOT~~ Rich* humorously examines the social divide between the rich and the poor, and illustrates how money has the potential to change people, but that it's important never to forget where you started.

The book was inspired by the film 'Happy Gilmore' – though obviously we do not recommend allowing students to watch this.

### **Author:**

Adam Wallace thought he wanted to play AFL or cricket for Australia or professional golf. Unfortunately a lack of size, skill and dedication meant that none of those things happened.

He did become an engineer, a qualified primary school teacher, and, for a while, a petrol station attendant and envelope stuffer.

Then he rediscovered the love of writing he'd had at school, and he started writing . . . he still hasn't stopped! Adam's books have been published in Australia and distributed around the world. He has visited hundreds of schools and libraries, giving workshops on writing, cartooning, and having heaps of fun.

Adam's books are fantastic for readers of all levels, and have started many children on the exciting journey of a lifetime of reading.

Adam's goals include continuing his career as an author, inspiring and entertaining as many children as he possibly can, taking a siesta on at least 253 days of the year, and maybe one day playing in the AFL . . . it might be a little late for that dream though.

At this present time Wallace has had thirty-five books published but has written over 500. *Jamie Brown is ~~NOT~~ Rich* is the first book Adam Wallace has entirely illustrated.

### **Themes that can be discussed further**

#### **Bullying:**

Jamie gets bullied at Snootyville Grammar because he is different. Discuss how Jamie deals with this and what the consequences are for trying to conform to the Nasty Jefferson's 'rules'.

The Jeffersons are total bullies. Not just the kids either, their parents too. What are some things they do that make them bullies?

What is the best way to deal with a bully?

Who should you talk to if you are being bullied?

Why do you think people become bullies?

Why do you think the Jeffersons are bullies?

Why is it wrong to bully others just because they are different?

#### **Discussion Questions:**

What would you do if you suddenly got a truckload of dollars?

What do you think the phrase 'money changes people' means?

What lesson(s) do you think Jamie learned throughout the book?

Do you have a fear of something the way Jamie does with public speaking?

Did the story end the way you expected it to? If not, why?

Why do you think it is important to take a break from technology and go play outside?

Did this book make you laugh out loud? Which parts?

Who was your favourite character and why?

#### **Comprehension Questions:**

What were Johnny, Maxy and Trav's skills?

What was the nickname Jamie used for the new people he met at Snootyville Grammar before he learnt their names?

Could you spot any of the differences between the triplets? What were they?

Who are the heroes in the story?

Who are the villains in the story?

What was the school cleaner's secret identity?

What are the biggest differences between Jamie's old neighbourhood in Hovel and his new one in Snootyville?

Jamie calls almost everybody at Snootyville Grammar 'Jefferson'. Which character uses the same nickname on him?

What is the fifth thing that Jamie is scared of?

Who is Jamie's hero?

What word does Jamie always shout whenever he is forced to do any public speaking?

### **Fitting in**

Jamie Brown really wants to fit in at his new school, but he finds it hard. Why?

Sometimes you try and be someone you don't really want to be in order to fit in. What does Jamie do that isn't what he normally would do?

### **Apologising**

Jamie has to apologise to Harmison and Dakota for his behaviour, which isn't easy to do. What is the best thing he does when he apologises (Hint: It's not saying they have nits)?

Why do you think they forgive him?

### **Can money buy happiness?**

If you had a whole truckload of cash like the Browns, what would you do? List three BIG things you would spend your money on.

List some of the ways that money didn't make Barnaby happy.

List some of the ways money didn't make the Browns happy.

List some of the ways money DID make the Browns happy.

### **Workbook questions:**

Think of an invention like Barnaby's Von Baranbus' HandPillow™. Draw it and explain what it does and how it could be AWESOME!

List your Top Five:

- Conversations you've ever had!
- Things you're scared of!
- Mistakes you've made!
- Things you learnt from the book!

Think of how the story might have gone if Jamie and his family had started off rich, then became poor. How might the characters be different? Write this down and draw accompanying pictures!

Write down as many words you can think of that mean 'toilet'.

Come up with your own alternate ending to the story, write it down and share it with the class.

### **Art and Crafts Activities:**

Draw your own Jamie Brown and Jefferson gang! Will they all be identical or will they look different? Then draw yourself in Adam Wallace's style.

Draw what you think the Brown family's mansion in Snootyville would look like.

Look like a Snootyville resident and make your own top hat and monocle! Gather black cardboard and sticky tape together to build the top hat, cutting circles for the brim and top of the hat and roll a rectangular piece of cardboard into a cylinder. For the monocle use cellophane and the rings from plastic milk cartoons, or pipe cleaners bent into circles.

Go outside and play a game of British Bulldog!

Try and learn the card tricks that Igor Kravoski teaches Jamie.

Make up your own Academic Challenge with questions and trivia about the book. Team up and play against each other. Don't forget to include a lightening round!

### **Persistence**

Things don't always go to plan for Jamie as he tries to settle into his new home and school. This can happen when you are going for a goal or dream too. What are some of the things that may stop people going for their dreams? Think about fears, peer pressure, parental pressure, comfort zones, etc (Oh, The Places You'll Go by Dr Seuss is another fantastic book to use here when discussing that it is okay to fail, as long as you pick yourself up again and keep on trying).

Jamie can't quite get the card in the pocket trick right, but he keeps on trying. List three things you find really hard that you think you will improve at if you keep practicing.

### **Cheating**

The Jeffersons cheat to try and help them win Academic Challenge. This is the wrong thing to do. However, Barnaby also cheats to give Jamie an advantage. Considering the circumstances, was this the right thing to do? What else could he have done?

### **Activity Ideas**

#### **Cartooning**

Look at the expressions Jamie pulls on page 7. What things have been changed on his face to give him a different expression?

Make some expressions in front of the mirror, or have someone make expressions to you. See what changes on their face when they change expression (ie eyebrows, eyelids, etc). Try and draw the expressions. You don't have to draw the whole face, just the eyes and mouth is enough to get the idea.

Try drawing a character being angry in three different ways. What did you change each time to make it different?

How has Katie Brown been drawn to make her look young? What do you think she will look like when she's older? Draw her as a 10-year-old girl. Draw her as an 89-year-old woman.

It's fun to draw cartoon characters with big heads and little bodies, but this can cause problems, like when Jamie has to scratch his head on p146. What other things would be hard to do if you had a huge head and little body and arms in real life? List them. Then list ways you could overcome the problems.

#### **The Marx Brothers**

A lot of Jamie Brown's story is based around the Marx Brothers. Who are the Marx Brothers? Do some research and find out what they did.

List the Marx Brothers movies.

The Marx Brothers were very poor when they grew up, but they always found ways to have fun and improve themselves. They taught themselves the piano, card tricks, and ways to be funny.

List something really cool you would like to be able to do. Why do you want to do it? What are the steps you would have to take to achieve it? What would be obstacles you would have to overcome? Would you need to do training or study?

Harpo is the author's favourite Marx Brother. Watch the mirror scene (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j5IU52aWTJo>)

This is from 1933!!! Do you think it's funny? Why? What do you like about it?

Do you think it isn't funny? Why?

Are there any actors today who you think might be able to do a scene like this one? Who are they?

Try and do something like this with a friend. It's really hard!

### **House Design**

The Browns move into a mansion when they move to Snootyville. Imagine if you could have any house at all in the world. What would be in it? List all the awesome things your dream house would have.

Now design it! Draw your house! You can draw the outside of it, or you can look at the internet to see how to draw a house plan and then do one of those for your dream house.

### **Card Tricks**

Try and learn one of the card tricks Jamie explains. It may take some time and practice, but you will get there (Note: The card in the pocket trick is much harder, and I recommend not doing it to your Principal until you have it mastered).

Do you know any card tricks? If you do, teach your card trick to some of the other kids in your class.

### **Circus Skills**

Jamie learns some circus skills off Mr Kravoski. One of them is juggling. Learn to juggle two balls. If you can do that, move on to three balls! You may have to read a book, watch some videos, or ask someone who can juggle for help to learn the techniques.

Mr Kravoski liked all his jobs in the circus except for training the monkeys. If you could train monkeys, what tricks would you teach them?

Write a story about training monkeys in a circus.

Make a poster advertising the circus you would like to work in.

### **Question Time**

On p133 and 134 Jamie gives answers to questions. What could the questions have been? Make them up!

Does the Sulphur-crested Armadillo really exist? Are there any sulphur-crested animals (or birds?)?

Armadillos are actually really cool. Find out some facts about them! Hold your very own Academic Challenge! Someone will need to be the Quizmaster, there will need to be contestants, and someone will have to write all the questions.