

Parent Resources

A Match for a Mermaid

by Eleanor Cullen and David Roberts



10 stories to make a difference

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are delighted that you are interested in sharing ***A Match for a Mermaid*** with your child. ***A Match for a Mermaid*** is part of our **10 Stories to Make a Difference** collection, which has ten inspiring stories for young readers that celebrate difference and individuality.

Inside these pages you'll find activities inspired by ***A Match for a Mermaid***, for your child to do at home, together with information to help you support your child's wellbeing and learning.

A strong suggestion is to read the book aloud once for the story, then again to focus on particular aspects, passages or themes. The following activities are grouped by desired outcome and are for a range of abilities and additional needs of a child. Some extension activities are included, but all the materials can be adapted beyond the target audience according to the interest and abilities of your child.

The following activities would be suitable for the allocated age group:

- Reading independently or as group **5+ years**
- Exploring through the creative learning activities in this pack **5 - 9 years /
KS1 and LKS2**

All the books in our **10 Stories to Make a Difference** collection are beautifully illustrated and perfect for children aged 5 and up. They reflect the need for greater inclusivity and more diversity in children's books with the stories including characters of colour, LGBTQ+ and disabled characters.

The **10 Stories to Make a Difference** collection is available to buy from www.pop-up.org.uk/shop. Teacher and Parent/Carer Resource packs are available to download from www.pop-up.org.uk/shop. This Resource pack is written by Carey Fluker Hunt and published by Pop Up Projects CIC.

Artwork © David Roberts.

These resources were made available with the generous help of Arts Council England.



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

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About this resource pack

There are seven sections:

1. About this resource pack
2. About this book (includes themes and insights from the writer and illustrator): Page 4
3. Arty Starter: expressing yourself: Page 5
4. Thinking and talking: expressing yourself and being a good friend: Page 7
5. Taking it further: your underwater kingdom: Page 8
6. Word Search: Page 9
7. Glossary: Page 10

This pack will help your child talk about:

- their own and other people's feelings
- friendship
- valuing themselves and others
- talking about differences

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About this book

In this fun story about finding your own path, a mermaid princess called Malu rejects a crowd of suitors and marries her best friend Brooke, instead.

Malu's gradual discovery of herself is described in rhyming verse and her journey is brought to life in a joyful celebration of diversity where everyone feels comfortable to be exactly who they are.

"Loving someone is brave, especially when you love someone the world doesn't expect you to love," observed author Eleanor Cullen, who hopes her story will help everyone "appreciate the beauty of being different" and would have welcomed stories about choosing what kind of family to create when she was growing up.

About this book's themes

This humorous 'fairytale with a twist' address important themes, including

- Knowing and expressing your true self
- Individuality
- Making decisions that are right for you
- Following your heart
- Valuing and celebrating differences
- Looking after each other

About the author and illustrator



As one of the winners of Pop Up's tenth birthday writing competition, **Eleanor Cullen** was excited to see her underwater world being brought to life on every page. "David made it a hundred times more inclusive and accepting of so many more gender identities," she said, and described the final book as "an even bigger and greater celebration of humanity than I could ever have imagined."

From an interview with CILIP

www.cilip.org.uk/blogpost/1637344/372489/
Introducing-A-Match-for-a-Mermaid-by-Eleanor-



David Roberts studied fashion design before becoming a children's book illustrator, and has illustrated over seventy titles, including the New York Times #1 bestseller *Ada Twist, Scientist* and *The Bolds* with Julian Clary.

3

Arty starter: expressing yourself

Look at this picture and talk about what you can see. These mermen seem to have plenty to chat about! What could they be saying? Can you come up with some ideas?

Ask your child to describe these characters, then look at the other mermen in this book. Can you spot any that look the same? Talk about what these mermen are wearing.

- Which outfits and hairstyles do you and your child like best? Why?
- Do you agree, or are your choices different? Why?

While your child is colouring the downloadable sheet, have fun together inventing names for each merman and dreaming up more underwater adventures.

Can your child draw a merman to join the others in this book? Talk about what this new merman is going to look like. How will he express his individuality?





4

Thinking and talking: expressing yourself and being a good friend

Look at the mermen's clothes, hairstyles and accessories, and ask:

- Why do the mermen choose to wear so many different outfits?
- How do these outfits make them feel?

There are no 'rights answers' to these questions, or encourage your child to come up with lots of possibilities. This will help them develop imaginative skills and give them confidence to explore ideas in other situations.

Knowing who they are and being able to express themselves helps children develop wellbeing and confidence. Choosing clothes and hairstyles is one way of expressing and celebrating individuality, but there are many more.

Encourage your child to talk about ways they express themselves.

- What do they enjoy wearing? What activities do they like?
- Where do they feel especially happy, comfortable or confident?
- What else makes them feel this way?

Friends help us feel good about ourselves, and we help them feel good, too.

It isn't just Malu and Brooke who are good friends in this story - the mermen are, too. Can your child find mermen who are caring for each other and looking after their friends?

Who does your child care about, and how do they show their friendship?

Talk about what being a *good friend* means, and how good friends behave.

5

Taking it further: your underwater kingdom

Ask your child to imagine they're ruling an imaginary country with their best friend. How will they make it a happy place for everyone?

Talk about making good choices, looking after each other and valuing people's differences.

While your child is thinking about talking encourage them to draw their ideas or sketch a map.

Take this further by suggesting your child

- Invents laws to help everyone live happily
- Draws pictures of this place
- Tells a story inspired by this activity



Malu and Brooke, p. 24

6 Word Search

Help your child look for the following words and ideas from the story.

They're all about

- being a good friend
- valuing and expressing individuality
- making good choices

Support your child by

- discussing what each word means, and how these ideas are important in this book.

L	T	H	N	U	S	H	A	R	E	A	O	H	E
L	R	L	R	L	T	O	L	G	E	F	F	A	I
U	O	R	T	I	F	V	R	H	T	I	E	L	I
P	N	R	H	T	A	O	L	N	E	C	A	N	T
N	E	U	R	E	H	V	H	T	T	T	R	A	T
T	T	O	V	V	D	W	E	E	I	W	U	T	U
O	U	N	T	T	I	F	L	S	R	L	L	N	T
N	A	O	T	H	E	S	P	T	U	O	E	T	E
H	E	H	W	R	H	O	F	C	O	V	F	T	N
I	R	E	R	O	S	F	R	V	V	E	T	U	I
R	N	S	U	N	I	S	I	G	A	O	T	V	F
R	D	H	R	E	W	E	E	I	F	H	V	O	O
W	O	E	N	A	V	E	N	F	O	C	D	O	O
N	A	L	O	N	E	R	D	T	H	W	S	E	R

Favourite *Friend* *Honour* *Throne*

Share *Alone* *Rule* *Wish*

Help *Love* *Gift* *Can't*

7 Glossary

Choice: the act of picking or choosing; selection.

Diversity: different kinds or sorts; a variety.

Individuality: the qualities and characteristics of a person that make them different from all others.

Personality: all of the qualities of a person that make that person different from others.

Self-discovery: the act or process of coming to know or understand oneself, as regarding one's true needs and wants, one's identity, or one's vocation.

10 stories to make a difference

A Match for a Mermaid is part of a collection of ten inspiring stories for young readers that celebrate difference and individuality.

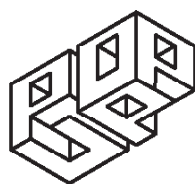
All the books in our **10 Stories to Make a Difference** collection are beautifully illustrated and perfect for children, aged 5 and up.



Each of the books is an exciting collaboration between well-known and emerging writers and illustrators, giving a platform to bold new voices.

We believe that all children should be able to find themselves, and discover others, through the stories they read. We therefore hope that these amazing stories will entertain and inspire the young readers in your lives.

Enjoy and feel free to get in touch with us at info@pop-up.org.uk.
We always love to hear from our readers!



Pop Up Projects

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