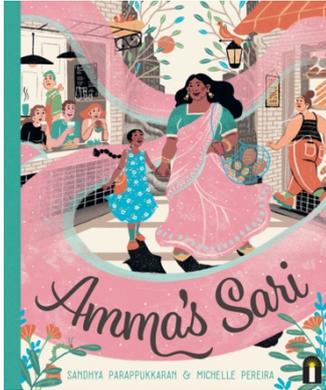


Teacher's Notes



Amma's Sari

Written by Sandhya Parappukkaran

Illustrated by Michelle Pereira

Teacher's Notes by Bec Kavanagh

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

RECOMMENDED FOR

Primary aged readers (ages 3+, grades 2+)

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- Learning areas: English
- General capabilities:
 - Examining literature (ACELT1591)
 - Interpreting, analysing, evaluating (ACELY1670)
 - Responding to literature (ACELT1596)
 - Examining literature (ACELT1599)

THEMES

- Identity
- Fitting in
- Family
- Accepting difference
- Celebrating cultural heritage

SYNOPSIS

Shreya loves Amma *and* her sari - when they're at home. But when they're out in public, Shreya feels small and embarrassed by how much they stand out. Amma's sari makes everyone stare, and Shreya wishes for the freedom of fitting in.

But one day at the shops, Shreya goes to play on her own while Amma shops. At first she's happy with the freedom of fitting in, but soon she starts to feel lost and alone. Shreya wishes for the comfort of being able to see Amma's colourful sari nearby.

Amma's Sari is a gentle, evocative story about fitting in and celebrating differences.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sandhya Parappukkaran left her job as a food technologist so she could put her feet up and read. Then she rediscovered her passion for children's books. Her stories are inspired by her multicultural experience and include scrumptious food from her Kerala Indian heritage. Sandhya resides in Brisbane, Australia, with her family.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Michelle Pereira is an illustrator who spent her childhood in Nairobi, Kenya, and now lives in Melbourne, Australia. She graduated from Monash University with a Bachelor of Communication Design and became a professional illustrator after a somewhat extended, but enjoyable, stint of bar work. She has worked with a range of clients such as Penguin UK, Netflix, *The New York Times* and *Marie Claire*. She uses bright colours and textural elements to create playful illustrations.

THEMES

Amma's Sari invites readers to explore themes of difference, family, identity, and culture from a range of perspectives. Shreya must straddle two worlds, and her story will help to build empathy for others who share this experience. Her experiences of feeling different and embarrassed by the things that make her unique will be familiar to many readers and are a good entry point for discussions about why some people are made to feel more ashamed by their differences than others, and how we can ensure that we celebrate difference and support our friends.

WRITING STYLE

Sandhya Parappukkaran uses simple, direct language to draw readers into the story. Shreya is the bridge between two worlds, inviting the reader into her life, and the way the writing captures her feelings encourages readers to build empathy.

The writer uses powerful adjectives to increase the reader's understanding of the characters, for example – *in the mornings*, *Amma's sari bristles with adventure*. This is a wonderful opportunity to invite readers to think about how we can use adjectives to make a story more specific and exciting.

COMPREHENSION

- What are some of the things that happen when Shreya wakes up in the morning?
- Why do people arch their eyebrows when Amma and Shreya walk past them? What makes Amma stand out?
- How does Shreya feel about being different?
- How does Amma describe her sari in the book? Why is it special to her?
- How does Shreya feel about Amma's sari when they're at home? How does she feel about it when they're out? Why does she feel differently in each place?



- How do the illustrations take the colours and shapes of the sari to show its different memories and meanings?
- What does Amma say about the importance of culture? How does your culture nourish you? Do you have any special foods, clothes or objects that connect you to your culture?
- What happens that changes the way Shreya feels about Amma's sari?
- How would you describe Shreya's feelings at the end of the book? Have they changed from the beginning of the story?

WRITING EXERCISE

The book opens with the sounds of Shreya's morning – the 'flutter' of Amma's sari pallu, the 'rustle' of her sari pleats. What other sound words can you find in the book? What other senses can we use in our writing?

Make a list of words that describe the sounds in your home and use these to write about waking up at your house.

ILLUSTRATION STYLE

Michelle Pereira makes use of texture, shape, and colour to bring Shreya and Amma to life in this story. Amma's sari is given a life of its own, weaving across the page, and becoming a place where memories and dreams can unfold. The bright colours of the sari stand out against the more subdued colours of the outside world, where Shreya feels embarrassed of their difference. Discuss the way that pictures can be used to show things that are real as well as things that are remembered or imagined – how does the sari allow this illustrator to bring all three together?

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

- An **adjective** is a describing word. Adjectives tell us something about a person, place or thing. Make a list of the adjectives in the book. How do they help you to understand the characters in the story better? Make a list of adjectives to describe the people in your family. Make a list of adjectives to describe yourself.
- Stories often have a problem that needs to be solved or overcome. What is the problem in *Amma's Sari*? How does Shreya overcome it? Think of a problem you've encountered recently and write a short story about how you overcame it (or how you wish you'd overcome it!)
- The illustrations in the book show how Amma's sari stands out – the colours are so bright, and the shape stretches out and drapes across the pages. Think about something that makes you different. How would you draw it? Draw a picture of yourself outside and use colour and shape to draw attention to the thing that makes you different.
- When Shreya says 'I feel as calm as a fish in water' she is using a simile to show her feelings more clearly. A simile is a way of describing something by comparison using the words 'like' or 'as'. Can you come up with a simile to describe the following feelings?
 - Scared



- Happy
- Anxious
- Excited

RELATED READING

- 'The Boy Who Tried to Shrink His Name' by Sandhya Parappukaran and Michelle Pereira
- 'My Two Blankets' by Irena Kobald and Freya Blackwood
- 'The Patchwork Bike' by Maxine Beneba Clarke

