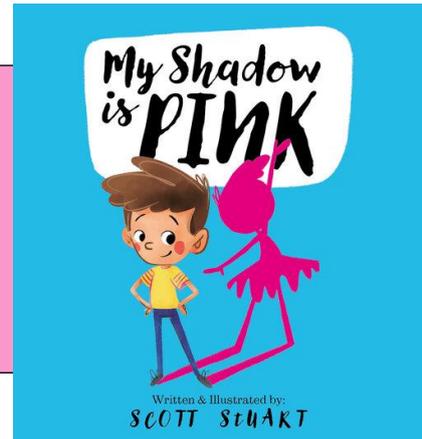


My Shadow is Pink

Written and Illustrated by Scott Stuart
Recommended for Lower Primary



Synopsis:

My Shadow is Pink is an empowering and uplifting book about daring to be different and having the courage to be true to yourself. It follows a young boy born with a pink shadow who, more than anything else, loves to wear dresses and dance! But there's a problem: everyone thinks that boys are supposed to have blue shadows, just like all of the members of his family tree. From his family to the kids at school, the young boy is faced with disapproval and confusion about his pink shadow and his love of things 'not for boys'. After questioning who he is and what he loves, and deciding to throw it all away, a loving gesture from Dad saves the day. In the end, the young boy learns that every shadow is unique and different, and that we have to embrace our differences and be proud of ourselves, just as we are.

Creator Biography:

Scott Stuart- Author and Illustrator

Scott Stuart is a Melbourne-based illustrator/author and the father of a six-year-old boy who loves all things Queen Elsa and princesses. He is the best-selling author of *My Shadow is Pink*, *Alone: A Story of Friendship in the Darkness of Space* and *A Pickle in the Post*. He's been in love with the art of storytelling his entire life, but his biggest passion in writing is creating stories that empower young kids.

Themes:

- Individuality
- Acceptance
- Identity
- Belonging
- Courage to be you
- Unconditional Love

Extension Activities and Ideas for Classroom Discussion

Comprehension/Discussion points

Before opening 'My Shadow is Pink, look at the title and cover design. Ask the students:

- What do you think the title of the book might be?
- What do you think this story is about?
- What makes you think that?
- Do you think it will be a funny story or a sad story? Why?

As you read the story, draw the students' attention to the young boy's facial expressions and body language across the different illustrations. Ask the students 'How is the boy feeling? Why do they think that?'

Throughout the reading, draw the students' attention to the way the men are depicted. Ask the students:

- What do the men in this picture look like? What can you see?
- Are the men similar to the boy? Different?
- Why do you think the illustrator depicted the men that way?

Towards the end of the story, Dad dresses up in a dress. Ask the students how they think this might help the main character.

After reading the book, ask the students to compare how the main character felt at the beginning of the story and how the character felt at the end. Why did this change take place? Compare this with how Dad felt at the beginning and at the end. How did Dad change? Why?

Ask the students why they think the author wrote the book. Look at the dedication at the beginning of the book. Does this make them think differently? How?

The main character experiences feelings of confusion, anxiety and rejection. How do the actions of his family and the students at school contribute to this? Ask the students to question how they would respond in the same situation. What would they think/do if they saw a boy come to school wearing a dress? What about if it was a girl in a Spiderman or Hulk suit? Discuss how our reactions (words and actions) impact on others. What would be a good way to respond in these situations?

Activities:

- 1) 'My Shadow is Pink' is filled with rhyming words. Examine the book and find all of the rhyming words. Have the words written on cards and ask the students to find the matching rhymes. Set a time limit and have the students think of as many words as they can that rhyme with the rhyming words in the story.
- 2) Draw the students' attention to the line 'My shadow loves ponies and books and pink toys, princesses, fairies, and things "not for boys".' Get the class to work in small groups to create lists of activities and 'things' that are 'not for boys'. Have the groups work to create lists of activities/jobs/things that are 'not for girls'. As a class, go through and discuss each item. Question why they think it's not suitable for that gender. Explore examples of how these lists are incorrect, and discuss how gender should not play a part.
- 3) 'My Shadow is Pink' is told from the perspective of the young boy, but Dad is a central character throughout. After looking at Dad's arc in the story, have the students write a diary entry from Dad's perspective focusing on the day his son started school and how he felt as a father.
- 4) Ask the students to write an interview with the young boy's shadow. What are its favourite things (food, colour, sport, toys)? What makes it sad? How did it feel on the first day of school? What is it afraid of?
- 5) 'My Shadow is Pink' is written in rhyming verse. Have the students write a poem about their own shadow, what they like and what makes them unique.
- 6) We all have similarities and differences. Have the students describe qualities and characteristics that make them similar or different to others (eg hair colour, eye colour, height, skin colour, interests, hobbies, likes/dislikes). Play a game where the students have to get into groups based on visible similarities (hair colour, eye colour, colour of socks, height, favourite sport). Do the same for differences. Discuss how it doesn't matter about our similarities and differences- what's important is respect, compassion, kindness and understanding.
- 7) Ask students to think of ways we can be kind and demonstrate respect to others, even those who seem different to us. Have students create posters around kindness, respect and courage to be yourself: 'How to be kind'. 'How to be respectful'. 'How to help someone belong'. 'How to be you'.
- 8) Discuss the illustrations with the students: What do you like about these illustrations? What do you dislike? What do you notice especially about them? Highlight how the colours change throughout the story (more muted blues when Dad is in the picture and the main character feels ashamed/uncomfortable, bright and colourful when the main character is talking about what his shadow loves). Ask why the illustrator did this. Explore how colour is used to explore/represent different emotions. Have the students create their own artworks using 'colour' as a theme to depict an emotion.

9) Have students design a front cover for the book that depicts their own 'shadow', include representations of what they like/enjoy in the artwork.

10) We all have a self that we show the world, and an inner-self who is sometimes a bit more hidden. Have the students create 2 self-portraits- one that reflects who they see in the mirror (who they show to the world), and one that reflects who they are on the inside. Are they different? If so, how? Why?

11) In small groups, have the students act out the scene where the boy goes to school dressed in a dress and gets rejected by the other students. Discuss what the other students could have done/said to be more welcoming. Redo the scene with the students responding in kind, welcoming and accepting ways.

12) The main character experiences lots of different emotions throughout the story, and we see his facial expression and body language change throughout. Discuss this with the students and create emotion cards in response. Using the emotion cards, play a game where the students have to move/stand in a way that reflects different emotion cards that are being shown (like Simon-Says).

13) We often express ourselves through the way we dress. Have a day where the students can come dressed as their 'inner selves'- expressing themselves through their choices of clothing/costumes/headwear.