

PAULY & FLUFF'S DAY AT THE BEACH

Written by Sara Madden, Co-Written by Calie Helsten

Illustrated by Hayley Helsten

READER ACTIVITY GUIDE

Friendship, difference, and questioning the walls between us

Read together. Wonder together. Talk about what matters.

FOR GROWN-UPS - Why This Story?

Pauly is a unicorn.

Fluff is a dragon.

They're best friends—which shouldn't be particularly complicated.

Except their communities have spent a hundred years believing unicorns and dragons should remain apart because of an old argument involving an ice cream parlor and a marshmallow.

There's even a graham-cracker wall separating them.

Pauly and Fluff inherit the rule.

But they don't inherit the reason for believing it.

Through their friendship, the children begin questioning a division that the adults around them have simply learned to accept—and eventually help bring down the wall itself.

Beneath all the dragons, unicorns, mermaids, sweets, and silliness, *Pauly & Fluff's Day at the Beach* asks children a significant question: *Just because something has always been this way, does it have to stay this way?*

Talk About It Together

Before reading

- Can two very different people be best friends?
- What makes someone a good friend?
- What does a wall do?
- Can there be invisible walls between people, too?

After reading

- Why are the unicorns and dragons separated?
- Do Pauly and Fluff think the old argument makes sense?
- What do they discover they have in common?
- Why do you think the wall stayed up for so long?
- What happens when they begin sharing?
- Have you ever been told you couldn't play with someone?
- What helps people who are different become friends?

A NOTE FOR GROWN-UPS

Children inherit more than traditions.

They can also inherit assumptions about who belongs together, who doesn't, and what kinds of differences are supposed to matter.

Pauly and Fluff don't begin by delivering an argument against prejudice.

They do something much more childlike: *They become friends anyway.*

The story gives grown-ups an opening to talk about unfair divisions without requiring children to begin with complex terminology.

IN THE CLASSROOM

Ask students to brainstorm things that help people connect despite differences.

Write their answers on paper “bricks”—but instead of building a wall, arrange those bricks into a *bridge*.

BUILD A BRIDGE, NOT A WALL

Help Pauly & Fluff Finish The Bridge!

Each bridge plank needs something that helps people connect.

Examples:

LISTEN

SHARE

ASK QUESTIONS

INVITE

LEARN

PLAY

BE FAIR

APOLOGIZE

What would YOU add?

Sometimes differences are interesting!

Something different about one of my friends that I like or find interesting:

Something we have in common:

Friendship doesn't require us to be the same.

THE 100-YEAR-OLD RULE

OH NO.

The Kingdom of Scrumptious has discovered another very old rule:

“Dragons may eat cupcakes only on Tuesdays, and unicorns may eat cupcakes only while standing on one hoof.”

Nobody remembers why.

What should Pauly and Fluff ask?

- ☐ Who made this rule?
- ☐ Why was it made?
- ☐ Is the reason still true?
- ☐ Is it fair?
- ☐ Does it hurt or exclude anyone?
- ☐ What might happen if we changed it?

Now:

Invent a Ridiculous Old Rule (or two)

Why might someone question it?

NOW THINK ABOUT RULES IN REAL LIFE

Rules can help keep people safe and make things fair.

But if a rule seems unfair, what can you do?

- ☐ Ask why
- ☐ Talk to a trusted grown-up
- ☐ Listen to people affected by it
- ☐ Learn more
- ☐ Suggest something fairer

More Suggestions/Fair Rules:

-
-
-
-
-

You can respect people and still ask why.