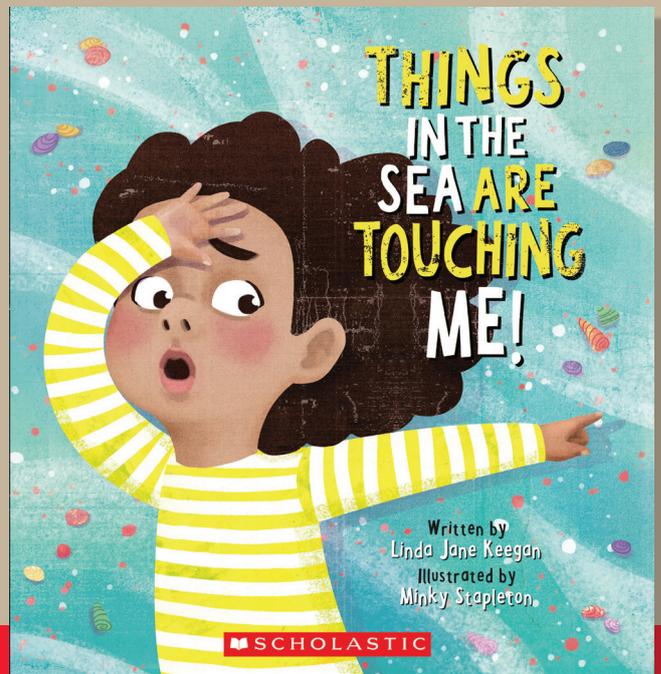


Things in the sea are touching me!

By Linda Jane Keegan
Illustrated by Minky Stapleton



- Reading • Writing •
- Social Studies • Art •

Synopsis

Things in the sea are touching me! is a story about two mothers and their daughter at the beach. They find their favourite spot and go for a swim. The young girl suddenly feels something graze her feet and cries out, “Look in the water, Ma! Golly, oh gee! Some *thing* in the sea is touching me!” Her Ma reassures her it is just a small crab and suggests they watch it and see where it goes. When the girl wades up to her belly she finds herself wading through jelly and yells out her catch-cry again. Ma tells her they are just salps and won’t bother her at all. While diving under water she feels something bumping her thigh. Again she yells out something is touching her. Her Ma tells her it is only a seed pod from mangroves close by. When swimming out deeper she feels something slide over her arm and calls out to her mother again. Her Ma shows her it is just kelp and from then on she ignores things touching her elbow or her shin. Then Ma rushes out of the water, screeching out that something is touching *her*. The little girl laughs and says, “Don’t worry, Ma ... that thing is just Mum!”

About the Author

Linda Jane Keegan loves to spend time outdoors. She has hiked long distances, tries to identify everything she finds, and takes ocean dips in the winter. Her background is in ecology and outdoor education. (Legend has it that she can build fires underwater!) Linda Jane was born in Singapore and grew up in Auckland, New Zealand, where she currently lives with her partner and child.

About the Illustrator

Minky Stapleton is a multi-faceted illustrator with a range of styles. Originally from South Africa, she now resides with her husband and two sons in Auckland, NZ, where she balances a number of illustration projects with taking classes for kids on how to design scary monsters. Minky’s first book with Scholastic NZ is the highly acclaimed *Kia Ora, You Can Be a Kiwi Too*, the perfect match for a book about immigrants to New Zealand.

Writing and Illustration Style

Things in the sea are touching me! is a charming and reassuring rhyming picture book about a little girl overcoming her fears while swimming. It is a diverse and inclusive picture book of a family with two mothers, covering themes such as diversity, ocean ecosystems, holidays, and fear of the unknown. The rhyming sequence is a-a, a-b-c-b. The story is set on a beach and the characters are mostly in the water. The author has repeated a catchphrase throughout the book: “Look in the water, Ma! Golly, oh gee! Some thing in the sea is touching me!” The text is in the first-person past tense. The author has used a range of short and long sentences, with 4-5 words per line. *Things in the sea are touching me!* has been written for ages 3–7. Young children can easily follow the plot, join in with the repetitive catchphrase and laugh at the twist at the end of the story. Also available in Te Reo Māori.

The pictures are created in Adobe Photoshop in bright summery colours, with a watercolour effect. The text is printed in black on white space, or white on black space, sometimes taking up a whole page.

Shared Learning and Discussion Points

ASK YOUR STUDENTS:

- Look at the cover. When and where is this story set? Can you tell? Who or what do you think this story is about? Why do you think that?
- Look at the title page. What do you think the green things on the sides represent? How does that relate to the title? (p1)
- There are many different types of family units – this story has two mothers and one child. Discuss with the class other types of family units. What are ‘togs’? What other names might they be called? (pp.2-3)
- How can we tell this story is set in New Zealand? What are these shoes called in other countries? What else do you take to the beach? Why is the sunblock so important? (pp.4-5)
- Look at the rhyming words on these pages. Are they spelt the same? What other words rhyme with these words? (pp.6-7)
- Why do you think the designer has capitalised these words? What do you think is touching her? (pp.8-9)
- Were you right? What have you learnt about crabs on this page? (pp.10-11)
- What type of jelly could be in the sea? What other words can you think of for ‘belly’? (pp.12-13)
- Notice how the author uses different words each time to describe *how* the girl shouts out. Make a note of the other words used throughout the book. How are these words different, and the same? (pp.14-15)
- Have you ever seen or felt ‘salps’ in the sea? How would you describe them, using the descriptions in the story and from the pictures? (pp.16-17)
- What could have touched her out deeper in the sea? What clues are there in the pictures? (pp.18-19)
- What were the seeds and how do they become mangrove plants? Have you ever seen any in the sea? Do you know why they are good for the marine environment? (pp.20-21)
- How would you describe the expressions on the girl’s face? Why do you think she is feeling that? (pp.22-23)
- Can you find a word here that describes a type of seaweed? How many things did the girl encounter on her swim? How did she feel by page 25? (pp.24-25)
- Who is calling out this time? What is she frightened of? Brainstorm some things that haven’t been mentioned yet that might have touched her. (pp.26-27)
- Who played a trick on Ma? How did the girl feel about this trick? How did Ma feel about it? How can you tell? (pp.28-29)

Activities

ACTIVITY 1: SEA MURAL

Discuss with your students all the things you might see or touch in the sea. On a large sheet of paper, paint a water background. Students then each pick one thing that might be in the sea and illustrate this on a separate piece of paper/card, which they can cut out and stick on the water mural. Next to each underwater animal or plant, students stick a brief paragraph about their marine creature or plant describing its behaviour, what it eats, and if it has a job to do in the sea.



teacher toolkit

 SCHOLASTIC

ACTIVITY 2: FEEL THE FEAR THINK-PAIR-SHARE

Discuss with your class how people often have fears but can learn to overcome them. Ask the students how the girl overcame her fear of things touching her in the water. Students then THINK about a fear they might have or someone they know might have. Then, in PAIRS, students share what they or someone they know fears, and together brainstorm ways to overcome it. Lastly, students SHARE what you can do to overcome fears.

ACTIVITY 3: CHARACTER TRAIT

Ask your students to draw a picture of one of the characters in the story and place the person in the middle of their page and draw a line (or fold) right through the middle. On the left side label 'Outside' and on the right-side label 'Inside'. In the Outside column students write down 'physical traits' – what they can see about the character. For example, the colour of hair, height, colour of eyes, what they are wearing, facial expression and body language. On the right side write down 'personality traits' drawing from what their character says, does, thinks and feels that gives you insight into their personality.

<p>OUTSIDE</p> <p>Physical traits</p> <p>What we see</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• hair• eyes• Short/tall• Clothes:• Expression on face:• Body language:	<p>INSIDE</p> <p>Personality Traits</p> <p>What she says:</p> <p>What she thinks:</p> <p>What she does:</p>
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Written by Maria Gill