

Everyone Wants an Octopus Book!

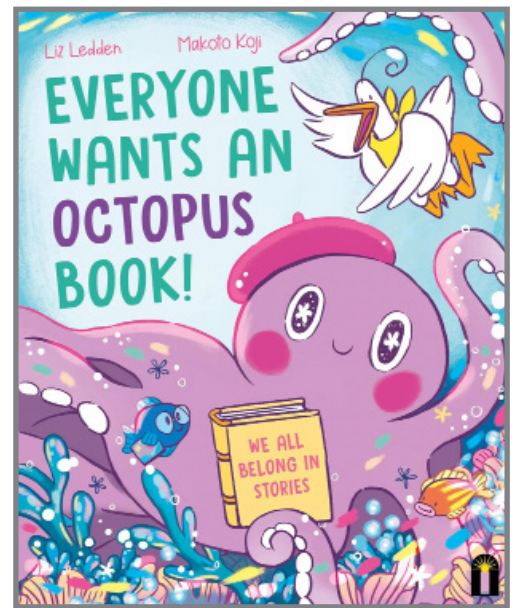
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RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower Primary



SYNOPSIS

Inky wants to find a book with a character that looks like them. They scour every bookshelf with their best friend, Quack, but there isn't a single book with an octopus in it. There are plenty of books about ducks, dogs, bears, cats, and more ducks, but none about an octopus.

Inky feels sad that there aren't any stories about octopuses and wonders if that's because no-one wants to read about them. Quack disagrees. Together, they think of all the reasons why Inky would be an amazing main character—Inky has eight arms, three hearts, the ability to camouflage and their ink. That's heaps to write about!

So Inky and Quack write their own book, and of course everyone wants a copy.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Liz Ledden is a Sydney-based children's book author and podcaster. She has published two picture books, *Walking Your Human* and *Tulip and Brutus*. Liz also co-hosts kids' book podcast *One More Page* with her friends, authors and book lovers Kate Simpson and Nat Amooore. Together, the *One More Page* team contributed a kids' play to the CBCA anthology *Old Worlds, New Worlds, Other Worlds*. Liz lives and writes on Gadigal land (Sydney), and loves travel, cafes, libraries, books and dogs! You can find Liz on Instagram [@liz_ledden](https://www.instagram.com/liz_ledden) or at www.lizledden.com.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Makoto Koji is a Japanese-Australian illustrator and animator. She was born in Hiroshima in the Year of the Rabbit and was raised in the wilderness of rural Queensland. Her work draws from her unique upbringing, a blend of Eastern and Western sensibilities. She lives in Adelaide in South Australia.

THEMES

- Representation
- Friendship
- Self-confidence
- Individuality
- Stories

STUDY NOTES

THEMES

Representation

- How does Inky feel when they can't find any stories about them? What do they think is the reason for this?
 - One reason it's important to see ourselves in stories is to know that our lives are important to others. What are some of the other reasons? Use this book to start discussions about some of the things we take for granted in stories, and how we might make sure that everyone knows how much their stories matter.

Friendship

- Sometimes being a good friend means being able to see when our friend needs a confidence boost, like when Quack suggests that Inky would make an amazing book character. Discuss some of the qualities that make a good friend.

WRITING STYLE

- *Everyone Wants an Octopus Book!* is a simple story about representation and friendship. The book is written in dialogue, as a conversation between Inky and Quack. Why do you think this is?
 - Discuss the difference between telling a story as a summary versus using dialogue. How might this story have read if it wasn't written as a conversation? By writing it as a conversation, the author also captures the friendship between these two characters, because we see the way they interact with each other.
- Practise writing your own dialogue by thinking of something fun you've done recently with a friend. Can you tell the story entirely in dialogue?

COMPREHENSION

- Who are the two characters in the book? Why do you think the illustrator has chosen to make them a duck and an octopus?
- What is Inky looking for?
- How does Quack behave like a good friend to Inky?
- Why does Inky think there are no books about octopuses?
- What are some of the reasons that Quack thinks Inky would be a great character for a story?
- How do you think Inky feels at the beginning of the story? What changes?
- What are three cool facts you learn about octopuses in the book?
- Why do kids need to see more octopuses in books?
- Who does Inky want to have with them in their book? Why?

ILLUSTRATION STYLE

- Writers have a saying—show, don't tell—which means leave space for a reader to come up with some of the story in their imagination. In picture books, the illustrations help us by giving our imaginations a bit of a boost. When Inky says to Quack that eight arms come in handy, the illustrations show some of the things they might come in handy for. What else could eight arms be useful for?
 - What other examples of showing can you find in the book?

ACTIVITIES

- Inky and Quack make a list of all the kinds of characters they'd like to read more books about—even sea snails! What are some of the characters you see in the books you read? What kinds of characters would you like to see more of?
 - Create your own character—give them a name and draw a picture of them. What kind of book would they be in?
- What do you think Inky and Quack's book is about? Write a story for them—what problem will they solve together? Draw a picture of where your Inky and Quack story takes place.
- Quack tells Inky that they would make an amazing book character, and this makes Inky think of all the incredible qualities that they have. Sometimes it can be nice to have a confidence boost from a friend. Write a list for your best friend with three reasons why they'd make an excellent character in a book. If you were going to write a book about them, what would it be called?

- Look closely at the last page of the book—describe all the characters who are reading Inky and Quack’s book. Imagine you’re one of these characters who has just read the book. Write a short review of the book explaining what you liked (or didn’t like) about it, and why someone else should read it.

AUTHOR OF NOTES
BEC KAVANAGH