The Makeover Machine

By Amani Uduman
Illustrated by Margarita Yeromina
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Original illustrations by Margarita Yeromina

The Makeover Machine
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“Now for breaking news! A Makeover Machine has been created that changes a user’s appearance to be perfect, changing their body and voice,” said the newsreader.

Marina swallowed another mouthful of food. *Who’d believe in such nonsense?* she thought.
Marina swam through the front door.
The ocean was buzzing with excitement.
Everyone was talking about the Makeover Machine.

“It’s revolutionary,” said Octopus.
“It’s the way of the future,” said Swordfish.
“I have to have one!” said Sea Snake.
Soon, the Makeover Machines were shipped over.
The ocean creatures scrambled over and argued with each other to get the newest product on the market.
The ship’s captain shouted over the noise, “Only one machine per family.”
Marina’s family bought a Makeover Machine.
Her mother, father, and sister all took turns at using the device.
Buzz! Ziiip! Wooom!
Marina gasped.
All her family members had turned into a new, orange species and all of them had a different accent.
The ocean was flooded with animals that all looked identical.

All except for Marina.

“How does it feel to be different?” demanded an orange fish.

“Would you like to borrow my machine?” asked another orange fish.

“Why didn’t you use the Makeover Machine?” questioned a third orange fish.

Marina shrugged. “I don’t want to change myself. I’m happy the way I am.”
It was impossible to tell one ocean creature from another.
The animals started wearing identity cards to help tell them apart.
And, before long, fraudsters used the identity cards for theft.
Marina’s vibrant community had lost its spark.
It was as if the ocean was about to dry up.
Marina went to the nearest TV station. Not even the security guards had the energy to question her.

Marina looked directly at the camera before choosing her words carefully. “Makeover Machine creators, please create another device to turn everyone back to how they were before. I’m sure it will be a great success.”
Marina went home and realised that her pleas had been noticed.

“Now for breaking news. The creators of the Makeover Machine have developed a device to reverse its effects,” said the newsreader.

Soon, the Reversible Makeover Machines were shipped over.

The ocean creatures scrambled and argued with each other to get the newest product on the market.

The ship’s captain shouted over the noise, “Only one machine per family.”
Marina’s family also bought a Reversible Machine.
One by one, each family member took turns using the device.

*Buzz! Piiiiz! Beep!*
Marina cried out in horror.

“What’s wrong? Don’t we look like ourselves?” asked her sister.
Marina spotted a dial on the side of the Reversible Makeover Machine and swam over to it.

“Oh!” she exclaimed. “It’s on the wrong setting. Let me turn it to ‘fish’.”

Her family tried the machine again.
They were themselves!

“Thank you, Marina,” her father said happily. “I missed being myself. I think we’re all better off being who we are, instead of trying to be something we’re not.”

“I’m glad you see it my way, Dad,” Marina said, smiling.
You can use these questions to talk about this book with your family, friends and teachers.

What did you learn from this book?

Describe this book in one word. Funny? Scary? Colourful? Interesting?

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