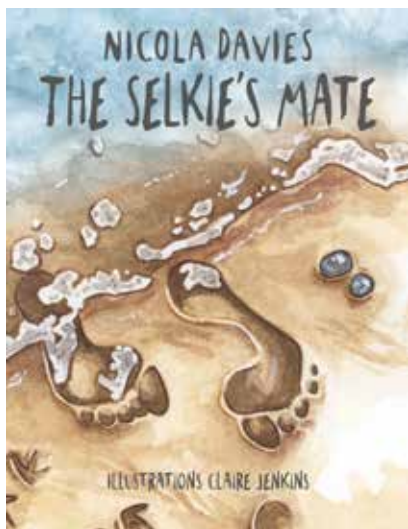


Shadows and Light series

# *The Selkie's Mate* by Nicola Davies



- Author Nicola Davies
- Illustrator Claire Jenkins
- Hardback, 40 pages
- Size 200 x 150mm
- For readers aged 9 +
- Recommended for teaching Year 5+
- Price £8.99
- ISBN 9781910862490

Author and illustrator's websites:

[www.nicola-davies.com](http://www.nicola-davies.com)

[clairejenkinsillustration.tumblr.com](http://clairejenkinsillustration.tumblr.com)

## Reading Log

Keep a reading log so you can record thoughts, ideas and viewpoints as they develop and change during the course of the story. This can include:

- Predictions
- Plot development – summarising each chapter
- Character studies – deduction and making inferences and refining opinions as the story progresses
- Author techniques – style analysis: form, language, imagery, foreshadowing, motifs, themes, viewpoint, tone.
- Vocabulary – clarifying unfamiliar words and extending personal vocabulary.

When considering discussion points, try out your ideas with a response partner before entering into whole class discussion.

## THE SELKIE'S MATE

### First Impressions

#### Discussion points

(Prediction and inference)

Make a note of your opinions.

- Look at the title only – don't peep at the blurb! What do you think this book will be about?
- Think, pair, share: discuss possible ways that the plot might develop, map these out quickly and share with the class.

Consider:

- What is a selkie?
- What do you think will happen in the book?
- Read the blurb to see whether this confirms your ideas or alters them.  
(All ideas can feed into your own writing, so none is wasted.)
- Think, pair, share: describe the design of the cover of the book to each other.
- Discuss the different features and evaluate the overall effect.
- How do you think the artist created the illustration?
- What further ideas does it give you about the story?



## End papers

### Discussion

- Look carefully at the end papers. What sort of mood does this image create?
- What does the image suggest?

## Title page

### Art challenge

- Collect some shells and create a necklace or mobile with them. Think carefully about colour, shape, size and pattern.



## Pages 2 and 3

### Art challenge

- Look at the double page spread to see how a sense of distance is conveyed and how texture has been introduced into the foreground. Also look at the endpaper illustration. Observe how the illustrator has worked with the paint in terms of depth, direction and tone with the three elements of sky, sea and shore. Find a photograph of the seashore and create your own watercolour of the scene.

## Pages 4 and 5

### Rapid research

- Look at maps of the United Kingdom and find out what the islands might be called.

### Vocabulary

- Scan the text on pages 4 and 5 to find the following words:
  - fretwork
  - crofter
  - crescent
  - tide race
- Can you work out what they mean from the context?
- Look it up in the dictionary to confirm that you are correct.
- Construct a sentence, using each one.

### Author technique

- Re-read the first paragraph aloud. What do you notice?

### Music challenge

- Create a piece of music to accompany the reading of this paragraph.

### Writing challenge

- What does the author mean by 'the weather of their heart.'?
- Create a thought shower of words that could indicate 'the weather of the heart.'

E.g. light, airy, heavy, overcast.

- Compose a short poem to capture the different 'weathers'. You could link it with the time of day

E.g.

Day dawns and ...

At midday, ...

Dusk descends and ...

Night falls and ...

### DT challenge

- Create a scale model of a cottage to match the description. Devise a way of holding down the thatch with ropes with pebble weights.

- Test how well it works by creating a 'gale' with a hair drier on a cool heat.
- Do you need to modify our design in any way?

### Discussion

- Which would you prefer:
  - Growing vegetables
  - Tending livestock
  - Fishing

Give reasons for your choice.

- How does the crofter feel about the natural world?
- Why do you think he loved seals most of all?

### Writing challenge

- Think about something that you particularly like in the natural world. Write a short description of it in the form of a riddle. Can your classmates guess what it is?

E.g.

I climb trees but I'm not a cat

I hibernate but I'm not a bear

I eat nuts but I'm not a bird

I'm a type of rodent but I'm not a rat

I have a bushy tail but I'm not a fox

E.g.

I am an animal of few letters,

Remove the second and you can't see,

Change it to "l" and I'm a punishment,

Yet backwards I'm a game.

### Rapid research

- Find out about the seals which frequent the British coast.
- Create one of the following to display the information you have found:
  - Concertina book
  - Infographic
  - 3D wall display
  - Prezi or PowerPoint presentation

You could use QR codes to link to relevant video clips.

## Pages 6 and 7

### Vocabulary

- Find synonyms for the word 'yearning'.
- Create sentences using these words.

### Author technique

- Spot the simile on page 6.
- Why does this work well?
- What do you think the crofter is yearning for?

### Creative challenge

- Create a thought shower of words about the sea, sky and sun. Play around with them to create lyrics for a short song.
- Once you have composed the words, set it to music.

### Art challenge

- Create a picture on a postcard of the scene the author describes in the last paragraph on page 6.





## Pages 8 and 9

### Vocabulary

- Scan the text on pages 8 and 9 to find the following words:
  - harmony
  - wane
  - oblivion
- Can you work out what they mean from the context?
- Look it up in the dictionary to confirm that you are correct.
- Construct a sentence, using each one.

### Rapid research

- Find out about the phases of the moon and how this affects tides.
- Create an infographic or electronic presentation to show the information.

### Discussion

- What does the illustration on page 9 suggest?
- What do you think might happen next?
- What would you do if you were the crofter?



## Pages 10 and 11

### Vocabulary

- Scan the text on page 11 to find the word:
  - solitariness
- Find synonyms in the thesaurus or on the internet.
- Scan the text on page 11 to find the word:
  - threshold
- Can you work out what the word means from the context?
- Look it up in the dictionary to confirm that you are correct.
- Construct a sentence using this word.

### Writing challenge

- Create a story or poem about loneliness. It could be about you, someone you know, or an imaginary person. You could write in the first or third person.
- Think of powerful similes that convey the feeling, like Nicola Davies's 'it lay in his heart like a cold, cold stone.'

### Discussion

- Who do you think the woman is?
- Why do you think the illustrator chose not to depict the Selkie's face at this point?
- What usually happens in folk tales, myths and fairy stories if someone is told not to do something?
- Can you think of specific examples?
- Think, pair, share: decide on some things that a protagonist might say not to do in a story. Jot down your best ideas in your writer's notebook as you may want to use them later.

### Author techniques

- What is the effect of the words chosen to describe the woman? 'her skin and her hair shining in the sun like the silvery sea.'

## Pages 12 and 13

### Vocabulary

- Scan the text on page 12 to find the word:
  - sacrament
- Can you work out what it means from the context?
- Look it up in the dictionary to confirm that you are correct.



- Construct a sentence, using this word.

### Discussion

- How has the crofter changed since living with the Selkie?
- What do you think the crofter will do in response to the Selkie's request?
- Why do you think the Selkie wants her sealskin back now?

### Drama

- Conscience Alley: should the crofter return the sealskin?

Create two lines, approximately a metre apart, each line taking an opposing viewpoint. One person, taking the role of the crofter, walks between the two lines as each side voice their thoughts. The crofter then has to decide what his decision will be. A number of people could take turns as the crofter, so that more than one argument can be voiced, gestures and expression can be added and arguments improved.



## Pages 14 and 15

### Discussion

- What is the implication of 'without a word...'?

### Quick research

- Find out what cowrie and tellin shells look like.
- What other types of shells might you find on British beaches?
- List the names and select an adjective to suit each one.

### Writing challenge

In pairs or small groups:

- Create a sea incantation, using shell names.
- Play around with the order until you find the right order and shape.
- Add percussion or electronic sea sounds to accompany your incantation and make a recording of it.
- Listen to it and see if there are any improvements you could make.

### Fact files

- Find out about the birds listed and listen to their calls on the internet.

(E.g. <http://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/bird-and-wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/> )

- Create your own fact file of coastland birds, deciding how you want to display the information: e.g. electronically, infographic, leaflet, booklet)

### Musical/electronic challenge

- Create a soundscape of sea, birds and silence.



## Pages 16 and 17

### Discussion

- What is significant about this illustration?

### Art challenge

- With a partner, devise a way of accurately creating profile silhouettes of your heads.
- Using a folded piece of paper, create a watery-effect background.
- Tick the silhouettes facing outwards from the centre, fold and display.
- Are you able to recognise everyone from their silhouette?



## Pages 18 and 19

### Drama

- Smile 'an empty smile.'
- Hot seat the crofter and the Selkie to find out their thoughts at her second request for her sealskin.

### Design challenge

- Either draw or make a scale model of the rocking chair with your own sea-themed patterns.

### Discuss

- Do you think the crofter is happy, now that he has prevented the Selkie from leaving for a second time?
- Do you think a 'false smile' is the same as an 'empty smile'?
- What is happening to the relationship between the man and the Selkie? Who do you have the most empathy with, and why?



## Pages 20 and 21

### Author technique

- Why is the simile about the mother, 'so she would show a flash of silver for a moment, like a herring in a net' so apt?

### Drama

- Conscience Alley: should the twins investigate the 'beautiful thing'? Create two lines, approximately a metre apart, each line taking an opposing viewpoint.

Two people, taking the role of the twins, walk between the two lines as each side voice their thoughts. The twins then have to decide what their decision will be. A number of people could take turns as the twins, so that more than one argument can be voiced, gestures and expression can be added and arguments improved.

### Discussion

- Why are the twins 'a little afraid'?



## Pages 22 and 23

### Writing challenge

Either:

- Describe a good hiding place, ensuring you include relevant detail.

Or:

- Write about a time when you have hidden something.



## Pages 24 and 25

### Discussion

- Bedtime routines: what is the best routine?
- What sort of routine do you have at bedtime?
- Why are routines important?
- Why do you think the crofter feels different this morning?

### Creative challenge

Either:

- Paint the scene described: 'All night the children dreamed of seaweed forests, sparkling shoals of sprats, and shooting lines of sunlight.' You might want to do some research on types of seaweed and different techniques artists use to convey sparkles and sunlight.

Or:

- Create a piece of dream music, conveying the sense of the 'seaweed forests, sparkling shoals of sprats and shooting lines of sunlight.'



## Pages 26 and 27

### Discussion

- Compare the illustrator's picture with your own. Discuss which techniques work best and which complement the text most effectively.

## Pages 28 and 29

### Discussion

- Why had no-one ever sat on the rocking chair?
- What do the words 'trusted him with her freedom' mean?
- What does that suggest about the male/female relationship?
- Why do you think the Selkie returned to the sea?
- What do you think might have happened if the crofter had given the Selkie her freedom willingly?
- What do you think the main messages are that this tale conveys?



## Pages 30 and 31

### Rapid Research

- Bullet point the information you have on Nicola Davies and Claire Jenkins.
- Would you rather be an author or an illustrator? Give reasons for your answer.

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### SHADOWS AND LIGHT SERIES:

The Selkie's Mate

Elias Martin

Mother Cary's Butter Knife

The White Hare

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