

EXTRACTS AND NOTES FOR KS2 TEACHERS & LIBRARIANS

BENJAMIN DEAN

**ME,
MY DAD
AND
THE END
OF THE
RAINBOW**



illustrated by
**SANDHYA
PRABHAT**



SUITABLE FOR: AGES 8+

Explores themes of: Different Families ✓ LGBTQ+ History ✓ Pride ✓ Celebrating Difference ✓
Subject Checklist: Literacy ✓ Art, Design & Technology ✓ PSHE ✓ Citizenship ✓ History ✓

CONTENTS

EXTRACT 1: Different Families (taken from Chapter 7 – Everything Is Just Fine, I Think)

Objectives: Discuss different kinds of families; write 'Thought Clouds' from different characters' perspectives.

EXTRACT 2: LGBTQ+ History (taken from Chapter 9 – A Piece of Cake)

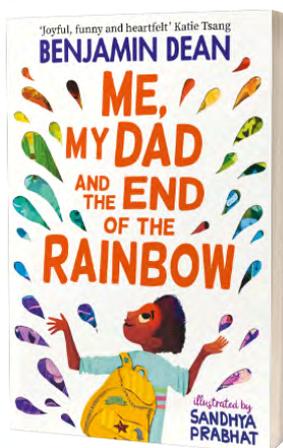
Objectives: Understand what LGBTQ+ stands for; create a Fact File for an inspirational LGBTQ+ historical figure.

EXTRACT 3: Pride (taken from Chapter 15 – The Rainbow Flyer)

Objectives: Learn about the history of Pride and its significance; design an eye-catching Pride poster.

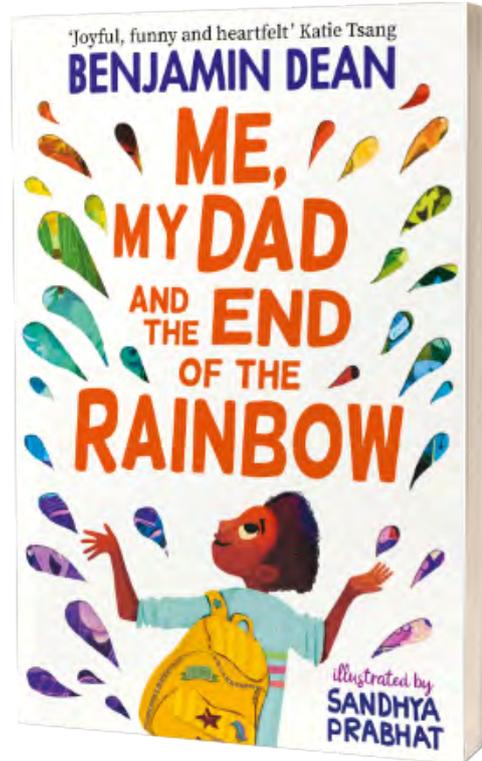
EXTRACT 4: Celebrating Difference (taken from Chapter 34 – Everything Will Be Alright)

Objectives: Explore what it means to celebrate our differences; reflect on what makes you different and celebrate it.



ABOUT THE BOOK

MY NAME'S ARCHIE ALBRIGHT, AND I KNOW TWO THINGS FOR CERTAIN:



1. My mum and dad kind of hate each other, and they're not doing a great job of pretending that they don't anymore.
2. They're both keeping a BIG secret from me, but I can't figure out what it is.

Things aren't going great for Archie Albright. His dad's acting weird, his mum too, and all he wants is for everything to go back to normal, to three months before when his parents were happy and still lived together. When Archie sees a colourful, crumpled flyer fall out of Dad's pocket, he thinks he may have found the answer. Only problem?

The answer might just lie at the end of the rainbow, an adventure away.

Together with his best friends, Bell and Seb, Archie sets off on a heartwarming and unforgettable journey to try to fix his family, even if he has to break a few rules to do it ...

EXTRACT 1

DIFFERENT FAMILIES (taken from Chapter 7 – Everything Is Just Fine, I Think)

colour. 'Did you hear any of that?'

I shook my head quickly. If Dad knew I was lying, he didn't call me out on it.

'Well, there's something we need to talk about,' said Dad.

I looked down at the table.

'You know I love you very much, right?' Dad shifted in his seat, trying to sit up straight.

I nodded, not trusting myself to speak.

'More than anything. More than ...' He stopped to think. 'More than beating you at air hockey.'

I half-smiled but still didn't look up.

'I might even love you more than Mum does, but don't tell her I said—'

'I HEARD THAT!' Mum yelled from upstairs, blowing her cover that she was eavesdropping. Dad chuckled to himself.

'What I'm trying to say is that we both love you very much. I want you to know that.'

I nodded.

'The thing is, I ... well, I ...' Dad paused, collecting himself. Then suddenly, like ripping off a plaster, he said it.

'I'm gay, Archie.'

He blew out a long, quivering breath, like he'd been

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holding it in since I'd sat down. Like he'd been holding it in for much, much longer. Of course, I, who have never really been great at dealing with awkward or serious conversations, had a very comforting and emotional response.

'Oh, okay. Cool.'

Yes, that's what I said. Three very kind and endearing words. Honestly, I should just never be given permission to speak out loud. Dad also seemed to be struggling to decide what to say next, which left another silence threatening to fall on us both. I could've sworn I heard Mum huff to herself upstairs.

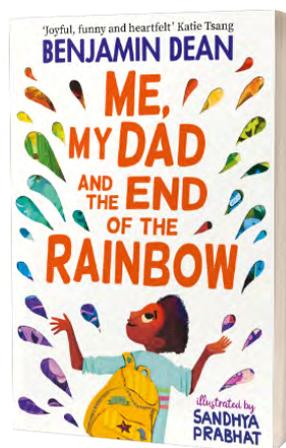
'Is there anything you want to ask me?' Dad said. 'Anything at all, it doesn't matter how big or small.'

Sure, I had a thousand questions to ask. But right then, I didn't know how to put anything into words. I wanted to ask if that was the reason Mum and Dad weren't together any more. If it was something he had only recently figured out or something he had known all along. What would change now? Everything? Nothing? I guess I could've used my head some more and actually asked some of these questions out loud, but instead I made the wise decision to cram all of my emotions into a small box, throw that box into a bigger box, and push the bigger box off a cliff.

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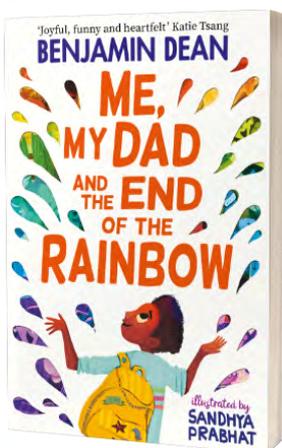
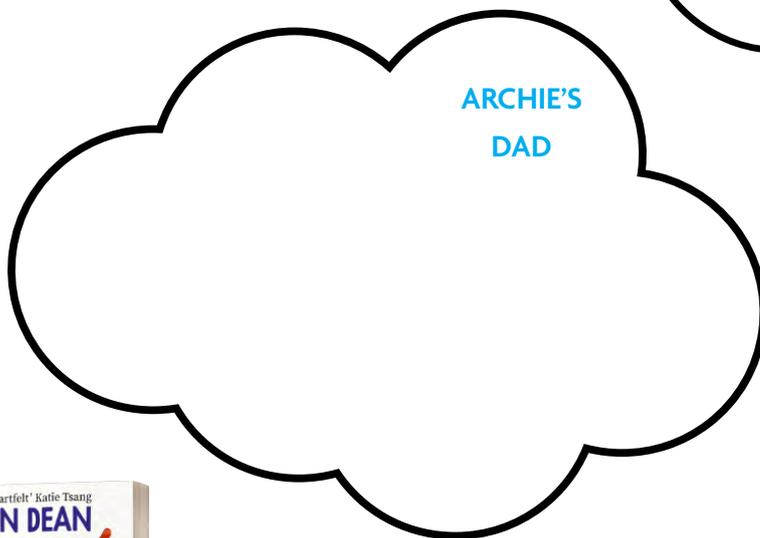
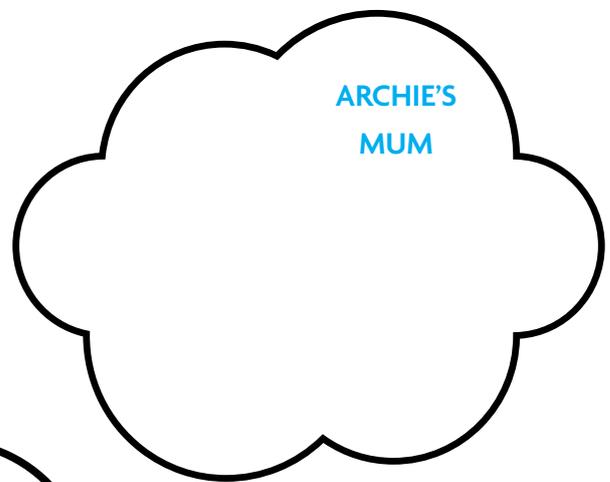
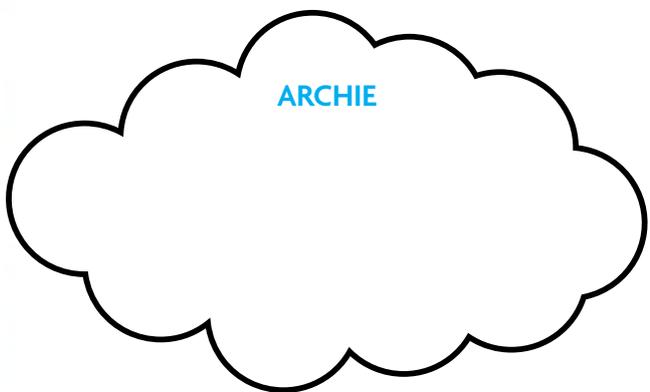
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Why is it important to understand that all families are different?
- What is different about Archie's family?
- What does it mean to be 'gay'? Why might Archie's dad be anxious about telling him this news?
- What questions do you think Archie might have for his dad?
- How do you think Archie's mum might be feeling at this point in the story?



ACTIVITY: THOUGHT CLOUDS

- It's important to remember that no two families are the same and that families can be complicated!
- As a class, discuss and note down some of the feelings and thoughts that Archie, his mum and dad might be having at the beginning of the story. You might want to think about how things have changed, what hasn't changed between them, why Archie's mum and dad are arguing and what Archie might find confusing.
- Then, in each of the thought clouds below, write a few lines about each character's feelings. Discuss these points together or even act-out a game of Hotseat – asking and answering questions from the perspective of each character.



EXTRACT 2

LGBTQ+ HISTORY (taken from Chapter 9 – A Piece of Cake)

something which obviously really helped matters.

‘Okay, forget the cake for a minute, though I personally think that’s a great metaphor.’ I thought Oscar might pat himself on the back but he just wriggled out his shoulders and carried on. ‘So, I’m gay. Surprise, shock, oh my God, blah, blah, etcetera. But I’m also left-handed and a complete chemistry nerd. I love *Game of Thrones* and *Call of Duty* and the colour green.’

I wrinkled my nose because green really is a horrendous colour and I thought Oscar had better taste than that.

‘Being gay, it’s just a teeny tiny part of who am I. It doesn’t change me or make me any different. It’s just like . . . a little addition, that’s all. It’s no more important than the fact that I hate coffee and bubble baths. Do you get what I’m saying?’

I half-nodded because I kind of got the point but I was also still seething about the cake nonsense.

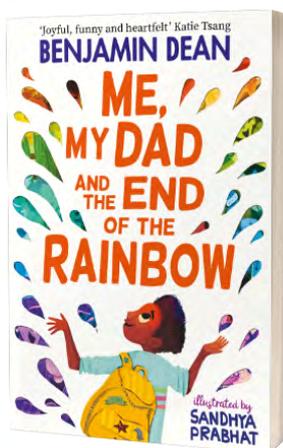
‘Honestly, don’t worry about it,’ Oscar said, awkwardly trying to get up from the beanbag in a flurry of uncoordinated limbs as the bell for fourth period kicked up a fuss. ‘There are a ton of things to worry about in life, and this really isn’t one of them.’

‘Thanks, I guess.’

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What do we learn about Oscar in this extract? What is described as just a ‘tiny part’ of who he is?
- Do you know what the letters and symbol of ‘LGBTQ+’ stand for?
- Can you give definitions for these terms? Note them down.
- How can we treat people equally? What does the word ‘inclusive’ mean?
- Why is it important not to treat someone differently because of their sexuality?



ACTIVITY: CREATE A LGBTQ+ FACT FILE

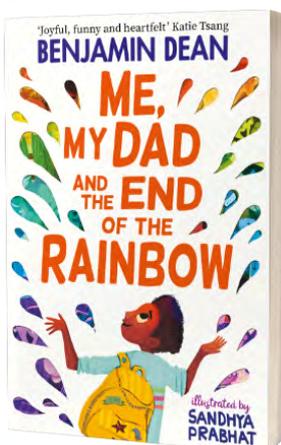
There are many amazing people throughout history who have fought for equality for LGBTQ+ communities.

- To get started, you will be given an inspirational figure from history. Research who this person is and the work they have done to help LGBTQ+ communities:
 - KARL HEINRICH ULRICHS, BARBARA GITTINGS, HARVEY MILK, MAGNUS HIRSCHFIELD, AUDRE LORDE, BAYARD RUSTIN, CHRISTINE JORGENSEN

Note: Teachers can be selective in which figures students research and include their own figures too. Above are suggestions.

LGBTQ+ Fact File

1. What is the name of your LGBTQ+ figure from history?
2. Where were they from?
3. When were they alive?
4. How did they fight for equality?
5. What challenges might they have faced?



EXTRACT 3

PRIDE (taken from Chapter 15 – The Rainbow Flyer)

make dresses. One particular man wore a suit entirely pinstriped in all seven colours of the rainbow. It was a bold choice.

‘They all look so ...’ Bell trailed off, leaning in for a better look.

‘Happy?’ I said, enlarging one picture where three friends were bent double from laughing.

Seb took the mouse and opened another picture, then another and another. In every one, the crowds appeared to get bigger and bigger, until at one point I was sure there were enough people in Trafalgar Square to populate a small country. But, despite being pushed up against their neighbour like an overstuffed suitcase, every single person looked like they wouldn’t want to be anywhere else.

Then one picture caught my eye. I nudged Seb and he hovered the mouse over it, pausing just for a second before clicking. Four people beamed back at the camera, smiles so big that their faces looked like they had been split in half by a ray of sunlight. There were two men that could’ve been my dad’s age, rainbows painted on their cheeks and one arm slung loosely around each other. Their other hands rested on the shoulders of two small kids, clearly

twins and no older than seven with rainbows stamped on their arms like tattoos.

‘Mario and Dave celebrate their first Pride as a family by taking their children to the parade in London,’ Seb said, reading the caption I’d missed next to the picture.

‘Wait, there’s more.’ Bell tapped the arrow on the keyboard and the picture switched to another, this time a man and a woman holding a newborn baby.

‘Lucy and Will take their three-month-old daughter to her first Pride parade,’ Seb recited.

The next picture was two women hugging, one with an impossibly large and round belly, a ‘baby on board’ badge pinned to her dress. The one after that: two grandparents, two parents and one toddler, pulling a gigantic rainbow flag around themselves with joy. With each swipe, another family appeared, somehow managing to look even happier than the family before. Then the final picture popped up and I bit my lip hard.

‘Victor and his son Junior have been coming to Pride for years,’ read Seb. ‘They plan on attending many more.’

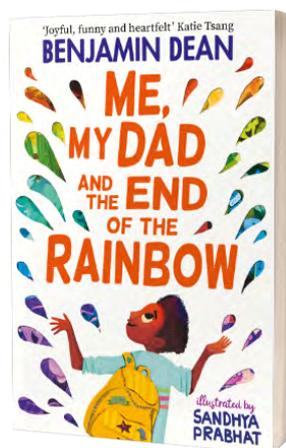
Victor looked a little older than Dad, while Junior looked a little older than me. He was slightly taller than his father, and leaner too, although you could imagine

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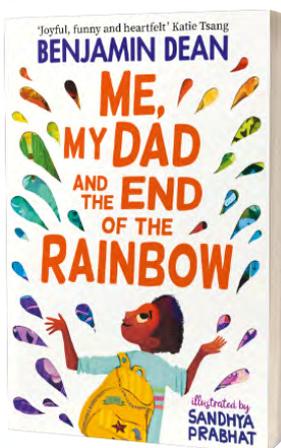
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What has Archie found and where did he find it? What do you think the rainbow symbolises?
- What is the Pride parade and where is it held?
- What do the Pride pictures show? How do they link into discussions from previous lessons?
- Why do Archie and his friends decide to go to Pride?
- How do they get into trouble? How does the LGBTQ+ community work together to help them?



ACTIVITY: DESIGN A PRIDE POSTER

- Take a few minutes to read over the flyer, then discuss and note down:
 - Have you ever been to a Pride parade before?
 - How is it described in the book?
 - How and when did Pride begin?
 - Why is it described as a 'protest' and not just a party?
 - When and where is your nearest Pride parade?
- Use these discussions and your notes to create a Pride poster. Try to make your poster as colourful and eye-catching as possible with all the colours of the rainbow. Make sure you include details about Pride and why it is important for people to come together to celebrate and protest, even if they don't identify as LGBTQ+!



EXTRACT 4

CELEBRATING DIFFERENCE (taken from Chapter 34 – Everything Will Be Alright)

outside my house, Dad taking the keys and jumping into the driving seat. 'Are you sure don't want me to drive?' Oscar tried, already grumbling about having to sit in the back with us regular folk.

'Oscar, you can't be trusted to babysit three kids without losing them,' Dad said under his breath. Mum still didn't know *that* bit of the story. 'You're *definitely* not driving from here to London. I value my life, thank you very much.' Dean looked somewhat relieved at that and relaxed in his seat. Oscar folded his arms and looked grumpily out of the window.

'All ready?' Dad called.

'Yeah!' we all chorused back.

And then we were off. London Pride awaited on the horizon and this year, we were doing it right, with our families by our side. If I learned anything from last year, it's that Pride is all about family, both the ones you're given and the ones you make. Somewhere fifty miles or so away, Lester and Michael and Dora and Viv and the rest of our army would be getting ready for the big day. Clara and Kaleidoscope were no doubt warming up too, much to Seb's delight. They'd all be meeting us in London, so we could do Pride properly – together.

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And I guess that's where our story ends. Things always get better if you only give it a little time. You don't need to run off to London to try and fix them. I learned that the hard way so you don't have to.

When I think about it, Dad didn't really change at all. He's still terrible at cooking and even worse at air hockey. He still watches *Top Gun* at least once a month. He still bites his lower lip so his teeth are showing when he's concentrating really hard and he doesn't wear his glasses when he's supposed to. He still loves me and Mum. And he's still my dad too.

As for Mum, she'd kill me if she knew *all* the details of what happened last year. Sabine would probably faint on the spot. But I think I trust you to only give this story to people who can keep a secret. I'll let you be the one to decide that.

I appreciate your co-operation and secrecy, partner.

Until next time,

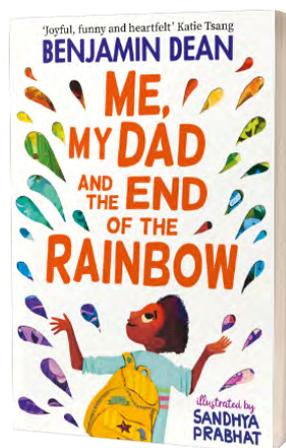
Your friend, Archie Maverick Albright.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What has Archie learned about family by the end of the story? Explain your ideas.
- Who do Archie and his friends meet at Pride?
- What does it mean to celebrate our differences? How can we do this?
- How have the characters of the story learned to celebrate each other's differences?
- What have you learned about LGBTQ+ history in these lessons?

Do you have any unanswered questions?



ACTIVITY: CELEBRATE YOURSELF

- Celebrating our differences doesn't just apply to whether you identify as LGBTQ+; it's about being proud of who you are and the fact that we are all different! Remember, the world would be a very boring place if we were all exactly the same!
- For each colour of the rainbow below, write at least one thing that makes you different. It could be something about your family, your interests, where you are from, your appearance, your faith – or anything else!
- Share the details of your rainbows together if you are happy to. Then, put them on display to remind you to be proud of who you are and the things that make you special!

