

THE ADVENTURES OF MALI & KEELA



A VIRTUES BOOK FOR CHILDREN

BY
JONATHAN COLLINS

WITH JANICE HEALEY, ILLUSTRATED BY JENNY COOPER



CONTENTS

Page	
7	Foreword by Linda Kavelin Popov
8	Preface by Jonathan Collins
10	THREE MOUNTAIN ISLAND <i>Determination, Consideration, Peacefulness, Tact</i>
20	THE STOWAWAY <i>Caring, Patience, Service, Honesty</i>
30	RESCUE AT DOLPHIN BAY <i>Kindness, Perseverance, Reliability, Detachment</i>
40	CAMPING WITH THE KING <i>Humility, Assertiveness, Honor, Understanding</i>
50	GLOW-WORM CAVE <i>Trust, Respect, Truthfulness, Forgiveness</i>
60	THE SHOW MUST GO ON! <i>Commitment, Cooperation, Orderliness, Tolerance</i>
70	MEETING LAO <i>Integrity, Idealism, Friendliness, Self-discipline</i>
80	THE HORSE RACE <i>Enthusiasm, Cleanliness, Gentleness, Trustworthiness</i>
90	KEELA'S SURPRISE <i>Creativity, Generosity, Love, Unity</i>
100	THE MISSING NECKLACE <i>Justice, Loyalty, Confidence, Compassion</i>
110	FLYING WITH THE SEAGULLS <i>Helpfulness, Excellence, Courage, Joyfulness</i>
120	THE PUMPKIN AND THE FAIR <i>Diligence, Moderation, Flexibility, Modesty</i>
130	SMOKE ON THE HORIZON <i>Thankfulness, Responsibility, Courtesy, Purposefulness</i>
141	Index of Virtues
143	About The Virtues Project™

Preface

When our children were young, my wife and I attended a Virtues Project™ (see p. 143) weekend which had a profound impact on how we parented. Concepts such as ‘speaking the language of the virtues’ and ‘recognizing teachable moments’ sat beautifully with our personal ideas about parenting and teaching. Natalie, a trained Montessori teacher, saw The Virtues Project™ as a valuable complement to her work in the classroom.

At the same time, our then five-year-old son was putting me on the spot each evening – I’d begun a tradition of making up ‘Mali stories’ at bedtime... and these improvised tales of adventure and daring were expected each night. Mali (an anagram of his name, Liam) was a swashbuckling hero who displayed the virtues – courage, joyfulness, determination, etc. – that both he and I loved hearing about.

And then the penny dropped for me... I realized these stories were a fantastic way to help understand virtues. While the characters sailed the seas and saved the day, they educated and inspired. I started writing down the stories with the intention of creating this book.

The Virtues Project™ brings virtues into everyday life. Some of the virtues are reasonably easy for young children to understand – caring, friendliness, enthusiasm, etc. – but some are a little more difficult. Humility, tact, respect, integrity, and so on, are reasonably complex for a young mind to grasp. When they are demonstrated through the actions of our heroes, the message is so much easier to communicate, and the understanding is easier to absorb.

As with the original Mali stories, the intention for this book is that the adult reads the story to the child. Discussion pages follow each story, containing definitions (from *The Virtues Project™ Educator’s Guide*) of the virtues shown in the story, followed by questions, written as a prompt for discussion.

To ensure the stories are engaging for the child, the examples of virtues within them have been consciously kept light. As with the fables of old, the yarn drives the interest, allowing the virtue to be communicated subtly. The stories touch on the virtue, with the following discussion pages picking up from that cue, and taking the exploration further.

The questions provided are examples designed to encourage discussion and interaction. They're a catalyst to stimulate the flow of ideas, and I encourage you to add your own questions to see where the discussion takes you. It is my hope that through this process, a deeper understanding of the virtues will occur for the child.

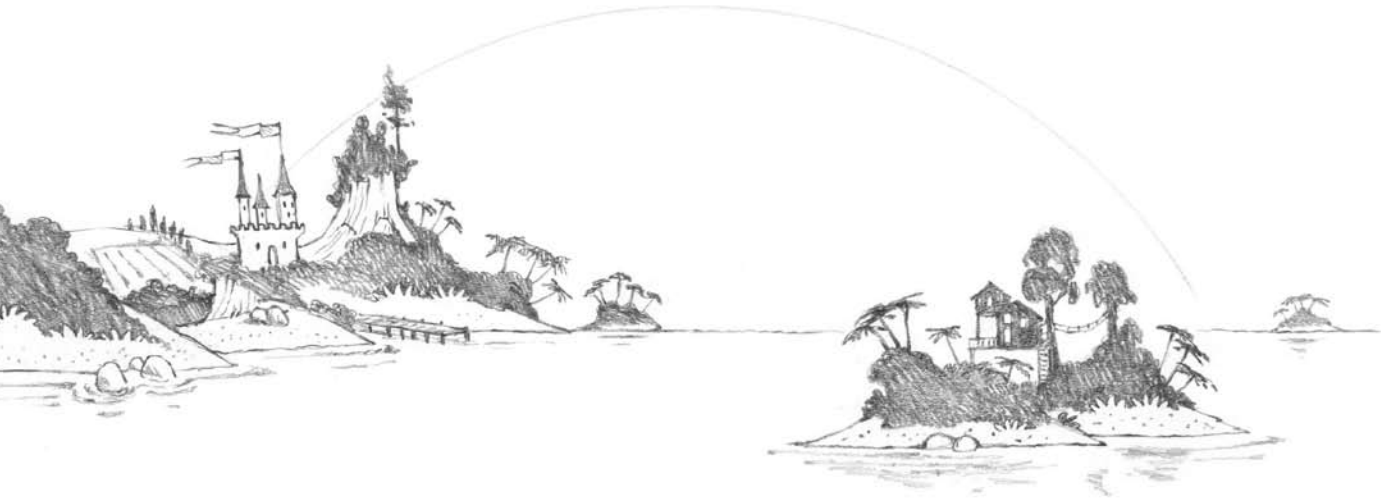
These stories flow best when read in story order, however, with 'recognizing teachable moments' in mind, they have been written to work also as standalone stories. You may recognize a particular time when it would be helpful to discuss a certain virtue (patience, or tolerance perhaps) with your children, in which case the story specific to that virtue might be a good choice.

While *The Adventures of Mali & Keela* has tapped into the wisdom generously offered by the creators of The Virtues Project™, it is an independent publication. The fifty-two virtues discussed in this book are from *The Virtues Project™ Educator's Guide*, which was designed primarily for counselors, teachers, caregivers, and youth leaders as a guide to creating cultures of caring and integrity in schools, day care centers, and youth programs. These virtues were chosen because of their universality. They may fit very well alongside spiritual belief systems, however they are not specific to any one faith.

Jonathan Collins

THREE MOUNTAIN ISLAND

Determination ⇌ Consideration ⇌ Peacefulness ⇌ Tact



I feel adventure in my bones! Mali thought as he jumped out of bed.

From the window of his tree house he could see over the water to the castle, sparkling in the morning light. It was there that his friend Princess Keela lived.

He climbed down the ladder, prepared his boat, and was soon sailing towards the mainland.

Looking back at his island, Mali smiled. His tree-house looked good up there in the big tree overlooking the bay.

At the castle Mali and Keela planned their adventure.

“There’s an island, not too far from here,” Mali said, “with three

mountains on it. And," he added, "they've never been climbed!"

"Then let's be the first to climb them!" Keela said with a grin.

They told the king and queen their plans, and set sail for Three Mountain Island. It wasn't long before they were standing on the beach looking up at the first mountain.

"It doesn't look too big," Keela said. "Let's go!"

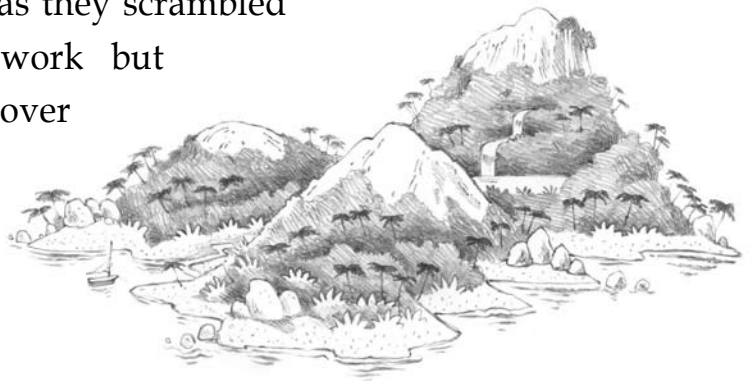
Rough plants scratched their legs as they pushed through the undergrowth. The slope grew steep and thick with trees as they clambered upwards. When they finally stepped out from the trees into the bright sunlight at the top, they realized how high they had climbed.

"Woo hoo!" Keela cried out. "Look at your boat!"

"It looks like a toy down there," Mali laughed.

They rested a while before Keela pointed towards the second mountain. "Let's keep going," she said.

Rocks slid and tumbled as they scrambled upwards. It was hot work but eventually they made it over the ridge. When they saw the view in front of them, their tiredness was quickly forgotten.





A clear blue lake, shimmering in the sun, was nestled between the second mountain and an even bigger one beyond.

"I'll race you to the lake," said Keela, and she was off before Mali could answer.

Mali caught up as they reached the water's edge. A company of emerald-green parrots flew low over the lake. A waterfall splashed on the far side, and the air chimed with birdcalls.

"A perfect spot for a picnic," Mali said as he pulled a bundle of food from his bag. They ate hungrily. They skimmed stones and splashed in the cool water, and then they continued around to the base of the third mountain.

Beside the waterfall they clambered up boulders. Higher and higher they climbed. The stream that fed the waterfall tumbled down the rocks beside them.

“Oh no!” Mali cried as the strap on his shoe broke.

Keela turned to see the shoe tumbling down. It bounced off the rocks and landed with a *splash* in the stream. Then, like a tiny boat, it floated to the edge of the waterfall and disappeared from view.

“Wait here. I’ll go and hunt for it,” Mali told Keela. “I’ll be back soon.”

He scrambled down. The rocks were sharp against his bare foot. At the bottom he searched for the shoe – scanning the lake and checking between rocks – but there was no sign of it.

Mali selected a large leaf from a plant that grew beside the lake and wrapped it around his bare foot. Then, with a long flax leaf, he continued to wrap and strap until he had made a leafy shoe.

Then he climbed back up to where Keela waited.

“I’m tuckered,” he puffed. He flopped to the ground. His legs ached and his foot hurt. “I don’t think I can climb another step.”

Far in the distance they could see Mali’s boat – so much smaller than when they’d seen it from the first mountain. They looked

down at the parrots flying formations around the lake. They talked about how high they'd climbed – and as they talked their determination to reach the top grew.

Mali got to his feet.

"What are you waiting for?" he said. "Let's get going."

"I thought you couldn't climb another step?" said Keela. She looked at Mali's makeshift shoe. "I don't mind if you'd rather we go back down."

"I'm determined to get to the top – I know we can do it!" he replied. "Come on!"

At the first big rock Mali held his hands together to make a step for Keela to put her foot into. He hoisted her up. She then



reached back down to help pull him up. They climbed the last of the rocks this way until eventually they reached the top.

“Wow!” they said together.

Everywhere, as far as they could see, was blue. The blue from the ocean melted into the blue from the sky – it seemed as if they had stepped into a huge blue painting. The only thing not blue was a fountain of white water far below. Beneath the fountain was a grey shape.

“What’s that?” Keela whispered. It seemed too amazing to speak aloud.

“I think it’s a whale,” Mali whispered back. He had never seen one from up above like this. “It’s spraying water from its blowhole!”



Mali and Keela sat at the top of the mountain and watched the whale swim gracefully by. They were silent in their blue-painted world.

Gradually their blue world turned indigo.

“We’d better head back down,” Mali said.

Beside the lake Keela spotted something nudging the sandy bank.

“Mali!” she called, as she picked up a soggy shoe.

The trek down to the boat went quickly and they were soon ready to set sail.

“We did it!” Mali grinned as they cast off. “We climbed all three mountains.”

As they sailed home Keela closed her eyes to remember the whale they had



seen. As she did, she heard a beautiful sound: a half-whistling, half-singing noise.

“Do you hear the wind in the ropes?” Mali said.

“Mali! That’s not the wind!” said Keela. “It’s the whale! It’s singing to us!”

Mali knew that whales could sing. He also knew what the wind in the ropes sounded like. But he said nothing. He just smiled.

Mali dropped Keela at the castle and sailed back to his island. Wearily he climbed the ladder to his tree-house.

As he dropped into bed he smiled, thinking about the great adventure they’d had that day. And he was asleep before his head even hit the pillow.



DETERMINATION

You focus your energy and efforts on a task and stick with it until it is finished. Determination is using your will power to do something when it isn't easy. You are determined to meet your goals even when it is hard or you are being tested. With determination we make our dreams come true.

Although the climb was difficult and Keela and Mali were tired, they showed great determination to continue up the three mountains. Their determination was rewarded by a feeling of achievement and a wondrous view from the top.

- Tell me about a time when you have been determined to do something?
- What do you think determination would look like if you were learning a new sport or a new musical instrument?
- What might happen to your determination if you were to lose your focus? Has this ever happened to you?
- Can you think of someone who has shown their determination? What did they do?
- What could you do to resist losing your focus when you feel distracted?

CONSIDERATION

Consideration is being thoughtful of other people and their feelings. You consider how your actions affect them. You pay careful attention to what others like and don't like, and do things that give them happiness.

Even though she was keen to reach the top, Keela told Mali that she wouldn't mind if they needed to go back down instead of carrying on. She was showing consideration for how Mali felt.

- Can you think of a situation where showing consideration for others would be a good idea?
- What are some ways you could show consideration toward a friend or schoolmate?
- Do you know someone who might need help or kindness? What could you do for them?
- How could you know what the best gift might be for you to give to someone?
- Describe yourself doing something considerate for a family member.

PEACEFULNESS

Peacefulness is being calm inside. Take time for daily reflection and gratitude. Solve conflicts so everyone wins. Be a peacemaker. Peace is giving up the love of power for the power of love. Peace in the world begins with peace in your heart.

At the top of the third mountain they were “silent in their blue-painted world”. They felt at peace as they sat quietly and enjoyed the beauty of the moment.

- *Is there a special place you go to, to enjoy peacefulness?*
- *Do you have a favorite way to practice being peaceful?*
- *How might you achieve a peaceful outcome if you disagreed with your classmate about something and you both thought you were right?*
- *If you saw a fight starting on the playground what could you do to be a peacemaker?*
- *What can you and I do to help create peace in the world?*

TACT

Tact is telling the truth kindly, considerate of how your words affect others’ feelings. Think before you speak, knowing what is better left unsaid. When you are tactful, others find it easier to hear what you have to say. Tact builds bridges.

As they sailed home Mali said, “Do you hear the wind in the ropes?” He knew it was the wind making the whistling sound, but he could see Keela was enjoying the idea that it might be the whale singing to her – he showed tact by choosing to remain quiet.

- *Let’s talk about some situations where it would be kind to show tact.*
- *Do you remember a time when you felt embarrassed because someone said something to you without tact? How could they have spoken differently to you?*
- *How would you demonstrate tact if you were standing in line behind someone who looked very different than you?*
- *If your friends were making fun of someone, can you think of a tactful way that you could respond?*

INDEX OF VIRTUES

VIRTUE	STORY PAGE	DISCUSSION PAGE
Assertiveness	40	48
Caring	20	28
Cleanliness	80	88
Commitment	60	68
Compassion	100	109
Confidence	100	109
Consideration	10	18
Cooperation	60	68
Courage	110	119
Courtesy	130	139
Creativity	90	98
Detachment	30	39
Determination	10	18
Diligence	120	128
Enthusiasm	80	88
Excellence	110	118
Flexibility	120	129
Forgiveness	50	59
Friendliness	70	79
Generosity	90	98
Gentleness	80	89
Helpfulness	110	118
Honesty	20	29
Honor	40	49
Humility	40	48
Idealism	70	78

VIRTUE	STORY PAGE	DISCUSSION PAGE
Integrity	70	78
Joyfulness	110	119
Justice	100	108
Kindness	30	38
Love	90	99
Loyalty	100	108
Moderation	120	128
Modesty	120	129
Orderliness	60	69
Patience	20	28
Peacefulness	10	19
Perseverance	30	38
Purposefulness	130	139
Reliability	30	39
Respect	50	58
Responsibility	130	138
Self-discipline	70	79
Service	20	29
Tact	10	19
Thankfulness	130	138
Tolerance	60	69
Trust	50	58
Trustworthiness	80	89
Truthfulness	50	59
Understanding	40	49
Unity	90	99



About the Author

Jonathan Collins lives with his wife and two children on an island in the South Pacific. It's not quite as small as Mali's island, although it is equally as beautiful... it is the South Island of New Zealand. When not writing, Jonathan works as a creative director and communications manager. This is his fifth children's book.

Acknowledgements

I am extremely thankful for the generosity of so many people who have helped to bring this book to reality. Natalie Collins for her endless support and love, and Liam and Jemma Collins – the inspiration for Mali and Keela – for patience and understanding while Dad disappeared to the computer for so many hours. At Personhood Press, Cathy and Bradley Winch have been a pleasure to work with, thank you for your trust, your hard work, for everything. Unsung hero of the book is editor and mentor, Sean O'Connor, whose guiding hand and keen eye have been invaluable. Enormous thanks go to my writing buddy, Janice Healey, who worked with commitment and enthusiasm to get Mali's adventures down on paper – your helpfulness and creativity is very much appreciated. Many thanks also to Jenny Cooper, whose charming illustrations have brought these stories to life.

I give thanks also to Linda Popov, who encouraged me to write The Adventures of Mali & Keela, and for creating The Virtues Project™ in the first place. Her work has had a profoundly positive impact on so many people. Thanks also to PRO-ED for granting permission for excerpts from The Virtues Project™ Educator's Guide to be included in this book.

Jonathan Collins