



This story begins on a misty winter's morning. It's cold. Marco and his friends are on their way to school. They walk in a line, one behind the other, on the boardwalks in place over the water.

The children who live further away come by water bus and some even use the gondola to cross a canal. And they all look down into the water which continues to rise up and up...



At school, the teacher tells the story of Venice.

“Venice began life on the sea,” she says. “And a long time ago, it was one of the most important cities in Italy. Its ships travelled to far-off countries to trade their goods for precious things to bring back. In this way, the city soon became rich and powerful and its citizens living there wanted to live in magnificent buildings.

To protect themselves from the sea, they decided to build their houses, churches, monuments and even the harbour on stilts. These stilts were large wooden poles hammered one by one into the bed of the lagoon. This was good because as time passed, Venice, with its winding lanes, its bridges and canals, its churches and its houses with flower-filled balconies became as beautiful as a dream come to rest on the water.

But sadly, one day, the sea began to rise. Little by little, it rose above the stilts and oozed its way between the houses. If it continues like this, one day the whole city will be swallowed up by the water.

And it will end up by disappearing under the water...”

The children listen carefully and the teacher adds, “Get pen and pencil, brushes and paints and try and imagine what Venice will look like in the future... try drawing the city under the sea!”





It's night time. Marco is in his bed, thinking about his drawing. In the foreground, he has painted a little mermaid and, on the sea bed, Venice stretching out beneath the sea. Suddenly, someone knocks at the window. It's the little mermaid, who says, "Thank you for putting me in your drawing! But you've never seen Venice at the bottom of the sea... If you come with me, I'll show it to you. Come on!" Marco decides to follow her and... he can't believe his eyes. Now, out of his window, there really is the sea with its seaweed and fish! "Put on this diving mask and flippers," says the mermaid, "you'll swim more easily!"

Now Marco and the mermaid are swimming together in the night. Marco switches on a torch to see the cuttlefish, jellyfish, shining fish, sea anemones, sea urchins and blue seaweed...