

Rosa and the Daring Dog

Author: Megan Rix

Publisher: Penguin

ISBN: 9780241369142

Synopsis

HOWLY is a tiny puppy, left abandoned in a trash can next to a school.
EDDIE is the young girl who finds him . . .

Eddie is immediately drawn to the puppy, whose bravery and determination remind her of a very famous person indeed.

Eddie's class are learning about Mrs Rosa Parks, whose act of courage on a bus in 1955 started a whole movement against racism in America. Mrs Parks herself soon visits Eddie's school, and when the great lady points out a stark reminder of racism in the school's own playground it's up to Eddie, her friends, and their new school dog Howly to remind everyone how to stay hopeful and stand up for what is right.

I was born in London in 1962. I have a sister and two brothers. I'm the oldest and the shortest! In 1962 there were still blue police boxes about – like in Doctor Who – and my Dad rushed into one of them (and got in trouble for doing so) to call for help because The Baby (me) was on its way.

I always loved books and writing stories as well as adventures and travelling. At 18 (having never even been out of the UK before) I set off by myself for the USA and travelled round America and Canada on a bus before becoming an exchange student at Kutztown, Pennsylvania.

I trained to teach children with learning difficulties and taught in the UK for a few years before heading off to teach in Singapore. While I was a student I also worked on a kibbutz in Israel (until I was given the sack.).

A couple of years later, while I was staying in Tasmania, my first story was accepted for publication but eventually that fell through and it wasn't until 1997 that my first book 'The Master of Secrets' was published by Puffin under my real name of Ruth Symes. For the next 10 years I wrote books for publishers Orion, Piccadilly, Andersen and Chicken House across the age range as well as writing for radio, TV and film.

I got married in Hawaii and the next year we decided to become puppy parents for helping train Assistance Dogs. Emma and Freddy became two of the stars of my memoir 'The Puppy that Came for Christmas' published by Penguin. I wrote the book under the pseudonym of Megan Rix to protect our privacy but afterwards Puffin (part of Penguin) asked if I'd like to write some children's books for them under the Megan Rix pseudonym.

I like writing books as Megan Rix as I intend them to all be based around animals. I've also written a series of books about a witchling called Bella Donna for Piccadilly Press as Ruth Symes and I'm currently writing a series called The Secret Animal Society under the name Ruth Symes.

My first children's book written as Megan Rix: 'The Great Escape' was published in 2012.

I now have 2 dogs, both golden retrievers: Traffy (short for Trafford) who's the puppy in my memoir and Bella (named after my Bella Donna series) who doesn't have a book about her yet – but probably will soon (she does have her own Twitter page and website.)

Author Bio





Curriculum Links

English Year 4

- ACELT1602** Make connections between the ways different authors may represent similar storylines, ideas and relationships
- ACELT1603** Discuss literary experiences with others, sharing responses and expressing a point of view
- ACELT1605** Discuss how authors and illustrators make stories exciting, moving and absorbing and hold readers' interest by using various techniques, for example character development and plot tension
- ACELT1607** Create literary texts that explore students' own experiences and imagining

English Year 5

- ACELT1608** Identify aspects of literary texts that convey details or information about particular social, cultural and historical contexts
- ACELT1609** Present a point of view about particular literary texts using appropriate metalanguage, and reflecting on the viewpoints of others
- ACELT1610** Recognise that ideas in literary texts can be conveyed from different viewpoints, which can lead to different kinds of interpretations and responses
- *Identifying the narrative voice (the person or entity through whom the audience experiences the story) in a literary work, discussing the impact of first person narration on empathy and engagement*
 - *Examining texts written from different narrative points of view and discussing what information the audience can access, how this impacts on the audience's sympathies, and why an author might choose a particular narrative point of view*

HASS Year 5

History

- ACHASSK110** The role that a significant individual or group played in shaping a colony

Civics and Citizenship

- ACHASSK118** How people with shared beliefs and values work together to achieve a civic goal

Health and Physical Education

Year 3 and 4

- ACPPS037** Describe how respect, empathy and valuing diversity can positively influence relationships

Year 5 and 6

- ACPPS051** Examine how identities are influenced by people and places
- *investigating how personal and cultural identities are influenced by the groups and communities to which we belong and the places to which we feel connected*

Themes

- Human Rights
- Racism
- Civil Rights
- Slavery
- Activism
- Assistance Dogs

Pre Reading

Look at the cover of the book.
Identify the title and the author.
Ask the class if anyone has read any other books by Megan Rix.

Read the back of the book.
Ask if anyone has heard of Rosa Parks before?



Discussion

The first chapter we meet both of the main characters.

- Eddie
- The puppy (Howly)

Those first few pages are told from two perspectives.

What do we gain as a reader from reading about Howler being abandoned from his point of view?

Eddie's class is learning about the First World War.

They have to do an oral project and Eddie is nervous about getting up in front of the class.

Ask the class if anyone has felt nervous talking in front of a group of people. What are some strategies to make it easier?

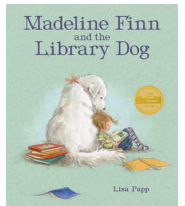
Assistance dogs

Eddie is not allowed to have a dog at home, so she comes up with the suggestion that Howler becomes a school dog. Specifically a dog to listen to children read.

Reading Education Assistance Dogs (READ) is a programme in the US that takes dogs to schools and have students read to them. Reading to the dogs builds confidence in the readers, and children's reading ability has improved greatly as a result. This programme was just in the trial phase in 1990.

We have a similar programme in Australia, called Story Dogs.

Find out more here: <https://www.storydogs.org.au/about-us>



This book is set in 1990.

There is an author's note in the back of the book as to why she set it in this time period.

Discuss why the author chose not to set her book in 1955, when Rosa Parks started a whole movement against racism in America?

How would the story have been different if it was set in 1955?

Racism/ Human Rights

Racism and human rights are themes we see throughout this story. In stories from history as well as what happens to Eddie in present day.

Ask the class what they think racism is. Write their thoughts on the board and discuss.

Ask the same question about human rights. *See on the next page for the book *We Are All Born Free*, which is an illustrated version of the declaration of human rights.

On page 138 Eddie is accused of stealing from the department store. All she was doing was showing her Grandma a tiara. Why did the security guard think that she was stealing?

We learn from other characters throughout the story that discrimination occurred with other groups throughout history, not just black Americans.

- Miss Rodriguez tells that in Texas, schools were segregated, splitting up Mexican children and white children. That Mexican people could only use the local swimming pool one day a week, and some restaurants would refuse to serve Mexicans.
- Mrs Hulu, who works in the school canteen, was interned in a prison during the Second World War because she was a Japanese American.

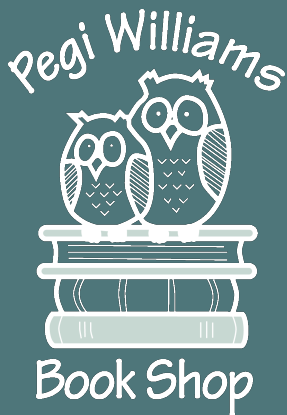
These are all examples of what happened throughout history in America.

Similar things happened in Australia too. Use some of the books listed on the next page to start a conversation about our own history.

We have learned the names of lots of interesting people in this book (* and in the additional books listed on the next page) and learnt about the amazing things they have achieved.

- Imagine you could invite anyone of these people (living or dead) to your school to talk to your class.
- Who would you choose and why?

Teacher's Notes



Some of the people mentioned in this book

- Rosa Parks
- Nelson Mandela
- Martin Luther King
- Harriet Tubman

Important people who fought for rights in Australia's history

- Edith Cowan
- Mum Shirl
- Faith Bandler

The activists in this book all believed they could make a change, and they did. You might want to look at some young people who are making a difference today. For example: Greta Thunberg or Malala Yousafzai.

Resources

Other books on the people and themes found In Rosa and the Daring Dog

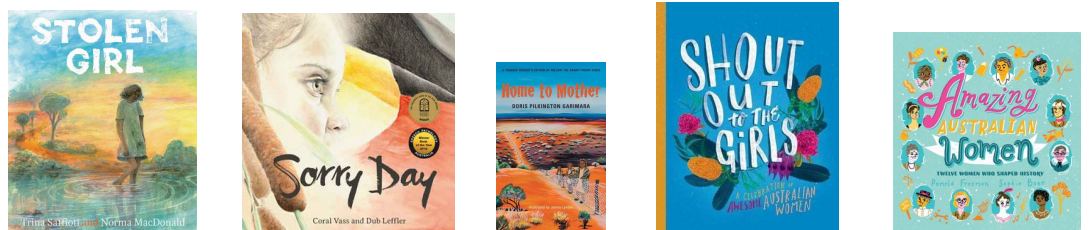


YouTube clips to listen to Martin Luther King Jr's speech

https://youtu.be/_IB0i6bJlJw

https://youtu.be/3P_s3ChZIRY

An Australian perspective



Young people using their voice today

