



TEACHERS' RESOURCES

RECOMMENDED FOR

For children 3 and up.
Preschool to lower primary

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KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** English; Creative Arts; Humanities & Social Science
- **General capabilities:** Ethical understanding; literacy; critical and creative thinking; personal and social capability; visual literacy

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

To discuss new vocabulary, respond to texts and share feelings and thoughts about the events and characters in texts.

- To use and experiment with different materials, and create artworks to communicate ideas to an audience.
- To use the text as a springboard for general discussion and exploration of major themes.

THEMES

- Courage
- Heroism
- Friendship
- Family
- Adventure

PREPARED BY

Penguin Random House Australia

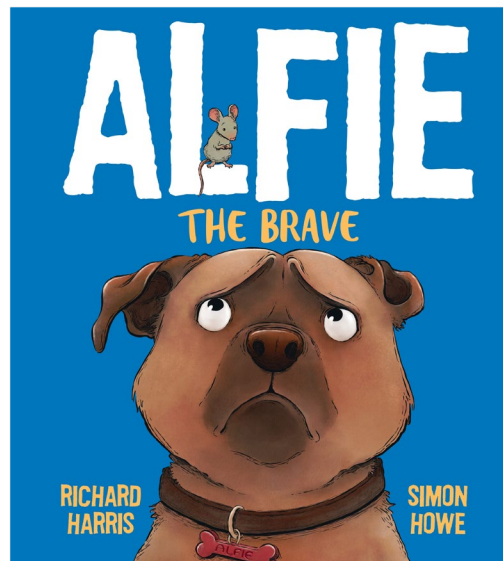
PUBLICATION DETAILS

ISBN: 9781761041358 (hardback)

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Alfie the Brave

Richard Harris
& Simon Howe

PLOT SUMMARY

A delightful picture book about a dog called Alfie who longs to be bold and brave like other dogs. From Australian of the Year Dr Richard 'Harry' Harris, a key member of the cave-diving team that rescued the Wild Boar soccer team in Thailand. Illustrated by the talented Simon Howe, who perfectly captures the emotional ups and downs of the adorable and expressive Alfie.

Alfie was a fine-looking dog. His coat was sleek and shiny like an otter. He was the son of champions.

But Alfie didn't feel like a champion.

Alfie was scared of . . . everything!

Could Alfie ever be bold and brave like other dogs?

A charming picture book about how bravery doesn't always come naturally.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Dr Richard 'Harry' Harris SC OAM is an Australian anaesthetist and cave diver who played a crucial role in the Tham Luang cave rescue. He and Craig Challen were jointly awarded 2019 Australian of the Year as a result of that rescue, and are the co-authors of *Against All Odds: The inside account of the Thai cave rescue and the courageous Australians at the heart of it*, a young readers' edition of which is publishing in 2022.

AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

Harry says:

After my involvement in the rescue of the young boys from the cave in Thailand, I was filled with admiration for how courageous the lads had been. They spent ten very long days sitting in the dark at the back of that cave, without any hope or expectation of rescue. I wondered how I might have fared under similar circumstances? I came to understand that most of us are not inherently brave, but rather it is something we have to work on by challenging ourselves throughout life by doing things outside our comfort zone.

I realised that Alfie, my real life, chicken-hearted hound might provide a wonderful metaphor for young people who increasingly seem to face the world with anxiety and trepidation. Alfie, a dog who looks singularly impressive at first glance, is in fact genuinely fearful of many things. It is comical to watch him try and puff himself up to face his little everyday challenges. Every story in the book has actually occurred, with the sad exception of the one heroic moment towards the end! But I know he has it in him,

and one day he will actually find his courage. In the meantime he is much loved and plays a more important role within our family; that of companion and emotional support dog to anyone who is feeling low or sad. That is his real superpower, as he is truly perceptive to people's feelings. And I guess that's my message for kids. Courage comes in many forms and can build over time. But it is not the most important quality. We all have unique skills, sometimes we just need time to discover what they are.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR



Simon Howe is an illustrator and author with a broad appetite for children's literature, animation, storytelling and design. He has worked with several notable Australian authors on books for children, and has designed and directed animation for advertising and television. His long-time collaboration

with ARIA award-winning children's band, Teeny Tiny Stevies, has seen him produce more than a dozen animated music videos. His first authored picture book, *Shoosh!*, was published in 2020. Simon lives in regional Victoria with his family.

ILLUSTRATOR'S INSPIRATION

Simon says:

The artwork for *Alfie the Brave* was all created digitally, and designed to reference the look of ink-line and wash. The drawing was done in Procreate, with colouring and effects completed across both Procreate and Photoshop. I didn't need to hunt very far for character inspiration, as Alfie is a real dog! While I needed to stylise his physiognomy enough to showcase a range of expressions and emotions, I strove to keep his anatomy reasonably true to life. I'm lucky enough to work from home, and a few homely references crept into the pictures. Millie, the youngest child in the book, turned out looking an awful lot like my two-year-old daughter, who delighted in watching me put these pictures together. On one spread, I also put Harry in my own red slippers, which tend to live under my drawing table when not in use.



THEMES

- **Friendship and family:** Looking at the book's illustrations and text, students can identify how Alfie relates to his family. What things do students think make their bond special?
- **Courage:** Using the illustrations in the book, children can identify parts of the story to link to their own experience. They can talk about the use of different colours, techniques and other things of interest in the art and also talk about the artist and her techniques.

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

- Look at the front cover of the book. Read the title together. Can you see what the title is referring to? What do you think the story will be about?
- Open the book flat and explore the front and back cover as one large image. How does the choice of colours and the scene that is illustrated make you feel?
- Read the blurb at the back of the book. What do you feel about it? What kind of things are you now expecting to see inside the book? What questions do you have?
- Just inside the cover, before the title pages and the start of the story, are some illustrated pages. These are called 'endpapers'. What do the endpapers in the front of the book show you? What do they add to what you've already guessed about the story?
- Read the story aloud as a group, pausing to take in Simon Howe's artwork and observe all the detail and difference you can find on each page.

KEY STUDY TOPICS

Literacy, language and storytelling

Questions

- How many characters are in this story? Do you think creatures other than people can be characters in a story? Can you think of other stories that have non-human characters?

Activity

- **New Words:** Can you find three words in the book that are new to you? Try to work out what they mean from the context (the way they are used and what surrounds them).

Courage

Activity

- Write a story about your own experience of courage with another person or pet. Include something you did to help them.
- What do you think is the most important message in this book? What does it teach us about courage and heroism?

Questions

- What do you notice about the very first page of the story? (Hint: what can you see?) What does it tell you about the characters in this book?
- What does it take to be brave?
- In what ways is Alfie shown to be brave?

Activities

- Write a sentence about a time you were brave on a piece of paper. Place all of the pieces of paper inside a box anonymously. Your teacher will share with the class the experiences that have been listed and ask the students to write a story about being brave.

Visual literacy

Questions

- How much of the story is told through the text and how much through the illustrations?
- How do the illustrations help to establish the setting and mood of the story?
- Consider the amount of detail in every illustration. How does the detail help to add to the story?
- How does the illustrator manage to include emotion in his illustrations?
- Choose your favourite illustration and explain to the class what it is that you like about that page. How did you react to that page as a reader?



Dogs!

Questions

- What characteristics do dogs have? List 5 words that describe a dog's behaviour and attitude towards people.
- What sorts of things do dogs like to do?
- In what ways are they different from other pets such as cats?
- Is it easy to train a dog?
- Is there anything dogs are afraid of?
- Looking at the title of the book, do you think overall Alfie is brave? Give reasons for your answer.



FURTHER READING FROM PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA



Go Home, Cat!
by Sonya Hartnett & Lucia Masciullo

Why this story? Read this gorgeous picture book from the combined talents of Sonya Hartnett and Lucia Masciullo about Nicholas and Cat, telling their story of friendship, courage and loyalty, and the things we do for those we treasure most.

When Nicholas finds a silver coin in the garden, he tells his cat, 'I can buy liquorice with this!'

Nicholas loves liquorice more than almost anything.

'Stay home, cat,' he says, and sets out for the shop.

But as Nicholas walks down the street he hears a voice he knows . . .

A delightful story about the special bond between a boy and his cat, from the award-winning team, Sonya Hartnett and Lucia Masciullo, celebrating friendship, courage and the value of those we love.

[Teachers' resources available.](#)



Blue Flower
by Sonya Hartnett
& Gabriel Evans

Why this story? Read another wonderful picture book by Sonya Hartnett with glorious illustrations by Gabriel Evans about finding beauty and difference in individuality. A story about self-esteem, resilience and the discovery that being different can be something wonderful.

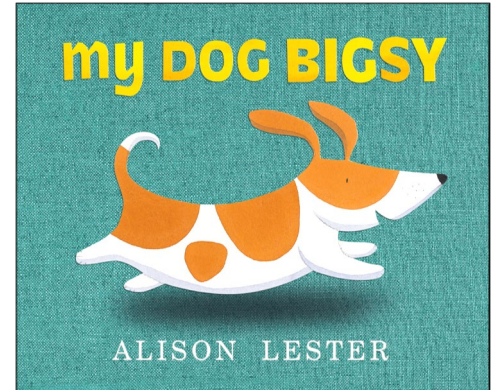
I lay down and put my nose in the grass. The grass was dotted with yellow flowers, but blue ones grew there too. I rolled over and looked at the trees and the clouds, and thought about things for a while.

'Not all clouds are white,' I said, and Piccolo looked at me.

'Not all trees are tall. Not all birds are brown. Not all cats are tabby like you, Piccolo. Some are black. Some are orange. Some are calico.'

Piccolo swished his stripy tail. I plucked a flower and showed it to him. 'This flower isn't yellow, but it isn't wrong. It is what it's supposed to be. No one would want it to be yellow. Everyone would say it's lovely just the way it is.'

[Teachers' resources available.](#)



My Dog Bigsy
by Alison Lester

Why this story? From Australia's favourite picture-book creator, Alison Lester, comes an energetic story about a little dog who causes a big commotion.

From Australia's favourite picture-book creator, Alison Lester, comes this energetic story about a little dog who causes a big commotion.

Meet my dog Bigsy. He's only small, but everyone knows he's the boss.

Each morning he visits the animals on the farm.

Squawk, neigh, quack, moo, baa, oink, cluck, purr, ruff ruff ruff!

What a lot of noise! And all because of Bigsy!

[Teachers' resources available.](#)



ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
Alfie the Brave	Richard Harris & Simon Howe	9781761041358	Pre-1	\$19.99		
My Dog Bigsy	Alison Lester	9780670078936	Pre-K	\$24.99		
Go Home, Cat!	Sonya Hartnett & Lucia Masciullo	9781760899493	Pre-1	\$24.99		
Blue Flower	Sonya Hartnett & Gabriel Evans	9781760894450	K-2	\$24.99		
TOTAL						

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