

A Young Hero



By Chase Tunbridge
Illustrated by Craig Deeley



Have you heard the story of Ruby Bridges?
She was an ordinary little girl who was very brave.
Read this book to find out more about her.

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What does it mean to be brave?

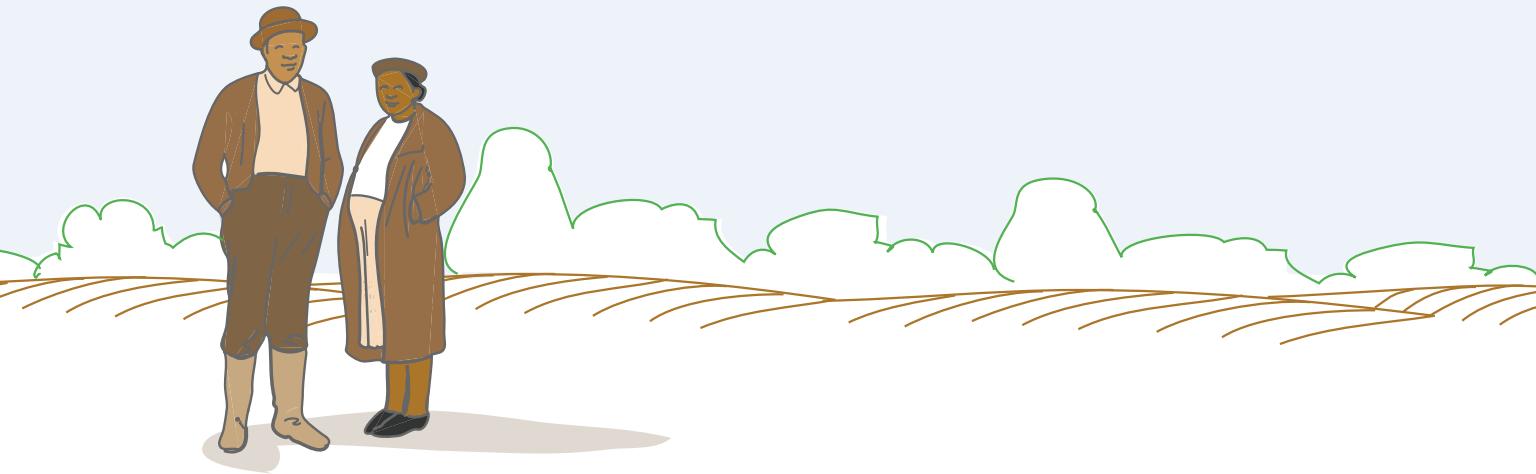
Most of the time, we think bravery is only for the heroes we see on TV or in the movies.

Does bravery only happen on TV?

Is bravery only for grown ups?

Can a young person be brave?





This is the story of Ruby Bridges.

Ruby was born in Mississippi. Her father worked on a farm. When Ruby was very young her father lost his job. She and her family had to leave the farm and move to the city of New Orleans, Louisiana.

Even though Ruby's parents worked very hard, her family didn't always have enough money for food.



When Ruby was young, black children and white children in New Orleans were not able to go to the same schools. The schools for black children were not equal to the schools for white children.

There was no real reason for it to be like this. It was racism and it was against the law.

A judge made a new law that said the schools had to integrate. He asked four young black girls to go to two white schools. Three of the girls went to one school. Ruby went to William Frantz Elementary alone.

She was the first black child to enter an all-white school in New Orleans.

Ruby was only six years old. She was young, and she was very brave.





On Ruby's first day, a large crowd of angry white people waited outside of the school. They tried to scare her. They teased her and yelled mean things at her. They were afraid of change.

The President of the United States sent Federal Marshals to protect Ruby. They would not let the angry people harm her.

Each new day was just like the first. Every day angry people tried to keep Ruby away from the school. Every day she came back!

How do you think this made Ruby feel? How would you feel if it were you?

If Ruby felt fear, she didn't show it.





Once Ruby reached her desk she was able to relax. She was the only child in her classroom!

Most of the white people would not send their children to the school because Ruby was there. Ruby did not have anyone to play with. It was not safe for her to go outside for recess.

The only other person in the classroom was her teacher, Mrs. Henry. Every other teacher at William Frantz Elementary had refused to teach a black child. Mrs. Henry had never seen such a brave person, young or old. She was happy to teach Ruby to read and write.





After a long while, the white people began to overcome racism and started sending their children to integrated schools.

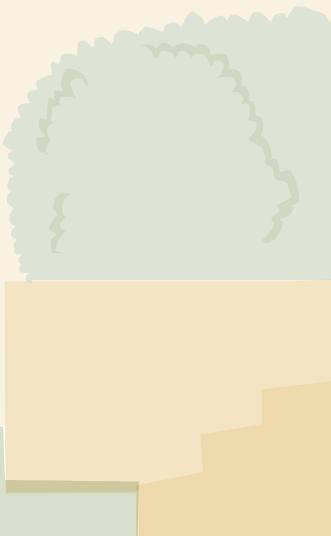
By the time Ruby went to second grade, classrooms had many children, black and white.





When Ruby Bridges grew up, she returned to William Frantz Elementary to help all the children, black and white. Today, she visits schools to tell her story.

The next time someone asks you if a young person can be brave, remember the young hero, Ruby Bridges.



WILLIAM FRAN^T PUBLIC SCHOOL



On November 14, 1960, Ruby Bridges entered William Frantz Elementary School in New Orleans. She was the first African-American child to attend an all-white school in Louisiana.

Racism

The belief that one race of people is better than another, simply because of the color of their skin.

Integrate

To combine one thing with another to make it whole. To mix together.

"Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome."

- Booker T. Washington
(1856-1915)

About the Author

When Chase Tunbridge visited the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, Tennessee she was overwhelmed with feelings of gratitude and respect for the bravery of the citizens who helped change the United States. Because of their actions, she was able to grow up in a time where people of all races went to school together, and she is so glad she never knew her country to be any other way.

About the Illustrator

When Craig was in 1st grade he created a picture collage with bottle caps and acorns and a dog cut out of brown paper. All the kids thought the dog was a cow. From that day to this Craig has loved being an artist, drawing, illustrating and animating. (Because in art, dogs can be cows!)