



**Rescue Pup**  
**Jean Little**

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Consider the following question as you read *Rescue Pup*:

**How can a pup teach a person about kindness?**

**Story**

Shakespeare is a Seeing Eye puppy. But before the time comes for him to train with a blind person, he must spend a year with a girl who has never learned to love. He does all he can to teach her, but the challenges are great. By the end of the story he has earned the title, Rescue Pup.

**Author**

Jean Little is one of Canada's most-beloved writers for children. She is also blind and currently living with her third Seeing Eye dog. Three times she has travelled to the Seeing Eye in New Jersey to train with a dog, first Zephyr, then Ritz and now Pippa. For years she thought about writing a book about the training of a guide-dog puppy. Now she has done it, but Shakespeare is not just any dog. Jean is also the author of *Birdie for Now* (Orca, 2002) and *I Gave My Mom a Castle* (Orca, 2003). Watch for *Rescue Dog* in 2005.

**Curricular Integration**

**Language Arts**

- Famous People: Louis Braille, Helen Keller, Stevie Wonder, Ray Charles, Claude Monet, John Milton, Steven Hawking, Ludwig Von Beethoven and Homer all have something in common. To begin a lesson on living with disabilities, give students these names and have them try to make the connection among them. If this is a new kind of activity for your class you may want to begin with an association type game. For example: Once the connection has been made, talk about the challenges each individual would have faced. Have students then choose one person to research to find out how their disability influenced their life.
- Informational Poetry: In her book *Make It Real: Strategies for Success with Informational Texts* (372.6), author Linda Hoyt presents a lesson on creating poetry using nonfiction. Her outline on page 275 guides you through

the use of visualization and our five senses, to create a list of words and phrases on your chosen topic, from which the poetry will evolve. This can be used with any of the topics listed in this guide or that come out of your reading of *Rescue Pup*.

- Communication types: How do we communicate with each other? How does Tessa make herself understood in the story? Brainstorm with your students all the ways of communicating they can find in *Rescue Pup*. Create a chart or web of ideas, especially ones that are non-traditional.
- Sometimes we don't realize how much an event in our lives affects us. "As he mended, some of the deepest hurts hidden in Tessa began to heal too" (p. 56). Near the end of *Rescue Pup*, we start to see a new Tessa emerge. Have students write a journal entry from her point of view, describing the change she is feeling and why it is so important. Include three things from earlier in the story that she might do differently now that she has started to heal. You might want to extend it further to think of a time you or someone you know felt badly about something and how it felt. Talk about it and see how it compares to what you have written.

### Art

- The Power of Eyes: Students will draw a variety of types of eyes and end by drawing a portrait. The following materials are suggested to complete these lessons: charcoal pencils, pencil crayons, tracing paper, drawing or other white paper, B pencils, pastels and tissues for smudging. Have students look through a variety of picture books, art books or pictures you have collected and observe the eyes. Have students draw a series of three types of animal eyes. These may all be from the same species or cover different types. Discuss the similarities and differences among them and between the animal eyes and human eyes. Next have them draw one human eye using only black and white, then a pair of eyes using colour. To end this series of lessons, have students choose one of the characters from *Rescue Pup* and create a portrait of him or her.
- Using the book *Art Dog* as a guide, create dog portraits in the style of famous artists. This book transforms the work of Leonardo da Vinci into Leonardo Dog Vinci to create masterpieces in a new light. You may select any artist you wish, though if particular artists are new to the students you will have to introduce them before undertaking this activity.

- Idioms, similes and metaphors are phrases that describe things in unique ways. Illustrate each of the following phrases from *Rescue Pup*, both literally and figuratively: got off on the wrong foot, her face set like marble, an alien world, eyes bright with menace, the chip is off your shoulder and put my foot in my mouth. Using a book such as *My Teacher Likes to Say* will provide some examples to share with the class. Students can look for more figurative language in *Rescue Pup* or in other books that they are reading and create illustrations to accompany it. Display the images with the phrases.
- Tessa feels very strongly about the book *Good Night Moon*. If students are familiar with the book, have them discuss why she might love it so much. If not, read it to the students or if there are enough copies, divide into groups and have a student read it to each group. Then complete the activity. Have students find other picture books that have a similar theme or ones that talk about loneliness, facing fears or belonging. Have students write about how these stories connect to the emotions they have seen in Tessa.

### Social Studies

- Homes around the world look very different from each other. People can live in brick homes, bungalows, thatched huts, trailers or houseboats. They can be homeless or live outside in the elements. *A Life Like Mine* (305.23) by Unicef and Dorling Kindersley is about children around the world, their homes and their rights. Using this and other resources have students make a chart listing different types of homes children live in, their basic needs and their rights as children. Discuss how this information relates to the class personally and talk about children and situations in which it does not occur. Unfortunately, not all children in the world have what they need. In *Rescue Pup*, Tessa lives in a foster home. She feels that she doesn't have a home, though she has lived in several houses. Discuss what this means. (With this activity it is important to be sensitive to the particular living situation of every child in the class so as not to wound anyone or put anyone on the spot.)

### Science

- Animal Communication: Animals have many ways of communicating; almost every species its own system. In *Rescue Pup*, we see how Larkin and Shakespeare communicate (remember, *Rescue Pup* is fiction!). Other

animals change colours, use touch, scratch things or make a variety of sounds. Have students select one form of communication or a group of animals to find out more.

### **Drama**

- Shakespeare has an inquisitive nature. Have students write short skits that show this trait in a variety of ways. Groups of 3-4 students would work best. They may work from a list of ideas or create impromptu skits,
- Hand gestures are sometimes used to signal dogs to perform specific tasks. Learn some of the basic ones and add some of your own. Perform short instructions using only gestures of some sort. Specific verbal commands are used with guide dogs. Find out what those are and how blind people instruct their dogs while their dogs guide them. Then dramatize. For example, dogs are not aware of traffic lights. Find out how dogs know when to start across the street.
- Fears and phobias, such fear of the dark, snakes, spiders, making friends or closed spaces, can have a minor or major impact on our lives. As a class, brainstorm ideas on how you might overcome a fear. Then in small groups choose a fear and try out the suggestions in a short improvisation. Share it with the class.
- Imagine what you would feel like if you were suddenly given something you have always wanted such as a family and a home. What emotions would you feel? What would you say? Have students talk about this share their responses.

### **Suggested Resources**

#### **Fiction**

Bauer, Marion Dane. *Runt*

Blake, Robert J. *ToGo*

Bennan-Nelson, Denise. *My Teacher Likes to Say*

Brown, Margaret Wise. *The Important Book, Good Night Moon*

Bunting, Eve. *The Summer of Riley*

Creech, Sharon. *Love That Dog*

DiCamillo, Kate. *Because of Wynn Dixie*

Edwards, Julie Andrews. *Dragon, Hound of Honour*

Fleishmann, Paul. *Weslandia*

Harlow, Joan Hiatt. *Star in the Storm*

Hurd, Thacher. *Art Dog*

Little, Jean. *Birdie For Now, Different Dragons, I Gave My Mom A Castle, Stars, Come Out Within, Willow and Twig*

Read, Nicholas. *One In A Million*

Rylant, Cynthia. *Dog Heaven*

Thomas, Jane Resh. *The Comeback Dog*

### **Nonfiction**

(Dewey Decimal Classification numbers appear in parentheses where applicable.)

Bender, Michael. *All The World's A Stage* (822.3)

Claybourne, Anna. *The World Of Shakespeare* (822.3)

Darling, Kathy. *ABC Dogs* (636.7)

Greer, Colin and Kohl, Herbert. *A Call to Character* (808.8)

Hausman, Gerald. *Dogs of Myth: Tales From Around The World* (398.2)

Kindersley, Barnabas and Anabel. *Children Just Like Me* (305.2)

MacDonald, Fiona. *Homes* (392.3)

Moore, Eva. *Buddy, The First Seeing Eye Dog* (636.7)

Patten, J.M. *Numbers and Measuring* (530.8)

Rosen, Michael (ed). *Home: A Collaboration of 30 Distinguished Authors and Illustrators to Aid The Homeless* (810.3)

Schneck, Marcus. *Dogs: A Portrait Of The Animal World* (636.7)

Seckel, Al. *The Art of Optical Illusions* (152.14)

### Online

“Strategies for Teaching Students With Visual Impairments”  
[as.wvu.edu/~scidis/vision.html#sect0](http://as.wvu.edu/~scidis/vision.html#sect0)

“American Foundation For The Blind Braille Bug Site” [afb.org/braillebug/](http://afb.org/braillebug/)

“ABC Teach- Graphing Activities” [Abcteach.com](http://Abcteach.com)

“Character Counts” [charactercounts.org](http://charactercounts.org)

“Idiom Site” [idiomsite.com](http://idiomsite.com)

“Unicef” [unicef.org](http://unicef.org)

“The Seeing Eye” [seeingeye.org](http://seeingeye.org)

“Shakespeare In The Classroom” [pbs.org/shakespeare/educators/](http://pbs.org/shakespeare/educators/)

“Shakespeare For Kids: Activities for Children and Families”  
[www.folger.edu/education/kids/kidshome.asp](http://www.folger.edu/education/kids/kidshome.asp)

“How Lasers Work” [science.howstuffworks.com/laser.htm](http://science.howstuffworks.com/laser.htm)

“Foundation for Fighting Blindness Tips for Teachers”  
[www.blindness.org/coping/resourceDetail.asp?res=1&id=23](http://www.blindness.org/coping/resourceDetail.asp?res=1&id=23)

### A Few Words From the Author

Dear friends of Shakespeare,

What made me write *Rescue Pup*?

I will tell you some of the answer to this question, but exactly where a story comes from is not always clear even to the author. I was surprised myself when I discovered that the Seeing Eye puppy in the book was bilingual! But the following facts about my guide dogs and me will help you to understand what made me tell Shakespeare's tale.

I have owned three Seeing Eye dogs. I have put the first two into other books. My very first was a yellow lab called Zephyr. I tell all about going to get him and our joys and problems in my autobiographical book *Stars Come Out Within*. He had to stop guiding when he was ten because he became too lame with arthritis to keep up to me. He went to live with a wonderful family who cherished him, and he died peacefully at age twelve. He looked exactly like Shakespeare. He was also the model for Gully in my book *Different Dragons*.

My second Seeing Eye dog was a black Lab named Ritz. He is in *Willow and Twig*. I changed his name to Sirius, but that dog was really Ritz. He had to be put to sleep when he was eleven. He was a gentle and serious dog. We still miss him.

My third Seeing Eye dog, Pippa, is sitting next to me as I write this letter. She thinks it is her dinner time and wants me to come right now and feed her and Snug, my great nephew Ben's pug. But she is half-an-hour early and they will have to wait.

When they gave me Pippa, they told me an eleven-year-old girl named Autumn raised her. I wanted to thank Autumn and all the other kids who raise puppies to become dog guides so I started to write a story about a dog called Shakespeare. It told not only the part you will read, called *Rescue Pup* but what happened to Shakespeare when he began to guide a blind young man named Tim. My editor thought we could make two books out of the one longer story so that is what we have done. By the time you finish reading the first half, I hope the sequel, *Rescue Dog*, will also be available.

It is hard for me to imagine life without a Seeing Eye dog. Pippa not only keeps me safe, she helps me not to feel lonely. She loves me and I love her dearly, just as I loved Zephyr and Ritz.

You should know a couple of things about Seeing Eye dogs. You should never start to talk to one or pet or feed him or her without asking the blind person's permission. If the dogs get distracted while they are working, they may stop concentrating and endanger their person's safety.

The other small thing is that dogs are colour blind and so cannot tell red from green in traffic lights. I listen to the sound of passing cars, and when I decide it is safe to cross I say, "Forward, Pippa." She goes when I speak unless she sees some danger I have missed. If she does see something of the kind, she stands still on the curb until the danger passes or I change the command.

Keep reading a Little and have fun with Shakespeare!

Jean Little