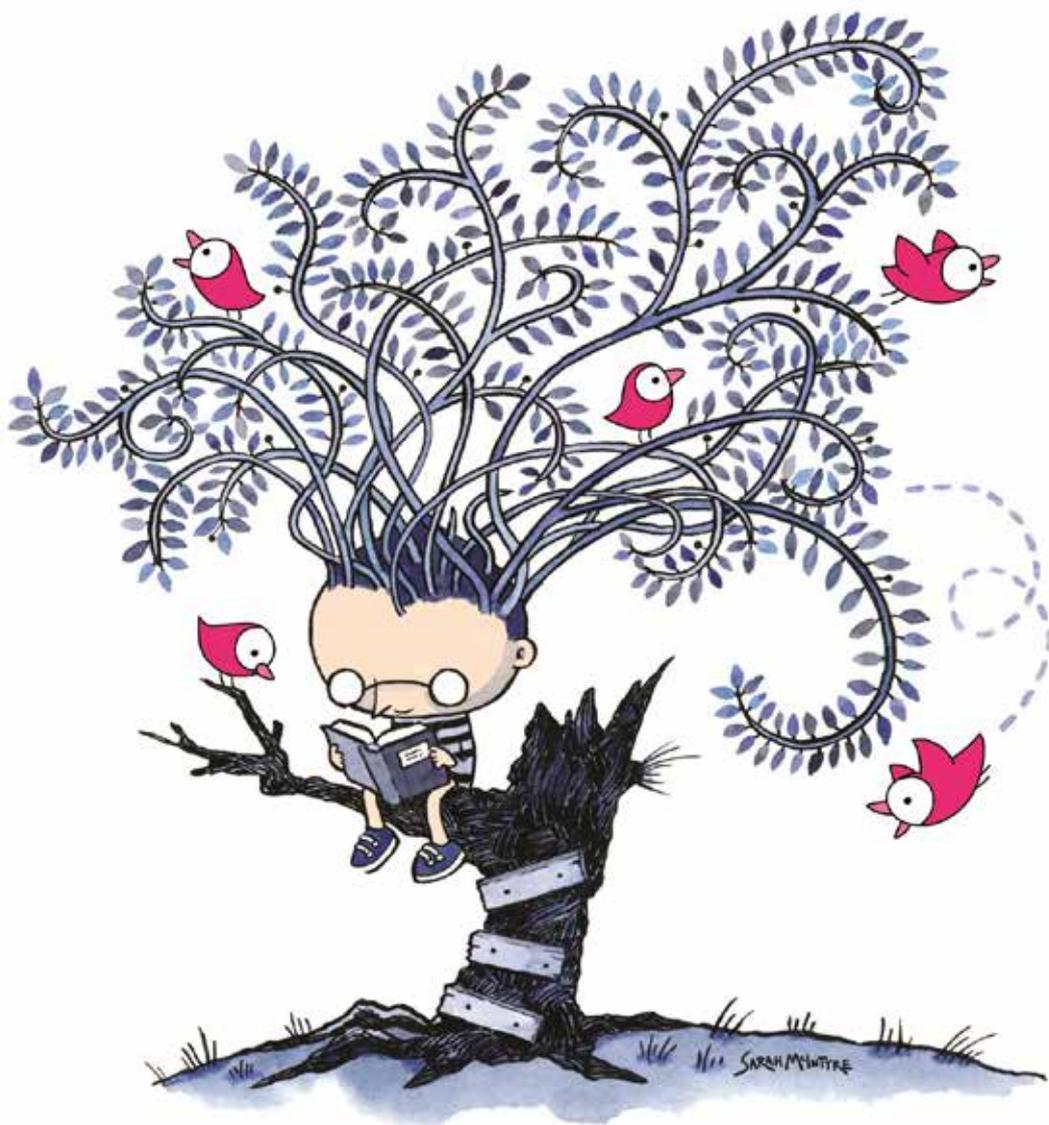


# Just Imagine Book Guide

## *My Place*

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Illustrated by Donna Rawlins



# Just Imagine...





# Before Reading

Cover up the title on the front cover.

- What do the children think the title might be?

Share the title *My Place* and consider why the book may have been given this title? Who do they think the 'my' will be?

Ask the children to record everything they can see on the front cover on a Post-it note.

- Why is there vegetation in the bottom part of the front cover? Is there anything unusual about this?

Ask the children:

- Who do they think the story will appeal to?
- What genre do they think this book belongs to?
- Who do they think the book is aimed at? Why?
- Where do they think the story is set?

Allow some time for the children to explore the first double page with the timeline on. You can use a paperclip to secure the pages so the children don't read past this page. If it is possible for the children to have their own copy, they can read at their own pace and write down their responses.

- Is there anything that puzzles them about the book?
- Do they have any questions?
- Is there an image they like or dislike?

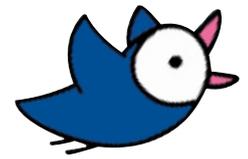
Use the children's questions to initiate a discussion – they will be more engaged if it is something they are genuinely interested in. Some questions might be answered easily, whilst others may need to be explored at a later date or after further exploration of the book.

# During Reading

At all stages, invite the children to share their ideas and responses. Avoid asking too many leading or closed questions. The prompts below are merely intended to be used as supplementary questions. Please select or adapt the questions which you think are most appropriate for the children you are working with. They will ask and answer many of their own questions, if they are encouraged to look closely at the pictures and discuss their ideas.

## Timeline

- Ask the children to use the information on the first double page to create their own timeline showing the major events in the history of the Aboriginal people.
- What is a convict?
- What important events happen in 1798 and how did they affect the Aboriginal people?
- How does the layout of the timeline help you better understand the history of the Aboriginal people?
- What do you think the spiral at the beginning of the timeline might represent?



## 1988

- Gully thinks the cars are sheep. What does this tell you about Bourke?
- Why did Laura and her family move?
- Can you use the map to find the fig tree and canal? Show a partner.
- What is the purpose of the map?
- Look at the map of the area in 1978. How has the land use around the old junk yard changed?
- Look at the t-shirt at the bottom of the page emblazoned with 'FEED THE WORLD'. What message do you think the author and illustrator might be trying to convey?

## 1978

- Find and copy (onto a Post-it or whiteboard) a group of words that show that Mike's mum wants to leave.
- Describe the traditions followed by Greek people during Easter.
- Complete a Venn diagram, describing the similarities and differences between how you, or someone you know, celebrates Easter and how Mike celebrates Easter.

## 1968

- What does Sophia mean when she says she 'lives with Paul McCartney'?
- Is there anything different about the content of this page to the other two pages? Why do you think this might be?
- How do we know Sofia's mum is concerned for the safety of Michaelis?
- How do you think Michaelis' girlfriend felt at the party?
- Can you use books and the internet to find out more about the Vietnam War?
- How does the map differ from maps you might find in an atlas?

## 1958

- How does Michaelis feel about his new sister?
- What is different about how Michaelis uses the big tree to how Sophia uses the tree?
- Find two pieces of evidence that suggest Michaelis is adventurous and rebellious.
- What does Michaelis mean when he says the fence by the canal has 'good holes'?

## 1948

- Look carefully at the map. Where does Jen take Soxie for walks? Where do Jen and her friends play? Where does mum work?
- Describe Miss Miller to a partner. What sort of person do you think she is? What might she look like?
- How do you think Jen feels towards her new dad?
- Where do you think Jen has got the idea from that the house by the big tree is haunted?
- Write a story about Jen and her friends visiting the haunted house. What might happen?

## 1938

- What has happened to the Thomsons?
- Why do you think people celebrated when the Thomsons were evicted?
- What is Col's job?
- Why are there so many empty houses in the street now?
- How do we know people are struggling financially?

## 1928

- Look at the timeline on the first double page. What important event happened in 1928?
- How did Dec get a job at the brickworks?
- How do you think Bridie feels towards Col?
- Who do you think Henry is?
- How do we know Bridie is fond of Henry?



## 1918

- What does Champ mean when her talks about ‘The War Effort’?
- Write down what Mum might’ve been thinking and feeling during the street party.
- What has happened to Mr. and Mrs. Miller’s sons?
- Look at the map. Why might someone eat the rabbit belonging to the girl who lives on top of the shop if it escapes?
- How has the war affected the community?

## 1908

- How do the map’s colours differ from the colours used in previous maps? Why do you think this is?
- What do you think ‘Cracker Night’ might be?
- What does the phrase ‘out to pasture’ mean?
- What evidence is there in this period that technology is changing?
- How do you think Mr. Muller feels about the changes going on around him?
- How do we know that Evelyn feels she is growing up and no longer a child?

## 1898

- What do you think has happened to Rowley’s dad?
- How have the Brickpits and factories affected Rowley’s dad’s health?
- What might the ‘Labor Party’ be that Mr Merry organises once a month?
- Look at the map. How do the inhabitants travel?
- What does Mr Merry mean when he says, ‘every brick in every house tells a story’?

## 1888

- What is a ‘breezeway’?
- Why do you think Father is worried?
- Describe the relationship between Victoria and the Owen’s girls. What does the phrase ‘as if I’d care!’ suggest?
- Use books or the internet to find out about The Temperance Movement.
- How has Miss Muller inspired Victoria?
- How do we know Father does not like Miss Muller?

## 1878

- Who do you think Heinrich is? Has he appeared in any other parts of the story?
- What do you think the ‘dragon’ really was? Why?
- Why do you think Heinrich refuses to tell his grandfather that he really wants to be a balloonist?
- How do Heinrich’s family make a living?

## 1868

- Who do you think Wong Ga Leck is? Why do the other children treat him differently?
- What does the phrase ‘heathen savage’ mean?
- How do Minna and her family celebrate Christmas?
- How does this map differ from the previous maps?

## 1858

- How might Benjamin’s father’s words inspire him later on in life?
- Why does Benjamin feel a connection with Leckie?
- Leckie and Benjamin are wrong to throw the figs at the children who tease them. Do you agree?



## 1848

- How has the creek become polluted?
- What did Uncle Sam bring home for Johanna?
- Why do you think Mr Owen gives Johanna a 'weird look' when she climbs his tree?
- How do Johanna and her family make a living? Look carefully at the map!

## 1838

- Why does Ma dislike the Owens family so much?
- Who are the most powerful characters in this section of the story? How do you know?
- How does Davey respond to Mr John's children?
- What is a tannery?

## 1828

- What are convicts?
- Use the internet or books to research how and why convicts were transported to Australia. How were they treated?
- How do we know the convicts dislike the Owens?

## 1818

- What does the sentence, 'Mother gave Sarah her second best shawl' suggest about the treatment of the servants?
- What sort of person do you think John is? Use evidence to support your answer.
- What do the servants and convicts eat?

## 1808

- Imagine you are Sarah. Write a diary describing your day to day life and the work you do. You could also talk about Sam, Alice, Pokey, where you sleep and the day the soldiers visited.

## 1798

- Why was Sam sent to Australia?
- Do you think Sam deserved his punishment?
- How do you think Sam felt when he stepped off the ship?
- What kind of a master do you think Mr Owens is?



## 1788

- What does Barangaroo mean by 'everywhere we go is home'?
- Describe Barangaroo's lifestyle.
- Why do you think Barangaroo's story is left to the end? What impact does it have?
- Who does the land belong to? Does it belong to anyone?

# After Reading

- Now you have read *My Place* read it again, starting from the back of the book. Is it easier to read when you start at the back of the book? Try and record as much information as you can about each family. Make sure you look at the maps too for information about each family and their impact on the land.
- What does Grandmother mean when she says they have belonged to this place 'for ever and ever'? How can someone belong to a place forever?
- What do you think the big tree symbolises? What do you think the condition of creek and canal symbolises?
- Are there any things that do not change in *My Place*? (They might be things you can't see e.g. friendship, hope)
- *My Place* is set in Australia are there any similarities between this story and the place where you live?



## **Dream time**

The Dreamtime is the Aboriginal understanding of the world, of its creation, and great stories. Read some Aboriginal stories such as *The Rainbow Serpent*, *Tiddalick the Greedy Frog* and stories retelling how the kangaroo got its pouch and what makes the platypus so special.

## **My local area**

Take a walk around your local area and see if you can identify the main physical and human features. Can you create a map to describe where things are? Can you find any old maps from the past to identify how your local area has changed? You could also look at the different types of buildings in your area and discuss how they are used, carry out a traffic survey or think about how you could improve your local area and write to a local MP to persuade them to help you do so.

## **Diary**

Imagine you are one of the children. Write a diary, using the information from the text and map, describing a day in your life. Where do you go? What do you see? Who do you talk to?

## **Biography**

Look at one of the characters who lives through a number of decades. Write a biography or autobiography detailing their life, referring to their family, their jobs, their dreams and aspirations.

Write a paragraph describing what you think you will be doing in ten or twenty years.

## **Compare and contrast**

Use a double bubble map to compare and contrast two periods of time from the book, thinking about how the land has changed and the people who live there have changed. Put the two dates in the central bubbles. In the circles that link to both central bubbles, note the similarities between the two periods. The circles that link to only one central bubble are for the children to record the differences between the two periods.

## **Friendship and neighbours**

Read the maps and text carefully. How do friends and neighbours help each other throughout the story? How do you help your friends and neighbours and how do they help you?

# If you liked this book, you might enjoy...

Alvaro F Villa *Flood*

Jeannie Baker *Window*

Jeannie Baker *Belonging*

Lynne Cherry *The Great Kapok Tree*