



## A word from the President

### Dear Friends

As I sit here looking at my newly decorated Christmas tree, I'm reminded of a story my father used to tell at this time of year called 'The good little Christmas tree' by Ursula Moray Williams, where a little tree from a peasant family goes into the forest to look for more decorations and slowly gives up all its needles for some lovely decorations from creatures in the woods. It's a beautiful story and one that captures the magic of that hallowed night when St Nicholas reigns.

It is sometimes hard to remember the sparkle of Christmas amongst the mad rush that precedes it, and for some people a time when life is very hard, with job losses just before a traditionally expensive time. So for some they may be just like the peasant family who have little to give their children except for the home made biscuits on the branches.

The sparkle can be found again in getting back to basics and just giving what we have. Time is more precious than gold. And something handmade, into which much thought has gone, is so much better than an expensive gift with no thought given. Let us be kind to each other this festive season and aware of those less fortunate.

I wish you all a gentle and joyful time over Christmas and may 2025 bring hopeful beginnings.

**Corrina Gordon,**  
FDNWC President



## Annual General Meeting

This year's AGM was held at the National Library on 20 June 2024.

The event started at 5:30pm in Te Kupenga with a presentation from Mary Skarott, Research Librarian Children's Literature, showing a selection of picture books added to the Dorothy Neal White and the National

Children's Collections in the past year. Te Kupenga is a new room on Level 1 of the library, specifically designed for sharing our collections.



*Presenting one of the new books in the National Children's Collection, a New York Times Best Illustrated Book, 2023:*

*We are starlings: inside the mesmerizing magic of a murmuration / by Robert Furrow & Donna Jo Napoli ; illustrated by: Marc Martin. New York: Random House Studio, 2023*

Drinks and nibbles were served afterwards, followed by the AGM.

There was a very small attendance of 10 at the AGM. Full minutes of the meeting are available on the Friends of the Dorothy Neal White website, as are the reports from the President, Treasurer, and Research Librarian <https://dnwfriends.nzl.org/index.php/home/agm/>

## Election of committee

All committee members were re-elected.

## Committee 2024-2025

**President:** Corrina Gordon

**Treasurer/Membership Secretary/Webmaster:**  
Jeff Hunt

**Facebook:** Chantalle Smith

The roles of Minutes Secretary and Newsletter Editor will be shared by committee members on a roster.

**Committee:** Barbara Robertson, Chantalle Smith, Joan McCracken, Kathryn Walls.

Ex officio – ATL Research Librarian Children's Literature  
Mary Skarott.

## From the Research Librarian

The major news since the last newsletter is the welcome return of the children's literature displays to the General Reading Room now that the heavy construction work is over. We now have a special child-friendly set of wooden shelves to display selected titles from the NCC,

and the display cabinet is also back (see 'In the Display Cabinet' below for more detail). Both displays continue to be rotated at approximately quarterly intervals.



NCC display shelves in General Reading Room (photo: Mary Skarott)

Some small updates and corrections have recently been made recently to the Children's Literature research guide which continues to be available here:

<https://natlib.govt.nz/researchers/guides/children-s-literature>

All our online research guides are regularly checked to make sure that the information and resources they contain is still accurate and current.

**Mary Skarott**  
Research Librarian, Children's Literature

## In the display cabinet

The display cabinet has made a welcome return this year, after a taking a break during the heaviest phase of construction work. The Level 1 foyer has now been reconfigured to include the Te Kupenga classroom and new lockers and seating, so the cabinet is now inside the main reading room. It is easily visible as you enter, straight past the enquiries desk on the left-hand side of the room.

**#32 Animals in black and white: wood engraving in children's literature**  
(on display from 13 March 2024 – 25 June 2024)

Wood engraving is a relief printing process. A printing block is created by using metal engraving tools to carve an image from a piece of hard wood, such as box or pear, cut on the end grain. Using a dense wood allows for the use of a wide variety of cutting tools. Strictly speaking, this is a slightly different process from creating wood cuts, which utilize softwood that is cut with the

grain. However, the terms are sometimes used interchangeably.

The acknowledged master of wood engraving is Thomas Bewick (1753-1828) who began work as an apprentice engraver in Newcastle as a lad of 14. He is remembered for his sympathetic depictions of birds and animals, in books such as the *History of British birds* and a number of editions of *Aesop's fables*. The display included an engraving by Bewick from Mrs Trimmer's *Fabulous histories*. His work is notable for his development and use of the 'white line' technique. In this method the original drawn line is cut away and does not print. By contrast, the 'black line' engraving technique aims to reproduce the appearance of a line drawing on paper, cutting away all the surface except the lines of the drawing.

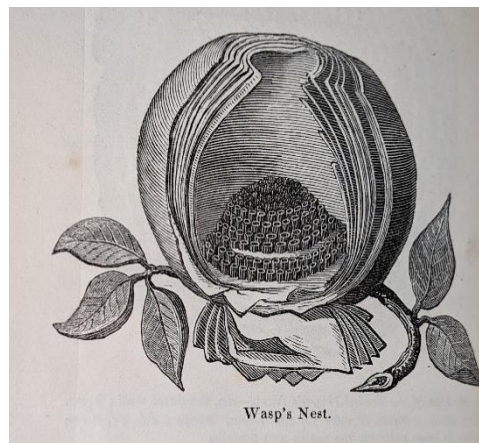
The other artists whose work was displayed also used wood engraving to produce their beautiful interpretations of birds and animals. All the images are printed using only one colour of ink, so they incorporate line, dots, hatching and cross-hatching to show the textures, tone and detail of fur, feathers and features.

Books included in the display:

*Uncle Philip's conversations with children about the habits and mechanical employments of inferior animals.* With numerous engravings on wood. (New ed.)

London: Thomas Tegg and Son; Glasgow: Griffin and Co. ; Dublin: Tegg, Wise, and Co., 1835.

*Scrupulous attention to detail is evident in this scientific engraving which uses the 'black line' technique to faithfully replicate the original drawing. The 'inferior animals' referred to in the title are, in this instance, insects and birds.*



Wood engraving from: *Uncle Philip's conversations with children about the habits and mechanical employments of inferior animals.*

Trimmer, Sarah. *Fabulous histories, or, The history of the Robins: for the instruction of children on their treatment of animals.* With woodcuts by Bewick. (15th ed.)

London: Thomas Ward, 1845?  
(First published in 1786)

Roche, Aloysius. *Animals under the rainbow.* With wood-engravings by Agnes Miller Parker. London: Hollis and Carter, 1952.

Young, Andrew. *Quiet as moss: thirty-six poems*. With wood engravings by Joan Hassall. London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1959.

Farjeon, Eleanor. *Dark world of animals*. Wood engravings by T. Stoney. London: Sylvan Press, 1945.  
*A delicate example of the 'white line' technique.*



Wood engraving by T. Stoney, from: *Dark world of animals*.

Andersen, H.C. *An anniversary edition of the first four tales from Hans Andersen*. Illustrated with woodcuts by Gwen Raverat. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986. (First published in 1935)

Falla, R. A. *Some New Zealand birds*. Illustrated by E. Mervyn Taylor. Wellington, N.Z.: Price Milburn, 1960 (First published as a Primary School Bulletin by School Publications Branch, Department of Education, in 1940)  
*E. Mervyn Taylor began his working life as an engraver with a manufacturing jewellery firm, before moving to advertising and then finally pursuing a career as an artist and illustrator. The wood engravings in this book are some of the many that he made for Department of Education publications, including the School Journal.*



Wood engraving by E. Mervyn Taylor from: *Some New Zealand birds*.

*Aesop's fables*. Edited and illustrated with wood engravings by Boris Artzybasheff. London: Charles Skilton, 1948.

**Additional photos of the display are available on the National Library's Facebook page:**

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?vanity=NationalLibraryNZ&set=a.720682526847006>

### #33 Elsie Locke, 1912-2001

(on display from 26 June 2024 – 24 September 2024)

Elsie Locke (née Farrelly) was born in Hamilton in 1912, the youngest of six children. After the family moved to rural Waiuku in 1914, she spent the rest of her childhood there, and attended Waiuku District High School. Elsie was determined not to be a teacher or a nurse - her goal was to be a writer. In 1930 she took the first step on that path when, with a tuition scholarship, she began her studies at Auckland University College.

Elsie produced a large body of work for readers of all ages. Her writing for children reflects her commitment to topics such as history (including both Māori and Pākehā perspectives), the environment and women's rights. It encompasses non-fiction, novels and picture books, and pieces for the School journal. Elsie's papers are held here at the Alexander Turnbull Library and include research notes and drafts for many of her works for young readers.

Her best-known book for children is undoubtedly *The runaway settlers*, which was her first historical novel, published in 1965 and reprinted several times. *The runaway settlers* won the inaugural Gaelyn Gordon Award for a Much-Loved Book in 1999. Prior to that, Elsie had received the Children's Literature Association's Award for Distinguished Services to New Zealand Children's Literature (1992) and the Margaret Mahy Lecture Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature (1996).

The New Zealand Book Awards for Children and Young Adults includes a non-fiction category named in Elsie's honour. The non-fiction award was established in 1986 and was named the Elsie Locke Medal in 2002. Since 2016 it has been known as the Non-fiction Elsie Locke Award.

#### Further reading about Elsie Locke's life and work:

Locke, Elsie. *Student at the gates*. Christchurch: Whitcoulls Pub., 1981.

Birchfield, Maureen. *Looking for answers: a life of Elsie Locke*. Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 2009.

The books in this display are all from the National Children's Collection:

Locke, Elsie. *The end of the harbour: an historical novel for children*. Illustrated by Katarina Mataira. London: Jonathan Cape, 1968.

*In February 1860, 11-year-old David and his parents arrive as settlers in Waiuku. David meets Honatana, a Māori boy of his own age from the nearby village. Despite the growing tension between Māori and Pākehā, the two boys become close friends.*



The cabinet, showing the Elsie Locke display, in its new home in the General Reading Room.

Locke, Elsie. *A canoe in the mist*. Illustrated by John Shelley.

London: Jonathan Cape, 1984.

*It is 1886, and Lillian lives with her mother at Te Wairoa, the village where tourists come to see the world-famous pink and white terraces across Lake Rotomahana. But the tohunga, Tūhoto Ariki, is predicting doom and disaster, as a mysterious waka wairua appears on the lake.*

Locke, Elsie. *Journey under warning*. Illustrations by Margaret Chapman ; maps by Libby Plumridge.

Auckland, N.Z.: Oxford University Press, 1983.

*In 1843 fifteen-year-old Gibby Banks goes to work as a camp boy with a survey party headed for the Wairau Plain. When the expedition proceeds, despite warnings from the chief Te Rauparaha, Gibby soon finds himself caught up in a dispute which becomes dangerously explosive.*

Locke, Elsie. *The runaway settlers*.

Auckland, N.Z.: HarperCollins, 2009.

(First published 1965)

*In 1859 Elizabeth Small and her six children escape their abusive husband and father in Australia and arrive in the colony of Canterbury to make a new life for themselves. Based on a true story.*

Locke, Elsie. *Explorer Zach*. Illustrations by David Waddington.

Christchurch, N.Z.: Pumpkin Press, 1978.

*Eight-year-old Zach has never been anywhere much outside his family's small South Canterbury farm, until one summer day he is allowed to go exploring with Bruce, the family dog who always comes home. Or does he? Set in the 1920s.*

Locke, Elsie. *Look under the leaves*. Design and graphics, David Waddington; illustration assistance, Trevor Lithgow.

Christchurch, N.Z.: Pumpkin Press, 1975.

*Introduces New Zealand eco-systems and considers ways in which they can be protected for future generations. It is interesting to compare this extract, written some 50 years ago, with the measures being taken to protect our native birds today.*

*Godwits*. A School journal prepared by Elsie Locke, Lee Pledger, and the children of Standard 2, Westburn School; photographs by H. Ruffell [et al].

Wellington, N.Z.: R.E. Owen, Government Printer, 1968.

(First published as: School journal, Pt. 2, no. 1, 1968)

*This is one of seven School journals with content written by Elsie that were also published as individual books.*

*This one is about a class nature study trip to see the migratory godwits on the sandspit at South Brighton. It includes a description of what the children saw and did on their visit, their follow up activities in the classroom, and Elsie's story Kato the godwit.*

Locke, Elsie. *A present from Pudding*. Illustrations by Kirsty Lillico.

Wellington, N.Z.: Published for the Ministry of Education by Learning Media Ltd., 2001.

(School Journal, Pt. 1, no. 3, 2001)

*Based on the true story of Pudding the cat, who brought seven ducklings home to her family. This was Elsie's last story for the School journal, published shortly after her death. Her first story for the School journal, written some 42 years earlier, was The secret rescue (School journal, Pt. 3, Spring 1959).*

Locke, Elsie. *Six colonies in one country: New Zealand 1840-1860*. Illustrated by Stephen Furlonger.

Wellington, N.Z.: R.E. Owen, Government Printer, 1965.

(First published as: School journal, Pt. 4, Spring 1964)

*Another book that was previously published as a School journal, and one of a group of six by Elsie that covered the history of New Zealand from 1840 to 1919.*

**Additional photos of the display are available on the National Library's Facebook page:**

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set?vanity=NationalLibraryNZ&set=a.783898650525393>

### #34 Charles Keeping, 1924-1988

(on display from 25 September 2024 -

The current display marks the centenary of the birth of Charles Keeping. I wrote a short article about Keeping's interpretations of Beowulf for our last newsletter in February <https://dnwfriends.nzl.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/fdnw-newsletter-feb-24.pdf> and both books are included in the display. Other titles in the cabinet are:

Keeping, Charles. *Charley, Charlotte and the golden canary*.

London: Oxford University Press, 1967.

*Kate Greenaway Medal, 1967*

Noyes, Alfred. *The highwayman*. Illustrated by Charles Keeping.

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981.

*Kate Greenaway Medal, 1981*

Garfield, Leon and Edward Blishen. *The god beneath the sea*. Illustrated by Charles Keeping.

London: Longman, 1970.

*Carnegie Medal, 1970*



The current display case in the General Reading Room. (photo: Mary Skarott)

Additional photos and text from the display are available here:

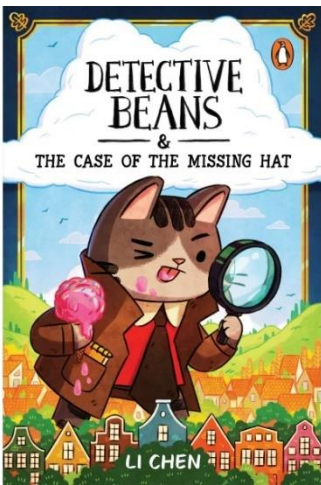
<https://www.facebook.com/NationalLibraryNZ/posts/pfbid0pgeLgcb4HPCJmkWynTdCqVqosQNQntoaRP7GhgNn1LGPqgyrDLeXU2WGjJJW26QC>

**Mary Skarott**  
Research Librarian, Children's Literature

## Book Review

*Detective Beans & the Case of the Missing Hat*  
Written and Illustrated by Li Chen  
Published: Southbank, VIC: Penguin Books, 2024.

This debut graphic novel by Li Chen is adorable. It



follows the newest detective in town, Detective Beans, as he goes all over Cat Town trying to find his missing hat. Because of course you cannot be a detective without your hat! Along the way he meets

so many delightful characters that each give him clues that lead him closer to his hat (or so he thinks). All while trying to solve the case and get home before Mum worries.

Detective Beans is quite resourceful when it comes to finding his information. One of my favourite parts is when he and a friend outwits the antique dealer to gather information on where to go next to find the hat.

The illustrations are colourful and provide so much extra context to the story. The details that she has put in each panel is fantastic. Do look out for some of these details that provide a bit of humour. For example, when the animals in the community garden tie a napkin around their necks while they eat. And the way she has broken up the story with the panels being different sizes,

shapes and at times using an entire page just to show an illustration.

Although this book is for seven years and older, I enjoyed reading it as an adult. I did not want to put this book down, as I really wanted to find out if Detective Beans finally gets his hat back!

The book is clearly a hit with the kids as it has already made it into the Whitcoulls Kids Top 50 this year, featuring at number 23 on the list. It was also recently chosen as one of the best books of 2024 for kids at the New York Public Library.



Li has provided some interesting merchandise to go with the book as well. I could not help it, and did purchase the bookplate for my own copy.

Although this is Li Chen's first graphic novel, she has been producing a popular weekly web comic series since 2009, called Extra Ordinary Comics.

Other reviews:

Black, L. (2024). *Review: Three adventurous new graphic novels*. The Sapling. <https://www.thesapling.co.nz/review-three-adventurous-new-graphic-novels/>

Moata. (2024). *Detective Beans: Li Chen's cute kitten is on the case*. Christchurch City Libraries. <https://my.christchurchcitylibraries.com/blogs/post/detective-beans-li-chens-cute-kitten-is-on-the-case/>

Resources:

Chen, L. (n. d.). *Extra Ordinary*. <https://www.exocomics.com/>

*Detective Beans* (2024). <https://detectivebeans.com/>

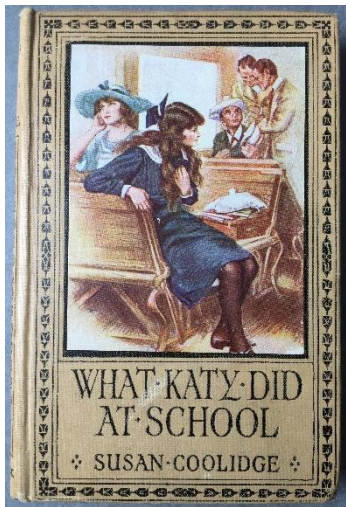
Elworth, H. (2024). *The Whitcoulls kids' top 50 books*. The Sapling. <https://www.thesapling.co.nz/the-whitcoulls-kids-top-50-books/>

*The New York Public Library announces the best books of 2024 for kids, teens and adults*. (2024). <https://www.nypl.org/press/new-york-public-library-announces-best-books-2024-kids-teens-and-adults>

**Chantalle Smith**  
FDNWC Committee Member

# FROM THE DOROTHY NEAL WHITE COLLECTION

## The 'Katy' books, by Susan Coolidge



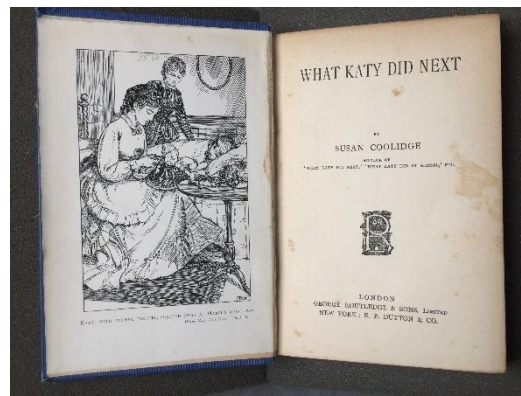
Cover: *What Katy did at school* / by Susan Coolidge. London: Ward Lock, [190-?] (Dorothy Neal White Collection)

Sarah Chauncey Woolsey, using the pen name Susan Coolidge, wrote these much-loved stories about the Carr family in the late nineteenth century. Coolidge was the American author of more than thirty children's books, published between 1871 and 1906, but it is the five stories about Katy Carr and her siblings for which she is best remembered. The first book, *What Katy did*, was published just over 150 years ago in 1872 and, soon after, came *What Katy did at school* in 1873. *What Katy did next* followed in 1886. There are also two later books which focus more on Katy's younger sister, Clover. They are *Clover* (1888) and *In the high valley* (1890).

The author was from a large family and used herself and her four younger siblings as inspiration for the Carr children. The first story begins when Katy is twelve years old and the youngest of her five brothers and sisters is four. The children's mother died four years earlier, and they live with their father – the local doctor – and their Aunt Izzie in the small fictional town of Burnet, Ohio. By the last book *Clover* (next to age in Katy) and Katy are both married women in their twenties.

The Dorothy Neal White Collection holds early editions of the first three books, but the Library's only copies of *Clover* and *In the high valley* are later printings from the 1950s and are held in the National Children's Collection.

If you have read *What Katy did*, you will remember that a major part of the story is Katy's accident and recovery. She falls off a swing, severely injuring her back, and spends four years confined to her room before finally walking again. In many ways *What Katy did* remains a wonderfully readable and enjoyable story, but it is certainly true that the treatment of and attitudes to physical disability are very different today. In a modern



Title page and frontispiece from: *What Katy did next* / By Susan Coolidge. London: George Routledge, [1906]. (Dorothy Neal White Collection)

take on the story, popular children's author Jacqueline Wilson was inspired to write her own version of *What Katy did*. In an interview with the Guardian, Wilson describes her idea:

*"My Katy would have a similar terrible accident, just like the Katy in the original book. But then my story would be very different. I wanted to show what life is really like for children with serious spinal injuries. I didn't want any sudden unlikely miracle cures for my Katy."*

Jacqueline Wilson's book, *Katy*, was published in 2015 and is held in the National Children's Collection. You can read the full article about it in the Guardian here: <https://www.theguardian.com/childrens-books-site/2015/jul/31/jacqueline-wilson-on-what-katy-did-by-susan-coolidge>

All five 'Katy' books have been digitised and are available to read online. Here are links to the versions on the Internet Archive <https://openlibrary.org/> :

*What Katy did*  
[https://openlibrary.org/works/OL5114586W/What\\_Katy\\_Did?edition=key%3A/books/OL24388328M](https://openlibrary.org/works/OL5114586W/What_Katy_Did?edition=key%3A/books/OL24388328M)

*What Katy did at school*  
[https://openlibrary.org/works/OL5114584W/WHAT\\_KATY\\_DID\\_AT\\_SCHOOL?edition=key%3A/books/OL40696063M](https://openlibrary.org/works/OL5114584W/WHAT_KATY_DID_AT_SCHOOL?edition=key%3A/books/OL40696063M)

*What Katy did next*  
[https://openlibrary.org/works/OL5114588W/What\\_Katy\\_Did\\_Next\\_%28Best\\_Loved\\_Stories%29?edition=key%3A/books/OL17427947M](https://openlibrary.org/works/OL5114588W/What_Katy_Did_Next_%28Best_Loved_Stories%29?edition=key%3A/books/OL17427947M)

*Clover*  
<https://openlibrary.org/works/OL5114614W/Clover?edition=key%3A/books/OL6942008M>

*In the high valley*  
[https://openlibrary.org/works/OL5114571W/In\\_the\\_High\\_Valley\\_%28Katy\\_S.%29?edition=key%3A/books/OL6563487M](https://openlibrary.org/works/OL5114571W/In_the_High_Valley_%28Katy_S.%29?edition=key%3A/books/OL6563487M)

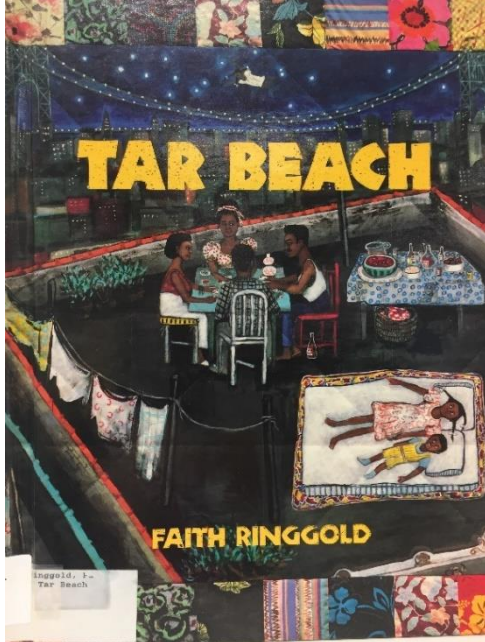
Mary Skarott  
Research Librarian, Children's Literature

# FROM THE NATIONAL CHILDREN'S COLLECTION

***Tar Beach* / Faith Ringgold.**  
**New York: Crown, 1991.**

*Caldecott Honor Book, 1992*

*Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award, 1992*



American artist, teacher and activist Faith Ringgold was born in New York in 1930. She graduated with a B.S. in Fine Art from City College in 1955 and completed her M.A. in Art in 1959. Beginning her artistic career as an oil painter, she was multi-talented and subsequently produced murals, masks, dolls, soft sculptures, performance art and story quilts. Her works are powerful explorations of the themes of race, gender and social justice. She is particularly well-known for her story quilts, the first of which, titled *Echoes of Harlem*, she made in 1980.

*Tar Beach*, published in 1991, was her first children's picture book. It grew out of Ringgold's 1988 *Tar Beach* story quilt (the first in a series of 5 quilts collectively titled *Woman on a Bridge*). The book tells the fantastical story of 8-year-old Cassie Louise Lightfoot who, one summer night in Harlem, dreams of flying over the George Washington Bridge. The "tar beach" of the title is the roof of her apartment building, a popular spot for picnics with family and neighbours. The American Library Association's guide to the Newbery and Caldecott medal and honor books describes *Tar Beach* as a "visual feast celebrating the act of transformation, while the quilt form represents an historically important African-American communication medium."<sup>1</sup>



Now I have claimed it. All I had to do was fly over it for it to be mine forever. I can wear it like a giant diamond necklace,



Detail from: *Tar Beach* / Faith Ringgold.

The illustrations for the book use images from the original quilt for the cover and patterned page borders, together with additional artwork and revised text created specifically for the book. The detail above shows how these elements are combined in the interior of the book.

The quilt itself combines traditional quilting techniques of piecing (using canvas and printed fabrics) and decorative stitching, together with the non-traditional media of ink and acrylic paints. The original *Tar Beach* story quilt was acquired by New York's Guggenheim Museum, and you can see it on their website here: <https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/3719>

Faith Ringgold died earlier this year, aged 93. For more about Faith Ringgold's life and her body of work:

New York Times obituary

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/13/arts/faith-ringgold-dead.html>

Faith Ringgold website

<https://www.faithringgold.com/>

Millman, J. (2005). Faith Ringgold's Quilts and Picturebooks: Comparisons and Contributions. *Children's Literature in Education*, 36(4), 381–393.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10583-005-8318-0>

(Viewable onsite in the National Library reading rooms via the online catalogue.)

## Note:

- (1) Association for Library Service to Children. (n.d.). *The Newbery & Caldecott awards: a complete listing of medal and honor books*. Association for Library Service to Children. 2001 ed.