



All the
COLOURS of the
RAINBOW

RAE WHITE ✦ ILLUSTRATED BY SHA'AN D'ANTHES

TEACHERS RESOURCES

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Teachers Resources by Bec Kavanagh

About the Book	3
Before Reading	3
Comprehension Questions	3
Creative Activities	3
Related Reading	4
About the Author & Illustrator	4
About the Author of the Notes	5

Recommended ages: Ages 4+, notes recommended for grades P–2

Themes: gender, identity, self-expression, acceptance, inclusivity, play

Curriculum connections: AC9E1LA08, AC9E1LE02, AC9E2LA08, AC9E2LE02

ABOUT THE BOOK

Some days when Jem wakes up, they bounce out of bed, ready to wear their favourite yellow dress. Other days, they're bursting to wear their blue jeans and orange sneakers. Gran tells Jem that girls shouldn't wear pants to weddings, but Jem's mum tells them that all clothes are for everyone, and Jem isn't sure if they're a girl anyway.

Some things – like rainy days spent searching for bugs – make Jem feel like a girl. Others – like sunny days spent running in circles – make them feel like a boy. On days when the rain has stopped and a rainbow hangs in the sky, Jem feels like both and neither.

Jem's P.E. teacher tells the class that the world is black and white, that things are one thing or the other, but Jem knows that's not true. When they look out the window, Jem sees many more colours than that. They know that people can be more than one thing too.

Through the colourful illustrations and gentle poetry of *All the Colours of the Rainbow*, readers are invited to reflect on who they are in the world and who they're told to be, sparking conversations about identity, inclusion, gender and celebrating difference.

BEFORE READING

- Talk about inclusivity in your classroom and school community. Who is/isn't included? What does it mean to be inclusive?
- Is there a place where you feel most yourself? Describe it – what makes it special?

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- What are some of the things that make Jem feel like a boy or a girl?
- Why do you think Gran tells Jem to change their clothes for the wedding? What would you say to Gran in this situation?
- Look at Jem's expression and the colours in the illustration when Gran tells them to change their clothes. How would you describe their mood here? Why?
- What words would you use to describe Jem's mum in the story? What makes her words to Jem so special?
- Do you agree that there's no such thing as clothes for boys and clothes for girls? Why/why not?
- How does Jem feel when there's a rainbow in the sky?
- Look closely at all the illustrations that show Jem's interests. Do you have anything in common with Jem?
- What happens at school that makes Jem feel excluded? How could the teacher have organised things differently?
- What is a metaphor? What is the rainbow being used as a metaphor for in the story?
- Who should read this book? What would you tell them to encourage them to read it?

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

- On a large piece of butcher's paper, trace an outline of your body (you might need a friend to help with this). Fill it in with pictures of all the things that make you feel most like you, using all your favourite colours. Around the outside, make a list of words that make

you feel confident and happy.

- Has anyone ever told you that you can't do something because of your gender, your age, your race or your body? How did it make you feel? Write a story where instead of being told that you can't do something for these reasons, you're invited to have a go anyway. What happens?
- Read the last line of the book aloud – 'I know I can be whoever I choose – *I can be any colour of the rainbow.*' Do you agree with this? Draw a picture of yourself in the future being exactly who you want to be. Write a letter to this future self, describing your dreams for them, and put it away to open in a few years.
- Come up with an activity that everyone in your class can do together and enjoy. What do you need to think about to make sure that everyone is included?
- Choose one of the books from the related reading list. How is it similar to this story? How is it different? Are there particular elements from any of the two books that you like? What form would you use to tell the story of who you are?

RELATED READING

As Bright as a Rainbow by Romy Ash, illustrated by Blue Jaryn

Introducing Teddy by Jessica Walton, illustrated by Dougal MacPherson

The Spectacular Suit by Kat Patrick, illustrated by Hayley Wells

Julian is a Mermaid by Jessica Love

ABOUT THE AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR

Rae White is a non-binary transgender writer, educator and zine maker. Their poetry collection *Milk Teeth* won the 2017 Arts Queensland Thomas Shapcott Poetry Prize, was shortlisted for the 2019 Victorian Premier's Literary Awards and commended in the 2018 Anne Elder Award. Rae's second poetry collection, *Exactly As I Am*, was shortlisted for the 2023 Prime Minister's Literary Awards and 2023 Queensland Literary Awards.

Rae has poems published in *Nothing to Hide: Voices of Trans and Gender-Diverse Australia* and also contributed a piece to *Dear Lover*. Rae's short story 'The Body Remembers' placed second in the 2019 Rachel Funari Prize for Fiction. They have had poetry published in many journals, including *Australian Poetry Journal*, *Cordite*, *Meanjin*, *Overland* and *Rabbit*. Rae is the Creative Director and Founder of community poetry initiative Uplift Poetry, and the Founding Editor of *#EnbyLife*, a journal for non-binary and gender-diverse creatives.

Sha'an d'Anthes is the author and illustrator of *Zoom* and *Bandits* and is based in Sydney, Australia. Her work is vibrant and playful and is enjoyed by children and adults alike. You can find Sha'an on Instagram and YouTube.

<http://instagram.com/furrylittlepeach>

<http://youtube.com/furrylittlepeach>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE NOTES

Bec Kavanagh is a writer, literary critic and academic living in Naarm whose work examines the representation of women's bodies in literature.

She is a regular guest at writers' festivals and has judged a number of literary prizes, including the Victorian Premier's Literary Award. Bec's most recent reviews can be found in *The Guardian* and *The Big Issue*. She has written fiction and non-fiction for a number of publications including *Westerly*, *Meanjin*, *Review of Australian Fiction*, *The Big Issue* and the *Resilience* anthology.

Bec was previously the Schools Manager for the Stella Prize, and the Youth Programming Manager at the Wheeler Centre. She is currently an associate lecturer at La Trobe University, a sessional tutor and academic at the University of Melbourne and UTS and teaches Faber Academy's 'Writing the YA Novel'. Independently, she runs 'Body Writing', a series of 3-hour life drawing classes for writers.

www.beckavanaghwriter.com