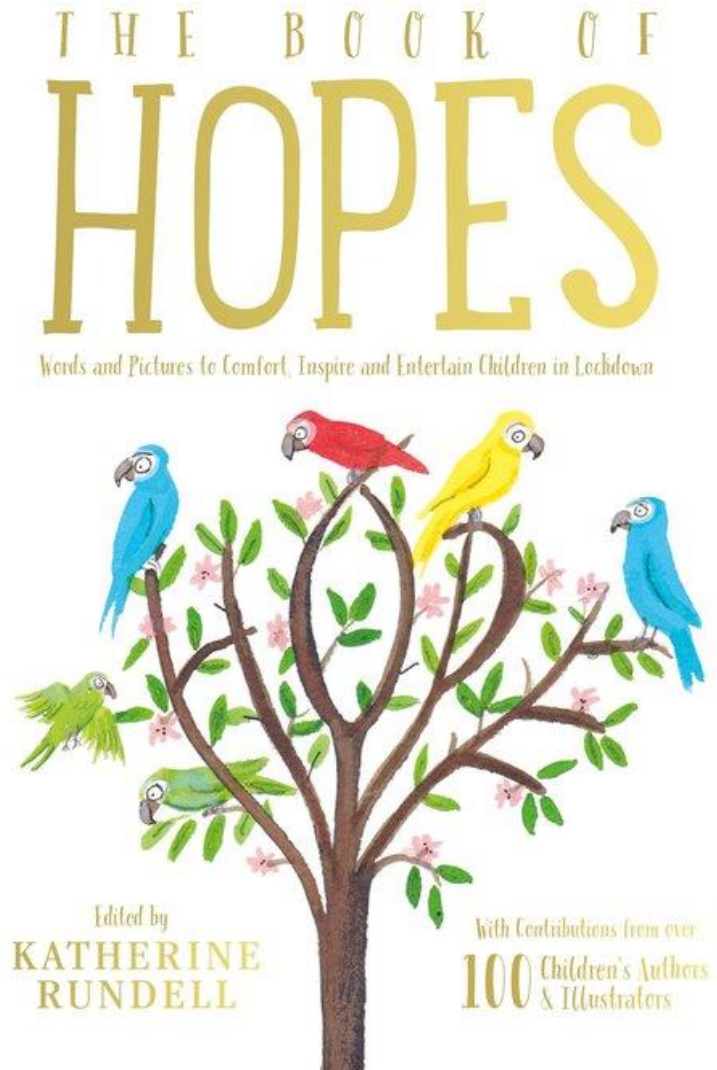


Day 1 – New text.



Book talk.

What might this book be about?

Why is hope relevant at the moment?

Day 1 – Read and highlight the words you're not sure about.

Teaching a Bird to Fly

When my brother was old enough he learned to ride a moped. But this story isn't about that, it's about something he brought home one day, in his helmet.

'What have you got now?' we said, and my brother held out his helmet like a bowl and replied.

'A bird.'

Inside was a tiny fluff-ball of brown and yellow, with an open beak.

'Peep, peep, peep!' came out of that beak.

'But that's a duckling!' we all said. Sometimes when something is really obvious, people say it out loud anyway. 'What are you doing with a duckling?'

'Found it,' said my brother. 'On the road. Lost. Near the lake, but not near enough.'

Day 1 – Read and highlight the words you're not sure about.

'No mother duck will want it back,' we said. 'Not now it smells of you.'

'Peep, peeeep!'

My brother shrugged.

'He's called Dippy.'

Well, Dippy was a goner for sure. No way he could survive, even with a shoebox of shredded paper to hide in. And no matter that my brother took him for walks in the garden – great teenaged feet stumping like a gentle giant's beside the tiny, peeping thing.

'He'll starve,' we said. 'You can't just feed a duck breadcrumbs, you know.'

'I've got it covered,' was all my brother would say to that.

Secretly he was using my chess game as a chopping board to cut up earwigs, leaving scored diagonals of brown across the black and white chequers.

Dippy got bigger and bigger on his earwig diet, following my brother everywhere till his 'peeping' turned to 'quacks'. Eventually he got so big we could see he wasn't a *he* at all, but a she-duck.

'A mallard, actually,' my brother explained.

'You can't keep a mallard as a pet!' we explained back.

'Why not?'

My brother stroked Dippy where she sat on his lap, in front of the TV.

'Because ... a cat will get her. Or a fox. She's still a goner. It's only a matter of time.'

And we were right. In a way.

One day, when my brother rode his moped, Dippy followed him all the way down the lane.

My brother brought her back, but she followed him again – running as fast as a mallard can run, and flapping like mad.

She did this, for *days*.

'I'm teaching her to fly!' My brother would shout, jumping on his moped and zooming off down the lane. And all we could do was shake our heads as he passed back and forth in front of the house, pursued by a duck. Until one day he roared past, hunched over the handlebars, and Dippy was in the air above his head.

Flying!

Day 1 – Read and highlight the words you're not sure about.

She lived in the garden after that, until – following my brother around for one last time – she took off and flew away for good.

'She's a goner alright,' my brother said, a week later.

But the next year a pair of mallards came to our garden – a male and a female – and stayed for several days. We never knew for sure, but my brother always believed it was Dippy, home again to have ducklings of her own.

And I think he's right.

Teaching a Bird to Fly
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