

Alice's Shoe

AUTHOR

JULIE THORNDYKE

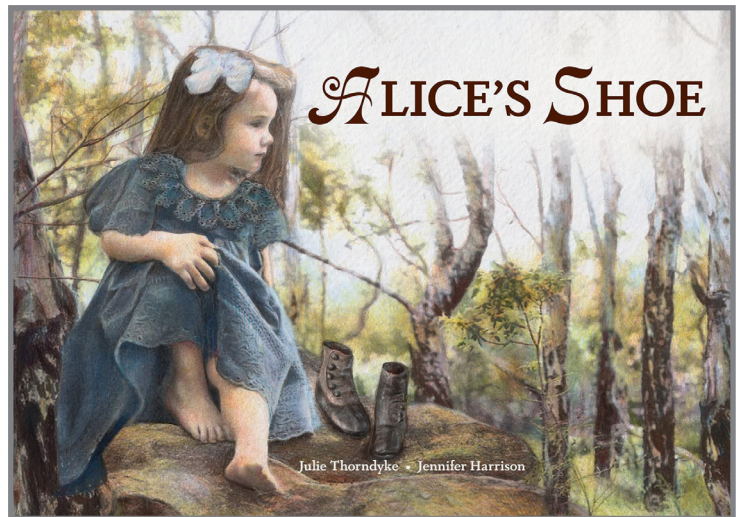
ILLUSTRATOR

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SYNOPSIS

A country child, Alice ran barefoot. On smooth waxed floorboards, over dusty clay in the yard, through icy water in the creek . . . she refused to wear shoes. After losing her sight and hearing through illness, Alice slowly made her way back to life and became the first deafblind person in Australia to be educated. Her hated shoe was Alice's first connection with the world of language as she learnt to sign.

Alice's Shoe tells the childhood story of Alice Betteridge, who became known as 'Australia's Helen Keller'.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Julie Thorndyke writes poetry and fiction for children and adults. Editor of *Eucalypt: a tanka journal* since 2017, Julie's books include *Mrs Rickaby's Lullaby* (adult novel), *Divertimento* (short stories), *Borrowed Riches* (tanka) and picture books *Waiting for the Night* and *Watching Through the Day*. Her stories and poems for children have been published in *The NSW School Magazine*. In 2020 she co-edited *Splash, Slither, Squawk!* anthology for The Society of Women Writers NSW. She was Highly Commended in the Nance Donkin Literary Award 2021. Julie and her family live in Sydney with two ragdoll cats and a collie dog.

Walking each day past photographs of Alice Betteridge in the corridor, while working as research librarian at RIDBC, inspired Julie to write a book for children about this remarkable person. She hopes that children living with deafblindness will be encouraged by the story of *Alice's Shoe*.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Jennifer Harrison lives in Adelaide with her son Nathaniel. Since leaving university she has worked as a graphic designer, commercial artist and art director. Her illustrations have been commissioned for book covers, magazines and packaging for overseas and local markets and she has exhibited in Adelaide galleries.

MidnightSun published her children's book *Olivia's Voice* in March 2017 and *Vanishing* in November 2018, both written by Mike Lucas.

THEMES

- Sensory impairment
- Literacy and language
- Biography

- Communication for people who live with deafblindness
- Women—education in early 20th century NSW

STUDY NOTES

- How many senses do we have? Can you list them?
- When normal function of vision and hearing is affected by damage to the structure of the eyes or ears, this is called sensory impairment. Using a blindfold and ear plugs, try to identify everyday objects using only taste, smell and touch.
- Do you know what deafblindness means? Research this as a class. (Deafblindness means that a person has both impaired hearing and impaired sight.)
- What is tactile signing? (Tactile signing is a method of communication that uses the sense of touch. A pattern of signs is made on the deafblind person's hand.) Visit the following website and download the deafblind alphabet used in Australia <https://www.deafblindinformation.org.au/living-with-deafblindness/deafblind-communication/deafblind-manual-alphabet/>.
 - In pairs, practise tactile signing the word SHOE on your partner's hand.
 - Have a go at spelling each other's names too.
- At school, after learning tactile sign language, Alice was able to learn to read and write in braille, using her sense of touch. Braille uses patterns of raised dots for each letter of the alphabet. Find out more about braille on this website: <https://brailleaustralia.org/about-braille/>.
- Using the chart below, can you spell shoe in braille?

UEB grade 1 braille symbols

Letters

⠠	⠡	⠢	⠣	⠤	⠥	⠦	⠧	⠨	⠩	⠪
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	
⠬	⠭	⠮	⠯	⠰	⠱	⠲	⠳	⠴	⠵	⠶
K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	
⠸	⠹	⠺	⠻	⠼	⠽					
U	V	W	X	Y	Z					

- Do you know the word for shoe in a language other than English? Make a class list of these words.
 - How many other words can you think of for SHOE? eg. boot, slipper, etc.
- Alice most likely had leather boots with buttons or laces. What other types of footwear have been worn at different times and in different countries?
- Alice lived with her family in country New South Wales. How many of the animals can you find in the text and pictures?
- Adjectives are words that describe the things (nouns) in the world around us. List all the adjectives you can find in the story.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why is the book called *Alice's Shoe*?
- Why is her shoe important to the story?
- How did Alice's life change after her illness?
- Alice could not hear her teacher talk or see sign language. What did Miss Reid do instead?

- What textures, smells and tastes could Alice use to understand the world around her?
- People who are Deaf or hearing impaired, but have unimpaired vision, are able to use sign language. Do you know what the system of sign language used in Australia is called? (Answer: AUSLAN)