

## About JEAN LITTLE

Jean Little was born in the country of Formosa. She was born blind and, though her sight improved, she has been almost totally blind all her life. Yet her disability did not prevent her from learning to read. Her mother taught Jean to read before she attended school, and reading soon became a favorite activity.

When Jean was still a child, her family moved to Canada. Jean began attending public schools with children who cruelly teased her and chased her home from school every day. Jean Little recalls that time by saying, "I had no armor at hand so I gave up the fight and retreated to the public library. I read and I daydreamed . . . so I prepared myself for becoming a writer."

Jean Little had written poems, essays, and stories throughout her school and college years. Yet she spent several years teaching children with motor handicaps before writing became her fulltime career. In her children's books, Jean Little often writes about children with disabilities. She develops her characters and tells their stories with warmth and feeling. In recognition of her talent, Jean Little and two of her books, *Mine for Keeps* and *Listen for the Singing*, have been honored with Canadian book awards.

### More Books by Jean Little

From Anna  
Stand in the Wind

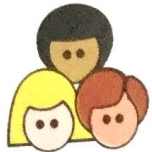


Think about the story. Finish the chart on page 149 by filling in the problems that Sally faces. Then answer the questions.

1. Where is Sally at the beginning of the story? Why might the writer open with this setting?
2. Dr. Eastman gives a long explanation of Sally's disorder. To what does Dr. Eastman compare Sally's brain? Why does he use the comparison?
3. Use your chart. Which character presents problems for Sally? Why might this be so?
4. At the beginning of the story, do you think Sally belongs in a unit about never giving up? Does your opinion about her change?
5. What are Sally's true feelings about having a dog? What does she do about these feelings?
6. Why does Sally choose Susie? What change does this show in Sally?
7. Think about Sally before and after she chooses Susie. What effect does owning a dog have on Sally?
8. Pretend you run the special school that Sally attended. What pets would you have at the school? Explain your choices.

## Think and Discuss





**WORK IN  
A GROUP**

Discuss how it might feel to have a handicap. Ask questions if you want to know more about your classmates' feelings. Talk about the answers.



## Focusing on "We Can Do Anything"

### Think and Read

- ▶ Talk about a time when you did something that no one thought you could do. Discuss how you felt. Ask your classmates about their experiences.
- ▶ Read the title on page 166 and the paragraph that follows. Look at the pictures in the selection. Think about doing something that no one thought you could do.
  - What might the people in the pictures have in common?
  - What do you think "Anything" in the title refers to?
  - What might the selection be about?
- ▶ Get ready to read an information article about handicapped people and courage. Think about how hard it must be to overcome a handicap. Copy the chart. As you read, take notes on the people chosen for this information article.

Subject	Handicap	Reason Chosen
1.		
2.		
3.		

Now turn the page and read "We Can Do Anything." Then you will talk about courage.



## We Can Do Anything

Every day, many people lead useful lives despite great obstacles. Some of these people are the disabled, who live their lives in a world they cannot see, hear, touch, or move about in. A few of these disabled people have become heroes to others. Here are some of them.

### Washington Roebling

The Brooklyn Bridge, connecting Brooklyn and New York City, is 1,595 feet long. When it was finished in 1883, it was the longest bridge in the world. During most of the thirteen years it took to build the bridge, Washington Roebling, the engineer in charge of the job, could not move from his chair.

The men who dug the foundations for the bridge's towers had to work inside air-tight structures called *caissons* (KAY-sahnz). Each caisson was pushed down to the bottom of the river and filled with air. When the workers returned to the surface, some were stricken with terrible pains. A few became paralyzed or even died.

Washington Roebling spent even more time in the caissons than his men. One day he, too, was stricken with "caisson disease." He suffered the effects for the rest of his life.

Washington did not stop his work on the bridge, however. He could see the bridge from the window of his home. Every day he sat in his chair and watched the work through field glasses. His wife, Emily, carried messages between Roebling and his foremen.

Washington Roebling could not go to the opening of the finished bridge. However, President Chester A. Arthur led a procession to Washington's house to thank him personally for his work.







### Helen Keller

From babyhood, when an illness left her deaf and blind, Helen Keller lived in a dark, silent world. Then in 1887, when she was six, Helen's parents brought her a teacher named Annie Sullivan.

Annie Sullivan tried to teach Helen the sign alphabet that many deaf people use. Annie spelled the letters into Helen's hand so Helen could feel them. At first nothing happened. Helen could not understand that these hand movements were letters that could spell words and that words could name things.

Then one day, Annie took Helen outside to a well. She poured water over one of Helen's hands while she spelled "w-a-t-e-r" into Helen's other hand over and over.

Suddenly Helen understood. She knew that the hand movements she felt in one hand spelled the name of the water she felt in the other. "It was as if I had come back to life after being dead," she wrote later. She and "Teacher," as she called Annie Sullivan, were seldom apart after that.

Helen Keller learned to speak and to write. First, Annie Sullivan taught Helen the alphabet by having her touch raised letter shapes on cards. Then Helen learned to print letters using cards that had letter-shaped grooves. A piece of paper was placed over the grooves. Helen could follow each letter with her fingers, and the grooves guided her pencil point. Later, Helen learned to speak by imitating the movements of the lips of others.

As an adult, Helen became very active in public life. She wrote her life story and other books. She and Annie Sullivan gave lectures around the country. She helped persuade Congress to pay for reading services for the blind and to give blind people help through Social Security.

When she was eighty years old, Helen Keller was asked about her future plans. "I will always—as long as I have breath—work for the handicapped," she said.



### Kitty O'Neil

The woman perched on the ledge of the twelve-story building for a moment, then leaped into space. As she fell, she curled her body into a somersault, then stretched it out in a dive. A few seconds later, she landed safely on an air bag.



The woman's name is Kitty O'Neil. She is one of the top stunt workers in Hollywood. Stunts, in movie-making, are feats of skill and daring that are difficult. Stunts include such dangerous actions as falling from high places, driving cars that must appear to crash or spin out of control, and escaping from burning buildings.

Someone who does stunts must be able to shut out the noise and confusion that go with making a movie. Kitty O'Neil has no trouble with that. She is totally deaf. Yet, although Kitty's deafness makes her work easier in some ways, it makes it more difficult in others. She can't hear directions or warnings of sudden danger. She must find ways around these obstacles to do her work well.

Like Helen Keller, Kitty O'Neil lost her hearing because of illness when she was only a few months old. Kitty's "Teacher" was her mother, who taught Kitty to read lips rather than use sign language.

When she was young, Kitty did not let her deafness keep her from pursuing her athletic goals. As a teenager, Kitty was a high-diving champion. She went on to race cars and motorcycles. Kitty married a stunt worker who did falls, car crashes, and other dangerous acts as a stand-in for movie and TV performers. She asked him to teach her to do stunts, too. Soon Kitty had her own stunt career.

Kitty O'Neil has also driven rocket cars and is the holder of several world speed records. She competes in some of the world's most demanding off-road races, such as the Baja 500 and the Mexican 1000. She once told a reporter, "I like to do things people say I can't do because I'm deaf."

Think about the information article and the notes you took while reading it. Then answer the questions.

1. Use your chart. How are Washington Roebling, Helen Keller, and Kitty O'Neil alike? How are they different?
2. Who helped Washington Roebling while he was working on the Brooklyn Bridge? Why might he have seemed angry at first because of that kind of help?
3. Why would Helen Keller's learning of sign language be described as coming back from the dead?
4. What should you say to Kitty O'Neil to get her to try to do something? Why do you think it would work?
5. The selections in this unit are about never giving up. What might have happened to the Brooklyn Bridge if Washington Roebling had given up?
6. How might the examples of Roebling, Keller, and O'Neil help people who do not have a handicap?
7. These people turned their difficulties into success stories. Which success story seems the most interesting to you? Explain your choice.
8. Imagine that you are unable to use your legs, your eyes, or your ears. How would you overcome this handicap?

## Think and Discuss