

What Is Love



FKB's Children's Biography

Helen Keller / Free Kids Books / FKB Make a Difference
CC-BY-NC

WHAT IS LOVE

Helen Keller Children's Biography



Creative Commons Licensing Attribution: Any use of this material must be attributed in the following way:

This work is based on the original work of the
Helen Keller from her own, now public domain, writing,
and the CC-BY-SA writings available on <https://www.wikipedia.org>

made available through licensing under a
Creative Commons Attribution- NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 Unported License.

This remixed edition of this work is remixed and published by:
<http://www.freekidsbooks.org>,

Any use of this material in this format must be attributed to:
<http://www.freekidsbooks.org>,

This work is licensed under the
**Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike
License, CC-NC-BY**
<http://semi-conservative/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

This text is free for non-commercial distribution and use, including
republishing on educational websites. No part of this text may be
reproduced for commercial use without express permission of the
creators.

Table of Contents

HELEN KELLER ON WHAT IS LOVE.....	4
Excerpts from The Story of My Life:.....	4
Awakening of Consciousness.....	10
HELEN KELLER's BIOGRAPHY.....	11
Introduction.....	11
Early Life.....	12
Seeking Help	14
Anne Sullivan	15
Education	19
Sponsorship.....	21
The First Deaf and Blind University Graduate.....	22
The Ability to Speak.....	23
Helen's Work with the Blind and Deaf	23
Civil Rights Work.....	25
Friends.....	31
Film.....	32
Final Days.....	34
A Legacy.....	34
Books by Helen Keller.....	37
Reading Comprehension / Knowledge Questions.....	39
Image and Text Attributions.....	40
About the Creators of this eBook:.....	41

Contact the Editor:: Please see our contacts at the following webpage:
<https://www.freekidsbooks.org/makeadifference>



**free kids
Books**

Make a Difference

K12 - Free School Textbooks - OER Resources - Books For A Cause

This eBook is part of the FKB Make a Difference Project

Find out more at:

<https://www.freekidsbooks.org/makeadifference>

HELEN KELLER ON WHAT IS LOVE

In this very special account, Helen explains the first time she was taught the meaning of love.

Excerpts from The Story of My Life:

I remember the morning that I first asked the meaning of the word, "love."

This was before I knew many words. I had found a few early violets in the garden and brought them to my teacher.

She tried to kiss me: but at that time I did not like to have any one kiss me except my mother.

Miss Sullivan put her arm gently round me and spelled into my hand, "I love Helen."

"What is love?" I asked.

She drew me closer to her and said, "It is here," pointing to my heart, whose beats I was conscious of for the first time.

Her words puzzled me very much because I did not then understand anything unless I touched it.

I smelt the violets in her hand and asked, half in words, half in signs, a question which meant, "Is love the sweetness of flowers?"

"No," said my teacher.

Again I thought. The warm sun was shining on us.

"Is this not love?" I asked, pointing in the direction from which the heat came. "Is this not love?"

It seemed to me that there could be nothing more beautiful than the sun, whose warmth makes all things grow. But Miss Sullivan shook her head, and I was greatly puzzled and disappointed.

I thought it strange that my teacher could not show me love.

A day or two afterward I was stringing beads of different sizes in symmetrical groups--two large beads, three small ones, and so on.

I had made many mistakes, and Miss Sullivan had pointed them out again and again with

gentle patience. Finally I noticed a very obvious error in the sequence and for an instant I concentrated my attention on the lesson and tried to think how I should have arranged the beads. Miss Sullivan touched my forehead and spelled with decided emphasis, "Think."

In a flash I knew that the word was the name of the process that was going on in my head. This was my first conscious perception of an abstract idea.

For a long time I was still--I was not thinking of the beads in my lap, but trying to find a meaning for "love" in the light of this new idea.

The sun had been under a cloud all day, and there had been brief showers; but suddenly the sun broke forth in all its southern splendour.

Again I asked my teacher, "Is this not love?"

"Love is something like the clouds that were in the sky before the sun came out," she replied.

Then in simpler words than these, which at that time I could not have understood, she explained:

"You cannot touch the clouds, you know; but you feel the rain and know how glad the flowers and the thirsty earth are to have it after a hot day. You cannot touch love either; but you feel the sweetness that it pours into everything.

Without love you would not be happy or want to play."

The beautiful truth burst upon my mind--I felt that there were invisible lines stretched between my spirit and the spirits of others.



Awakening of Consciousness

BEFORE my teacher came to me, I did not know that I am. I lived in a world that was a no- world. I cannot hope to describe adequately that unconscious, yet conscious time of nothingness.

Thus it was not the sense of touch that brought me knowledge. It was the awakening of my soul that first rendered my senses their value, their cognizance of objects, names, qualities, and properties. Thought made me conscious of love, joy, and all the emotions. I was eager to know, then to understand, afterward to reflect on what I knew and understood, and the blind impetus, which had before driven me hither and thither at the dictates of my sensations, vanished forever.

HELEN KELLER's BIOGRAPHY

1880 – 1968

Introduction

Helen Keller was an extraordinary person. Not just for overcoming disabilities, but for her prolific writing, her endearing optimism, and for her contributions and tireless efforts in supporting others in fundraising for research and support of disabilities and in her outspoken campaigns for human and civil rights, the latter in the face of criticism.

This biography for children summarises the important events and achievements in Helen Keller's life.

Early Life

Helen Adams Keller was born on 27th June 1880, in Tuscumbia, Alabama, United States.

Her family lived on an estate called Ivy Greens, built by Helen's grandfather.

Her father, Arthur Keller, spent many years as an editor for the Tuscumbia North Alabamian newspaper, and had served as a captain in the Army. Her mother, Kate Adams, was the daughter of a confederate general.

Helen was born with the ability to see and hear. At 19 months old, she became ill, and this illness left Helen both deaf and blind.

As she grew up, she found a way of



communicating with the daughter of the family's cook; Martha Washington. They invented a kind of sign language and by the time Helen was 7 years old they had created more than 60 different signs for use in their personal communication.

Around this time, Helen became very frustrated and difficult to control. She had violent temper tantrums and would giggle uncontrollably when she was happy. Her family was worried about Helen and went in search of help.

Unaware of how to deal with Helen's disabilities, the family had indulged , which at this point it was to her detriment.

Seeking Help

In 1886 Helen's mother had read an account by Dickens in his American Notes of the successful education of another deaf-blind woman, Laura Bridgeman. Desperate for help, this account inspired her to reach out. Helen and her father travelled to visit a doctor, J. Julian Chrisolm, who referred the family to Alexander Bell,

starting a life long friendship. Bell referred them to the Perkins Institute for the Blind. It was at the Perkins Institute where the Kellers were referred to Ms Anne Sullivan, who at the time was a recent graduate.

Anne Sullivan

At the tender age of 20 years old, Anne Sullivan was appointed by the Kellers to teach Helen, and had an immediate affinity for the task. Anne had a strong empathy with the child's frustrations, as she her self had once been blind, but had her eyesight restored by surgery.

Anne began teaching Helen how to communicate in sign language. She began to teach Helen to communicate by spelling words

into her hand, beginning with “d-o-l-l” for the doll that she had brought Helen as a present.

In the beginning it was hard work, as Helen still didn't really understand the concept of words. At one point she was so frustrated that she smashed the doll Ms Sullivan was using for explanation.

The breakthrough moment came when, one day, Helen understood that the motion Anne was making on one hand, while running cold water on the other hand, symbolized the idea of water.

After this, Helen felt more confident, and was determined to learn the motions for all the familiar objects in her world. At this point Helen's natural enthusiasm and thirst for

knowledge shone through. She almost exhausted Ms Sullivan by demanding to know the names for everything she could find.



Helen Keller and Anne Sullivan vacationing at Cape Cod,
July 1888

Helen's relationship with her teacher Anne was

a hugely important part of Helen's life. This special friendship that lasted 49 years was later shown in the play and film 'The Miracle Worker'.

Helen describes the 5th of March 1887, the day Sullivan arrived at Ivy Green, as her "Soul's birthday", likening her previous existence as a kind of fog.

There is record that Ms Sullivan argued with the Kellers over her socialistic views when she first arrived, (the family had at one time kept slaves, and were affiliated with confederates). Her stance may be contributory to Helen's strong views on these subjects. However it is not evident, and Helen attributes her attitudes towards her own learning. There is no indication of their arguments with Ms Sullivan

ever effected their relationship with her.

Education

Helen attended many schools specifically for blind and deaf students and learned several methods of communication, including touch-lip reading, Braille, speech, typing, and finger-spelling.

She first attended the Perkins Institute for the Blind in 1888 (the school where the family had been referred to Ms Sullivan). Helen quickly excelled at her studies and became an ambassador for the school, helping them to secure prominence in the teaching of the blind.

In 1894 she moved to New York to attend the

Wright-Humason School for the Deaf and the Horace Mann School for the Deaf.



In 1896 she attended a mainstream preparatory school, The Cambridge School for Young Ladies. Ms Sullivan attended with her and assisted in interpreting the instruction for her.

This meant all the instruction was spelled by Ms Sullivan into Helen's hand, and the same was conducted where textbooks were not available in braille.

Sponsorship

Her admirer Mark Twain introduced her to oil magnate Henry Hutton Rogers, who then sponsored her attendance at a mainstream tertiary institution, Radcliffe College for Women.



The First Deaf and Blind University Graduate

In 1904, at the age of 24, Keller graduated from Radcliffe College, a female coordinate of the

(at the time) all-male Harvard College, in Massachusetts . This made her the first ever deaf-blind person to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree.

The Ability to Speak

Helen was very determined and set herself the goal of learning to speak so that she could communicate with a wider audience. She achieved this goal and went on to give many inspiring speeches and lectures.

Helen's Work with the Blind and Deaf

When Helen left university, she wanted to help others. In 1915, she set up the Helen Keller International (HKI) organization. This

organisation is still running today and its mission is to prevent blindness and reduce malnutrition around the world.

In 1931, she attended the first world council and made Braille the world standard writing system for blind people. Helen and her teacher Anne travelled the world, making speeches. Many schools for the blind and deaf were established worldwide as a result of her work.

Inspired by her success and ability to reach people, because of her special abilities, Helen was determined to learn more about the world and how she could help improve the lives of others.

Civil Rights Work

To appreciate the significance of Helen's civil rights work, we must first remember that at the time civil rights were still a very controversial view and not popular with those in power.

Helen believed that all Americans should have the same rights; it didn't matter if they were male or female, black or white, able bodied or disabled.

Equal rights is norm no one would dare challenge today, thanks to people like Helen, however in the days she began her speeches women were still not allowed to vote and there were still many states which had discriminatory laws imposing black segregation, equal rights legislation was only finally enforced close to the time of her death with the passing of the

Civil Rights Act in 1964.

Despite pressure and criticism Helen made speeches on women's rights and civil rights to raise awareness of equal rights for all people.

In 1920 she helped found the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), an organisation which supports civil liberties infringements.

Helen was criticised by many newspapers who said that her disabilities had corrupted her mind. Despite facing such prejudices, she continued with her work as a political and social activist. She campaigned tirelessly for women's right to vote and fair treatment for all individuals.

Helen writes this response to one of her critics,

the editor of a powerful newspaper publication:

“(When I met him) he paid me such generous compliments that I blush to think of them. Now that I am outspoken on Socialism he reminds me that I am blind and deaf and therefore liable for error. ...(They are) socially blind and deaf to support an intolerable system that is the cause of much physical blindness and deafness that we are trying to prevent.”*

Philanthropy

Helen devoted much of her life to raising funds for the American Foundation for the Blind and the Helen Keller International Organisation. She was a founding member of the American Civil Liberties Union, and supported the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), writing for them between 1912 and 1918. Helen was active and outspoken in support for the Socialist Party

because of their support for equal rights, liveable wages, and welfare for those in need.

Her motivation for human rights activities stemmed from her empathy for persons with disabilities, and the knowledge that many were preventable.

Helen writes about her socialist activities:

“I who had thought blindness a misfortune beyond human control, found that too much of it was traceable to wrong industrial conditions, often cause by selfishness and greed of employers.”

Helen traveled extensively where she spoke on matters important to her and assisted in support and advice to schools and disability associations.

Awards

Helen received many honours and awards for her work, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom, from President Lyndon in 1964, the highest award in the US given to civilians. She was elected to the National Women's Hall of Fame in 1965.



Hobbies

Helen was an avid reader, of books she says:

“In a word, literature is my Utopia. Here I am not disfranchised. No barrier of the senses shuts me out from the sweet, gracious discourse



of my book-friends. They talk to me without embarrassment or awkwardness. The things I have learned and the things I have been taught seem of ridiculously little importance compared with their "large loves and heavenly charities."

However reading was not her only hobby, she was also found of the outdoors, and a an avid boater, sailing, rowing, and canoeing. It might surprise you to learn that she was an accomplished sailor.

Helen's indoor activities were probably very much the same as any other. She knitted and crocheted. She had a special chess, checkers, and card sets modified for use by the blind.

Friends

Notable among Helen's friends and sources

of inspiration were Mark Twain, who she writes of often, and Alexander Graham Bell, who she dedicates her second and more prolific book, *The World I Live In*, to.

Film

The story of Helen Keller's and Anne Sullivan was portrayed in a play and film called "The Miracle Worker", released in 1962, and remade in 1979, and 2000. There were many more film and television programs made about her.



Patty Duke, pictured with Helen above, played Helen in the 1962 version, and Anne in the 1979 version,

Final Days

After a series of strokes, Helen died peacefully in her sleep on the 1st June 1968, at her home, Connecticut, a few weeks before her 88th birthday.

A Legacy

Helen was an important woman in history because she showed the world that deaf and blind people could be educated and go on to lead fulfilling lives. She was an international celebrity and was an influential campaigner regarding awareness of disabled persons, women's rights and civil rights.

Helen's motto was that

**"Although the world is full of suffering, it is
full also of the overcoming of it."**

Asides from being the first deaf and blind person to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree, Helen wrote several books and managed many successful campaigns for her own and other's causes.

Besides from her intellect, and ability to learn her amazing optimism is what is outstanding and memorable about Helen.

T h e Helen Keller International (HKI) organisation exists today as a multi-million dollar fund, and makes significant contributions towards helping people to this day.

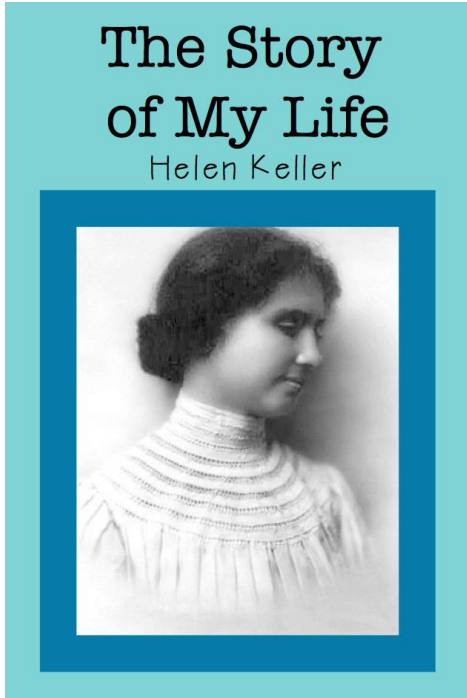
See more information at <https://www.hki.org> .

The American Civil Liberties Union, likewise is currently a multi-million dollar non-profit, supporting the continued fight against civil liberties infringements.

See more information at <https://www.aclu.org> .

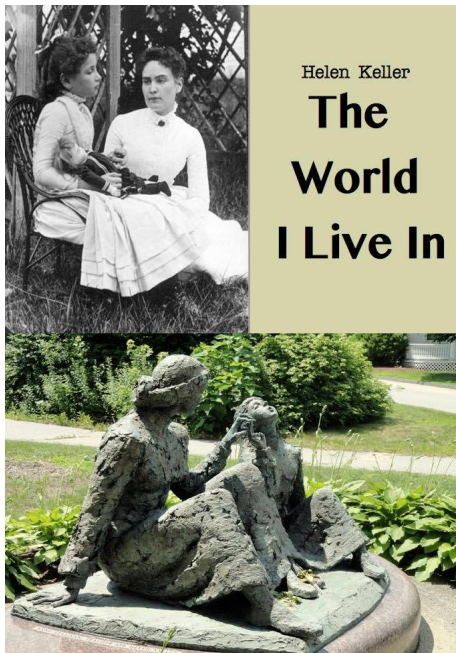


Books by Helen Keller



An account of Helen's life up to 21, written by Keller during her college years, with the assistance of Anne Sullivan's husband John Macy.

[The Story of My Life - FKB](#)



The second book by Keller describes her world, after popular requests on the subject, and includes letters, poems, and essays.

[The World I Live In - FKB](#)

Helen published several other books, notable are her essays on socialism, *Out of the Dark*, was published in 1913 and another autobiographical account titled *My Religion*, about her theological philosophies was published in 1927.

Reading Comprehension / Knowledge Questions

1. At what age did Helen Keller become deaf and blind, and why?
2. Helen Keller was the first _____ and _____ person to gain a _____.
3. What prestigious US award did Helen Keller receive?
4. Helen Keller was outspoken about _____ because of her empathy to those living in poverty .
5. How was Socialism related to those suffering from blindness?
6. Helen Keller supported _____ for all people.
7. Why did Helen believe that persons who supported discrimination were “socially blind and deaf”?

8. When did women gain the right to vote?
9. What year were US equal rights legislations implemented?
10. Write an essay about your thoughts and feelings about Helen Keller and her life's works.

Image and Text Attributions

Page 13 Image attribution - Lena London,
CC-BY-NC

Excerpts and quotes from Helen Keller taken from her own books, *The Story of my Life* and *The World that I Live In*.

About the Creators of this eBook:

Free Kids Books

Free Kids Books provides a multitude of new original, creative commons, classic children's books, and K-12 OER textbooks – for free download and read online, for the joy of reading and for promotion of free literacy and education materials for access to everyone, everywhere.

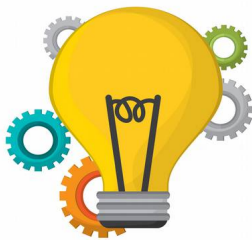


*Simply providing great free kids books
□ no strings attached.*

<http://www.freekidsbooks.org>

FKB Make a Difference

FKB Make a Difference is a non-profit venture aimed at supporting important causes for children through free open source literature, including the right to free education, creation and sharing of open education resources, children's / human rights, child welfare, and protecting our planet.



*Let us not underestimate the power of books to
Make a Difference in people's lives.*

<https://www.freekidsbooks.org/makeadifference>

*We sometimes forget how significant
the value of being able to read and
write is, not everyone is so lucky.*

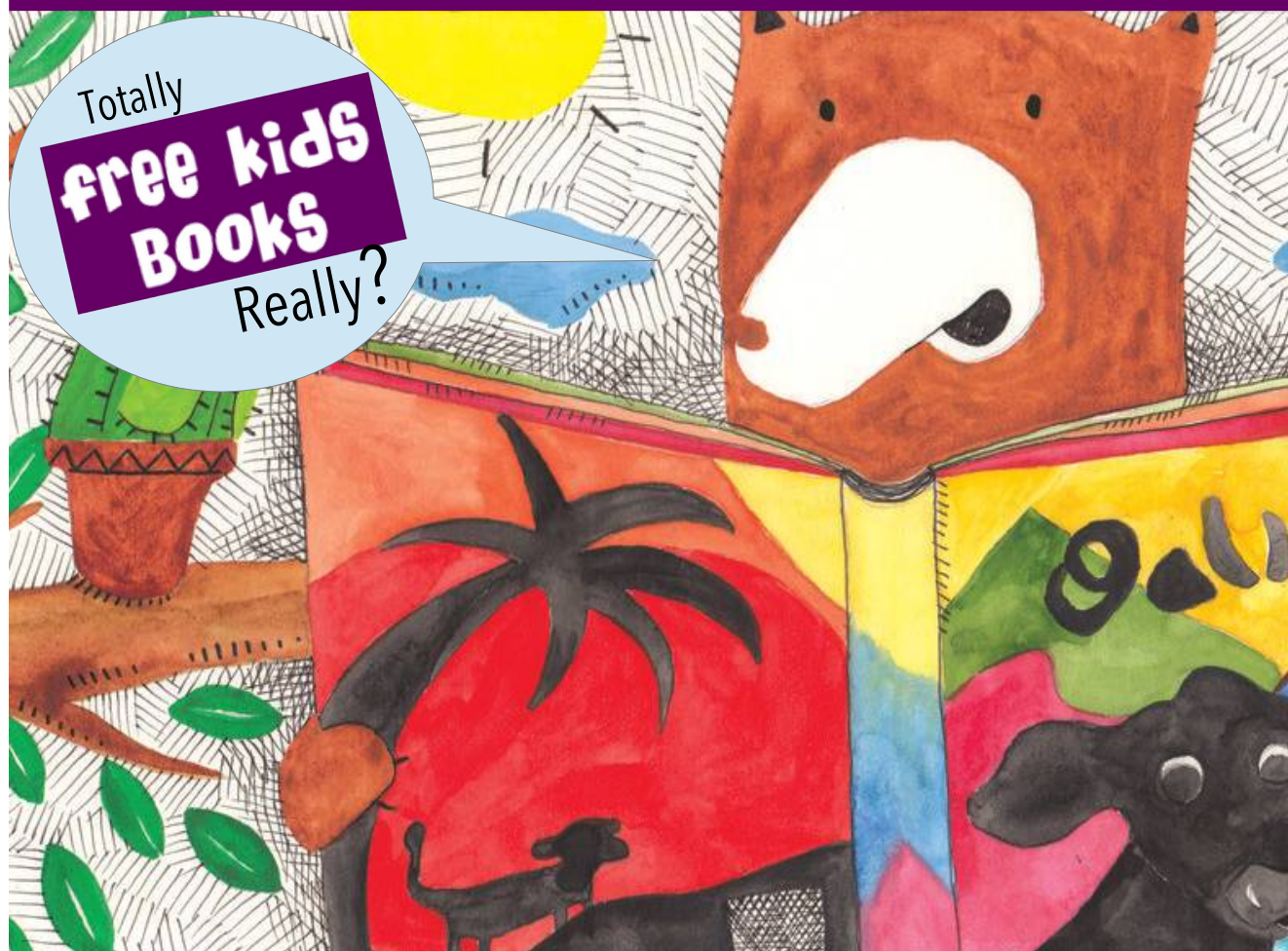


*#literacy
#freekidsbooks
#thankateacher*

<https://www.freekidsbooks.org>

This book is shared online by Free Kids Books at <https://www.freekidsbooks.org> in terms of the creative commons license provided by the publisher or author.

Want to find more books like this?



<https://www.freekidsbooks.org>

Simply great free books -

Preschool, early grades, picture books, learning to read,
early chapter books, middle grade, young adult, OER textbooks

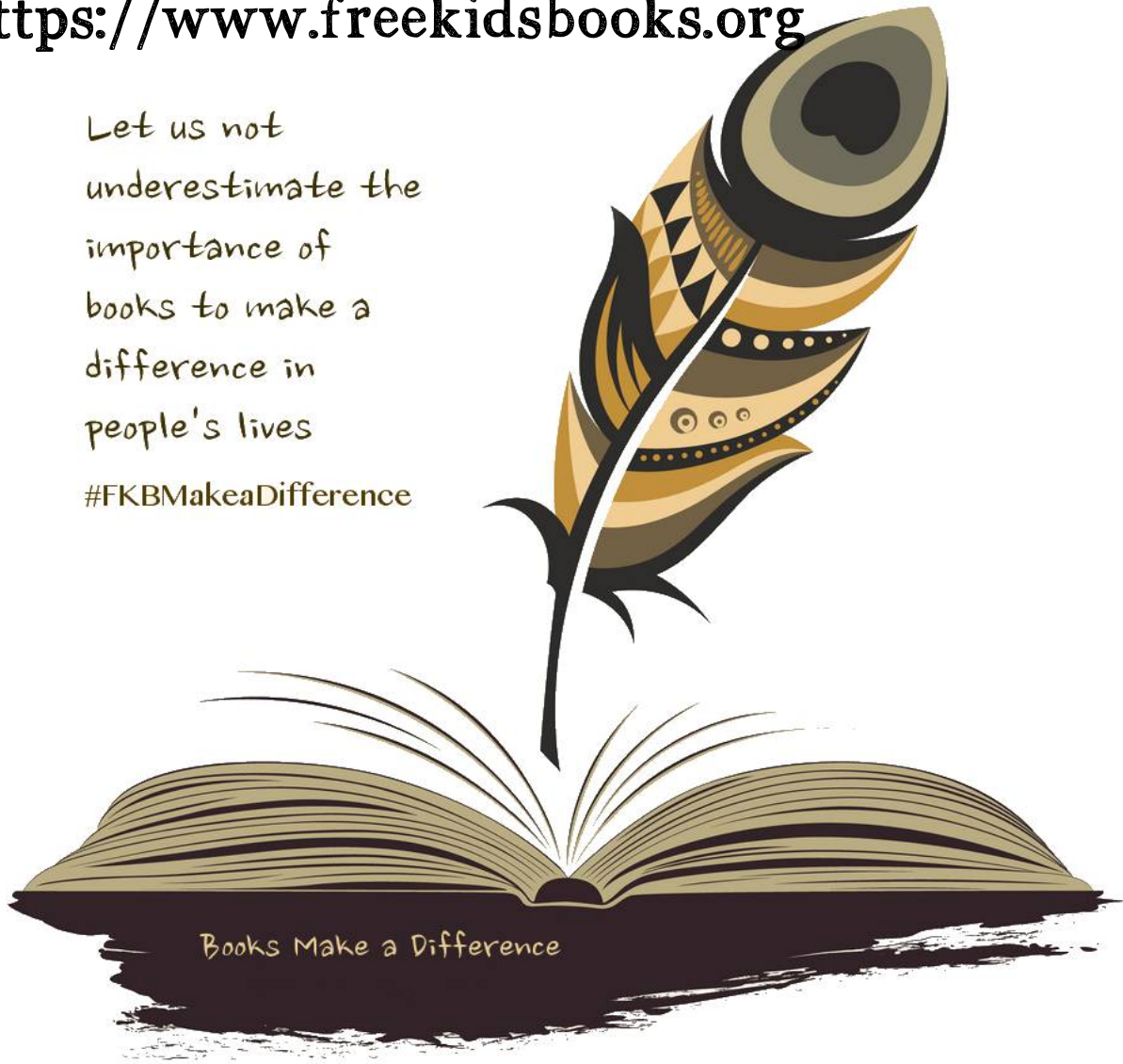
Pratham, Book Dash, Mustardseed, Open Equal Free, and many more!

Always Free – Always will be!

Image Attribution: Anjora Noronha CC-BY-SA

<https://www.freekidsbooks.org>

Let us not
underestimate the
importance of
books to make a
difference in
people's lives
#FKBMakeaDifference



<https://www.freekidsbooks.org/makeadifference>

Legal Note:

This book is in CREATIVE COMMONS - Awesome!! That means you can share, reuse it,
and in some cases republish it,
but only in accordance with the terms of the applicable license
(not all CCs are equal!),
attribution must be provided, and any resulting work must be released in the same
manner.

Please reach out and contact us if you want more information:

<https://www.freekidsbooks.org/about>

This page is added for identification.