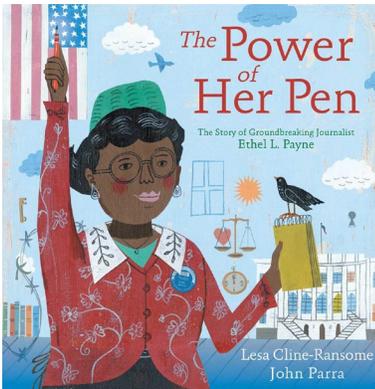




2021 – 2022
Children's Book Award Finalist
Elementary Grade Levels 3-5



The Power of Her Pen
*Simon & Schuster/
Paula Wiseman Books*



Lesa-Cline Ransome
Author



John Parra
Illustrator

Summary

"Ethel Payne always had an ear for stories. Seeking truth, justice, and equality, Ethel followed stories from her school newspaper in Chicago to Japan during World War II. It even led her to the White House briefing room, where she broke barriers as the only black female journalist. Ethel wasn't afraid to ask the tough questions of presidents, elected officials, or anyone else in charge, earning her the title, "First Lady of the Black Press." Fearless and determined, Ethel Payne shone a light on the darkest moments in history, and her ear for stories sought answers to the questions that mattered most in the fight for Civil Rights." (amazon.com)

Genre

Contemporary Realistic Fiction

Book Conversation

After reading the story aloud, you may use the following questions to prompt a book conversation with students.

- How does Ethel L. Payne find power in her pen? What in the text shows this?
- What are some of the main causes Ethel fought for? How did she help those causes?
- What specific examples can you discuss?
- What does "First Lady of the Black Press" mean?
- Ethel was often fighting for something she believed in. What is something that you believe in? How would you fight for it?
- What have you heard, or connections that you made, while listening to this book?
- What could you do to advocate for the injustices you hear about?



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Florida Statute 1003.42.2 requires that K-12 public school instructional staff teach specific character education, cultural, and historical topics. This book may assist teachers in partial fulfillment of that requirement.

http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&URL=1000-1099/1003/Sections/1003.42.html

Extension Activities

1. After reading, research a piece or couple of pieces of writing that Ethel L. Payne completed. Talk about what the article makes you think or feel. Have students write a similar piece of writing about something that is currently taking place. The student should focus on something they feel passionately about changing.
2. After reading the story and the author’s note, have the student choose two major events that Ethel wrote about: Montgomery Bus boycott, Rosa Parks, the plight of unwed mothers, race relations, and the adoption crises for black children, etc. Have students read an informational text (article) about this event and identify key points of the article. Have them create a poster with their key points about that event to present to the class.
3. After reading, students can choose another African American journalist, writer, or author from a list provided to them. The student should complete an autobiography or “One Pager” about this person. https://www.google.com/search?q=one-pager+examples&rlz=1C5CHFA_enUS725US726&sxsr=A0aemvLeyDWH6yRvgZ8jTe-qaN6d9vut3A:1630808037818&tbm=isch&source=iu&ictx=1&fir=qeGlsydvkaeWmM%252Cwbo-qL9lJv1niM%252C_&vet=1&usg=AI4_kRBdiQMMoR5RP5i5eB_Kml8ZU35og&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewj7uqmu4ebyAhX0RTABHQCtAOgQ9QF6BAgNEAE&biw=1440&bih=610#imgrc=AP6c65w8VgJXKM
4. Ask students if they think activists are born to be leaders or they learn how as they grow into adults.

Websites

Meet the Author- <https://www.lesaclineransome.com/>

Meet the Illustrator- <https://johnparraart.com/>

Watch a read aloud of the book- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q_codf6n0Gk

Diversity and Multicultural Features

Author: African American female

Illustrator: Hispanic and Mexican heritage

Character(s): African American journalist, female

Setting: Civil Rights Movement