

Tar Beach – Faith Ringgold

Cassie is the narrator of this story; she dreams of being free to go wherever she wants to. Flying is the only way she can achieve her dreams. The Tar Beach of the title is the tarmac that makes up the land around her in the city; children learn what metaphors are and are introduced to symbolism. Children will learn about African-American language, culture and history in this beautifully illustrated book that is illustrated based on a sewn story quilt.

Key characters

Cassie Louise Lightfoot – the main character who flies over Harlem, looking back at her family

Be Be– Cassie’s baby brother

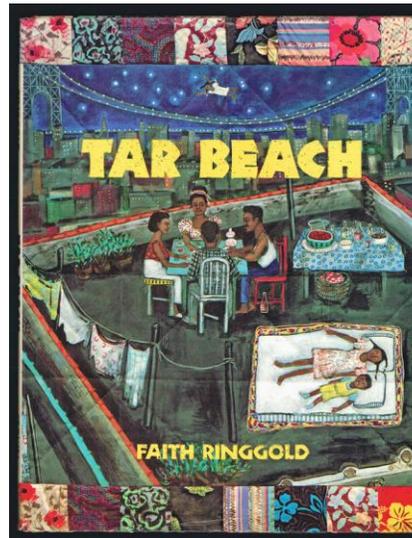
Mommy and Daddy

Mr and Mrs Honey – Cassie’s neighbours

What we are going to do

When enjoying this book we will:

- Write a recount in paragraphs
- Design a poster
- Write a play script



Key vocabulary

Quilt- Bedding made from two layers of cloth sewn together sometimes telling a story

Skyscraper - A tall building in a large city

Harlem - An area of New York

Girders- A strong metal beam

Threatened - Strongly say you are going to do something

The Union- A club where people have to be members

Claimed- Suggest that you are or have something

Tar Beach is being studied by Year3 and 4 this year; this book recounts the dream adventure of eight-year-old Cassie Louise Lightfoot, who flies above her apartment-building rooftop, the 'tar beach' of the title, looking down on 1939 Harlem. Part autobiographical, part fictional, this allegorical tale sparkles with symbolic and historical references central to African-American culture. The spectacular artwork resonates with colour and texture. Children will delight in the universal dream of mastering one's world by flying over it. Tar Beach is visually engaging; encouraging children to consider the idea of freedom and visualize travelling over their own environment to experience it.