

Book Club April 6, 2020

Miss Rumphius - by Barbara Cooney

Miss Rumphius is not a true story, but it is based on a true story. The author grew up in Maine, where a woman named Hilda Hamlin lived in the early 1900s. Hilda Hamlin imported lupine seeds from her native England and planted them around her home in Maine. She would gather the seeds and spread them along the roads where she walked. She was known as "Hilda Lupina" or "The Lupine Lady." Some of the characters in the book are based on the author's family. Her grandmother's name was Alice. Alice's grandfather was an artist. The author traveled to many places and included some of her favorites in the book. Rumphius is the name of a Dutch botanist in the 1600s.

### **Vocabulary**

lupine - Last week we read *The Legend of the Bluebonnet*. Bluebonnets are a kind of lupine. There are several varieties of lupines.

stoop - a raised area (such as a porch, platform, or stairway) at the entrance to a house or building

wharf/wharves - a flat structure that is built along the shore of a river, ocean, etc., so that ships can load and unload cargo or passengers

bristling - of hair: to rise up and become stiff

mast - a long pole that supports the sails of a boat or ship

proW - the front of a ship

conservatory - a room or building with glass walls and a glass roof that is used for growing plants

fetch - to go after and bring back (someone or something)

catalogue - a book containing a list of things that you can buy or use, usually with pictures

bushel - a unit for measuring an amount of fruit and grain that is equal to about 35.2 liters in the U.S. and to about 36.4 liters in the U.K.

sow - to plant seeds in an area of ground

hollows - a place or area (especially on the ground) that is lower than the area around it

### **Discussion questions:**

How can a person make the world a more beautiful place? Who is someone who makes/has made the world a more beautiful place?

What are examples of someone making the world a more beautiful place at this time (during the Corona virus pandemic)?

In Texas, we give credit to Lady Bird Johnson for the beautiful wildflowers that grow along our highways. Lady Bird Johnson was the wife of President Lyndon Johnson. They were from central Texas.

"Ugliness is so grim (gloomy, depressing, serious)," Lady Bird Johnson once said. "A little beauty, something that is lovely, I think, can help create harmony which will lessen tensions." She is remembered for her belief that beauty can improve the mental health of a society and for her determination to make the United States a more beautiful place. While her husband was President, she worked to make American cities more beautiful by planting flowers, adding park benches, and removing billboards and junkyards from the nation's highways. Do you agree with Lady Bird Johnson that beauty can create harmony, improve the mental health of a society, and lesson tensions?

Alice's grandfather told her that she must do this one thing - make the world more beautiful. Has a relative given you a similar task to do or similar advice?

Can a person "travel" by reading a book?

What is your favorite part of the book?

What are your thoughts about the illustrations?

What might a child enjoy about this book?

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