



di Rosa

Preparing for your Art Lit Visit

Thank you for enrolling your students in Art Lit, an art and literacy tour, at di Rosa Center for Contemporary Art. To make the most of your visit, please read this book to your class in advance of your scheduled field trip. Use the guided reading questions to assist student learning and consider extending learning through one of the ideas proposed in the “extend and engage” section.

Reminder: Please return your book when you visit di Rosa.

The Most Magnificent Thing, by Ashley Spires

About the Author¹

Ashley Spires grew up in a little town on the coast of British Columbia called Tsawwassen with two parents, an older sister, eight cats, a dog and the occasional newt.

For a while she thought that animation was her future, but then photography caught her eye, which led her to bookmaking courses. These classes opened her eyes to the world of illustration and she never looked back. Delighted that there was, in fact, a career that allowed her to remain in her pajamas, hang out with her cats and be productive at the same time, she knew illustration was the perfect job for her.



Ashley spent time living in Toronto and Saskatoon before returning to her home turf of Delta, British Columbia where she now resides with three cats, a dog and her extremely patient fella.

Summary²

One day, a young girl who enjoys creating things decides to build something truly special. So, after drawing diagrams, hiring an assistant (aka her best-pal pooch), and collecting materials, she establishes her sidewalk workshop. But, alas, bringing vision to fruition isn't easy. Progressively, excitement and confidence wane, motivation turns to meltdown—then to defeat (I'm no good at this. I QUIT!). Happily, some timely dog walking brings clarity, calm, and an inspiration for an imaginative solution that just might work.

Why we selected *The Most Magnificent Thing*

The Most Magnificent Thing is a favorite book of di Rosa education for its representation of the trials and tribulations of the artistic process—and the value of a loyal studio assistant! A growth mindset is important for school-age children and artists alike, and we admire the protagonist's motivation, empathize the difficulty of bringing an idea to life, and ultimately would love to create a sidecar just like hers.

¹ <https://www.amazon.com/Most-Magnificent-Thing-Ashley-Spires>

² Ibid

Questions to Ask Students

- Why does the girl think her invention will be easy to create?
- What are some problems that she encounters with making her invention?
- What strategies does the girl use to fix the problems with her invention?
- What emotions does the girl have as she makes her invention?
- What strategies does the girl use to manage her emotions?
- Invite students to think of a time that they tried to bring something from your imagination to life (a costume that they created, a drawing they made, or an invention). Discuss in small groups what was successful about that experience and what could have worked better.

Resources

- [Growth Mindset Toolkit for Teachers](https://www.mindsetkit.org/topics/about-growth-mindset) (<https://www.mindsetkit.org/topics/about-growth-mindset>)

Extend and Engage

- Learn more about growth mindset and incorporate this into your classroom learning.
- Have a STEM Magnificent Thing challenge! Let students explore a variety of materials available to them (a good way to clear out the closet) and challenge them to create something magnificent.