

Little Rebels Exploring Social Justice

Zac and Jac

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illustrated by *Monique Steele*
Graffeg

9-year-old Jac has his very own, home-grown hero, Dad. And, within his tight knit group of friends he also has bestie, Zac. And, he's finally getting to play football for the local team. But when Jac's dad realises that this means his son will be spending more time, not just with Zac, but Zac's family, his behaviour becomes...bizarre. Slowly Jac realises that his 'hero' has been raised on racist ideas and is perpetuating them still. A heads on, and yet also a very subtle and layered, look at intergenerational racism.

Shortlisted for the 2025 Little Rebels Book Award



Social Justice Themes: Racism; Inequality; Diversity; Equal Treatment

Things to talk about

- Jac's dad tells him that 'everyone should be able to say what they want to say and that it's their right' (P8). Do you agree with this?
- It isn't until the footballers visit Jac's school that he realises that his dad is racist. Had you already worked this out? What clues are there in the text?
- Jac's mum makes the connection between racist behaviour and bullying. Read her description of a bully (P67). Do you agree with this description?
- We learn that Zac and many of the other children in Jac's class have had to hear horrible racist comments from an early age. He is both strong and kind. How do you think he has managed to stop those experiences from making him unkind to others?
- When Jac's dad is forced to finally face up to his racism, he starts to think about why he is like this (P100-102). What do you think about his explanation? Could Jac have had the same prejudices as his dad?

Activities

- The book ends on a positive note. We see that Jac's dad has started changing. Do you think it's possible for him to let go of his prejudices? Write an extra chapter based on whether you answered yes or no to the previous question.

Extended

- Show Racism the Red Card charity was founded in part by a donation from the footballer, Shaka Hislop. Read about and watch the video about what happened to him here <https://www.theredcard.org/>.

For more information about The Little Rebels Book Award visit littlerebels.org