

STORIES

FOR

BOYS



Who

DARE

—TO BE—

DIFFERENT

TRUE TALES OF AMAZING BOYS WHO CHANGED
THE WORLD WITHOUT KILLING DRAGONS

Ben Brooks

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ILLUSTRATED BY QUINTON WINTER

RP|KIDS
PHILADELPHIA

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[COVER](#)

[TITLE PAGE](#)

[COPYRIGHT](#)

[PATCH ADAMS](#)

[EDDIE AIKAU](#)

[DR NAIF AL-MUTAWA](#)

[MOHED ALTRAD](#)

[ROALD AMUNDSEN](#)

[DANIEL ANTHONY](#)

[LOUIS ARMSTRONG](#)

[DAVID ATTENBOROUGH](#)

[BALDWIN IV](#)

[LOUIS BRAILLE](#)

[EUGENE CERNAN](#)

[FAVIO CHÁVEZ](#)

[CONFUCIUS](#)

[FREDERICK DOUGLASS](#)

JESSE EISENBERG
JAIME ESCALANTE
THE FOUR CHAPLAINS
CHARLES FOURIER
GALILEO GALILEI
MAHATMA GANDHI
BILL GATES
SIDDHARTHA GAUTAMA
RICK GENEST
KING GEORGE VI
JOHN GREEN
ALAN L. HART
ACHMAT HASSIEM
STEPHEN HAWKING
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RYAN HRELJAC
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR



PATCH ADAMS

(BORN 1945)

Patch was bullied at school for being different and for standing up to the racism that he saw around him. Because of the bullying, he ended up in the hospital three times. On his third visit, when Patch was eighteen, he decided that, after he got out, he'd start a revolution to spread happiness.

For a while, he found it difficult to be around people, so he set out to do experiments in friendliness. He would call random numbers on his phone and speak to the people on the other end until they'd become friends. He would start up conversations with strangers in the street. And he would ride elevators up as many floors as it took for the people inside to introduce themselves and start laughing together.

Patch became a clown and a doctor. He started his own hospital called the Gesundheit! Institute, where his goal wasn't just to make his patients less sick, but to make them happier, too.

These days, he flies all over the world, giving talks and performances as a clown and as a doctor. Patch doesn't think the two jobs have to be separate. To him, laughter is one of the best medicines. It can get the blood flowing, strengthen your heart, and even help your body fight off diseases.

If you want to help make the world a better place, Patch has some suggestions: be silly in public, wear funny clothes, be friendly to everyone you meet, and pick up all the garbage that you see in your

town.

“Anyone can do something,” he says. “It’s about deciding to do it—to dive into work for peace and justice and care for everybody on the planet.”





EDDIE AIKAU

(1946–1978)

Eddie surfed whenever he could. Before school, after school, and sometimes even during school, if he could get away. He lived on Oahu, the third largest Hawaiian island, and the ocean meant everything to him.

Working at a pineapple factory was how Eddie saved up enough money for his first surfboard. After that, he got a job as a lifeguard and was given the task of covering all the beaches on the North Shore of the island.

Even though the waves could sometimes rise as tall as utility poles, not a single person was lost on Eddie's patch while he was lifeguard. He would venture out into waves that no one else would dare go near. Eddie never let the sea take anyone away. For that, they made him Lifeguard of the Year.

One day, Eddie joined a crew on a wooden boat to re-enact the historic journey taken by Polynesian migrants between the Hawaiian and Tahitian islands. They would travel using traditional methods and navigate only by the sun and stars.

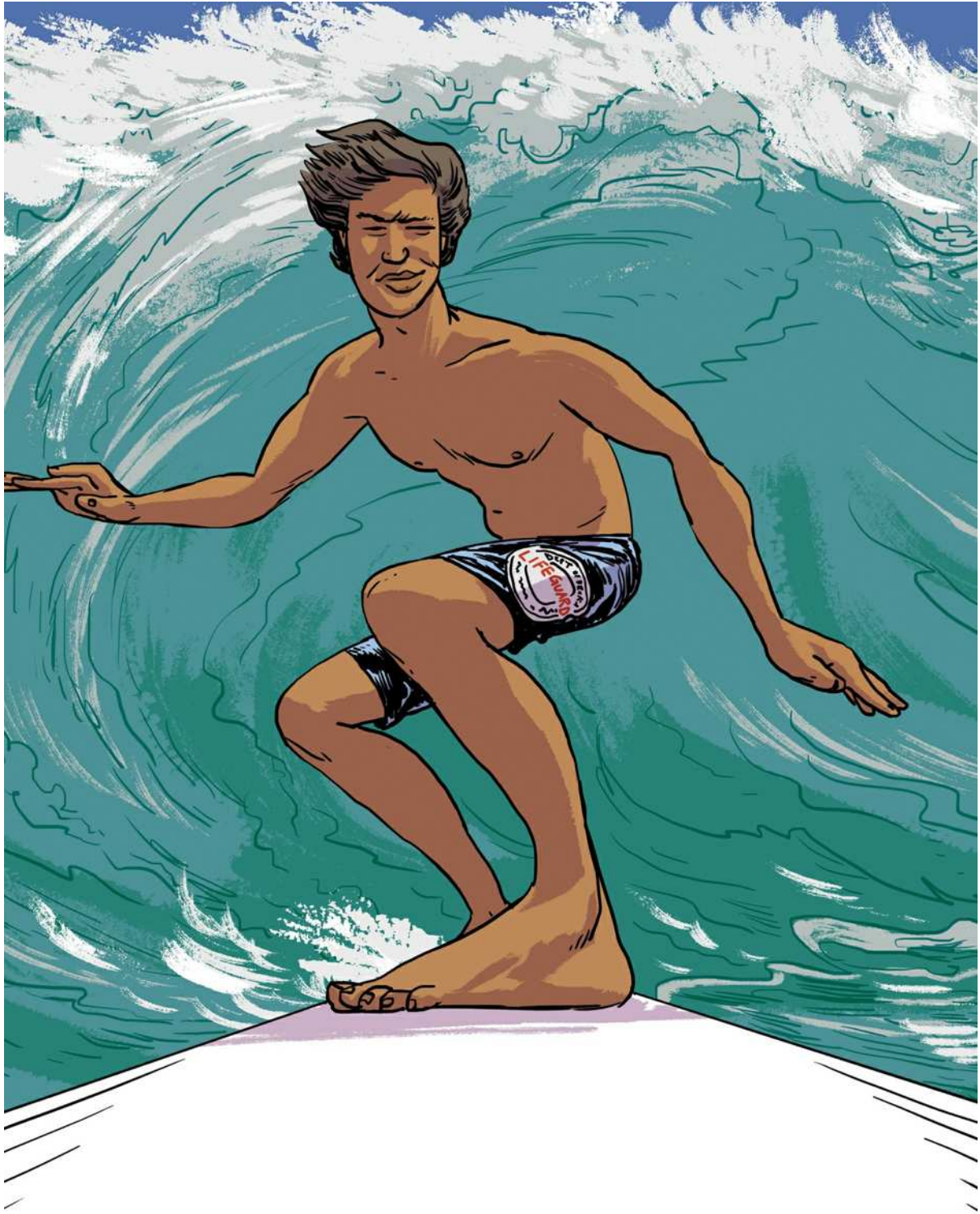
They ran into terrible weather. The water was so rough that it capsized the ship, tossing everyone overboard. Desperately, they clung to the sides of the boat, trying to stay afloat.

“Don't worry,” Eddie told the crew. “I'll go and get help.”

He swam away, into the dark, rolling sea.

The crew was eventually rescued. Nobody ever saw or heard from Eddie again.

To this day, when faced with tall waves or stormy weather, Hawaiian surfers say to each other, "Eddie would go." Every year, they hold a surfing competition in his honor. They cancel frequently because they only go ahead if the waves are huge.





DR. NAIF AL-MUTAWA

In 1979, Naif spent his summer at Camp Robin Hood, on the edge of a giant lake in America. That was where he first opened a comic book and lost himself in a world of superheroes.

Back home in Kuwait, Naif realized that there were no Muslim characters in any of the comic books he was reading. He decided that he would grow up to be a writer, so he could create them, but his father told him to study a more practical subject. Naif agreed, but he never forgot his dream.

In 2007, he made it a reality.

The 99 are a team of superheroes from all around the world, each named after one of the different ninety-nine qualities of Allah, which is the Muslim name for God.

They get their powers after finding magic stones that have been secretly scattered around the world hundreds of years earlier. The stones were created by the librarians of Baghdad, to preserve the city's wisdom after it was destroyed by invaders.

One character, Mujiba the Responder, has answers to everything, and wears a headscarf like a lot of Muslim girls. Another character, Darr the Afflicter, uses a wheelchair and can manipulate people's nerves.

The 99 battle their enemies without violence. Like their religion, they teach peace.

Naif wanted to give Muslim boys and girls their own superheroes. He

also wanted the world to have a deeper understanding of Islam than what is sometimes shown on the news.

The comics have sold thousands of copies, been turned into a TV show, and are handed out to children at refugee camps.

Naif has received death threats because of the 99. But he's also been praised. President Obama thanked him for inspiring so many young Muslims and for letting them know that they can be superheroes, too.





MOHED ALTRAD

(BORN 1948)

Mohed grew up in a tribe that would chase the rains across the Syrian Desert. Wherever the rains were, plants would grow, which meant the tribe's goats, camels, and sheep would have something to eat.

It was a difficult life. Mohed's mother died young, followed by his brother, and his dad wouldn't speak to him at all. He was raised by his grandma, who told him that he'd grow up to be a shepherd.

"But I want to go to school," he told her, one day.

"Don't be silly," she said. "Shepherds don't go to school."

Mohed didn't listen. In the mornings, he'd secretly race barefoot across the hot desert sand to a schoolhouse, where the other kids would bully him for being poor. He ignored them, knowing education was his only chance to get out.

He worked so hard, he won a place to go to France and study. Once he arrived, Mohed realized he could hardly understand anything the teachers said, and he was so poor he could only afford to eat once a day.

Still, he carried on working until his French got better and he graduated with a degree that helped him find a job.

Mohed saved and saved and bought a company that was about to fall apart. He renamed the company after himself—Altrad—and he turned

it around. Today, it has 1 million customers, in 100 countries, and 17,000 employees to organize everything.

Mohed's proven, to himself and everyone else, that it doesn't matter how you grow up, or what people tell you you're supposed to be—there are no limits to what you can achieve.

