

« The Problem We All Live With »

● Nature and origin of the document

The Problem We All Live With is a famous painting by Norman Rockwell . It **was painted** in 1964 and appeared in *Look* magazine, ten years after the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and during the Civil Rights Movement.

● Analysis

It depicts Ruby Bridges, a six-year-old African-American girl on her way to William Frantz Elementary School in New Orleans (Louisiana), an all-white public school, on November 14th 1960 during the desegregation crisis.

Ruby **was allowed** to integrate the school by a court decision.

The scene takes place on a sidewalk.

The characters

- the little girl

In the foreground, we can see the central character, a young African American girl. She is dressed in white (skirt, socks, shoes), in contrast with her skin colour. The white colour suggests innocence. She is holding schoolbooks, pens and a ruler. She is walking decisively, with her head up. A smashed and splattered tomato thrown against the wall is visible .

A racist slur , « Niggers » is written on the wall as well as a reference to the « KKK ». It refers to the Ku Klux Klan, a far-right organisation, opposed to the Civil Rights Movement.

The red of tomato draws our attention and first suggests blood and violence.

The girl is rather small whereas the marshals look proportionally like giants.

She is protected by the police because angry people, who are opposed to school integration, don't want her to enter the school.

-the men

The federal marshals are wearing grey or brown uniforms with yellow armbands saying « deputy US marshal ».

The marshals' heads are cropped at the shoulders. We can't see their faces.

They are escorting the little girl because angry people, who are opposed to school integration, don't want her to enter the school.

-the white crowd

The white protesters are not visible, as the viewer is looking at the scene from their point of view.

● Rockwell's goals.

This is a committed painting. Norman Rockwell wanted to show the stupidity of racism.

He wanted to show that African-Americans were victims of discrimination and injustice.