

**QUIET
RIOT**

Quiet Riot

Nadia Finer

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First published in the UK and USA in 2024 by
Moon + Bird, an imprint of Watkins Media Limited
Unit 11, Shepperton House, 83–93 Shepperton Road
London N1 3DF

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Publisher: Fiona Robertson
Commissioning Editor: Lucy Carroll
Project Editor: Brittany Willis
Copyeditor: Claire Phillip
Head of Design: Karen Smith
Head of Marketing & Publicity: Laura Whitaker-Jones
Illustrator: Holly Farndell
Production: Uzma Taj

A CIP record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978–1–78678–402–0 (Hardback)

ISBN: 978–1–78678–921–1 (eBook)

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in China

www.moonandbirdbooks.com

NADIA FINER

QUIET RIOT

True Tales of Shy Superheroes
Who Changed the World

ILLUSTRATED BY HOLLY FARNDELL





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INTRODUCTION





Hi there! I'm Nadia, a quiet person who often feels shy. I have a small voice that people tell me sounds weird, which makes me feel embarrassed and self-conscious at times. I know how to manage my shyness these days, but when I was younger, I hid at the back of a room and lurked on the sidelines. I preferred to keep my thoughts and ideas to myself.

In the past, I would avoid all kinds of things because I was so worried about being laughed at. I hated calling people I didn't know on the phone, and talking

to groups of people gave me a stomach ache! Just the thought of being on camera made me want to cry. If only I could be louder and braver.

I didn't tell anyone how I felt because I was too shy. Have you ever noticed that people rarely talk about shyness? It's mostly ignored in day-to-day life. But the thing is, not speaking about shyness can make us feel *more* alone, like we're the only ones experiencing life this way. And that's not the case at all—there are lots of shy people, and many of them have done incredible things.

When you're shy, timid or reserved – or whatever you want to call it – it's tempting to hide in the background of your life. It's easier and way more comfortable *not* to put your hand up, ask questions, share your opinions and ideas or take a risk. But when we stay quiet and keep ourselves small, we miss out on all kinds of amazing experiences.

And here's the thing! When we don't join in, speak up, enter the race or step onto the stage, other people miss out on what we have to offer. Quiet people have so many gifts and talents. It makes me sad to think we are keeping all that good stuff locked away.

Our quieter voices are missing from lots of important conversations: in the classroom, at work, in politics and in the media. While there are some amazing shy people in every industry – and this book is full of them – there are many places where we don't have enough representation, and that is a huge problem. Often we have the exact skills and understanding to solve serious issues.

When I realised this, I decided to change how I thought about myself. I wanted to embrace my quiet personality and stop wishing I was different. It's OK to feel shy and awkward sometimes – it's part of what makes me human. I decided to start the Shy and Mighty Project because I was concerned that if I didn't do something to help other shy people, maybe no one else would.

I've studied everything there is to know about shyness, and I've given talks about it in schools and for big companies. I've also written about shyness in magazines, newspapers and books. I've even managed to talk about it on the radio and TV. I found a way to overcome my fears and find my voice because I feel so strongly about this topic.

While working with my shyness, I wondered why people who achieve incredible things all seem so loud and outgoing. Where are all the softly spoken superheroes, leaders, innovators and champions? Shy people need role models to realise they don't need to change. I decided to write this book to show that quiet people can be brave, successful and awe-inspiring. It's the book I wish I had when I was younger – and the book I still need to keep me pushing forward.

This book contains 40 magnificent stories about the shy yet mighty. Athletes, writers, explorers, artists, singers and activists from all over the world are featured. Importantly, each person has had to overcome their fears to find their voice.

Get ready to read about the remarkable achievements of music queen Beyoncé, racing star Lewis Hamilton, sporting wonder Lionel Messi, fashion icon Yves Saint Laurent and many more! Their stories show that shy and softly spoken people can be trailblazers, and so can you.

The stories have been organised into ten sections – each one has an important message to help you start your own quiet riot. Start at the beginning of the book and read to the end, or dip in and out depending on your mood. You can read a story when you wake up, before bed or during a quiet moment in the day. It's up to you.

My heartfelt hope is that these stories will give you the confidence to try something new, stand up for your beliefs and follow your dreams. Never forget that your voice matters and that the world needs to hear what you have to say.

With love,

Nadia

P.S. You can find out more about me, my work and my books at

 www.shyandmighty.com 



THE SHY AND MIGHTY



Manifesto

ALWAYS REMEMBER:

Shyness might make you feel lonely, but you are not alone.

Shyness is not shameful. Let's talk more about shyness.

Shy people are not broken. You don't need fixing.

Shy people have superpowers!

Shyness is not a weakness. You are mighty inside.

The world needs to hear your voice.





DREAM
MASSIVE



Sally Ride

(1951–2012)

At the age of 18, Sally Ride was on track to become a professional tennis player, but on 20 July 1969, she found a new dream: going to space.

That evening, Sally should have been in bed asleep. She had an important tennis tournament the next day in her hometown of Los Angeles, California, USA, but something BIG was happening. On her screen was the grainy black and white footage of astronaut Neil Armstrong stepping onto the rocky surface of the Moon. He was announcing, "That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind." Sally was entranced. Something people thought was impossible had happened. A man was on the Moon!

The next day, Sally won her match, but all she could think about was the space mission. It was as though a little star had started to glow inside her. Whenever she thought about space and imagined becoming an astronaut, the star would shine brighter.

When Sally studied science and mathematics at school, she felt strong and powerful. When she looked through her telescope at the night sky, that little star inside would burn brighter. And when people told her that science was not for girls, she ignored them. Instead, the star would shimmer and spark.

However, when Sally was in the classroom and her teacher asked a question, she shrunk. She would hunch over her desk and wish for the teacher to choose someone else. Sally often knew the answers, but speaking in front of everyone felt impossible! In those moments, Sally remembered her dream of being an astronaut, and the thought of going into space gave her a reason to be brave.

After graduating from school, Sally went to Stanford University to study English and Physics. She was the only girl on her course. At the time, the idea of a woman becoming an astronaut seemed bizarre to most people. Whenever she doubted herself, the star inside Sally would sparkle and remind her that she was capable, strong and brave. With a name like Sally Ride, it seemed she was destined to blaze a trail across the sky.

In 1977, Sally was nearing the end of her university degree. She picked up a local newspaper – *The Stanford Daily* – and spotted something incredible. NASA had placed an advertisement on the front page announcing they were looking for people to become astronauts, and women could apply. The opportunity she had been waiting for was staring her in the face.

Deciding that this was definitely not the moment to be afraid, Sally picked up her pen. Imagining she was about to launch herself into a new kind of life, the star inside Sally sparkled. Sally filled out the application and sent it off.

After weeks and weeks of waiting, she was invited to attend a series of interviews and tests. They placed her in a tiny space to check she was not claustrophobic and put her through a multitude of examinations.

Sally then waited for months until she received a letter. It informed her that she and five other women had been chosen to join a group of 35 trainee astronauts at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas, USA. Her combination of calm, intelligence and sportiness made her perfect astronaut material.

That's when the hard work really started! Sally had to learn to parachute jump, move in a weightless environment and navigate. She also had to

"Whenever she doubted herself, the star inside Sally would sparkle and remind her that she was capable, strong, and brave."

become a strong scuba diver and swim in a heavy space suit. All the trainee astronauts had to learn to use the rocket controls and other complex equipment. Sally's favourite bit was flying a jet upside down at 500mph. The astronauts had to plan for every scenario and learn what to do if something went wrong. They would practise and practise until they got everything right. Sally loved learning new things and working as part of a team. She was in her element.

Five years later, Sally was chosen as a mission specialist for a six-day mission aboard the rocket-powered Space Shuttle. The press made a huge commotion! They asked her all kinds of ridiculous questions about makeup, underwear and whether she might cry. Thankfully, the star inside Sally was shining brightly. She was too focused on her dreams to bother with their nonsense.

At last, the big day arrived. Sally was scared and excited as she sat in the spacecraft waiting for launch. Her dreams were about to come true. The countdown began, and 3, 2, 1 ... Lift off! On 18 June 1983, Sally became the first American woman – and the third woman worldwide – to fly to space. She was also the youngest-ever American astronaut. When Sally came back down to earth, she was a national hero. People wrote about her and featured her in songs and movies.

Sally made a second trip into space the next year and later became a professor of physics at the University of California, San Diego, USA, and the director of the California Space Institute. She made it her mission to encourage girls to get into the wonderful world of science.



Lionel Messi

(born 1987)

In the centre of Grandoli – a small suburb in Rosario, Argentina – there was a football pitch made from dust and earth. Kids of all ages gathered there to play and let off steam. Stray dogs roamed the streets, horses trotted by and people sipped cold drinks in the sun. The young Lionel “Leo” Messi, now one of the most famous football players of all time, lived nearby.

Leo was a small, timid boy who stuck close to his family. He avoided all the mischief and distractions of his neighbourhood and rarely spoke to anyone. To keep him busy, Leo's grandmother asked if he could join in when some of the older boys formed a football team. He was only four years old, so the other boys seemed like giants! At first, Leo sat on the floor by himself and played with pebbles, but eventually, he looked up and noticed how they ran with the ball.

When the ball accidentally rolled over to him, Leo took a deep breath, gathered his courage, stood up and tapped it gently. The ball rolled forward. He tapped it again and smiled. And that was it! He dribbled the ball as if it was the most natural thing in the world. The next day, he returned to the pitch and joined in without hesitating. Shy little Leo got the ball, ran toward the goal and scored. Goal! He was hooked.

Leo's grandmother bought him his first pair of football boots so he could join the team. He was so talented that everyone gasped as he zoomed in and out of the other players. The ball was seemingly glued to his feet. And as for the goals – there were so many! Leo became known for miles around as the tiny goal-scoring wonderkid.





As well as being a skilled player, Leo was also considerate. During one game, he collided with the opposition's goalkeeper. He could have easily scored, but he left the ball and went to check on the keeper to make sure he wasn't hurt. Leo was a determined player, but deep down he was still a kind young boy.

Even though Leo was excellent at football, there was one main complication: he was much smaller than the other kids, even those his own age. He went to a doctor to find out why he wasn't growing and was diagnosed with a growth hormone deficiency.

Growth hormone is a chemical-like substance made by a gland in the brain. It controls height as well as bone and muscle growth. To help Leo grow, he would need a daily special injection to increase the growth hormone levels in his body. This treatment did help Leo a lot, but it was expensive. The Argentinian government paid for a while, but soon, Leo's family would have to find the money.

Luckily for Leo, news of his talent was spreading far and wide. FC Barcelona (in Spain), one of the best football teams in the world, invited Leo to play for them. They also promised to pay for his treatment.

When he was just 13 years old, Leo and his family headed to Spain so that he could play for the Barcelona youth team. They were so impressed with him that his first contract was signed on the back of a napkin. They couldn't

wait to complete the entire process! The coach there told the players to be careful with Leo. He was worried the bigger kids might injure him. But they just chuckled, "How can we hurt him if we can't catch him? He's too fast!"

Leo did not talk to his teammates for the first month or so. Moving to a new country, house and football club made him homesick and even shyer. Leo found it challenging to settle in and make friends. He was also insecure about his body, so he got changed in private. It was a difficult time for Leo.

However, after a while, Leo started to feel more comfortable. Once the season got going, he began to relax and chat with people. He made friends and had fun. Leo *loved* the game. He did like to win, but mostly, he wanted to play football for the joy of it!

Leo turned his quietness and his size into his superpower. Even today, when he gets the ball, his aim is to swerve as many people as possible. He dodges, tackles and darts around the other players. He's good at going unnoticed until it's too late to stop him – then the ball is in the back of the net!

Leo doesn't care about being famous or having lots of fans or followers. He is more concerned with scoring goals. His unique approach to the game is what makes him one of the best football players in the world. Go, Leo!

"Leo turned his quietness and his size into his superpower. Even today, when he gets the ball, his goal is to swerve as many people as possible."



Jessica Watson

(born 1993)

Jessica Watson is the youngest person to sail solo and unassisted around the world. She accomplished her dream at just 16 years old, but it wasn't without years of practice and preparation.

The first few times Jessica's parents took her sailing, she didn't want to go! Jessica was a timid and cautious kind of kid. She was worried about the icy cold water and did not like the idea of getting drenched. Too scared to join in, she sat and watched her brother and sisters as they glided across the water.

Feeling unsure was familiar to Jessica. She was afraid of climbing trees, going too fast on her bike and jumping into water. Fear controlled Jessica's life and stopped her from trying new things, joining in and having fun.

But there was no escaping sailing. Jessica's life was changed forever when her parents sold their house and business to live on a boat and sail the Australian Gold Coast. Instead of going to school, Jessica's mum taught them as they sailed. The family would go camping and spend lots of time outside. Gradually, Jessica realised that trying new things could be enjoyable. She saw that being on the water was safe, that sailing was fun and gave her freedom!

Jessica has a learning difficulty called dyslexia, so her mum would read stories out loud to her. One of the stories was about a man who sailed around the world all by himself – a normal person who had achieved something incredible. As Jessica listened, her eyes opened wide.

The story had planted a seed in Jessica's mind, and she felt inspired to start nurturing her new dream. Sailing around the world seemed like such a big

challenge. Could she do something scary like that? Jessica could not help but wonder.

Jessica didn't share her thoughts with anyone because she was worried about what they would say. After all, she was only 11 years old! She feared they would squash her dream. But when she finally felt brave enough to tell her parents, they didn't laugh or tell her off. They encouraged her to start planning.

For four years, Jessica devoted herself to sailing. She took lessons, studied books and learned about safety, engines, radios and first aid. She also learned about the weather and how to sail in different conditions. There are no repair shops at sea, so Jessica had to learn how to fix and rebuild equipment if it broke. She was still rather shy and reserved, but Jessica had to ask the more experienced sailors for advice when she needed it.

And then there was the small matter of buying a boat! Boats can cost vast amounts, and the one she needed was particularly expensive. It was as

watertight as a submarine and had lots of safety features and gadgets – such as solar panels and a satellite phone – to make sailing it as smooth and safe as possible. Jessica worked various odd jobs to earn money, and mustered the courage to ask companies to sponsor her trip.

When the boat was ready, Jessica did a test run. On the first night, her boat crashed into a huge ship while she was sleeping, and the mast was snapped in two. Jessica was upset and embarrassed at the mistake – it was a terrible disaster.



Tempting as it was to run away and hide, Jessica managed to steer her thoughts to focus on her goal and the valuable lessons she had learned. There will always be setbacks. The important thing is how you recover from them.

Finally, on 18 October 2009, Jessica set sail on her journey around the world from Sydney, Australia. The plan was to take 210 days to cover almost 23,000 miles. She was just 16 years old!

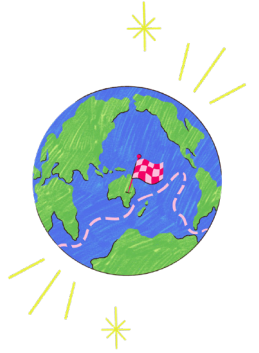
Jessica was by herself aboard her boat, which was called *Ella's Pink Lady*, for the entire journey. She only had her books and music for company. The rules stated that Jessica wasn't allowed to stop and nobody could come onto the boat to help her. The only way she could talk to people was via her radio and the blog she wrote along the way.

The trip was not always plain sailing. Jessica forced herself to put on "happy glasses" during difficult moments so she could see the best in a situation and appreciate the good things.

She faced rough seas, massive waves and battering winds. During the long and lonely voyage, Jessica had to carry out many repairs to the sails, stove, pump, kettle and even the toilet! At times her little boat struggled, and it was knocked down over and over. One night, conditions were so rough that the boat smashed into the sea four times. Luckily, the damage was not too serious, and Jessica was unhurt.

Aside from the danger and the drama, Jessica's journey was filled with epic beauty and breathtaking moments. She saw the sun rise over the sea, watched whales leap and gazed at the night sky filled with dazzling stars.

After eight months, Jessica returned to Sydney and was met by 75,000 people cheering her on. Jessica had become the youngest person to sail solo all the way around the world without stopping. Her incredible journey shows us that all adventures start with a dream and the courage to talk about it.



Anthony Horowitz

(born 1955)

In the 1950s, in London, England, there was a boy who lived in a house so big that when it was eventually demolished many years later, 16 gigantic houses were built in its place.

Growing up in a massive mansion with lots of money, fancy cars and expensive things sounds amazing, right? Unfortunately, this wasn't really the case for Anthony Horowitz.

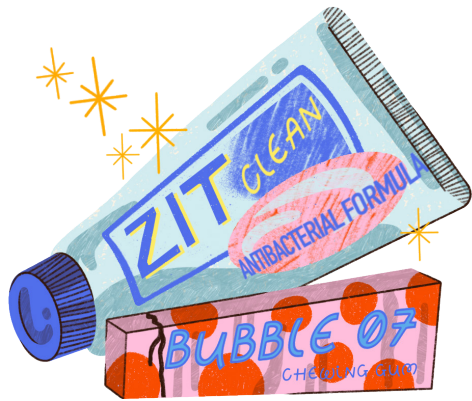
Even though his house was massive, it was miserable. Anthony's father could be cruel and distant. Nobody knew where all his money came from, and when he died, nobody knew where it all went. He left behind huge debts, and there was a lingering suspicion that he'd been up to no good.

When Anthony was young, his father often mistreated him. He was made to perform for his father's important guests by telling jokes and was forced to prove his intellect before he was given dinner. And Anthony's grandmother was so gruesome and awful that she made everyone who entered the house afraid of her.

During all this misery, Anthony's mother provided a glimmer of love and affection. When she was able to get away from her husband and mother-in-law, she read him horror and adventure stories. These fleeting moments were precious indeed. Otherwise, Anthony was ignored and isolated with only the nanny or the driver keeping an eye on him.

His only happy place was his father's library. Anthony felt safe in the library surrounded by books. He spent hours reading, writing and fantasising





about another life, a life that was overflowing with adventure and fun – and far away from his family. The pictures in his mind came to life as stories on the pages of his notebooks, giving him hope for a brighter future.

Unfortunately, Anthony's next real adventure bore no resemblance to his dreams. One day, without

warning, he was shipped off to a boarding school and left to fend for himself. The school was run by old-fashioned and often cruel teachers who seemingly enjoyed making the boys' lives a complete misery. They even used corporal punishment, which means they hit misbehaving students with belts or sticks. Thankfully, this horrific practice is now illegal in lots of countries.

To say that Anthony hated the school would be the world's biggest understatement. He despised it more than congealed custard covered in bogies! In fact, when he went back to his school many years later, it brought back such terrible memories that he was nearly sick.

To cope with his horrible situation, Anthony would sit in class and let his imagination whisk him away to far-flung places and take him on exhilarating adventures. He thought up tales of double-crossing spies, murderous mysteries and do-or-die detectives.

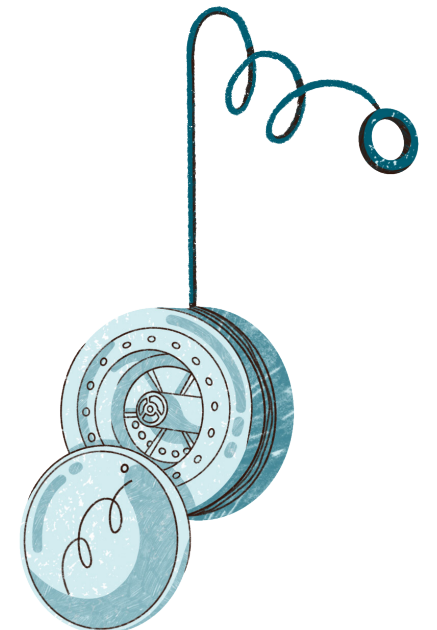
After being punished cruelly one day, Anthony offered to tell everyone in his dormitory a story. He wasn't used to being the storyteller, so he started his tale rather shy. As Anthony gradually found his voice, his confidence grew and the words began to flow. He spoke of spies, monsters and bad guys being defeated. There were giggles, guffaws and gasps. Under the cover of darkness and duvets, Anthony had started to shine.

"There have been many times that Anthony has worried about being successful or speaking in front of crowds, but in those moments, he remembers that his voice matters."

At that moment, Anthony knew he wanted to become a writer. He felt it was his destiny, so he wrote and wrote and wrote! He shared his stories at night, designed intriguing book covers and even practised his signature so that he'd be ready to sign books for his fans. Writing stories gave him hope. They gave him a power and a future. It didn't matter whether his father or his teachers believed in him. Anthony was determined to make it happen and become a great success. And he did!

Anthony is now a bestselling author. He's written over 50 brilliant books, including the popular *Alex Rider* series. His books have even been made into plays, films and TV programmes. He writes stories of survival, determination, hope and defeating ghastly grannies and terrifying teachers!

There have been many times that Anthony has worried about being successful or speaking in front of crowds, but in those moments, he remembers that his voice matters. His stories bring hope and excitement to young people everywhere, no matter what they are going through. After all, it's hard to feel lonely when you are reading a brilliant book!



DREAM MASSIVE

Quiet Reflection

Take a moment to reflect on the previous chapter and answer these questions to help you work out how you can dream massively.

I have the most fun when I am . . .

The things that are most important to me are . . .

I want to feel . . .

I want to learn . . .

I want my life to be . . .

If I knew I could not fail, I would . . .

I feel like there's something glowing inside me when . . .

My biggest dream is to . . .

When I think about my dream, it makes me feel . . .

The first step I am going to take toward making my dream happen is . . .