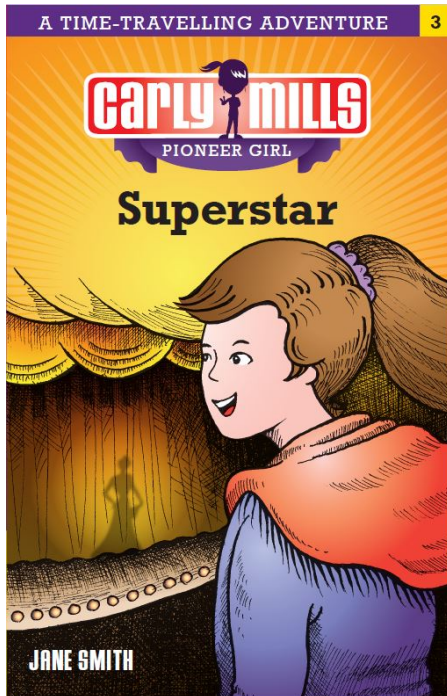




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Carly Mills Pioneer Girl

3 – Superstar

by

Jane Smith

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About the Series

Featuring a young girl who travels back in time and has adventures with strong and influential women of the past, 'Carly Mills, Pioneer Girl' introduces children to the female pioneers who paved the way to a better society. Full of adventure and surprises, the series shows how these women, through determination, integrity and courage, changed the world – and how those same qualities can still inspire young women of today.

About the Book: *Superstar*

When Carly Mills goes to Melbourne with the school choir, she gets more than she bargained for: a trip back in time and a chance meeting with a mischievous little girl with an amazing singing voice. If Carly is to help the little girl achieve her dream of a life on the stage, she will have to endure Nellie's practical jokes, an angry headmaster, and her father's belief that opera is not a fit career for a lady. Not to mention Simone's bad moods and Dora's terrible singing. In meeting the girl who will become the world-famous opera singer Dame Nellie Melba, Carly discovers that determination, perseverance and believing in yourself can lead to superstar success.

From the Author

I'm lucky enough to live in a time and place in which my gender doesn't limit my opportunities. Even in the western world it wasn't always so. In the past, girls didn't receive the same education as boys; women weren't allowed to become doctors or politicians or engineers or have just about any other career besides teaching or domestic service. They weren't even allowed to vote. In some countries, women still have fewer rights than men, but in most western countries we've come a long way.

Our progress is thanks to the brave women from our past – in Australia and all around the world – who stood up and fought for our rights. Thanks to them, girls like you can go to school, have a career in a field that interests you, have a job *and* a family (if that's what you want), vote, own your own home, make scientific discoveries, travel, even become prime minister! I'm grateful to the strong women of history like Caroline Chisholm, Dr Lilian Cooper and Dame Nellie Melba, whose efforts made the world a better place – not just for women, but for everyone. I'm also grateful to the women in my own life – my mother, sister, daughter and friends – who have shown me the value of love, loyalty, friendship and courage.

The 'Carly Mills, Pioneer Girl' series combines fact with fiction. The books contain true settings and events and some real people, but the main characters – Carly and her friends – are characters that I made up. This is what we call *historical fiction*. I've tried to keep the history part as accurate as possible, and to help you to separate the fact from the fiction, I've included some historical notes at the end. I hope that Carly and her friends (both the real ones and the made-up ones!) inspire *you* to make your part of the world a better place.

Emerging Themes and Issues

- Feminism
- Women's rights
- Empowering women
- Biography
- Time travel
- Adventure
- Music
- Comparison of communities in the past and present
- Influential people
- Opera
- Friendship
- Singers
- Australian history

Key Curriculum Areas

KLA: HASS – History

Year 5

Australian communities – their past, present and possible futures

- What do we know about the lives of people in Australia's colonial past and how do we know?
- How did an Australian colony develop over time and why?
- How did colonial settlement change the environment?
- What were the significant events and who were the significant people that shaped Australian colonies?

The role that a significant individual or group played in shaping a colony [ACHASSK110](#)

Year 6

Australia in the past and present and its connections with a diverse world

- How have key figures, events and values shaped Australian society, its system of government and citizenship?
- How have experiences of democracy and citizenship differed between groups over time and place, including those from and in Asia?
- How has Australia developed as a society with global connections, and what is my role as a global citizen?

Experiences of Australian democracy and citizenship, including the status and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, migrants, women and children [ACHASSK135](#)

KLA: English

Year 3

Draw connections between personal experiences and the worlds of texts, and share responses with others [ACELT1596](#).

Discuss how language is used to describe the settings in texts, and explore how the settings shape the events and influence the mood of the narrative [ACELT1599](#).

Identify the point of view in a text and suggest alternative points of view [ACELY1675](#) .

Create imaginative texts based on characters, settings and events from students' own and other cultures using visual features, for example, perspective, distance and angle [ACELT1601](#) .

Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning and begin to evaluate texts by drawing on a growing knowledge of context, text structures and language features [ACELY1680](#) .

Year 4

Discuss literary experiences with others, sharing responses and expressing a point of view [\(ACELT1603\)](#).

Discuss how authors and illustrators make stories exciting, moving and absorbing, and hold readers' interest by using various techniques, for example, character development and plot tension [\(ACELT1605\)](#).

Create literary texts that explore students' own experiences and imagining [\(ACELT1607\)](#).

Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning to expand content knowledge, integrating and linking ideas and analysing and evaluating texts [\(ACELY1692\)](#).

Year 5

Understand that patterns of language interaction vary across social contexts and types of texts and that they help to signal social roles and relationships [\(ACELA1501\)](#).

Identify aspects of literary texts that convey details or information about particular social, cultural and historical contexts [\(ACELT1608\)](#).

Recognise that ideas in literary texts can be conveyed from different viewpoints, which can lead to different kinds of interpretations and responses [\(ACELT1610\)](#).

Create literary texts that experiment with structures, ideas and stylistic features of selected authors [\(ACELT1798\)](#).

Identify and explain characteristic text structures and language features used in imaginative, informative and persuasive texts to meet the purpose of the text [\(ACELY1701\)](#).

Year 6

Understand how authors often innovate on text structures and play with language features to achieve particular aesthetic, humorous and persuasive purposes and effects ([ACELA1518](#)).

Make connections between students' own experiences and those of characters and events represented in texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts ([ACELT1613](#)).

Participate in and contribute to discussions, clarifying and interrogating ideas, developing and supporting arguments, sharing and evaluating information, experiences and opinions ([ACELY1709](#)).

Analyse how text structures and language features work together to meet the purpose of a text ([ACELY1711](#)).

Suggested Pre-Reading Questions & Activities

- Discussion: If you could travel back in time and visit a certain place or event, where might you like to go? What might you choose to see or do? What might be the same? What might be different?
- The series name is **Carly Mills, Pioneer Girl**. What is a pioneer?
- The title of the book is **Superstar** – what might this mean?
- Show students the cover of the novel and read the blurb to them. Ask them to write down their predictions of what might happen to Carly throughout the story.
- The story is about Dame Nellie Melba. Students use the KWL template to record what they know about her and what they want to know.
- Look at the quote from Dame Nellie Melba on the back. Why might she have said this? What do you think it means to be Australian? Does it matter what country you came from?

Suggested During Reading Activities

- As the students progress through the story, create a story map that outlines the generic features of the novel (introduction, conflict, resolution, further action, conclusion).
- Create a word wall, including unknown words and words relating to the era in which Nellie Melba lived.
- Choose words from within the text to include in spelling lists.
- Build a profile for each character throughout the book. Include descriptive words found in the text and personal inferences.
- Use the character profile template to record the details of the characters in the story.
- Using Trove, search for images of Melbourne in the late 1800s.
- Students add questions and findings about Nellie Melba to their KWL sheet.

Suggested Post-Reading Activities

- Read the historical note. Discuss which events in the book were real and which events the author made up.
- See the quotes from Nellie Melba on page 129: 'Art is not national. It is international. Music is not written in red, white and blue. It is written in the heart's blood of the composer.' What might it mean?
- Refer to Jane Smith's 'Carly Mills, Pioneer Girl' website. Look at the timeline of the life of Nellie Melba. Compare it to the timeline made of events of Australian history during the time.

<https://www.carlymillspioneergirl.com/dame-nellie-melba.html>

<https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/defining-moments-timeline>

- Select a significant person from the nineteenth century in Australia. Research and report on the contribution the person made to the development of Australian society.
- Write a letter to author Jane Smith asking further questions about Nellie Melba.
- Create and film a 'book talk' reviewing the book.
- Produce a new book cover and blurb for the story.
- Write a book review, outlining details of the storyline, recommended readers, etc.
- Create an advertising poster, which could be displayed in a bookstore, that would persuade readers to purchase the book.
- Imagine you are Nellie Melba, Carly Mills, Dora or Simone. Write a series of diary entries based on events in the book.
- Choose a strong woman from the past to research. Write a report and create a brief PowerPoint presentation on her life and achievements.
- Read the mock interview with Nellie Melba. Write a question you would like her to answer. Try writing the answer. Swap questions with a partner and each answer your partner's question from Nellie Melba's perspective. Are your answers similar?
- Are there student questions from their KWL that require further research?

Chapter Summaries and Comprehension Questions

Chapter 1

Carly is practising singing with the school choir, getting ready for a performance during a choir tour to Melbourne. Simone is rude about Dora's terrible singing. The choir is singing a song that the teacher, Ms Carrigan, tells them was famously sung by opera singer Dame Nellie Melba when she was a child. Simone spies Carly's magical shawl and teases her about it and snatches it away; Carly grabs it back and a piece of lace rips off it. Simone ties the lace around her neck. Carly fears Simone

will go back to the past and also worries that now that her shawl is torn, the magic might be lost. She and Dora put on their shawls to join Simone.

1. Have you ever sung in a choir? How did it make you feel?
2. What is a folk song?
3. Can you find a recording of 'Comin' thro' the rye'? What do you think of it?
4. Have you heard opera music? What did you think of it? Why do you think people might have different opinions about it? Do you think it's 'right' or 'wrong' to like or dislike a particular type of music? What sort of music do you like? Discuss this with a friend.
5. Why does Carly hope the magic in her shawl still works?

Chapter 2

Carly, Simone and Dora find themselves back in the past. Simone is shocked to find she's wearing olden-day clothes as she has never time-travelled with Carly and Dora before. They realise they are in 1867 and in the audience at a Sunday-school concert. A six-year-old girl, Helen Mitchell, gets up on a chair to sing. She sings the same song Carly's choir was practising: 'Comin' thro' the rye'. The girls are surprised by her beautiful voice.

1. Simone is shocked to find she's wearing olden-day clothes. She thinks Carly and Dora are playing some strange joke on her. How would you feel if you were in her situation?
2. Imagine wearing olden-day clothing from 1867. Would it restrict your activities? How would you feel?
3. How long ago is 1867?
4. Why might Carly have expected the concert to be boring?
5. What sort of concerts have you been to? What were they like?

Chapter 3

The girls come across the little singer, Helen Mitchell, arguing with another girl who teases her, and Dora steps in to defend Helen. Helen, who likes to be called 'Nellie', invites her new friends home for afternoon tea, so they walk home with her. Nellie plays a prank on her father and enrages him. He says he's going to send her to boarding school. As the girls are comforting her, Nellie pulls the lace off Simone's neck, inadvertently sending the girls back to the present.

1. What is the item of clothing called 'drawers' or 'bloomers'? Can you find any pictures?
2. Carly 'had been back into the past often enough to know that the rules of behaviour for girls were different back then.' What might some of the differences be?
3. What do you think of the pranks Nellie plays on Carly and her father? Do you think there is any harm in them? What does it tell you about Nellie?
4. What are bellows?
5. Would you like to go to boarding school? Why/why not?

6. At the end of the chapter, Simone reacts strangely when Nellie tells her she wants to be a famous opera singer. What do you think Simone is thinking? What makes you think that?

Chapter 4

The girls are back in the present, at the school concert. Simone tells Carly and Dora she thinks ‘Helen Mitchell’ was really ‘Nellie Melba’. They don’t know whether to believe her. The choir goes on stage to perform, and even Dora manages to sing in tune. After the performance, the girls decide to go back to the past.

1. Why does Simone think she might be going mad?
2. Why do you think Carly is nervous on stage? Have you ever performed on stage in any way? How did *you* feel?
3. What is a choir riser?
4. Why did the girls want to go back to the past again?

Chapter 5

The girls are in a big building that they realise is a school. They realise they are back in the past. They come across a Latin class and spy Nellie in it, but now she’s a teenager. She excuses herself from class and joins them. She tells them she’s going to skip class to go to the church on the other side of Fitzroy Gardens to practise the organ, and invites them to come with her. The girls agree and try to escape unseen, but the headmaster catches Nellie creeping past his window. She goes inside for her punishment while Carly, Dora and Simone run across the road to the gardens.

1. How do Carly and her friends know they’re back in the past?
2. What is Latin?
3. Reading the description of Nellie as a teenager, can you draw a picture of her?
4. Why does Nellie say ‘You haven’t grown much, have you?’
5. Nellie thinks that ‘Melba’ would be a nice stage name. What’s a ‘stage name’? If you had to use a stage name, what would you choose?
6. What do Nellie’s adventures tell you about her so far?

Chapter 6

Carly, Dora and Simone explore the Fitzroy Gardens. In the afternoon, Nellie joins them. They come across a horse-drawn bus and Nellie climbs up to drive it. Her friends join her, but the horses take off at a canter. Just before the bus crashes, Carly’s and Dora’s shawls fly off and they are sent back to the present.

1. What is Fitzroy Gardens? Can you find it on a map? What significant sites from the past exist in Fitzroy Gardens? See if you can find some pictures of it from today, and use Trove to look at pictures of it from the past: <https://tinyurl.com/yymvdadu>
2. What is a rotunda?
3. Why does Dora think Nellie doesn't seem like an opera singer? What do you think an opera singer would be like? What does 'posh' mean?
4. Have you ever been driven in a horse-drawn carriage? Can you describe what it was like? If you haven't, can you describe what you *imagine* it would be like?
5. Simone complains a lot. List some of the things she complains about. How do Carly and Dora react to her moods?

Chapter 7

The girls are back in the present, in their choir uniforms. They are in Fitzroy Gardens with Ms Carrigan and the rest of the choir. They see the same rotunda they saw when they were there in olden days. Ms Carrigan tells them that Nellie Melba used to go to school across the road, and the girls realise that the little girl they met really *was* Nellie Melba.

1. They realise the rotunda in the gardens must be at least 140 years old. Do you know of any buildings that are that old? See if you can find some pictures.
2. Why is Simone grumpy again?
3. Carly and Dora are puzzled when Simone says it wouldn't have been fun to stay in the past without them. Why are they confused? Do you think Simone wants to be friends or not? Have you ever had complicated friendships like that?
4. Find a picture of a flame tree and describe it or draw it.
5. The school that Nellie attended across from Fitzroy Gardens was called Presbyterian Ladies' College. It has moved to a different place since she was there. See if you can find a picture of it or any information about its history.

Chapter 8

Back in the present, students from the choir have ice creams, visit a museum, go op-shopping and visit the State Library. The next day it is raining and the girls aren't very interested in the rainy-day activities Ms Carrigan has planned for them. They decide to go back to the past.

1. What is 'op-shopping'? What are some advantages of buying clothes from op shops?
2. Carly and Dora discuss going back to the past. They don't want to take Simone but would feel bad about leaving her behind. What should they do? Why?
3. What is a State Library? Find some pictures of the State Library in your state.

Chapter 9

The girls are back in the past again. They are outside a house and can hear a baby crying and a man and woman arguing. They realise the woman is Nellie and the man is telling her he won't let her have a career in singing. The man storms out and sees them. He tells them he is Nellie's husband and her name is now Nellie Armstrong. They go inside to comfort her and realise the crying baby is hers. Nellie's father appears. Nellie is angry because he has the chance to go to Europe and won't take her; she believes that to further her singing career she needs to train in Europe, but her father doesn't want her to be a singer any more than her husband does. Finally, Carly persuades Mr Mitchell to take Nellie to Europe. The girls go back to the present.

1. Why might Nellie's husband have objected to her career in opera? Why might Nellie's father have objected? Do you think they might have the same attitudes about it if they were living today? Why/why not? What do you think of the idea that a career on the stage is not 'respectable' or 'ladylike'?
2. We know of three different surnames Nellie has used. What are they? Why did she change her surname to Armstrong? Think of married women you know now. How many of them changed their surnames to their husband's name, and how many did not?
3. What does it mean if you 'don't see eye to eye' with someone?
4. Simone calls Nellie's husband a 'brute', but Nellie says he's not so bad. What is a brute? Think of some examples where you have had an argument with someone but still like them.
5. Find Mackay on a map.

Chapter 10

Carly and her friends are back at the hotel, in the present. Ms Carrigan take the choir to the theatre to see the opera *La Bohème*. Wondering what the theatre would have been like in the olden days, the girls decide to go back to the past again.

1. What do you think of Dora's comment: 'We have to stick together in these adventures ... even with Simone'?
2. Research the opera *La Bohème*.
 - a. Who wrote it?
 - b. When was it written?
 - c. Can you find a recording of some music from it?
3. Would you rather go to the zoo or a performance at a theatre? Why?

Chapter 11

The girls are in the audience of a theatre. From a programme, they realise they are back in 1902 and about to see Dame Nellie Melba perform at Melbourne Town Hall. The theatre is crowded and the girls are amazed to see how successful and popular Nellie has become.

1. If Nellie was born in 1861, how old would she be in late 1902?
2. What is a chandelier?
3. What does Carly mean when she says, 'She's like a rock star'?
4. When the crowd cheers, Carly thinks there is a tear in Nellie's eye. Why was Nellie so emotional?

Chapter 12

After the Melba concert, Carly, Dora and Simone go back to the present. They are back in the theatre with the school choir and the show is over. Ms Carrigan takes them to the restaurant next door for dessert, and she tells them that *La Bohème* was a role that Nellie Melba famously played. Dessert comes out and they discover it is called 'Peaches Melba', after the opera singer.

1. What does Carly mean by an 'emotional rollercoaster'? Have you ever felt that way when listening to music? What music makes you feel emotional?
2. Ms Carrigan says, 'The few recordings we have of her singing today don't do her justice.' Why might that be?
3. Nellie chose the name 'Melba' because she always wanted people to know where she came from. Why might she have wanted that?
4. What is a soprano?

Name:

3 Superstar



Character Profiles

Name	Physical Characteristics	Behaviour/Relationships
Carly		
Dora		
Simone		
Ms Carrigan		
Nellie Melba		
Mr Mitchell		

Name:



KWL

3 Superstar

What I K now About	What I W ant to Know	What I L earned About

For further information about

Carly Mills, Pioneer Girl **#3 Superstar**

please visit

[Author website Jane Smith](#)

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Teachers' Notes are also available for the wonderful Books # 1 & 2 in the series!

