

Bobbi Chegwyn

Radical Ray



**Australia's Little
Champion for Big Change**

Book 1

BOBBI CHEGWYN

Radical  **Ray**

Australia's Little Champion for Big Change

The author acknowledges the First Australians as the traditional custodians of this land and pays respect to Elders past, present and emerging. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have lived on and cared for this Country for tens of thousands of years, and their stories, cultures and connections to the land continue to this day.

Copyright © 2025 Bobbi Chegwyn

All rights reserved.

This book is an original work created by Bobbi Chegwyn, inspired by personal and professional experiences. All rights to the story, characters, and themes remain the sole property of the author.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise—without the prior written permission of the author, except for brief quotations used in reviews or educational purposes.

CONTENTS

1. Ray's Growing Heart	1
2. Ray Lends a Hand	7
3. Ray Builds a Bridge	14
4. Seeing What We Share	21
5. A Step Toward Understanding	26
6. Learning From Mistakes	30
7. The Wisdom of the Porch	35
8. Atlas and the Unexpected Adventure	40
9. Ray Hears His Inner Guide	45
10. Ray Honours a Hero	51
11. Finding Calm in the Storm	55
12. The Boomerang of Love	63
13. Ray Learns to Forgive	68
14. How Small Things Matter	76
15. The Power of Growing Together	79
16. Becoming Radical Ray	85

17. A Visit Worth Making	90
18. R.A.D: Radical Love Takes Action	95
19. Building the Belonging Bench	101
20. Radical Love Takes the Stage	105
21. The Ripples of Radical Love	109
Think, Share, Explore	115
Behind The Boomerang	119
Let's Stay Connected	120
Your Thoughts Matter!	122
Welcome to the Glossary!	123
Other Books in the Radical Ray Series	132

CHAPTER 1



RAY'S GROWING HEART

Ray Roxby of Banksia Street, Botany, had a knack for finding magic all around him. Whether it was sunlight making a shell shimmer like a pearl at Bronte Beach or a tangle of vines in the Royal Botanic Gardens that looked like the entrance to a secret world, his curiosity and imagination turned ordinary moments into extraordinary adventures.

With dark brown hair that always seemed to have a mind of its own, sticking up in playful tufts, and warm, deep brown eyes that sparkled with excitement, Ray looked like he was always ready for the next big thing. His skin was sun-kissed from afternoons spent exploring outside, and faint freckles dusted his nose and cheeks. His wide grin carried an infectious enthusiasm, as though every moment held the promise of something incredible waiting to be discovered. Ray wasn't just a boy who noticed things; he was a boy who lived for adventure.

Botany, a suburb of Sydney, was full of history. The First Australians had called this place home for tens of thousands of years, long before Captain Cook sailed into Botany Bay in 1770. Ray loved imagining all the stories this land held, the adventures, the discoveries, the lives lived here long before his own. That same thrill of the unknown hit him every time the fire station across from his house roared to life, its trucks speeding off to face whatever awaited them.

Ray lived in a house filled with warmth and laughter. He shared it with his mum, Shirli; his grandmother, Leila; and his best mate, a Blue Heeler named Atlas. The house, perched near the end of the street, always smelled like fresh baking or flowers, depending on whether Grandma Leila had been in the kitchen or the garden. Atlas's paws clicked on the wooden floors as he followed Ray from room to room, always ready for the next adventure.

Shirli was a writer for *The Sydney Morning Herald*, working from her cosy home office, a cluttered nest of papers, sticky notes, and coffee mugs. She wrote inspiring, feel-good stories that aimed to brighten readers' days and shine a light on positive moments in life. Shirli had warm brown eyes that crinkled when she smiled, her dark hair often swept into a messy bun with a pencil tucked behind her ear. She wore glasses that sometimes slid down her nose, and her

favourite cardigan, soft, worn, and covered in ink stains, seemed to hug her as she worked. But juggling her writing and being a single mum often left her with less time for Ray than she wished. When Ray peeked into her office, she'd glance up with a tired smile. "What's up, little mate?" she'd say, her voice full of love but her hands still typing away.

Grandma Leila, now retired after years as the librarian at Booralee Public School, stepped in to fill the spaces where Shirl couldn't always be. She had a way of making even ordinary moments feel exciting and fun. Whether teaching Ray to bake ANZAC biscuits or pointing out constellations in the night sky, she helped Ray see the world as full of possibilities waiting to be discovered.

But behind Grandma Leila's warm smile, there was a story that Ray only caught glimpses of when the house went still and she thought no one was looking. Her husband, Ray's grandfather, had passed away when Ray's mum, Shirl, was just a teenager. Life had asked Grandma Leila to be strong and kind at the same time, and she had found a way to do both. She had always cared for others, but after losing her husband, she had to learn how to care for herself too, while helping Shirl through her sadness. That's when she discovered something she would carry for the rest of her life: Radical Love, a love so big and powerful it could help

heal hearts, bring people closer, and even make the world a better place.

Ray, of course, didn't know all of this yet. But that February afternoon, sitting on the porch with a lemonade Icy Pole in hand, he was about to get a glimpse of the wisdom his grandmother had carried for years.

The summer sun bathed the front yard. Atlas lounged nearby, chewing on his favourite tennis ball with great dedication, as though it had personally offended him. Grandma Leila sat beside Ray, her curly auburn hair, now streaked with grey, catching the golden light.

"Ray," she said, her voice low and easy but carrying the particular weight of a sentence that hadn't finished yet.

Ray looked up, licking a sticky drop of lemonade off his hand. "Yes, Grandma?"

She leaned forward, her blue-green eyes sparkling with a mix of mischief and wisdom. "Now that you've started third grade, I have a magical secret to share with you."

Ray sat up straighter. Grandma Leila's secrets were never ordinary.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Your heart," she began, placing a hand over his chest, "is bigger than you think. And here's the magical part. It can grow even bigger."

Ray tilted his head. "Like... when I eat more? Or like when I grow taller?"

She chuckled. "Not quite. It grows in a different way, through Radical Love."

"Radical Love?" Ray repeated, the words unfamiliar yet exciting on his tongue. "What's that?"

"It's a kind of love that's so big, it stretches out to everyone. Not just the people who are easy to love, but everyone, even people who upset you or seem different. But here's the secret: Radical Love isn't just about what you feel; it's about what you do."

Ray thought about that. "Do? Like... being nice to people?"

"Exactly. Showing kindness, even when it's hard. Sharing what you have, helping someone in need, or forgiving someone who's made a mistake." She paused, and Ray noticed something shift in her face, a kind of softness that wasn't always there. "Radical Love is love in action."

Ray's brow furrowed. "That sounds... kind of hard. Why does it matter so much?"

"Because when you choose Radical Love, it doesn't just help others; it helps you." She was quiet for a moment, looking out at the street. "When I lost your grandfather, I was so angry at the world. I didn't think I'd ever feel happy again."

Ray watched her. He didn't say anything.

"But then I learned that love isn't just something you hold inside. It's something you give. And the more you give, the more it comes back to you."

Ray turned that over in his head. "So... it's like when you throw a boomerang, and it comes back?"

Grandma Leila's face broke into a grin. "Exactly, little mate. Radical Love is like a boomerang."

"I think I could try it," Ray said.

"That's the spirit." She ruffled his hair. "The best adventures often start with small steps."

Atlas chose that moment to drop his tennis ball on Ray's foot, tail going like a helicopter. Ray laughed and picked it up and threw it as far as he could, watching Atlas rocket across the yard, all four legs a blur.