

CATALPA

Escape to Freedom

by Mike Lefroy and Joy Lefroy

ABOUT THE BOOK

This is the extraordinary true story of Australia's most daring prison escape.

It is 150 years since an audacious plan was hatched to rescue a group of politically persecuted Irish Fenians from Fremantle Prison.

The plot involved friendships and alliances, secret letters, undercover spies, treachery and a ship, Catalpa. The bold Fenians contended with police on their trail, a looming storm and the threat of international war.

Combining beautiful original illustrations by Marion Duke with historical artefacts such as contemporary lithographs and scrimshaw, the authors blend narrative and non-fiction storytelling to create a thrilling new picture book.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

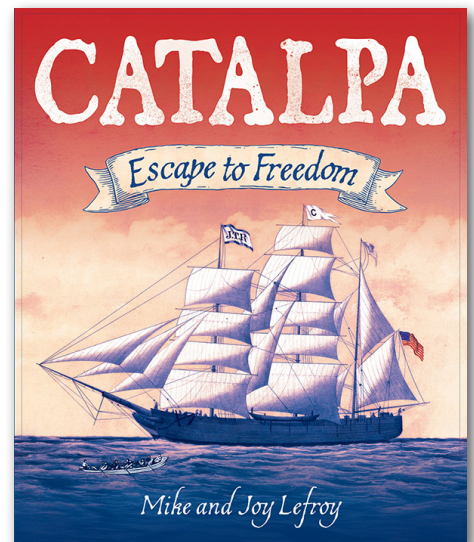
Mike Lefroy is an educator, writer and historian. He loves the challenge of bringing Western Australian stories to life through his books, street walks, lectures and museum tours. He previously worked as Head of Education with the H.M. Bark Endeavour project and the WA Maritime Museum.

Joy Lefroy is an author, educator and printmaker. She has a passion for the history and heritage of Western Australia. Her previous roles have been Head of Education at the National Trust of Australia (WA) and at Fremantle Literature Centre.



NOTES

- The book is an excellent resource for schools and libraries looking for content relating to Australian history.
- THEATRE 180 has developed the production *Catalpa: Flight to Freedom* to coincide with the 150th anniversary of the Fenian escape from Fremantle Prison on *Catalpa*
- The 150th anniversary of the Fenian escape takes place on 17 April 2026.
- Author Mike Lefroy is a local historian and a descendant of CY O'Connor and JS Roe. He and his wife Joy lead local history and heritage tours around Fremantle through their business Museums Without Walls.



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