



The problem we all live with (1964)

Norman Rockwell

## Introduction

This document is a coloured painting which is entitled **the Problem we all live with** and which dates back to 1964. It was drawn/made by the American artist Norman Rockwell and was published in the magazine Look.

## Who?

On this painting we can see/there is... OR The painting displays/represents/shows a black/colored little girl who is in the middle of the painting. She's wearing white clothes: a white dress, white shoes and socks and a white hairband. There's an opposition/a discrepancy (=décalage) between the color of her skin and the color of her clothes. White may symbolize peace, hope and serenity, thus the girl is the symbol of innocence.

## Where's the little girl going?

We can suppose/assume/guess- She must be going to school/ We understand that she's going to school as far as/because/as she's holding a copybook and a ruler.

## The 4 marshals: why are they here?

We can notice/what is striking is that she's surrounded/encircled by 4 men. Maybe they are policemen or bodyguards. Indeed they're wearing suits, they've

got badges and yellow armbands on which we can read US Marshals. Maybe she's the daughter of a celebrity, or of the president! and she needs to be escorted/protected. Perhaps they're here to / in order to/so as to protect her because she's black.

We don't know whether the men are white or black but we can notice that we cannot see their heads/their heads are "cut" which means/reveals that they are dehumanized. The focus is not on them but on the little girl. The white crowd is not visible, as the viewer is looking at the scene from their point of view

### **Where? When?**

It must take place in America in the 60ies during Segregation (=a "separate but equal" division of society) : at that time, blacks couldn't go to the same schools as whites, they didn't have the same rights as whites. They weren't on an equal footing (=être sur un pied d'égalité) with whites.

It actually takes place during the process of racial desegregation. **Segregation started in 1876 ( Jim Crow Laws ) and it ended in 1964 (Civil Rights act)**

What is displayed (=represented) in the painting shows the situation just after the desegregation ordered by the Supreme court: blacks were allowed/could (= étaient autorisés/pouvaient) to go to the same schools as whites.

Actually, the little girl really existed: her name is Ruby Bridges and she was chosen to be the 1<sup>st</sup> afro American girls to attend a white elementary school in Louisiana.

### **What are the elements of humiliation and violence in the painting?**

- \* KKK: a graffiti referring to the racist organisation
- \* Nigger: an insult/a graffiti written on the wall
- \* Tomato splashed onto the wall ( red= blood= violence)

### **Conclusion**

As a conclusion/To conclude, we can say that this painting is an iconic image of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States.