

Amelia Bloomer Project 2004 List

Introduction

As the political and social climate in the United States becomes more conservative, the need for books depicting strong, self-actualizing girls and women grows. While reproductive rights are challenged and the basic right to free expression is diminished, it is more important than ever for children and teens to read about girls and women who solve problems, gain personal power, and empower others to reach their goals. The Amelia Bloomer Project, sponsored by the Feminist Task Force of the Social Responsibilities Round Table of the American Library Association, is proud to announce the third annual Amelia Bloomer Project list of books that celebrate girls and women as a vibrant, vital force in the world.

Although definitions of feminism vary, the project uses several questions to evaluate feminist books for young readers: Is there a potential change to the story if the character were male? Does the female depend on a male to rescue her? Is there an awareness of gender-based inequalities and is there action to change them? Do females blaze trails for themselves and those who follow them? Do girls and women gain power through personal effort? Do females use power for purposeful action and to empower others? Is the character true to herself? Do girls and women take on nontraditional roles? Is the protagonist's voice silenced successfully, or does challenge initiate growth? Besides meeting these challenges, books must have quality writing and illustration to be selected for this list.

This bibliography of challenging and engaging feminist books for young readers from birth through age 18 memorializes the legacy of feminist activist Amelia Bloomer. From picture books celebrating baseball players to inspiring stories of women activists, from a powerful 4000 year-old goddess to the horrific honor-killings in the modern-day Middle East, this collection celebrates girls and women who stand up for themselves and others. No effort was made to balance the list in terms of author or illustrator, gender, publisher, genre, or recommended age level, yet the 2004 list highlights 34 titles, the work of 36 authors, 14 illustrators, and 30 different imprints. Several imprints represent larger publishing corporations, but there is still a small press presence.

We in the Amelia Bloomer Project celebrate the authors, illustrators, editors, and publishers who create and produce feminist books for young readers. We celebrate the librarians and bookstore owners who have the courage to purchase these titles and stand behind them. We celebrate the parents, grandparents, friends, teachers, and other role models who will recommend these books to children. We celebrate the power of choice in the lives of girls and women and the books that demonstrate that we all have choices.

2004 Amelia Bloomer Project members are Jennifer Baltes, Forest Hill Elementary School (MD); Debbie Carton, Berkeley Public Library North Branch (CA), Jane Cothron, Lincoln County Library District (OR), Alison Hendon, Brooklyn Public Library (NY), Brenda Kilmer, Felix Varela Senior High School (FL); Gay Ann Loesch, Sun Valley Middle School (NC); Nel Ward, editor Women in Libraries (OR), and Ilene Cooper, Booklist, consultant.

The List

Picture Book

Fiction

Corey, Shana. *Players in Pigtails.* Illus. by Rebecca Gibbon. 2003. unp. Scholastic, \$16.95 (0-439-18305-7).
PreS- Gr. 3. Katie Casey, who “preferred sliding to sewing, batting to baking,” was one of the first recruits for the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League.

Nonfiction

Christensen, Bonnie. *The Daring Nellie Bly: America’s Star Reporter.* Illus. 2003. unp. Knopf Books for Young Readers, \$16.95 (0-375-81568-6).

PreS-Gr. 3. Enraged by an article that claimed any woman who had a job was "a monstrosity," Elizabeth Jane Cochran wrote a letter of protest and became the famous journalist Nellie Bly, the reformer, best known for her trip around the world in 72 days.

Hopkinson, Deborah. *Girl Wonder.* Illus. by Terry Widener. 2003. unp. Simon & Schuster, \$16.95 (0-689-83300-8).

Gr. K-3. Bold illustrations depict the saga of baseball pioneer pitcher Alta Weiss.

Mora, Pat. *A Library for Juana: The World of Sor Juana Ines.* Illus. by Beatrice Vidal. 2002. unp. Knopf Books for Young Readers, \$15.95 (0375806438).

Gr. 2-5. Luminous illustrations highlight this picture book biography of the 17th-century Mexican poet who, at the age of three, followed her sisters to school and continued learning for the rest of her life.

Intermediate

Fiction

Cushman, Karen. *Rodzina.* 2003. 215p. Clarion Books, \$16.00 (0-618-13351-8).

Gr. 4-7. Overlarge, unpretty, stand-offish Rodzina would rather stay on the streets of Chicago, but instead she’s on an orphan train, accompanied by the cold, rigid Miss Doctor.

Ihimaera, Witi. *The Whale Rider.* 2003. 152p. Harcourt, \$17.00 (0-15-205017-5).

Gr. 5-9. In the Maori tribe of New Zealand descended from the legendary "whale rider," it is the male that inherits the title of chief, but eight-year-old Kahu is determined to change this tradition despite her great-grandfather's stubbornness.

Love, D. Ann. *The Puppeteer’s Apprentice.* 2003. 185p. Margaret K. McElderry, \$16.95 (0-689-84424-7).

Gr. 4-6. Orphaned scullery maid Mouse runs away from the cruel cook and finds a new life and home with a mysterious puppeteer who hides an identity.

Mankell, Henning. *Secrets in the fire.* 2003. 166p. Annick Press, \$17.95 (1-55037-801-5).

Gr. 5-9. When a game takes her off path and onto a landmine, Sofia's life instantly changes in this brutal depiction of an indomitable young girl's survival in war-torn Mozambique.

McDonald, Megan. Judy Moody Saves the World! Illus. by Peter Reynolds. 2002. 144p. Candlewick, \$15.99 (0-7636-1446-7).

Gr. 3-5. Judy's pushy manner may irritate her friends and family, but her determination to save the planet after learning about the destruction of the rain forest inspires her third-grade class to undertake an award-winning, environment-saving project.

Nonfiction

Anderson, Laurie Halse. Thank You Sarah: The Woman who Saved Thanksgiving. Illus. by Matt Faulkner. 2003. unpaginated. Simon & Schuster, \$16.95 (0-689-84787-4).

Gr. 1-5. Although she didn't view herself as a women's rights activist, Sarah Hale's actions define feminism, as she fought for the education of girls and women, opposed slavery, struggled for safe working conditions for all women, and spearheaded a 38-year letter-writing campaign to make Thanksgiving a national holiday.

Atkins, Jeannine. Wings and Rockets: The Story of Women in Air and Space. Illus. by Dusan Petricic. 2003. 197p. Index. Farrar Straus & Giroux, \$17 (0-374-384590-9).

Gr. 4-10. Stories about the challenges for 20th-century women in flight begin with Katherine Wright, who supported older brothers Wilbur and Orville so they could pioneer powered flight.

Butcher, Nancy. It Can't be Done, Nellie Bly!: A Reporter's Race Around the World. Illus. by Jen L. Singh. 2003. 84p. Peachtree, \$12.95 (1-56145-289-0).

Gr. 2-5. Told that women are lesser beings than men, reporter Elizabeth Jane Cochran travels around the world in 72 days in 1888-89 to beat the time set by Jules Verne's fictional character Phileas Fogg.

Fradin, Dennis Brindell & Judith Bloom Fradin. Fight On!: Mary Church Terrell's Battle for Integration. Photographs. 2003. 181p. Index. Clarion Books, \$17 (0-618-13349-6).

Gr. 5-9. Born the daughter of slaves in 1863, Mary Church Terrell's fight for civil rights and women's rights culminated in her participation in the 1950's battle to integrate restaurants and theaters.

Harness, Charyl. Rabble Rousers: Twenty Women Who Made a Difference. 2003. 64p. Dutton Books, \$17.99 (0-525-47035-2).

Gr. 4-8. Spurred by misery and unfairness, these twenty fascinating, fiery women spoke out to rouse the people and change America.

Lakin, Patricia. Amelia Earhart: More than a Flier. Illus. by Alan and Lea Daniel. 2003. 48p. Aladdin, \$11.89 (0-689-85576-1).

Gr. 3-5. Lively illustrations and engaging text show the development of Amelia Earhart as a feminist as well as a pioneering aviator.

Lyon, George Ella. Mother to Tigers. Photos by Peter Catalanotto. 2003. 32p. Atheneum, \$16.95 (0-689-84221-X).

Gr. 3-6. Helen Martini's career as the first woman zookeeper at the Bronx Zoo started with hand-raising abandoned zoo babies in her apartment.

Pflueger, Lynda. Amelia Earhart: Legend of Flight. 2003. 128p. Index. Enslow, \$20.95 (0-7660-1976-4).

Gr. 3-6. From her childhood climbing fences against her grandmother's wishes to her final around-the-world flight, Earhart pushed against the limits imposed on women.

Swinburne, Stephen R. *The Woods Scientist*. Photographs by Susan C. Morse. 2002. 48p. Houghton Mifflin, \$16 (0-618-04602-X).

Gr. 2-5. Study forests and forest animals with Susan C. Morse as she teaches volunteer trackers forest habitat and animals in northern woodlands.

Tryszynska-Frederick, Luba. *Luba: The Angel of Bergen-Belsen*. As told to Michelle R. McCann. Illus. by Ann Marshall. 2003. unpaginated. Tricycle Press, \$16.95 (1-58246-098-1).

Gr. 3-8. In this stirring picture book biography, Luba Tryszynska-Frederick, while a prisoner in a Nazi concentration camp, succeeds in hiding, feeding, and caring for a group of orphaned children.

Young Adult

Fiction

Bradley, Kimberly Brubaker. *For Freedom: The Story of a French Spy*. 2003. 181p.

Delacorte Press, \$15.95 (0-385-72961-8).

Gr. 5-9. War changes everything, including the life of a young French girl who fights for her country, her honor and her freedom in this World War II tale based on a true story.

Donnelly, Jennifer. *A Northern Light*. 2003. 389p. Harcourt, \$17 (0-15-216705-6).

Gr. 7-10. Surviving life in poverty, her mother's death, the burden of raising her sisters on a farm, and the crisis of being the only person who knows the truth about a young pregnant woman's murder, 16-year-old Mattie fights to find her own voice and achieves her desire of going to college in 1906.

Karr, Kathleen. *Gilbert & Sullivan Set Me Free*. 2003. 226p. Hyperion Books for Children, \$15.99 (0-7868-1916-2).

Gr. 6-9. When the new chaplain at Sherborn Women's Prison starts a prison chorus, the life of young inmate Libby Dodge is changed forever.

Krisher, Trudy. *Uncommon Faith*. 2003. 263p. Holiday House, \$17.95 (0-8234-1791-3).

Gr. 7-10. Voices of townspeople in 1837 Millbrook, Massachusetts share their attitudes about women's rights, slavery, and religious differences as young Faith Commons questions the traditional expectations of women.

Peters, Julie Anne. *Keeping You a Secret: A Novel*. 2003. 256p. Little, Brown/Megan Tingley Books, \$16.95 (0-316-70275-7).

Gr. 8-12. Senior class president Holland Jaeger has her life on track, balancing classes, her boyfriend, a new stepfather and stepsister—until she falls in love with Cece, a out-and-proud lesbian.

Pratchett, Terry. *The Wee Free Men*. 2003. 263p. HarperCollins, \$16.99 (0-06-001236-6).

Gr. 5-9. Young Tiffany discovers her talents as a witch-to-be as she works with a tribe of pixies—blue-skinned men only six inches tall—in the daring rescue of her brother, kidnapped by the Queen of the Elves.

Nonfiction

Allred, Alexandra Powe. *Atta Girl!: A Celebration of Women in Sports*. Illus. 2003. 227p. Index. Wish Publishing, \$16.95 (1-930546-61-0).

Gr. 9-12. Thanks to the women who fought, and continue to fight, for the right to train and compete in sports, girls and women everywhere can challenge their bodies, minds, and spirits on the field, the court, and the track.

Bitches, Bimbos, and Ballbreakers: The Guerrilla Girls' Illustrated Guide to Female Stereotypes.

Illus. 2003. 96p. Penguin Books, \$20 (0-14-200101-5).

Gr. 10-12. The Guerilla Girls take on the stereotypes used to make women feel insecure, fearful, and powerless and offer examples of real women who have changed their worlds in this fun and upbeat introduction to feminism.

Di Domenico, Kelly. Super Women in Science. Illus. 2003. 102p. Bibliography. Second Story Press, \$7.95 (1-896764-66-5).

Gr. 5-9. From Hypatia and Mary Anning to Chien-Shiung Wu, Rosalind Franklin and Mae Jemison, women scientists followed their passions, becoming pioneers in nuclear physics, sports medicine, genetics and ecology.

Echlin, Kim. Inanna: From the Myths of Ancient Sumer. Illus. by Linda Wolfsgruber. 2003. 72p.

Groundwood Books, \$19.95 (0-88899-496-6).

Gr. 7-up From the 4000-year-old stories of the powerful goddess Inanna come her adventures in love and war as she grows from childish inexperience and youthful exuberance into maturity, gaining the power to create, destroy, and name.

Feldt, Gloria. Behind Every Choice Is a Story. 2003. 242p. University of North Texas Press, \$19.95 (1-57441-158-6).

Gr. 9-12. Vibrant voices of patients, teachers, doctors, teenagers, mothers, and other women and men about love, sex, pregnancy, and family show the necessity of reproductive rights and the value of defining lives by individual choices.

Khouri, Norma. Honor Lost: Love and Death in Modern-day Jordan. 2003. 209p. Atria Books, \$24 (0-7434-4878-2).

Gr. 10-12. Dalia, a vibrant twenty-five year-old Jordanian woman, died at the hands of her father in an honor killing for the crime of falling in love with a Catholic man.

Nebenzahl, Donna. Womankind: Faces of Change Around the World. Photographs by Nance Ackerman. 2003. 196p. The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, \$29.95 (1-55861-460-5).

Gr. 9-12. Superb photographs, lyrical writing, and graphic design document the inspiring work of forty-five women activists in over thirty countries and five continents and their efforts toward peaceful social change.

Satrapi, Marjane. Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood. 2003. 153p. Pantheon Books, \$17.95 (0-375-42230-7).

Gr. 9-12. Powerful black-and-white graphic novel images tell Satrapi's story of her life in Tehran from ages six to 14 during the overthrow of the Shah's regime, the Islamic Revolution, and the war with Iraq.

Smith, Catherine and Cynthia Greig. Women in Pants: Manly Maidens, Cowgirls, and Other Renegades. 2003. 184p. Harry N. Abrams, \$35 (0-8109-4571-1).

Gr. 9-12. Real women have always worn pants: vintage photographs from the 1850s to the 1920s combined with well-researched text chart an important chapter in feminist history.