

# GIRL POWER!

## Books for Young Women

Avi. (1992). True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle. NY: Avon.

In 1832, thirteen-year-old Charlotte Doyle finds herself the only passenger and only female aboard a sailing ship bound from England to Rhode Island and is drawn into a maelstrom of evil and danger when she joins the crew in a revolt against the captain.

Banks, Lynne Reid. (1996). One More River. Boston: Morrow, Williams, & Co.

This is a book about a spoiled rich Canadian girl named Lesley. Lesley's family is a Jewish family living in Canada after having left the Middle East many years ago to get away from religious persecution. Lesley's father feels like he is raising her in a way that will make it impossible for her to understand the importance of their religion and the gravity of the Jewish situation in the world so they move back to Israel and Lesley has to learn to adapt to life on a kibbutz.

Block, Francesca Lia. (1999). Violet & Claire. NY: HarperCollins.

This is the story of two girls, racing through space like shadow and light. A photo negative, together they make the perfect image of a girl. Violet is the dark one, dressed in forever black, dreaming Technicolor dreams of spinning the world into her very own silver screen creation. Claire is like a real-life Tinker Bell, radiating love and light, dressing herself in wings of gauze and glitter, writing poems to keep away the darkness. The setting is L.A., a city as beautiful as it is dangerous, and within this landscape of beauty and pain Violet and Claire vow to make their own movie. But when desire and ambition threaten to rip a seamless friendship apart, only one thing can make two halves whole again--the power of love.

Brooks, Bruce. (1988). Midnight Hour Encores. NY: Harper Trophy.

Sixteen-year-old Sibillance T. Spooner is a musical prodigy. Although she is well-adjusted and has a father who adores her, her life isn't as perfect as it seems. Her mother abandoned her at birth, and Sibillance and her father travel cross country to meet her. Sibillance learns what the meaning of love is in this novel as she matures into an independent woman.

**Brooks, Martha. (1999). Bone Dance. NY: Laurel-Leaf Books.**

Alexandria's father dies and leaves her a cabin in rural Manitoba. There, she meets Lonny, a boy whose family once owned the land Alex inherited. Grief and pasts they cannot change haunt Lonny and Alex. Now, guiding spirits of their Native Canadian ancestors have brought them together to face their futures. An ALA Best Book for Young Adults.

**Cleaver, Vera and Bill. (1989). Where the Lilies Bloom. NY: Harper Trophy.**

Set in the Appalachian hills, the story, narrated by 14-year-old Mary Call, tells of her efforts to keep her family together and independent after their sharecropper father dies. School Library Journal Best of the Best (1969); ALA Notable Children's Book; New York Times Outstanding Children's Book of 1969.

**Cooney, Caroline B. (1991). The Face on the Milk Carton. NY: Laurel Leaf.**

Janie Johnson lives a great life until she sees her picture on a milk carton and discovers that she has been kidnapped. Throughout the novel, she struggles to accept the truth about her past as she tries to figure out what happened to her when she was three years old. The novel is full of real characters thrown in complicated circumstances and explores the nature and depth of love.

**Cooney, Caroline B. (1996). Whatever Happened to Janie? NY: Laurel Leaf.**

This sequel to *The Face on the Milk Carton* continues Janie's story as she begins her new life as Jennie Spring. An only child as Janie Johnson in Connecticut, she must adapt to her new mom and dad and brothers and sister as Jennie in New Jersey. Janie wrestles with her new identity throughout the novel. She wants to be the daughter of the Springs and a sister to Stephan, Jodie, Brendan, and Brian, but she also feels obliged to remain true to the people who she really considers her true parents, the Johnson's, and her former life.

Cormier, Robert. (1991). After the First Death. NY: Laurel Leaf Library.

This book is about the events of the highjacking of a bus full of children by terrorists seeking the return of their homeland. The incident is recorded through the voices of a hostage, a terrorist, an Army general involved in the rescue operation, and his son.

Creech, Sharon. (1997). Absolutely Normal Chaos. NY: HarperCollins. What begins grudgingly as a dreaded assignment for school becomes a hilarious chronicle of the circle of people and events that make her summer. There is Carl Ray, the mysterious and troublesome cousin that comes to visit; Beth Ann Bartels, the best friend who's recently gone boy crazy; Alex Cheevy, the boy that makes Mary Lou's brains "mushy" and, of course, the Finney clan, her "normally strange family." What follows is a story of a summer filled with lessons and observations on love, death, friendship and family.

Creech, Sharon. (1994). Walk Two Moons. NY: HarperCollins. Thirteen-year-old Salamanca Tree Hiddle's mother has disappeared. While tracing her steps on a car trip from Ohio to Idaho with her grandparents, Salamanca tells a story to pass the time about a friend named Phoebe Winterbottom whose mother vanished and who received secret messages after her disappearance. One of them read, "Don't judge a man until you have walked two moons in his moccasins." Despite her father's warning that she is "fishing in the air," Salamanca hopes to bring her home. By drawing strength from her Native American ancestry, she is able to face the truth about her mother.

Crew, Linda. (1991). Children of the River. New York: Bantam Double Day.

Kumara is a young Cambodian girl who is forced to leave her home and parents because of the Kmar Rouge. She escapes with some relatives to a boat on which they travel first to the Philippines, then on to the United States. They have to rebuild their status in society, but some of the Cambodian traditions still apply. Kumara is seeing life in a new way now that she is in a new country. She battles with the issues of respecting her family and culture and satisfying herself.

Cushman, Karen. (1996). Mid-wife's Apprentice. NY: Harper Trophy. A homeless girl is taken in as an apprentice by a hot-tempered midwife, and eventually, in spite of obstacles and hardships, gains a place in the world. A humorous and insightful novel filled with fascinating details of village life in medieval England.

Fox, Paula. (1999). The Moonlight Man. Boston: Econo-Clad Books. Catherine has never known her father very well. He and her mother divorced and Catherine never had the chance to be with him. But one summer, Catherine's father takes her to be with him. Her days are filled with fun, poetry and nature, but at night, her father becomes a roaring drunk. Catherine struggles to understand her father's ways in this story of understanding and family relations.

Freeman, Suzanne. (1996). The Cuckoo's Child. NY: Greenwillow. In 1962, an American couple, residents of Beirut, suddenly disappear while sailing off the coast of Greece, and their three daughters are returned to the U.S. to the custody of an aunt they barely know. Mia, the youngest, who spends a summer in limbo in her aunt's Tennessee home, narrates the story.

Gaardner, Jostein. (1991). Sophie's World. NY: Boulevard. Sophie's World is a novel that combines 3,000 years of philosophy with a mystery story in order to give young adults an introduction to the history of Western philosophy. The story begins with Sophie Amundsen, a typical fourteen-year-old Norwegian girl, who receives strange notes asking her who she is and where the world came from. Sophie's teenage world turns up-side down, as she and Alberto Knox (the mysterious writer of the notes) begin to explore the world of philosophy beginning with the pre-Socratics.

George, Jean Craighead. (1974). Julie of the Wolves. NY: Harper Trophy.

Miyax, like many adolescents, is torn. But unlike most, her choices may determine whether she lives or dies. At 13, an orphan, and unhappily married, Miyax runs away from her husband's parents' home, hoping to reach San Francisco and her pen pal. But she becomes lost in the vast Alaskan tundra, with no food, no shelter, and no idea, which is the way to safety. Now, more than ever, she must look hard at who she really is. When a pack of wolves

begins to accept her into their community, Miyax must learn to think like a wolf in order to survive.

Hesse, Karen. (1992). Letters from Rifka. NY: Henry Holt & Company.

Letters from Rifka tells the story of twelve-year-old Rifka Nebrot and her family as they flee to the United States because of the anti-Semitism they encounter in post-revolutionary Russia. The story emerges through letters that tell of her fear, indignities, privation, and disease endured as they travel. Moreover, the letters tell of Rifka's struggle as she tries to make it as an immigrant in the United States.

Hesse, Karen. (1997). Out of the Dust. NY: Scholastic.

Fourteen-year-old Billie Jo tells about her life in Oklahoma during the Dust Bowl. Her mother dies after a gruesome accident, which also leaves Billie Jo's piano-playing hands in pain and permanently scarred. Billie Jo's problems are made worse by her father who goes on a drinking binge and is literally decaying with grief and skin cancer before her very eyes. When she decides to flee the lingering ghosts and dust of her homestead and jump a train west, she discovers a simple but profound truth about herself and her plight.

Kincaid, Jamaica. (1997). Annie John. NY: Noonday Press.

Annie John, the headstrong, brilliant heroine is engulfed in family happiness and safety. Annie loves her father, but only has eyes for her mother. When she is almost twelve, she falls into deep disfavor with her mother. Annie tries to imagine herself as someone in a book—an orphan girl with a wicked step mother. The trouble is, she finds, those characters' lives always end happily. Annie's life is no such fairy tale.

L'Engle, Madeline. (1983). And Both Were Young. NY: Dell Publishing Company.

Philippa is miserable at an all girls' boarding school in Switzerland until she forms a supportive friendship with the mysterious Paul.

Lowry, Lois (1989). Number the stars. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Annemarie Johansen remembers life before World War II, when she and her best friend, Ellen Rosen, could play in the streets without fear of the

Nazi soldiers. Now, Annemarie and Ellen run into the Nazis at every turn. One day, Annemarie discovers that a local store has been closed by the Nazis because the owner was Jewish. The Rosen family is Jewish and know that if they don't leave now, the German could take them away too. Annemarie learns about courage and bravery as she does her part to help her friend.

Mazer, Norma Fox, (1989). Silver. Boston: Morrow, William and Co. Sarabeth Silver has lived in a trailer all of her life. When her address happens to be on the right side of the line, she finds herself being bussed to a new school in a better neighborhood. Sarabeth helps Patty, one of the "in" girls, when she needs someone and that fully initiates Sarabeth into her new school and into the lives of her new friends.

Meyer, Carolyn. (1993). White Lilacs. NY: Gulliver Books. In 1921 in Dillon, Texas, twelve-year-old Rose Lee sees trouble threatening her black community, Freedomtown, when the whites decide to take the land there for a park and forcibly relocate the black families to an ugly stretch of territory outside the town. The dismantling of the community and the businesses and families living and thriving there is seen through the eyes of Rose Lee. Based on a true story, White Lilacs has a concrete sense of time and place that will transport readers so effectively that their view of the present may be forever altered.

Montgomery, Lucy Maud. (1908). Anne of Green Gables. Boxed Set edition (November 1991). NY: Bantam Doubleday Dell. Anne Shirley, an 11-year-old orphan comes to live with Marilla and Matthew Cuthbert, an elderly brother and sister on their Prince Edward Island farm. While Anne thinks that she has found a home at beautiful Green Gables, Marilla and Matthew want a boy instead to help out with the chores. Anne transforms their lives, through her chatter, imagination, and spirit. The series chronicles Anne's adventures and comedic episodes that will win everyone over. This boxed includes Anne of Green Gables, Anne of the Island, Anne of Avonlea, Anne of Windy Poplars, Anne's House of Dreams, Anne of Ingleside, Rainbow Valley, and Rilla of Ingleside.

O'Dell, Scott. (1988). Black Star, Bright Dawn. NY: Houghton Mifflin Co.

Most young girls' experiences never involve hunting bearded seals on the ice, even within the Alaskan Eskimo culture. In Scott O'Dell's gripping novel, *Bright Dawn* is an exception. In her father's eyes, she became his son's replacement ever since her brother drowned. When *Bright Dawn* is 18 years old, her father, recently injured, insists that she take his place in the Iditarod, the famous Alaskan dogsled race covering more than a thousand miles between Anchorage and Nome. Unflinching, yet trembling in her mukluks, she faces her challenge head-on.

O'Dell, Scott. (1971). Island of the Blue Dolphins. New York: Bantam Double Day.

This is a story of a young girl who is left alone on her island home. The reason that she finds herself stranded there is because there is a ship that comes to the island to take all of her people to the main land. But when the ship sets sail, it does so without the girl's younger brother, and she jumps into the water to save her brother and finds herself on an adventure alone on her island.

Opdyke, Irene Gut, Armstrong, Jennifer. (1999). In My Hands: Memories of a Holocaust Rescuer. NY: Knopf.

When World War II began, Irene Gutowna was a 17-year-old Polish nursing student. Six years later, she writes in this inspiring memoir, "I felt a million years old." In the intervening time she was separated from her family, raped by Russian soldiers, and forced to work in a hotel serving German officers. Sickened by the suffering inflicted on the local Jews, Irene began leaving food under the walls of the ghetto. Soon she was scheming to protect the Jewish workers she supervised at the hotel, and then hiding them in the lavish villa where she served as housekeeper to a German major. When he discovered them in the house, Gutowna became his mistress to protect her friends--later escaping him to join the Polish partisans during the Germans' retreat.

Perkins, Lynne Rae. (1999). All Alone in the Universe. NY: Greenwillow.

"Before last summer Maureen and I were best friends... At least I think we were. I don't know what happened exactly. As some people who get hit by trucks sometimes say, 'I didn't see anything coming.'" When her best friend

since the third grade starts acting as though Debbie doesn't exist, Debbie finds out the hard way that life can be a lonesome place. But in the end the heroine of this wryly funny coming-of-age story -- a girl who lives in a house covered with stuff that is supposed to look like bricks but is just a fake brick pattern -- discovers that even the hourly tragedies of junior high school can have silver linings, just as a house covered with Insul-Brick can protect a real home. Fun, engrossing, bittersweet, and wonderfully unpredictable.

**Sapphire. (1997). PUSH. NY: Vintage.**

Claireece Precious Jones endures unimaginable hardships in her young life. Abused by her mother, raped by her father, she grows up poor, angry, illiterate, fat, unloved and generally unnoticed. At the age of sixteen, Precious Jones is pregnant with her second child from her father. The public school doesn't want her anymore. Although she is illiterate, she possesses wisdom beyond her years. When Precious enters the new alternative school with Miss Rain, she is able to open up in order to release both her past and the knowledge that she has inside of her. PUSH traces the journey of Precious as she struggles to come to terms with her past filled with horrifying sexual and physical abuse, neglect, and hate, and looks towards a brighter future with dreams of being educated, getting her GED, and providing for herself and her children.

**Sebestyen, Ouida. (1997). Words By Heart. NY: Yearling Books.**

Hoping to make her adored Papa proud of her and make her white classmates notice her "Magic Mind" and not her black skin, Lena vows to win the Bible-quoting contest. Winning does not bring Lena what she expected. Instead of honor, violence and death erupt and strike the one she loves most dearly. Lena, who has believed in vengeance, must now learn how to forgive. An ALA Best Book for Young Adults. School Library Journal Best Book of the Year.

**Sobel, Dava. (1999). Galileo's Daughter: A Historical Memoir of Science, Faith, and Love. NY: Walker & Co.**

Inspired by her long fascination with Galileo, and by the remarkable surviving letters of his daughter, which Sobel has translated into English for the first time, Galileo's Daughter is a book of great originality and power, a biography unlike any ever written on Galileo. Sobel, the author of the bestseller Longitude, brings Galileo to life as never before-boldly compelled

to explain the truths he discovered, human in his frailties and faith, devoted to family, especially to his eldest daughter.

**Sones, Sonya. (1999). Stop Pretending: What Happened When My Big Sister Went Crazy. NY: HarperCollins.**

The subtitle of *Stop Pretending* says it all: "What Happened When My Big Sister Went Crazy." In a sequence of short, intense poems based on the author's own experiences, a 13-year-old girl suffers through her shifting feelings about her sibling's mental illness.

**Taylor, Mildred. (1976). Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry. NY: Dial.** Cassie's family struggles to remain independent and proud as they try to hold on to land in the South during the Depression in the 1930's. Her father works away from home and her mother works and runs the family farm. Their warm ties to each other and their land give them the strength to defy rural Southern racism, prejudice, and discrimination.

**Voigt, Cynthia. (1995). Dacey's Song. NY: Fawcett Books.**

Keeping her family together is what thirteen-year-old Dacey does best. But now that all four Tillerman children have found a new home with their grandmother, Dacey has to learn the hard lesson of letting go. Dacey's got other problems than finding her new role in the family.

**Voigt, Cynthia. (1986). Izzy, Willy, Nilly. NY: Atheneum.**

Izzy, who is the all-around, popular cheerleader, gets asked out by Marco, a senior boy. Izzy and Marco go to a party, but Marco drinks too much and on the way home, hits a tree. While Marco sustains minor injuries, Izzy must have her right leg amputated. Now Izzy is the topic of everyone's conversation, and she must learn to deal with the plight of being a teen age outcast.

**Walker, Margaret. (1999). Jubilee. NY: Mariner. Jubilee tells the life story of Vyry, daughter of the black house slave and the white plantation owner from slavery-time through the Civil War. Vyry is intelligent, strong, honest, and brave, and is a Southern Civil War heroine to rival Scarlett O'Hara. Vyry bears witness to the South's prewar opulence and its brutality, to its wartime ruin and the subsequent promise of Reconstruction.**

Wolff, Virginia, Euwer. (1997). Make Lemonade. Boston: Econo-Clad Books.

Accepting a part-time babysitting job to earn college money, fourteen-year-old LaVaughn comes to love and understand her two charges, and their unmarried teenage mother Jolly, in a way no one else seems to want to.

Yep, Laurence. (1977). Child of the Owl. NY: Harper Collins.

Twelve-year-old Casey is a Chinese-American girl who is sent to live with her grandmother, Paw-Paw, in Chinatown, San Francisco. Casey doesn't know much about her Chinese heritage, and she is not prepared for the Chinese school, noisy crowds, and missing her father. But Paw-Paw teaches Casey about her heritage, and Casey begins to understand who she really is.

Yolen, Jane. (1990). The Devil's Arithmetic. NY: Penguin USA.

Hannah dreads going to her family's Passover Seder— she's tired of hearing her relatives talk about the past. But when she opens the front door to symbolically welcome the prophet Elijah, she's transported to a Polish village in the year 1942, where she becomes caught up in the tragedy of the time.

Compiled by Emily Gard, Kathy Priore, and Emily Straub