

Children's Books To Smash the Patriarchy:

our must-read picks for
little feminists of every age



LittleFeminist.com

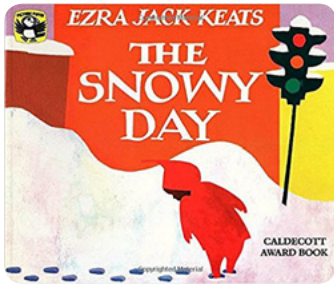
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Here at Little Feminist, we know that it can be hard to wade through all the books out there when trying to find the right story to add to your collection. So, being as we are the helpful sort, here is a list we have compiled of the kinds of books with which you can't go wrong. We have combed through classics and new releases, award winners and indie reviews, to give you a taste of what we're all about. Here you will find strong female characters, diverse viewpoints, and brave, truthful voices. Some of these stories may be familiar, and some will be new, but all of them have the official Little Feminist seal of approval—so let's get reading!

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FOR AGES 0-2



The Snowy Day, by Ezra Jack Keats

A youngster ventures out into the snowy world after a storm.

WHAT WE LOVE: The main character is black, but the book doesn't force the story to focus on that trait. Instead, it's all about his childlike sense of wonder.

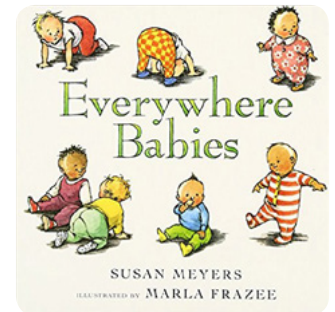
THINGS TO KNOW: This story is also available as a board book.

Everywhere Babies, by Susan Meyers

Every day, babies are born—and this book celebrates them all!

WHAT WE LOVE: The babies in this book are about diverse as they come, but they all share the same special baby-ness we love.

THINGS TO KNOW: all of the babies are able-bodied.



Mama Zooms, by Jane Cowen-Fletcher

A mother and son have speedy, imaginative adventures together.

WHAT WE LOVE: This book showcases the mother's disability without making it a negative trait or something to overcome.

THINGS TO KNOW: The book doesn't take the opportunity to explore the intersection of race and disability, as the main characters are white.

Mama, Do You Love Me? By Barbara M. Joose

A child tests her mother's love by imagining different ways of causing mischief.

WHAT WE LOVE: The artwork features beautiful images of Inuit art and culture, and the message of unconditional love is paramount.

THINGS TO KNOW: Both the author and illustrator of this book are white, and some of the images reflect a blending of native cultures that may not always be completely accurate.



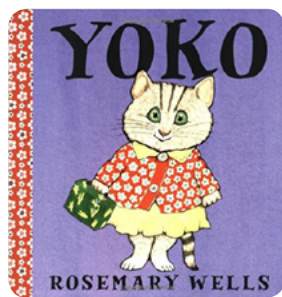
What Color is the Wind? By Anne Herbauts

A blind child questions the world about the color of the wind, meeting many friendly creatures along the way.

WHAT WE LOVE: The pages of the book are full of different textures to explore, so sighted children can try reading with their eyes closed, and so can you!

THINGS TO KNOW: This book was inspired by a question from a blind child, who asked the author if she could describe to him the color of the wind.

FOR AGES 2-4



Yoko, by Rosemary Wells

Yoko wants to share her favorite food with her classmates, but many of them don't understand what sushi is. Raw fish is gross, right?

WHAT WE LOVE: Exploring other cultures through food is a great way to get started, and this book is also one of those rare few with animal characters who are not implicitly racialized as white.

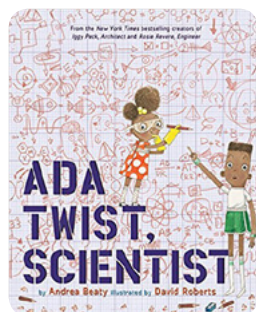
THINGS TO KNOW: The author is not Japanese.

The Paper Bag Princess, by Robert Munsch

A princess fights to save a prince from a dragon, but does he even deserve to be saved?

WHAT WE LOVE: Reversal of traditional gender-roles, a focus on personality over beauty, and eco-friendly-fashion!

THINGS TO KNOW: This book features only white characters, although it is a great read for those children who simply love princesses!



Ada Twist, Scientist, by Andrea Beatty & David Roberts

A rhyming book about a girl who explores her dream of being a scientist-- the best scientist to ever exist!

WHAT WE LOVE: We can't help but root for a girl who won't be told that "science is for boys."

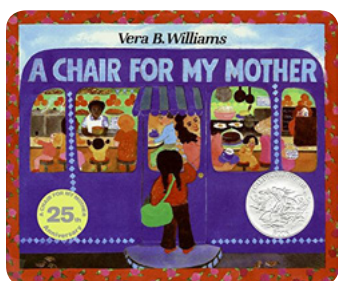
THINGS TO KNOW: This author team is also responsible for the popular book *Rosie Revere, Engineer*.

I am Jazz, by Jazz Jennings and Jessica Herthel

Jazz is confused by people who think that she is a boy, when she knows that she is a girl.

WHAT WE LOVE: Jazz co-authored this book, giving it an air of authenticity that makes it a classic!

THINGS TO KNOW: Some of the writing reinforces gender norms by describing what is "girly" and what isn't.



A Chair For My Mother, by Vera B. Williams

After losing their home in a fire, a family saves every penny to buy a big, beautiful armchair.

WHAT WE LOVE: The little girl in this book lives with her single working mom, but not having a father doesn't affect the love and closeness of her family at all.

THINGS TO KNOW: For younger readers, try *More, More, More! Said the Baby*, by the same author.

FOR AGES 4-6



Her Right Foot, by Dave Eggers

The story of the Statue of Liberty, and what it means that her right foot is sculpted in motion.

WHAT WE LOVE: This book explores the history and future of immigration in America with a welcoming, heartfelt message of acceptance.

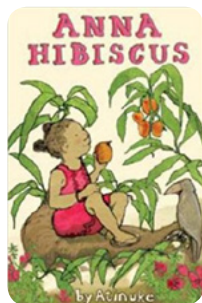
THINGS TO KNOW: The author works with 826 Valencia, an after-school program that encourages literacy and imagination. Look for a chapter near you!

Mirette on the High Wire, by Emily Arnold McCully

A young girl longs to walk on a tightrope.

WHAT WE LOVE: A classic tale of childhood fearlessness and determination.

THINGS TO KNOW: It's white. Very white.



Anna Hibiscus, by Atinuke

Anna lives in Amazing Africa with her family and friends, and she loves her home, but Anna also has a dream... she wants to see snow!

WHAT WE LOVE: Anna's story offers a perspective of life outside the US that isn't marred by the typical "American savior" plot we have all come to recognize (yuck).

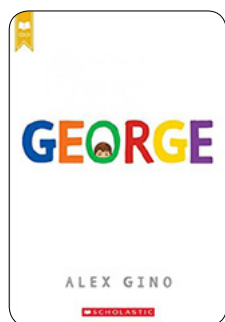
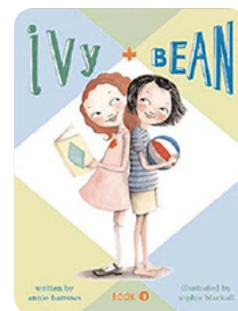
THINGS TO KNOW: This is a series, with many books to keep your little feminists reading about Anna's adventures!

Ivy and Bean, By Annie Barrows

Tomboy Bean and girly Ivy strike up an unlikely but lasting friendship.

WHAT WE LOVE: These books explore female friendship without trying to define what it means to be "feminine."

THINGS TO KNOW: The latest book in the series, *Ivy and Bean, One Big Happy Family*, is set to be released in August of 2018.



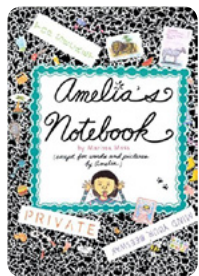
George, by Alex Gino

George needs to make something clear: she's really Melissa.

WHAT WE LOVE: The book describes the experience of being transgender as a kid in a bold and outspoken way, with no over-emphasis on enforcing any gender norms.

THINGS TO KNOW: George was written by a Trans activist!

FOR AGES 7-9



Amelia's Notebook, By Marissa Moss

The journal of 9-year-old Amelia, complete with thoughts, dreams, and doodles.

WHAT WE LOVE: The spunky Amelia makes no apologies for her big personality and bigger dreams.

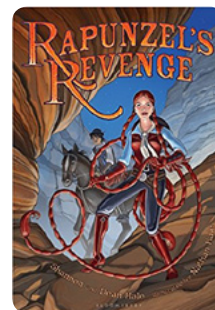
THINGS TO KNOW: The series is ongoing, following Amelia all the way through 6th grade (so far.)

Rapunzel's Revenge, by Shannon Hale

This graphic novel stars a princess determined to escape her tower and find her real family—even if it means teaming up with an annoying boy named Jack, who keeps going on about “magic beans.”

WHAT WE LOVE: This is a wild retelling of the typical princess story—who would have ever thought to set Rapunzel in the wild west?! Shannon Hale, that's who. We love her.

THINGS TO KNOW: Stories set in the old American west often fail to address the inhumane treatment of native people that took place during westward expansion, so make sure your little feminists know their history.



Brown Girl Dreaming, by Jacqueline Woodson

The author tells the story of her childhood growing up in the American South during the late 1960's.

WHAT WE LOVE: The verse form in this book makes it a unique and beautiful look at familiar themes.

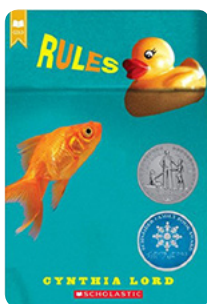
THINGS TO KNOW: The author is also the 2018 National Ambassador for Young People's Literature.

A Girl Named Disaster, by Nancy Farmer

A strong-willed girl must face down almost insurmountable odds to survive.

WHAT WE LOVE: The main character never loses sight of herself, despite incredible obstacles in her path.

THINGS TO KNOW: This one is for advanced readers. A survivalist novel set in Africa—think feminist Hatchet. If your little feminist loves stories like these, another classic pick is *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, by Scott O'Dell, which only missed out on inclusion in this list because it is a story about a woman of color written by a white man.

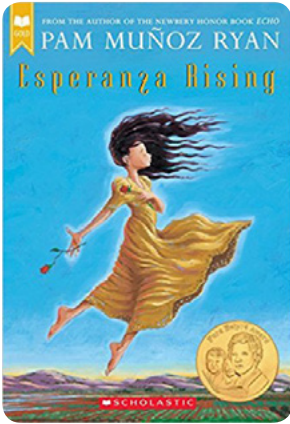


Rules, by Cynthia Lord

A 12-year-old girl tries to help her autistic younger brother by creating a series of “rules” for how to be normal, but she soon discovers that “normal” might not exist.

WHAT WE LOVE: The main character's development over the course of the story is believable, relatable, and poignant.

THINGS TO KNOW: This book is for the advanced readers of this age category, but it will help any child dealing with the desire to be both accepted and accepting.



Esperanza Rising, by Pam Muñoz Ryan

A young Mexican girl struggles through the death of her father and her family's immigration to the United States during the great depression.

WHAT WE LOVE: Beautiful language and complex storylines, allowing for an intersection of immigrant and economic-specific issues.

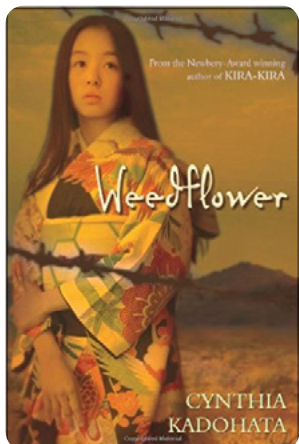
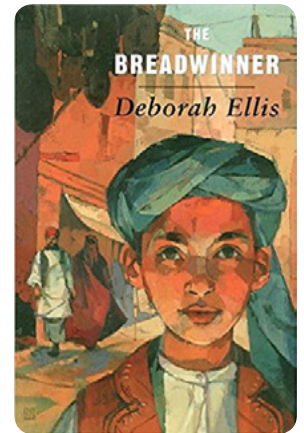
THINGS TO KNOW: This book has some complicated and mature themes, so is best suited for advanced, mature readers (you probably already got that from the "great depression" stuff earlier).

The Breadwinner (Parvana), by Deborah Ellis

An 11-year-old girl in Kabul is forced by circumstance to become the breadwinner for her family.

WHAT WE LOVE: Great character development, coming of age, and subversion of gender roles, plus a non-US-centric plot.

THINGS TO KNOW: Although well-researched, this book was written by a white author.

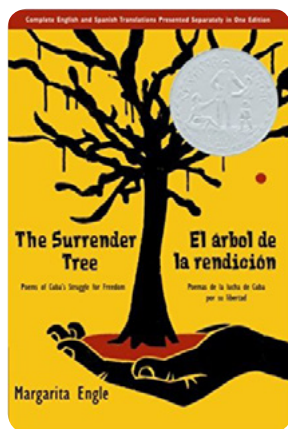


Weedflower, by Cynthia Kadohata

A 12-year-old Japanese girl living in the US in 1941 is shocked by the events of Pearl Harbor and her family's subsequent relocation to an internment camp.

WHAT WE LOVE: A strong female lead character, an awareness of intersectional experience, and an acknowledgment of the problematic aspects of American history.

THINGS TO KNOW: This book was written by the author of another well-known book for young readers, *Kira-Kira*.



The Surrender Tree: Poems of Cuba's Struggle for Freedom, by Margarita Engle

This collection of narrative poems tells a fictionalized account of the Cuban war for Independence from Spain, through the lives of four characters from 1850-1899.

WHAT WE LOVE: Stories of political conflict are not often seen from a personal perspective, and individual accounts of the impact of colonialism in children's books are rare—this book is unusual. Especially considering Cuba's relationship with the US has been a little... well... “strained.”

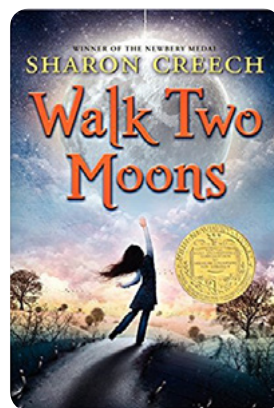
THINGS TO KNOW: the mature themes of war and sickness make this another book for advanced readers, but the account of people of all genders dealing with anger in the face of injustice will make this book an important one for kids who are dealing with frustrations of their own.

Walk Two Moons, by Sharon Creech

A girl goes on a journey to find her mother while relating the story of her friend, who once made the same trip.

WHAT WE LOVE: The importance of female role models is always a great theme, and the story also deals with the difficult topics of grief and loss.

THINGS TO KNOW: The author is not, herself, native American, although the native culture depicted in this book is dealt with sensitively and well.



There you have it! Our tested, vetted, safe-bet-books; these stories will improve any shelf you put them on. More importantly, they will help foster conversations about important issues with your little feminists, and hopefully they will entertain the whole family along the way.