

World Fairy Tales for Strong Girls: a Bibliography

General collections

Hamilton, Virginia. *Her Stories: African American Folktales, Fairy Tales, and True Tales*. New York: Blue Sky Press, 1995.

This is a collection of 19 tales, each featuring an African American woman or girl as the main character. There is a broad range of stories including true tales, ghost tales, folktales, fairy tales and even tall tales. They are all wonderfully retold and give a glimpse of the breadth of African American cultural traditions.

Minard, Rosemary. *Womenfolk and Fairy Tales*. Houghton Mifflin: 1975.

This is a great collection of eighteen tales of adventuresome heroines. There are no women waiting to be rescued in any of these stories which were well selected by Minard. Composed of stories from around the world, these tales have both adventure and humor.

Muten, Burleigh. *Grandmothers' Stories: Wise Woman Tales from Many Cultures*. New York: Barefoot Books, 1999.

This is a collection of retold folktales from around the world honoring the wise older woman and presenting her “as a benevolent, resourceful, independent, informed guide who is respected in her community.” Beautiful illustrations always include a frame with the grandmother/storyteller sharing a bedtime story, contributing to the kind, cozy feeling of the book.

Ragan, Kathleen. *Fearless Girls, Wise Women, and Beloved Sisters: Heroines in Folktales from Around the World*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1998.

Ragan has gathered, from all corners of the globe, folk and fairy tales with heroines who exemplify courage and heroism, not merely through imitation of male behaviors but through female characteristics such as motherhood. The variety of role models in these stories gives girls permission to feel good about whoever they are. This is a lengthy collection for adults to read or to share selectively with children, not for kids to read on their own.

San Souci, Robert D. *Cut From the Same Cloth: American Women of Myth, Legend, and Tall Tale*. [Need publication info]

Most Americans know about Paul Bunyan, Johnny Appleseed and Paul Revere, but they probably don't know about Bess Call, Molly Cotton-Tail and other larger than life women folk heroes. In this collection of fascinating American tales, readers will meet fifteen strong-willed, solid-hearted women they won't soon forget. Many of the tales come from Native American and African American folklore.

Yolen, Jane. *Not One Damsel in Distress: World Folktales for Strong Girls*. San Diego: Silver Whistle, 2000.

In this collection of 13 traditional folktales from around the world, the author has included a variety of tales that have one thing common: all have female main characters that are heroic, strong, resourceful and brave – no damsels in distress will be found in this collection!

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Single-Story Picture Books

Bierhorst, John. *The Woman Who Fell from the Sky: The Iroquois Story of Creation*. New York: William Morrow & Company, 1993.

In this powerful story from the Six Nations, the world as we know it begins with a pregnant woman who fell from the sky. When her jealous husband in the "sky country" pushes her through a hole in the ground, she softly lands on a turtle. With her powers of creation she creates the earth, the stars and the sun. Eventually, she and her twin sons return to the sky where others left behind are able to communicate with them through the smoke of their fires.

Charles, Veronika Martenova. *Maiden of the Mist: A Legend of Niagara Falls*. Stoddart Kids: Toronto, 2001.

This retelling of an old Iroquois tale takes place near Niagara Falls. Lelawala's Seneca tribe has prospered until recently, when several members are taken in illness. After sacrificing canoe loads of goods to the angry Gods, the chief contemplates sacrificing one of their own to the treacherous waterfalls. Lelawala volunteers and her bravery saves the tribe from further illness and death.

Climo, Shirley. *Atalanta's Race: A Greek Myth*. Clarion: 1995.

After Atlanta's father rejects her for not being a son, she's sent by the gods to be raised by wild animals. She grows into a good hunter and strong athlete and eventually comes to face the gods again as she becomes an adult. After ignoring the gods' help in her most important race, she must deal with the consequences. This book brings up important issues of female worth and inclusion in male-dominated activities.

Isaacs, Anne. *Swamp Angel*. Dutton: 1994.

Swamp Angel can lasso a tornado, and drink an entire lake dry. She single-handedly defeats the fearsome bear known as Thundering Tarnation who terrorizes her small town in Tennessee. This is a wonderful book- the larger life than life heroine will spark admiration and laughter at her amazing feats.

Kellogg, Stephen. *Sally Ann Thunder and Whirlwind Crockett*. Morrow: 1995.

When she was a baby, Sally claimed she could "out-talk, out-grin, out-scream, out-swim, and out-run any baby in Kentucky" and she did! Sally Ann left for the frontier at age 8, and after numerous outrageous feats, she marries Davy Crockett. But marriage doesn't slow her down at all. This is a fabulous book to share with young children- Kellogg is at his best.

Manna, Anthony L. and Christodoula Mitakidou. *Mr. Semolina-Semolinus: A Greek Folktale*. Atheneum: 1997.

Areti the princess conjures up her own man out of semolina, almonds and sugar- and he's beyond her highest hopes. However, soon after, an evil queen steals Mr. Semolina and Areti is devastated. She wears out three pairs of iron shoes during her brave quest to rescue her true love.

McCully, Emily Arnold. *The Pirate Queen*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1995.

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Though a historical figure, Grania O'Malley is today as much legend as history: a female Irish pirate with her own lands and fleet and guts enough to stand up to Queen Elizabeth I herself. McCully's graceful watercolor illustrations bring the Grania's rugged and wild story to life.

Muller, Robin. *Tatterhood and other Tales: Stories of Magic and Adventure*. New York: The Feminist Press at CUNY, 1989.

All of the central characters in this collection of folk tales are spirited females—heroines of extraordinary courage, wit, and achievement who set out to determine their own fate. These stories include ones that are comic, adventurous, eerie, and magical. The tales come all over the world.

Munsch, Robert. *The Paper Bag Princess*. New York: Annick Press Ltd., 2003.

The princess Elizabeth plans to marry Ronald, a prince, until a dragon destroys her castle and abducts the hapless Ron. Elizabeth, not to be daunted, dons a paper bag and sets off to rescue him by her wits. The ending serves both amusement and justice.

San Souci, Robert D. *Brave Margaret: An Irish Adventure*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999.

In this retelling of a classic Irish folktale, redheaded Margaret meets Prince Simon, a ship captain and convinces him to take her aboard to adventure on the seas. After battling a sea monster and getting left ashore alone, she reunites with her beloved by battling yet another monster. Margaret comes close to disaster many times in this story, but her bravery and strength always pull her through.

San Souci, Robert D. *Callie Ann and Mistah Bear*. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 2000.

When Mistah Bear learns Callie Ann's mamma is looking for a new husband, he disguises himself as a handsome man, hoping to trick her into marriage. He might have, had Callie Ann not seen right through his costumes and schemes. She manages to outwit him and saves the day by exposing Mistah Bear for what he really is. This retelling is based loosely on "Wiley and the Hairy Man" and "Escape Up the Tree" tales.

San Souci, Robert D. *Cendrillon*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998.

"You may think you know this story I am going to tell you, but you have not heard it for true. I was there. So I will tell you the truth of it. Here. Now." In this Caribbean retelling of the Cinderella story, her godmother tells how she and Cendrillon together shaped the young woman's destiny through love.

San Souci, Robert D. *The Samurai's Daughter: A Japanese Legend*. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 1992.

This retelling of an old Japanese legend is a great one. A young girl, Tokoyo, sets off on a dangerous journey to rescue her father who has been wrongly exiled. She overcomes many obstacles and eventually is reunited with her father because of her bravery.

San Souci, Robert D. *The Tsar's Promise*. New York: Philomel Books, 1992.

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When a young prince, Ivan, is held captive by a demon, an intelligent and resourceful princess named Maria uses her wits and her magic to help both of them escape. Ivan is at least intelligent enough to recognize her abilities and to follow her guidance.

San Souci, Robert D. *Young Guinevere*. New York: Doubleday, 1993.

Guinevere is one of the most controversial women of legendry—glorious and beautiful, the beloved wife of King Arthur, and yet she takes the blame for the war which led to Arthur's death. Most stories portray her as either passive or treacherous, but San Souci's Guinevere is a pro-active young woman who has to choose whether or not to marry Arthur, knowing it will lead to his doom.

Stamm, Claus. *Three Strong Women: A Tall Tale from Japan*. Viking Press: 1990.

This is the story of the strongest wrestler in Japan who is taught by three women the true meaning of strength and power. This is a great addition to a folk-tale collection because of its unconventional approach to issues of gender, size, strength, and power. The illustrations are also beautiful.

Williams, Jay. *Petronella*. North Kingstown, Rhode Island: Moon Mountain Publishing, 2001.

In the kingdom of Skyclear Mountain, three princes are always born to the king and queen, but this time the youngest one is a girl! Not to be daunted by a silly thing like gender roles, she rides out with her brothers to find her destiny and rescue a prince.

Yep, Lawrence. *The Khan's Daughter: A Mongolian Folktale*. Scholastic: 1997.

Mongke, a shepherd in ancient Mongolia, hears a prophecy that he will become rich and marry the Khan's daughter. When he speaks to the Khan, he's told he must do three things in order to marry the princess. The third task is set by the princess herself and teaches him humility- after which he makes a good and wise husband.

Yolen, Jane. *Good Griselle*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1994.

Griselle is horribly tested by the gargoyles and angels on a nearby cathedral when they wager on whether or not she can love the ugly and disobedient child they send her. This is a beautiful book of unconditional love and total unselfishness.

Yolen, Jane. *Tam Lin: An Old Ballad*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990.

In this retelling of an ancient Scottish fairy tale, Jennet braves the wrath of the Faery Queen by holding tight to a snake, a lion and a branding iron to save her true love, Tam Lin from certain death. She also reclaims her family's abandoned, long enchanted ancestral home for her and Tam Lin by standing up to the Faery Queen.

Yolen, Jane. *The Ballad of the Pirate Queens*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1995.

Anne Bonney and Mary Reade were female pirates of the Caribbean during the 18th century, and they were only captured and brought to justice because of the laziness or cowardice of their male comrades who stayed below decks, gambling and drinking, while Anne and Mary attempted to defend the ship against a man-of-war of soldiers. Jane Yolen takes the story of Anne and Mary, part history, part legend,

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and turns it into a ringing, swinging ballad which is glowingly illustrated by David Shannon. An author's note clarifies the facts.

Zhang, Song Nan. *The Ballad of Mulan*. Union City, CA: Pan Asian Publications, 1998. This folktale is based on a ballad from the Sung Dynasty in which a girl named Mulan dresses as a man and becomes a soldier for ten years, leading the army of China to victory over the enemy. After the war she asks only to return to her village, forgoing offers of rewards. After returning to her village and wearing women's clothes once again, she convinces her former comrades that women can also have courage and fight for their country.

Chapter books and single-author collections

McKinley, Robin. *Beauty: A Retelling of the Story of Beauty and the Beast*. New York: Harper Trophy, 1993.

When Beauty's father loses his fortune and the family moves to the northern woods, Beauty is sorry to lose her books. A gawky and bookish teenager, she and her beloved horse, Greatheart, find different rewards in a life of physical labor, until the well-known plot kicks in and she must go to live with the Beast. McKinley has crafted an elegant tale of love, honor, and self-discovery.

Williams, Jay. *The Practical Princess and other Liberating Fairy Tales*. New York: Parents' Magazine Press, 1978.

Williams' collection of stories turns several fairy-tale clichés on their heads. One take is "Stupid Marco," in which the thoroughly pleasant but simple-minded hero must be guided through his quest by an intelligent and resourceful princess. Another, called "The Silver Whistle," features a befreckled heroine who turns down an opportunity to be the most beautiful girl in the kingdom, because she likes herself the way she is. The prince marries her anyway, because he happens to like freckles. Children and adults will love Williams' gutsy heroines and equally atypical heroes.