



The Bravest Woman in America

Marissa Moss , Andrea U'Ren (Illustrator)

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Ida Lewis loved everything about the sea, so when her father became the official keeper of Lime Rock Lighthouse in Newport, Rhode Island, she couldn't imagine anything better.

Throughout the years, Ida shadowed her father as he tended the lighthouse, listening raptly to his stories about treacherous storms, drowning sailors, and daring rescues. Under her father's watchful eye, she learned to polish the lighthouse lens so the light would shine bright. She learned to watch the sea for any sign of trouble. And, most importantly, she learned to row.

Ida felt ready for anything—and she was.

Award-winning author Marissa Moss pairs up with award-winning illustrator Andrea U'Ren in a stunning collaboration that sheds light on a remarkable piece of history. Based on the true story of Ida Lewis, who was dubbed “the Bravest Woman in America” and who was recognized with the Congressional Life Saving Medal and the American Cross of Honor, this inspiring and unforgettable tale of courage and real-life heroism is a tribute to brave women everywhere.

The Bravest Woman in America Details

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Author : Marissa Moss , Andrea U'Ren (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review The Bravest Woman in America for online ebook

Chris says

This picture book is based on the story of Ida Lewis (1842-1911), the Newport, Rhode Island lighthouse keeper who rescued over 18 people during her tenure.

Alliteration: "Ida loved the sea. She loved it when it was calm and coppery in the sunlight." Similes: "She loved it when it was wild with froth like a herd of stampeding horses." Incredible description: "She loved the crash of the waves, the screech of gulls wheeling overhead, the bite of salt in her nose as she breathed in the ocean air." Snazzy verbs: perched, lurched, shinnied, churned Metaphor: "bubble of triumph"

Sydney Hall says

I had never heard of Ida Lewis until I read this book. Ida was considered the bravest woman in America for her heroic saving of 18 lives off the coast of Lime Rock. She was honored with the Congressional Life Saving Medal in 1874. This book is based on the events of her life, which makes it historical fiction. I think this promotes female heroes and would give students inspiration to research different types of people.

Richie Partington says

THE BRAVEST WOMAN IN AMERICA by Marissa Moss and Andrea U'Ren, ill., Tricycle Press, July 2011, 32p., ISBN: 978-1-58246-369-8

"Whoever wrote the book of 1 Timothy claimed to be Paul. But he was lying about that -- he was someone else living after Paul had died. In his book, the author of 1 Timothy used Paul's name and authority to address a problem that he saw in the church. Women were speaking out, exercising authority and teaching men. That had to stop. The author told women to be silent and submissive, and reminded his readers about what happened the first time a woman was allowed to exercise authority over a man, in that little incident in the garden of Eden. No, the author argued, if women wanted to be saved, they were to have babies (1 Tim. 2:11-15).

"Largely on the basis of this passage, the apostle Paul has been branded, by more liberation minded people of recent generations, as one of history's great misogynists. The problem, of course, is that Paul never said any such thing. And why does it matter? Because the passage is still used by church leaders today to oppress and silence women. Why are there no women priests in the Catholic Church? Why are women not allowed to preach in conservative evangelical churches? Why are there churches today that do not allow women even to speak? In no small measure it is because Paul allegedly taught that women had to be silent, submissive and pregnant. Except that the person who taught this was not Paul, but someone lying about his identity so that his readers would think he was Paul. -- from the 3/25/11 article "Who Wrote The Bible and Why It Matters" by Bart D. Ehrman

Strong women.

Geraldine Ferraro died this weekend. I can recall my excitement, twenty-seven years ago, when I got to

shake her hand after hearing her speak at a local high school during the 1984 Presidential campaign.

Strong women.

Back in my bookstore days, I once got to sit beside Michael Moore at a publisher's breakfast. As we conversed, Michael railed about all of the men he was encountering who feared Hillary Rodham Clinton because of her strength and outspokenness. "Why are men afraid of strong women?" he kept asking me rhetorically.

Strong women.

THE BRAVEST WOMAN IN AMERICA is the true story of a strong woman. It is a picturebook biography for little kids as well as not-so-little kids. This is the story of Ida Lewis, the first woman to receive the American Cross of Honor; a woman who had previously been recognized for her heroism with the Congressional Life Saving Medal. This is a girl with guts.

The daughter of a lighthouse keeper, Ida learned from her father how to row, how to maintain the light and the lighthouse, and how to rescue those needing rescuing. She practiced rowing until she could row like nobody's business. Then, one winter evening when she was sixteen and her father was ill, she saw a sailboat with four boys capsized and she rowed out into the turbulent water and successfully rescued all four. Thereafter, and for many decades to come, Ida Lewis operated the lighthouse at Lime Rock (in Newport Harbor) and saved many lives.

It is great to discover that the local yacht club there is named in her honor. But it is far better to know that we now have this beautiful picturebook biography that portrays yet another nineteenth century woman who wasn't conforming to the stereotype that children still get from far too many American history texts.

I also really like Andrea U'Ren's illustrations here. The gulls flying, the waves crashing, and the storm clouds rolling in impart a great flavor of the northeast coast throughout the story. And be sure not to miss the cute-as-the-dickens seal on the back of the dust jacket.

Richie Partington, MLIS

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Moderator <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/EcolIt/>

<http://slisweb.sjsu.edu/people/facult...>

Sandy Brehl says

Ida Lewis joins the growing list of little known or gradually forgotten women who are finding new recognition in the pages of amazing non-fiction picture books. Much like Mary Anning (the young paleontologist on the English coast), Ida's interests, actions, and belief in herself far surpassed society's expectations and limits. Recognized in her own lifetime as a national hero, her name and story slipped away in time.

Pair with "Keep the Lights Burning, Abby" by Peter and Connie Roop, for a lively discussion of the lives of Ida and Abby .

Princolitas says

La historia de Ida Lewis, una niña que amaba el mar y fue la más feliz el día que le dieron el puesto de guardián del faro a su padre, su amor por el mar la llevaría a ser conocida como la mujer más valiente de América, en una época (1850) en que las mujeres no eran reconocidas por su trabajo y no tenían derechos, donde se pensaba que las mujeres no podían ser valientes como los hombres, Ida logró una gran hazaña con solo 16 años y su amor al mar.

Macy says

I read the book, "The Bravest Woman in America" by, Marissa Moss. This book is about a light house keepers daughter named Ida and how she helps her dad take care of the light house. She also has to help many people who are in danger in the ocean during storms. Ida learns how to help people, and she also learns that she can do scary things. She learns how row out to help someone and stay in control of her boat. She has to learn how to save people in scary situations. Then there is a big storm and there are four boys who get knocked out of their boat. Ida uses what she has learned from her Dad to save all of them. Ida is very brave and she has lots of courage, as the title says she is "The Bravest Woman in America."

Barbara says

The daughter of a lighthouse keeper in Rhode Island, Ida Lewis loved everything about the sea. Born in 1842 during a time when women had no suffrage, this young woman learned everything she would need to know about being the keeper of a lighthouse as well as maritime rescue work from her father. When her father became too feeble to do his work, Ida took over. In the incident described in this picture book, she was 16 when she rescued four boys whose horseplay caused their boat to capsize. An Author's Note provides additional information about this inspiring heroine who received the Congressional Life Saving Medal and the American Cross of Honor for her many rescues. The watercolor, ink, and acrylic illustrations are filled with movement, and Ida's determination to learn how to row as well as her joy in being near the sea shine through them.

Donalyn says

Ida Lewis was the lighthouse keeper at Lime Rock in Newport, RI for most of her life. She rescued at least 18 people and became the first woman to receive the American Cross of Honor and also received the Congressional Life Saving Medal. This book follows Ida during her childhood as the daughter of a lighthouse keeper and her first rescue when she was 16.

The precise text includes beautiful sensory images, describing the sea as "wild with froth like a herd of stampeding horses".

Tasha says

Ida Lewis loved the sea, from the crash of the waves to the bite of the ocean air. When her father got a job as a lighthouse keeper, she was thrilled. He had to cross back and forth twice a day to check the light, and he took Ida with him, teaching her how to row. He also taught her to care for the lamp and how to rescue people without capsizing herself. When Ida turned 15, her family moved out to live next to the lighthouse. Ida dreamed of becoming the keeper herself one day. That day came early when her father got ill and could no longer care for the lighthouse. So Ida helped more and more. Though she had never rescued anyone, she rowed out to save some boys in a sailboat that capsized. It took all of her determination and strength to save them, but she did.

This book works on so many levels. It is a true story about a real hero who defied what society expected of her and became what she dreamed of. Additionally, it is the story of a girl who was strong, brave and amazing. A girl who relied on her own strength and wits to save others rather than to be rescued herself. Beautiful.

Moss writes the story with drama and action, yet is never heavy handed. She builds up to the accident nicely, showing it happen and then building to the climax of the rescue. This is an rescue story that will have readers cheering.

U'Ren's art is done in watercolor, ink and acrylic. The colors are deep and lovely, from the changing colors of the sky to the blues and greens of the water that change with the storm. Ida Lewis is always shown as a young lady, never masculinized at all. It adds to the charm and drama of the story.

Highly recommended, this is a great book choice for women's history units or for any child to learn that girls are heroes too. Appropriate for ages 5-8.

Heidi says

Moss does a great job of introducing us to Ida, whose greatest passion is the ocean, in all its forms. Her eagerness is demonstrated through her determination to learn to row the boat that takes her father out to the island to check the lighthouse. U'Ren's illustrations beautifully compliment Moss's descriptions by showing the reader Ida's love of the sea and her determination to do whatever it took to help her father run the lighthouse. I love how Moss shows us, Ida's determination and courage in gradually taking over the lighthouse keeping duties and rescuing people in trouble.

I found U'Ren's illustrations interesting. The use of ink and watercolor works well. I thought the use of outline especially effective in showing the solid shapes of people, land, and things, and the lack of outline on the ocean gives the reader a sense of the wildness and openness of the ocean. The use of framed illustrations provides a feeling of solidity and safety after the dangers of the ocean. All in all, I'd say this is one of my favorites this year. I look forward to sharing it with my students.

Laurie Brumbaugh says

I love learning about strong women in history and I had never heard of Ida Lewis before! This book is a great

introduction that could spark interest in further reading, while generating quality conversation on its own as well. The illustrations are lovely and the Author's Note contains interesting information. Source notes would have been helpful, but their absence doesn't detract from the book in my opinion.

Stephanie Rice says

Stephanie Rice- READ 6252

Informational Picture Books

Book Title: The Bravest Woman In America

Author: Marissa Moss

Short Description of the Book: The Bravest Woman In America is about the heroic actions of Ida Lewis. Ida Lewis grew up in Newport, Rhode Island where her father was the lighthouse keeper. Ida and her family were responsible for tending to the lighthouse and helping any struggling sailors arrive on land safely. One night Ida noticed a struggling boat full of young boys lost in the middle of a strong storm. Ida took her small boat into the water and without hesitation she pulled all of the young men to safety. Ida's parents were extremely impressed by her bravery and at the end of the story Ida was given her fathers captain's hat, a symbol of honor and bravery.

Historical Focus: Ida Lewis was born in February of 1842; she has been accredited with saving over twenty-five people in her lifetime. Ida Lewis was given the Congressional Life Saving Medal in 1874 and the American Red Cross of Honor in 1907. She was extremely important because she proved to the American public that women were as brave and strong as men and that all women should have the opportunity to vote and express themselves publicly.

Focus:

1.) Narrative Structure: Marissa Moss wrote a very exciting story about Ida Lewis which relies heavily on descriptive words and phrases to depict Ida's love of the sea and her enthusiasm for rescuing ships and sailors. Moss attempts to highlight the nature of the ocean by saying phrases such as "when it was wild with froth" and "the screech of gulls, wheeling overhead, the bite of salt in her nose as she breathed in the ocean air".

2.) Historical Significance: Social Studies curriculum across the United States focus curriculum on women's rights on people like Susan B. Anthony. Ida Lewis was a prominent proponent of women's rights and she made large strides in the fight for women's voting rights in the 1900's. Social Studies teachers can use moss's biography of Ida Lewis as an example of how many female pioneers were silenced by the biases of the time period. Ida Lewis was an accomplished rescue patrol person in Rhode Island and she was given the Congressional Life Saving Medal in 1874 and the American Red Cross of Honor in 1907.

TEACH: CCSS Connection- ELA- Literacy. RH.9-10.9- Compare and contrast treatments of the same topics in several primary and secondary sources.

Laura says

Ida's family lives in a lighthouse and keeps ships safe in the harbor. As a young girl, Ida learns to row a small

boat and listens to her father describe how to save someone. As a 15 year old girl, she puts these lessons to use and rescues 4 boys from the cold water, saving their lives.

This is an excellent early reader choice and will work with well for students in grades 1 and 2. While I appreciate stories about unsung and every day heroes, I did feel that it was a bit of a stretch to call Ida the bravest woman in America; the title of the book comes from her younger sibling's admiration.

The author's note gives additional historical information about Ida Lewis; no bibliography or source notes.

Deb (Readerbuzz) Nance says

Ida Lewis grows up in a lighthouse and her father, the lighthouse keeper, teaches her how to do all the things those manning a lighthouse must know. It comes in handy when a boat of boys gets in trouble near the lighthouse one stormy night.

“The boys’ faces were white with cold, their lips blue. One passed out, lying limp on the bottom of the boat.

Ida didn’t think. She rowed---harder and faster than she ever had. The waves crashed over her head, tilting the boat along a wall of green and gray. Ida kept on rowing, frantic to get them all to safety.”

Based on a true story, this is the tale of a girl who grew up to be a hero, saving many lives.

Michele says

I really like this book. This surprises me because it is a simple sort of book about a not particularly new topic--a young female who lives near a lighthouse and rescues drowning victims.

However, something in the storytelling makes me really feel admiration for Ida Lewis, the teenage daughter of a lighthouse keeper who rescued 18-25 lives in her own lifetime. The story emphasizes the idea that a strong and determined girl can do anything. It resonates with the significance of the choices we make in our lives.
