**Notes on books about leadership in girls**

***I am Amelia Earhart by Brad Meltzer***

Appropriate for preschool children

*“When I was little, people told me that girls should wear dresses and play with dolls. They said we shouldn’t have ‘unladylike’ adventures.*

*I didn’t agree”*

No explicit comparison with boys, but implicit. Also possible implicit criticism of wearing dresses and playing with dolls. Also nice that the character’s disagreement was explicit.

At seven she and her sister built a roller coaster in their backyard. She remembered the wind in her face, her stomach seemed to sink and she was flying. The grandmother is upset.

*“The crash was loud and noisy and messy. It certainly wasn’t ladylike. But it was awesome!”*

Would having the grandmother be upset (even if it was a boy say a brother rather than sister) make a difference?

“*to save for my flying lessons, I worked as a truckdriver (which wasn’t ladylike either….)“*

*“but here is my secret: I wasn’t a natural. I wasn’t the best pilot. I just worked harder than everyone else”*

This is interesting to discuss. I’m concerned about a lot of these portraying people as special, unique, and this counters that. But working harder *than everyone else* is something to consider.

*“I dared to do what so many said couldn’t be done.”*

*“In fact, on the day I took off, one magazine ran an article that said women would never be able to fly that far.”*

What if this said “people would never….”

*“Never let anyone stop you.*

*Whatever your dream is, chase it.*

*Work hard for it.*

*You will find it.*

*It is the best lesson I can give you.”*

*“I am Amelia Earhart.*

*I know no bounds.*

*And I hope you’ll remember that the greatest flight you’ll ever take,*

*is the one no on has tried before”*  Is this emphasis constructive or likely to backfire?

***Joan Procter, Dragon Doctor by Patricia Valdez***

It might be the right age group.

*“While other girls read stories about dragons and princesses, Joan read books about lizards and crocodiles. Instead of a favorite doll, a favorite lizard accompanied her wherever she went.”* The contrast is with other girls. Is this an implicit criticism?

“*When Joan grew older, she skipped the parties and dances with her friends. Instead she sought out the curator of reptiles and fish at the Natural History Museum.*

Is this exceptionalism motivating or could it backfire?

*“But soon, these carefree days came to and end. England was at war. Women took up jobs left behind by men. The curator found himself short-staffed at the museum, so he hired Joan as his assistant.*

*When the curator retired, Joan took over. Men returning from war were surprised to find a woman in charge, but times were changing, and Joan was leading the way.”*

***I am Rosa Parks by Brad Meltzer***

The age might be okay but there is a lot disturbing about racism.

Me Jane by Partick McDonnell

Appropriate for the age group. I wouldn’t say it was that well written, but it did focus on Jane’s passions without contrasts with boys.

Lillian’s Right to Vote by Jonah Winter and Shane W. Evans.

Probably for early elementary school but also a lot of racism discussion.

***I dissent: Ruth Bader Ginsburg Makes her Mark by Debbie Levy***.

The book jacket says 4 to 8 but this is not appropriate for preschool.

Deals with antisemitism, racism, etc. But does have lots of statements about what

women were allowed to do.

***Lillian’s Right to Vote by Jonah Winer***

Says 5-9 but it is advanced and deals with voting discrimination.