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# Florence Nightingale: The Courageous Life Of The Legendary Nurse



## Synopsis

Most people know Florence Nightingale was a compassionate and legendary nurse, but they don't know her full story. This riveting biography explores the exceptional life of a woman who defied the stifling conventions of Victorian society to pursue what was considered an undesirable vocation. She is best known for her work during the Crimean War, when she vastly improved gruesome and deadly conditions and made nightly rounds to visit patients, becoming known around the world as the Lady with the Lamp. Her tireless and inspiring work continued after the war, and her modern methods in nursing became the defining standards still used today. Includes notes, bibliography, and index.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gr 7 Up •Born into a wealthy English family in 1820, Florence Nightingale was expected to marry and tend to the home. Nightingale, however, had different ideas and felt that she had been called to action by God. Reef's meticulously researched biography chronicles Nightingale's remarkable achievements. Her revolutionary approach to nursing impacted all aspects of English society, from soldiers in the army to the impoverished people suffering in workhouse infirmaries. By placing Nightingale's life within the context of the Victorian era •a time of great colonial expansion as well as economic and scientific change•Reef highlights her subject's unique single-minded drive to work and make a difference for the sick and infirm, despite the many obstacles she faced as a woman. Nightingale became famous during the Crimean War when she

spent two years with a team of nurses under her direction caring for wounded and ill soldiers. However, her reform work began long before the war and continued until her death at age 90. **VERDICT** With accessible language, a linear story line, and photographs interspersed throughout, this is a great addition to any library. Recommended for students writing reports and others who want to learn about the remarkable "Lady with the Lamp."  **Ragan O'Malley**, Saint Ann's School, Brooklyn

\* " With careful contextualization that sometimes goes missing from purely hagiographic presentations, this title offers a fuller picture of the effort and emotional price Nightingale paid to become a groundbreaker."  **Bulletin**, starred review \* "A vividly written, richly layered portrait of a fascinating woman whose life and work influenced and inspired many."  **Kirkus**, starred review \* "A captivating and inspiring study of one woman's perseverance and the good that came from it."  **Booklist**, starred review \* "A lucid, handsomely designed volume."  **Publishers Weekly**, starred review "With accessible language, a linear story line, and photographs interspersed throughout, this is a great addition to any library. Recommended for students writing reports and others who want to learn about the remarkable 'Lady with the Lamp.'"  **School Library Journal** "...well written and thorough..."  **VOYA**

Great!

gift for an eight-year old who enjoyed reading this book.

Very elegant book. Nurses have loved it.

I am not thrilled with this book. It is not holding my attention and I am an avid reader. It seems to skip around and is not like a typical biography. Perhaps when I get past the first 50 pages it will be better.

Gift for my Mom. She reports that there is a lot of back ground information on Florence Nightingale and her family. Written for a young adult audience but interesting for adults as well.

Catherine Reef's autobiography of the legendary nurse Florence Nightingale is a fine example of a young adult book whose audience has no upper limit. In straightforward prose, Ms. Reef tells the

story of the young woman born into British privilege who brushed aside her social position to nurse the sick and war wounded. I had no idea so much could be known about Florence Nightingale. I pretty much knew her as only a mythical saint -- all I knew was that she nursed wounded soldiers in the Crimean War. Ms. Reef uses a hundred or more sources to flesh out the very real human being. Each person in Nightingale's story comes to life: the mother determined that her daughter not dirty her hands and sully the family reputation; the father who weakly encourages her but retreats at the first sign of discord; the sickly sister whose jealousy and resentment festers; the extended family and high-born family friends who help the determined young woman achieve her goal. The narrative is enlivened with quotes taken from memoirs, letters and official paperwork. Photographs and drawings aid in conjuring both the real woman and the woman the public wanted to imagine. I appreciate that the author didn't downplay Ms. Nightingale's motivation for pursuing her chosen profession. "On February 7, something happened to Flo while she was alone in her bedroom, something strange, wondrous, and mystical," the author writes. "It seemed to her that God spoke her name and called her to His service." By acknowledging Florence's faith, the author relays the strong foundation that carried her through her decades of grueling work as a nurse, a nursing administrator and the driving force in establishing nursing as a trained profession. Ms. Reef's book isn't a complete work of hagiography. She acknowledges Florence's shortcomings -- her lack of compassion for the nurses under her charge, her harsh feelings toward her parents, her increasingly bad temper as her health declines -- and notes when Florence's medical ideas were wrong. For example, she believed, as most did at the time, that contagion was not how illness spread, that illness came from "miasma," or a stew of bad air, not from germs and bacteria. But when science proved that theory wrong, she willingly changed her mind and the curricula of her nursing schools. All in all, this is a young adult book that should cross the aisle to the adult shelves. As with many books, the only difference I can see is that the type is larger, with more white space between the lines. I'm not sure why this should characterize a young adult book... their eyes are better than those of older folks anyway!

My daughter has been looking for stories about women heroes for my grandson. Much of what is out there is all about the male hero. She has found a few, as have I. When I had the opportunity to read this young adult book about Florence Nightengale, I knew this was perfect for him. My grandson and I both read this book, and this is a compilation of both of our reviews. Florence Nightengale has been a part of my history since my college days with a major in nursing. In our Nursing History classes, Florence Nightengale was a major component of the course. We knew her

history as a wealthy young woman, finding her way in the world, and became a nurse in the Crimean War. Florence took 38 other nurses with her to Turkey to help care for the British soldiers what she discovered was that the soldiers were not dying from war wounds as much as disease entities. Nightingale worked towards improvements in sanitation, nutrition, and other issues for the patients of the hospital. Nightingale kept records of the number of deaths, and the causes of deaths, so that on her return to Great Britain she could justify the need for improving conditions in hospitals. She was not the angel of mercy to her fellow nurses. She was condescending and arrogant, but she brought a different type of Nursing to the front lines. Within the pages of this book we learn about her inner life through her letters, her diaries and the meticulous records she kept. She was the forerunner of the modern nurse. My grandson liked this book. He is an avid reader, but did not know about the Crimean War nor Florence Nightengale. We discussed the war, and what kind of care soldiers had before Nightengale arrived. My grandson was a little shocked about the medical care, but it did give him a good background for what Florence Nightengale brought to the war and later for everyone. This is an engaging book, written for the young teen and older. We both found the book a learning experience. I learned more about the Crimean War, and my grandson was new to it all. We both would recommend this book for everyone. Recommended. prisrob  
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Chance are you've at least heard the name "Florence Nightingale" and you might have a vague idea of what she accomplished. In her latest biography for the teen and middle grade set, Catherine Reef shines light on the life and times of the woman who changed the world of nursing. Much of the early going can best be summed up as Florence fighting against her expected station and her family as she pursues her interest in nursing. The second half is as much about fighting the establishment and bettering the training and practice of nursing. As far as being a serviceable and interesting biography goes, Reef does a good job. The book is chock full of notes and bibliography at the back, too, so should you wish to know more and want to know where the author found her information, you'll get that. This is a good read for anyone interested in the subject as it goes in depth enough to give a picture of Nightingale, warts and all, but doesn't go so far into everything to be dull. Feels a bit repetitive at times, especially in the early going, but the second half picks up and gets more interesting.

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