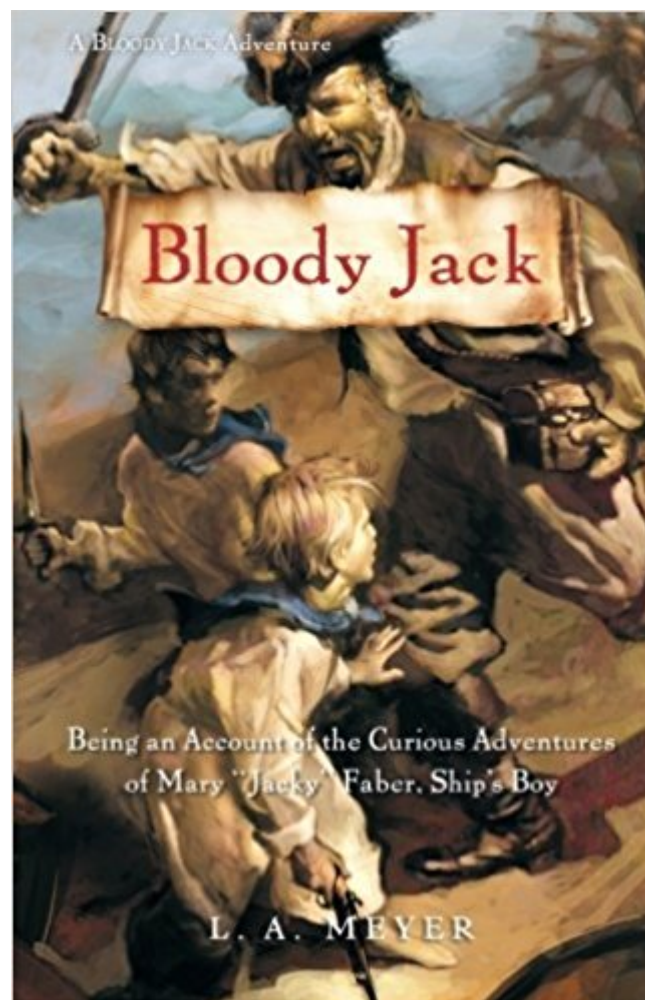




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Bloody Jack: Being An Account Of The Curious Adventures Of Mary "Jacky" Faber, Ship's Boy (Bloody Jack Adventures)



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Synopsis

Life as a ship's boy aboard HMS Dolphin is a dream come true for Jacky Faber. Gone are the days of scavenging for food and fighting for survival on the streets of eighteenth-century London. Instead, Jacky is becoming a skilled and respected sailor as the crew pursues pirates on the high seas. There's only one problem: Jacky is a girl. And she will have to use every bit of her spirit, wit, and courage to keep the crew from discovering her secret. This could be the adventure of her life--if only she doesn't get caught. . . .

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

"I pray for deliverance," confides Mary Faber, orphaned at eight years old by a pestilence that relegates her to a life of begging and petty crime on the streets of London. After her gang's leader is killed, she dons his clothing, trading in the name Mary for Jack, and takes to the high seas aboard the HMS Dolphin. Meyer evokes life in the 18th-century Royal Navy with Dickensian flair. He seamlessly weaves into Jacky's first-person account a wealth of historical and nautical detail at a time when pirates terrorized the oceans. Interspersed are humorous asides about her ongoing struggle to maintain "The Deception" (she fashions herself a codpiece and emulates the "shake-and-wiggle action" of the other boys when pretending to use the head, for instance), she

earns her titular nickname in a clash with pirates and survives a brief stretch as a castaway before her true identity is discovered (the book ends as she's about to be shipped off to a school for young ladies in Boston). The narrative's dialect occasionally falters, but this detracts only slightly from the descriptive prose ("He's got muscles like a horse and looks to have a brain to match") and not at all from the engine driving this sprawling yarn: the spirited heroine's wholly engaging voice. Her budding sexuality (which leads to a somewhat flawed plotline involving a secret shipboard romance) and a near-rape by a seaman mark this one for older readers, who will find the salty tale a rattling good read. Ages 12-up. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Grade 6-8-With the plague running rampant in London in 1797, Mary's parents and sister are soon counted among the dead. Left alone and penniless, the eight-year-old is taken in by a gang of orphans and learns survival skills. However, when their leader is killed, Mary decides to try her luck elsewhere. She strips the dead body, cuts her hair, renames herself Jack Faber, and is soon employed as a ship's boy on the HMS Dolphin. When the vessel sees its first skirmish with a pirate ship, her bravery saves her friend Jaimy and earns her the nickname "Bloody Jack." Told by Mary/Jack in an uneven dialect that sometimes doesn't ring true, the story weaves details of life aboard the Dolphin. Readers see how she changes her disguise based on her own physical changes and handles the "call of nature," her first experiences with maturation, and the dangers to boys from unscrupulous crew members. The protagonist's vocabulary, her appearance and demeanor, and her desire to be one of the boys and do everything they do without complaint complete the deception. This story also shows a welcome slant to this genre with an honorable, albeit strict Captain, and ship's mates who are willing and able teachers. If readers are looking for a rousing, swashbuckling tale of pirates and adventures on the high seas, this title falls short. However, it is a good story of a brave ship's "boy" with natural leadership abilities and a sense of fair play and humanity.Kit Vaughan, Chesterfield County Public Schools, VACopyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The full title of this book is meatier than its shorthand version: "Bloody Jack: Being an Account of the Curious Adventures of Mary "Jacky" Faber, Ship's Boy." The title, plus the cover illustration on the HMH trade paperback edition, offers exactly the bait to draw a young boy into a reading adventure. Alas if our young reader (as this older one did) should miss the clue in that title; Jacky is

a girl. A plague orphan masquerading as a boy to be safe on the mean streets of London in the 1790s, Jacky has learned how to cope on her own. Joining a street gang, she has learned to fight to keep herself and her comrades safe and fed. For youngsters like her, the life of a ship's boy presents a shining promise. Imagine being fed each day, having a place to sleep out of the weather. Imagine not having to fight rival gangs for your right to exist. As for the dangers, well, Jacky is philosophical: "It's just as dead you get from starvation, muggin', or bein' stepped on by a horse, as you get from drownin'. which is, of course, the seagoin' option. And I hears they'll feed us, even. ... [Besides,] a girl what's born for hangin' ain't likely to be drowned." At first the pleasures of her new position far outweigh the duties. Jacky is astounded to be served meat at her meals, and isn't worried about weevils in the biscuits. She sleeps soundly in unaccustomed peace, and is allowed to replace her brother's cast-off trousers with a hand-made uniform, so long as she makes it herself. The dangers Jacky finds on board are nothing she can expect from life in London's streets: sadistic sailors and pederasts, strict preachers and officers, and a growing attraction to one of the other ship's boys are the least of her worries. Hot-cannon battles with pirates and the careful choice of where to have a tattoo and how to handle a visit to a brothel loom larger for Jacky and her mates. They take a young boy's perspective on all these perplexities, even religion: "No, Jesus ain't the King of Heaven," counters Davy. "His dad's the King of Heaven and there'd surely be hell to pay if Jesus come to dinner all covered wi' tattoos, 'specially with 'I loves you, Mary Magdalen' all over His Sainted Belly." I first read "Bloody Jack" after reading the trilogy "The Hunger Games" [1] and the first book of another dystopian trilogy, "Divergent" [2]. It struck me then that Jacky was just as valorous, struggling every bit as hard against a world that did not welcome her, and as much challenged by her unorthodox nature as either Katniss Everdeen or Dauntless Tris. Yet the worlds Jacky inhabits are real. Her history is fiction, but only in its details; the broader picture Meyer paints reveals a true image of life in 1790s London, work on board a merchant vessel, and the struggles of those who live in the British Colonies of the time. At the end, Jacky's sex has little to do with her courage, or her adventures. Young male readers can squint one eye and look past it to see the rollicking adventure it is.

I have read and listened to all the books in this series. I totally love them! Even though these books were written with young adults in mind, at 50+ years ago I still loved them. I got hooked on them by listening to them on audio books. The narrator brings the stories to life with her inflections and wonderful accents. I can still hear Jackie saying, "but I try to be good, really I do" in my head. It makes me smile when I think of it. I recently gave the first book to my granddaughter who is 12.

These books are not 100% PG. You will have to use your own judgement as to the appropriate age for these stories. The later books go get a bit racier, but I am perfectly comfortable with my granddaughter reading them at 12. The books are full of adventure, drama, humor, and just plain fun.

I eyed this book in libraries for years before I checked it out. For all of two seconds, I worried I wouldn't be able to get past the cockney language of the first couple chapters, but the colorful Jacky's language quickly improves as she learns more. Throughout the whole series (all 12 of them), Jacky's spirit near jumps off the page. The books are even better if you listen to the audiobooks too--Katherine Kellgren is a master at accents and gender. Basically, there's a reason this series became a cornerstone of my relationship with my sister, and we reference it to this day. 100% recommend.

This beautifully written story chronicles a period in the life of Mary Faber, a homeless orphan growing up on the streets of England during the late seventeen hundreds. The harsh reality of her life is drawn so clearly that I could almost imagine being there with her. Little Mary is a tough survivor who manages to beat all the odds despite the lack of resources that we consider essential for life. After a few years on the streets Mary makes a life changing decision. she decides to leave the safety of her group of homeless children and her kip (living quarters) beneath a bridge. Disguised as a boy she secures a position as a ship's boy named Jack. Mary is much better off in many ways but still must constantly fight for survival. She carefully hides her gender while learning how to sail and live aboard a ship. This story should appeal to anyone of any age who enjoys reading about adventure, life during a different time period, or life aboard a ship with an added dash of romance and some humor thrown in. This is the first book in the Bloody Jack series and ALL are good. They are best read in order as each book picks up where the last left off. I will not say anything regarding what happens in the rest of the series but I will say they will keep the reader enthralled as Mary shares her life and her many adventures.

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