



Elizabeth Leads the Way
Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the Right to Vote
by Tanya Lee Stone
Illustrated by Rebecca Gibbon

About the book:

Meet Elizabeth Cady Stanton, a woman who stood up and fought for what she believed in. From an early age, Elizabeth knew that women were not given rights equal to men. In nineteenth-century America, women were not allowed to attend college, own property, or vote. Instead, they were expected to marry, have babies, and keep house for their husbands. Elizabeth was a bright, adventurous girl who liked to ride horses and study Greek. Her father thought her talents were wasted on a girl and told her she should have been a boy!

But rather than accept her lesser status, Elizabeth went to college and gathered other like-minded women to challenge the right to vote. Here is the inspiring story of an extraordinary woman who changed America forever because she wouldn't take no for an answer.



Tanya Lee Stone

Author interview:

1. What first inspired you to write about Elizabeth Cady Stanton?

I was shocked to find out that most of my educated, forward-thinking female friends had no idea who Stanton was! I thought, if these grown women don't know who she is, how can we expect young girls and boys to know about this important heroine? I feel very strongly that in order to appreciate what we have (the right for women to vote), we need to appreciate that there was a time when we didn't have such rights, and know the people responsible for effecting change.

2. What was your favorite part of the research?

My favorite part was reading Stanton's autobiography, *Eighty Years and More*, and hearing Stanton's own words in my head. Being able to participate in the historical accuracy of the artwork was wonderful, too.

3. What do you think Ms. Stanton would think of women's rights today?

I suspect we would hold similar views—she would be happy about the rights that have been secured for women, but completely determined to keep fighting for the rights that women still do not have. We've come a long way, yet there is room for more equality all around us. And not just for women, but for minorities of all types.

Pre-reading:

What do you think this story is about? What makes you think so? Where and when do you think this story takes place? Why?



Questions to consider:

1. Has anyone ever told you that you couldn't do something? How did you react?
2. How was life better for boys when Elizabeth was young? Do you think that is still true today? Why or why not?
3. If a woman's husband died during this time period, what might be that woman's fate?
4. How did Elizabeth prove that she could do anything boys could do?
5. What does the author mean when she says, "Elizabeth wasn't interested in easy?" Are you interested in easy? Why or why not?
6. Compare Elizabeth's life to most other young women. Why did she decide to do things differently?
7. Why do you think Elizabeth liked Henry Stanton? What do you think is most important about becoming friends with someone else?
8. What did Elizabeth like about being married? What was not much fun?
9. What was the "one thing that could change everything?" How does Elizabeth work to make it come true?
10. Why do you think "word of the meeting spread like wildfire" across the country? Why was this so important to so many people? Why do you think so many were against the idea?

Projects:

Language Arts:

Elizabeth Cady Stanton gave many speeches in her lifetime to convince others to believe the way she did about women's rights and the abolition of slavery. This is called persuasive writing, when you try to change someone's mind about a topic. Write a speech about something that you believe in strongly (for example: longer silent reading time or the importance of recess). Earn extra points by being willing to read it to the class.



History:

Write a biography of another important figure in the suffragist movement. Use Tanya Lee Stone's text as a mentor text. Be sure to include at least five facts that you researched about this important person in history and include what resources you used to find your information.

Math:

A two-thirds majority was needed for a constitutional amendment to allow women the right to vote. Figure out how many $\frac{2}{3}$ majority is in your own class and see how hard it is to agree on one of these issues: best book, best movie, best after-school snack. Create pie graphs showing the fractional opinions on these issues.

Science:

Back in Elizabeth's day, girls were discouraged from learning much, especially in the sciences. Many believed that it would ruin a girl's personality! So, in honor of Elizabeth Cady Stanton research ANY topic of your choice under the broad banner of science and create a poster, pamphlet or PowerPoint presentation about what you learned. Before you get started, write a brief journal about what you'd like to study and why.

Elizabeth Leads the Way is a featured selection of the Junior Library Guild, received a star from Booklist, and stellar reviews from School Library Journal, the Horn Book, and Kirkus. It is a Top Ten Youth Biography and one of Book Links Best New Books of 2008.

This guide was created by Tracie Vaughn Zimmer, a reading specialist and children's author. Visit her website to find hundreds of guides to children's literature.