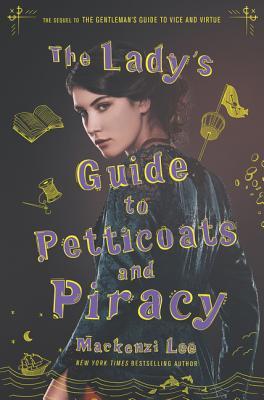
**The Lady’s Guide to Petticoats and Piracy**  
By Mackenzi Lee  
  
(<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/37880094-the-lady-s-guide-to-petticoats-and-piracy>)

**About the Author**  
Mackenzi Lee  
Photo courtesy of <https://www.mackenzilee.com/>  
<https://www.mackenzilee.com/>



Lee is a young author with several awards including being on the New York Times and ABA bestsellers list, her books have been translated into over twenty different languages and she has written several books including The Gentleman's Guide to Vice and Virtue, The Lady’s Guide to Petticoats and Piracy and The Nobleman's Guide to Scandal and Shipwrecks, She is also Currently working on a series with MARVEL detailing several origin stories. Her stories were also “once praised by Teen Vogue as “The queer teen historical you didn’t know was missing from your life.””

**Summary**

Felicity Montague wants nothing more than to be a doctor, but in a time when women are subjected to being wives and mothers, she is perhaps the one person who believes in her ability to fulfill her dream. When she learns that her idol, a well-respected doctor, is marrying a childhood friend, she can’t help but journey to Germany to beg for an apprenticeship. Without money, she accepts the offer of a stranger who agrees to pay for their journey in exchange for allowing this stranger to pose as her maid. She soon learns that her idol is not as he appears and must embark on a new journey with Johanna, her childhood friend, who is far too interested in puffy dresses and parties for her liking. Johanna and Sim teach Felicity that strength, bravery, intelligence, and femininity can coexist.

**Quote 1**

*“You are Felicity Montague*… I push up my spectacles and look at the board.” pg.59

I chose this quote because I think it really represents Felicity's struggle not only with the world but also the struggle within herself. She knows she deserves to be there, but everyone else tells her she won’t make it, and in a way, she needs to remind herself. This is the first time we see her reciting her speech to herself about how she is deserving of belonging, but we continue to see it throughout the book, and we observe how she grows and becomes more confident the more she repeats it to herself.

**Quote 2**

“In addition,” I say, “there are elements of feminine health that male physicians are not equipped to address….. Higgins snatches his hand back from my shoulder.” pg 67

I chose this quote because it shows first how badly she wants to be a doctor and it also shows a bit of why, she knows, as a female, that women often have issues that are untreated because they are considered “taboo” by men and at the same time only men are allowed to be doctors. This is part of what drives her so hard to want to be a doctor, not a nurse, not a midwife but a doctor.

**Quote 3**

“As she raises the needle, I look between her and Jo-hanna… it feels like the view goes on forever.” pg 438

This quote is important because it shows that Felicity has changed. Throughout the entirety of the book, she fought against being anything female because she believed it would make her “less than” and that people would be unable to take her seriously. However, in this passage, she has come to an understanding that she, and others, don’t have to sacrifice femininity for people to take her seriously because men (in this time period) will never take her seriously anyway.

**Classroom Use**

I would teach this book to high schoolers, specifically freshmen, as it deals with themes I believe they can relate to, such as self-discovery, societal pressure, friendship, and overcoming obstacles. One activity I would have my students do is create a collage of their own goals and aspirations. Another activity would involve writing a letter to themselves; much like how Felicity writes down what she wants and why she deserves it, the students would do a similar exercise. I would collect these letters to give back at the end of the year. The final project I would consider is a “Historical Adventure Plan,” where students would group up and plan their own adventure based in the 18th century.

**Why give this book to kids?**

I would give this book to kids because I think that every child can relate to a story about trying to find a place in the world and feeling like everyone is against them. The themes of friendship and family are also something that kids can relate to, including, but not limited to, Felicity and Johanna fighting and needing to make up, and Felicity needing to alter her opinions of Johanna. All of the characters go on a journey of self-discovery and growth, and in high school, that is something that all kids can relate to.

**How it fits best in Chapters 4-8 in Adolescents in the Search for Meaning:**

**Chapter 4: Books about Real-Life Experiences**

* Felicity struggles with living in a male-dominated world.
* Felicity and Joanna both deal with the loss of a parent.
* Felicity and Joanna have a falling out and must reconcile with one another.
* The places they travel to are mostly real locations, including London, Germany, and Zurich.
* We see the bonds of siblings, friends, parents and children, and romantic relationships.

**Chapter 5: Books about Facing Death and Loss:**

* Johanna’s mother has passed and Johanna must deal with the fact that her mother is not who she believed her to be.

**Chapter 6: Books about Identity, Discrimination, and Struggles with Decisions**

* Felicity wants to be a doctor, something that is considered impossible for a woman.
* Felicity struggles to decide whether to allow Sim to come with her
* Felicity must decide whether or not to tell Johana Sim is there to steal
* Felicity struggles with her identity as a (future) doctor and whether or not to simply give up and become a wife
* The three women in the story all have moments where they are told they are incapable because of their gender
  + Felicity and her desire to be a doctor
  + Sim and her desire to be the pirate queen when her father dies
  + Johanna wishes to be an explorer and follow in her mothers footsteps

**Chapter 7: Books about Courage and Survival:**

* Both Johanna and Felicity are captured by Dr. Platt and held for ransom
* Johanna and Felicity make a copy of her mothers map in the hopes that they can protect the real map
* Johanna decides to give up the map in order to save her beloved dog,
  + I would teach this to the kids as an act of courage because she does it knowing not only that the individuals she gave the map to would use it for nefarious purposes but she also knew Felicity would be upset/furious and she was willing to accept that anger/wrath to save her friend
* When dragons attack the boat during the battle with Platt’s crew the girls must stay calm and think on their feet to get out of the dangerous situation

**Chapter 8: Books allegory fantasy myth and parable:**

* The big twist in the book is that dragons exist and their scales have both healing and detrimental qualities

**Quantitative**

Lexile: 960L Age Range 13-17,  
ATOS: 6.20   
Dale Chall: 6.48  
Flesh-Kincaid: 8th grade  
Pages: 464 pages

**Qualitative**

Structure

* First person POV.
* Straightforward plot; Felicity wants to become a doctor and sets forth on that goal, until she gets wrapped up in a mystery and an adventure

Language Conventions and Clarity

* Simple and easy to understand language.
* all words used would be easy to understand by most ages/grades.

Knowledge Demands

* Some light knowledge of the 1800, for example the lack of technology and the discrimination faced by women and people of color would be helpful.
* book is the second in a series but can be read as a stand alone

Levels of Meaning

* **Surface level:** The story follows a girl who wants to be a doctor but is denied the opportunity due to her gender.
  + **Deeper meaning:** Felicity struggles with her self-worth and navigates the relationship between femininity and strength, trying to reconcile the idea that the two can coexist.
    - **Deeper DEEPER meaning:** The narrative explores three girls grappling with themes of loss—both of loved ones and of their sense of self—as they seek to find their place in worlds where they feel they don't belong. The book addresses trauma, grief, and the journey of overcoming obstacles.