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# The Girl Who Ran: Bobbi Gibb, The First Woman To Run The Boston Marathon



## Synopsis

"She said she would do it, she wasn't a liar; she'd show them by running like the wind in the fire." When Bobbi Gibb saw the Boston Marathon her mind was set—she had to be a part of it. She trained hard, journeying across America to run on all kinds of terrain. But when the time came to apply for the marathon, she was refused entry. They told her girls don't run, girls can't run. That didn't stop Bobbi. This picture book tells the true story of how she broke the rules in 1966 and how, one step at a time, her grit and determination changed the world. Created in collaboration with Bobbi Gibb and the perfect gift for would-be runners, kids of all ages, and everyone out there with a love of sport.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## Customer Reviews

In cooperation with Gibb herself, Poletti and Yee tell the story of the first woman to run the Boston Marathon, questioning authority with her feet. The Boston Marathon had been taking place for 70 years when Bobbi Gibb, a white woman, steps illegally to the starting line in 1966, a hoodie covering her hair. Her road there is strewn with the land mines of bias, everything from "So unladylike" to the official comments on the rejection to her application: "Women cannot run marathons. It's against the rules." Poletti and Yee neatly evoke the joy some find in running, simply running. Gibb "ran with her pack, going higher and higher, / the world whooshing by, like the wind in the fire." Such couplets are found every few pages, the last four words the refrain. Readers gain a sense of the experience

through Chapman's artwork, the light-footed energy of the watercolors slipping outside the pen's fine line, a veil of wind trailing behind Gibb. Halfway through the race her ruse is up. She is boiling in her hoodie and confides to a fellow marathoner, a black man, that she is afraid of ejection. "We won't let anyone throw you out; it's a free road." Well told and illustrated, Gibb's story speaks to not only women's fight for equality, but the power of community. (biographical note, timeline) (Picture book. 4-8) --Kirkus starred review "Girls can't run marathons, don't you know that?"; Good girls don't run. You'll hurt yourself!" What does it take to follow your heart, rather than bend towards the fears of others? From the time she was a young girl, Roberta "Bobbi" Gibb loved to run. After watching the Boston Marathon with her father, she knew she had to run the race even if her family thought such an idea was strange, silly, and frankly a "mighty odd hobby for a girl." In 1966, Bobbi applied to run in the Boston Marathon only to find her application rejected based on the ruling that women could not run the marathon for fear that they would injure themselves. Steadfast in her determination, on marathon day she disguised herself in her brother's Bermuda shorts and hid her long hair under a hooded sweatshirt, becoming the first woman to run the famed race. Written by Frances Poletti and Kristina Yee, in collaboration with Bobbi Gibb, *The Girl Who Ran* is a picture book biography that explains the life events leading up to Bobbi's rule-breaking participation in the Boston Marathon. Susanna Chapman's energetic illustrations sweep across the pages. A swirling red line follows Bobbi in each illustration, capturing the fluidity of running and acting as a visual reminder of Bobbi's fiery spirit. Ideal for an interactive read aloud, *The Girl Who Ran* offers opportunities for students to engage in critical literacy practices about the sports culture of the time as well as today. This can be enhanced through the back matter which provides expository information about Bobbi Gibb and a timeline of the history of the Boston Marathon, including when Title IX legislation was signed into law. The book also serves as a bridge for students out-of-school interests on the track, sports field, or playground. Teachers will find that they can leverage this story to serve as a mentor text for student writing about the things they are passionate about that may not always be accepted by others. --School Library Journal

Frances Poletti and Kristina Yee are the authors of *Miss Todd and Her Wonderful Flying Machine*, as well as the co-writers of the Student Academy Award-winning short film *Miss Todd*, on which the book is based. They collaborate across the Irish Sea, with Frances in London and Kristina in Dublin. They both love writing, cups of tea, and above all, a good story.

Wonderful story and beautiful book! A must for any book lover's collection!

This book is amazing. The writing is really beautiful and tells an amazing story about a truly inspirational woman, a perfect role model for kids. And the art is absolutely gorgeous, I can't even begin to do it justice in this review. You just have to read the book to find out! I can't wait for more from these authors and illustrator!

I was looking for a book for my five-year-old niece because she was coming to watch me run a marathon and she's a huge reader. I was having trouble finding kids' marathon books, but this one was released just in time! The pictures are beautiful and the story is perfect. It helped my niece understand what I was doing and has a great, empowering message for girls like her, whether she ever tries running or not.

This is a wonderful book with beautiful illustrations! It tells an inspiring story that is especially useful for girls. I bought it for my niece and I cannot wait to read it to her!

I was lucky enough to get a pre-publication copy of this children's picture book. It tells in simple language about the challenges faced by one woman, and all women, who wanted to run in the Boston Marathon. I think it is very important that we all remember and teach our children that the doors that are currently open for women were fought for and won by women, like Bobbi who faced obstacles in order just to do something they loved. The illustrations are simple and elegant and focus on the support Bobbi did receive when she finally successfully ran the Marathon in 1966 rather than the negative things that happened.

A beautiful book that would be a welcome addition to any home library! Not only does it share a powerful story of the first woman to run the Boston Marathon, but it includes gorgeous artwork, a few large fold-out pages and an additional biography with timeline at the end. The watercolor images are reminiscent of your favorite vintage picture books, which I think is perfect for this historic story. An ideal gift for children, though I will likely to keep this on my own bookshelf or coffee table!

Beautiful book that shares the story of the first female runner at the Boston Marathon. Used this book with some of my elementary aged students and they loved it! Encourages courage, independence, determination, and hard work.

As a kindergarten teacher, I am always on the lookout to find inspiring, well-written books to share with my class. "The Girl Who Ran" definitely fits these criteria. With its vibrant and colorful illustrations this book shares a story of dedication, strength, and motivation that is particularly inspiring to young girls. I would highly recommend it!

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