

Audacity

By Melanie Crowder

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A 2015 National Jewish Book Award finalist

The inspiring story of Clara Lemlich, whose fight for equal rights led to the largest strike by women in American history

A gorgeously told novel in verse written with intimacy and power, *Audacity* is inspired by the real-life story of Clara Lemlich, a spirited young woman who emigrated from Russia to New York at the turn of the twentieth century and fought tenaciously for equal rights. Bucking the norms of both her traditional Jewish family and societal conventions, Clara refuses to accept substandard working conditions in the factories on Manhattan's Lower East Side. For years, Clara devotes herself to the labor fight, speaking up for those who suffer in silence. In time, Clara convinces the women in the factories to strike, organize, and unionize, culminating in the famous Uprising of the 20,000.

Powerful, breathtaking, and inspiring, *Audacity* is the story of a remarkable young woman, whose passion and selfless devotion to her cause changed the world.

Praise for AUDACITY:

A 2015 National Jewish Book Award finalist
A *Washington Post* Best Children's Books for April: Poetry Edition
An ILA Notable Book for a Global Society
A 2016 NCTE Children's Notable Verse Novel
A New York Public Library Best Book for Teens
An ALA Top 10 Best Fiction for Young Adults Pick
An ALSC Notable Children's Book nominee
A BCCB Blue Ribbon winner

* "Crowder breathes life into a world long past....Compelling, powerful and unforgettable." --*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

* "This book stands alone....an impactful addition to any historical fiction collection."--*School Library Journal*, starred review

* "With a thorough historical note, glossary of terms, and bibliography, this will make an excellent complement to units on women's rights and the labor movement, but it will also satisfy readers in search of a well-told tale of a fierce heroine."--*BCCB*, starred review

* "This is an excellent title that can open discussions in U.S. history and economics courses about women's rights, labor unions, and the immigrant experience."--*School Library Connection*, starred review

"Based on the true story of Clara Lemlich, Audacity throbs with the emotions of this exceptional young woman who fought for equal rights and improved labor standards in factories. Melanie Crowder's verses spit out Clara's rage, cradle her longing and soar like the birds that are her constant companions."--*Bookpage*

"Crowder's (*Parched*) use of free verse in this fictionalization of Russian-Jewish immigrant Clara Lemlich's life brings a spare poignancy to a familiar history."--*Publishers Weekly*

"Brilliant, riveting, informative." —Cynthia Levinson, critically acclaimed author of *We've Got a Job*

"*Audacity* is an evocative reimagining of a fascinating historical figure who should be remembered for her determination in the face of great odds and powerful opposition—and for her role in changing America. Melanie Crowder's powerful verse reveals a long-past world, but the combination of hope and outrage that Clara Lemlich brought to her struggle should be both recognizable and inspirational to teen readers longing to right the injustices of our day."—Margaret Peterson Haddix, critically acclaimed, bestselling author of *Uprising*

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- 400 pages

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal
Gr 7 Up—Written in verse, this novel is loosely based on the life of Clara Lemlich Shavelson, the leader of New York shirtwaist strike of 1909. Clara and her family are Jewish Russians who flee the anti-Semitism of turn-of-the-century Russia to find a better life in America. However, Clara still experiences gender and religious oppression in New York. She is unable to gain the education she desires, because she is forced to work in a sweatshop, and she can't rise above her given status as an immigrant worker because foreign women are taught only rudimentary English. But "Inside I am anything/ but fresh off the boat./ I have been ready for this/ possibility/ all my life," Clara declares, and she proves that she has the audacity to do the impossible for a female and a Jew: organizing a woman's union and ultimately having her voice heard. The verse form of the narrative lends lightness to an otherwise bleak topic and moves the story along quickly, while artful formatting of the text creates and sustains mood. This book stands alone in its topic and time frame, with only Michelle Markel's picture book Brave Girl (HarperCollins, 2013) as a nonfiction companion. With historical notes, interviews with Clara's family members, and a glossary of Yiddish terms, Audacity is an impactful addition to any historical fiction collection.—Brittany Staszak, Glencoe Public Library, IL

Review
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About the Author
Melanie Crowder (www.melaniecrowder.net) lives on the Colorado Front Range where she is a writer and educator. She teaches English to non-native-English-speaking students at her local school and holds an MFA in Writing from Vermont College of Fine Arts. Follow Melanie on Twitter at @MelanieACrowder.

Users Review

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