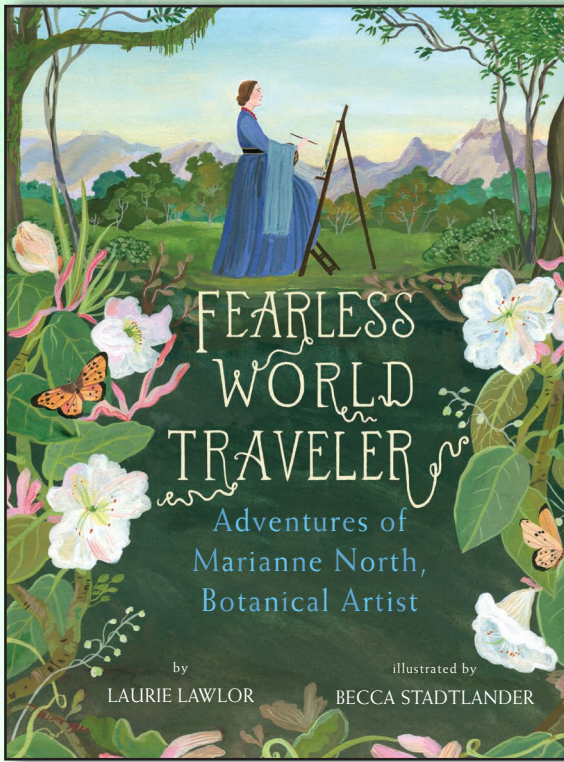


HOLIDAY HOUSE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



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Fearless World Traveler: Adventures of Marianne North, Botanical Artist

by **Laurie Lawlor**

illustrated by **Becca Stadtlander**

ABOUT THE BOOK

Scientist. Artist. Rule-breaker. This is the story of the vibrant and daring life of Marianne North by the award-winning author of *Super Women* and *Rachel Carson and Her Book That Changed the World*.

In 1882, Marianne North showed the gray city of London paintings of jaw-dropping greenery like they'd never seen before. As a self-taught artist and scientist, Marianne North subverted Victorian gender roles and advanced the field of botanical illustration. Her technique of painting specimens in their natural environment was groundbreaking. The legendary Charles Darwin was among her many supporters.

Laurie Lawlor deftly chronicles North's life, from her restrictive childhood to her wild world travels to the opening of the Marianne North Gallery at Kew Gardens to her death in 1890. The North gallery at Kew Gardens remains open to the public today.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Look at the first double-page illustration (pp. 6-7). What does this reveal about Marianne North's childhood? Point out other hints in the illustrations and text that North's family was wealthy. Contrast her childhood home to the home she later established outside London.
- Explain why her parents thought she was wasting her time with music and art. What did they think she should do with her life? How was this expectation similar to what most girls experienced in the 1800s? Discuss how Marianne felt "imprisoned" by her family and by society.
- Take clues from the illustrations on the end pages, and define botany. Explain Marianne North's method of studying botany. How did it become her passion? How did she use her passion to contribute to society?



- Explain how Marianne got the nickname “Pop.” How was Pop fascinated by the array of scientists that visited her father’s many homes? Debate whether she found inspiration in their work.
- Describe Marianne North’s father. How was she devoted to him, in spite of his disposition? Marianne was disappointed when her father wouldn’t allow her to go to the tropics to study plants. What did he do to soothe her disappointment? How did his solution reveal his inability to take his daughter’s passion seriously? Explain how the greenhouse increased her desire to study exotic plants.
- After her father’s death, Marianne set out on her own to study plants. How did this take courage? Chart the path she took to realize her dream. Explain what she meant when she wrote in her journal, “Hurrah for Liberty!” (p. 21). Discuss how she continued to celebrate her sense of freedom throughout her career.
- Discuss why Marianne North referred to herself as a “wild bird.” What part of her was “wild”? How was she like a “bird”? What dangers did this “wild bird” encounter as she traveled the world? Explain the following statement: “She was no longer a traveler who painted. She had become a painter who traveled” (p. 26). When did this transformation occur?
- Study the illustration on the double-page title page. Consider information provided in the book about Marianne North and discuss the symbolism of each item in the illustration. Which items represent adventure? Define fearless. How was Marianne North fearless as the title suggests?
- Read “Marianne North’s Legacy” at the end of the book. Explain the following quote: “She created paintings that crossed the boundaries between art and science.” Discuss her contribution to art and science.

Guide created by Pat Scales, retired school librarian and independent consultant, Greenville, South Carolina.

ABOUT THE CREATORS



Laurie Lawlor is a prolific and celebrated author of children’s books. Her picture-book biography *Rachel Carson and Her Book That Changed the World* was named a Bank Street Best Children’s Book of the Year and a National Science Teachers Association Outstanding Science Trade Book, and received the John Burroughs Riverby Award. Her *Super Women: Six Scientists Who Changed the World* was named a NSTA-CBC Outstanding Science Trade Book. She lives and teaches in the Chicago metropolitan area.



Becca Stadtlander is an award-winning illustrator and fine artist. She won the Golden Kite Award for Picture Book Illustration for *Made by Hand: A Craft Sampler*. She also illustrated *On the Wing* by David Elliott, which received two starred reviews as well as a Golden Kite Award. She attended the Maryland Institute College of Art and currently lives and works in her hometown of Covington, Kentucky.

