

Feminism and Collective Action in Contemporary Young Adult Novels about Rape

In the age of the #MeToo Movement, the importance of YA novels that center on the impact of sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape cannot be overstated. Perhaps even more necessary are books that emphasize the empowerment afforded to adolescents through collective action against those who perpetuate rape culture. Unlike earlier YA texts about rape, Jennifer Mathieu's *Moxie* (2017), Amy Reed's *The Nowhere Girls* (2017), and Ashley Herring Blake's *Girl Made of Stars* do more than depict the psychological and emotional impact of sexual traumas or the catharsis individuals find through speaking out against rapists. As Angela Hubler claims, "the individual focus is deeply problematic in novels in which the narrative events are shaped by societal and political issues," because this emphasis on the individual diminishes postfeminists' efforts to politicize the personal and obscures the social origins of sexual violence (121). *Moxie*, *The Nowhere Girls*, and *Girl Made of Stars* demonstrate that, for broader social and political change to occur, survivors must find empowerment through working together to investigate the forces that not only create, but also perpetuate, rape culture. By providing perspectives from queer characters and characters of color, these novels illustrate that rape is gendered, sexualized, and racialized—and thus, a political and social issue. The characters in each novel create coalitional groups to not only form connections with one another through shared conversations about rape and its social origins, but also to take feminist action against sexual violence through protests. Ultimately, *Moxie*, *The Nowhere Girls*, and *Girl Made of Stars* allow readers to envision ways to create change in their communities by both speaking and working collectively.