



# **Adventure Divas: Searching the Globe for Women Who Are Changing the World**

*Holly Morris*

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# Adventure Divas: Searching the Globe for Women Who Are Changing the World

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## **Adventure Divas: Searching the Globe for Women Who Are Changing the World** Holly Morris

After years of working behind a desk, Holly Morris had finally had enough. So she quit her job and set out to prove that adventure is not just a vacation style but a philosophy of living and to find like-minded, risk-taking women around the globe. With modest backing, a small television crew, her spirited producer-mother, Jeannie, and a whole lot of chutzpah, Morris tracked down artists, activists, and politicians—women of action who are changing the rules and sometimes the world around them.

In these pages, Morris brings to life the remarkable people and places she's encountered on the road while filming her PBS series *Adventure Divas* and other programs. We meet Assata Shakur, a former Black Panther and social activist and now a fugitive living in exile in Cuba; Kiran Bedi, New Delhi's chief of police, who revolutionized India's infamously brutal Tihar Jail with her humanitarian ethic; New Zealand pop star Hinewehi Mohi, a Maori who reinvigorates her native culture for a new generation; and Mokarrameh Ghanbari, a septuagenarian painter and rice farmer who lives in the tiny village of Darikandeh on the Caspian plains of Iran, where her creative talents run counter to the government's strict stance on art.

Along the way, Morris herself becomes a certified Adventure Diva, as she hunts for wild boar with Penan tribesmen in the jungles of Borneo, climbs the Matterhorn short-rope to a salty fourth-generation Swiss guide, and memorably becomes the first woman ever to enter the traditional camel race of the Saharan oasis town of Timia.

Intelligent, phenomenally funny, and chock-full of rich and telling details of place, *Adventure Divas* is a pro-woman chronicle for the twenty-first century. In a pilgrimage fueled by curiosity, ideology, and full-on estrogen power, Holly Morris has paved the way for all of us to discover our own diva within and set out on our own adventures.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

## **Adventure Divas: Searching the Globe for Women Who Are Changing the World** **Details**

Date : Published October 31st 2006 by Villard (first published 2005)

ISBN : 9780375760631

Author : Holly Morris

Format : Paperback 320 pages

Genre : Travel, Nonfiction, Autobiography, Memoir, Womens, Feminism

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# **From Reader Review Adventure Divas: Searching the Globe for Women Who Are Changing the World for online ebook**

## **Tara says**

The concept was interesting, but the narrator was kind of annoying and had a bit of a white savior mentality.

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## **Lianne says**

A friend recommended this book to me as part of my research about Cuba. The author, Holly Morris, is a founder of a multimedia production company and this anthology is a series of essays about her seeking out adventurous women and making documentaries about them in situ. In Cuba, she is on the hunt for an interview with Assata Shakur, one of the exiled Black Panthers avoiding American justice. Her account is gutsy and provides vicarious thrills and insights into Cuban reality. "Paradox Found" attempts to deconstruct Cuban politics and is the first of seven essays about adventurous women around the world. The material is lively and provocative (and perhaps a little forced in Morris's "bad girl" persona) and captures experience in the early 2000's so seems already dated.

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## **Travelalong2 says**

I was disappointed in this book. Great concept but the author got lost of her goal along the way. I did learn about interesting women who I will have to investigate myself. I'm glad I finished the book but its not gripping.

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## **Aleta says**

I enjoyed the book, especially the authors dry humorous tone. It was great to be enlightened about some the politics and culture of the various places Holly and her femme-posse traveled (Central America, Middle East, etc.) Although she can be a bit dark, and stewes in her rebelliousness against stereotypical female image (in her own image struggle about what it means to be female) she keeps things funny & witty for most of the book and has a smart way of writing that kept me wanting to read more. I loved the whole female power premise and her sincere search for real women who have overcome real obstacles to reach success was inspiring. This type of book and people with passions like this is invaluable to women nationally and globally. Holly's connection to the women she meets makes that very apparent. The cover picture of hot pink shoe laces on a ratty pair of hiking boots says it all.

The only thing that I wasn't too enthusiastic about was where she would go too far into a personal obsession or personal thing that made no sense to me. Over all, enjoyable book with lots of great information!

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## Heidi Schoephoerster says

This book is not the kind you sit down and tear through in one sitting. It is however, such an incredible peek into the lives of women and feminists the world over. Holly Morris is one bad-ass gal who details the struggles of everyday women from Cuba to New Zealand to Iran.

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## Nic says

This should be facinating material - a young woman decides to produce a TV pilot about women around the world contributing to culture and womens' rights. The first chapter has Holly and her crew smuggling themselves into Cuba via Mexico, and her observations about the culture are intriguing, but I couldn't get into the book. I suspect it has to do with the poor characterization. I'm not getting a sense of the narrator as anything but a quick-witted, happy-go-lucky (Holly Golightly?) cheerleader for feminism. Even when she describes a fight with her mother, who is also along as a production assistant, I don't get any sense of their issues. Everyone else in the production party is lauded as brilliant and what-would-I-do-without them. In that way, it's like reading a biography where the benevolent subject decides not to criticise anyone, or show any personal flaws. I guess it's too self-celebratory, like a "making of" documentary, rather than honest or self-revealing, which my taste in personal narrative runs to.

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## VeganMedusa says

I was extremely disappointed by this book. Some parts were interesting, but I found the author annoying and for me the book was too focussed on the trials of filming a TV series and not enough on the 'divas' themselves.

Tell us this person is English, or Australian, or whatever - but please don't keep pointing out how funny they talk (she had an English person saying royyt, an Italian saying ve should... and an Aussie saying 'Allo there, Ian 'ere. Why the Italian would say 've' for 'we' or an Aussie would drop their aitches, I have no idea - but I found it truly annoying always being reminded that: These people talk funny! Not normal like me! Everyone else has an accent except Americans!

I found her attitude a bit cringe-worthy. When you're visiting a tribe that is so unknown to most of us, why not just be glad that they've let you come along on their caravan? Why insist on entering a camel race without any thought as to whether it's culturally appropriate? Not to mention going to Iran, knowing that the veil is compulsory and women can be punished by law for not wearing it - and then going around trying to find women who will appear on camera without a veil!

The whole chapters on Borneo, Niger and Switzerland had nothing to do with women or divas at all - they were just regular travel stories and seemed stuck in there to pad the book out.

I'm being harsh because this book had so much promise.

But anyway, the chapter on NZ was interesting (I so want Keri Hulme's book-filled house) - it's always interesting seeing your own country through foreign eyes. And there were some interesting women, although I would have liked to have heard more from them.

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## **Jenn says**

This book took me nearly a year to finish. I had such high hopes for it, but I struggled to get into it and carried it around in my purse so that when I got bored or stuck on trains, I'd be forced to make some progress on it. I read it while traveling stateside and also while in Italy earlier this year. There were two or three women that Morris highlights in this book that really, truly got to me, but they were so far back in the book that I almost missed them as I nearly gave up on this book several times. I do love the idea and what they accomplished is fantastic, I just had a hard time getting through the words. I'm a journalist as well, and usually love books by journalists because they aren't overly wordy or self-important, but with this one, Morris used too many words and often times did not let the story tell itself.

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## **Jeanette says**

i had a hard time with this book, which is why its taken me so long to read it. it started out fabulously. a woman decides to ditch her job and start a website, tv show, and book on divas over the world. she sets out to explore the meaning of diva in different cultures and to interview divas over the world- real divas- not movie or rock stars. Lol.

I loved, loved, loved the first few chapters. I now HAVE to go to Cuba after her stories about it. Towards the middle, she gets lost (in her writing, not her travels) and I got bored out of my mind. She strays away from the Diva concept and stops writing about women. Its really weird... The last few chapters she gets back on course, and I especially loved the last chapter on iran (A place I would love to visit, but only if my friend Michelle takes me cuz shes from there).

Im glad I finished it, and Id recommend people reading it- but only the interesting chapters. You dont have to read the whole book to get her just. I think she had a GREAT concept, and i hope her tv show turned out to be what she envisioned, but i wasnt so thrilled with the book.

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## **Faith says**

I first saw Adventure Divas by Holly Morris at an REI a long time ago, and finally picked it up at the library a week ago. The concept immediately intrigued me: a woman quits her secure daytime job as a publisher and travels the world in search of 'divas'—women who are changing the world and doing radical things both big and small—for a TV show. I'm a big fan of strong women, girl power, and adventure, so it seemed like the perfect book.

Despite some aspects of this book that I really didn't like, this is actually one of the most inspiring books I've read in a very long time. The book is really more of a memoir about Morris's making of a TV show rather than a specific account of the divas. I was expecting this after reading some reviews, so I can understand how some people might be a little disappointed after reading. It's also meant to be a sort of prequel/learn more about the making towards the tv show (which I plan on renting soon). Morris also talks about two trips to Borneo and the Matterhorn that are completely unrelated to the tv show or adventure divas projects, but I enjoyed her accounts regardless. At times I also found her to be embarrassingly American—obsessing over people's accents in writing (Ello Olly, goat shiiiiid) and her lack of education concerning hijabs in Islamic culture.

The production teams obsession with the veil in Iran bothered me a lot--Morris like so many Westerners perceives the veil to be wholly negative and supports that in her writing. I'm surprised she didn't read a little more before going to Iran. Anyone who understands the history and context of the veil understands that Western feminism (freedom to wear what I want! Slutwalk!) isn't exactly desirable to ALL women in the world. Their guide in Iran laments "You guys are obsessed with the veil" then Morris goes on to defend herself saying that "Tv is a visual medium and the veil is a powerful image". She does sort of make up for it by saying "the Islamic restrictions may go too far, but the other extreme—sex-obsessed—can be just as oppressive." I just wish she had maintained this view throughout her entire time in Iran.

Morris also has a TERRIBLE habit of making assumptions from direct quotes of 'divas'. Many quotes are followed by "I assume by this she means...", "since [insert diva] said this... [insert assumption here]" I found it to be very unprofessional, and took away from the already inspiring words said by the divas. Sometimes you just have to let things be Morris!

Despite the above annoyances, this book actually made an immense impact on my plans for the future. It definitely incited a powerful feeling of adventure and 'f\*ck yeah women!!! Even though her writing may be iffy and not as professional, I appreciated her honesty and admired her passion and the end result of her success. It's also very easy to ignore the quasi-bad not-journalistic writing, because the sheer strength and energy of the women interviewed was wholly inspiring. I gained a lot of wisdom from those incredible voices and spent a lot of time writing down their incredibly insightful thoughts on fear, strength, and being part of a larger change. Adventure Divas also did a great job at portraying many different types of women in different locales: from politicians in New Zealand, entrepreneurs in Iran, mountain climbers in India, to artists in Cuba. It's also not biased in terms of what makes up a 'diva'-- whether she's giving a safe space for women trapped in sex work, reforming prisons in India, or revitalizing the Maori music scene, it's all considered important and revolutionary in it's own way. I think this is important because feminism can often be limited to idolizing women who specifically take places of men in power. Although this is important, women who teach, take part in the arts, and challenge 'everyday feminism' are equally important.

I would recommend this as a light read to anyone looking for inspiration-- just be warned that the writing is not perfect!

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## **Anne says**

Loved this book!

Being an adventurist myself, Holly Morris truly inspired me to not let anything stand in the way. If you have a will, a lot of perseverance, and a really amazing mom....heck you can do anything.

I loved how honest her writing was and how much energy it held. Her stories about the women in Iran, Borneo, New Zealand, India, and Cuba were real, not over the top drama queens. Diva took on a much humbler meaning.

A great book for anyone to read who feels like they're not really knowing how to go after that ticking "I want to do more" part in their brain. Never fear, let your heart steer.

First page of prologue, sums it up:

"My pod days are over, damnit," I thought to myself as I stood in my bedroom back in Seattle, looking at the

wall. In my family, "pods" --the dispirited hulks from Invasion of the body Snatchers who walked through life with eyes open but not really living --were the lowest form of being. I had stripped clean my walls, painted them white, and hung huge sheets of white paper and scrawled on them painfully self-conscious resolutions for the future: BODY, SOUL, WORK. All had subdivided categories. My gray backpack lay in the corner covered with Indonesian dust, and I was struggling to hold on to my hard-won modicum of actualization."

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## **Amanda says**

My friend Mari, world traveler, lent me this book. At first I was scared, because I thought, "Oh gosh, this author has got to be one of those awful feminist/VW with inspiring women bumper sticker driving/granola crunching pains in the asses that make me hate women." She was a little of that, but also had another side that made me decide not to hate her.

Adventure Divas narrates the trials and tribulations of trying to start up a television program about something that the U.S. needs more of: gutsy women around the globe. While Adventure Divas is getting off the ground, Morris must take on other jobs as an adventure program host in order to fund the dream she is working on. She travels Cuba, Iran, New Zealand, and India for Adventure Divas, but also climbs the Matterhorn, visits tribes deep in the jungles of...I forget, and basically jumps into any situation for the love of adventure.

I especially loved the chapter about Iran, which has always fascinated me as a country...this is well worth the time for any traveler.

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## **Ruby says**

"Truth is, I do feel slightly guilty about leaving Jeannie holding down the Diva enterprise, and the Boyfriend with the dog. But I also resent that guilt. Why is it that when Robert Redford - cum - Denys Finch Hatton flies away in the golden glow out in Africa, he is pursuing his destiny? And when I walk away I'm just a chick who's scared of commitment and on the run, who's weird for ignoring Glamour magazine's prediction of her eggs drying up?" Holly Morris

A great combination of Holly Morris' own travel experiences. her attempt to start an multimedia Adventure Divas company that has a brief show on PBS, and the Divas around the world she interviews to find the spirit of powerful women making change against huge odds.

It highlights political issues without being preachy, and recounts funny experiences without cheap sarcasm. Each chapter is a different part of the world, and the table of contents is one of the more unique I've seen with subtitles like "Short Roped to Heidi's Grandfather: In which the author must attempt to climb the Matterhorn on about a week's notice. The chapter features an excess of boys and cheese, as well as some disturbing Lord of the Flies behavior."

She travels from Cuba to Malaysia, to India to the Matterhorn with an all male crew, to New Zealand on the hunt for the author of the Bone People, to Nigeria and a camel race, to end in Iran where "The Veil" is given



much contemplation.

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### **Linda says**

It takes guts to quit a paying job in journalism and dive headlong into a gamble on a televised documentary, but that is exactly what Holly Morris did a decade ago. *Adventure Divas*, searching the globe for a new kind of heroine, was her first book detailing the outcome of her quest. Namely, to meet and interview women around the globe who are breaking molds and making a difference. On this journey Holly learns more about who she is (a nomadic spirit) than she does about anyone she interviews along the way. She hunts for wild boar in Borneo, climbs the Matterhorn and becomes the first woman to join in a camel race across the Sahara. All these adventures are best experienced as an armchair traveler. Her writing is crisp, insightful, never maudlin and always fun. Since then, Holly has written follow up book and her PBS series is a huge success. Learn more about Holly Morris and the adventure divas she has placed in the spotlight at [www.AdventureDivas.com](http://www.AdventureDivas.com)

[www.lindaballouauthor.com](http://www.lindaballouauthor.com)

Lost Angel Walkabout – One Traveler's Tales

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### **Miko Lee says**

I really love the concept of this book and thought it would be the best kind of armchair adventure travel, bonus as a feminist take to meet divas around the world. AND in New Zealand she sets out to meet one of my author favorites - Keri Hulme. I wish I loved this more. I learned some. It was fun. But the writing just wasn't really compelling to me. Did provoke me to learn more about Assata Shakur, black panther expat living in Cuba.

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