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## BOOK ANALYSIS AND SUMMARY REPORT

**Book Title:** *Girls Think of Everything: Stories of Ingenious Inventions by Women*

**Author:** Catherine Thimmesh; illustrated by Melissa Sweet.

**Date of Publication:** 2000

**Awards:** 2001 – IRA Children's Book Award;  
2001 – Outstanding Science Trade Book for Children;  
2000 – Children's Book of the Month Club Best Nonfiction Book;  
2000 – Smithsonian Notable Book;  
Minnesota Book Award finalist.

**Themes:** Inventors and Inventions;  
Ingenuity;  
Technology and Society;  
Women's History.

**Setting:** Women History 3000 B.C. to 1995



# | DETAILED SUMMARY OF MAIN EVENTS

The book gives information on some of the greatest inventions made by women. The book lists inventions and innovations made by women from as early as 3000 B.C. The author notes that women inventors have been largely ignored, and their contributions have also been downplayed. The women sort to make life easier and more efficient.

The innkeeper, Ruth Wakefield invented the chocolate chip cookies in 1930. She was preparing cookies for her guests when she realized that she had run out of baker's chocolate. She wanted to save time and hence decided to toss chunks of chocolate into cookie batter. She hoped they would melt, but the small pieces only softened. To her astonishment, "Toll House Crunch Cookies" emerged. The cookies became popular in America.

Mary Anderson invented the windshield wipers, receiving a patent in 1903. The southerner's invention was conceptualized during a trip to New York City. She needed to find a solution that will prevent drivers from opening the windows during rain or snow in order to see the road. The solution was the windshield wiper operated by the driver through some lever system. Unfortunately, Anderson's invention was rendered useless as most thought it distracted drivers.

Stephanie Kwolek invented Kevlar in 1971. The young scientist came into the limelight in 1960 through her work on long molecular chains. However, her greatest discovery was Kevlar, which is a synthetic material



five times stronger than steel. The material is resistant to corrosion, flames and wear. The invention became valuable and was used in production of bullet proof vests among other products. Stephanie has received many accolades for her work.

Bette Nesmith Graham invented Liquid paper in 1957. Her invention was as a result of frustration from having to retype entire work caused by small typing errors. Her determination to find an efficient alternative led to the invention of a paint that covered the mistakes. Her artistic experience came in handy in the discovery. She sold her first batch of the paint "Mistake Out" in 1956. Experiments led to a refined product, which was renamed Liquid Paper.

Patsy Sherman invented Scotchgard through a lab mishap in 1953. After the compound Sherman had prepared splashed on lab assistant's shoes, it could not be washed away as it repelled liquids. This discovery led to the development of Scotchgard, a material protector. Further experiments expanded the use of the invention.

Ann Moore invented Snuggly, a baby carrier. The invention was conceptualized during her stay in Africa in the 1960s. She observed how African women carried their kids on their backs using fabric slings. After returning to the United States, Moore gave birth and wanted to carry her child the same way as the Africans. Numerous attempts led to a creation that started booming business.

Margaret Knight invented the paper bag machine, and received the patent after numerous court battles in 1871. Her invention entailed the development of flat bottomed paper bags for packaging items. Her

curiosity played a crucial role in the conception of the invention. The invention demonstrated how difficult it was for recognition women's contribution.

Jeanne Lee Crews invented the space bumper while working for NASA. The invention plays a significant role in the spacecraft industry. The space bumper reduced accidents associated with landing. The lady went on to win many awards from her contributions at NASA.

Valerie L. Thomas invented illusion transmitter and received the patent in 1980. In her childhood, she experienced resistance when she showed interest in science subjects. The discouragements continued in high school, but did not deter Valerie's determination of becoming a scientist. While working at NASA, her curiosity led to the invention of the illusion transmitter.

Alexia Abernathy invented the no-spill feeding bowl at the age of eleven. She wanted to present something unique during the science fair project, culminating to the invention. The bowl prevents spilling over of foods through a larger outer bowl.

Becky Shroeder is also credited in the book for her invention of a glowing board at the age of twelve. She received the patent in 1974, becoming the youngest U.S. female to get such achievement. Her invention enabled people to write in the dark.



# | PERSONAL THOUGHTS ABOUT THE BOOK

*Girls Think of Everything* is an excellent book that illustrates how women and girls contributed to various inventions that have made the world a better place. Some of the innovations were as a result of curiosity, others out of necessity, while others were as a result of sheer determination to make something better. The book is an inspiring one that compels young girls to work towards achieving their goals.



# | LITERACY CRITICISM: INFORMATIONAL BIOGRAPHY

1. The biography meets the criteria for good literature. It illustrates the events that led to the inventions by various women.
2. The subject of the biography is worth reading. It gives the stories of inventions made by women in the early history. Most of the inventors were downplayed and failed to achieve recognition. Therefore, it enlightens the reader on matters invention and innovation.
3. The biography is factual as it gives an account of when the various inventions took place. Most of the inventions are used to date, and the reader can also check the facts against reputable sources. It reveals to the reader the situations that made the inventors conceptualize the various inventions. However, some statements have been altered for simplification purposes.
4. The biographer distinguishes between fact and judgment and between fact and fiction. This occurred in instances where the invention took place long ago. However, the biographer was able to record factual information for most recent inventions. This because of the ability to conduct interviews.
5. The biographer used primary sources to gather information. The commonly applied method was interviews. The interviews targeted most recent women inventors. The information about the interviews is well articulated in the book.
6. The biographer included information that supported the credibility of



the text. Most of the inventions made by women are in use to day. Furthermore, some of the inventors are still alive.

7. All the illustrations in the biography are accurate according to the life and time of the person.
8. The writing style appeals to the reader. Its an easy read and provides inspiration to young inventors and non-inventors alike.

