



## From the Author

The characters and content in *10 Secrets of Being a Lady* represent the essence of a mother/daughter symbiotic relationship in which the daughter strives to do her best for her mother and the mother strives to become her best self for her daughter. With a focus on a timeless theme, such as manners and the social pressures of a mother defining womanhood to her daughter, the beauty of authenticity surfaces and the need for physical identity disappears. The mother learns a little more about being a mother and the daughter enjoys the quality time that will forever shape her expectations for expressing and receiving love. *10 Secrets of Being a Lady* is a true story of likeness, love and acceptance.

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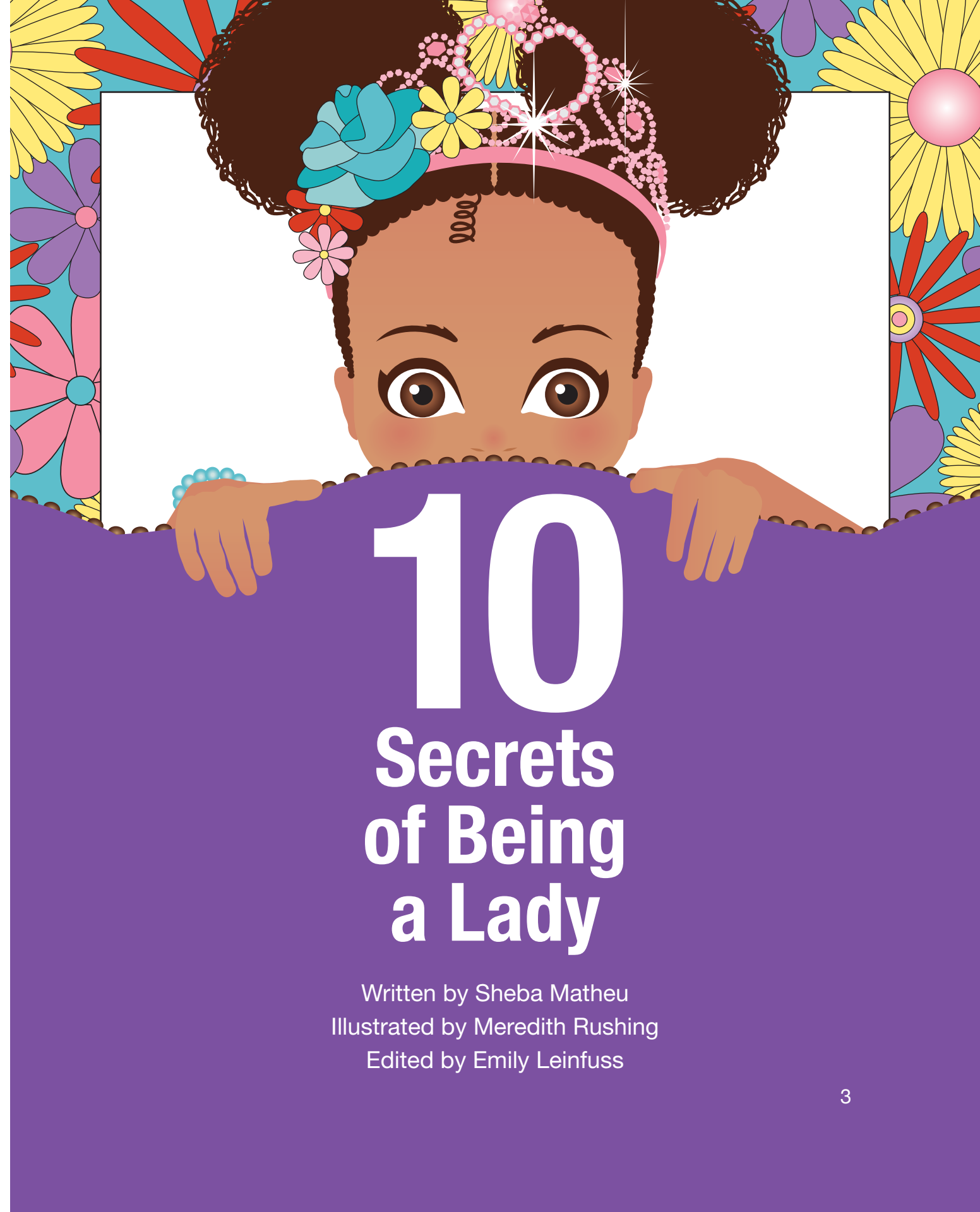
# 10 Secrets of Being a Lady

by Sheba Matheu  
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Ava is a beautiful little girl who likes to exercise her independence, like all little girls. Ava's mother supports her efforts but at the same time, hopes that imparting her family's secrets of being a lady will help Ava make better choices for herself. Ava has other things on her mind. She tries her best to make her mother happy but instead, she succumbs to her youthful silly ways with exuberance. Ava's mother must then make decisions about what really matters, her own wishes or her daughter's will.

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to come





## 10 Secrets of Being a Lady

One day a loving mother decided the time had come to share her family secrets about being a lady with her daughter Ava. This was a special day.

She came home from work, went straight to the library of their home, and perched upon her purple wingback chair, next to Ava's identical purple wingback chair. The library was their magic playroom. Some afternoons the two enjoyed a snack of almond milk and oatmeal cookies as they played games. Other times they read and conjured magical stories in their special place.

When Ava walked into the room, her mother smiled with joy and her heart filled with pride.

In Ava's adult fashion, she had dressed for the occasion. She put on her two favorite tutus, red-

and-white-striped leggings, pink ballet slippers, a flowered top, white gloves with a teal bracelet, a strand of pearls and a glittery pink tiara decorated with flowers. She completed the ensemble with a fluffy poodle purse overflowing with blocks.

Ava climbed into her chair next to her mother's. She sat with her hands clasped, resting on her lap as she analyzed and mimicked her mother's every move.

Her mother leaned close and said, "Today I am going to reveal the ten secrets of being a lady."

Ava's eyes grew wide. "Secrets? Oh, Mommy, I just love secrets! I promise I will not tell anyone else... I think." Her mother smiled and began reading from the book she created just for her daughter titled, *10 Secrets of Being a Lady*.





## Secret #1 Project Confidence

A lady enters any room  
With confidence not to assume  
The temperament of people  
in that place.  
She knows that with  
her warm “hello,”  
Combined with smiles she will bestow,  
May change the mood  
with elegance and grace.

Her hand she lifts and then extends  
To greet or just to help a friend.  
A lady makes this effort all the time.  
She shares with those  
who do not know  
Just how to greet a friend or foe.  
A lady knows benevolence is sublime.





Huh?

But when I enter any place  
I always try to move with grace,  
Although my laces seem  
to come untied.  
I try to speak one little word  
But fear my voice just isn't heard,  
Then all I want to do is run and hide.

When you leave I am so strong.  
I do not stay afraid for long.  
I take deep breaths then change  
to calm from dread.  
I walk with my head held up high.  
I make eye contact; I don't cry.  
I trust that you'll be back  
just as you said.

## Secret #2

### Listen to Others

If a lady sees her friend  
Looking gloomy she will spend  
Her time to soothe the sadness  
or the fear.

She may sit or kneel to listen,  
And then wipe the tears that glisten.  
A lady knows what it means  
to lend an ear.

She does not interrupt or preach,  
Nor does she scorn, dismiss or teach.  
A lady listens to her friends in-kind.  
She lets her caring nature show  
Allowing her close friends to know  
No matter what,  
she will be there every time.







Every Time?

I love it when all of my mates  
Make up ways to communicate,  
But listening is so hard for me at times.  
I'll stop and focus, but then  
I'll listen to one other friend,  
And off we'll run to find a tree to climb.

I look around, my friend is gone.  
I had hoped she'd come along,  
But I forgot to ask; I feel so bad.  
Then I see her by the swing.  
I run to her and we sing  
And share the best of times we've ever had.

## Secret #3 Be Sincere

A lady tries to be sincere,  
Presents a stance  
that's crystal clear;  
She does not sway  
or backtrack on her word.  
She follows the path she has set,  
And vows to not have one regret,  
Remaining true to her heart,  
not to the herd.

A lady will try not to mind  
If eyes are watching all the time.  
She knows to make mistakes  
means she may learn  
To discern, yet welcome all the risk  
And follow her path just as if  
She seeks success, not dreams  
for which she'll yearn.





Hmmm...

While I want to  
make up my mind,  
It's fighting with me all the time.  
When I choose red, my brain says,  
"I want blue!"  
I try to undo what I did,  
Trade colors with some other kid,  
Again confused about what I should do.

You whisper often, "be sincere,"  
My choices are all that I fear.  
I'm scared to make decisions  
that aren't right.  
If I make only one mistake  
I start to get a stomach ache  
Then all I do is think of it at night.

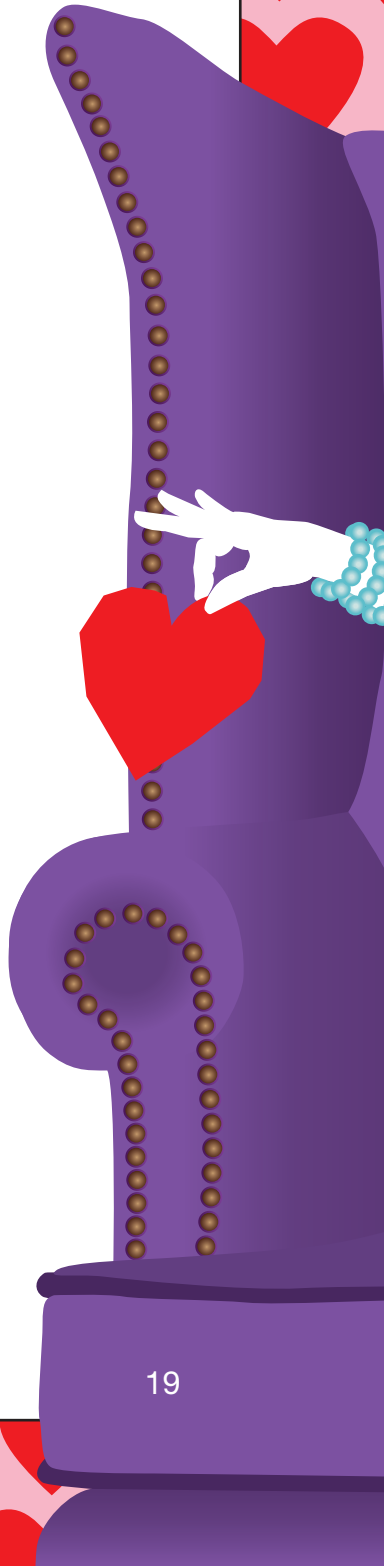




## Secret #4 Converse Respectfully

A lady endeavors to say  
Words from her heart every day.  
Her choice of verbiage  
renders her quite earnest.  
She chooses her tone;  
smooth but strong.  
Each sentence is clear but not long  
With the sweetest words  
for messages of the sternest.

Her tangents she tries to limit.  
And minds her time to the minute,  
She tempers interactions as she speaks.  
She respects one's personal space,  
Helps those who may feel out of place,  
And still she welcomes  
all constructive critiques.





Grrrr...

I've always been  
so super nice,  
Except with that one girlfriend twice.  
I used the very words I wished to say.  
I did not mean to be so rude.  
I tried to keep up my good mood,  
But she pushed me too hard  
to come and play.

I thought, "Tomorrow! I'll start again."  
I spoke so nicely to my friend,  
But then she said  
she did not want to talk.  
I responded, "That's not nice."  
She spoke so rudely to me, twice!  
Now teachers say  
we're birds of the same flock.



## Secret #5 Speak Deliberately

A lady chooses a time to speak  
In which she's patient but not meek.  
"Excuse me" are the words  
she'll use to start.  
She makes sure not to over talk  
As if to block another's thought  
Instead she waits her turn  
to speak her part.

When speaking in public or private,  
She knows that the perfect climate  
Matters to the person she will address.  
In public, she's quite self-assured.  
In private, she's frank and secure;  
She's real and speaks  
with ladylike finesse.





Fe-what?...  
Oops!

Oh, how much I wish  
I could speak  
About the things I've heard all week.  
My mind keeps asking questions;  
it won't stop.  
Right from my lips the words will fly.  
It doesn't matter how hard I try.  
If I hold them in, I know my cheeks will pop.

That last time I tried to cut in,  
You looked at me without a grin.  
You thought that the intrusion was all mine.  
I shut my mouth and then I thought,  
"Should I go on? Probably not."  
That time, it seems, I really crossed the line.



## Secret #6

### Eat Properly

While eating with posture erect,  
A lady soon gains her respect;  
The proper eating habits  
must be learned.

She must always remember how  
Not to chew food like a cow.  
She knows that praise for manners  
must be earned.

A lady chews with her mouth closed;  
Her hands remain  
still and composed,  
With fork in left and knife in right  
for her meal.

Her napkin stays snug in her lap;  
She always leaves the chef a scrap  
To let him know  
her portion was ideal.





I eat my meal like it's delicious,  
Then you become really suspicious  
As if you know the thoughts  
that I could glean,  
Like making up my eating rules  
And then inventing special tools  
To hold my plate so I could lick it clean.

How long must I be ladylike?  
I heard it's like riding a bike,  
But manners leave my mind  
when I'm near pie.  
And mom, it's time that I confess,  
I hope this does not cause you stress,  
While eating pie I got some in my eye.





## Secret #7

### Practice Healthy Eating

A lady's sweets are just a pinch.  
She minds her waist  
right to the inch,  
Caring not for vanity but for health.  
For a fit body and sound mind;  
She eats, works out,  
reads and unwinds.  
She rates success  
by health and mental wealth.

Some fruits and veggies every day  
Are used when one  
must run and play.  
A lady knows that foods  
are used as fuels.  
She eats her dairy, meats and grains,  
Drinks water to hydrate the brain.  
A lady prizes her health more than jewels.

