

A BOOK CLUB EVENT GUIDE

"Greer Macallister pens a
nail-biter that makes you
want to stand up and cheer."

—KATE QUINN, *New York
Times* bestselling author of
The Alice Network for *Woman 99*



THE ARCTIC FURY

A NOVEL

GREER MACALLISTER

EXCERPT & ADDITIONAL INFORMATION INLCUDED

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We cannot say what the woman might be physically, if the girl were allowed all the freedom of the boy.

— **Elizabeth Cady Stanton**

The real work of an expedition begins when you return.

— **Louise Arner Boyd**



MEMBERS OF THE WOMEN'S EXPEDITION

Margaret Bridges, journalist
Irene Chartier, translator
Caprice Collins, mountaineer
Dove, nurse
Ebba Green, British Royal Navy wife
Stella Howe, housemaid
Christabel Jones, illustrator
Elizabeth Kent, lady's maid
Ann Montgomery, dog breeder and trainer
Siobhan Perry, medical student
Althea Porter, British Royal Navy wife
Virginia Reeve, leader
Dorothea Roset, navigator



CHAPTER ONE

Virginia

Massachusetts Superior Court, Boston

October 1854

In the front row sit the survivors.

Virginia can see them clearly from her seat in the dock.

Even when she looks away from them—toward the judge, the jury—she still feels their presence. Five women, broken and brave, who came to this courtroom against all odds. She wonders if they feel jarred, the way she does, minding the rules of civilization again: caring what they wear, watching what they say, wondering how their actions make others feel. They were free of all that, not so long ago. Then again, what a steep price they paid for that fleeting freedom.

Only five. Not all who survived, that's a mercy, but all who choose to stand up and be counted as survivors. She feels the ones who aren't there as much as the ones who are. If she closes her eyes, she can see each of the lost before her. One laid out cold and blue as cornflowers. One swallowed by the ice, its hungry maw open just wide enough to devour. One bathed, writhing, in blood. Each a pinpoint tragedy Virginia will never forget, never stop regretting.

Even the ones who sit here today are missing parts of themselves they'll never get back. How many fingers, how many toes? One ear, Doro's. The right, if she remembers correctly, and how could she

forget? Also lost: a sliver of each of their souls, including Virginia's. She does not close her eyes to picture any of that, any of those losses. She knows them well enough.

Five women present and willing to be known as survivors of the expedition, not counting Virginia, who had no choice about whether or not to be known. If they had to be counted—in happier times, they joked about it, a welcome thing, an optimist's dream—there should have been eleven. Virginia the twelfth. That was the size of the expedition they'd planned for, though not what they'd launched with, and certainly not what had returned. The numbers don't add up, but then again, the numbers have never added up correctly. That was Caprice's fault. Virginia should be done with her anger at Caprice by now, but she's not. She may never be done.

"All rise for the Honorable Judge Elton Miller," calls the bailiff. Virginia rises.

The judge is younger than she would have thought, though not young, exactly. Dark hair instead of white, not a flash of gray among the jet. Her eyes land on a reddish streak along his jaw. Careless with his razor? A stumble in the night? She is sick of analyzing injuries. Siobhan should be here to do that. But Siobhan, like so many others, is not.

"You may be seated," the judge says, and the whole courtroom dissolves into soft rumbles and thumps as they shuffle to comply, exactly like a congregation. Virginia half expects to hear an organ lumbering into the opening strains of "All Things Bright and Beautiful."

Instead, the not-old, not-young judge continues, "We are here today to hear the case of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts versus Miss Virginia Reeve. How do you plead, Miss Reeve?"

From the defense table comes a reluctant but forceful voice. Higher than it should be. Virginia winces at how young he sounds.

“Judge, the charges,” says her counsel, whose name is Clevenger. He looks young as well as sounding young, all apple cheeks and skinny limbs. Clevenger is the tallest man in the courtroom, yet somehow, at least to Virginia, he seems to take up the least space.

The judge blinks. “Come again?”

Her counsel shuffles papers, makes another attempt. If Virginia were the lawyer, she tells herself, she would make a stronger beginning. *If ifs and buts were candy and nuts*, Ann would have said to that. Poor Ann.

And poor Virginia. Five faithful, living women in this courtroom form a silent, united line, and it’s the voices of the other seven who won’t shut up.

“I believe the charges should be read first? And I will tell you how she pleads?” says her counsel.

“Oh, I apologize, Your Honor!” booms the judge, not a whit of apology in his voice. “I forgot to address you as Judge! And in your own court no less. What an embarrassment.”

More twitching, more shuffling of papers. “Your Honor, I’m not a judge.”

The judge says, with great relish, “Precisely.”

Virginia’s counsel is silent.

“Now may I proceed?” asks the judge, though it’s not really a question.

“Yes, Your Honor.”

“Rise,” says the judge, though Virginia doesn’t hear him until he repeats, more stridently, “Rise.”

Virginia rises.

“Read the charges,” he says to the bailiff.

“One count of kidnapping and one count of murder,” the bailiff says, “in the death of Caprice Collins.”

Whispers zip around the courtroom, a handful of flung pebbles skittering on slick ice. But from the row nearest Virginia, there is

only a thick, welcome pocket of silence. She feels herself resting on it like a pillow. Shock and surprise may bubble over everywhere else, but nothing surprises the survivors. The capacity for surprise was blasted out of them, frozen out of them, wrenched out of them in the Far North. They froze solid up there. While their bodies are warmer now, something within them has never thawed. She doesn't believe it ever will.

The judge turns away from Virginia, away from the lawyers and the women who sit in the front row, away from the unknown faces who make up the audience for this—what? Circus?

“Men of the jury,” he addresses them ponderously. “Know that the prisoner at the bar, Virginia Reeve, has heretofore pleaded and said she is not guilty of each count of the indictment. For trial, she puts herself upon your good judgment to try the issue. If she is guilty on either or both of said counts, you are to say so, and if she is not guilty on either or both of said counts, you are to say so, and no more. Good men and true—stand together and hearken to your evidence.”

Of Virginia herself, he shows no awareness.

His heavy indifference, she thinks, threatens to sink her. She cannot let herself be drawn down. She has endured worse than this man's disdain. And she has a choice in how deeply she lets him cut her. She turns her attention away from him, toward the only people in the courtroom she truly knows.

The five survivors buoy her up with their silence. She fears the words they may speak when called upon later—not to mention the words of others with damaging, dark things to say, true and otherwise—but for now, their quiet reassures her. All she wants from them right now is nothing, and that is exactly what they have left to give.

CHAPTER TWO

Virginia

Tremont House, Boston

April 1853

As she entered the lobby of Tremont House, Virginia only heard her first three footfalls. One, two, three steps on slick golden marble. The plush, deep carpet smothered the sound of four, five, and everything after.

She moved forward silently in the flicker of the gilt lanterns, the luxurious sofas beckoning with their rich crimson cushions, the cavernous ceiling soaring overhead. Two women sat on the farthest couch with their heads bent together, clearly in conversation, but in such a vast room, she couldn't even hear their voices. *Silent as the grave*, she thought, unbidden. For years, she hadn't felt right in open spaces, either outdoors or in, and she fought back the urge to flee.

Behind the desk sat an attendant in a shirt as white and smooth as fresh snowfall, his eyebrow rising at her approach.

"May I help you, miss?"

"I'm Virginia," she said, and when the hush around her swallowed her voice, she spoke louder the second time. "Virginia Reeve. I'm expected."

The attendant's head went down, possibly checking some kind of list. She saw no signal, but as if by magic, a tall man dressed

entirely in black appeared just behind her. In the glimpse she caught over her shoulder, he looked like a crow, and she started, a high gasp in her throat.

Her escort, well trained enough not to call attention to her mistake, merely nodded, clicking his heels together.

“Miss Reeve, it would be my pleasure to show you to Mrs. Griffin’s suite,” he said.

She trailed him up the stairs and down another hallway of that plush, rich carpet, soft and silencing. The miles she’d traveled to be here exhausted her. The rough wool of her traveling dress made the side of her neck itch, and she longed to scratch the spot. She’d been through far worse, of course, but this always amazed her: how the worst pain, no matter how terrible, could recede into the past. At some point, it no longer breathed into one’s ear like a hungry wolf. The minor irritations of daily existence became irritating again. Suffering stayed suffering in all its myriad forms, all its degrees.

She knew not to speak of what she’d been through. No one wanted to hear. What did the mysterious Mrs. Griffin want to hear instead? Virginia had crossed the entire continent to find out.

Her escort rapped lightly on the door of Room 17, bent his ear to the door to wait for an answer, and appeared to hear one. He gripped the doorknob and swung the door open wide, gesturing for Virginia to enter.

“That’ll be all, William,” said a woman’s voice, accented, low, and husky.

“Very good, Madam,” answered the escort, stepping back into the hallway and closing the door with practiced care, making no sound.

The entire room seemed gilded. The bright light of day peeked through the gossamer curtains, lighting the white and gold of the room until it glowed. It felt like Virginia imagined a Greek temple might have felt, far back in ancient days.

Virginia turned her attention to the only other person in the room. Mrs. Griffin could well have been an alabaster statue, as still and pale as she sat. Her plush chair curved gracefully around her seated body like a throne.

Though a close observer could see the signs of age on the backs of her hands, Mrs. Griffin had been maintained with great care. Her cheeks were soft with cream, her faded hair still sculpted and pinned as carefully as a bride's. The extravagant folds of her watered silk gown would have offered a litter of collie pups shelter for the night. In age, she might have been Virginia's mother or even her grandmother, but in appearance, it would be obvious to anyone the two never could have sprung from the same family tree.

The older woman spoke without rising. Her accent was clearly British, crisp as a starched sheet. "I must apologize, Miss Reed. I've begun our acquaintance with subterfuge."

Dumbfounded, Virginia did not know how to respond. She latched onto what she could. "Sorry, ma'am. Miss Reeve, you mean."

As soft as the woman's face looked, her eyes were hard and sharp.

"I know what I mean."

"And yet," Virginia said, "my name, begging your pardon, is Virginia Reeve. You wrote to me under that name, did you not?"

"I did," the older woman said, "and yet names can be deceiving. That is the subterfuge I speak of. I am not—and here I beg *your* pardon, a fair trade—a Mrs. Delafield Griffin."

"Well then, what's your name?"

"Goodness. The Americans of my acquaintance are direct, as one expects, but you—how do they put it? Take the proverbial cake." This in a dry voice, cool and collected, but not without a hint of humor. "The proper way to address me is Lady Franklin."

In wonder, Virginia blurted, "Lady *Jane* Franklin?"

The woman gave a controlled, careful smile. Virginia had the

distinct feeling that Lady Jane Franklin rehearsed her smiles in the mirror to choose the most flattering. “It seems that my fame precedes me even to the Western frontier of your wild country.”

“A Canadian friend of mine was quite fond of your song,” Virginia said. She didn’t even really mean to begin singing it, but she opened her lips, and out came the memory:

*In Baffin’s Bay where the whale fish blow,
The fate of Franklin no man may know.
The fate of Franklin no tongue can tell,
Lord Franklin alone with his sailors do dwell.*

A warm feeling was gathering in her veins—the song reminded her so strongly of Ames—but when Lady Franklin held up her hand for silence, Virginia swallowed down the words.

“I have heard of your many talents,” Lady Franklin said. “Singing does not rank among them.”

“I didn’t mean to upset you.”

“You didn’t upset me in the least,” said the woman, though it sounded to Virginia like a lie. “You are simply a very bad singer. And it is not *my* song, as you style it. It is simply a popular song that purports to speak with my voice, though I gave no permission for it to do so. But let’s have done with that. Please, tell me, how was your journey?”

As rusty as her social skills might be, Virginia recognized a change of subject when she heard it, and she took the cue. “Long, to be sure. But far more comfortable than it would have been without your generosity. Thank you for that. If one has a first-class cabin on both the Pacific ship and the Atlantic, the portage in Panama is the worst of it.”

She tried to make the journey sound like nothing, when in fact, it might have broken a less experienced traveler. The journeymen

who carried her belongings in Panama made off with one of her two precious trunks. A drunken sot on the Atlantic journey mistook her cabin for another's and pounded on her door, shouting and then sobbing, the better part of a night. But she wasn't one to complain. Her neck itched again. She pictured the rash she would find—an inch-thick strip like a priest's collar, all the way around—when she finally peeled the infernal wool dress away. She missed the buckskin trousers and tunic she'd worn as a guide or even the plain cotton hand-me-down dresses she'd worn before that. As dangerous as they were, the wilds beyond the eastern edge of America did offer some advantages over civilization. On the frontier, a young woman in her twenties might do almost anything, as long as she was capable and smart, and if she chose, she could do it dressed in comfort.

“I hope you don't come down with the fever,” said Lady Franklin, her clipped British accent brushing away her ending *r*'s. *Feev-ah*. “It might interfere with the plans I have for you.” *Int-ab-feeh*.

Virginia smiled. Small talk was done with, it seemed. “Your correspondence referred to a journey, an expedition. And now that I know who you are, I suspect the travel you have in mind is entirely northward.”

The older woman laughed, a throaty, husky sound, and looked Virginia up and down. “Do you, now.”

“Your husband is lost,” Virginia said simply. “I assume you want him found.”

“Those are the facts of it, yes. I would expect most young women—or thoughtful people of any age or sex—would phrase it with more care, having some regard for my feelings in the matter.”

“Feelings are a luxury, ma'am,” said Virginia, respectfully but firmly. She figured Lady Franklin would appreciate a hard head. “Feelings did not bring me here.”

Lady Franklin's sharp eyes grew even colder, indicating that

she'd miscalculated. "How jaded you are, even at your age. Feelings are what make us human. It is my deep *love* for my husband that drives me to continue to seek him out, despite so many obstacles, so many failures."

Taking a new tack, Virginia tried to appear contrite. "I apologize. I confess I do not know the whole of what you have done so far to seek him. West of Fort Bridger, news is thin on the ground."

"And yet you know that song, the one you referred to as mine. 'Lady Franklin's Lament,' they style it."

"As I said, my Canadian friend was fond of the tune. He was a better singer than I am."

"Was?"

Virginia ignored the question, forging ahead. She had come a long way for this opportunity; she would not let it slip away without knowing what was truly on offer. "If it's a northward journey you have in mind for me, Lady Franklin, I hope you don't misunderstand my background. I have spent no time in the North."

"Your expertise is in leading people. I need people to be led."

"Over land or sea?"

"Both, as it happens. And lakes as well, which may be new for you. Land, lake, sea. Good things, I am told, come in threes."

"And deaths," said Virginia.

"Beg pardon?"

"It's a superstition," she said, feeling her cheeks redden. "I'm sorry. Deaths also come in threes, they say. But I apologize, I should not have steered us off course. Tell me, what sort of people do you have in mind for me to lead?"

Lady Franklin sat up straight in her chair, curling her fingers around its soft arms like an eagle's talons on a branch.

"I have determined," said Lady Franklin, "a key similarity between all the expeditions—and I now need a second hand to count them—that have failed to find my husband."

“And that similarity is?”

“Men,” said Lady Franklin, not with rancor but still investing the word with a sharp importance. “Each of these failed expeditions has been conceived by men, run by men, peopled by men entire.”

“Forgive my ignorance,” Virginia said apologetically, though she was getting the distinct sense that Lady Franklin may not. “Aren’t all Arctic expeditions so run?”

“Yes.” Lady Franklin smiled a wry little smile. “They have been, so far. But I have a theory about women. Would you like to hear it?”

“Of course.”

“Women can do far more than the narrow lens of society deems fitting. I suspect there is nothing, literally nothing, of which women are not capable.”

It was a shocking statement on the face of it. Virginia happened to agree.

Lady Franklin went on, “I myself have done things only a handful of travelers of my generation can lay claim to, man or woman. Sailed down the Nile. Ridden a donkey into Nazareth. Visited a quarantine station in Malta, the docks of Alexandria, the shining Acropolis. Can any man of your acquaintance say he has even been in the presence of janissaries? Bedouins? A pasha? I have met them all.”

Virginia’s awe was sincere. This elegant, carefully arranged woman—sixty years old if she was a day—bore no signs of such adventure. Her soft cheeks, rich dress, sophisticated air, all seemed at odds with the idea of such unusual achievements. “You are clearly extraordinary.”

“You mistake me!” Lady Franklin leaned forward, intent. “I do not argue my own exceptionalism. What I have done, a thousand other women could do, given the chance. This westward expansion of yours proves it. These American wagon trains. Women

drive wagons or trek alongside them, learn to shoot firearms, protect themselves and one another, survive the worst storms and the baking sun, shift for themselves through hardships. Over thousands—thousands!—of miles. These intrepid women. At the end of it all, they make it to California or Oregon or Washington Territory.”

“Except when they don’t,” Virginia blurted.

Pinning her with a direct look, still from the comfort of her gilded chair, Lady Franklin said, “Well, yes. To attempt great things sometimes means failure. But even in failure, there are often kernels of success. That party of settlers that went astray on the way to California, marooned in the deep snow of a mountain pass for months, more than half of them dead at the end, you know who survived?”

Virginia held her peace. So many possible answers. Lady Franklin’s was the one she wanted to hear.

Lady Franklin said, “The women. If women can live through that, who’s to say they can’t succeed where men have failed and bring my husband back to me?”

“What if there’s no husband to bring back?”

“Girl,” said Lady Franklin, her voice turning harsh again, “I said it before, you have no regard for feelings.”

She’d spoken too plainly, Virginia realized, and she tried to recover from the mistake without showing weakness. “I understand your feelings, ma’am. Fully. Yet I believe they are not the only reason you called me here. I believe you wanted to offer me some sort of employment.”

“I did.”

“If you do still,” Virginia said, “I am more than willing to listen.”

Lady Franklin’s pause was long, but it ended with clear, steady words. “Simply put, I propose you lead an expedition to the North to bring back my husband. He is a great man, and the world does

not yet recognize his triumph. Once he returns, his name will be sung far and wide.”

Virginia was eager to embrace the proposal, but she forced herself not to agree just yet. Why her? She had to be clear, just in case. “Leading wagon trains through the pass to California is not the same as leading people on foot through the frozen North. What we were looking for, I already knew how to find.”

“But how many people did you take safely through?”

After Virginia had abruptly given up her career as a guide and settled temporarily in San Francisco, a newspaper article—just one—had told her story. Lady Franklin must have seen it, and it included the number she was asking for. There was no reason to hedge. “By my best estimation, 563.”

“I believe you have the skill and strength to do what I need, Miss Reeve. The terrain will be different, but the party is much smaller than what you’re used to. You have my confidence. I only need your agreement.”

Virginia’s mind was whirling, starting to seize at the particulars. “You propose for me to lead this expedition alone? Myself?”

“Yes. You will be in charge. At different points, yes, you will need to work closely with others—the experienced voyageurs with the canoes, for example, and the captain of the schooner that carries you north through the Bay. That’s why I chose you. You worked with a man to lead those parties through the mountains, if I recall correctly.”

And there was the rub. She needn’t have avoided mentioning Ames; Lady Franklin obviously knew why Virginia wasn’t leading wagon trains through the pass anymore. Why her number of saved souls would never climb any higher than 563. Because she could no longer do it with Ames, and she would not do it alone.

Perhaps this expedition—this mad, ridiculous idea of an expedition—was actually exactly what she needed.

And then she remembered the last verse of “Lady Franklin’s Lament,” heard it as warm and strong as if Ames were standing right next to her, his scratchy baritone singing directly into her ear. It took real effort to keep from smiling at the memory.

*And now my burden it gives me pain,
For my long-lost Franklin I would cross the main.
Ten thousand pounds I would freely give
To know on earth that my Franklin do live.*

There was a reward. Real money. She would almost do it only for the adventure, but what could she do with that money if she had it? Anything. Nothing. She could live as she liked, where she liked, and never feel even the slightest hunger. Money would free her from so many questions, so many concerns. One could not even put a price on that freedom. There was no other realistic way for her to earn so much money so fast—and become so free. “And if we find him, the reward is ours?”

“Yours alone. To share with the rest of the expedition however you see fit. Like a whaling captain shares with his crew.”

“And if we fail?”

“I’m betting that you won’t,” said Lady Franklin. “You should be willing to make the same bet.”

Virginia thought. She was on the cusp of something extraordinary. Whether it was something fantastic or fatal, she did not know. But there was excitement here, and wonder. There was potential she had not thought she could ever embrace again.

At her silence, incongruously, Lady Franklin smiled. “When I read about you, I knew you would be qualified, but whether you’d be interested in taking on the work, that I didn’t know. Having met you, talked to you, I’m completely sure you are the right choice. I feel confident no one else could do as well.”

Virginia said, "I'm...flattered, Lady Franklin."

"Of course you are. You'll leave for the first leg of the journey in a week. I have a few other things to discuss, like some letters you'll carry for me. Very important letters, including one to deliver to my husband when you find him. We can go over the particulars at the desk here, if you'll please?" She gestured for Virginia to sit.

Virginia remained standing. "I said I was flattered. I didn't say I'd do it."

The older woman's brow knotted in discontent. "What could possibly stand in your way?"

"Those particulars you mentioned. We need to discuss them first. Who else will go? And how? How much will you pay if we follow the route but return empty-handed? What are the dangers, and how will we be prepared for them?"

Lady Franklin's brow eased, and she met Virginia's gaze with confidence and calm. "I have an answer for every one of your questions, I assure you. I do have certain conditions, which I will spell out. But first, you must sit."

Virginia didn't know why Lady Franklin cared so much whether she was sitting or standing, but she knew that when someone cared very much about a thing and you didn't, you might as well give them what they wanted. Goodwill was a good like any other, to be traded and hoarded and spent.

So this time, when Lady Franklin told Virginia to sit down, she did as she was told and smiled her prettiest smile. "Let's begin."

CHAPTER THREE

Virginia

Massachusetts Superior Court, Boston

October 1854

Very well. Proceed,” says Judge Miller. The prosecutor poses in the front of the courtroom as if Charles Loring Elliott himself were engaged to paint his portrait. The man looks like a textbook illustration of an attorney: tiny spectacles, rigid posture. Prominent belly and jowls to match. Virginia’s judgment is clouded a bit by the circumstances, but she believes that even if he weren’t rabid to see her hanged for a crime he can’t prove she committed, she still would not like him.

She likes him even less when he launches into what is supposed to pass for his opening statement. To her ears, it sounds a great deal more like a schoolmaster’s harangue.

“Society has rules,” lectures the prosecutor, whose name she has not caught. “Some say we should be kind to those who flout them. Forgive them, for they know not what they do, as we read in the Good Book. But those who choose not to move in society are rarely the gems we wish them to be. You have not heard the name Virginia Reeve before. No doubt, before your time in this courtroom ends, you will be sorry you have heard it at all. Nor will you want to hear the details of how our own Caprice Collins, a native daughter of Boston—upstanding and sorely missed—met a

horrible death at the hands of this cast-out, unknown girl. I want to thank you, as her family thanks you, for your service. Because you are taking on this unpleasant task, hearing things no good gentleman should ever have to hear, you may be able to stop a fiend from murdering again.”

Virginia stays as motionless as a statue. Or a corpse.

“This girl, she claims that her expedition was initiated and paid for by Lady Jane Franklin. But I ask you, why would a highborn British lady do such an outrageous thing? Gin up a misfit band of American women—women and girls!—to search for two British Royal Navy ships that not even the world’s most qualified, experienced seamen have been able to find? It’s a foolish argument on the face of it. And I tell you, though I regret to do so, there is nothing to learn beyond the face.”

He gestures back toward her without fully turning around, without raising his arm all the way. Something desultory about it, almost demeaning, but subtly so. “The defendant, Virginia Reeve, has no family. No history. No one to vouch for her, except for these poor, misguided young women”—he indicates the survivors with a backward sweep of his hand, and Virginia wants to launch herself at him like a bearcat and rake the very flesh from his pompous pink cheeks—“whom she has clearly placed under some kind of spell. As we will prove she did to her victim.”

A year ago, even half a year, Virginia would have laughed at the idea that anyone would call Caprice a victim. But the realities of the trial, what’s at stake, have sunk in. She does not feel at all like laughing now.

After a stately pause, the prosecutor resumes his address to the men of the jury. “Each had her own reasons for believing the lies Miss Reeve told. But make no mistake, good gentlemen of Boston. She swindled every one of these girls into believing a lie, the same lie she’ll tell you—if her counsel even lets her speak.”

As much as she wants to leap up and tear into him, Virginia gazes out from the dock with a blank look, seemingly impassive. For all the terrible things her Arctic ordeal has done to her, not to mention the ordeals previous to it, it has at least done this one good thing: her face keeps many secrets. When she was young, she had a nimble face. Flashing eyes, pink lips quick to smile, the guileless expressions of a girl who wore her heart for anyone to see. No longer.

And so the people in this courtroom, this judge, this jury, will not be able to find any trace of what she feels inside by looking at her outside. They'll see the neat slate-gray dress her counsel shoved through the bars of her cell without comment, neither cheap nor extravagant, blamelessly plain. They'll see the toll that the cold North took on her face, the red bloom on her cheeks that never quite goes away no matter how cold or warm the room might be. They'll see her dark hair parted in the middle and gathered in a smooth, tight coil at the nape of her neck, not a strand out of place, as if she were a painted picture of a woman and not flesh and blood.

But they won't see her anger, the anger that has burned in her for years, unladylike, unquenchable. They won't see how she truly feels about what happened to Caprice, the fierce, haunting regret.

Most importantly, they will never, ever see her fear.

"Thank you. The prosecution rests," says the lawyer, and Virginia stares straight ahead at a knot in the wood of the witness stand, on the far side of the judge's bench. She pretends it's the most interesting knot in the world.

The sound of shuffling papers comes from the defense table. If she could reach, she would slam her hand down on those damn papers to silence them. Her counsel is preceded by rustling everywhere he goes, like a preening debutante who fluffs her skirts to draw attention.

She has spoken with Clevenger on exactly two occasions.

Neither filled her with optimism. But she tries to reassure herself: Clevenger is a trained attorney, not a dilettante. The entire purpose of his profession is to protect and defend people like her, and as long as this trial lasts, her specifically. And while she does not feel entirely comfortable in his hands, there are no other hands on offer in which to place herself.

She keeps her body still, turning only her face in his direction to watch him while he rustles, clears his throat, and stands. The assembled courtroom listens with sober attention.

Clevenger addresses the jury, the bystanders, the survivors. In his reedy voice, he says, “My client—Miss Reeve—is innocent.”

A long, long pause follows those six words. In Virginia’s mind, the pause stretches to fill hours and days of fretful possibilities, of worry and rot, of glaciers and icebergs crashing upon distant shores, of the sun soaring overhead to blot out the blue of the sky until the oceans drain, until the flesh of every person in the courtroom melts away to leave nothing but bone. In her mind, it takes that long. And her counsel isn’t even the one to break it.

Long after the silence becomes uncomfortable, the judge says, “And, Counsel?”

Clevenger says, “We will prove it.”

Virginia pleads with her eyes for him to say something else, anything else. For him to advance what she’s told him about Lady Franklin, about Brooks, about Captain Malcolm. *Is Captain Malcolm here?* she wonders. She will not let herself turn to look. She remembers the five survivors to her right, reaches out for their strength, lets herself rest on it while she waits for her counsel to make her case. Any case.

Clevenger says to the assembly, with a firm and completely groundless pride, “That is all.”

It takes everything Virginia has not to put her head in her hands and weep.

CHAPTER FOUR

Virginia

American House, Boston

April 1853

After their long talk at the Tremont House, Virginia and the Englishwoman had concluded their conversation with a firm, definite handshake. Virginia had heard enough of the particulars to say yes, she would undertake the expedition for the agreed compensation, and yes, she would await Lady Franklin's designee at her hotel to make all the necessary arrangements.

But it had been three days, days that had suddenly and irrevocably slipped through her fingers. With nothing to do but wait for Lady Franklin's envoy, she could feel her patience dissolving like sugar in tea. On the trail with Ames, she had always been in motion; stops at forts lasted no longer than absolutely necessary, and with California-bound parties coming through so frequently, they rarely waited more than two or three days for a hire. A room this size in Fort Bridger, she thought to herself with a grim smile, would have slept two dozen. Thinking on inequities like this made her want to scream; best, then, not to think on them.

Though it was not as extravagant as Tremont House, Virginia's hotel was by far the most comfortable place she'd ever stayed, and certainly the most private. In the American House, she had two rooms behind a locked door entirely to herself. The indulgence!

Virginia imagined Lady Franklin looking down her nose at the relatively stark bedroom and sitting room, not an inch of gold leaf to be seen anywhere. But one's upbringing helped determine one's definition of luxury, and for Virginia, nothing was more luxurious than space.

Virginia's semipermanent lodgings had included two farmhouses, three wagons, and one cabin she barely let herself remember, but in none of these had she ever had one entire room to herself, let alone two. She stood stock-still among all the damask and the chintz, the silk and the mahogany, and drank in the excess. She would have strewn her belongings around if she'd had more belongings. But the lack would soon become an advantage. Certainly, she would not be able to take much with her on the proposed expedition. In some ways, she was perfectly suited for this undertaking, but it would still be unlike anything she'd ever done before.

She was already humming with excitement. The Arctic! The cold was no friend to her, and yet there was a thrill to this adventure that she could not, would not, shake. To seek this lost man and his company and find them when no one else could. The impossibility of it was exactly the allure. The potential reward was enormous, yet the reward was not the only thing that drew her. Going north felt like fate. It felt, in so many ways, like escape.

But before she could begin, Lady Franklin's envoy needed to appear at the American House, and every day, he did not. Even though her surroundings were lush, as each day slipped by, she began to feel more and more trapped. Her logical mind understood exactly why. But in those becalmed, constricting times, her logical mind was not the part of her that writhed and bucked in panic, blind with fear.

So she pushed down the fear and gathered her energy for readiness. The only thing worse than the wait, she knew, would be to miss the envoy when he came.

For three days, she did not leave the hotel, not even for a moment. She took every meal in a room called “the ladies’ ordinary,” a new innovation of which the hotel staff seemed quite proud. She was unsure how much it differed from a fine restaurant, as she’d never been in one, but in her opinion, the ordinary offered more than enough comfort. Elegant globe lights above the tables cast soft, flattering shadows at night; during the breakfast and noon meal hours, enough daylight streamed in through the windows to tint the tablecloths and china warm gold. For a moment, she thought she might amuse herself by counting up how many meals in her life she’d eaten without even plate or utensils, let alone a table and chair, but then she shoved the thought away. She should focus on where she was and where she’d be going, not where she’d been. God had seen fit to give her a fresh start more than once. It would not honor Him to linger on what she’d needed a fresh start from.

So she focused on the surroundings of the ordinary, its lush fabrics, its gleaming silver. Water beaded on the outside of her glass, and she resisted the urge to swipe it away with a fingertip.

Looking around to find herself surrounded by women was a new, odd feeling for Virginia. She knew the reverse quite well—at any given fort, she was likely to be the only woman for miles—but here, she felt more out of place. She reminded herself that anyone looking at her would see her sober dress and calm expression. Not the fire that burned inside. Not the lingering ghosts of her past. All that, as indelible as it was, was blessedly invisible.

The woman who tended to her table at meals was a dark-eyed, quick-witted woman, likely not much past her twentieth year. She introduced herself as Miss Thisbe. In Virginia’s limited experience with those formally employed to serve others, there were two main types: those glad to serve and those who resented being in service. Thisbe seemed another type entirely. She seemed almost amused by her own role in service, lighthearted at every turn. She took

Virginia's order with a wink and set her plate down with a grin, as if the fact that Virginia could ask her for things was a private joke between the two of them.

Virginia sometimes lingered over her meals to prolong her conversations with Thisbe, a behavior she also found new in herself. She did not think of herself as someone who wanted or needed company. But then again, she'd so rarely had the choice of whether to be in company, perhaps she'd never been away from others long enough to miss them.

After her fourth supper at the ladies' ordinary, as she returned to her room, she found a strange man lingering in the hallway near her door. Even looking directly at him, she wasn't sure how she'd describe him to someone seeking him in a crowd. He was not particularly tall or short, thin or fat, dark-haired or light-haired. He was not particularly anything.

"Mr. Brooks?" she asked.

"Brooks," he said in an accent that differed from Lady Franklin's. She could tell it was neither American nor Canadian, but beyond that, she could not pin it down.

"Brooks? Is that your first or last name?"

"Brooks will do, Miss Reeve." His voice was matter-of-fact.

She looked more closely at him, observing. Like the rest of him, his face was undistinguished in a way that she suspected made him very good at doing someone else's bidding.

"Will you come in?" she asked. "It isn't proper, but then, we're not on proper business, are we?"

"It's all fully proper, Miss Reeve," he said, the strange accent bending his words, his jaw tight.

"But...unusual."

"We can discuss whether it is usual in the privacy of your room, please." He nodded toward the empty room behind her, and she opened the door to let him in.

As he entered, she searched his face and body for some characteristic that might help her define him. Was he an envoy or an enforcer? His shoulders were broad under the smooth fabric of his coat. There was a tense strength to his movements, even when all he did was shut the door. Virginia was uncomfortable enough in his presence to hope she needn't find out any more about what he could do with his strength if he chose.

Brooks began, "I've come to tell you about the arrangements that have been made and help you make those that remain."

"Lady Franklin sent you?"

"My employer prefers that no names be used."

"Even here in private?"

"Even so." Though his accent differed, his cadences seemed to mimic Lady Franklin's, businesslike and formal. "From this moment, all dealings will be in my hands. My employer will have no further contact with you. Nor will the financing of your expedition be made public. If asked any questions about this expedition, unless and until you come back successful, my employer will deny all knowledge of it and you. Is that clear?"

Virginia felt a tickle of disappointment to hear she wouldn't be seeing Lady Franklin again before they left, but it wouldn't do to let it show. For his benefit, she gave an indifferent shrug. "As long as she pays when we do come back successful."

"I pray you do attain that success, miss."

She did not ask him to whom he prayed. Instead, she said, "Get on with it, then."

His voice was dry as he responded, "She did say that you were quite...straightforward."

"Are women not straightforward where you come from?"

She saw by the ghost of his smile that he understood her gambit.

With a condescending air, he said, "My understanding is that women of good breeding, regardless of what country they come

from, know how to conduct themselves in society. Now, you were the one who wanted to, you said, 'get on with it,' am I correct?"

"Yes."

"So let's."

They both gestured to the empty chairs at the same time, and then both sat down, eyeing each other, wary as dogs.

Brooks drew a map from a hidden pocket and unrolled it on the table between them. He traced the route with a blunt fingertip as he went, hundreds of impossible miles streaming by in barely a sentence. "Train to Buffalo, canoes to Sault Ste. Marie, transport overland to Moose Factory, and a topsail schooner up the west side of Hudson Bay to Repulse Bay, arriving in late July. From there, you'll make the overland trek to the search area. That's King William's Land, specifically, Victory Point. That leaves you four months to trek in, search, and trek out before winter."

"Easy as falling off a log," said Virginia breezily.

"Indeed." He rolled up the map in silence and tucked it back from whence it came.

Virginia wished he would've left the map out to examine further; she wanted a closer look. All this was so new. But in the glimpse she'd been given, she hadn't missed the top left corner where the lines changed from reassuring solidity to ambiguous, tentative dots. They were headed straight for the vague, smudged unknown.

"Nine of the women have been chosen for the expedition," Brooks went on, changing focus. "Our employer felt that you might like to choose the other three. You have a week to do so."

Her head spun with the new information. There was too much to take in, and yet she had to be strategic in her questions. "Three that I choose. In a week. And I absolutely must take the nine—well, eight, besides myself—that she asks me to?"

"That you are asked to take, yes," he repeated, a stone wall. "The expedition in total will be twelve. No more, no less."

“So that’s another condition she’s set, then.”

“Another condition, yes,” he said, and she heard his annoyance, but only because she was listening closely. He was good, this one. Fully in control of himself. It was a rare quality and one she admired. She reminded herself to look for it in the recruits she had just been informed she needed to find. In seven days. In a place she’d never been, with no friends or family, no connections.

But that, she would sort out herself. At the moment, she had to stay focused on Brooks and what he could tell her.

Virginia asked, “And what about the rest of our transport? The canoes, the ship?”

“All in good time.” He seemed offended.

“When is there a better time than now?” She was particularly curious about the ship that would carry them northward. The ships of the lost Franklin expedition had been Royal Navy ships once upon a time: armored, solid, ready. But the Royal Navy’s half-hearted attempts to find Franklin had brought back no news, and Lady Franklin had taken matters into her own determined hands. Would she enlist an American ship? Canadian? What could she get hold of, given her funds and desperation?

He shook his head. “I’ll leave you a file with the logistical information. You can read, can’t you?”

With absolutely no hint of her aggravation, she said, “Yes. I can read.”

“Good. But first things first. Our employer would like you to familiarize yourself with the other members of the expedition. To meet those who are here in Boston. To understand their strengths before you assemble the remainder of the team.”

“How many are here?”

“Three,” he answered.

“Only one thing, then.”

“Yes?”

A hint of a smile crept into her voice when she said, "You'll have to tell me who they are."

"Althea Porter. Ebba Green. Caprice Collins." He consulted no list or paper; the names rolled off his tongue.

"And they are already familiar with the terms of the expedition? They've been invited and confirmed?"

"Yes."

"And told how much they will receive in payment?"

"They are less preoccupied with payment than you are, Miss Reeve."

She squirmed but fought to hide her reaction, balling her hand into a fist. The three he mentioned must be well-off. Only wealthy people thought so little of money.

"Tell me more. I understand you've given me their names, but who *are* they?"

"You're impatient," he said. "I hope you'll be more patient as you prepare to take your life—and the lives of eleven other women—in your hands."

"I hope you'll be more forthcoming with information that will enable me to protect the lives of those women." She let some of her anger show in her voice; she wanted him to know she was no doormat. "That is my top priority. Followed by ensuring we return successful from our voyage, with full knowledge of the fate of John Franklin or, God willing, John Franklin himself."

He inclined his head just a fraction. "Indeed, miss."

"So who are they? These three?"

"Althea Porter and Ebba Green are the wives of two of Franklin's officers, James Porter and Daniel Green, two of his best lieutenants."

"They must be sick with worry."

"They are Royal Navy wives," he said coldly. "They were prepared."

Though she was sure he was correct about the preparation, Virginia doubted any woman could truly be trained not to grieve the disappearance and probable death of the man she loved.

“And these ladies are good adventurers?” she asked. “Strong?”

“You will have to ask them directly. I will give you the address of their hotel.”

She should have known. “Well then, I’ll dash off a note and set an appointment to meet them. As soon as possible.”

He nodded.

“And Miss Collins—it is Miss Collins, yes, not Mrs.?”

“Miss.”

“Shall I write her as well?”

“No, that won’t be needed,” he said. “You’re expected at her house in Beacon Hill in”—he pulled out a pocket watch, spit-shined gold, incongruous and gleaming—“just under half an hour.”

The surprise must have shown on her face. He smiled, a smile without kindness, only superiority, a smug pleasure in seeing someone else’s discomfort.

“Better hurry, Miss Reeve.”

A Conversation with the Author

Early in the book, Virginia seems determined to rid herself of the past. As a historical fiction writer, I doubt you share that attitude. How do you consider your relationship to the past?

Well, I don't have a past nearly as traumatic as Virginia's, for one thing! But I suppose I have reinvented myself a few times over the course of my life so far, so we do have that in common. In the broader sense, I do rely on the resonance of past history with current conditions to give my readers one more way to think about modern society. How far have we come since the nineteenth century? Very far in some ways and not nearly as far as we'd like in others.

For such a formidable journey, the women's party seems initially scarce on adventurers. What motivated that distribution?

The exact makeup of the party was one of the hardest things to get right in the early going. What finally unlocked it for me was to make sure that each woman had a real-life counterpart, an inspiration from the mid-nineteenth century I could point to and draw from. And some of those women were doing startling things, like climbing mountains or saving soldiers' lives on a battlefield, but others were setting themselves apart in different ways, like drawing plants no one else had drawn before.

How much research do you do before you begin writing a book? If you come up against a fact you don't know while writing, do you leave a placeholder or take a research break?

I definitely prefer to do as much research as possible before diving into the serious drafting of a book, but for various reasons, that didn't happen on this one. So I was still researching while I was writing, which I definitely don't recommend! But there was just so much to learn about the Arctic, what the women were up against, what the conditions would be in all these locations, that was the only way I could get it done. When I was writing *THE MAGICIAN'S LIE*, my first historical novel, I used to stop writing in order to find a fact; that book took me five years to finish. I don't do that anymore. Placeholders are the only way I can keep forward momentum.

You develop a tense interplay between the courtroom scenes and the scenes of the expedition. Did you write both narratives simultaneously as they appear in the final book, or did you interweave them after they were both complete? How did that shape the story overall?

That was easier than I thought it would be, actually! To reference *THE MAGICIAN'S LIE* again, which also unfolded in two timelines, I really struggled with fitting together all the puzzle pieces to form one cohesive narrative for the reader—Arden's story. But this time around, as I was writing both the murder trial timeline and the expedition timeline simultaneously, they just sort of fell into place. My somewhat outrageous decision to include one chapter from the point of view of each woman on the expedition actually helped dictate a lot of that structure—once I knew who died when, obviously her chapter had to come before that point, and I locked in the whole jigsaw before I was done writing the first draft. And it didn't change during revision, which is kind of remarkable.

Which of the women from the expedition would you most want to meet in real life? What would you talk to her about?

Oh, I've got a real soft spot for Caprice, insufferable as she can be. I'd let her tell all the stories she wanted to tell about climbing half the mountains in Europe. I don't think I'd even have to ask questions—she would just monologue freely until her tea went cold, then she'd ring for more and keep talking.

Each time the expedition loses another member, you somehow introduce a new kind of sorrow. Which was the hardest to write? Was there anyone you were tempted to save?

The hardest was Ann, because she's the only one who completely chooses her fate, and she does it for this noble, painful reason that no one else but her would choose. She was also the only one who I had to kill twice. I'd written a different death scene for her early on, but as I got deeper into the first draft, I realized it was way too similar to what I ended up writing for Caprice. I briefly thought about letting Ann off the hook, but I knew how I wanted the numbers to come out, so she still had to go. And it turned out to be, I think, one of the most moving scenes.

Virginia traces the course of her fate squarely back to the news paper article about her career as a trail guide. Do you believe there's always one fateful choice in life that can be treated as the source of everything afterwards? How does that shape your life?

I do think we have turning points in our lives that we look back on and recognize as significant. The what if of it all. I don't think there's just one, and I think that you can make a thousand different choices at a thousand different points in your life and still turn out basically the same. But without question, there are forks in the road, and taking the left side of the fork means you'll never know what would have happened if you'd taken the right.

The trial takes a hard turn when Virginia's past is revealed. How do you think we're all shaped by the ways we describe the past? Would Virginia's life be different, for example, if she stopped thinking of the Donner expedition as the Very Bad Thing from her past? Are those stories more important to us individually or to the people around us?

I think if Virginia hadn't been running away from that past she would never have made the choice to go to the Arctic, for better or worse. If she'd been honest with herself about how deeply it scarred her to see civilization fall apart in that way, she would have run farther away from adventure, not toward it. The real-life Virginia Reed, from the accounts I've read, settled down into a more traditional family life, got married, had children. Was she making peace with her past or avoiding it? I have no idea. But how our pasts affect how other people see us, yes. That's a big part of what I wanted to address. On the expedition, if Virginia's past had been common knowledge, I think her fellow adventurers definitely would have treated her differently. But by the time the survivors were there to support her during her trial, that revelation didn't change anything. They already knew everything they needed to know.

What have you learned about writing, now that you're publishing your fourth novel? How has your process changed since THE MAGICIAN'S LIE? What has stayed the same?

As I mentioned before, I've learned a lot about not letting the forward momentum of your writing grind to a halt in order to do your research! And it's funny, after

THE MAGICIAN'S LIE, I told myself I'd stick to writing books told only in straightforward chronological order—so GIRL IN DISGUISE was that way, but the first half of WOMAN 99 has all these in-depth flashbacks that form an earlier timeline, and then in this book, I'm just flinging timelines and POVs all over the place. Whatever serves the story, that's what I'm going to do.

What's next on your to-read list? Anything that might hint at your next project?

I'm always reading three or four different books at once, so some might be more relevant than others! I can say that I'm in the early stages of deciding what my next work of historical fiction will focus on, and I may have checked out a few library books on nineteenth-century New Orleans.



Discussion Guide

1. Virginia frequently finds herself caught up in reflections on the past. Do you think her relationship to the past is healthy? How have you dealt with difficult memories?
2. What were your impressions of Virginia's defense attorneys? Do you think she should have testified?
3. Lady Franklin chooses Virginia to lead the expedition partly because of Virginia's experience leading groups of people. How does she demonstrate this leadership? Is it enough for the journey at hand?
4. What is the source of Ebba's regard for Virginia? Why does she decide to follow her after essentially being told to stay home?
5. Virginia wonders several times which group is luckier: the ones who came back or the ones who didn't. In her place, would you struggle to decide? Who do you think the lucky ones are?
6. Which of the varied crew did you find the most interesting? Who did you think presented the greatest danger to the mission as a whole?
7. How did you feel about Virginia and Caprice's early interactions? Did you agree with Virginia's decisions to let things slide, expecting Caprice to eventually fall in line? How would the story have changed if she pursued the conflicts sooner or more thoroughly?
8. What do you see as the final danger the expedition encountered? Which roadblock ensured that they would never, as a whole, come back safe and sound? Were there any missed opportunities that could have prevented disaster?

9. When the women's party divided, whose choice made the most sense to you? Who surprised you the most? Did you think any of them chose wrong?

10. In her musings, Virginia makes a distinction between serving as a guide in unsettled land and being a "true explorer." What challenges separate these two similar endeavors? Which would you rather do?

11. At the beginning of the story, would you have expected Caprice's actions in the crevasse? What changed for her?

12. Virginia thinks, "They would go home failures, yes. But they would go home." What do you think of this assessment? What does it mean to fail?

History & Background

Arctic Exploration

WHAT WAS ARCTIC EXPLORATION LIKE? WHY WERE PEOPLE SENT?

The first recorded Arctic expeditions took place in the fifteenth century. By the nineteenth century, Arctic exploration had come to dominate European and American popular culture. There were both publicly funded and privately funded journeys. Government-sponsored expeditions were usually larger and better funded than private ones. However, they were also more likely to lose ships and explorers; private expeditions often yielded greater success.

One of the main goals of nineteenth century Arctic expeditions, many of which were sent out by the British Royal Navy, was to find and navigate the Northwest Passage, a route that connects the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Explorers also wanted to reach the North Pole and traverse Greenland. And, many expeditions set out with the goal of discovering what really happened to the Franklin expedition.

When the Franklin expedition set out in 1845, they were hoping to map a remaining portion of the Northwest Passage. As we know from *The Arctic Fury*, they never came back. Other expeditions were subsequently sent out to look for Franklin and his crew, including seven that were sponsored by Lady Jane Franklin. Eventually, it became clear that these expeditions were not searching for living men, just the ships they traveled on, *Erebus* and *Terror*. An expedition led by Edwin De Haven, the first American search, found the graves of three crew members from the Franklin expedition on Beechey Island, Canada. This 1850-51 expedition was the first to come back with information of the lost crew. The McClintock Arctic expedition (1857-59) found artifacts, the skeleton of a crew member, and written communications from some of the last survivors of the Franklin expedition. Despite many missions, it wasn't until a Canadian group set out in 2014 that *Erebus* was located. It took another two years to find *Terror*. It's still not entirely clear what happened to the crew or what their last moments were like.

Westward Expansion

WHAT WAS WESTWARD EXPANSION LIKE? WHAT HAPPENED TO THE DONNER PARTY?

After the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 and the Lewis and Clark expedition in the following years, traveling westward became a popular choice for families struggling in the East. By 1840, 40 percent of the U.S. population were living in the trans-Appalachian West. Many of the travelers landed in Oregon, initially a British territory, and California, New Mexico, and Texas, all originally Mexican territories. The California Gold Rush, which began in 1848, and the Transcontinental Railroad, which was completed in 1869, drew even more people.

People packed up their belongings and their families into covered wagons and headed west. These wagons were pulled primarily by oxen, but also sometimes by mules and horses. Much travel occurred on the Oregon Trail; from the 1830s to the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869, about 400,000 people used the trail to expand westward.

The Donner Party, the most famous group of people to travel the California Trail, left from Springfield, Illinois, in 1846. They were heading to California, but after they tried to take a shortcut and encountered rough terrain, they got stuck by snowfall in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. After about a month, some of the stronger members of the party set out for help on what became known as the “Forlorn Hope” expedition. Although they made it eventually, the rescue process took over two months. Desperation set in for the emigrants, and about half of the survivors engaged in cannibalism. In the end, only 45 of the original 89 people made it to California.



The People

Although all characters in *THE ARCTIC FURY* are fictional, some of them were inspired by real women. Lucy Walker, a British mountaineer who completed 98 expeditions in her life and was the first woman to summit the Matterhorn, led to Caprice Collins. Margaret Bridges, the journalist in the novel, was inspired by Margaret Fuller, a journalist who wrote for the *NEW YORK TRIBUNE* under Horace Greeley and served as the first American female war correspondent. Dove, the nurse, was based on Sarah Bowman, a cook and battlefield nurse during the Mexican-American war who was remembered as the “Heroine of Fort Brown” for her actions during combat. Lady Jane Franklin, who sponsored Virginia’s journey, was not drawn from inspiration but was a real woman herself. She was responsible for several expeditions to the Arctic in an attempt to determine her husband’s fate.

Lucy Walker – Mountaineer

Lucy Walker (1836-1916) was a British mountaineer who inspired the character of Caprice Collins. She began climbing in 1858 after a doctor advised her to walk as a way to cure her rheumatism. Alongside her father and brother, she became the first woman to regularly climb in the Alps, and she completed a total of 98 expeditions in her life. She gained recognition in 1871, when she summited the Matterhorn, a 14,692 foot peak in the Alps. She was the first woman to do so. She holds the title of first female ascent on 15 other peaks in the Alps, including Monte Rosa, Wetterhorn, and the Strahlhorn.

Margaret Fuller – Journalist

Margaret Fuller (1810-1850) was an American journalist as well as a women’s rights activist. She began her journalistic career in 1840 as the first editor of *THE DIAL*, a transcendentalist journal, after being a teacher. In 1844, she joined the staff of the *New York Tribune* under Horace Greeley. A year later, she wrote *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, which is considered to be the first major feminist work to come from the U.S. Fuller was a strong advocate for women’s

rights, particularly women's rights to education and employment. In 1846, she went to Europe for the Tribune, covering the revolutions in Italy and becoming the first American female war correspondent. She died just years later in a shipwreck off Fire Island, New York.

Sarah Bowman—Battlefield Nurse

Sarah Bowman (c. 1813-1866), who was nicknamed “The Great Western” for her large size and stature, was a cook and battlefield nurse during the Mexican-American war. She began as a laundress after her husband enlisted in 1845. As the war continued, she traveled with the army and eventually began cooking and serving as a nurse as well. She was known to be strong and courageous and was named as the “Heroine of Fort Brown” after she worked through a Mexican bombardment, continuing to cook three meals a day for the soldiers despite bullets flying around her. After dying of a poisonous spider bite, Bowman received a military funeral and was buried in the fort's cemetery.

Lady Jane Franklin—Philanthropist

Lady Jane Franklin (1791-1875) was the second wife of Sir John Franklin, a British Royal Navy officer and an Arctic explorer. Jane served alongside John, and went with him when he was appointed lieutenant-governor of Tasmania (then called Van Diemen's Land) in 1839. While in Tasmania, she worked with John to help found secondary schools for both boys and girls and also traveled to New Zealand and Australia on political business. In 1845, after going back to England, John set out on an Arctic expedition from which he would never return. After his disappearance, Jane sponsored and supported 7 expeditions to find him and his crew. These expeditions, which occurred between 1850 and 1875 added much to our knowledge of the Arctic.



Food & Drinks

ON EXPEDITIONS:

Well-provisioned Arctic expeditions in the 19th century carried large quantities of food, which mostly consisted of salt beef and pork for their shelf life and porridge for its versatility. The Franklin expedition brought enough food for three years, including a number of live cattle which would provide fresh meat in the early stages of their journey. Their preserved food came in the form of 8,000 cans of soup and vegetables, but these very cans were what led to the demise of Franklin and his crew. In 1987, postmortems on men from the Franklin expedition revealed lead concentrations up to 20 times more than normal, which has been linked to their frequent consumption of canned food.

BACK HOME:

In the U.S. in the 1850s, dinner was the main meal of the day and was eaten midday. These meals consisted of soups with breads or biscuits, meat and fish, vegetables, and dessert. Below are recipes for the kinds of foods that would be served at dinners, including a traditional historic apple pudding pie.

19th Century Cornbread

INGREDIENTS:

1 cup stone-ground cornmeal	¼ tsp salt
1 cup unbleached flour	1 cup buttermilk
⅓ cup sugar	6 tbsp butter
2 ½ tsp baking powder	1 egg, lightly beaten

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 400° F.
2. Combine cornmeal, flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt in a bowl.
3. Melt the butter in a cast iron skillet, making sure the sides are coated.
4. Pour the melted butter, buttermilk, and egg into the dry ingredients and mix until just combined.
5. Pour the batter into the buttered skillet and bake for 25 minutes until the top becomes light golden brown.

Split Pea Soup

INGREDIENTS:

1 tbsp olive oil	2 bay leaves
1 ½ cups chopped yellow onion (1 medium)	1 ½ tsp chopped fresh thyme or ½ tsp dried thyme
1 ¼ cups chopped celery (about 3 ribs)	1 ½ lb meaty ham bone or ham shanks
4 cups unsalted chicken broth	1 cup chopped carrots
4 cups water	Salt and pepper to taste
1 16 ounce bag dried split pes, rinsed	Chopped fresh parsley to garnish

DIRECTIONS:

1. Heat a large pot with olive oil over medium-high heat.
2. Add onion and celery and saute for 3 minutes, then add garlic and saute for 1 more minute.
3. Pour in chicken broth, water, split peas, bay leaves, and thymes.
4. Season lightly with salt and pepper to taste.
5. Add in ham bone or shanks and bring to a boil, then reduce to low. Cover and let the mixture simmer, stirring occasionally until peas and ham are tender, about 60-80 minutes.
6. Remove ham from soup and let it rest for 10 minutes before shredding the meat into pieces.
7. Add carrots to the soup.
8. Cover and continue to simmer, stirring occasionally, for about 30 minutes longer until the peas have mostly broken down.
9. Stir the ham pieces back into the soup and season with more salt and pepper as needed.
10. Serve hot and garnished with parsley.

Apple Pudding Pie

INGREDIENTS:

1 cup milk	1 tsp baking powder
1 egg	1 cup flour
1 tbsp butter	Pinch of salt
Tart apples, enough to mostly fill a pie dish	White sugar & cinnamon to sprinkle over the top

DIRECTIONS:

1. Peel and slice the apples and place in a greased pie dish.
2. Sift the flour, salt, and baking powder together.
3. Melt the butter and beat the egg.
4. Combine the butter, egg, and flour mixture.
5. Pour the batter over the apples in the pie dish.
6. Bake at 350* F for 50 minutes (or until top is golden and fruit is tender).
7. Sprinkle with white sugar and cinnamon to taste.

Old Fashioned

INGREDIENTS:

1 ½ ounces (5cl) whisky or bourbon
1 tsp sugar
2 splashes angostura bitters

1 tsp water

2-3 ice cubes

Garnishes: 1 orange slice and 1 cocktail cherry

DIRECTIONS:

1. Combine the sugar cube with the water and the angostura (ideally in an Old Fashioned glass or other large-base glass) and stir to create a base.
2. Add the ice and whiskey/bourbon and stir again.
3. Garnish with the orange slice and the cocktail cherry and serve with a long spoon or stirring rod.

The Old Fashioned is associated with 1850s East Coast bars & was known as a "gentleman's drink" at that time.

Whiskey Fix

INGREDIENTS:

2 ½ ounces rye or bourbon whiskey
1 ounce fresh lemon juice

½ ounce simple syrup

Garnishes: lemon wheel

DIRECTIONS:

1. Fill a shaker with ice.
2. Pour all ingredients in the shaker and shake well.
3. Pour into a highball glass with ice, and garnish with a lemon wheel.

Snow Cap

INGREDIENTS:

3 parts half & half
2 parts whiskey
1 ½ parts triple sec

1 ½ sugar syrup

Ice

DIRECTIONS:

1. Fill a shaker with ice.
2. Pour all ingredients into the shaker and shake well.
3. Strain into snifter glass

Pimm's Cup

INGREDIENTS:

2 ounces Pimm's
6 ounces sparkling British-style lemonade
Garnishes: mint, cucumber, fruit

DIRECTIONS:

1. Pour the Pimm's and the lemonade over a class of Ice and stir.
2. Garnish with mint, cucumber, lemon or lime wheels, and/or fruit

*Pimm's became popular in England
in the early 1800s and spread to the
U.S. around the mid-century.*

Virgin White Russian

INGREDIENTS:

5 ounces green tea, chilled
½ ounce coconut milk
5 ounces coconut soda, chilled

DIRECTIONS:

1. Stir green tea and coconut milk together in a tall highball glass
2. Pour chilled soda over the tea mixture



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