

★ **The Arctic Fury**

Greer Macallister

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In 1854, Virginia Reeve stands in front of a Boston court, accused of the kidnapping and murder of wealthy socialite, Caprice Collins. Reeve, the leader of an all women's expedition to the Arctic, juggles what to withhold and what to reveal about the true nature of their trip—especially the fact that only seven of the party's twelve members returned. Suffused with a spine-tingling aura of dread, Greer Macallister's complex, riveting historical novel *The Arctic Fury* includes tantalizing glimpses of nineteenth-century women's lives.

In this deadly adventure, horror always looms just over the horizon. From the outset, surviving implies that others have not. The book's revelations are drawn out in a chronology akin to a word problem. As various party members narrate, the past and present travel toward each other from opposite directions. The plot's restrained tension thrums, its undercurrent hurtling the story toward the dark-edged truths that await.

This evocative historical reimagining spotlights the problems of the present. The ragtag band of women who form the expedition are unlikely compatriots, spanning all walks of life. All that unites them are the machinations of the explorer Lady Franklin, who is desperate to have her husband's Arctic disappearance solved, as well as their collective inability to fit social expectations. For them, the call to adventure is irresistible. Their assemblage is a captivating window into the ways that race, class, and sexual and gender identities interact within the broad, shared social category of womanhood.

Resonant with echoes of the Donner party and final confrontations with cannibalism, *The Arctic Fury* is a riveting historical novel that conflates two contemporaneous events, capturing the past with gritted teeth and a pounding heart.

LETITIA MONTGOMERY-RODGERS (November / December 2020)

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