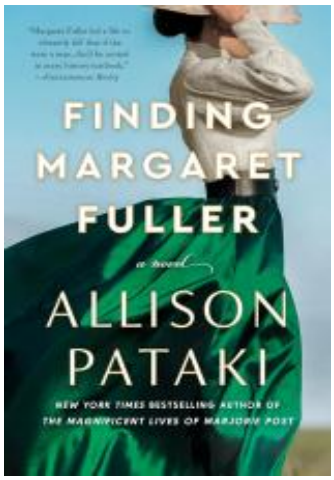
Finding Margaret Fuller

by Allison Pataki



About the Book

An epic imagining of the life of Margaret Fuller --- America?s forgotten leading lady and the central figure of a movement that defined a nation --- from the *New York Times* bestselling author of THE MAGNIFICENT LIVES OF MARJORIE POST.

Young, brazen, beautiful and unapologetically brilliant, Margaret Fuller accepts an invitation from Ralph Waldo Emerson, the celebrated Sage of Concord, to meet his coterie of enlightened friends. There she becomes ?the radiant genius and fiery heart? of the Transcendentalists, a role model to a young Louisa May Alcott, an inspiration for Nathaniel Hawthorne?s Hester Prynne and the scandalous SCARLET LETTER, a friend to Henry David Thoreau as he ventures out to Walden Pond...and a muse to Emerson. But Margaret craves more than poetry and interpersonal drama, and her restless soul needs new challenges and adventures.

And so she charts a singular course against a backdrop of dizzying historical drama: From Boston, where she hosts a salon for students like Elizabeth Cady Stanton; to the editorial meetings of *The Dial* magazine, where she hones her pen as its co-founder; to Harvard?s library, where she is the first woman permitted entry; to the gritty New York streets where she spars with Edgar Allan Poe and reports on Frederick Douglass. Margaret defies conventions time and again as an activist for women and an advocate for humanity, earning admirers and critics alike.

When legendary editor Horace Greeley offers her an assignment in Europe, Margaret again makes history as the first female foreign news correspondent, mingling with luminaries like Frédéric Chopin, William Wordsworth, George Sand and more. But it is in Rome that she finds a world of passion, romance and revolution, taking a Roman count as a lover --- and sparking an international scandal. Evolving yet again into the roles of mother and countess, Margaret enters the fight for Italy?s unification.

With a star-studded cast and sweeping, epic historical events, this is a story of an inspiring trailblazer, a woman who

loved big and lived even bigger --- a fierce adventurer who transcended the rigid roles ascribed to women and changed history, all on her own terms.

Discussion Guide

1. Had you heard of Margaret Fuller before? What did you learn about her historical significance? Why do you think she is lesser known compared to her contemporaries?

2. What was your first impression of Margaret? How did it evolve throughout the course of the story? How did Margaret herself change throughout her lifetime?

3. There are many historical cameos throughout the novel. Who was your favorite historical figure to meet on the page?

4. Margaret had many roles in her life: women?s rights activist, war correspondent, writer and Transcendentalist, as well as being a daughter, wife, mother, muse and friend. Which did you find the most fascinating? Which do you think meant the most to her?

5. In the novel, Margaret declares, ?I am a woman who is too unapologetic in my desire to write, to think, to work. I am a woman who is unafraid to speak with men and support my own work. I want too much.? What is Pataki trying to say about women in Margaret?s time?

6. Feminism and love: both of these themes played a strong role in Margaret?s life. Discuss their impact on her choices. Are there any other themes you found while reading?

7. Margaret often likens herself to a plant in need of new soil in order to keep growing, and this prompted her to move around a lot. Which location of Margaret?s did you enjoy visiting the most? Why? Which location do you think Margaret loved the most?

8. Margaret played a key role in the women?s rights movement and was a trailblazer for women in several ways. What are some ways her legacy has shaped modern society?

9. Margaret was unique in her day because of her ambivalence toward the institution of marriage. Discuss the different men with whom Margaret had intense relationships. How was she different in each relationship? What did you make of her eventual decision to marry Count Ossoli?

10. What do you think Margaret might have done had she lived past the age of 40?

Author Bio

Allison Pataki is the *New York Times* bestselling author of THE TRAITOR'S WIFE, THE ACCIDENTAL EMPRESS, SISI, THE QUEEN'S FORTUNE, THE MAGNIFICENT LIVES OF MARJORIE POST and FINDING MARGARET

FULLER and IT GIRL, as well as the memoir BEAUTY IN THE BROKEN PLACES. Her novels have been translated into more than 20 languages.

A former news writer and producer, Pataki has written for *The New York Times*, *USA Today* and other outlets. She has appeared on "Today," "Good Morning America," "Good Day New York" and MSNBC?s "Morning Joe." Allison Pataki graduated cum laude from Yale University and lives in New York with her husband and family.

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