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About the Author

Nikki worked as a financial journalist for 15 years. The financial crisis, followed swiftly by the arrival of three small children, put an end to that, and she now lives in the countryside, where she writes historical fiction and watches Gardeners World unironically.

On Wilder Seas follows the voyage of Francis Drake's Golden Hind from the perspective of the only woman on board. Earlier drafts were shortlisted for the Myriad Editions First Drafts Competition 2017 and the Historical Novel Society's New Novel Award 2018.

Nikki has a degree in history from the University of Nottingham and studied creative writing at the Faber Academy. Her interests are prehistory, feminism and feminist prehistory.

On Wilder Seas by *Nikki Marmery*

About the Book

April 1579: When two ships meet off the Pacific coast of New Spain, an enslaved woman seizes the chance to escape.

But Maria has unwittingly joined Francis Drake's circumnavigation voyage and he's about to set sail on a secret detour to find the fabled Anian Straits in the far north.

Sailing into danger, fog and ice on the Golden Hind, a lone woman among eighty men, Maria will be tested to the very limits of her endurance. It will take all her wits to survive and courage to cut the ties that bind her to Drake to pursue her own journey.

How far will Maria go to be truly free?

Inspired by a true story, this is the tale of one woman's uncharted voyage of survival.

Other books by the author

This is the author's debut. Find out more about Nikki at: www.nikkimarmery.com

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Discussion points

- The book is based on Sir Francis Drake's circumnavigation voyage on the Golden Hind, although the author calls it a 'possible life' of Maria rather than a history. Do you enjoy books related to real events? Why?
- What trait do you think the central character, Maria, values above all?
- The author's descriptions of the places explored are detailed and vivid. Do you think she has accurately captured New Spain (Mexico) and the Western coast of the Americas? In this novel, Nova Albion is set in the Canadian Arctic.
- Marmery conveys life onboard ship for an extended time. Discuss how you would feel to not touch or see land for months, or even years at a time. Do you think the sailors become institutionalised?
- Religion plays a key role in the men's lives, many believing themselves fervent Christians. Yet many of them still commit violence too frequently. Discuss how robbery, rape and enslavement is treated in the novel.
- How do the different groups interact with each other, in particular the crew and the indigenous people they meet?

Suggested further reading

The Strange Adventures of H by Sarah Burton

The Bedlam Stacks by Natasha Pulley

Under a Pole Star by Stef Penney

The Hornblower Series by C.S. Forester

The North Water by Ian McGuire

Master and Commander by Patrick O'Brian

Useful Links

Visit the locations in *On Wilder Seas*: [A BookTrail across Wilder Seas with Nikki Marmery](#).

Listen to Nikki talk about *On Wilder Seas*: [Talking Tudors with Nikki Marmery](#).

Historia, the Historical Writers' Association magazine: [Maria: the African woman who...](#)

Follow Nikki on twitter: [@nikkimarmery](#).

[The Wilbur & Niso Smith Foundation](#)