



Almost Famous Women: Stories

By Megan Mayhew Bergman

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From a prizewinning, beloved young author, a provocative collection that explores the lives of colorful, intrepid women in history. “These stories linger in one’s memory long after reading them” (*Star Tribune*, Minneapolis).

The fascinating characters in Megan Mayhew Bergman’s “collection of stories as beautiful and strange as the women who inspired them” (*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review) are defined by their creative impulses, fierce independence, and sometimes reckless decisions. In “The Siege at Whale Cay,” cross-dressing Standard Oil heiress Joe Carstairs seduces Marlene Dietrich. In “A High-Grade Bitch Sits Down for Lunch,” aviator and writer Beryl Markham lives alone in Nairobi and engages in a battle of wills with a stallion. In “Hell-Diving Women,” the first integrated, all-girl swing band sparks a violent reaction in North Carolina.

Other heroines, born in proximity to the spotlight, struggle to distinguish themselves: Lord Byron’s illegitimate daughter, Allegra; Oscar Wilde’s wild niece, Dolly; Edna St. Vincent Millay’s talented sister, Norma; James Joyce’s daughter, Lucia. *Almost Famous Women* offers an elegant and intimate look at artists who desired recognition. “By assiduously depicting their intimacy and power struggles, Bergman allows for a close examination of the multiplicity of women’s experiences” (*The New York Times Book Review*).

The world wasn’t always kind to the women who star in these stories, but through Mayhew Bergman’s stunning imagination, they receive the attention they deserve. *Almost Famous Women* is “addictive and tantalizing, each story whetting our appetite for more” (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*).

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Editorial Review

Review

"Every one of these stories is as vibrant, as urgent, as surprising as the women therein. What a thrill to listen as they cohere into a chorus of powerful, affecting and often hilarious voices, each unforgettable, together undeniable. Another stunning collection from the brilliant Megan Mayhew Bergman." (--Claire Vaye Watkins, author of *Battleborn*)

"*Almost Famous Women* is sharp, compassionate, and strong, just like the women depicted in its pages. Megan Mayhew Bergman writes with such precision that we should all quake in her presence. This book only looks like it's made of paper-- you are holding priceless diamonds in your hand." (--Emma Straub, author of *The Vacationers*)

"Megan Mayhew Bergman writes with an astonishing force of empathy, a compassion as bright and illuminating as a klieg light. The reader of *Almost Famous Women* can't help but be seduced by these eccentric, subversive, passionate women who lived their lives with their entire souls and who were furiously unapologetic for doing so." (--Lauren Groff, author of *Arcadia*)

"Lovely and heartbreaking." (Anjelica Huston, author of *Watch Me*)

"Megan Mayhew Bergman breathes life into lives that men and history have cast aside. It is rare that an author is as fearless as her characters. Bergman is, and *Almost Famous Women* is a stunning feat of great daring." (Lily King, author of *Euphoria*)

"Megan Mayhew Bergman is a tremendous writer -- compassionate and intelligent, generous and funny -- and *Almost Famous Women* is a collection filled with empathy, insight and extraordinary psychological precision. Mayhew Bergman has made the women who inhabit this beautiful book come fully to life -- I won't ever forget them." (Molly Antopol, author of *The UnAmericans*)

"A collection of stories as beautiful and strange as the women who inspired them." (Kirkus Reviews (starred review))

"Rough-cut gems of a bygone era." (O, The Oprah Magazine)

"In these inventive short stories, off-the-radar historical characters—a motorbike racer, a diva, Oscar Wilde's niece—enter the limelight at last." (MORE Magazine)

"Gutsy and expertly written." (Bustle)

"Fearless stories star[ring] an eccentric cavalcade." (Vanity Fair)

"Bergman is a spry and meticulous writer, and these stories linger in one's memory long after reading them." (*Minneapolis Star Tribune*)

"Stories that are so intriguing you wish they were full-length novels... Bergman revives these often troubled spirits with great compassion." (Connie Ogle *Miami Herald*)

"Real women are found at the heart of these tales, women unusual for their times and almost entirely forgotten in ours... Arresting... Sympathetic, never romanticizing often self-destructive behavior, but exploring why these women sought risk taking and the effect of their impulses." (Leanna Bales *Kansas City Star*)

"Seek within to find the forgotten. Bergman's well-written short stories tell the tales of women who *almost* made it into history books." (Tara Wanda Merrigan *GQ*)

"Thrill-seeking women abound in the collection, chock-full of bravery, defiance and creativity." (Cheryl Crocker McKeon *Shelf Awareness*)

"There's an allure to reading about the historical lives of women who bucked social conventions, even when they come, as they so often do, to a tragic end. We read them with an element of wish-fulfillment, searching for assurances that there were other ways to think and be." (Amy Gentry *Chicago Tribune*)

"Graceful prose charged with knowingness and certitude...burns bright in one's mind well after reading these fine stories." (*Boston Globe*)

"Bergman's scenarios are addictive and tantalizing, each one whetting our appetite for more... stunning depictions of how fame's fire warms with even the slightest contact." (Gina Webb *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*)

"By assiduously depicting their intimacy and power struggles, Bergman allows for a close examination of the multiplicity of women's experiences." (*The New York Times Book Review*)

"By exploring the women who didn't quite make it into history books, Bergman offers thoughtful commentary on the stories we do and don't preserve." (Maddie Crum *The Huffington Post*)

"Ingenious... atmospheric... intense, richly imagined tales." (Maureen Corrigan *Fresh Air*)

"A cleverly constructed, honest, and thoughtful book of stories. Fans of historical fiction and biography will find much to delight and ponder in these pages." (Julie Hakim Azzam *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*)

"[Bergman] nimbly animates the stories when she approaches them from tangential angles, often from the perspective of another character with something at stake." (John Williams *The New York Times*)

"Fascinating." (*People Magazine*)

"Bergman's 13 gutsy short stories portray women whose lives left them on the fringes of history's conversations... Through Bergman's exquisite writing, we dwell briefly in multiple lives that history was unkindly content to lose—but Bergman wasn't." (Meredith Turits *Vanity Fair*)

10 Best Short Story Collections of 2015 (*BookPage*)

About the Author

Megan Mayhew Bergman is the author of *Almost Famous Women* and *Birds of a Lesser Paradise*. Her work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Best American Short Stories*, *New Stories from the South*, *McSweeney's*, *Tin House*, and *Oxford American*, among other publications. She lives on a small farm in Vermont with her veterinarian husband, two daughters, and many animals.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Mary Edick:

Why don't make it to be your habit? Right now, try to ready your time to do the important action, like looking for your favorite guide and reading a e-book. Beside you can solve your long lasting problem; you can add your knowledge by the book entitled Almost Famous Women: Stories. Try to make the book Almost Famous Women: Stories as your close friend. It means that it can being your friend when you feel alone and beside those of course make you smarter than previously. Yeah, it is very fortunated for yourself. The book makes you more confidence because you can know everything by the book. So , we need to make new experience and also knowledge with this book.

Valerie Garrison:

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Jamey Norton:

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