



Fantastic Female Adventurers

Truly amazing tales of

women exploring the world

Lily Dyu

Illustrated by Chellie Carroll

Fantastic Female Adventurers

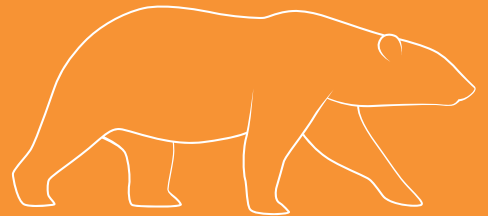
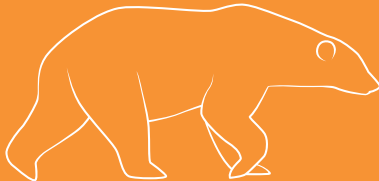
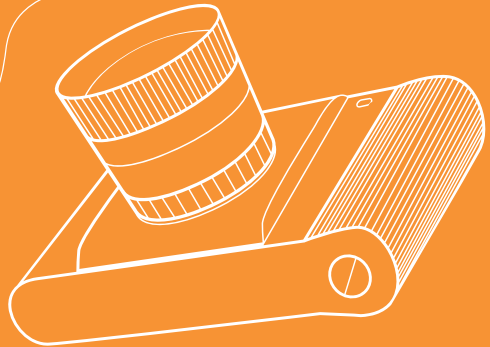
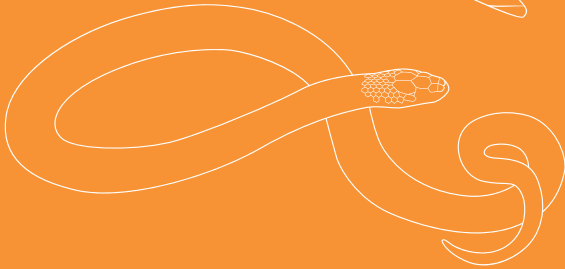
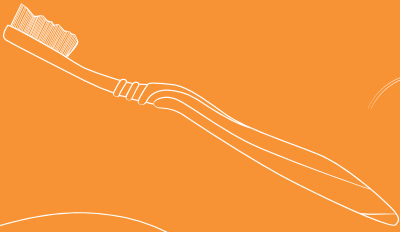
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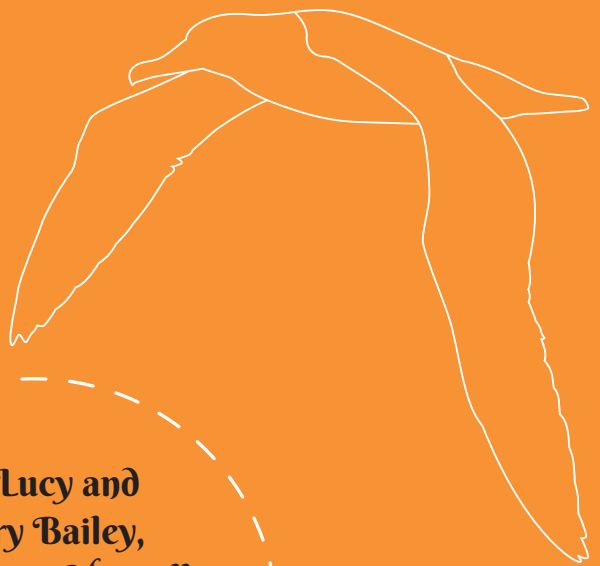
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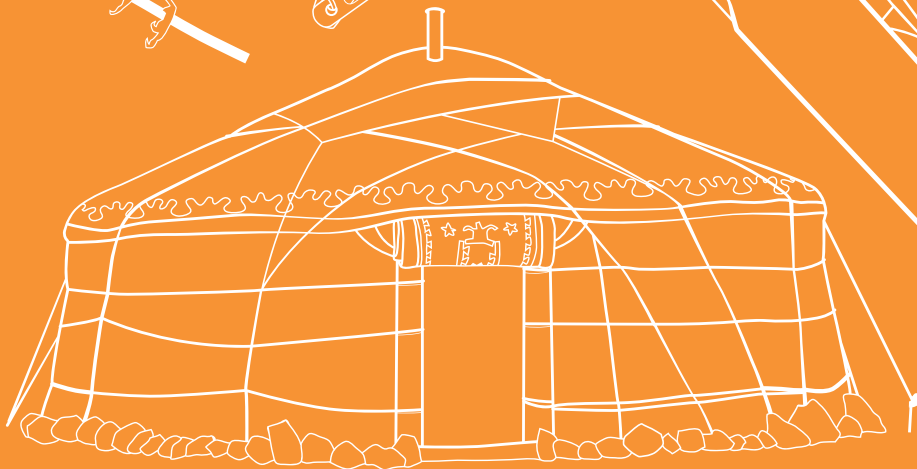
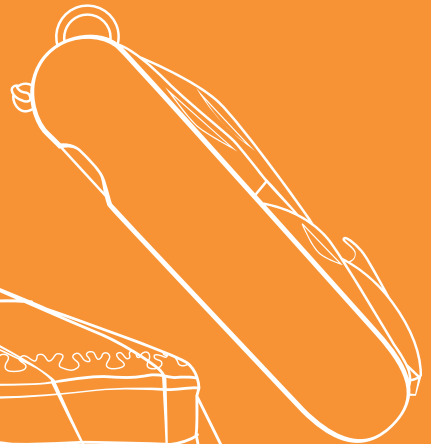
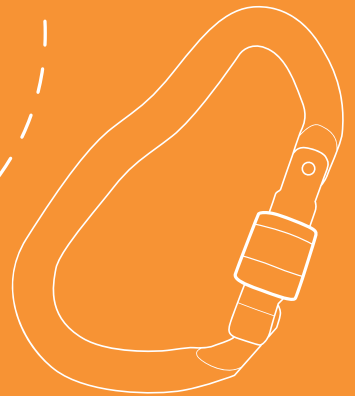
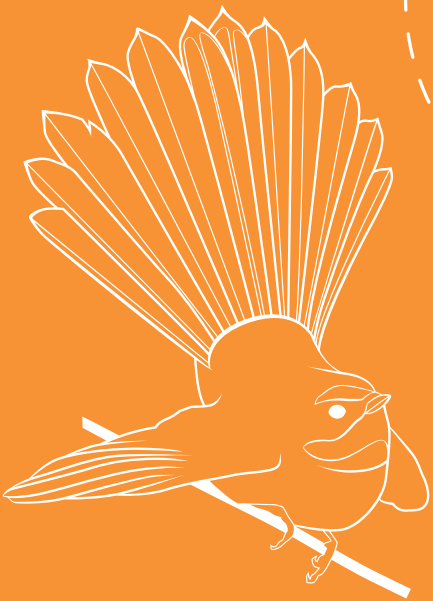
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**For Lucy and
Henry Bailey,
and Francie Meynell.**

May your lives be full
of curiosity, wonder and
fantastic adventures.



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Lily Dyu

Illustrated by Chellie Carroll

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Lily Dyu

Introduction

My story of adventure

When I was a little girl, I was afraid of getting muddy and dirty. The outdoors was a scary, alien place to me. Mum and Dad didn't take us to the park or the countryside or on trips to the seaside. They were too busy working long hours in the family business, where we often helped out after school. I dreaded school PE lessons since I was usually last to be picked for a team. I thought that sports and the outdoors were for other people.

I never dreamed that I would be sporty and adventurous when I was older. But in my twenties, I took up running. The first time I laced up my trainers, it was a struggle just to get to the end of the road. But I kept trying and grew to love running. Soon I was taking part in races – and I especially enjoyed splashing along muddy trails. I discovered nature, wildlife and the countryside for myself. I loved being in the outdoors and wild places – they felt like home to me. I've never looked back. A few years later, with my friend Michelle, I rode my bike the length of Britain, from Land's End to John o'Groats. *Wow! Me? The girl who hated sports at school? If I could do that, what else could I do?* Since then, I have swum

in rivers, lakes and seas, hiked up mountains, cycled all over the world, and I've even run all the way across England, Scotland and Wales!

As a child, I didn't read stories about girls like me who grew up to be adventurers and explorers. Instead, I learned about male explorers, like Captain Robert Scott and Roald Amundsen, who raced to the South Pole, and Sir Edmund Hillary, the first person to climb Everest. But I've since discovered that many ordinary girls have grown up to be extraordinary adventurers.

In this book, you can join some of these fantastic women on their incredible journeys. You can encounter jellyfish and man-eating sharks alongside Beth French as she swims in the world's oceans; ski to the North Pole with Ann Daniels while watching out for polar bears and lethal cracks in the ice; and hunt for the dancing Northern Lights with Jin Jeong as she cycles through Finland during her round-the-world journey. Feel the air beneath your feet as you perch on a cliff face while rock climbing with Gwen Moffat, Britain's first female mountain guide. Experience the thrill of racing down rocky Himalayan trails with champion runner Mira Rai. Feel the icy-cold sea spray against your skin and marvel at waves as high as a house when you sail with Ellen MacArthur, the girl who saved up her lunch money to buy her first boat. And you can even fly into space with Britain's first astronaut, Helen Sharman, and look out of her spaceship window at our astonishingly beautiful blue planet.

These women's stories have taught me many things: that you're never too old to develop a love of the outdoors. That adventures can be big or small – from a roller-skating trip near home to scaling the world's highest summits. That often the best part of a journey is the people you meet along the way. These women have inspired me to stay curious about other countries and people, to dream, and to never stop exploring our amazing world. I hope the stories in this book will inspire you, too – to get outdoors, to marvel at nature, to wander and to wonder, and to treasure and protect our planet.

Map of the Adventures



North Pacific Ocean

North Atlantic Ocean

South Pacific Ocean

South Atlantic Ocean

KEY

- — Ann Daniels
- — Mira Rai
- — Jin Jeong
- — Gwen Moffat
- — Beth French
- — Misba Khan
- — Karen Darke
- — Sarah Outen
- — Anna McNuff
- — Ellen MacArthur
- — Emma Timmis
- — Tori James
- — Helen Sharman



Ward Hunt Island

NORTH POLE

GREENLAND

ALASKA

ICELAND

CANADA

UNITED KINGDOM

Aleutian Islands

Rescue

London



San Francisco

USA

Catalina Channel

HAWAII

Molokai Channel



MEXICO

Strait of Gibraltar

COLOMBIA

PERU

BRAZIL

BOLIVIA

PARAGUAY

São Paulo

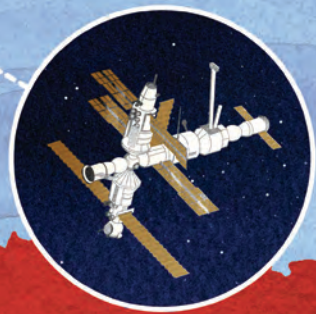
Cape Horn

Hercules Inlet

SOUTH POLE



Arctic Ocean



SVALBARD

FINLAND

RUSSIA



Baikonur Cosmodrome

KAZAKHSTAN

MONGOLIA

Mt Damavand

Bishkek

CHINA

JAPAN

Tsugaru Strait

Rescue



PAKISTAN

Kathmandu

Mt Everest

INDIA

THAILAND

Pacific Ocean



EGYPT
SUDAN
KENYA
TANZANIA
ZAMBIA
SOUTH AFRICA

Mt Kilimanjaro

ZAMBIA

SOUTH AFRICA

Cape Town

Cape of Good Hope



West Valley Rim
50km run

Pharping

Swayambhu

Indian Ocean



AUSTRALIA

Byron Bay

NEW ZEALAND

Cook Strait

Southern Ocean



ANTARCTICA



Ann Daniels

Adventures with the Ice Queen

Skiing to the North Pole

There was a loud bang and a rumble like thunder. The ice beneath their tent lurched and shook. Ann woke with a start, rolled out of her sleeping bag and unzipped the tent door to look outside. She was shocked to see that less than ten metres away – closer than the length of three cars – a frozen blue-white cliff had appeared where the flat ice had cracked. It towered four metres high – taller than two people – and was still slowly rising. The ice around their tent was also starting to crack.

‘Quick – we’ve got to get out of here!’ Ann told the others. If they didn’t move, the ice beneath them could split open and they would fall into the freezing water. Quickly they packed up their camp, threw everything on to their sledges and skied away as fast as they could. Only when they were a safe distance away did they dare to look back.

It was March 2002. Ann Daniels and her friends, Pom Oliver and Caroline Hamilton, were in the Arctic. They were skiing to the North Pole, trying to be the first all-female team to ski to both the North and South Poles. They had reached the South Pole two years earlier, skiing through Antarctica, a frozen continent surrounded by wild, icy seas. But the Arctic,

Fantastic Female Adventurers

on the other hand, is actually a frozen ocean: a collection of ice sheets surrounded by the land masses of Russia, Alaska, Canada and Greenland. These ice sheets constantly shift, crack and grind against each other as they are moved by ocean currents and the wind. This was why the ice had cracked earlier that morning.

The women had started their North Pole trip at Ward Hunt Island in Canada, high in the Arctic Circle. Their goal was to complete the 500-mile route in seventy-five days, pulling all their own food and camping gear. This is known as sledge hauling.

The record-breaking attempt was Ann's idea. Ann is a mum of four – and Britain's first female North Pole guide.

'As a girl I never imagined that I would one day be an explorer,' Ann explains. 'I grew up in a city with four older brothers and we never visited the countryside. We played in the street and in the park. My only adventures were climbing trees and walls!'



Ann left school at sixteen and got a job in a bank, before getting married and having triplets. When she was thirty and the triplets were eighteen months old, Ann's husband showed her an advert in the newspaper looking for 'ordinary women' to join the McVitie's Penguin Polar Relay to the North Pole – where five teams would each ski different sections of the 500-mile journey as a relay.

'I had never carried a rucksack, skied or slept in a tent, but I thought that if I could look after three toddlers then I could do anything!' Ann says. She had given up her bank job when her babies were born and she was ready for a new challenge. If she were chosen to go, she thought it would be an amazing adventure, so she filled out the form and sent it off.

At the first selection weekend on Dartmoor, Ann was one of over 200 women, many of whom were outdoor leaders, PE teachers or simply very sporty. For two days they hiked across boggy moorland and camped out, mostly in the rain. It was so tough that after the two days every muscle in

Ann Daniels

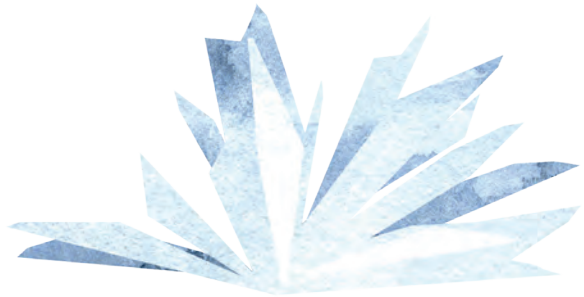
Ann's body hurt and she cried in frustration. Despite this, she still wanted to be picked for the team.

For nine months Ann trained hard for the second and final selection weekend. She went to the gym, did military-style exercises in the garden when the triplets were asleep, and took them running in their pram. Her friends taught her how to read a map, use a compass and pack her rucksack properly. When Ann returned to Dartmoor, the instructors were amazed to see how much she had changed. She was much fitter, and she showed them how well she got along with others and worked as part of a team. Ann was thrilled when she was told she had been picked as one of just twenty women chosen for the polar relay.

The expedition took place in spring 1997 and Ann's parents looked after her children while she was away. On that first trip to the Arctic, Ann set eyes on the most magical landscape she had ever seen.

'Everything was dazzling white,' Ann remembers. 'The ice glistened blue, green, red and purple in the sunshine. It was covered in ice rubble, with ridges and folds where the ocean had crushed the ice sheets together. In places it had cracked open to reveal the black ocean below, then frozen over again, creating frost flowers – beautiful clumps of ice crystals. In the sky, I saw rainbows that encircled the sun, while beneath us the ice groaned and moved as if it were alive. We were literally walking on water!'

Along with two guides, Ann's team successfully completed the first leg of the relay – skiing fifty-six miles. When she got home, she watched the fifth – and final – team on TV as they reached the North Pole. On the trip



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she had fallen in love with the world of ice and expedition life. She felt like she had finally found her place in the world.

The following year Ann and her husband got divorced. Soon she was living alone with her triplets. Despite being a single parent to her four-year-old children, she set her sights on a new challenge. She and four women from the original relay got together to organise, raise money for and attempt a 700-mile expedition across Antarctica to the South Pole, to celebrate the millennium. On this trip there would be no guides. Once again her parents took care of the triplets while Ann and her team skied across the windiest, highest and bleakest continent on Earth. They battled extreme weather conditions, including eighty-mile-an-hour winds, and faced dangers like crevasses – deep cracks in the ice that they could fall into. Finally, in January 2000, after sixty days on the ice, Ann and her friends became the first British all-female team to ski to the South Pole. They were overjoyed!

After Ann returned, she was asked to lead a team of ten people on a 'Last Degree' expedition, which is where you ski from the latitude of eighty-nine degrees north to ninety degrees north at the North Pole – a distance of sixty-nine miles. It was an all-male team, and during the expedition Ann began to dream of reuniting her South Pole team to sledge-haul the whole way to the North Pole. If they succeeded, they would be the first ever all-female team to reach both the North and South Poles.

While thousands of people have climbed Mount Everest, up until that time, fewer than seventy expeditions had reached the North Pole all the way from land because it is one of the most dangerous journeys in the world. The bumpy ice rubble, high ridges and changing areas of open



water make it much harder to reach than the South Pole. And while Antarctica has cute penguins, you might meet scary polar bears in the Arctic! When Ann had been on another North Pole expedition, she was followed for three days by a curious male polar bear – she had to make a loud noise to scare it off. Luckily, it eventually went away.



But for our three explorers the biggest danger in the North Pole was going to be the cold. ‘We started our journey in mid-March, which is at the end of the Arctic winter,’ says Ann. ‘But it was still -56°C . That’s three times colder than your freezer at home! The cold made it hard to think clearly. I often felt as if my brain was freezing like a bag of peas. Once, pulling my sledge, I thought I’d gone blind, only to realise that my eyelashes had frozen shut! And we always had to be very careful to stay wrapped up to avoid frostbite on our fingers, toes and noses.’

Their sledges were twice their own weight, and carried everything they needed for the journey. They had a tent, food and two camping stoves to share, and a sleeping bag, pencil, notebook, mug and spoon each. They didn’t bring toilet paper, but used wedges of snow instead. *Brrrr!* They didn’t wash or change their clothes for the whole eighty-day expedition. Can you imagine doing that? Luckily, they were wearing four layers of clothing so they couldn’t smell each other!

It was also freezing cold inside the tent. Each evening the wind howled outside while the women huddled in their sleeping bags and boiled water to rehydrate their dried meals, which included things like chicken curry



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and rice, or potato and beef stew. In the mornings they had porridge and made hot drinks on one stove, while melting snow on the other to provide enough drinking water for the day. This usually took around three hours. As they skied, they had a break every hour for a drink and to eat nuts, biscuits and chocolate chips to give them energy. (You can't take chocolate bars to the Arctic because the chocolate freezes so hard it would break your teeth!) The women were burning 5,000 calories a day and needed to eat nearly three times as much as they would normally. In freezing temperatures our bodies need more food than usual to convert into fuel and energy to stay warm and to function properly.

Whenever Ann found skiing hard, she chanted her children's names – *Lucy, Joseph, Rachel* – to remind her of home. Every two weeks she called them using a satellite phone. They were now eight years old and whenever she phoned they were usually more interested in telling her about school than asking her about the expedition!



