



A Captain for Caroline Gray

Julie Wright

Shadow Mountain Publishing (Mar 2, 2021)

Softcover \$15.99 (336pp)

978-1-62972-846-9

A ship traveling from England to India becomes a microcosm of Regency society in Julie Wright's touching proper romance novel, *A Captain for Caroline Gray*.

Caroline, stubborn and self-educated, can not keep her mouth shut. Her outspoken opinions repel eligible men; her best shot at securing her future is a risky engagement to a man in India. Aboard the *Persistence*, Caroline is one of many women whom Captain Thomas Scott is ferrying to an uncertain, grim future, but she catches his eye. Soon, romance blossoms against both of their better judgment.

Thomas knows what is in store for Caroline from experience: "it galled him to lead these women to a future with men who were cads at best and monsters at worse." Both Thomas and Caroline are constrained by duty, but as they get to know one another better through spirited discussions and "jolly adventures," they find needed reprieve from propriety.

Anachronisms help to make the novel feel progressive: among other contemporary topics, Thomas and Caroline discuss women's rights and fair trade, their exchanges leading to sparks. They speak their minds and stoke their mutual intellectual attraction, while the lively secondary cast, made up of ragamuffins, mean girls, and even tigers, is present to support their story. Caroline's artistic gifts further collapse the social mores that prevent sailors and passengers from mixing, resulting in an onboard meritocracy that buoys everyone's spirits over the long voyage to Mumbai, which includes a daring rescue, stargazing, and dolphins. Romance on the high seas may be a high-risk proposition for Caroline, but her discovery of new freedoms makes those risks worth taking.

A Captain for Caroline Gray is a charming historical romance in which smarts and sass are vindicated.

CLAIRE FOSTER (January / February 2021)

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