

A woman with dark hair is shown from the chest up, wearing a blue dress with a white ruffled collar. She is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is dark and out of focus.

# A Seat at the Table: Women Who Made Their Place in Herstory

Cristin Carnes



A close-up photograph of a woman with long, dark hair. She is wearing a white, ribbed, off-the-shoulder top and a colorful necklace with blue and gold elements. The image is slightly faded and serves as a background for the text.

***A Seat At The Table:  
Women  
Who Made  
Their Place In  
Herstory***

Cristin Carnes

To all the women from history who have inspired me. I want to thank all the wonderful people who modeled for me.

Thank you to my advisers who gave me much needed feedback to make this book what you see today.

And finally to my children, Chayton, Chekodontah and Cequoia, who indulged my every whim in creating this project!

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Printed in United States of America - Blurb

Female Historical - Figures Biography - Young Adult Literature

This book is set in Acuta, a typeface designed by Elena Albertoni.

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# About this work



The title of this book alludes to an art piece by Judy Chicago called “The Dinner Party.” She created a triangle table with 39 place settings for women of historical significance, with additional place settings for 999 more women. Much like the Chicago art piece, there are a variety of women in these pages who have accomplished great feats. Some have written books, while others have taken command of their tribe or country in times of upheaval, while still others have been misunderstood and maligned.

The photographs of these women are not meant to be completely historically accurate, it wasn't meant to be a historical production. These are portraits. Artists have been making portraits of people for thousands of years. Wealthy Roman citizens had a tradition of having busts of themselves made out of marble to showcase in their homes. Kings, nobility, and the wealthy commissioned artists to paint their portraits as well. This tradition is rooted in power, wealth, and elitism, only those with money could have these works created, only if someone were important. These commissioned portraits were also curated to show the subject as they wanted to be viewed, and less about reality. This project is about using the genre of portraiture while working within the framework of valuing those who were not valued, and showing others through a different lens. The images are meant to have a painterly quality to them. I use the photograph to purposely and intentionally manipulate the image, making the photos look painterly. The costumes, posing, lighting, gaze of the model, photo manipulation and texture all work together to create a painterly photograph. These images give power to the women portrayed in them, in the same way paintings done by the old masters were a way to show how much power their wealthy patrons possessed. The process of creating these images is meant to seem like we are looking at actual artifacts of these women, a sense of going back and reRighting history.

Growing up, I was told about all the men who did great things in history, there were thousands of them. But very rarely did I learn about the women, and when I was taught about their contributions they were often considered insignificant. I learned about Betsy Ross who sewed the flag for the 13 American colonies as a helper for the founding fathers. However, I didn't learn about Mary Katherine Goddard who printed copies of the Declaration of Independence with the signatures on them, an act of treason if she were caught. I did learn about Cleopatra and how she used her feminine wiles on Julius Caesar, but not that she was highly educated and intelligent. I was told how Marie Antoinette said “Let them eat cake,” when she didn't, but not that she was married off at 14 to help form an alliance between France and her homeland, Austria.



# WRITERS

# Jane Austen

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Author  
England  
1775 - 1817 AD

Jane began writing at the age of 14! We tend to think of her as an older woman who is immortalized in time wearing the blue dress in the painting done by her sister Cassandra. Jane grew up in an impoverished family and the only way out was to marry someone with money. Jane and Cassandra were quite close, we know this from letters written between the two and kept by their niece, Fanny. These letters are the way we know about Jane's thoughts about marriage, so often represented in her work. While many people read Jane's books thinking they are about the idea that all women want is marriage and to fall in love, what she is really writing about is that women had only one real choice in life—marriage. She didn't want to be forced to marry to have a good life, so she never did. Instead, she wrote about the trappings of only offering marriage as a life for women. Anyone who has read a Jane Austen novel knows the turmoil and stress the women in the stories go through to find and secure a husband. Jane's stories have been made into movies more times than any other author of her time period. The reason her stories have been made into movies so often is because this idea that women should only strive to be married still resonates with women today.



# Murasaki Shikibu

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Author

Japan

973 - 1014 AD

Murasaki Shikibu is viewed as the world's first person to write the modern novel. She was born during the Heian period in Japan, in a time when most people wanted to have boys. Her father let her learn lessons with her brother so she could have a good life. She was educated in many Chinese classics, which caught the eye of the Imperial Court. She was brought to the Imperial family and began writing her most famous novel *The Tale of Genji*. She spent the rest of her life at court even though her novel seems to be a commentary about the frivolousness of court life and her observations about the upper class of society. Her story was told over and over again throughout Japan during her lifetime and after. Her novel has been translated into many languages and is studied by college students, even in the 21st century. Her work is considered the first novel, and it is amazing that a writer from 1000 years ago still has relevance today.

# Radclyffe Hall

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Writer  
England  
1880 - 1943 AD

Radclyffe Hall was born Marguerite Hall and was known to her loved ones as John. Radclyffe created a cultural revolution with the publication of her book *The Well of Loneliness*. She dressed in men's clothing, she had a same-sex relationship in a time when it was not only considered immoral but was also illegal, and she even wrote about it. She made the hero in her story a lesbian and someone who was likable as well. Not everyone liked her book or any of her writings, which caused her to be arrested because she wrote about same-sex relationships, which were illegal. Hall's publisher brought in many writers and artists to testify on her behalf during her trial, including Virginia Woolf. It was decided by the courts that her book be destroyed and Radclyffe had to pay for court costs. While the British banned her, American editors got the rights to publish the book and, as a result, *The Well of Loneliness* made its way into culture via American booksellers. Hall went on to be considered a cultural icon as the first writer of lesbian literature.



# Gunnborga

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Runemaster  
Sweden  
11th Century AD

Gunnborga is the only woman on record as being a Runemaster. A what, you might ask? A Runemaster was a person in Norse culture who carved runestones as a way to mark burial rites and other forms of record-keeping. It was important to Vikings that bravery was celebrated and that the glory of those that died was commemorated. These stones were carved by people, like Gunnborga, who wanted to show the achievements of either themselves or their relatives. Many of these stones were set up in public places so that people could stop and admire them in much the same way that there are historical markers throughout the United States. Most of those who inscribed the stones were not masters, but apprentices who were in training to become masters. Most times the master would sign the stone. Gunnborga is the only known female of record to become a master of this profession. While she is known to have cared as a Runemaster, not much more is known about her life beyond this.



## Zitkala Sa

---

**Writer and Poet  
Yankton Nation, Dakotas  
1876 - 1938 AD**

Zitkala-Sa was born Gertrude Simmons to a Dakota mother and white father at the Yankton Sioux Agency in South Dakota. She lived among the Sioux until she began attending Carlisle Boarding School, a Quaker boarding school for Native Americans, which was common during that time to assimilate the Native children. She went on to attend college at the New England Conservatory and became a teacher at the Carlisle Boarding School, where she had been a student. She saw the school in a different light and started to criticize the experience and this caused issues with her employer. She's one of the first Native American women to publish traditional stories that came from the oral tradition of Native culture. She decided to return to the home of her mother's ancestors and became a member of the board of the Society for the American Indian. It was an important society for Native Americans to promote Indian self-determinism. Her life was filled with conflict between the white world and the Native world which was often reflected in the stories she wrote.



# Kathinka Zitz-Halein

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Poet Laureate of the  
German Revolution  
1801 - 1877 AD

Kathinka was born into a well-to-do merchant family and because of her family's wealth, she was able to get the best education available to her. She went to boarding schools in Germany and France. She had a strong talent for writing that showed early on with her first work being published when she was just 16. After her education, she began writing about political activities and began to get involved in politics. Her family had lost their fortune by this time, so she began to support herself with her writings. She had strong views about women's roles in politics and felt that they should not just be relegated to the domestic realm, but also as citizens and patriots who had their ideas heard in public. She did acknowledge that men and women did have different roles, but Kathinka thought that women could make a significant contribution by pushing the boundaries the roles women played within society.



# Nellie Bly

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Journalist  
United States  
1864 -1922 AD

Nellie Bly was a reporter in the United States at the turn of the 20th century. One of her very famous news stories came about when she went undercover to expose the way women were treated in the asylums in the US. She convinced the people in the boarding house where she was living, under an assumed name, that she was insane. Nellie was sent to a New York asylum. She learned that many of the people in there were not insane at all, but rather ill and were not being treated for their illnesses. When she finally was released, she was able to write her story and convinced a grand jury panel to visit the asylum. Unfortunately, the staff found out about her story and tried to cover things up. She was able to convince the grand jury that all she said was true, and they added money to the department budget and fired many of the people there. They also released people that didn't have a mental illness and made changes to the system to prevent abuses in the future. This story is actually the one that launched Nelly's career. While Nellie had a long journalistic career, the asylum story is the one where she made a name for herself as a journalist.





# **LEADERS**

# Isabella I of Castile

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Queen  
Spain  
1451-1469 AD

Isabella of Castile became queen by her own hand when she declared herself queen in 1474. She was called the Iron Queen; she was tough and determined. She made sure that she ruled Castile, and later all of Spain, as an equal to her husband Ferdinand. She married the man she chose, not one that was chosen for her. She turned Spain's dangerous streets into ones of law and order by creating what many say is similar to a modern Police squad. While Isabella didn't fight on the battlefield during the war, she did know how to strategize. She was the queen who funded Christopher Columbus's voyage to the Caribbean Islands. When Isabella died she knew that her home Castile and all of Spain had been transformed into a place she was proud to call home.



# Wu Zetian

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Empress  
China  
624 - 705 AD

There are a lot of rumors that swirl around Wu Zetian that are negative, most of them were spread by those that she angered, while those that she treated well spoke great things about her. She was China's first and only female emperor to rule on her own. Wu Zetian began her political career as the consort of Emperor Gaozong, and after he died, she placed her oldest son on the throne. He angered people and the government because he ruled with himself in mind, so she took him out of office and tried to place her younger son in that position. However, her second son didn't want the job, so Wu Zetian declared herself the emperor. She began the Zhou dynasty and ruled in the way she saw fit, putting people in power, and removing others from their position, squashing rebellions, and making China a Buddhist country. She even decided *when* she would renounce the title of Emperor. She's known as one very tough Emperor who did a lot of horrible things, many of which some scholars are not even sure she did because of all the misinformation about her rule.



# Elizabeth I

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Queen  
England  
1533 - 1603 AD



Queen Elizabeth I has been the subject of many books and movies over the years. It's almost like we can't get enough of this queen. But really, Elizabeth was like no other who came before her or after for that matter. Unlike her father, Henry the VIII, Elizabeth never married; she wanted the divine right to rule over England alone. During this time England was a powerhouse country where there was a tremendous revival in the arts and literature. The Protestant religion became entrenched within the country, after a long battle of what would be the religion of England between Catholicism and Protestantism. Elizabeth was able to keep peace within her country for pretty much her entire rule. She was the queen who ruled over England during the dawn of the English Renaissance. Elizabeth challenged The Catholic Pope, she had people write plays about her, she had colonies in the Americas, she pushed the French out of Scotland, she defeated the Spanish Armada, and all the while ruled England solo.

## Ana de Sousa Nzingha Mbande

---

Queen, Ndongo and Matamba  
Angola, Central West Africa  
1583 - 1663 AD

Ana de Sousa was born into the ruling family of Ndongo and Matamba. When the Portuguese tried to take over her nation, Ana's brother made nice with them. When he ascended to the throne, they threw him in jail. Ana was not happy about this because she was tired of being oppressed by the Portuguese and went to them to demand her brother be returned. Somehow she convinced the Portuguese to let her brother go. He died shortly after that and she took over as leader. For the next 35 years, the Portuguese tried to subject her people and her nation to their colonization. Ana was able to keep them at bay, finally negotiating a peace treaty only after years of using guerrilla warfare tactics and digging trenches around the land to keep the Portuguese out. She lived to be 81 years old and in present-day Angola, there are statues of her all over the place.

# Cartimandua

---

Queen of Brigantia  
Britain  
43 - 69 AD

Cartimandua was a Celtic leader of the Brigantes from 49 to 69 AD, during the time of Roman invasion and conquest of the British Isles. She was a strong and influential leader who was loyal to Rome. However, when the British King of the Catuvellauni tribe built a resistance against the Romans, Cartimandua's loyalty to Rome was tested. She handed the king over to the Romans and this did not sit well with her people. However, Rome did protect her and moved her away from danger. Not much is known about her life after this point. While her story had a legendary aspect to it, artifacts were found in the 1980s around what was thought to be her forte in present-day Yorkshire, England proving she was a real woman who lived and led her people.

# Nur Jahan

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Emperiors Consort  
Afghanistan  
1577 - 1645 AD

Nur Jahan was born into an aristocratic family and married young, but her husband died soon after. She caught the eye of the Emperor and became one of his many wives. However, nine years later, she had the right to a sovereign rule and soon was in charge of the whole empire when her husband was ill or absent from the Palace. When the Emperor was captured by rebels (most likely one of his sons who wanted to overthrow his father) Nur mounted an army and rescued the Emperor. Along with the Emperor, Nur supported the arts throughout the kingdom and created beautiful gardens for public and private use. She had many loyal men who she entrusted to speak on her behalf in matters of governmental decrees because it was not allowed that a woman speak in public. This made her position even more important. She was able to appoint family members and people she trusted to help her.

# Isabella of France

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Queen  
France  
1295 - 1358 AD

Isabella grew up a dutiful young woman who did what she was told. She was married to Edward II of England and it was considered a good match. However, Edward was not the best husband and treated his friends better than he did his wife. Isabella did not let this get her down; she continued to be the dutiful wife and helped her husband by asking for France for troops to help England battle the Scots. Edward was thankful to her and began to ask for her counsel on political affairs, however, he eventually turned on her again. He sent her back to France with their oldest son. This was Edward's biggest mistake because he had taken a good wife and treated her badly. When she returned to England she brought with her troops to fight against Edward. Isabella won, took over the throne, but didn't do a good job ruling. When their son, Edward III, turned eighteen years old he took over as king and recognized that maybe his mother had made some mistakes, but she had good intentions. Edward III recognized his mother had just been treated poorly and so he forgave her and removed those from power who had been a bad influence on her. She lived out the rest of her life in peace.

# Mahendradatta, Gunapriya Dharmapatni

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Queen Regent of Bali  
Java  
971 - 1011 AD

Mahendradatta was from Java and married a prince from Bali, and she took control, bringing in the cult of Durga and Hinduism to Bali from Java. Her rule was a good one, even if some didn't like that she instituted new cultural ideas from her homeland. When her husband died she had to take over and lead Bali until her son was able to lead the country. She was a good ruler, and the people learned to live with her as the regent queen. It wasn't until after her death that people started bad-mouthing her because they said they didn't like foreign rulers, they didn't like having a different religion in their country, and they didn't like her being such a strong outspoken queen. It could be because they thought she had been married before and her oldest child was not the son of the prince or they just didn't like the idea that she was not one of them. She was called a witch and was said to have brought a plague to Bali.



# Queen Aminatu

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Warrior Queen  
Zaria, Northern Africa  
16th Century AD

Aminatu's father was the founder of the Zazzu Kingdom in 1536. This medieval African Kingdom was in the region now known as Nigeria in the city of Zaria, which is named after Aminatu's younger sister. She was a great military strategist and a Calvary-trained warrior. When her brother became ruler, he made Aminatu the leader of his army. She controlled trade routes in the region and erected a network of commerce within the walls that surrounded the Hausa States. There is one wall, the entrance to the Palace of Emir of Zazzau, that still stands today. Despite the rise of nation-states within Africa itself, the region that she used to rule continues the traditional leadership she established.







# Freedom Fighters

## Mariya Oktyabrskaya

---

Tank Driver  
Russia  
1905 - 1944 AD

Mariya's husband was an officer in the Russian Army during World War II and was killed in action. While she didn't have a military background, she was not typical of most war widows. Mariya decided to sell everything she owned and bought a tank. She was determined to keep the fight going in her husband's honor. She wrote to Stalin, telling him she had a tank and was ready to fight in her husband's place. The army was skeptical at first, but she proved that she could drive, shoot, and throw grenades just as well as the men. All this was something that Mariya had learned from her husband. She fought off many Germans, but in the end, she was killed while trying to repair "Fighting Girlfriend," the name she had given her tank. She received the highest military honor that a Soviet could earn and she's buried in a sacred cemetery. Her likeness is reproduced on numerous items throughout Russia.

## Petra Herrera

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Captian  
Mexico  
1887 - 1916 AD

Petra, like many other women during this time, became a soldier in the army. She even took it one step further and started dressing like a man so that she could be eligible for promotions as a soldier. Over time she did rise in rank by earning a reputation as a leader and solid marksman. Petra eventually stopped wearing men's clothing and fought as herself. While it is not credited to her, she is most likely the person who sacked the city of Torreon, but the glory went to Poncho Villa. It was after this she left his command and built her own female brigade of about 400 women. She was later killed while she was working as a spy, and even though she is not the only female soldier during the Mexican Revolution, she's probably one of the most remembered. Her main goal was to become a general and she worked very hard to achieve that, but it eluded her. Most of the women who fought during the Mexican Revolution are remembered through folk songs.



# Ilona Zrinyi

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Hero and Noblewoman  
Croata  
1643 - 1703 AD

Ilona was born into a very famous family in Croatia. She married twice, both men were from Hungary. Her second husband worked to fight off the Habsburgs, but they eventually captured him and everyone at the castle that he was defending, however, the Habsburgs were not able to take the castle. Why? Because Ilona was able to keep the Habsburg Imperial Army at bay using a military tactic created by her uncle. With 4000 troops, she was able to repel the Habsburgs every time they tried to assault the castle. The only reason that she gave up was the chancellor had wasted their supplies and without the supplies needed they were not able to resist any longer. She went to Vienna herself to surrender in person. After this was all over she went back to a relatively quiet life, and in 1703, her son took up the fight she was forced to give up. She is still remembered today in Croatia as one of the country's greatest heroes.

## Albert Cashier/ Jeannie Hodges

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Union Soldier  
Ireland/United States  
1843 - 1884 AD

When Albert Cashier, an Irish immigrant, was 19 years old he enlisted in the Union Army in 1862. At that time Cashier was living his life as a man, but Albert was born female in Ireland as Jeannie Hodges. By the time Cashier traveled across the ocean, Jeannie Hodges had become Albert Cashier. It's not clear if this was a choice to live as a man or if Albert was transgender before being transgender was widely known. Either way, Albert was considered a good soldier who spent three years fighting in the American Civil War. Even to this day in Cashiers' adopted hometown in Illinois, people still come to visit the one-room home that he lived in until his death in 1915.

## Anne Farquharson Mackintosh

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Colonel  
Scotland  
1723 - 1787 AD

Anne was a member of the Farquharson clan and a Jacobite, who married the leader of the Macintosh clan. In the 17th and 18th centuries, there was a war over who would rule England and Scotland. The Jacobites favored the idea of placing a Stuart back on the English throne. The English wanted George II to rule. Anne's husband ended up joining an English peacekeeping force. But, when Charles Edward Stuart decided that he was going to take back Scotland, Anne joined his cause and raised an army on his behalf. The English found out what Charles was doing and that he was at Anne's castle, so the English decided they were going to storm the castle. Anne was warned and gathered some men who were able to make it seem like there were more of them than there were. This allowed Charles to hold off the English for a time. History tells us that the Stuart Prince did not win and Anne was imprisoned in a secluded home. She was later freed and ended up dancing with the men who tried to find and capture Charles. Anne remained a loyal Jacobite till the end of her life.

# Emilia Plater

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Leader in Baltic Revolution  
Poland/Lithuania  
1805 - 1831 AD

Emilia was born into a noble family; she was a strong supporter of her Polish–Lithuanian heritage. When the Imperial Russian army was forcing people to join, there was a group that was mounting an uprising. Plater felt it was her duty to join them, some even say that she was excited about this opportunity in part because she did not live the conventional noble lifestyle of women of her time. She did things like ride horses and shoot guns, something that her female counterparts did not and were not allowed to do. Unfortunately, the uprising was not a success for the Polish people. Plater became ill and died as a result of her illness from the battle. But her legacy lives on in Lithuania, where there are statues of her and her face is on their money. She also has some literary works published about her and she pushed against the notion that only men can fight in war.

# Mai Bhago

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Warrior and Bodyguard  
India  
1666 - 1705 AD

Mai was a Sikh, a group of people in India who believed that the establishment of a caste system was wrong and the idea that men were superior to women was just not true. And even though they had different ideas they lived peacefully alongside the ruler of the Mughal Empire. Aurangzeb came to rule the Mughal Empire, but he wasn't a fan of the Guru, the leader of the Sikh, so he had the Guru killed. This didn't sit well with the Sikhs who decided to fight back. Because women were equal to men in the Sikh culture, Mai went to fight. They were eventually able to win against the Mughal soldiers, even though they were outnumbered. Most of the Sikh people lost their lives, but Mai survived and became the bodyguard to the Guru because she had proven herself as a loyal warrior.





# Lyudmila Pavlichenko

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Sniper in WWII  
Russia  
1916 - 1974 AD

Lyudmila was at school when World War II broke out and the Nazis bombed her university. This made her decide to join the war effort. It was suggested that she work in a factory or hospital, but because she had earned so many awards for shooting (a personal hobby of hers) she was allowed to become a soldier, specifically a sniper. Fighting wasn't as easy in reality as it was in theory. Throughout her career, she killed about 309 enemy soldiers, the most anybody had ever killed as a sniper. After she was injured, the Russian government would not let her go back into battle. But she had already made her mark on the war effort and became the most famous Russian sniper to ever serve.



## Velu Nachiyar

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Warrior who fought off the British  
India

1730 - 1796 AD

Velu Nachiyar was the princess of Ramanathapuram, and queen from Tamil Nadu, India. She was the first queen to wage war against the British, who occupied many parts of India. Velu was trained in combat, martial arts, archery, and horseback riding. She defeated the British in what is considered a brilliantly formulated coup and even earned the respect of the Sultan. After this victory, she reigned over the Sivagangai Kingdom for a decade. When she died, her daughter took over the throne. Today her likeness can be seen throughout India, even on a postage stamp.





# Artists

# Artemisia Gentileschi

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Artist

Italy

1593 - 1656 AD

Artemisia, the daughter of the renowned painter Orazio Gentileschi, is often called one of the best female painters of the Baroque period in 17th century Italy. But she was THE best painter of the Baroque period. Most of her artworks are exclusively about powerful women, oftentimes using her face as the model for the women in her work. While her father was also a well-known painter, her life as a painter was not an easy one. She worked very hard to earn her place as the first woman to ever become a student at the Accademia delle Arti del Disegno, the most prestigious school in Italy at the time. She was almost virtually forgotten until the 20th century when in 1991, she had her first art exhibition. Since then, historians have worked to restore her to a position of prominence within the art world and she is considered a modern-day feminist icon.



# Annie Oakley

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Sharpshooter  
United States  
1860 - 1926 AD

When Annie Oakley was eight, her father taught her how to shoot a gun. By the time she was 10, she was earning money for her family by supplying food to restaurants and hotels. When she was 15, she outshot Frank E. Butler, one of the best male sharpshooters at the time, in a shooting contest. So, what do you do when a woman outshoots you? You marry her of course! Annie and Frank joined Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West Show and eventually made their way across the ocean to perform for Queen Victoria and Prince Wilhelm. When World War I broke out, she volunteered to train women as regiment soldiers, but she was turned down. She did help in the war effort by performing for army platoons and did fundraising for the Red Cross. She knew throughout her life that because she was a woman she would never be considered a true marksman, but that didn't ever stop her. She was an excellent sharpshooter.



# Mary Cassatt

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Painter

United States and France

1844 - 1925 AD

Mary was born to a wealthy family and was raised in upper-class society. She was able to travel the world and experience quite a bit throughout her early years; she even was afforded the choice to never get married. She went to art school at 15, moved to Paris after, but had to come back home to the United States because of war in Europe. After the war, Mary was able to go back to France and make a home for herself in Paris. She lived in Paris at a time when there was a shift in art movements and the Impressionists were starting to make a name for themselves. Mary was noticed by Edgar Degas, who invited her to join an art show with other Impressionist artists. Mary chose to focus much of her work around the life of the everyday woman doing day-to-day tasks such as taking care of their children, taking care of the home, and doing whatever they did within the domestic domain. Her focus was to capture the special moments between mother and child. This became her most famous body of work because it was about something true and important.

# Frida Kahlo

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**Painter**  
**Mexico**  
**1907 - 1954 AD**

Today, many people know Frida Kahlo as the woman who did all the self-portraits, but that was not the original plan for her life. Growing up in Mexico City, Frida had polio as a child, which left her with a limp. However, she showed promise as a medical student, until she suffered spinal injuries in a bus accident when she was 18. After the accident, she turned to a childhood hobby of painting, thinking that she might make a career of being an artist. She met artist Diego Rivera in 1927 and they married a year later. They traveled throughout the United States and Mexico showing and making work. Plagued with health problems throughout her whole life, Frida Kahlo used that as inspiration in her work. She is celebrated as a feminist and icon for women for her depiction of the female experience as well as a Mexican icon. Today, products all over the world show Frida's face including makeup and clothing.



# Maria Mozart

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Virtuoso and Musician  
Austria  
1751 - 1829 AD

Maria was the older sister of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and many would say a better musician than her brother ever was. She was just seven when she began to play, and Wolfgang also wanted to learn as well. When Maria was just eleven and her brother eight, they began to tour Austria with their father. They performed for the Queen. But as it came time for her to get married, she was no longer allowed to tour. She was relatively unknown until the 21st century when a playwright named Sylvia Milo discovered her portrait and began to research her. Sylvia wrote a play called *The Other Mozart*, where she outlines Maria's genius as a writer and a performer. Most of her musical works are lost to us, and it is possible some of the works attributed to her brother were Maria's work or came from their collaboration. It is unfortunate that when she got married she had to stop playing because, who knows, maybe we didn't hear from the real Mozart genius.





# Mary Katherine Goddard

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Publisher  
United States  
1738 - 1816 AD

Mary Catherine Goddard was the first woman in America to hold a federal office as the postmaster in Baltimore. She had been appointed by Benjamin Franklin and held the office for 14 years. She was also a newspaper publisher who chronicled the Revolutionary War, and she was a bookseller. Probably her biggest accomplishment was the fact that she was commissioned by The Continental Congress to be the first to print the Declaration of Independence with the signers' names, a dangerous task if she were found out and even more dangerous if the patriots had not won against the British. She continued operating her bookstore until she was in her 70s. While men were credited with the proceedings that led to our current government documents, women also had their role in putting the United States government together.



# Risk Takers

# Claire Innes

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Survivor  
United States  
Late 19th Century

Claire Innes was just 12, living in Chicago when the Great Fire raged through the city in 1871. The whole city burned to the ground that fateful night. Many people lost their homes, lost their businesses, and lost loved ones as well. Claire's family home burned down and she lost her family. But that did not cause her to give up hope as Claire ran from the fire in a city that she had only lived in for a short time and didn't know her way around. As she ran she helped as many people as she could along the way. She is remembered because she was just a young girl who was able to make a difference.



# Mochizuki Chiyome

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Ninja  
Japan  
16th Century AD

Mochizuki was a Japanese poet and noblewoman of the 16th century. She created an all-female group of ninja agents (Kunoichi) in service of the Takeda clan. She was known to recruit prostitutes and other women who were seen to be of a bad reputation, some of the women she trained were orphaned and some had been abandoned during the Civil War of the Sengoku period in Japan. Mochizuki's training center was a haven for women who had nowhere to go. They were taught the ways of the Shinto and given a new life. These women were trained to gather information, be messengers, and, if necessary, assassins. These Ninja warriors could travel anywhere without being suspected and some even had religious education to continue to be in disguise. At one point Mochizuki had upwards of 300 trained agents working for her.



# Sybil Ludington

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Patriot and Revolutionary  
United States  
1761 - 1839 AD

Sybil was a teenager during the American Revolution when the patriots needed someone to ride to warn the army the British were headed toward them. Sybil was the oldest child of 12 and her parents owned a farm along the Connecticut coast of Long Island Sound. Her father, a former loyalist turned patriot, was then a Colonel of his local regiment. A rider came to the house one night in April 1777 to warn of a British attack. Sybil's father needed the rider to go on and warn the others whose farms were in the area, but he was too exhausted. Whether it was her father's insistence, urging, or her volunteering, Sybil rode all night in the dark and rain between 20 to 40 miles gathering the soldiers to fight off the British troops. While the troops were too late to win the battle, they were still able to fight off some of the British soldiers. The story is important because so often we hear of the midnight ride of Paul Revere, but he was not the only one to warn the patriots of British attacks during the American Revolution. This young woman was able to do the same and we very rarely hear about her heroic act.

# Mary Bowser

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Military Intelligence Agent  
United States  
1804 - 1867 AD

Mary Bowser was born Mary Jane Richards and was a slave on Elizabeth Van Lew's family plantation. Mary had been emancipated by Elizabeth, who was a staunch abolitionist. Mary technically was not allowed to return to the plantation, and when she did, she had to pretend that she was Elizabeth's slave. During the American Civil War, the Confederate south made their own white house. This gave Elizabeth and Mary the idea to place Mary as a servant in the Confederate White House as a spy. This was dangerous and if caught would be deadly. But Mary knew what this meant for all the slaves in the south. Mary used a method of symbols to communicate with those in the Union Army and other spies working in the Confederate White House. She knew that she had to escape when one of the spies, who was a baker in the kitchen, was uncovered. But before Mary left she set a fire in the basement, which allowed her to escape and get to Elizabeth. The intelligence she gave the Union Army allowed them to win the war.



# Sophie Morigeau

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Entrepreneur

British Columbia, Canada

1836 - 1916 AD

Sophie had a lot going against her early in life; she was born to an indigenous woman from the Metis tribe and possibly a man who was French. When she got married at age 16, Sophie and her husband began trading with the local miners in the area. They traded anything that the miners might need as far as clothing, weapons, and supplies. But Sophie wanted to be her own boss, so she decided to leave her husband and start her own business. She eventually bought land. Sophie then made it her mission to look after the local tribes around her. She employed many of her tribespeople and fed them as well, and she let them live on her land. All of this was not the norm for most women of this time to own land and be able to take care of other people. Sophie was said to have a zest for life and lived quite a colorful one at that.

# Virginia Hall

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Spy  
United States/England  
1906 - 1982 AD

Virginia Hall was born into a wealthy family in Baltimore in 1906, but she craved adventure. She went to school in France and hoped to be an ambassador. Unfortunately, the closest she came was a clerical job in Turkey. While she lost her leg in a hunting accident, she was able to get a wooden leg. When World War II broke out, Hall volunteered and ended up being the first spy the British sent to Nazi-occupied France. She was a highly decorated civilian for her work during World War II. A lot of what Virginia did during that time was really hard to track down because files have been destroyed, documents have been lost, and Hall herself knew how to keep quiet about her spy work. Hall never wanted to be called out as a spy. Because of this, her work was mostly lost to us until Sonia Purnell began doing research on her, which is why we know about Hall today. Virginia Hall was able to assist the Allies during World War II without ever being found out.



# Ching Shih

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**Pirate**  
**China Seas**  
**1775 - 1844 AD**

Ching Shih was a pirate. Shih's husband was the leader of a large fleet of pirate ships. When he died unexpectedly, she took over leadership of her husband's fleet. Ching was unlike her husband; while he was brash and loud, she was quiet and calculating. She installed one of her trusted men as the head of the fleets under her and united all pirate flights under her red flag banner. They all had to learn and obey the edict that Ching created as well as the hard-core code of conduct that she required of her crew. She terrorized the China Sea so severely that the Chinese government eventually agreed to pay her to stop terrorizing the area. Ching retired and spent her last years running a brothel and gambling house. When she died, she was a wealthy woman who was widely respected. Ching Shih made her own rules and lived her life the way she wanted to live.



# Alice Clement

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Detective and Film Star  
United States  
1878 - 1926 AD

Alice Clement was a police officer and movie star in the early 1900s Chicago, which was a rough city. There were gangsters like Al Capone and all types of criminals all over the place. Many women were committing crimes, and male police officers were not able to arrest them. So the mayor hired some women to take care of what he called “the women problem.” One woman they hired was Alice Clement and she quickly became a star detective, she was even called the female Sherlock Holmes. Clement was unlike most female detectives; she wore fancy clothes and did just about anything she could to get her criminal. She even became so famous that she starred in a movie about a fictional account of her life. The movie was called *Dregs of the City*, but the Chicago Police Department was annoyed with her so they prevented the movie from being shown. This didn’t sit well with Alice so she sued the city, and won her case. She was able to travel around the country to promote the movie. She was eventually demoted, and in 1926, she died. But Alice had already changed the way women were able to work as police officers, take down criminals, and solve crimes.



# Audrey Faye Hendricks

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Civil Rights Activist  
United States  
1953 - 2009 AD

Audrey was a young child when the Civil Rights Movement began in the United States. At age 9, she joined the demonstration in Birmingham in 1963, which came to be called the Children's Crusade. There were demonstrations throughout the South during this time. Audrey's parents were heavily involved in the Civil Rights movement in Alabama. Audrey saw this as a way to help other African-Americans have a better life and so she was prepared to be arrested and put in jail for her actions. Her actions, and those of other civil rights activists, changed many laws throughout the country at the federal, state, and local levels as well as opened up opportunities for African-American people. When Audrey went to high school she went to an integrated school where she was one of a small number of Black teenagers in a mostly white high school. While it was not easy at first, Audrey persevered. Her story is important because it shows that even as young children anyone can make a difference.





# **Forward Thinkers**

# Annie Jump Cannon

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Astronomer  
United States  
1863 - 1941 AD

Annie went to college in a time when most women did not. After college, she began working as a maid for Edward Pickering, the head of the Harvard Observatory. Pickering had gotten tired of the laziness of the male grad students, and he even said his maid could do a better job, so she did. Annie was able to do what many of the men of that time could not. In her lifetime, she cataloged over 350,000 stars. The person who cataloged the next highest amount was only 10,000. She knew her stars well, so she was able to pick out a star from all the thousands of photo plates whenever someone would ask her to show them a particular star. Annie attributed her success to the fact that she had become deaf during her college years, and she said it helped her focus more on the work. Annie worked until she was 76 years old earning just \$.25 an hour for her work. She pushed against and dispelled the stereotype that women astronomers were just playing astrology and making up horoscopes.



# Ada Lovelace

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Software Designer  
England  
1815 - 1852 AD

Ada Lovelace was the daughter of Lord Byron. Her mother was so afraid that she would become a poet like him that she taught Ada as much mathematics as she possibly could. The Lord and Lady were divorced so that helped a lot since her mother had Ada most of the time. Lady Byron was a very sickly woman, which meant she didn't pay as much attention to Ada or the fact Ada didn't conform to the traditional role of women within society. Ada married Lord Lovelace, and he fully encouraged her interest in mathematics. They often worked together on some serious projects. One project that Ada worked on involved her uncle, who was building a machine that would solve any math problem in the world. He wanted Ada to write a user manual for it, which would become the first software program for computers, long before computers were even really invented. It's safe to say that she was a mathematical genius. One of our programming languages today is even named after her, ADA.



# Margaret E. Knight

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Inventor  
United States  
1838 - 1914 AD



Margaret is the young woman who invented the square brown paper bag. She was an inventor from an early age and when she was just 12 years old she invented a safety device that powered textile looms. She worked in the factory where these looms were and saw many accidents and death caused by poorly constructed machinery. She wanted to figure out a way to reduce accidents and prevent deaths. Margaret was able to patent her invention for an attachment for paper-bag-folding machines that allowed the production of square-bottomed bags, a dress and skirt shield, a clasp for robes, and many other patterns over her lifetime that were used in manufacturing. And while she didn't profit much from her work, she did invent quite a few things that we still use today in machine factories. You might not know her name, but you probably know some of her inventions including numbering machines, window frame and sash, and some that were used in rotary engines. She was one of the most productive female inventors, pretty much of all time.

# Alexandra Kollontai

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Revolutionary and Politician  
Russia  
1872 - 1952 AD

Alexandra was a major figure during the Russian Socialist Movement at the beginning of the 20th century. She felt so strongly about the ideas of Marxism that she left her husband and child to study in Zürich. For the next 20 years, she wrote articles on the topic of Marxist ideas. Alexandra found herself organizing in places like Germany and Austria speaking out against World War I, where she was arrested and imprisoned. She found that she was unable to return home, but she still communicated with Lenin during this time. In 1922, she was appointed as advisor to the Soviet location in Norway and retired for health reasons in 1945. While in exile, she continued to be a diplomat for Russia and the USSR, where she served as Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs until her death. Alexandra's story shows that even if someone is forced to leave their homeland, they can still make a difference.





# Susan la Flesche Picotte

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Doctor and Advocate  
Omaha Nation, Nebraska  
1865 - 1915 AD

Susan grew up in Omaha on a reservation surrounded by sickness. She would often watch other people die because the white doctors just did not come or care. When she was old enough she was admitted into Hampton Institute, which was the only school for women to become doctors. She paid her way through college and medical school by sewing clothes and did not even stop to go home when her father died. She graduated as valedictorian in his honor. She went back to the reservation and worked tirelessly to help her people. She was more than a doctor to them, she also gave legal and personal advice. She married Henry Picotte and had their son. In January 1913, her dream of opening a modern hospital for the Omaha people was realized, but two years later Susan died. The legacy that she left behind is still present among the Omaha Nation. She was the very first Native American doctor, and her tireless legacy helped her people.



# Laura Bassi

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Scientist

Italy

1711 - 1778 AD

Laura was educated at home until she was 20, most likely due to her mother's ill health. In 1732, she went before the professors of the University of Bologna where she publicly defended forty-nine theses on various scientific principles. She was awarded a doctoral degree, the first woman to receive a doctorate in science. Just a month later, Laura was appointed by the university as its first woman professor, with the restriction that she could only teach all-male classes since women were not allowed to be students. She was also elected to the Academy of Sciences of the Institute of Bologna in 1732. Bassi was influential in the spread of Newtonian mechanics in Italy as well as Ben Franklin's theory of electrical attraction and repulsion. Those in the science field knew of her ideas and knew they had to visit her lab when they were in Italy. Laura was a woman of many firsts, first female professor, first to earn a doctorate in science, along with being a leader in the field of science for her entire lifetime.



# **Social Reformers**

# Matilda of Scotland

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Queen Regent of England  
Scotland  
1080 – 1118 AD

Matilda of Scotland was born Edith of Dunfermline in Scotland and was married to Henry I of England. She was a popular queen who was educated and a pious woman. She often found herself acting as queen regent when her husband would journey to Normandy. Matilda was also one of his most valuable councils, and Henry trusted her to help him make decisions within his kingdom. Matilda had quite a bit of autonomy at Henry's court, she had her own income, and staff. She would speak to Archbishops on his behalf, and she was oftentimes a mediator between her husband and someone else. She spent a lot of time on charity work to help the poor people of England, and she was a very compassionate queen to her subjects. Matilda had two children who became rulers in their own right. Her son Henry II brought together both Norman and Anglo-Saxon kings to the throne. She is remembered as a good queen and commonly referred to as Matilda of Blessed Memory and Good Queen Maud.

# Linda Brown

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Civil Rights Activist  
United States  
1943 - 2018 AD

Linda Brown is the Linda Brown at the center of the Brown vs. The Board of Education case that went before the Supreme Court. During this time, there was a disparity between the way schools were run between the black community and the white community even though the 14th amendment to the Constitution clearly stated this was illegal. The NAACP was working to desegregate schools in the 1950s. Linda Brown was part of a group of children who were sent to a nearby school that was closer to their home than the all-black school that was further from their home. The Brown family did not want to send Linda to the school further away, and they realized that for her to have a better life she needed to switch schools. So her family sued for Linda to attend the school closer to her home, and the case wound up going all the way to the supreme court because this was about Constitutional law. The Brown family won. Linda Brown worked as an advocate for quality education for the black community until she died in 2018. She even worked with the Topeka Schools to bring a case against the Kansas Board of Education when her children began attending there and she realized that segregation was still happening.

# Angela Burdett-Coutts

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Philanthropist  
England  
1814 - 1906 AD

Angela was born into the wealthy family of a rich banker. She had everything a young woman of her class and status could want. But what Angela wanted was to take care of people, so she refused any suitors because she knew they were only after her money. When her grandfather's second wife died, Angela inherited all his fortune under the condition that she take her grandfather's name, Coutts, as her surname. Angela agreed to do that because she wanted to use the money to help the poor women of London, to support the arts, to support actors, to support animal regulations, and to support humanitarian efforts around the world. She was visited by Queen Victoria and the future Queen Mary, and she was also made Lady Burdett Coutts in 1871. Angela eventually married William Bartlett in 1878 when she was 67 and knew she had total control over her financial life. William also took her surname. When she died at 92, she had set the standard for philanthropy that helped people with kindness and without judgment towards those who needed help.

# Jane Addams

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Social Worker  
United States  
1860 - 1935 AD

Jane is called the mother of social work. Though she was born into a wealthy family, she quickly learned that not everybody lived like her. She worked tirelessly in her adult life to help those around her to have a better life. After seeing a settlement house in London, she brought that idea back to Chicago, opening Hull House, a settlement home for inner-city women that provided social services to the community. Hull House quickly expanded into a 13 building complex with a theater, a library, a post office, and a gymnasium. Jane's main goal was to help women, but she also lobbied for women's rights, child labor laws, and protecting immigrants. She was also a co-founder of the American Civil Liberties Union and the first woman to win a Nobel Peace Prize. Jane remained the head resident at Hull House until she died at 74.

# Regina M. Anderson

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Librarian and Social Reformer  
United States  
1901 - 1993 AD

Regina was a librarian who worked at the New York Public Library during the Harlem Renaissance. She was a writer, lecturer, and art curator as well as a librarian. In her small Harlem apartment, Regina had meetings with people such as W.E.B. Du Bois, Countee Cullen, and Langston Hughes, who were just a few notable authors that helped launch the Harlem Renaissance. She wrote plays that were performed by the Krigwa players, a company of black actors who performed plays by black authors out of the 135th St. New York Public Library. Because of her position as a librarian and her extremely mixed heritage, she was able to push the boundaries of race during the time of the Harlem Renaissance and after.





# **Spirit Keepers**

# Jigonsaseh

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Mother of Nations  
Iroquoia Nation, New York  
14th to 15th Century

Jigonsaseh was an Iroquoian woman considered to be a co-founder of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy with Great Peacemaker and Hiawatha. The dates of the beginning of the Confederacy are uncertain, with some that claim it was between AD 1142 and 1450 and others that claim it is closer to 1570–1600. It is said that she began a conversation with the five warring nations, the Mohawk, Seneca, Cayuga, Oneida, Onondaga, and later the Tuscarora so that they could end their bloody conflict. They bound themselves together and adopted what is called the Great Law of Peace as their decision-making guide. Because of this, she is considered the Mother of Nations among the Iroquois.

# Severa Tertonicna

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Senae and Druid  
Gaul  
100 AD

Severa was a woman who lived in Gaul around 100AD. The people of Gaul lived in what is now modern-day France. She was most likely a Senae, a leader of a group of women who served a healing goddess (a Mother Earth Goddess). Her name is on a tablet, found in France, that refers to a curse placed on her and some of her followers that were members of a Gaulish tribe. The importance of this is that these people were under Roman rule and this tablet seems to be from a Roman citizen. From this, we can understand the importance of women's fellowship in the ancient world and how that might have made other cultures at the time uncomfortable. It is one of the oldest preserved Gaulish texts. She is considered a "head witch" and more than likely she probably was a druid.

# Sarraounia Mangou

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Sorceress Queen of the Azna  
Nigera  
Late 19th Century

Sarraounia was a leader of the Azna people when the French were colonizing many parts of Africa. She was not happy about the prospect of being colonized and wanted to fight back. Sarraounia was no stranger to fighting because she had other tribes that attempted raids on her village in the past. She went to these tribes to ask them to unite against the French invasion, but they declined. Sarraounia decided to empty the granaries and the animal pens to make it look as if the town was deserted. Another thing she did was at night Sarraounia and her people would appear in the tall grass, raid the French forces, and then disappear again. These tactics earned her the name Panther Queen. It also freaked out the French and eventually their leaders, Voulet and Chanoine. Even though they were overpowered by the French, Sarraounia and her tactics eventually forced the French to retreat. Today though her legacy lives on in books and movies about her life.

## Scáthach of Skye

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Warrior and Queen  
Scotland  
200 BC

Scáthach was a warrior queen who lived on the Isle of Skye in Scotland around the year 200 BC. Scáthach means shadowy and her story is often found in medieval Irish heroic legends and sagas. It is believed that she may have even trained some of the greatest Irish warriors. It is also thought that the demi-god Cú Chulainn helped her overcome one of the neighboring female chieftains, Aoife, who could've been her sister. Legend says she was some kind of magician, more likely a druid and that she had the gift of prophecy. Because many stories come to us from an oral tradition, it's not always easy to know if Scáthach was an actual person or possibly an amalgamation of female leaders. But it was not uncommon for women in Scotland and Ireland to be ruling clan leaders.

## **Ix Wak Chan Ajaw, Lady Six Sky**

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Warrior Queen

Maya

682-741 AD

Ix Wak Chan Ajaw, or as she is known in English, Lady Six Sky, was a Mayan queen who ruled in Naranjo, in what is now Guatemala, in the 8th century A.D. While her father was happy to have her take over as ruler there, the people of Naranjo were not used to having a woman rule over them. When she did arrive in Naranjo, she quickly chose someone to marry, and then had children. When her oldest son was five, he was named ruler, but Lady Six Sky continued to call the shots and rule over the Naranjo. Lady Six Sky saw herself as more than a wife and mother, but she was meant to be a leader of the people.



# Rebels

# Cleopatra

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Pharaoh of Egypt  
Macedonia  
69 - 30 BC

There is much written about Cleopatra, it seems that most people know very little about who she truly was as a person. Her beauty seems to be the main focus when talking about her. Born to Ptolemy I Soter, a Macedonian general, Cleopatra was extremely well-educated and a shrewd political strategist. Although not ethnically Egyptian, she embraced their culture and even learned their language. Cleopatra fought her sister and her brother to become the pharaoh, and she aligned herself with some of the greatest men in history to ensure her place there. She did have a child with Julius Cesar, but what some might not realize is that she was very calculated and that Cleopatra curated their relationship. She was an intelligent woman who knew what she wanted and knew how to go about getting it. One of her downfalls was that she loved very deeply and when she teamed up with Mark Anthony to unite against Octavius for control of Rome's vast empire, she lost her throne and a chance to rule Rome as well. It was a gamble that she was willing to take and as a result, the history books don't always speak kindly about her.



# Alice Roosevelt Longworth

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Socialite and Political Activists  
United State  
1884 - 1980 AD

Alice was the daughter of President Teddy Roosevelt. As a child of a president, she was expected to act a certain way, however, she was strong-willed, unbridled, and did not want to conform to the ideas of the culture in which she lived. She was called the White House wild child and proclaimed that she never would marry. But she did get married to congressman Nicholas Longworth, and, in true Alice style, their relationship was quite interesting. He was called a playboy, and she often spoke out against her husband's conservative political views. She did get involved in politics in her later life to honor her father's memory by supporting Teddy's Progressive Party. But one of the most interesting tidbits about Alice is that she got herself banned from the White House after her father was no longer president.

# Grace O'Malley

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Pirate  
Ireland  
1530 - 1603 AD

Grace O'Malley was known by many other names such as Granuaille, Granine Mhaol, and other versions of those names. She was born an O'Malley, one of Ireland's only seafaring clans. She took to the water even though her father was not a fan of it, but he could not stop her. She was particularly adept at defeating any man who tried to oppose her. When England tried to divide the Irish clans, Grace was able to bring them together under one banner to resist the English presence. However, Richard Bingham, a British soldier, was not to give up so easily and got one of her sons to turn on her. This allowed Richard to uncover some secret ports where Grace kept her ships and impounded her fleets. This sent her to the top to see Queen Elizabeth I. Grace made such an impression on the queen that she was granted everything she asked for, which included that Bingham had to leave her alone and leave her to run the Irish waters as she saw fit. It is true that when women get together they can get things done.

# Anne Boleyn

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Queen  
England  
1501 - 1536 AD

Anne became the second wife of Henry VIII after he became enamored with her while she was a lady in waiting for his first wife, Catherine of Aragon. She spent a good part of her childhood in France, and when she returned to England in 1522, she lived at Henry's Court. Henry even went so far as to create his own religion in England so he could divorce Catherine and marry Anne. Anne got blamed for many things throughout her lifetime. She was seen as arrogant, and as someone who flirted with other men. Anne was not able to give Henry a male heir, their only child was Elizabeth I, and so rumors spread around court about her. Anne was charged with being unfaithful and as a result, she was beheaded in 1536. While she was accused of many things she remained calm at the time of her death. Anne is often remembered as the mother of Elizabeth I, but she was more than that and she was given a bad reputation because someone else wrote her life story.

## Clara de la Rocha

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Revolutionary  
Mexico  
1892 - 1970 AD

Clara de la Rocha was the commander guerrilla during the storming of Culiacan, Mexico in 1911. Women fought during the Mexican Revolution as Soldaeras (women soldiers) or Adelitas, which were women who were in the military and participated in the conflict. Clara became a revolutionary to fight for her people and her homeland, and the Adelitas were considered an important part of Mexico's rebellion. Clara was an excellent marksman and an intelligent soldier. She was promoted to Colonel during her time as a soldier. Does the hairstyle look familiar to you? George Lucas looked to the women of the Mexican Revolution to help in forming the identity of Princess Leia in the Star Wars movies. Clara inspired Lucas when he created the character of Princess Leia, hair and all.

# Eleanor of Aquitaine

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Queen  
France and England  
1122 - 1204 AD

Eleanor was the Duchess of Aquitaine and had lands of her own, which made her a catch. She did end up marrying two very prominent kings. The first was Louis VII of France, and they had three daughters. Their marriage was able to be annulled when, after 15 years of marriage, she had not given him a son. Then she married Henry II of England and bore him eight children total, five of which were sons and three of whom became king. When Eleanor supported their son Henry's plan to overthrow his father, Henry II put her in jail. Eleanor seems to have been a lively person outliving both husbands and all three of her king sons. While in prison she still seems to have had an influence over her children and her lands in Aquitaine. She's been the subject of art, books, movies, music, and even a character in a video game. She was one strong woman.



# Marie Antionette

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Queen  
France  
1755 - 1793 AD

Marie Antoinette is famously quoted as saying “Let them eat cake!” Many historians would say she most likely did not say that, but she might not have realized the extent that her subjects were suffering until it was too late. Marie was born Maria Antonia Josepha Johanna, Archduchess of Austria. When she was 14, her parents sent her to France to marry the future king, Louis XVI, a man she never met before to help form an alliance between the two countries. From that time on, her life was under constant surveillance. She had her first child eight years after her marriage and then would go on to have three more children. She did try to change from her lavish and excessive spending after her children were born, the only way of life she knew since that was how she was raised. Marie realized her children were most important to her, but the people of France didn’t care about her change of mind (many never liked her, to begin with), and they still blamed her for their poverty. She was not innocent in the disparity of lifestyles between the royalty and the peasants, but that didn’t begin with her marriage to Louis XVI. She will forever be maligned, but she was a strong woman in the face of death during the French Revolution that sought to dismantle the Monarchy.





# **Women's Rights Advocates**

## Sor Juana Inés De La Cruz

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Writer  
Mexico  
1651 - 1695 AD

Inés was an illegitimate child born into poverty in Mexico. By the age of three, she had taught herself to read and would read everything that she could get her hands on. Inés would sneak into her sister's lessons so she could hear what her sister was learning. When she was a teenager, word of her brilliant mind spread, and the Viceroy of New Spain wanted to test Inés's intelligence, but he quickly learned that she was even more intelligent than the stories told. She became a lady in waiting for a noble family, which was uncommon for illegitimate children. She quickly realized that life among the aristocracy was not the one for her, so she entered a convent and became a nun. This enabled Inés to read and write as she saw fit, as well as have many wealthy patrons to publish her work, and she became famous. Before her death, she wrote one of her most controversial writings, which defended women as intellectual beings, something that she was told women could not be. This work was published after her death. To this day, in Mexico, Inés's likeness is on coins and paper money and she is remembered as the Phoenix of Mexico.





# George Eliot

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Author  
England  
1819 - 1880 AD



George Eliot was born Mary Anne Evans and grew up on the estate of her father's employer. She went to boarding school and was an extremely religious person for most of her younger life. After she finished school, she was exposed to many ideas that contradicted her religious upbringing. She lived in a time where new ideas about science often were different from what religion said. Eliot married twice, her first marriage was in her 20's and her second in her 60's, which was not the norm for a woman during this time. She also worked as an editor at the Westminster Review. She is a celebrated author who created works such as *Silas Marner* and *Middlemarch*, each depicting just about every class of people in England during the 19th century. Eliot was well-read during her lifetime and her novels are still read today because of the psychological depth of her characters.

# Simone de Beauvoir

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Writer and Philosopher  
France  
1908 - 1986 AD

Simone was a woman who knew she was just as good as any man, even if the society she was born into said otherwise. She lived in a time when women were viewed as inferior to men. Because Simone experienced these ideas first hand she wrote a book titled *The Second Sex* and in it, she outlined the oppression of women. She worked as a teacher until she was able to support herself as a writer. Today, this book stands as a seminal text for the modern feminist movement. Even though she wrote many other works throughout her lifetime, this book is her most famous. She is a controversial figure because many people focused on her personal life such as her open relationship with Jean-Paul Sartre, and her relationships with young women as well, which were often the main focus of the questions she would get when she gave speeches or was on a panel. She was a force to be reckoned with and her works are still read today. Simone's influence on feminist ideas and feminist theory continues to ripple through most of the western world.

# Theodora

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Empress of the Eastern Roman Empire  
Constantinople  
500 - 548 AD

Theodora was not born into a noble family, she was born into a family that lived in one of the lowest ranks within society. She began her life as an actress and was able to travel to North Africa, but found herself stuck there, far away from her land. She had to save up money to get back to Constantinople, and when she got back home began working in the palace as a wool spinner. This is where she met Emperor Justinian, who liked her and rewrote the laws so that he could marry her. While she was critical of people in governmental authority, she worked tirelessly to advocate for the rights of women within her society. She was able to change the law so that women could have guardianship of their children in case of divorce or if their husbands died. Theodora even opened a place called Metanoia, where women could go and work so that they could support themselves. She also took good care of her people when they didn't have enough food or were in need. Theodora did have people who criticized her, but her influence in helping the women within her society was revolutionary.

# Olympe de Gouges

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Writer and Political Activist

France

1748 - 1793 AD



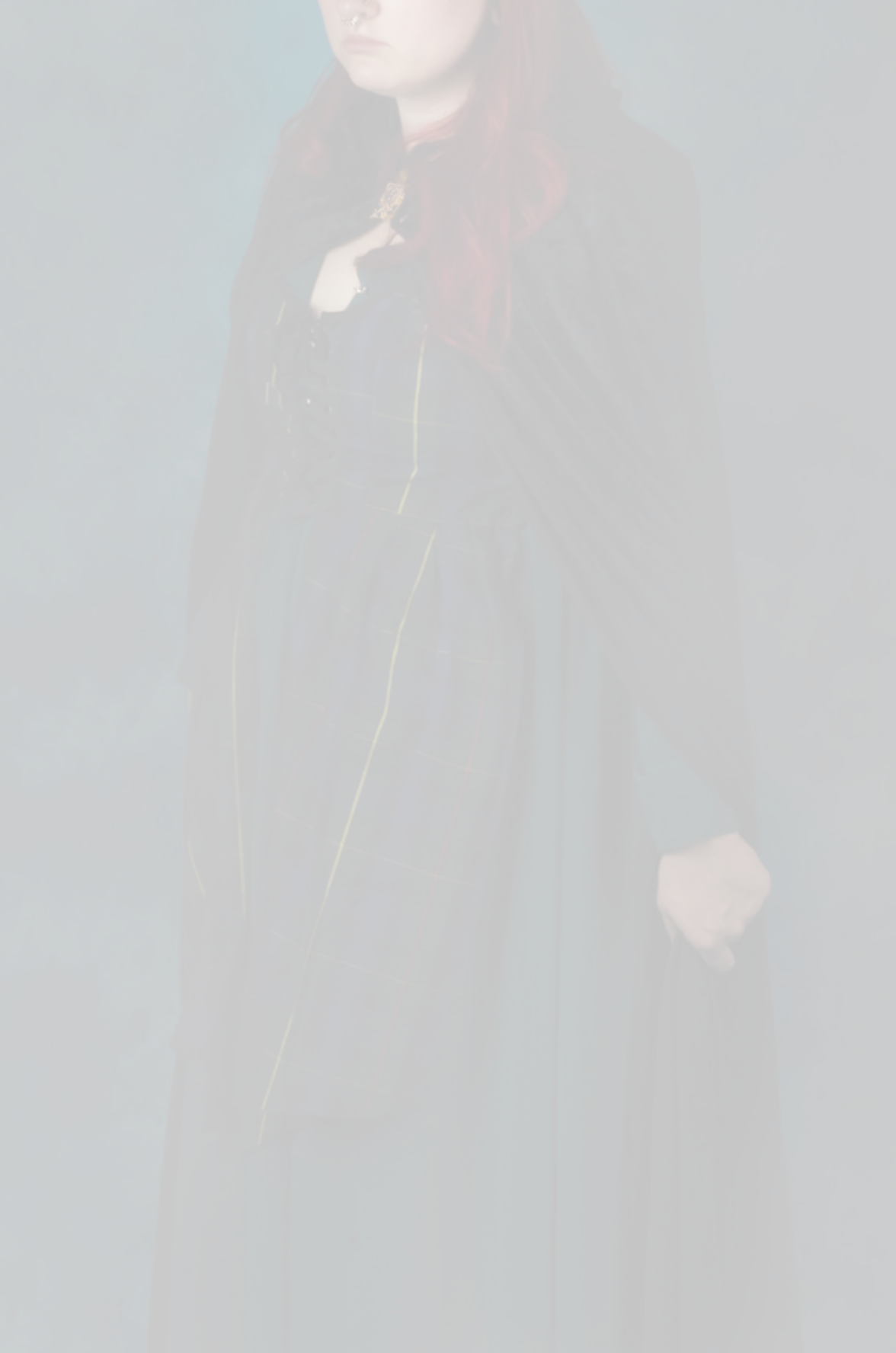
Olympia was born Marie and, at the age of 16, she was married and had a son. When her husband died she changed her name to Olympe and moved to Paris. Because she was married off at a young age Olympe said she would never marry again. She was a playwright who was very involved in politics and the social issues of her day such as maternity hospital rights of orphan children, unmarried mothers, and how women were treated in divorce. She is the author of *The Declaration of the Rights of Woman And the Female Citizen*, which she wrote during the French Revolution. Some of her ideas were not so popular, such as the French people should be able to choose the type of government they wanted. She was imprisoned and given what some call a mock trial because they had already made up their mind that they were going to convict her. Olympe lost her life for her political views.

# Caroline Norton

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Social Reformer  
England  
1808 - 1877 AD

In 1836 Caroline wanted to divorce her husband. She also sued her husband for falsely claiming she and her friend Lord Melbourne, the Whig Prime Minister, had an inappropriate relationship (they did not). The jury tossed out the case and she was also denied her divorce, which meant she lost custody and access to her three children who had been taken and hidden away from her. This prompted Caroline to campaign for the passing of several acts to protect the rights of women and children. These were the Custody of Infants Act 1839, the Matrimonial Causes Act 1857, and the Married Women's Property Act 1870. All of which were acts to help women during a divorce to keep access to their children, and keep property they owned.



# Renegades

# Rani Lakshmibai

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Resistance Fighter  
India  
1828 - 1858 AD

Rani was picked out of obscurity to marry the ruler of the city of Jhansi, even so, her life was not easy even after that. Her husband died, her child died, and then the British East India Company refused to accept her adopted child as a legitimate heir. This led to an uprising by the people. Initially, Rani was not part of the uprising, but she eventually realized she had to become their leader. The British did drive her out of the city, but she came back only to be killed in battle. Her people burned her body on the spot so the British could not take it, and then took her son into hiding. She is now revered as a national hero in India with her likeness in various places all over the country.



## Moremi Ajasoro

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Warrior and Advocate  
Yourba  
12th Centruy AD

Moremi's Village was being haunted by messengers of the dead, called Egungun. The people in her village, the Ife, became afraid, believing these messengers of the dead were stealing all their food at night. She became suspicious thinking, "Why do spirits need food?" So she stayed up the next time the spirits came to the village and the spirits decided to take Moremi with them. It turns out the "spirits" were men from the neighboring village called the Igbo. She married their king and stayed there for several months learning all she could about what was going on until she felt it was time to go back to her people. When she returned, Moremi told her people about the trick to steal food away from them. When her people found this out, they waited for the next time the spirits came, then greeted the spirits, who were just the Igbo people, with torches and set their costumes on fire. This ended the Igbo taking food from Moremi's village.





# Joan of Arc

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Warrior and Saint  
France  
1412 - 1431 AD

Joan of Arc, The Maid of Orleans began her life as a simple country peasant. When she was just a teenager, Joan began hearing voices that she truly believed to be those of saints speaking to her. She said those voices told her to go and tell the deposed Dauphin of France to fight for his crown, so she did just that. Joan was able to convince him that what she was saying was legitimate and he allowed her to become part of the French army. There are questions about whether she fought in a battle, but Joan was trained in warfare and did go to the battlefield when the French and English battled. Joan was captured before the end of the war, and the English burned her at the stake for being a witch, but they burned her because they feared her message. After her death, she was exonerated of her crimes, and in 1960 the Catholic Church made her a saint.



# Lady K'abel

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Supreme Warrior  
Maya  
7th Century AD

Lady K'abel was a seventh-century warrior queen from the house of the Snake King of the Mayan Wak Kingdom in present-day Southern Mexico. While she was considered physically beautiful, Lady K'abel was the military governor of her kingdom and was married to a leader of another great Mayan Kingdom. However, she outranked her husband as they both ruled the land together. The titles given to her, Lady Snake Lord and Lady Waterlily Hand, did not do justice to how strong a woman she was. She was ultimately given the title of Supreme Warrior. Lady K'abel was buried with over 1600 artifacts including ceramic vessels, jade jewelry, stone figurines, and a small alabaster jar carved in the shape of a conch shell. Today she is seen as a leader who was a force to be reckoned with.



# Boudicca

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Warrior  
Iceni in Britian  
Died 61 AD

Boudicca was married to Prasutagus, the leader of the British Iceni. Originally when the Romans conquered Britain, they had allowed the leaders to continue ruling. However, that quickly ended, and the Romans killed Boudicca's husband. This didn't sit well with Boudicca, so she took leadership of her people and went after the men who killed her husband. There is also a story that these same men raped her and her daughters, which further angered Boudicca. Between 60 and 61 AD, while the Roman governor Gaius Suetonius Paullinus was leading a campaign in North Wales, the Iceni rebelled, and many other tribes joined them in this rebellion. Boudicca's warriors were able to defeat the Roman Ninth Legion and destroyed the capital of Roman Britain, Colchester. As well they went on to destroy London and Verulamium. Boudicca was defeated by a Roman army, and it is believed that she poisoned herself to avoid capture. It is unknown where she died and what happened to her body, but in Britain, her story is still told today with a resurgence of the tale beginning in Victorian England.



# Osh-Tish

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Warrior  
Crow Nation, Montana  
1854 - 1929 AD

Osh-Tisch was a member of the Crow Nation. She was a warrior who earned the name Finds Them and Kills Them while fighting the Lakota. But before this, she was an artist, a medicine woman, and a shaman as well as the head badé in the tribe. A badé, or a two-spirit, is a person born one gender and lives their life as another. Her bravery was recounted by a Crow woman by the name of Pretty Shield who spoke many years later about the details of the battle of the Rosebud. The Crow fought alongside the US Army against the Lakota and Cheyenne. After the battle, most of the Crow were sent to reservations. The United States government did not approve of two-spirited people and they wanted Osh-Tisch to cut her hair and wear men's clothing. The Crow nation did not take kindly to the US government trying to force one of their own to be something they were not. The US government did not understand Osh-Tisch, but her name is one that survived to the present day because of her heroic deeds and the fact that Pretty Shield kept her name alive.



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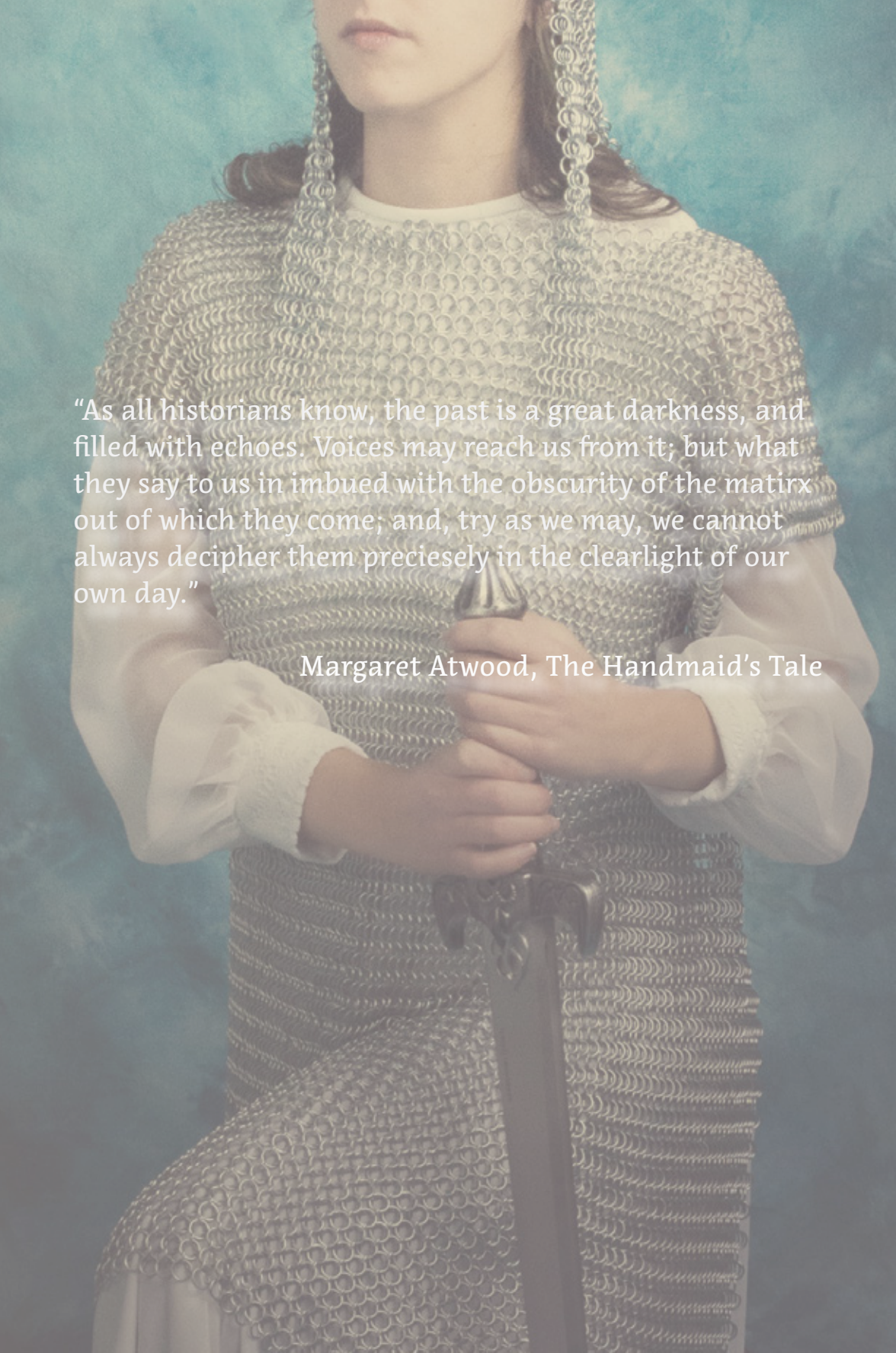
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A woman is shown from the chest up, wearing a full suit of chainmail. She is holding a sword with both hands, the hilt of which is visible. Her hair is pulled back, and she is wearing a white, long-sleeved garment underneath the chainmail. The background is a textured, teal-colored wall. The lighting is soft, highlighting the metallic texture of the chainmail.

“As all historians know, the past is a great darkness, and filled with echoes. Voices may reach us from it; but what they say to us is imbued with the obscurity of the matrix out of which they come; and, try as we may, we cannot always decipher them precisely in the clearlight of our own day.”

Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*