



**"Fact: Mary Morris is the best travel writer alive. I am humbled by her skill at using the bones of a journey to get to the heart of herself. She's a master of the craft."**

**— Jodi Picoult, *New York Times* bestselling author of *A Spark of Light* and *Small Great Things***

**<http://www.marymorris.net/> | @marymorriswriter | #AllTheWayToTheTigers**

For more information, to explore a book club visit (virtual or in-person) or to arrange an interview with Mary Morris, please contact Laura Rossi, [laura@laurarossipublicrelations.com](mailto:laura@laurarossipublicrelations.com).

## Praise for *All The Way To The Tigers*

**"Mary Morris has long been a master memoirist, and *All the Way to the Tigers* is among her finest works. Brave, layered, complex, and deeply human."**

— Dani Shapiro, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Inheritance and Hourglass*

**"This lush story tells the tale of a single woman on the road, looking for redemption and healing. . . expect the unexpected in her rich philosophies, inner discoveries, and self-realizations on the road."**

— *O, the Oprah Magazine*

**"The best travel memoirs offer readers three pleasures woven together: accounts of 'what I saw,' 'how I came to understand myself better' and 'what I learned about the world'—and Morris' memoir doesn't skimp on any of them."**

— Nancy Pearl, *NPR*

**"The author of the classic travelogue *Nothing to Declare* this time ventures to Pench, India, in part to glimpse the apex predator she's long dreamed of, in part to prove that a recent injury won't end the habit of far-flung travel that has nourished her for six decades. The resulting memoir—wry and wistful—reveals a woman finally comfortable with her own imperfections and, when she gets the chance, unafraid to look a tiger in the eye."**

— *O, The Oprah Magazine*

**"Rich and unsparing, Morris' slim memoir is a keeper."**

— Maureen Corrigan, *Fresh Air*

**"The compelling why and how of jumpstarting her epic adventure launches a multilayered story unfurled in 100 brief chapters—like little pearls expertly strung on an intricate necklace . . . Morris delivers with grace and grit."**

— *Forbes*

**"A travel narrative in the tradition of Cheryl Strayed and Elizabeth Gilbert."**

— *Read It Forward*

**"Morris is frank, funny, and incisive as she revisits her 'free ranging' Chicago childhood, single motherhood, and her start as writer, and expounds on tigers in the world and in the imagination . . . Morris' epigrammatic memoir is a finely wrought mosaic of unexpected and provocative pieces cunningly fit together."**

— *Booklist*

**"Engrossing . . . Morris's descriptions of remote beauty, grinding urban poverty, and exotic adventures will captivate armchair tourists and travel memoir fans."**

— *Publishers Weekly*

**"Honest, observant, and striking."**

— *Kirkus Reviews*

## Discussion questions for *All The Way To The Tigers*

- 1** Do you think Morris would have gone to India and written this book if she had not had her accident?
- 2** We think of love and betrayal, familial conflict, etc as elements that move a story along. How can mishaps also move a story along? In other words is there a story in this book without the accident?
- 3** What are all the elements that draw Morris to tigers? Is it really the animals? Are they metaphors for something and if so what exactly? Is it all the above?
- 4** The story moves between Brooklyn and India as well as memory and tiger memorabilia. Did you find this structure satisfying or confusing?
- 5** Why do you think Morris chose to write this book in these short vignettes? Was there some organizing principle here that may not be obvious?
- 6** Why did she choose to include the material about her parents and her childhood? Is that germane to the story?
- 7** Morris actually spent a great deal more time and traveled more in India than appears in this book. She also went to Calcutta and Varanasi. Why do you think she made the decision not to include more? As a reader would you have liked to have heard more or did you find the conciseness of this narrative satisfying?
- 8** Morris is still recovering from her accident and is sick when she arrives in India. Did you wonder why she didn't turn around and go home? Would you have stuck with it?
- 9** It is not always easy to write about other cultures and do so in a way that avoids stereotyping. Has Morris succeeded in this and if so how?
- 10** Morris writes fiction as well as memoir. Do you think this could have been a novel? Why do you think she decided to write it as memoir?

## From Mary Morris

Since I can remember I have been a traveler, but I have not always written about travel. Then, one day in 1986, I was having lunch with my editor, Nan Talese. I was between books and feeling a little stuck. I was also complaining to Nan that *The New York Times Book Review* had just published its summer special travel issue and all the books were by men. And Nan turned me and said, "Why don't you write a travel memoir, Mary? You're always traveling."

It was such an obvious question and yet it had never occurred to me before. In part it hadn't occurred to me because as a woman I had yet to own my own experiences, to feel that they were valid and important enough to put pen to paper. I wasn't an adventurer. Danger wasn't my thing. And I still wanted my creature comforts (a bed to sleep in, decent food). Though I journeyed into jungles and remote places on earth, I viewed myself as a traveler.

I read many of the memoirs by male travelers and realized that as a woman I moved through the world in a different way. I became more interested in what I call the inner journey. And how it interfaces with the outer journey - the landscape that surrounds me.

Since that lunch in 1986 I have published five travel memoirs about my journeys as a solo woman traveler. Each memoir reflects a different moment in my life - as a single woman traveling through macho Mexico in *Nothing to Declare*, searching for family in *Wall to Wall*, being a single parent in *Angels and Aliens*, and dealing with my daughter going off to college and mourning the death of my father in *The River Queen*.

In *All the Way to the Tigers*, I am an older woman, aware of my vulnerabilities (I was recovering from a devastating ankle-bone break after all), but still determined to go on seeing the world as I have for all these years.

People have said to me that I am very brave. That they could never do what I have done and travel in this way. I like to reply that I do not think of myself as brave. But I have a little courage. To me a little courage means that you might still be afraid, but your fear doesn't stop you.



Mary Morris is the author of sixteen books - eight novels, three collections of short stories, and five travel memoirs, including the travel classic *Nothing to Declare: Memoirs of a Woman Traveling Alone* (Houghton Mifflin, 1988), and, most recently, *All the Way to the Tigers* (Nan A. Talese/Doubleday, 2020). Each of Morris' five travel memoirs describes her journeys as a solo woman on the road.

Along with her husband, Larry O'Connor, she edited an anthology of travel literature by women, entitled *Maiden Voyages* in the US and the *Virago Book of Women Travellers* in the UK and Canada. Her numerous short stories, articles and travel essays have appeared in such places as *The Atlantic*, *Narrative*, *The Paris Review*, and *The New York Times*. Morris is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, the George W. Perkins Fellowship from Princeton University and the Rome Prize in Literature. In 2016, the novel *The Jazz Palace* was awarded the Anisfield-Wolf Award for fiction. This prize goes to a literary work that addresses the issues of racism and cultural diversity. She is a professor of creative writing at Sarah Lawrence College.

Morris likes to say that whether writing fiction or memoir, her goal is always to tell a story.

# Tiger Conservation

In the years since I began my research for ALL THE WAY TO THE TIGERS a lot has happened in terms of tiger conservation. And there is reason to be optimistic. The tiger, especially in India, has seen a strong resurgence in the wild thanks to strenuous conservation efforts that include anti-poaching campaigns, creating new buffer zones and tiger reserves, moving villages when need be (this remains a controversial practice). Through education and a focus on responsible tourism, India has made tremendous progress. A recent counting has estimated that there are close to 3,000 Bengal tigers in the wild, a 33% increase since 2014 when the last tiger counting was completed. And approximately 4,000 tigers exist in the wild globally.

At the same time in India where most wild tigers roam a billion and a half people must cohabitate with an apex predator that needs huge territory and this hasn't been that easy. The struggle continues between beast and man. While humans are technically not tiger prey, incidents, often fatal, occur. And the locals retaliate. Angry villagers savagely killed a tiger that had attacked people and a video of this went viral. And a tigress who had killed many people had to be hunted and killed when relocating her failed.



Yet there is progress. Zoos and circuses such as Sea World are cutting back and/or eliminating their animal acts (and in some cases, such as that of Ringling Brothers, gone out of business) and poaching through good wildlife management is down. Also the focus on tigers as entertainment in the incredibly successful documentary, "The Tiger King," has made people more and more aware of the need to protect these beautiful creatures.

To be clear tigers are not in danger of extinction. They are endangered in the wild. In the United States alone there are over 12,000 tigers in private collections. And the Chinese still believe that tiger bones and tiger blood will make them potent. They breed tigers for this purpose as well as trapping them in the wild. (One positive result that might come from COVID-19 is the awareness that eating wild animal meat might not be a safe practice). But hunters continue to want trophies. There are places in the United States where for a sizable sum you can go on "safari" and shoot tigers.

Yet I am hopeful. The numbers are encouraging, and progress is being made. I am less optimistic about tigers in other parts of Asia especially Siberia and Malaysia where there are only approximately 1,000 tigers left in the wild. For a greater understanding of tigers in general and the Amur, or Siberian tiger, in particular, I highly recommend John Valliant's outstanding book, THE TIGER.

If you would like to do something to help tigers, here are some places where you could lend your support: To help tigers in the wild: [savethetigersnow.org](https://savethetigersnow.org)

Also an excellent organization is [panthera.org](https://panthera.org) which has partnered with the Save the Tiger Fund. Also if you wish to help tigers that have been rescued from zoos, circuses, and private collections, you can send donations to the Exotic Feline Rescue Center [efrc.org](https://efrc.org) (Not to be confused with Joe Exotic!)

## Tiger Fire Cocktail

2 oz. Rye

1 oz Sweet Vermouth

2 dashes or half tsp dry or Orange Curacao

Dash Bitters (Orange or Angosture)

Shake for 30 seconds.

Strain into glass.

Express orange peel thru flame.

Drop in peel. ENJOY!

