



AAC Publications

Ataatap Tower, The Mental Breakdown; Chastity Tower, The Princess Brides

Greenland, East Greenland, Kangertivatsiaq Fjord, Mythics Cirque

Fay Manners (U.K.) and I arrived in Tasiilaq on August 7, after a delay of several weeks due to reports of impassable sea ice in the east coast fjords. A boatman then took us on a journey north of about 350km, and on the 10th we arrived in the alpine valley of the Mythics Cirque.

There, we ran into Felix Bub and Martin Feistl, who had arrived two weeks previously by yacht. The two had recently repeated Forum (840m, 7c, 2021) on the north face of Siren Tower and had scoped a new line on the face that looked inspiring. The four of us spent two days attempting this line, but retreated after encountering a blank section that we were unable to free climb without placing a bolt (see related story here).

A few days later, on the morning of the 17th, Fay, Martin, and I found ourselves at the base of a steep column on Ataatap (a.k.a. Father) Tower. We hoped to make a two-day, alpine-style ascent of a new line dividing the steepest part of the northeast face from a pinnacle on the left side.

What had appeared to be a long, splitter hand crack turned out to be three pitches of vertical offwidth or chimney—Fay carefully and boldly dispatched these without a number 6 cam. Above this, Martin continued to a thin finger crack and then climbed through sparsely protected 7b/b+ terrain for two long pitches, never falling or hanging, and providing us with the best free climbing of the trip.

From there, two more rather loose pitches, which required extreme delicacy and a nut tool to clean out cracks for protection, deposited us on top of the pillar, a comfortable spot for our one-Pod-for-the-three-of-us seated bivouac.

The following day, 120m of nice face and crack climbing brought us to the ridgeline, where we joined Coronis (AAJ 2013) and followed this to the summit, proud of our accomplishment but slightly bewildered as to the best way down. Downclimbing the 2012 Libeck route on the south ridge turned out to be progressively more exhausting, with loose and involved terrain, followed by a tricky circumvention of a black-ice glacier that forced us to slide down its moraine—a first-hand experience of the effects of climate change in Greenland.

We called our route The Mental Breakdown (765m of climbing, of which 580m were new, 7b/b+ R, natural gear throughout). Between tears and German expletives, it was apparent that each of us had been close to this feeling over the course of the two long days.

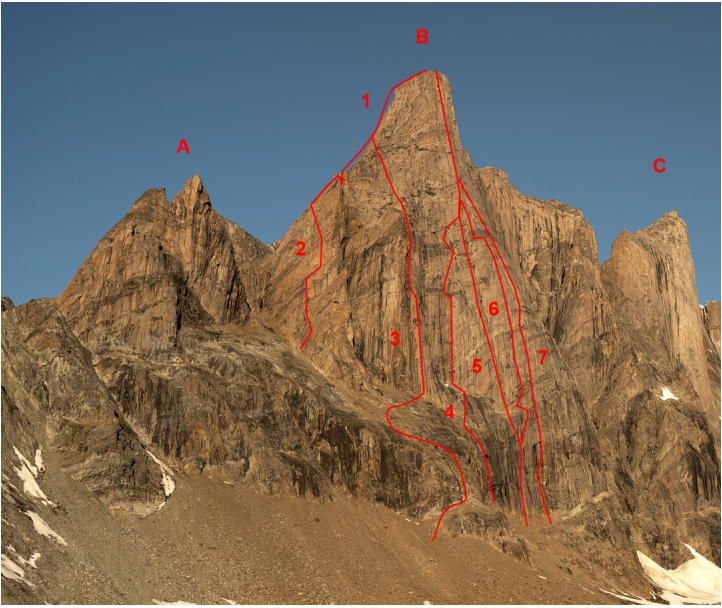
We returned to a base camp that had become even more sociable due to the presence of a team of Spanish women. We quickly made plans to accompany Miriam Marco and Amaia Segurola on a packraft voyage to nearby Chastity Tower (AAJ 2022). Fay and I found what appeared to be an easy and quick line on the west face, but it proved to be deceptively long: 370m and nine pitches up to 6c+, with involved route-finding, offwidths, loose blocks, and a smattering of nice cracks. We stood on the summit after nine hours of climbing, calling our route The Princess Brides. Amaia and Miriam were not able to complete their route.

Back in Seattle, after enjoying—with gratitude—a week of stormbound hospitality with new friends in

Kulusuk and then in Iceland, I reflected on how happy I was that this remote expedition had turned out to feel not so remote after all.

– **Michelle Dvorak, USA**

Images



(A) Ganja Tower. (B) Ataatap Tower. (C) Siren Tower. (1) Coronis (2012). (2) Rostoll Verbenero (2023). (3) The Mental Breakdown (2023). (4) Daddy's Sweet Tooth (2021). (5) Built Fjord Tough (2012). (6) Jubi (2023). (7) Northeast Face (French Route, 2018).



Seen from the north, The Princess Brides (2) climbs the triangular subsummit of Chastity Tower. The main top is to the far left, and the 2021 route (1) climbs directly up its north face.



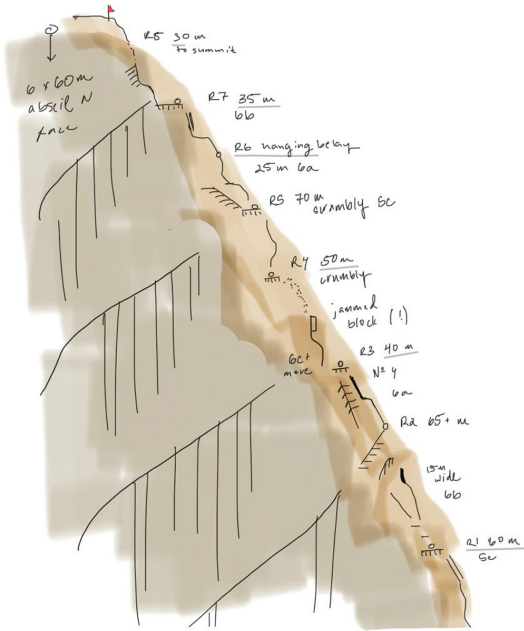
Michelle Dvorak starting up the sixth pitch (6a) of The Princess Brides on Chastity Tower.



Michelle Dvorak on the eighth pitch of The Mental Breakdown on Ataatap (Father) Tower.



Michelle Dvorak on the first pitch (5c) of The Princess Brides on Chastity Tower.



The Princess Brides on west face of Chastity Tower.

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