

The Republic of Birds

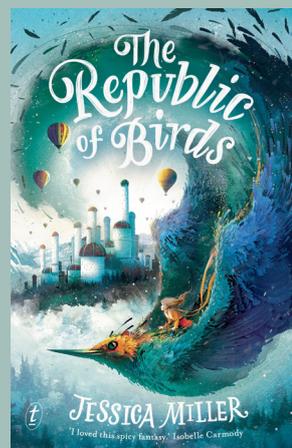


Jessica Miller

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FICTION, B-FORMAT PAPERBACK

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PRAISE FOR *THE REPUBLIC OF BIRDS*

'I loved this spicy fantasy with its unusual Russian influences and its clever, cartographer heroine.'

ISOBELLE CARMODY

'This book has so many things I love: maps, strange magic, living folklore, talking animals, history books, impossible challenges and a redoubtable heroine.'

LEANNE HALL

'Simply wonderful. I loved everything. EVERYTHING.'

KAREN FOXLEE

ABOUT JESSICA MILLER

Jessica Miller grew up in Brisbane and now lives in Berlin. Her debut novel, *Elizabeth and Zenobia*, was shortlisted for the Text Prize and the Readings Children's Book Prize. It was commended as a CBCA Notable Book and named one of Kirkus Reviews' Best Middle Grade Books for 2017

ABOUT THE BOOK

Olga loves the stories of the old cartographers and pores over their ancient books and maps, trying to unlock their secrets. Sometimes, she thinks she can even feel through the maps—almost see into them—as if by magic.

But magic is banned in Tsaretsvo, ever since the war with the birds that divided the kingdom, and the powerful magic-wielding lagas have long been banished. Now, any young girl who shows signs of being an laga is whisked away to Bleak Steppe—to a life, so the story goes, of unspeakable punishment.

When the bird army kidnaps Olga's sister in a surprise attack on the human kingdom, Olga realises she has to venture into the Republic of Birds to bring her back. But first, she must learn to unlock her magical ability.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. At the start of the novel, Olga thinks she is talentless and that her sister Mira is the special one in the family. Has there been a particular time in your life when you've felt similar? How did it affect your relationship with the other person?
2. Before reading this book, had you heard of cartography? Did Olga's love for ancient books and maps inspire you to learn more about places on the other side of the world? Where would you most like to travel to and why?
3. When Mira is captured and taken into the Republic of Birds, Olga is understandably terrified. What made Olga overcome her fear?
4. Often girls and young women are expected to like certain things and have certain interests just because they are female. When Olga isn't keen to attend the Spring Blossom Ball, it sets her apart from the other girls in Stolitsa. Do you think the advice Varvara gives Olga on page 304 is useful? Can you think of a situation where this advice might help you?
5. We see some pretty amazing magic in this book. If you could have a magical ability, what would it be?
6. In Stolitsa, there is an Instructionary Institute for Girls and an Instructionary Institute for Boys and at each place the students study different subjects. Do you think that boys and girls should have different schooling and learn different things?
7. Olga is gifted with a magical ability, but it takes her some time to learn how to control her powers. Name something you're good at (everyone has something) and describe how you harnessed that skill.