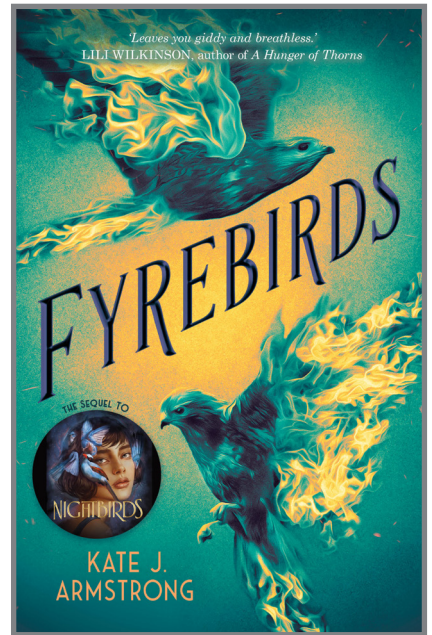


# Fyrebirds

AUTHOR

**KATE J. ARMSTRONG**



SCIS: 5496609

ISBN: 9781761066252

**RECOMMENDED FOR:** Mid to Upper Secondary  
(Sexual References, Drug and Alcohol References, Suicide Reference, Violence, Language)

## SYNOPSIS

The Nightbirds were once their city's best-kept secret, but now, the secret's out. Everyone knows there are girls who can gift their magic with a kiss, and everyone wants a piece of them. Such girls are in more danger than ever. But Matilde, Sayer, Æsa and Fenlin can do feats of magic no-one has seen in centuries. They're like the Fyrebirds of old: powerful women who once moved mountains, parted seas and led armies. But they don't want the world to know the full extent of their power—not yet.

Matilde is too busy trying to show the city that girls with magic can be trusted, while Sayer stalks the night, punishing any man who dares cross her. Fen struggles to keep her gang together and her magic hidden, while Æsa tries to settle back into life in the Illish Isles.

But fate tugs them inexorably towards each other, and back into the fight to protect magical girls. As the new suzerain works to lift the prohibition on magic, the churchmen who support it—and the gang lords who profit from it—whisper rebellion. The Nightbirds' old enemies are rallying, too. Smelling blood in the water, a magic-mad Farlands king threatens to invade Eudea. As war looms, and the Republic's fate hangs from a knife's edge, the Nightbirds have to decide if becoming Fyrebirds is worth risking the lives and loves they might have.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kate J. Armstrong has always had a fondness for adventure. After graduating college, she left her home state of Virginia and has never really looked back. She's explored many places and vocations, working as a high school English teacher, and a non-fiction writer and editor for publishers such as National Geographic. In 2018, she started *The Exploress*, a women's history podcast with a cult following and over half a million downloads. She is also the co-host of *Pub Dates*, a podcast that takes readers backstage to join her on the journey to publication for her books, *Nightbirds* and *Fyrebirds*. When she's not writing or recording, you will find Kate hiking mountains, trying out cocktails, finding excuses to dress up in historical attire, or reading way past her bedtime. She lives in Melbourne, with her husband.

## STUDY NOTES

- The prologue involves a new character—King Joost—and his decision to invade Eudea. Why do you think Kate J. Armstrong decided to open *Fyrebirds* with him?
- Joost appears in two epigraphs before he makes an appearance in the main action of the story on p 235. What effect does delaying his appearance create in the novel?

- Make a list of some of your favourite epigraphs in *Fyrebirds* and describe how they enriched the story.
  - Some of the epigraphs foreshadow events that occur later in the book. How else are future events foreshadowed in the novel?
- Which character was your favourite and what was it about them and their journey that appealed to you more than the others? How important was that character's special power in making your choice?
- Did you have a favourite male character?
- Why do you think magic is such a common theme in fantasy novels? Is the magic that is described in *Fyrebirds* similar to that in other fantasy novels you've read? In what way would you say it is different?
- Did you read *Fyrebirds* and see events play out like a movie in your mind?
  - What role did the structure and pace of the novel play in this?
  - Were there other elements in the novel that contributed to this?
  - Do you prefer to imagine a movie version as you read a novel or not?
- Kate J. Armstrong describes *Nightbirds* and *Fyrebirds* as 'fiercely feminist fantasies'. Do you agree with that description? Give an example from *Fyrebirds* that best demonstrates this.
- The *Fyrebirds* are often called witches in the novel. Research how witches were viewed at different times in European history: from relatively harmless individuals around the 10th century to the essence of evil from the 14th to 17th centuries. Who benefited most from this change and how did witch hunts ensure that these same people kept control of power? In *Fyrebirds*, who benefits most from controlling magic?
- How is religion portrayed in *Fyrebirds*? Is it a force for good in Eudea or merely a tool to be used by power-hungry men?
- YA (young adult) novels typically explore emotional highs and lows (first love, family and friendship issues) and fundamental themes such as the wish to change society for the better. With this definition in mind, would you describe *Fyrebirds* as a YA novel? Give examples of characters, settings and events in the novel to back up your answer.
  - What do you think 'coming-of-age' actually means? Do Matilde, Æsa, Sayer and Fen all 'come-of-age' according to your definition?
  - In what way do each change and do you think one, in particular, undergoes the greatest change?
  - What events or characters in the novel demonstrate that transformation?
- 'And then, at last, there comes a spark.' is the very final line in the story. What do you think the line signifies? What do you think might happen next if Kate J. Armstrong decided to write a third book in the series?

AUTHOR OF NOTES  
**CAROLYN WALSH**