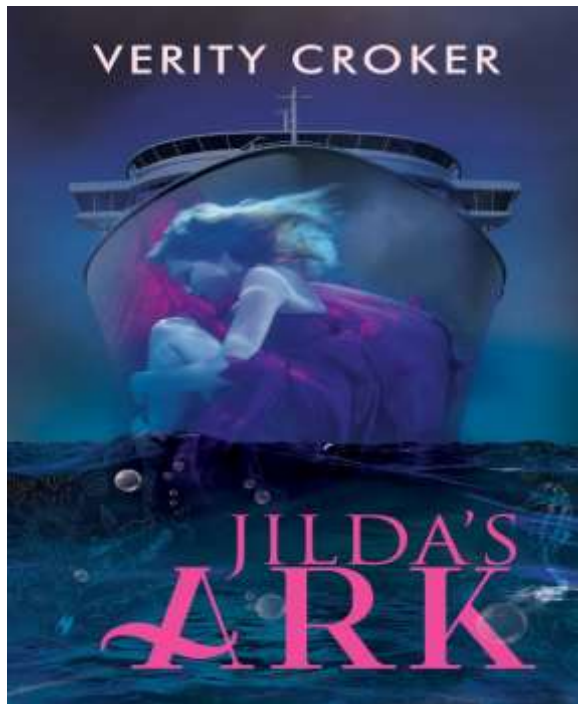


Jilda's Ark by Verity Croker

Teaching Guide



About *Jilda's Ark*: What was supposed to be a sixteenth birthday celebration cruise for identical twins Jilda and Rosa quickly turns into a nightmare. While her mother and sister are enjoying an excursion on a Fijian island, Jilda, who is unwell and remains onboard, finds their ship has sailed off, leaving most of its passengers stranded on shore.

An unknown group has taken over the ship. After a few days, they collect thousands of new passengers from a distant archipelago, making conditions onboard overcrowded and uncomfortable. Nobody seems to know where they are headed, so the mood on the ship rapidly deteriorates. Though Jilda is desperate to reunite with her family, she meets someone who comforts her and will completely change her world. But how will her new friend Jade feel when she learns Jilda has a boyfriend?



Verity Croker writes across a range of genres. Her young adult novels, *Jilda's Ark* and *May Day Mine* are published by Harmony Ink Press in the US. Her middle grade chapter books, *Cyclone Christmas* and *Block City*, have been published by Sunshine Books / Wendy Pye, NZ.

She has written travel articles for *Journeys* magazine, and articles for newspapers. Some of her short stories appear in anthologies, journals and on ABC online. She is also a published poet.

Verity completed her Master of Arts (Creative Writing) at the University of Tasmania in 2013, and worked at UTAS in Hobart, teaching English to international students. She originally trained as a schoolteacher. She is now a full-time author, based in Brisbane.

Discussion Questions and Activities:

HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY:

- 1) *Jilda's Ark* is mostly set on a cruise ship off the east coast of Australia. The ship docks in Fiji in the Pacific Ocean. Take a look at a map to locate Fiji as well as the other Pacific Islands mentioned in the novel, Samoa, Vanuatu, and Tonga. You won't find fictional Levy Archipelago, but you will have a general idea where it is. The novel also mentions the Caribbean islands of St. Lucia, Barbados, the Bahamas, and Jamaica. Check out their location on a map too. The ship sails to Hobart in Tasmania—can you find that on a map of Australia?
- 2) What do you know about any or all of these places? Their history? The indigenous populations? Politics? Famous landmarks? Famous people? The cities? The towns? The countryside? The climate? The culture? Industry? Agriculture? The Economy?
- 3) *Jilda's Ark* focuses on environmental refugees and climate change. What do you know about these issues? What do you think will happen in the future with sea-level rise and island populations? What are some solutions?
- 4) Which nations will be most impacted by sea-level rise? Which cities in particular? What will this mean for the citizens? What are some solutions?

ART & CRAFT:

- 1) There is a profile image of Jilda on the cover. Could you illustrate what she looks like front on? What about Rosa, Jade, Zac? The twin's mother and father? Marta and Jonas? Sketch or paint any or all of these characters.
- 2) The animal-saving scene would have been very dramatic. Can you illustrate how you imagine the scene with the animals swimming out in the ocean and scrambling for rescue over the side of the boats?
- 3) Can you imagine Marta and Jonas' home on their island? Could you draw or paint that?
- 4) Illustrate the fleet of ten ships sailing up the River Derwent to Hobart, Tasmania.

LANGUAGE & WRITING:

- 1) Write a review of *Jilda's Ark*.
- 2) These are the themes of *Jilda's Ark*:
 - Environmental refugees
 - Sea-level rise
 - Global warming
 - Bravery
 - Determination
 - Coming out (LGBTQI+ themes)
 - Family solidarity
 - The plight of animals

Can you find examples of these in the book? Do you think there are other themes the author didn't even realize she was writing about? What are they and how are they exemplified?

- 3) Jilda, Rosa, and Jade conduct a crowd-funding campaign. Do you know how these work? What cause/s are you so passionate about that you would organize a crowd-funding campaign to achieve your goals? How much money would you like to raise, and how would you spend it?
- 4) What do you think Jilda and Jade will be doing in five years' time? Ten years' time? Write a short story about their future lives. Will they still be together?
- 5) Which character in the novel do you relate to most and why? Write a paragraph or two explaining your reasons.

OTHER:

- 1) Jilda decides she would like to be an environmentalist. What is involved in becoming one? Jade wants to be a nurse or doctor. How long do you have to study to become one of these? What are the advantages and disadvantages of being a nurse over being a doctor, and vice versa?
- 2) The girls had some ideas for their future jobs. What about you? What do you want to do and why? How will you go about achieving this goal?
- 3) Discuss with a partner or small group: how do you think Zac felt after Jilda broke it off with him?