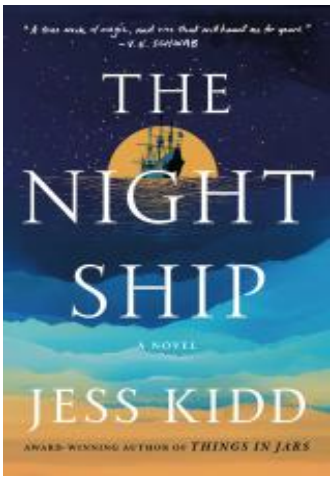
# The Night Ship

by Jess Kidd




## About the Book

**Based on a real-life event, this epic historical novel from the award-winning author of THINGS IN JARS illuminates the lives of two characters: a girl shipwrecked on an island off Western Australia and, 300 years later, a boy finding a home with his grandfather on the very same island.**

1629: A newly orphaned young girl named Mayken is bound for the Dutch East Indies on the *Batavia*, one of the greatest ships of the Dutch Golden Age. Curious and mischievous, Mayken spends the long journey going on misadventures above and below the deck, searching for a mythical monster. But the true monsters might be closer than she thinks.

1989: A lonely boy named Gil is sent to live off the coast of Western Australia among the seasonal fishing community where his late mother once resided. There, on the tiny reef-shrouded island, he discovers the story of an infamous shipwreck.

With her trademark ?thrilling, mysterious, twisted, but more than anything, beautifully written? (Graham Norton, *New York Times* bestselling author) storytelling, Jess Kidd weaves an unputdownable and charming tale of friendship and sacrifice, brutality and forgiveness.

## Discussion Guide

**1.** Jess Kidd evokes both being aboard the *Batavia* and life among the seasonal fishing community on Beacon Island through all five senses. What descriptions made these settings come alive for you? Were there any parts of Kidd?s sea voyage that felt familiar, or some that felt new?

**2.** How does Kidd mirror Mayken and Gil?s separate journeys in chapters 1 and 2? As the story progresses, do you find

Gil?s outsider identity important to the novel? How does his "otherness" reflect Mayken?s experience?

**3.** How would you characterize the tone of the story? How does the language contribute to the tone? What else contributes to it?

**4.** Discuss the differences and similarities between Mayken and Gil. Despite their being more than 300 years apart, what are some of their shared experiences?

**5.** As tensions rise during the *Batavia*?s voyage and after the shipwreck, what role does the Bullebak play in the novel? How is this reflected in the use of the Bunyip in Gil?s time?

**6.** Storytelling is woven into THE NIGHT SHIP in various ways, including through folklore and family histories. What do you think the author is trying to achieve with these layers of storytelling?

**7.** Each child has parental figures who step in at different times in their journeys (for example, Imke, Holdfast, Dutch and Silvia). How would you describe these stand-in parents? In what ways were these adults important for Mayken and Gil?

**8.** Loss is central to both Mayken and Gil?s experience; for starters, each child has lost their mother. Discuss some of their major (and minor) losses throughout the novel and how these may have shaped them as characters.

**9.** Each character brings something different to the story. Did you relate to any of them in particular? If so, please explain who and why.

**10.** As we reach the conclusion of the novel, the chapters become shorter. Why do you think the author chose to do this? Do these quicker chapters add to the urgency of the conclusion?

**11.** Given that this book is based on real-life events that took place during the voyage of the *Batavia* (as we are reminded in the epilogue), what do you think we should take away from Mayken?s story?

**12.** Jess Kidd?s novels cross genres, blending light and darkness, whimsy and mystery, the real and the supernatural. If you had to sum up this book in one line, how would you describe it?

## Author Bio

Jess Kidd is the award-winning author of HIMSELF, MR. FLOOD'S LAST RESORT, THINGS IN JARS, THE NIGHT SHIP and the *Nora Breen Investigates* series. She has a PhD in creative writing from St. Mary?s University in London. She grew up in London as part of a large family from Ireland?s County Mayo and now lives in North Yorkshire. Jess is currently developing her own original TV projects with leading UK and international TV producers.

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