



The Empress's Tomb

Kirsten Miller

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What's happening in New York City?

Giant Squirrels.

A Haunted Mansion.

Six fierce friends with fiercer secrets.

Ananka is in danger of being sent to a remote boarding school; Kiki's life (as always) is in danger, Betty seems to have found love in all the wrong places, and Oona....well, Oona's the one in the most serious trouble of all. From Chinatown to Fifth Avenue, whether they are rescuing kidnapped children or resuscitating an ancient Empress at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Irregulars have a knack for finding trouble, and putting it out of its misery.

The Empress's Tomb Details

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From Reader Review The Empress's Tomb for online ebook

Roxanne Hsu Feldman says

The second installment in the Kiki Strike and the Irregulars of Bank Street series is every bit as fun (actually, it seems MORE fun to me) as the first one and finally some of the ill-tempered banters between the girls (especially Oona and the rest) are being addressed by the girls themselves. This time, when loyalty and secrets are the focus of the story, how they treat each other becomes an integral part of the story. I did find the many supposed "facts" not quite accurate -- it reminds me of Dan Brown and his many made-up facts based on hearsay or unconfirmed "legends" in Da Vinci Code. I was bothered by the inaccuracy regarding the language use of those Taiwanese teens. There is NO way that ANY teen from Taiwan could not communicate with Mandarin, since that has been the official language for the island country for more than half a century now. Recently, Taiwanese and Hakka have been used more frequently in mass media but all Taiwanese youth would be able to speak and understand Mandarin without any problem. Having Kiki speak Mandarin but cannot communicate with Yu (the Taiwanese boy) is simply impossible. However, since there are so many other impossible things based on ill-informed "facts" all over the place, it is just in keeping with the overall style. But, I do think that many young readers might not be able to tell how tongue-in-cheek and fun-poking much of the book is, even if they probably won't believe the Shadow City under New York, or the whole Traitor Princess legend. The book could be very educational if teachers or librarians could use it to prompt research projects.

Ruben says

Ah, Kiki Strike. Another one of my guilty pleasures. Should a thirty-two year old dude be reading this? Probably not. But it's good. So good. I wish I were a fourteen year old female spy. I wish I were a member of the Irregulars. I wish I could break out of my room, go down the fire escape and roam the streets of New York with my six best friends in a concerted effort to outsmart the bad guys. But instead I live in the East Bay, California, with my wife and baby. I hardly ever stay up until midnight any more. I'll never discover underground cities or keep my cool when thugs point their firearms at me. I'll never have a friend as awesome as Kiki Strike. I'll never solve mysteries like that of the Empress's Tomb.

And you probably won't either.

And that's why you should read this book.

Jamie says

I really do want to join the Irregulars. These books make me want to read more spy novels.

Sofia says

This was such a good book! It gave a completely different view of one of the Irregulars life, and I got a

history lesson on New York!

Jennifer Wardrip says

Reviewed by Carrie Spellman for TeensReadToo.com

Get ready for the next adventure... The Irregulars have returned! On the agenda this time around are the following things:

Finish mapping the Shadow City. Since Livia and Sidonia Galatzina, (supposed) Queen and Princess of Pokrovia, and Kiki's mortal enemies, managed to get an incomplete copy of their map, it's more important than ever that The Irregulars finish what they started.

Stop Lester Liu. He got away last time, and they aren't about to let that happen again. But when Oona seems to throw herself in the middle of the whole thing, no one is sure what to do or who to believe.

Keep Ananka in New York. Ever since Ananka joined The Irregulars, her grades have been plummeting. Now her mom wants to send her to a boarding school on some farm.

Find the squirrels. Trained squirrels are attacking people, and someone is painting life-size pictures of them all over the city. And he seems to know who The Irregulars are.

And those things are just the beginning. This is a book of secrets, and misunderstandings, and sneaky dealings. No one is quite what they seem, not even the people you might think you know. And you can't be too careful about who you trust, or who you don't.

I admit that I had a moment, a split second of concern about this book. I loved the first one (**INSIDE THE SHADOW CITY**) so much, and second books are historically a letdown even when they're good. After the first page, I was thrilled to admit I was completely wrong to doubt. By the end, I was groveling at Kirsten Miller's feet!

Strong memorable characters, well-written, fast paced, exciting, touching, hilarious... And, of course, indispensable information like how to appear mysterious, how to know if your house is haunted, how to take advantage of the power of scent, and much, much more.

You absolutely must read this book. Trust me.

Brittany says

Kiki and the Irregulars are back again and Ananka is ready to tell you all about it. There are lots of secrets that the Irregulars tried to keep from each other, but all secrets are discovered eventually. Lester Liu is back and something is going on with Livia and Sidonia. Oona is all caught up in the Mister Liu mess and Kiki has some problems with Verushka and Ananka's mom is about to freak out if Ananka keeps sneaking out and falling asleep in school. The Irregulars need to pull it together if anything is going to work out. It may be the most unlikely people that end up saving them from themselves.

What a fun sequel. I adored Kaspar. I wish there was some squirrel graffiti somewhere in the book. I think that would have made the book look fantastic. It would have been so fun! I wish we had learned a bit more about Kaspar and the animal rights aspect of the story. It seemed like such a huge thing in the beginning but it went nowhere.

There was a lot of tension in this book between the girls. I was sure someone was going to loose it on every page. There were so many secrets and acting and it was just crazy. I liked how everything worked out though.

Again Ananka was a fantastic narrator. Seriously, her little helpful hints are just too good. I could read a whole handbook of just those. She such a plain character in comparison to the other girls and that may be why she's such a great narrator. She seems to always be where the action is, but she isn't all knowing (like Kiki seems to be).

This was just a really fun second novel and the ending made me need more. It ended well enough, but excitement is certain to ensue. If you haven't started this series yet, you totally should!

First Line:

"The whispers began the day she arrived on horseback at the gates of the Emperor's palace."

Favorite Line:

"My lab partner, a studious girl named Natasha with no talent for chemistry, was dumping liquids into a glass beaker and barely acknowledged my arrival."

Read more: <http://www.areadingnook.com/search?up...>

Rebecca McNutt says

Unfortunately this next installment in the *Kiki Strike* series is lacking what "Inside the Shadow City" had, but it still manages to be intriguing, well-written and detailed and filled with suspense. This one is very imaginative, to say the least - incredibly creative and original, with a whole new series of adventures for the Irregulars to face.

Linda says

As I was reading this book I told myself that I was rating it 3 stars but somehow when I went to rate it 4 stars appeared. I have ambiguous feelings about this book- in fact, about the *Kiki Strike* series in general. First of all, they are the weirdest group of young teenagers you could ever meet! Even their names are weird. Their adventures, personal home lives, and individual stories are above unbelievable for a series that is NOT sci-fi. That being said, I think the 4 stars appeared under my fingers because the book is so well written and the author so imaginative. The series takes place in present time New York City.

The first person point of view character in this book is Kiki Strike's friend Ananka Fishbein. The group of friends, who solve problems, call themselves The Irregulars. This includes Kiki Strike, an exiled Princess of Pokrovia, Oona Wong, a Chinese girl, Ananka, Betty, DeeDee, and Luz. They are all 14 years old. They are

helped by Iris, an 11 year-old genius at making potions. This story is multifaceted with international intrigue. Kiki and her guardian are still being stalked by the evil people who are trying to kill her to prevent her from ever gaining the throne; giant squirrels are appearing all over the city; and the Irregulars discover that Oona Wong is the daughter of the evil Chinese smuggler and leader of the fearsome Fu-Tsang gang, Lester Liu. Solving all of these mysteries involves all the talent the girls possess- Luz's electronic inventions, Betty's disguises, plus avoiding and escaping parenteral control and more exploration in the underground Shadow City with its many hidden entrances. The action all comes together in a fantastic adventure when Lester Liu presents the Metropolitan Museum with the mummified remains of an ancient Chinese Empress.

There is a book #3, which I think was released this year. I will probably want to read it to see what happens next to this odd group of girls!

Bethany Ainsworth says

I can't finish the series.

It was good, then I started noticing a bit of a pattern.

The way guys are looked down upon. The guy mooning the cameras, the guys in the park, Lester, the doctor, the delinquents in the first book, the guys calling Kiki a elf and making bad puns about it.

Page 165:

"What are you giving her?" Kiki asked...

"You wouldn't understand," the doctor replied.

...

"I'm young, not stupid," Kiki replied...

"Look he said peering down imperiously at Kiki. "I have more than ten years of higher education. I'm not even sure you've been alive that long. So why don't you stop pestering me and let do my job. You hired me to save this woman, not to provide me with a medical degree."

..."Go ahead. Do your job. If you do it well, I'll forget this conversation took place," said Kiki. "But if anything happens to her, I'm going to hold you responsible."

...

"What a jerk," I said once we were out of earshot.

Like what the fuck is that Miller?

He's just doing his job, but Kiki is the one in the way and threatening him.

I can handle making guys villains for female empowerment, but saying that guys are hold on a high pedestal

is where I draw the line.

Has Miller seen the way guys are treated? They're treated like perverts, pedophiles, rapists... Hell they can't even sit next to their kids because they're men.

I draw the line at this:

Page 83:

"May I follow you home?" Kiki read with a grin.

"That's kind of sweet," I said.

Yeah, she went there.

*"He's a stalker," Oona announced...*Page 83

Yes, I agree with Oona. Run Betty!

I'm dropping the series and the author.

I won't read the third book and I won't read How to Lead a Life of Crime because I can't read an author who says stalking is sweet, even if he asked. He followed Betty and I know he's going to hook up with her.

No.

Erin Mendoza says

Cute edition to the series

Emma (Miss Print) says

I had very ambiguous feelings about Kirsten Miller's first Kiki Strike book Inside the Shadow City. Although I loved the cover art and most of the characters, I felt like the book didn't live up to its full potential. Despite my misgivings (and the fact that no one shared them), I remained optimistic about Kiki Strike #2, feeling confident that it would be better than the first since Miller would have had more time with the characters she was writing about and to iron out her writing voice (which I thought was inconsistent in the first book).

Well, I finally had a chance to read Kiki Strike: The Empress's Tomb and am very happy to say, my hopes were not unfounded as this book was definitely better than the first in the series. Although this book does follow up on plot points from the first book, this one does stand alone. There is enough summary of important information that, if you read the first one a while ago (or not at all), the storyline will still make sense.

The story once again follows the Irregulars--brilliant albeit sometimes misguided Girl Scouts who were

recruited by girl spy extraordinaire Kiki Strike to help her map Manhattan's secret Shadow City and protect it from criminal exploitation. This time, however, the Shadow City is not the major plot. Kiki and narrator Ananka Fishbein also take a back seat to fellow Irregular Oona Wong who, for lack of a better word, is the star of this story--just look at the cover if you don't believe me.

Master forger turned entrepreneur and sometimes blackmailer, Oona has always been one of my favorite characters and I was really happy to see more of her in this book. Unfortunately, the Irregulars don't feel the same as they grow tired of Oona's continued snark and snobbery. To make matters even worse, that means no one has time to hear Oona's important news.

That isn't to say that the other girls don't have problems. Kiki's life is in danger (again). Ananka's mother is threatening to send her to a boarding school in Virginia of all places if she can't get her grades up. Meanwhile Betty, the group's master of disguise, seems to have attracted the attentions of the giant squirrels that have started wandering the city's parks. Add to the mix a haunted mansion, a prodigal parent, and Oona's dramatic secret and you have a story jam-packed with excitement.

The tone of *The Empress's Tomb* feels a lot more even than Miller's first *Kiki Strike* book. I suspect this has to do with the book being grounded in one time period instead of starting with the characters at the age of twelve the way the first book did. In addition to being a fast-paced read, the novel also offers an interesting commentary on secrets (when to keep them and when to share them) as almost every character has something up her sleeve in the way of hidden information.

Speaking of information, Miller also once again includes some of Ananka's useful information at the end of some chapters. Her findings include: how to be mysterious (learn to be quiet and invent a secret among other things), how to find information in people's trash (and what to avoid placing into your own trash), as well as a quiz on events in the book that, were I a teacher, I might assign to students if I had them read this book in class--which I really could. Because Miller writes a good story with a lot of practical information that could be applied to everyday life (maybe you'll never be digging through someone's trash, but it's good to be aware of what people might find if they dug through yours). That is one of the reasons I stuck with *Kiki Strike*, and one of the reasons *The Empress's Tomb* was so much fun to read: Miller doesn't just write a good story she writes a good, informative (and fun) story.

You can find this review and more on my blog [Miss Print](#)

Rachel says

Loved it, loved it, better than the 1st one, which is saying a lot because I LOVED the 1st one!!!!!!! This had a more dramatic and revealing plot line than the 1st one. This one also had more twists. I loved it. The last sentence (and I don't mean to give away any spoilers, but) is so shocking. This is a great series and Kirsten Miller is an excellent adventure writer for teens.

No, David! No! says

A fun quick read. If you don't take it too seriously, it is very entertaining. And there are lots of "fun facts" hidden throughout the book. I like that the story point of view is not from the title character. I also like that

there is very little romance, and is instead about the fun story and "detective work".

Laura says

Is this a children's book? I don't know, but I love it! It's so good to be back into this world and this written, I've become Kirsten's fan! Highly recommend!

Esse é um livro infantojuvenil? Eu não sei, mas eu adoro! É tão bom voltar para esse mundo e essa escrita, eu virei fã da Kirsten! Recomendo muito!

E Galera Record traduz o terceiro livro da trilogia por favor!

Ian Wood says

This is the complete review as it appears at my blog dedicated to reading, writing (no 'rithmatic!), movies, & TV. Blog reviews often contain links which are not reproduced here, nor will updates or modifications to the blog review be replicated here. Graphic and children's novels reviewed on the blog will generally have some images from the book's interior, which are not reproduced here.

Note that I don't really do stars. To me a novel is either worth reading or it isn't. I can't rate a novel three-fifths worth reading! The only reason I've relented and started putting stars up there is to credit the good ones, which were being unfairly uncredited. So, all you'll ever see from me is a five-star or a one-star (since no stars isn't a rating, unfortunately).

I rated this novel worthy!

WARNING! UNHIDDEN SPOILERS! PROCEED AT YOUR OWN RISK!

The title of this novel is something of a misnomer, implying that it's about Kiki Strike when it actually isn't. Yes, she appears at crucial times throughout the narrative to facilitate the action, a bit like a *deus ex machina*, but Kiki is side-lined by her protector Veruska's life-threatening illness, and she takes a back seat in this adventure (as indeed does most of the crew to one extent or another), leaving the stage to Oona and to Ananka, who is telling the story again. This is the second in what is a series. I already reviewed the first one. The third is now available. I suspect that there will be at least seven, because there are seven main characters in the irregulars:

Iris isn't shown here, nor is she mentioned in the irregulars group at the web site. I don't know why. The web site is worth a visit if you're into this series. It has a lot of interesting stuff.

The girls are now fourteen years old and still together as the irregulars, still righting wrongs and fighting the good fight, but there's some dissension in the ranks. Ananka is growing increasingly suspicious of Oona's behavior, thinking she's going over to the dark side. This becomes especially startling when Oona's father, the notorious Chinese gangster Lester Liu, who escaped capture in volume one, pops up again, seemingly reformed and asking Oona back into his life - the girl he tossed away at her birth like garbage because of her "useless" gender. His life now, he claims, is to be one of contrition and philanthropy.

Oona has a secret which she wants to share with the irregulars, but no one seems to have time to listen, and

some are antagonistic towards her for being spoiled, snooty, rich, and unkind to their newest honorary member, Iris, who is two or three years younger than the rest of them.

So what are these distractions? Well, the first is the break-in at a pet store which occupies the ground-floor of an apartment block. The apartments are subsequently invaded by animals which were released from the store, each critter sporting a necklace which itself sports a small sign saying "I want to go home" or words to that effect. The immediate suspect is the legendary Kiki Strike, but Ananka doesn't believe it's her - it's not Kiki's style. The next thing is the new artwork appearing all over the city - a form of artistic graffiti that depicts squirrels issuing warnings about abusing animals. As if that isn't plenty to consider, large squirrels start mugging people in Central Park! And why did Phineas run away from his psychologist parents?

As if all that isn't enough on her plate, and intent upon mapping the last section of tunnel in the Shadow City, Ananka discovers a boy, and later a girl, both of whom have evidently been kidnapped from China. The two are talented artists, but why would someone want to illegally "export" artistic children? There is increasing pressure from Ananka's parents (who are suddenly a lot more hands-on than they ever were in volume 1) to wake up at school and bring her grades up, otherwise she'll be kidnapped herself, and exported to West Virginia to a farm school, which fills her with dread. But she has an ally in the principle of Atalanta school - or so she hopes.

This novel was a little bit too drawn-out for me. It could have benefited from being somewhat shorter, especially with regard to the finale. Still, it was really good - as good as the first one. It's the same kind of set-up, with Ananka's astute and often caustic observations as well as her end-of-chapter tips on topics like how to be mysterious, what to do with secrets, how to appreciate odors, and what not to put in your trash if you don't want someone to learn secrets about you.

I rate this novel a worthy read. The message here is make good friends and then trust them, and part of making good friends is to give them the benefit of the doubt, and to listen to them when they have something to say. This story is well-told and as intriguing as it is engaging. It builds on the groundwork laid in volume one, but is not so dependent upon it that you don't know where you are, even if you haven't read volume one. However, I'd recommend reading these in order. The first volume is so good and it will enrich the experience of reading this one.
