



Olga

Ted Kelsey , Dillon Samuelson (Illustrator)

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Magic weapons, white tigers, cat-faced moths and giants on motorcycles... OLGA is Ted Kelsey's captivating first novel and features illustrations by the fine artist and illustrator, Dillon Samuelson.

When a mysterious figure is seen floating and dancing in the field near their house, Jack and Sally decide to investigate. This decision will lead them to an exciting place far beyond their imagination, the home of OLGA.

Nothing in the clouds is as it appears, and in order to get home safely, Jack and Sally must first learn whom to trust, and find a way to believe in themselves.

A story of spirit and imagination that the Online Book Club has described as "interwoven with comedy and deeper emotions of freedom and loneliness," OLGA will delight readers of all ages.

Olga Details

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ISBN : 9781508959793

Author : Ted Kelsey , Dillon Samuelson (Illustrator)

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Genre : Fantasy

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From Reader Review Olga for online ebook

Kristine says

I received this book from a Goodreads giveaway. Cute fantasy story about giants wanting to destroy humans. I enjoyed the characters. The descriptions of the giants was one of my favorite parts because each giant looked and smelled different there was plenty of details

Underground Book Reviews says

TOP PICK!

Who would've thought a stuffed elephant could lead to so much adventure...and trouble? In his debut novel, Olga, Ted Kelsey takes readers on a captivating journey of friendship, fear, trust, and imagination.

After spying the bouncing animal from afar during the day, middle schoolers Jack and Sally decide to investigate it that night, only to get trapped by its magnetic force and pulled up into a world in the clouds. Caught in this fantasy world with no seeming escape, the two children meet talking moths with kitten faces, a giant cloud princess, and a slew of other fantastical creatures.

Olga, the princess who had been watching Jack and the other humans on Earth, is unhappy and in search of a hero to free her from an arranged marriage. All the while, her human-eating, evil cloud-giant father plots with his brothers to go to earth and destroy it. Not knowing who to trust, or how long they're going to survive, Jack and Sally must learn to navigate the unknown, magical cloud kingdom as they try to escape and return home to their families...

...read more at [UndergroundBookReviews \(dot\) com](http://UndergroundBookReviews.com)

Anne Martin says

It's a tale for older children, maybe 10 or 11. Nicely written, it takes two kids around 12 on a trip in the clouds, where they discover another magical realm. Bad giants and small prisoners live there and the two kids will help and set them free.

I can believe it must be a sweet story for a kid.

Amy Biddle says

This story was woven with as much care and imagination as the pictures that decorated the pages... what a beautiful, mystical, magical ride!

latybug says

I received a free download of this book from Story Cartel, thank you!

I really enjoyed this book. It was a fun getaway into a fantasy land in the clouds. I like Sally, because she is a strong female character who is still willing to sacrifice for others.

The illustrations are well-done and help to create the mental image.

I think this would be an excellent read-aloud book in an elementary classroom, and I could easily see it being made into a movie. The ending certainly leaves an opening for a sequel.

I would absolutely recommend this book to others (children and adults) who enjoy fantasy. I would read more by this author.

Sharon says

What a charming little novel.

It is the summer before neighbors Jack and Sally start middle school and they have a bad case of, 'curiosity killed the cat', with predictable results when they explore Terror House. One might think it's a spooky story, but it is not. It *is* a fantasy adventure with a hint in the book of future adventures in this series/world.

If parents have advanced readers, they might consider that while this is supposedly for middle-schoolers, I would've enjoyed it in third grade (and possibly second - by fifth grade, I was reading Michael Crichton and Ray Bradbury).

This book was a Goodreads Giveaway.

La La - Everyone's Crazy Aunt says

4.5 stars on the blog. This is a delightful Middle Grade retelling of Jack and the Beanstalk with an added heroine, Sally, who is just as brave (and many times braver) than Jack! The fairy cloudland citizens and beastsies were superbly described and varied. The descriptions of the giants and events at the feast table are stellar. MG age readers will learn some valuable lessons along the way, too. This would also make a wonderful chapter book for bedtime read alouds.

The author has sent the book illustrations because this was an Audiobook Boom review copy. I will tell you they are sublime. I have asked if I may use two of them in my blog review.

I was provided with a review audiobook, via Audiobook Boom, in return for an honest review.

I will be reviewing this book on both my main blog and my Middle Grade blog, and will add the link when it is posted.

Lynne M Hinkey says

Olga is a fun fantasy adventure story with hints of Jack and the Beanstalk, Alice in Wonderland, and Hansel and Gretl. Ted Kelsey gives a new twist and some modern updates to this new fairy tale, but still keeping all the traditional elements--mischievous children in search of adventure, scary beasts, and helpful creatures--

that make the stories magical. I love that girls--Sally and Olga--play primary roles as hero and villain, respectively, and that it's Sally's bravery that really saves the day. As much as I enjoyed this story, I refrained from giving 5 stars because I also read Kelsey's second book (Shasha and Wally Watson vs the Faker) and liked it even more (which surprised me because I'm a big fan of fantasy and fairy tales). So, if you enjoyed Olga, I highly recommend you read that, too!

Evelina | AvalinahsBooks says

This review is going to be problematic. *Most of the time we just read books we like, or don't like.* Simple as that. *But sometimes the issues are slightly bigger than us and our likes or dislikes.* That tends to be the hard part of blogging.

You can check out the full review on my blog here.

First of all, the book's not even bad. *The writing is good, the story is good. Easy to read.* So much so that I was going to have a giveaway on my blog. *I mean, it's #kidlit. Kids' books are meant to be safe, right?* ...Right?

Not quite.

But let's start at the top. Here's a short summary of the plot:

Kids playing hide and seek in the twilight. A creepy building called The Terror House and something strange moving beside it. Curiosity. One thing leads to another, and the next thing we know, Jack and Sally are tumbling into the sky, Sally landing somewhere on a cloud, and Jack being trapped under a metal dome, like some fly in a soup tureen. What follows is a journey through a magical land in the tradition of The Wizard of Oz and Jack and the Beanstalk.

Everything was fine, fun and wonderful *up to the point where the villain of the story comes up.*

...And she is a giant black girl.

Okay, so you say she's blue-black. That doesn't help the initial shock.

I mean... okay, so she has white hair. Blue lips. Blue eyes. And her skin is actually jet black (or midnight black), not person-black. *But all of that still can't deny the unfortunate fact that you've just made the evil presence in your book black.* With no good reason!

Later in the story, I guess it evens out. Some giants are grey. Some are red. I don't think it was intentional, and considering the rest of the story, it's just flat out unfortunate, but personally, I could not bounce back from the initial jolt that there's a character in a kids' book who eats humans, makes them fight like gladiators, has 'a shrunken heart' and is referred to as black.

[image error]

Insert sadface here :(

Now I have asked myself countless times, am I overreacting? It's a make believe story. Other giants are other colors. And all that stuff.

But then I asked myself another question. *If I was black, would this book hurt my feelings..?*

And the answer... *Was yes.*

It doesn't matter if Olga (the giant girl) turns out to have **some sort** of a heart. It doesn't matter that the other giants are other colors (*half a book later...*). If I was PoC and was reading this book, at that point where the giantess shows up, I would have been offended. I would have been hurt.

Aside from these problems, the story itself is good. The writing is good. I feel like this story could benefit so much from just.. Stepping aside from the color stuff. I mean, there was no reason to make her any color at all. She could have been purple? Green? (Although some PoC might still have a problem with that). Why mention skin color at all? Why not just make her giant? Or, you know... if you really wanted to make her different, make her scaly? Feathered? Or better yet, if you REALLY REALLY want her black, make the kids black too? So we know that black doesn't mean bad in your story?

More on the good news front though. ***I approached the author with this problem, and I was happy to receive a very courteous answer*** that he recognizes the problem, indeed did not mean it this way, and he wasn't aware of this issue when he was writing it, as it's his first book. And that currently he is writing a more diverse novel (although I have doubts if he should, we should stick to what we know so we don't make a bigger mess with misrepresentation.) Personally, I lean towards forgiveness and understanding, and I'm glad he has recognized this flaw. Therefore, I will post a review, but I refrain from any rating of this book. It's a good story on its own, if it didn't have this issue, I would probably give it 4 stars, but the way it is now, I could only spare 2.

Indiebrag says

We are proud to announce that OLGA by Ted Kelsey is a B.R.A.G. Medallion Honoree. This tells a reader that this book is well worth their time and money!

Anita says

This is an engaging fairy story written for the new age where girls can look after themselves and help the hero rather than wait to be rescued by them. Sally and Jack go on an adventure in the clouds, where Olga is the sad daughter of an evil cloud giant who has been plotting with his brothers to destroy the earth. This tale has magic and adventure, a real page turner that makes the reader think about its moral message, a story to be enjoyed by adolescents and adults. The charming illustrations by Dillon Samuelson are lovely too.

Emmy says

4.50 stars, Overall
•audiobook•

Olga was a delightful listen about children, beanstalks, and multiple giants. It will be a fun book for adventure-seeking listeners who want a new spin of technology smart children discovering a world above the clouds, via a wonderful non-living elephant!

I found this book while searching for other books by Susan Murphy, who has a wonderful voice for

children's books. I'm satisfied with her performance and decision to bring this book to life.

A few areas were slow, but it was brief. Not eye-rolling slow, but it felt like fluff and did not forward the story line, plot, nor character developments.

My 'Listen to this Book with Granddaughters' list is growing, with this addition.

Although I read a review where a reader was "offended" by the iridescent giant, who was of a dark skin color (most giants had all kinds of colors!), I connected it with evil usually being represented by the black cape, an assassin dressed in black, or black eyes {Olga's were not} (white magic, dark magic) and did not get the impression it was any sort of symbolic or representation of a racial prejudice.

I would highly, highly recommend this book for family time - or to entertain children and entice them to use their creative imaginations. Of course, the young at heart would love this perfect new world with charming characters. The characters and settings were described innocently for younger ears, but an older listener would appreciate its endearments expected from our experience with a well written book!

Rebecca McNutt says

Olga is a sea of imagination, reminding me of Howl's Moving Castle in a vague way, and I loved the author's writing style.
