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Cat among the Pigeons

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Editor's Choice:

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Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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This is the second story about Cat Royal who lives at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane, courtesy of Richard Sheridan. A rollicking adventure set in London in 1790, it is a sequel to *The Diamond of Drury Lane* in which Cat made friends with Pedro, a former slave. Here Pedro is set to be a big star as Ariel in *The Tempest* but his former master arrives to claim him. Cat and her friends plot to save Pedro and various escapades move the plot along very speedily. In one of these Cat is disguised as a boy at Westminster School to try to escape detection by the police. The issue of slavery is not glossed over however and together with the work of the Abolitionist movement this is incorporated into a fast-moving adventure with some good detail of 18th-century life. This is first and foremost an historical adventure rather than an historical novel, but nevertheless within this genre, Golding has given the story a good period feel and considerable depth featuring several well-known figures of the time. The first story won the Ottakar's Children's Prize in 2006, and this sequel maintains the standard. Cat is a spirited and likeable heroine, suffering considerably in her attempts to evade capture, even to the extent of being beaten up by a gang of bullies at Westminster School to avoid her discovery. Her friends' protection of her is quite touching! But she is also steadfast in her loyalty to them. There is real menace and the threat of violence both in her dealings with Mr Hawkins, Pedro's former master, and Billy Shepherd, a gang leader, and the way the latter manages to place Cat under his obligation, neatly sets up the prospect of the third book. It would help to have read the first book but this will stand alone, and there will be many children eager to follow Cat's adventures.

Running Order:

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