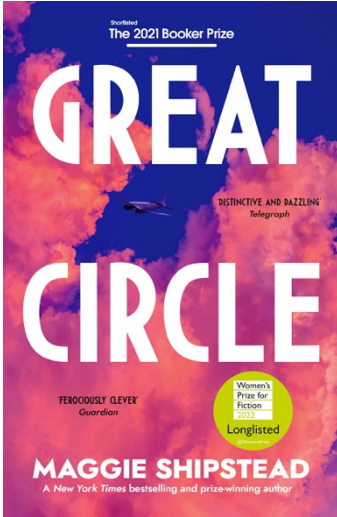


Great Circle

By Maggie Shipstead



Marian Graves has been obsessed with flight since her girlhood running wild in Montana with her twin brother Jamie. She becomes an accomplished aviator, and in 1950 she disappears in Antarctica whilst attempting to fly longitudinally round the world over the north and south poles - the Great Circle.

Some 75 years later actor Hadley Baxter, who has just lost her leading role in the block-busting fantasy franchise Archangel, is offered the part of Marian in a film exploring her disappearance. Hadley finds herself powerfully and unexpectedly drawn towards digging out the truth about Marian's fate.

Great Circle interweaves these two women's lives and draws striking parallels between their experiences, despite the differences in time and circumstances.

Discussion Questions

1. How do you think Marion was shaped by her unusual childhood? Was she damaged or strengthened by never knowing her parents?

2. How does Marion's relationship with her twin brother Jamie develop over time?

3. In what ways do you think Marion and Hadley both feel constricted by their lives? To what extent do they each achieve freedom?
4. Hadley's sections of the novel are necessarily more pedestrian than those charting Marion's exciting life. Do you think the novel would have been improved by focusing entirely on Marion?
5. Why do you think Marion wanted to fly round the world? Have you ever felt drawn towards taking a great risk?

Thank you to our volunteer Beth for choosing this title and creating the resource.