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# Operation Red Jericho (The Guild Of Specialists)



## Synopsis

A sister and brother's search for their missing parents uncovers a mysterious secret society in an action-filled sea-and-land saga centered in 1920s Shanghai. For Joshua Mowll, it was the surprise of a lifetime. There, among the archives inherited from his great-aunt Rebecca MacKenzie, was a 1920s journal recounting the thrilling and dangerous adventures of fifteen-year-old Rebecca and her younger brother, Doug, in the wake of their parents' mysterious disappearance in the deserts of China. Now carefully re-created in a lavish volume • complete with cloth binding and a journal-style elastic clasp • the siblings' tale begins aboard the *Expedient*, their uncle's enigmatic research ship, and moves at a breathless pace through the streets of Shanghai and on to a terrifying island fortress. Along the way, Doug and Becca encounter an ancient order of Chinese mercenaries, a brutal pirate warlord, a feisty Texan heiress, and a stolen cache of a volatile explosive called zoridium. By their saga's end, the intrepid duo has exposed a murderous plot involving their parents and uncovered a high-minded secret society hidden from the world for hundreds of years. Interspersed are such "archival" elements as: • elaborate diagrams and maps • vintage photos and illustrations • documents with stamps, seals, and watermarks • four full-color gatefolds, the largest a six-page foldout • extensive appendices and notes Painstakingly researched and packed with authentic detail, *OPERATION RED JERICHO* is the first of three nonstop-action tales of intrigue by first-time author Joshua Mowll • historical fiction at its finest.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Grade 5-8 *Â* Excerpts from 15-year-old Becca's diary interspersed with third-person narrative combine to produce a tale of high adventure, intrigue, and science fiction along the China coast in 1920. Following their parents' mysterious disappearance in the remote Sinkiang region, Becca and her younger brother, Doug, are sent from their home in India to live with their sea-captain uncle, whose research vessel they board in Shanghai. Through their inquisitiveness and spying, they learn of a secret society that may have had something to do with their parents' fate and of a very volatile substance called zoridium that their uncle is trying to retrieve from an evil warlord. Their curiosity leads to their capture and captivity on his island fortress *Â* the site of a rousing showdown that sets the stage for the second volume in this trilogy. Memorable, over-the-top characters and an often unbelievable plot are united with fascinating sidebars and graphics, such as short biographies of people like Bohr and Einstein, archival photographs of old Shanghai, vintage newspaper clippings, a chart of the Morse code, diagrams of inventions, or Doug's sketches of the action scenes. Several confidential full-color pull-outs provide detailed descriptions of the various vessels and of an ancient fighting order, the Sujing Quantou. Some readers may pore over the details in this novel; others will simply appreciate the comic adventure. *Â* Diane S. Marton, Arlington County Library, VA Copyright *Â* © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Gr. 8--11. The first book of the Guild Trilogy quickly and deftly plunges readers into an exotic corner of the first quarter of the twentieth century. Teenage siblings Rebecca and Douglas run through a series of adventures in a submarine, on the streets of Shanghai, and among pirates. They are bold, inquisitive, and creative, and they leave behind for readers' inspection numerous documents of their adventures, including Becca's diary, Doug's sketches, and such visual artifacts as maps and photos. First-time novelist Mowll spins a heady yarn, and his characters have some distinctive traits: Doug's speech, for example, is peppered with the term lethal. The reproductions, which are highly detailed, look suitably authentic and will have great appeal for readers who thrive on schematics and puzzles. By the end of the story, Becca and Doug have survived a variety of terrifying exploits

and are still in search of their missing parents. A sequel will find a ready audience. Francisca Goldsmith  
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Lots of nice illustrations, the author clearly researched the period and setting. The goofy gravity-control maguffin is presented interestingly. However, I've never really liked the "secret powerful organization centuries old, with secret technology and secret magic, secretly super-rich and able to control governments ... and they're the good guys" meme. The organization has secret ninja friends, secret fighting techniques ... the author doesn't want the protagonists to have negative or critical thoughts about their organization, I suppose. I got this (and the other two) as a gift for a friend who's running a role-playing game. The background and historical information should prove useful.

This book is one of the best reads to come along in quite some time. From concept design to execution the book is a delight to the eye and to the soul. A gripping original story line, setting, characters, illustrations, fold-out maps and diagrams make this book a MUST READ for both children and adults. Mowll's writing is some of the best writing to be found in this genre. Why this book has not gotten more media attention is the greatest mystery. I write and illustrate children's books and this is one that holds a place of honor in my library. I'm counting the days until the second book is released!

I enjoyed this story but I felt it was a bit rushed. I wish more time had been taken in each chapter with character and other details before the reader is thrown headlong into adventures. I almost felt like I was reading an abridged version of a much longer book. However I did like the maps, diagrams and photos.

This book was well loved by 9 year old from whom it was a gift. Very fun read for him and me.

A very fun and engaging story set in a time and place I know very little about. The artwork, fold-outs and gee-wiz aspects of the story are especially well done. Some of the writing is a little flat; not up to the standards set by the artwork. I bought the book for me and am very pleased to report that one of my boys (age 11) has picked it up and is quite engrossed.

Operation Red Jericho looks like it should be a fantastic book: its cover grabs you, there are foldout

diagrams and pictures inside to add visual content to the story, there is a stretchy band that can be used to hold the book shut or as a bookmark. But there are a few key problems with it.-The main characters are not sympathetic: I questioned their motives and actions at times, and felt nothing for them when they suffered the consequences of their impulsive behaviour. Nor are they particularly believable, or likeable.-There is lots of action, but we don't know enough about the characters or their motives to care about what they're doing. Mystery is good, but when we do uncover new information it feels like it is being spoonfed so that we know just enough to understand the following sequence.-The villain of this story isn't interesting. What are his reasons for doing what he's doing? A lot of the time it seems like the answer we're given is "He's just really, really, evil." What should be an interesting plot line is no longer engaging when these key elements are missing. I wouldn't recommend this but for the sole fact that I read its sequel, Operation Typhoon Shore, and it is better by far by improving on all of these points. You may not enjoy this book very much, but if you push yourself to finish it and move onto its sequels, you will be pleased with the end result.

This is a good book for adventure and excitement. it has high action and a chase in a speed boat.I would recommend having a pretty high vocabulary. STAY COMMITTED TO THIS BOOK if your going to read it has many characters and is all ways moving around areas in the world. This is a pretty short book only about 250 pages with not much detail.it is ideal for middle schoolers but it has a couple of diagrams if you can't think of a ship would look like. for slow readers it will take you a bout a week if you read a little bit a day but fast readers can read this in a day.

This is a Young Indiana Jones/Lemony Snickets style adventure story with great illustrations. Very creative, good gift for a young reader.

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