

Blue Jay Girl

Sylvia Ross

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Blue Jay Girl, a Yaudanchi girl, was not ordinary. "She was a girl who went where she wanted to go. She did what she wanted to do. She was afraid of nothing," Ross writes. By the time she has lived through nine acorn seasons, her friends will not play with her anymore; she is considered too dangerous. Blue Jay Girl is sad and lonely, and wants to change her bold blue jay nature to that of the gentle quail. She finds the courage to approach the hut of the tribal shaman, the terrifying Opodo Kaouteun, and his kind wife Idik Mukec, the healer, to ask for help. They help her to find the strengths in her own nature.

What stands out about this lovely tale is its language and gentle pace. The adult characters listen to Blue Jay Girl's troubles and respond, not with ready-made solutions, but with words of love that make room for a child's important questions. Illustrated by the author with bright paintings, the book also includes a pronunciation guide, a glossary of Yaudanchi words, and a brief description of tribal history for adults and good readers.

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