

Sophie Cunningham takes a flight of fancy with *Bird*

July 11, 2008

Courier Mail

THERE'S nothing quite like being carried away on someone else's flight of fancy and one of the true pleasures of reading a gifted story-teller is being able to take just such a journey.

With her second novel *Bird*, Sophie Cunningham takes the reader on an adventure through the psychological and emotional landscapes of her characters' lives, but also across the world.

After escaping post-war Russia, the beautiful and mysterious Anna Davidoff is flirting with Hollywood, making ends meet as an extra.

Bird is her nickname and her story.

It's a story Anna's daughter Ana-Sofia, abandoned at the age of seven, is determined to learn.

Ana-Sofia is 43 – the same age as her mother when she died an ordained Buddhist nun, alone in a Himalayan cave. A successful publisher based in New York, Ana-Sofia goes in search of what's left of her mother – the stories only the people who knew her can tell.

A selfish lover, a drunken father, a noble guru and a violent husband are among the people who help her flesh out her mother.

Bird has its roots in truth. Anna is based on the life of Zina Rachevsky – a Russian immigrant who became a Buddhist nun and died, aged 43, in a stone hut in the Himalayas.

Cunningham has married truth and fiction to produce a well-written and fascinating story.

A flight well worth catching

This story was found at:

<http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0,23739,23992785-5003424,00.html>