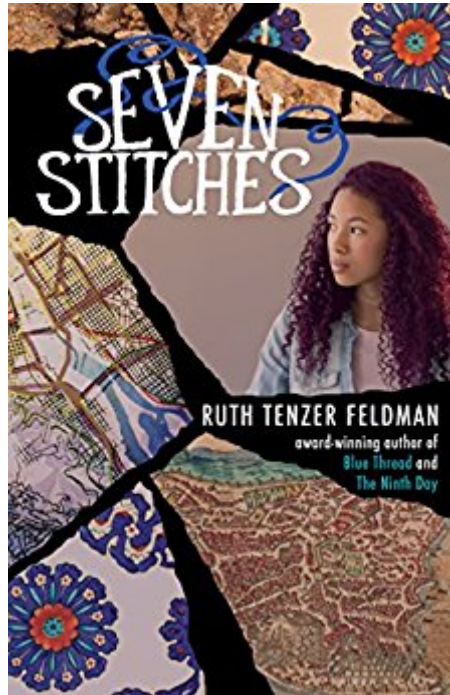


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Seven Stitches (Blue Thread Book 3)



Synopsis

It's been a year since the Big One—the Cascadia subduction zone earthquake—devastated Portland, and while Meryem Zarfati's injuries have healed and her neighborhood is rebuilding, her mother is still missing. Refusing to give up hope, Meryem continues to search for her mother even as she learns to live without her in a changed Portland. After she receives a magical prayer shawl handed down from her maternal grandmother, a mysterious stranger appears, and Meryem is called to save a young girl living in slavery in sixteenth-century Istanbul. The third companion in the Oregon Book Award-winning Blue Thread series explores how we recover—and rebuild—after the worst has happened.

Book Information

File Size: 3432 KB

Print Length: 281 pages

Page Numbers Source ISBN: 1932010882

Publisher: Ooligan Press (February 11, 2017)

Publication Date: February 11, 2017

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B06WP4D837

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #662,260 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #55

in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Religious > Jewish #433 in Kindle Store > Kindle

eBooks > Teen & Young Adult > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Science Fiction > Time Travel #518

in Books > Teens > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Science Fiction > Time Travel

Customer Reviews

Ruth Feldman's *SEVEN STITCHES* is an intriguing, multi-layered narrative about a young woman named Meryem who—among other things—is on a quest to find her missing mother and trying to come to terms with her Jewish-Vietnamese heritage. The novel freely uses magical

realism as it weaves a tale that takes place both in the mid-21st century after an earthquake has ravaged Portland, Oregon, and in 16th century Istanbul where Meryem attempts to free a girl trapped in slavery with the guidance of a mysterious woman named Serakh. Feldman covers a broad range of topics--homelessness, human trafficking, and family identity to name a few--in a way that is interesting and believable. Above all, Feldman makes the spiritual and psychological journey of Meryem and her network of family and friends very believable; we understand the characters and empathize with their various plights. Though much of the story takes place in a post-disaster urban area, we are made to focus on the people and how they manage to survive and find hope among the ruins. This is a well-crafted book that will appeal to readers interested in character development and ideas rather than the over-used clichés of much Apocalyptic young adult novels.

This is the story of Portland after "the big one" told through the eyes of a resilient 16-year-old. Meryem is a Blend; someone of mixed races. In her case, it's Jewish/Asian/Black. Her Jewishness is featured throughout as the key to her time travel and its meaning. This didn't feel like part of a book series and was a great read all on its own.

This is my favorite of the Blue Thread Saga by far. Meryem Zarfati is a fully realized, dynamic protagonist who charmed me through the entirety of the story (although I have to admit I have a weakness for animals, so her goats and chickens were quite delightful as well). The futuristic, dystopian-like landscape paired with the mysterious disappearance of Meryem's mom Jess make for an immediately engaging plot line. Serakh's expected appearance and the monumental task that Meryem must accomplish further complicate and add interest to the plot. Even if you haven't read Feldman's previous Blue Thread books, you'll be able to thoroughly enjoy *Seven Stitches* and all the magic it has to offer. Plus, that cover alone was enough to make me want to pick up a copy for myself!

Although this is a continuation of the characters and family story from *Blue Thread* and *The Ninth Day*, you do not need to read them to follow the beautifully written story of *Seven Stitches*--though I would highly recommend it. Ruth Tenzer Feldman has crafted a Portland that doesn't look much different than the present-day--residents are concerned with air quality, urban gardening, and displaced members of society. The major difference? The Big One has come and gone and Portland is in a state of rebuilding. Meryem Zarfati is learning to rebuild after the earthquake devastated her city, and her family. Just as she's accepting her changed life, two strangers enter

her life and make more drastic changes. While this book is classified as YA, readers of all ages will appreciate Meryem as the heroine so many of us are looking for.

Seven Stitches is the third book in the Blue Thread series by Ruth Tenzer Feldman, a series that combines both science fiction and historical fiction in a way that celebrates female power and Jewish heritage. Each of the women in the Blue Thread series are related to each other by blood, but they also share a bond with a time traveling daughter of Jacob (the one with the coat of many colors) named Serakh. In many ways, this book is very unique and different from the other two in the trilogy. It takes place in Portland after the Cascadia subduction zone earthquake that the Pacific Northwest has been warned about for years. It's set about fifty years into the future and has to project the way these problems will be dealt with. Portland still faces a major homeless crisis (just like it does now) and Meryem is trying to help be a responsible citizen and work with social justice causes while searching for her mother, who went missing when "the Big One" struck. In the midst of the drama, Meryem is also brought back in time to Turkey in the 1500s and is called upon to help a young girl escape a life of slavery. I do think there may have been a little bit (maybe too much) of a utopian element combined with the dystopia of an earthquake-wrecked Portland. First, there were references to social changes enacted in the near future after the Obama administration that, knowing what we know now, are extremely far fetched. Since this book would have been written before the rise of Trump, those touches feel a bit dated. On that same note, Feldman gives an image of a near-future Portland that is extremely racially diverse, with many people of mixed race living together with relative nonchalance. I think this ironically whitewashes some of the political realities of Portland's own embarrassing past (and, if I'm honest, present). For most, however, this will be an exciting mix of action, history, and fun sci-fi elements.

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