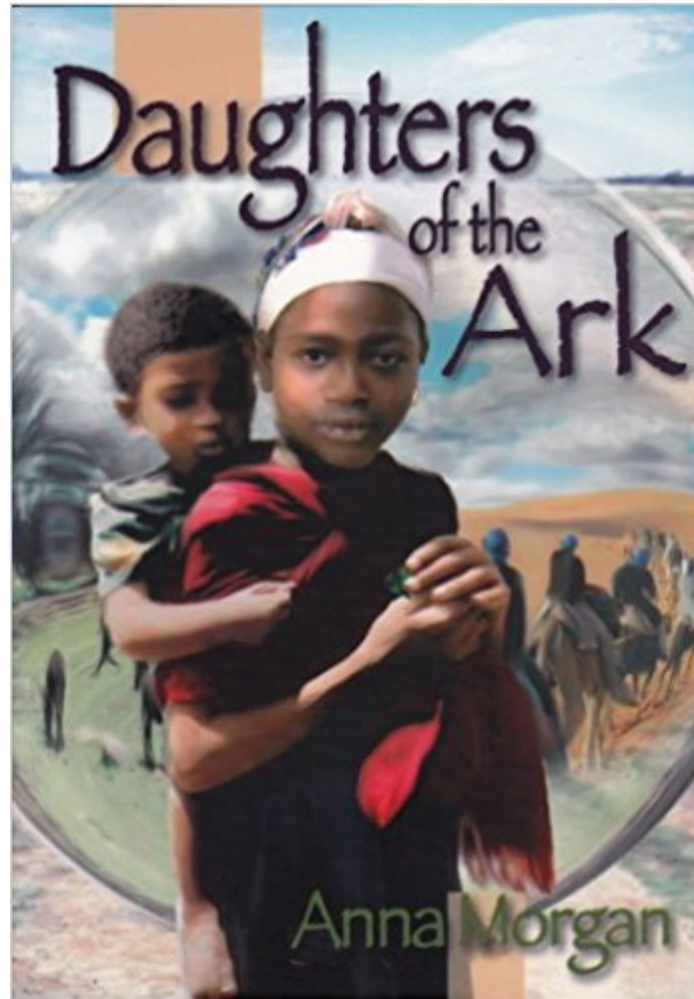




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Daughters Of The Ark



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Synopsis

A coming-of age story about two girls, separated in time by thousands of years, who are forced to leave their homes. In 1984, a young girl named Debitu and her two brothers set out by foot on a treacherous journey through the mountains of Ethiopia and the deserts of the Sudan. They must deal with bandits and famine before they ultimately reach Jerusalem, their ancestral home. 3,000 years earlier, during the rule of King Solomon, Aleesha and her family are sent from Jerusalem to join the Queen of Sheba in Ethiopia. Bridging the two eras is the story of an emerald stolen from the ancient Holy Ark in King Solomon's Temple and brought to Ethiopia. As Debitu and Aleesha journey towards new homes and new lives, they encounter adventure and overcome challenges on their way to becoming independent and self-reliant young women.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Grade 7-9
In 939 B.C.E. a daring girl and her priestly Jewish family journey from Jerusalem to Ethiopia in the company of the son of Solomon and Sheba. It is rumored that they may be transporting the Ark of the Covenant; the most important symbol of their faith. They do not know that Aleesha took an emerald from it and secreted it in her coat. Thus begins the civilization of the Beyta Israel (Ethiopian Jews) and the tradition of handing down the emerald to a female in each succeeding generation. The story then moves to 1984. Ethiopia is dealing with discrimination, famine, and unrest. As readers learn in the parallel stories, Debitu, 14, is as questioning and willful as her ancestor Aleesha. With her father conscripted into the army, and her mother in the hospital, Debitu must take her younger brothers, and the emerald, on the long and treacherous journey to

Israel. Discriminating readers will be put off by the plots clumsiness and improbabilities, the thinness of the characters, and even lapses of grammar. The book does not realize its potential. Its an undistinguished adventure story despite positive heroines. — Patricia D. Lothrop, St. Georges School, Newport, RI Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Gr. 4-7. Drawing on interviews she conducted with Ethiopian Jews, journalist Morgan blends legend, history, and fiction in a debut novel that connects past and present. In Part One, which is set in 939 B.C.E., young Aleesha and her family leave Jerusalem with King Solomon's son to take the sacred Ark with the Ten Commandments to Ethiopia for safekeeping. Part Two leaps into 1984 to focus on Debitu, 14, of the Beyta Israel people, an Ethiopian community of African Jewish families. To escape famine and oppression, the families traverse the mountains of Ethiopia and walk across the desert of Sudan until they reach Khartoum, where they are airlifted to safety in Israel. The fiction is awkward, particularly Aleesha's story, which blends contemporary idiom and place names with ancient legend. But the character of Debitu is based on a real person, and the story of her bravery brings close the history of exodus and asylum. Photos, a chronology, a glossary, and maps add to the facts, which are the real drama here. Hazel Rochman Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

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