

Broken Thread

written by Linda Smith
 ThistleDown Press, 2009
 978-1-55050-398-2 (pb) \$12.95
 for Grades 7 and up
Juvenile Fiction – Fantasy

Alina has dreamt her whole life of journeying to the Isle of Weaving and joining those who help create the great tapestry that tells the fate of the world and everyone in it. When her wish becomes a reality, she unthinkingly repairs a broken red thread with a lock of her hair, and causes a terrible disaster. Now she must find a way to set things right by traveling to the land of Kazia and undoing what she has set in motion.

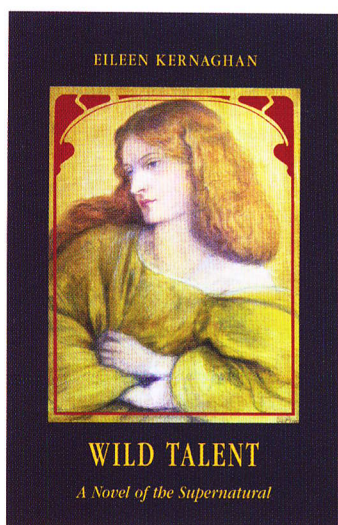
Based on the premise that each individual life on earth is represented by a thread in a tapestry, a broken thread represents a life cut short. By repairing a single thread, Alina extends that life, but also causes the death of thousands of others in wars instigated by the person she saved.

Broken Thread is a beautifully told multi-layered story. The characters are well developed and complex, and the author raises some interesting questions about our own ability to change what fate has laid out for us. When Alina is sent back to Kazia to make sure the prince she saved does not survive, it seems like a simple task. Finding herself inadvertently placed as a guard/babysitter to the prince, she believes that finding the opportunity to kill him will be easy. As she spends time

around the young prince, she comes to an important realization. Beneath his spoiled, and sometimes cruel, exterior is a frightened and lonely little boy who has seen abandonment and betrayal by those closest to him. For Alina, this creates an internal struggle between accomplishing her mission, and her growing fondness for the prince and for the young soldier also assigned as the prince's guard.

With a touch of romance and a richly told story, young teen fans of strong girl fantasy will find themselves glued to this hard-to-put-down novel.

Rachel Steen is Selection Manager for S&B Books, a Mississauga wholesaler.



Wild Talent: A Novel of the Supernatural

written by Eileen Kernaghan
 ThistleDown Press, 2008
 978-1-897235-40-9 (pb) \$15.95
 for Grades 7 to 10
Juvenile Fiction – Fantasy – Victorian History

As a child, Jeannie Guthrie dreamed of writing books and exploring the wonders of words. In reality, she knew that this would never be her lot in life and she accepted the days of backbreaking farmwork that came once she was hired out as a bondager to raise money for her family. However, never did she imagine that she would be forced to flee her native Scotland out of fear that she would be

accused of witchcraft!

Yet flee she has, after an accident in which she believes has left her loathsome cousin dead. She makes her way to London where the energetic and adventurous Alexandra David takes her under her wing. Jeannie soon finds herself immersed in the world of spiritualists and theosophists, especially once she is employed by the renowned and colourful Madame Helena Blavatsky, head of the British theosophist movement. Reluctantly, Jeannie must face her own frightening abilities – the strange powers that she possesses and deeply fears.

Her life continues to take unexpected turns which lead her ultimately to Paris, where the world's fair beckons and her dear friend Alexandra once again introduces her to a whole new world – one of artists and anarchists, rebels and would-be reformers. As Alexandra becomes increasingly introspective and begins entertaining some dark and disturbing thoughts, Jeannie knows she must find a way to bring her friend back to a better place within herself.

Eileen Kernaghan creates a richly atmospheric tale that captures a range of realities of the late nineteenth century. It is an evocative and mesmerizing tale, told through the eyes and in the voice of an earnest and endearing young woman. The vividly realized setting and quietly appealing protagonist lend this story an irresistible allure, both to readers of historical fiction and those who will be drawn by its more fantastical and otherworldly elements.

Lisa Doucet is the Assistant Manager of Wozzles in Halifax.

Mackenzie, Lost and Found

written by Deborah Kerbel
 Dundurn Press, 2008
 978-1-55002-852-2 (pb) \$12.99
 for Grades 7 to 10
Juvenile Fiction – Middle East

Three months. Mackenzie just has to suffer through three months in a foreign country where she doesn't know the language, the customs or anyone other than her father.



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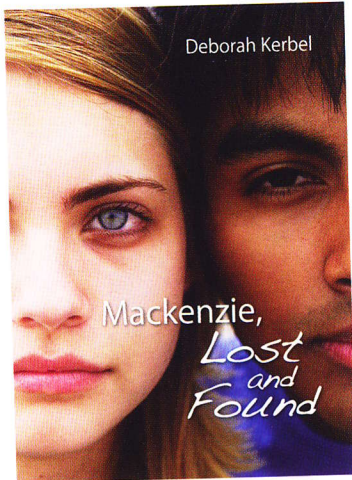
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Halifax NS B3H 4P7
902 423-8116
Contact: Jane Buss
talk@writers.ns.ca



Deborah Kerbel

Mackenzie,
Lost and Found

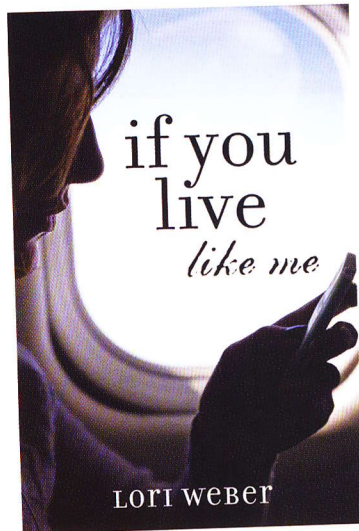
When Mackenzie's father told her that they would be moving to Israel for a year so he could oversee an archeological dig near Jerusalem, she had flatly refused to go. However, he had eventually agreed that if she was truly miserable after three months, he'd arrange to send her home.

Life in Jerusalem does indeed prove very different for Mackenzie, and she discovers that she has much to learn. Things become easier when she finds a friend in Marla, a girl who understands the pain that Mackenzie is still grappling with as she mourns her mom's recent passing. Then there is Nasir, the Palestinian boy that she finds herself drawn to. When she and Nasir begin to see each other in secret, Marla is openly critical. Hurt by her friend's refusal to accept her relationship with Nasir, Mackenzie ignores Marla's warnings. When things start to spiral out of control, Mackenzie realizes that her actions may have dire consequences for both her and Nasir.

Like Mackenzie herself, readers are sure to fall under the spell of Jerusalem and its many charms as the author adroitly conveys a sense of the land, its people and its rich history. While she depicts the tension and the ever-present threat of violence simmering near the surface of ordinary life, she also captures the awesomeness of its ancient ties. Mackenzie is taken aback to discover that even young people her age are very politically and socially aware, and struggles with the pressure from her peers to "take a side." She also discovers that people's feelings

and convictions not only run deep, but are also very complex and multi-layered. Her story gives readers much to think about even while leaving them uneasy about Nasir's fate.

Lisa Doucet



LORI WEBER

If You Live Like Me

written by Lori Weber
Lobster Press, 2009
978-1-897550-12-0 (pb) \$14.95
for Grades 7 to 10

Juvenile Fiction – Newfoundland

Cheryl has one wish: to go home. Home, as far as she's concerned, is Montreal – a real, bustling city where she fit in and had friends. Given her parents' plans, Cheryl is sure she'll never have friends again. Travelling around Canada with her anthropologist father and her cheerful mother is bad enough, but the worst part is the reason for all the moves. Cheryl's father is writing a book about dying cultures, so the family has been living in different communities for the last three years – not great for the social life, especially when people figure out they're being studied like an endangered species. The last move was to study the loss of farming traditions in Saskatchewan; now it's the dwindling fishing industry in Newfoundland. Cheryl's had enough, and is determined to find her way out of St. John's and back to Montreal, the first