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Ashes (The Seeds Of America Trilogy)



Synopsis

Return to the American Revolution in this blistering conclusion to the trilogy that began with the bestselling National Book Award Finalist *Chains* and continued with *Forge*, which *The New York Times* called "a return not only to the colonial era but to historical accuracy." As the Revolutionary War rages on, Isabel and Curzon have narrowly escaped Valley Forge—but their relief is short-lived. Before long they are reported as runaways, and the awful Bellingham is determined to track them down. With purpose and faith, Isabel and Curzon march on, fiercely determined to find Isabel's little sister Ruth, who is enslaved in a Southern state—where bounty hunters are thick as flies. Heroism and heartbreak pave their path, but Isabel and Curzon won't stop until they reach Ruth, and then freedom, in this grand finale to the acclaimed *Seeds of America* trilogy from Laurie Halse Anderson.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As "Ashes" begins, Isabel Gardner and Curzon Smith continue their search for Ruth, Isabel's sister. But this novel is more than one of recovering a lost family member. In Laurie Halse Anderson's "Ashes", the third installment of her *The Seeds of America* Trilogy, readers become immersed in the action and the hardships experienced by Revolutionary War soldiers during the final days of the war. The novel highlights the diversity of those patriots, the hardships and the dangers that all faced regardless of race or economic background. Ms Anderson delves into

the thoughts and the dreams of enslaved individuals who have freed themselves and into the relationships forged between individuals who persevered against all odds. "Ashes" is a very personal story, not only because of the subject matter, but also because Isabel narrates the novel. Speech patterns and colloquialisms are authentic; they enhance the reader's feeling of being beside the characters as events unfold. Descriptions of locale, clothing, and everyday objects are vivid; they draw the reader into the scenario presented making them become a part of Isabel's story. Language is appropriate for all ages of reader. Physical moments are innocent, involving glances, handholding or a kiss. Each chapter is prefaced by a quotation from actual letters or speeches written during the American Revolution. A comprehensive Appendix includes further information and references sources should the reader desire to research subjects further. It is apparent that Ms Anderson has researched and read extensively in writing The Seeds of America Trilogy. Although "Ashes" is the third of a trilogy, you do not have to have read the first two novels to love and appreciate Laurie Halse Anderson's latest book.

I had the first two books in the trilogy before I received this free copy from Vine. I never had a chance to read them till now. I am glad that I have them in my collection. They are really good stories. I have read her book "Fever." I picked it up when we were touring the Revolutionary sites in Philadelphia five years ago and have fallen in love with Anderson's writing. This book is the finale of a young slave girl, Isabel and her friend, Curzon. Both of them were born slaves. Their stories started in the first book, "Chains." Isabel and her sister Ruth were sold to a wealthy couple who were British Loyalists who lived in New York City. "Ashes" is a continuation of their stories that started in "Chains." They are older. They had been searching for Isabel's sister, Ruth, who was taken down to the Lockton's plantation in Charleston, SC. The two sisters have been separated for five years. Curzon went with Isabel as he promised. This is their story of their escape from the plantation and while fiction, it still shared details of what it was like to be slaves in a tumultuous period of our nation's history. Not only was the issue of the Thirteen Colonies' fight for independence from the English king a point in this novel, so was the issue of slavery. While the young nation fought for its independence, the slaves were fighting for theirs. Isabel and Curzon's pursuit of their own independence is the main theme of this book. This book is written for young adults. I think other adults should read this. It is written in such a way that one cannot help be emotionally involved with Isabel, Curzon and Ruth's plight. It does not romanticized war. Anderson shared the dirty details of war, the doubts that plague the characters and the fear they know.

The Seeds of America Trilogy finally has its last installment. It has been a long time coming and, as someone who used Chains and Forge in education, it is about time! The trilogy is unique in its view on the Revolutionary War from the perspective of African slaves who played a significant role in the conflict. I would not recommend reading Ashes without having read Chains and Forge first. While you can still get a lot out of reading only Ashes, the first two books definitely give a fuller experience to the events in the last book. Chains introduced us to Isabel, a young slave girl in revolutionary times, who - along with her sister - are denied a promised freedom on the death of their owner and are sold to a wealthy loyalist family in New York. Thrust into the center of a momentous time in history, Isabel becomes our eyes and ears on the Revolution - a battle for rights and freedom - as it would have seemed to an enslaved person. In Forge Andersen switched her focus to Isabel's friend, Curzon, who is one of the many men at Valley Forge. Again, we get to see the hope and the hypocrisy of a revolution that wanted freedom but only for a select few. Finally, years after the publication of Forge, we return to Isabel and Curzon and Ruth as the war unfolds around them. Isabel is a cynical witness to this battle for freedom when her own freedom is in constant peril. Curzon, on the other hand, is full of dreams and hopes and the brashness of youth. Curzon is torn between his desire to fight for the patriots (who guarantee him no freedom as a black man) and for the British (who may be his chance at a free life in England). And then we have Ruth - Isabel's intellectually disabled younger sister and the one person Isabel feels she is completely responsible for.

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