



## Forty Days

*Stephanie Parent*

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The entire village knows Neima's grandfather is a madman. For years the old man has prophesied that a great flood is coming, a flood disastrous enough to blot out the entire earth. He's even built an enormous ark that he claims will allow his family to survive the deluge. But no one believes the ravings of a lunatic...

...until the rain starts. And doesn't stop. Soon sixteen-year-old Neima finds her entire world transformed, her life and those of the people she loves in peril. Trapped on the ark with her grandfather Noah, the rest of her family, and a noisy, filthy, and hungry assortment of wild animals, will Neima find a way to survive?

With lions, tigers, and bears oh my, elephants and flamingos too, along with rivalries and betrayals, a mysterious stowaway, and perhaps even an unexpected romance, **FORTY DAYS** is not your grandfather's Noah's Ark story.

**FORTY DAYS** is approximately 45000 words, the length of a shorter novel, and is the first installment in a two-part epic story. It does contain a cliffhanger ending.

Readers looking for a traditional, religiously oriented version of the Noah's Ark story should be warned that **FORTY DAYS** may not appeal to them. The novel will, however, appeal to lovers of apocalyptic fiction, historical fiction, and romance, as well as anyone who's ever dreamed of having a baby elephant as a pet.

## **Forty Days Details**

Date : Published February 10th 2013 by Stephanie Parent

ISBN :

Author : Stephanie Parent

Format : Kindle Edition 123 pages

Genre : Young Adult, Historical, Historical Fiction, Fantasy, Romance

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## From Reader Review Forty Days for online ebook

### Brandee (un)Conventional Bookworms says

Wow! Completely, totally, utterly fascinating!

I'm so very impressed with Forty Days. To take a well known story and not just re-tell it...to help me live through it along with someone who's living through it...someone so close to Noah...brilliant! What better story to build upon than Noah's Ark? Stephanie Parent has woven a unique and fascinating tale. Noah's Ark from a different perspective - that of his teenage granddaughter.

Noah's Ark is a story we all know. And I must admit to questioning the wisdom of Noah building the ark solely because a voice claiming to be the one God told him to. Forty Days tells the story of Noah and his ark from Neima's point of view. It discusses the gossip and shunning Noah's family endures because of Noah's "madness". It also details the building of the ark, the work entailed, the sounds and smells. Parent's ability to describe these events allowed me to feel as though I was witnessing them...quite an accomplishment. I could even feel the heat and humidity.

Neima is a little different - and not just because she's Noah's granddaughter. She's taller than most girls and she has an unusual hobby. She carves objects out of wood - something her mother wants kept secret to protect her marriageability.

There are two boys interested in Neima. Kenaan, her cousin, and Jorin, a neighbor whose father opening shuns Noah's family. While preparing for the ensuing flood, Neima's village becomes more and more opposed to Noah's plan. They've dealt with the noise, the view and the smell of the construction of the ark. Now Noah is bringing dangerous animals into the village and it's too much.

Then the rain begins. We know the story but actually being on the ark is something to experience. The stomach churning movement of the ark and the caring for the animals...feeding them and removing the dung from their cages. Oh, the smell! And hearing Neima's inner thoughts on the events that put her on the ark -- whether there is only one God? Why would He destroy his creation? Why was Noah's family spared and others not? -- all valid and intriguing questions. It felt as though this was a journey of self-awareness and Neima experienced several existential moments. And then Neima discovers that not only her family escaped. What does it all mean?

I could gush on and on about how much I love Forty Days. It is masterfully written with great historical detail and asks age old questions. I will anxiously await Neima getting her answers.

#### Favorite Passages:

"...I make out the tiger's telltale growl amid the din, it somehow draws me closer. That feral sound seems to encapsulate everything I've just witnessed up above: a world turned dark and dangerous, savage and incomprehensible."

"My mind, even my body is too full of wanting to hold anything else. Wanting things to be simple, clear, the way they used to be, when I knew who was good and who was bad, whom to hate and whom to love. Wanting the world to be whole once again."

## Dragana says

Everyone knows story from the Bible about Noah's Ark. Stephanie Parent in her new series Neima's Ark retells this famous legend from a fresh and new perspective of a sixteen-year-old Neima, Noah's granddaughter. Told from a viewpoint of average teenage girl, process of building the arc seems like everything except an act of faith. Nobody believes in Noah's God and everyone thinks he is mad. So poor Neima, except usual teenage problems of first crush, low self-confidence and overzealous matchmaking cousins, has to fight against the ridicule of entire village since she is dubbed the madman's granddaughter.

I liked Neima. She is not weak, and although she is obedient, as it was custom in those days, she questions her elders and does not just listen blindly. And we both share love for animals. Neima's descriptions of animals that are part of arc's cargo were my favorite part. Not just baby elephants, although they were super cute, but also the tigers, flamingos and the rest. The only flaw that I could find in Neima thinking is irritating cliche of brunettes being dull as mud.

If you are looking for a christian fiction where 'God will give us strength' and 'We must have faith in our lord' are motivational sentences that pop-up on every page - look elsewhere. The only religious talk you will get is from Noah and it is usually regarded with skepticism and disbelief. Forty Days is a realistic retelling of Noah's Ark myth, or at least as realistic as it can get since the rain falls non-stop for forty days.

And don't be fooled by kissy cover. There is a budding romance, but it's not the center of the story, so people who are looking for a lot of steamy kisses and make-out sessions are going to be disappointed. But non-existing sexual content makes Forty Days a book that you can freely recommend to any teenage girl to read.

With a little bit over 120 pages, Forty Days is quick read with cliffhanger ending that will make you check out to see when will Forty Nights, the next part in Neima's Ark series, be released. I really don't know why did they split this into duology I guess it's some illogical decision that only money-making oriented publishers can understand. I personally would have preferred to read this as one book.

So if you are looking for a realistic, historical retelling of a Noah's ark myth with likeable heroine then hurry up and grab Forty Days, since until the end of the blog tour ebook will be available for a promo price of 0.99\$. ;)

**My rating:** 3.5 stars

**I recommend this book to fans of:** retellings of historical legends from young adult perspective; coming of age stories; animals; ...

***Disclaimer:** I was given a free eBook by the blog tour host in exchange for a honest review. This text is also posted on my blog Bookworm Dreams in a little bit more styled edition.*

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## Sam says

I picked this up as a freebie on Smashwords along with a whole bunch of other books, and didn't really have any clear idea of what it was about. I must admit, it was a surprise to find that it was about Noah and the great flood from the Bible. Or, more specifically, it was about Neima, Noah's granddaughter.

This is a short book, actually the first of a two part novel, and a quick read. It does also end on an absolute horror-bag of a cliffhanger—I was cussing away for quite a while when I realised there was no more to read! There were some very intriguing ideas in here too. The story leans away from traditional religious interpretation, and is much more about the characters and circumstances. Aside from Noah, most of his family really doesn't believe in this one true God, and thinks that the building of the ark and collecting of animals is all a big delusion on the part of the old man. But because he is head of the family, they do his bidding, and so are saved when the deluge begins. The story also covers the realism of living on a mostly sealed ark in turbulent water with a large number of birds and animals. I remember Noah and the Ark from primary school teaching, but I certainly don't remember any mention of seasickness, the stench of living in enclosed space, or the sheer hard work of looking after all these creatures. All this brings a realism to the story.

Neima is a decent main character, and although she tries to behave as she is expected to, she privately, and sometimes publicly, rebels in some ways. There's some romance in there too, as she realises that her childhood friend Jorin is no longer a child, but Neima is also aware that her family expects her to marry her cousin, Kanaan, who might be handsome but certainly isn't particularly nice.

This was interesting and very readable, and I think I'm going to have to get ahold of the sequel, if only to find out what happens next!

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### **Michelle (In Libris Veritas) says**

Forty Days is a new way of looking a very old story, more specifically the story of Noah's Ark. Stephanie Parent takes on the task of delving into the story and adding some depth to the family of Noah. This is not a overly religious story but instead it is a YA historical novel about family and love during a very scary and peculiar ordeal.

We are introduced to Neima before the Flood and we are treated just how her family is perceived by the other villagers. They are outcasts thanks to Noah's strange fixation with a coming flood and his building of a monstrous Ark; it's a source of immense tension through out the village and as a result Neima only has two friends, Jorin and Derya. I loved that Parent took the time to let us get to know Neima's rather large family and I also enjoyed seeing the progress on the Ark as the deadline closes in. There is a immense attention to detail as Parent lists the animals involved, as well as occupations and their roles during the Bronze Age. She paints even the smallest of details in a big way giving the story a life of its own.

Neima, our main character, is the obedient granddaughter of Noah but she has a will of her own and a sort of passive bravery. I can't even imagine the sort of panic and terror that she has to go through as the Flood starts, but Parent really gives you access to the character's mind so that you can better understand how she's dealing with everything. Most of the men in this novel are rather fierce and outspoken, one of which is Keenan. He is the cousin of Neima, and her mostly like suitor. He's charming but he's also egotistical, and he's a man of the times...meaning he plans to be in charge when it comes to relationships. Jorin is the exact opposite of Keenan and the others. He's sweet, soft spoken and willing to listen, and his intentions seem to be good; however he's not Neima's family.

This does end in a cliffhanger and it's one that snuck up on me, even though I was fully aware it was coming. I blazed through this book in a day and then when I read the last page I went into panic mode because I need to know what happens. I can't wait for the second book, Forty Nights! Stephanie is well on

her way to becoming an author I put all others aside to read.

I received this in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Zachary Flye (Zach's YA Reviews) says**

3.5 stars\*

For more reviews on many more YA books check out my blog, Zach's YA Reviews ([zachsyareviews.com](http://zachsyareviews.com))

Review:

**Protagonist:** Neima begins this book looking down on her grandfather for his crazy theory that the world will be destroyed in a massive flood and that he built a massive ark to survive it. Honestly there isn't all that much character development for her in this first book, mainly she wards off the advances of her cousin and tends to some of the animals she's befriended on the ark. Though she lacks sufficient development I didn't actually care because the writing surrounding her character was just that good. It was easy to get lost in Neima's personality and her personal drama as the flood approaches.

**Romance:** There is a love triangle in this book, and while it may not seem like it at first, due to the fact that the romance was sidelined until much later in the book, it's there subtly throughout. In the beginning it seems as though Neima's cousin Kenaan is a kind and compassionate person and though I knew he'd be part of the love triangle once Neima points out her mother wants them to be engaged, I thought and hoped he'd be a great side to the equation and be more or less equal to the other side. That is not the case however, as early on in the book Kenaan shows his true scumbag, pigheaded colors. It was sad to see such potential for a great love interest go to waste. The other love interest, however is a good guy. He's kind to Neima when the others in her village are not and doesn't blame her for the ramblings of her grandfather like the other villagers also do.

**World-Building:** I would also call this section "Biblical Accuracy" since that's kind of what I'm going to talk about. On the Goodreads page, in the summary of the book it says, "Readers looking for a traditional, religiously oriented version of the Noah's Ark story should be warned that FORTY DAYS may not appeal to them. The novel will, however, appeal to lovers of apocalyptic fiction, historical fiction, and romance, as well as anyone who's ever dreamed of having a baby elephant as a pet." This could not be more true. Going into this I had yet to read, or had forgotten reading that and was expecting a story more biblically accurate, being a Christian I was sort of hoping for it. However, I got over it pretty fast and learned to enjoy this more "realistic" version of Noah's Ark.

**Predictability:** Since this book is so short it's hard to have that level of foreshadowing that a longer book would have. That being said when there were twists they weren't the kind that I saw coming, even when I probably should have. There weren't too many twists, actually the only one I can really think of happens in the end and is actually the giant cliffhanger.

**Ending:** There was a giant cliffhanger to this tale and while I admire the attempt to shock and stun reader's with it's enormity it felt a bit forced. The way it came about kind of progressed naturally, but the last chapter or so seemed kind of like one giant push to the finish and with so much happening at once it was hard to see this ending as realistic.

Rating:

This book was a great reinterpretation of the story of Noah's Ark. However, the ending felt a bit rushed and with its short size I feel as though combining this book with the next and final one would have made for a great standalone whereas just this one alone was slow to start and had a rushed ending.

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### **Rachel Patrick says**

Not quite 3.5, so 4 Stars.

Lately, I've been reading a lot of books that I thought I would love but ended up just liking. So I am surprised--and happy--that I ended up liking Forty Days more than I thought I would. I was intrigued by the synopsis--Noah's Ark, a concept I've always loved, because, hello, a boat full of animals, and I love animals--and the pretty cover. Sure, it was short, and it's not my favorite, but I liked it more than I thought I would, and that's just excellent.

There really isn't anything bad I can say about this book. I may have wanted more from some scenes or wanted things done differently, but I think that's it. There's this thing with eBooks where I have a hard time reading them and getting through them and really liking them. I'm not sure if it's because this was formatted differently (bigger words on a smaller page, 314 pages total, PDF format), but I had pretty much no problems with that. Right away I liked the writing--thank gosh, because writing is kind of big for me. It flowed well and was readable and was simple but with enough detail that it worked well. (Only complaint is the lack of some Oxford commas; I love the Oxford comma.)

The characters were good, even if they were a little...different. What you have to remember is that this isn't set in modern times--back then, I think it may have been more normal for cousins to be paired together. (I did not like that.) Neima was a great MC--an average person who cares for her family, even if they have a bad rep. And she cares for the animals on the ark, and I liked her. It's hard, though, because the village looks at her and her family like they're a walking plague, and that's because of Noah. After an incident years ago, he began raving about a God who said he had to build an ark. Since then, his family helps him (though not necessarily believing him) and everyone thinks he's crazy. For the most part, the characters Neima interacts with are family members--Japheth, Arisi, and Shai are my favorites--and her two friends, Derya and Jorin. I liked Jorin more, for reasons. (Wink wink.) Derya wasn't a bad friend, and she stayed by Neima's side even though people hated her family, but after one little thing happens and she refuses to believe her best friend, things change. Jorin, on the other hand, is always there, and I really liked him.

If you're worried about this book being religious, don't. I didn't see it like that at all. Sure, it features Noah's ark, and it mentions God, but it never felt like a book about religion, just one that mentions it. If that's hindering you from reading it, please don't let it.

Forty Days was a short and quick read that I really liked. It's got a little bit of everything, including young elephants. I look forward to reading more from Stephanie Parent, and I wish I could dive into Forty Nights (book two, out sometime this year) RIGHT NOW. But, sigh, I can't. (Cliffhanger! I guessed it might end that way but still, ahhh!) I was pleasantly surprised with this book, and it was really just enjoyable.

This review can also be seen on my blog [Beauty and the Bookshelf](#).

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## **Sandra "Jeanz" says**

### **MY REVIEW**

The cover depicts the book well, with the Ark in the background, with the storm going on around it. Then there's the dove that Neima nurses as it has a broken wing. The couple in the foreground of the cover could be Kenaan forcing his unwanted attentions on Neima, or I'd prefer to think that it's Neima, and Munzir's son Jorin in a loving embrace. The fonts and placing of the book title, series title and author are all well placed and fit well with the cover, leaving the actual cover to do the "selling" of the book.

The blurb continues to "sell" the book so does it's job well. I sort of broke my own rule in that I say I don't read religious material. This book is literally based on the bible story of Noah's Ark. This story humanises the biblical story more by giving us characters and locations that are perhaps more readable. The story is told through the eyes of a young girl. You learn about the stubbornness of the character of Noah, how he rules his family firmly, and to do as he says without question. We also have our main character who narrates the story as Neima, she is Noah's grand-daughter. So as we all know the story goes that Noah is "told" to build an Ark. So Noah sets about his task and manipulates and forces his sons & their families to help. He doesn't ask he demands they listen to him and do as he says. Naturally there are skeptics within the family as well as outside of it. The family know better than to question Noah, but the villagers ridicule Noah and his family. One of the leaders of those in the village that oppose Noah is Munzir. No one believes that the rain will come as Noah says it will. Then when it does they blame Noah for building the Ark, saying he has cursed them. Munzir comes up with the idea of setting fire to and burning the Ark, though when he tries he cannot keep a fire torch lit long enough. Noah summons his family to the Ark. Then there's the torrential rain and the "living" on board the Ark, caring for and feeding all the animals that Noah ordered to be collected. This story also has the inter family politics, where one brother will agree with anything Noah says just to try and gain favour with Noah. Then there's the fact that Kenaan thinks he will marry Neima so thinks it acceptable to force unwanted kisses and grope her when he wishes. Then there's the friendships between Neima and Dreya her best friend, how does Dreya take the news that Kenaan will one day marry Neima when she herself covets him so much. There is also Jorin, son of Munzir who wants to be friends with Neima and perhaps more one day but his father would never stand for it, he hates to see Jorin even acknowledge Neima or any of Noah's family.

So most of you will know the story of the Ark but this book also tells of the lives of the family aboard the Ark, how they cope with the dark, the movement of the Ark, caring for the animals and each other, as well as coping with what is happening outside their safe haven.

There's also a stowaway on the Ark. Will Noah allow the stowaway to stay, as they are not of his family so were not chosen by the God who speaks to Noah? The ending leaves on a real cliffhanger.

So did I enjoy the book? Yes, I really did. Although I knew the story of Noah's Ark, this has an even more human side, and deals with perhaps sides of the story you would not first think of, like the living conditions on the Ark. Would I recommend the book? Yes, it makes you think even more than the biblical story. Would I read Bk2? Yes I definitely want to read book 2. Would I read more by Stephanie Parent? Yes, I liked her concept with this book being from Neima's point of view, and I also liked Stephanie's writing style, which was an easy, medium pace.

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## **Kristin (Blood,Sweat and Books) says**

Review:

Forty Days as the title/cover suggests is a play on the Biblical tale of Noah's Ark except with a decidedly Young Adult twist! I admit, I was a bit hesitant concerning this book. I didn't want to be preached at and I certainly didn't want my characters ie Women to be like those in the biblical version. Thankfully, this was not the case! To my pleasant surprise Stephanie Parent made this story completely her own and I for one couldn't be happier about that.

One of the things I really enjoyed about Forty Days was the world building. The story starts with the Ark nearing completion. Through the character Neima we learn about the Arks origins, her family, the town and the daily lives of its people. The pacing of the story was quick but I never felt inundated with information. It was direct, to the point and best of all beautifully written.

Which of course brings me to my second favorite thing about this book, the writing! This is my first Stephanie Parent book and I am impressed. Her writing has a very lyrical quality about it and it flowed smoothly over the pages. The imagery was so detailed I felt that if I leaned in close enough to my Kindle and sniffed I'd actually be able to smell the parched earth, the newly cut wood or the rain as it fell from the sky in an endless torrent.

Lastly, I love how Stephanie Parent conveyed that while Noah's family supported him and his building of the Ark, they didn't actually believe he was sane or even that a God existed. It was refreshing to see that even Noah's family being "chosen" still had doubts. It also made a scene later on gut wrenching to see and brought back many feelings of anger about this tale that I've harbored since my youth.

Now while I did really love the book with its fantastic writing and world building, I did take some small issues with the characters mainly Neima. I understand that Forty Days is set in a time where women aren't exactly treated as equals however... If someone has tried to molest you not just once but twice against your will surely you would speak up and tell a family member. Especially considering how important it was during those times to remain pure before marriage. I could forgive her refusal the first time it happened but the second time she should of spoken up. What the heck would she do if he succeeded and heaven forbid became pregnant? Virgin birth's already been done, can't use that excuse. This just really bugged me and made Neima seem weak.

I also would of liked to have seen more perspective from those outside the ship as the floodwater started to rise. We do get a small glimpse teaser of the carnage but nowhere near enough for my liking.

Overall, I really enjoyed Forty Days. The fabulous writing, striking visuals and the super adorable elephants Enise and Bilal definitely will have me coming back for more. I highly recommend picking Forty Days up and giving it a go. In the end, I will be rating Forty Days by Stephanie Parent ★★★★.

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### **Lelia Taylor says**

OK, let me get rid of the bad stuff first. What did I not like about Forty Days?

Um, well, let me think...oh, yeah! It's too short.

Yep, that's all I can come up with—it's too short.

Forty Days is exactly the reason I often don't like novellas, novelettes, short stories, what have you. If I don't

connect with the story or the characters or the writing, the truncated offering is a good thing because it means I haven't spent a lot of time on something I didn't care for. On the other hand, when I DO really buy into it, I'm so disappointed that it ends much too soon. I want it to go on and give me so much more. So, yes, I didn't like that this book is too short because I just loved it and I didn't get enough.

Stephanie Parent has taken a story people all over the world know and crafted a world around it that is believable and, for me, makes the core story come alive. The Noah's Ark tale means something different to everyone; to me, it's the quintessential biblical allegory meant to make sense of an event that would have been overwhelming to the people of the time. We know that a horrendous flood almost certainly occurred. Did it cover the entire earth? No, not in a literal sense, but isn't it interesting that the Noah's Ark story exists in such similar forms in so many cultures? It's easy to understand that the people directly affected would have seen this as a divine event and would weave their own explanations for it. It's also believable that this event could have been the catalyst for belief in a single God.

Another thing that I like about Ms. Parent's treatment of the basic tale is her acknowledgement that the taking in of the pairs of animals could reasonably only have meant those animals known to live in the immediate area or within trading distance. That would still be an inordinate number of species but it's at least more manageable than to believe two of every living creature were taken into the Ark (except, of course, for the unlucky unicorn). I also definitely appreciated Ms. Parent not shirking the unpleasantness that would be inevitable on a closed container of humans and animals.

The characters in *Forty Days* are all so normal, so likeable—or not—just as people usually are and I found even those who are violently opposed to Noah truly understandable. The members of his family, though, are who really bring the story to life because you can't help knowing that you'd most likely respond to him in the very same way, tolerating his craziness because he is the patriarch but hoping that his madness will somehow go away so they can return to a comfortable co-existence with their neighbors.

Neima is a girl it's easy to love. She has the expected teenage angst going on but she loves her family and only wants to be happy and accepted by the community for herself, not ostracized because she's the granddaughter of a crazy old man. She has one friend, Derya, who can look past Neima's family failings while her relationships with Jorin and Kenaan don't resemble the common love triangles found in so many young adult novels, something I appreciated. I'd much rather go along with her on her "journey" as she finds what her heart really wants. Best of all, though, is Neima's relationship with her father and how it changes as Neima has to accept that he is not perfect.

This first volume of the Neima's Ark duology ends in a real cliffhanger but I'm grateful that we don't have long to wait for the second book, *Forty Nights*, due out in June. I can barely wait and that reminds me of one other thing I don't like about *Forty Days*—I have to wait two months for the conclusion.

Reviewed by Lelia Taylor, April 2013.

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### **Kylee says**

You can find this review along with others on my book blog Babbling of a Bookaholic

Wow, you guys! I wasn't sure I'd like *Forty Days*, I had no clue what to expect, but I had high hopes and I was blown away. I'm really interested in retellings of anything really because I haven't read many. I've heard

the story of Noah's Ark several times throughout my life so I was interested to see exactly how Stephanie would twist this story into something unique and her own. I was very impressed with the writing, the detail, and how the story progressed. Forty Days was definitely one of those novels I just didn't want to put down, although I had to a few times.

The story is told from Neima's point of view who is Noah's granddaughter. Neima was very interesting and easy to like. It was fun seeing how others around Noah possibly felt. I liked how Stephanie put detail into all of her characters, even if they didn't have a huge part in the novel. They all had their own personalities and flaws, it made the story more believable for me. The family aspect of this novel was really well thought out and written. Stephanie explored all of the possible emotions that a family member of someone who is viewed as insane by the town could possibly feel. I liked how even though not all of Noah's family believed him they respected him enough to help him with what he needed to do. Although some of them did it for selfish reasons. I loved the love interests aspect of this book, Neima had her eyes set on someone but her family has other plans. I loved the love triangle and I'm saying love a lot. I'm not exactly sure if that's what you would call it but I'm going to anyways. It was a fun aspect to have in the book, making it feel more like a fun retelling than a serious, super religious one. I especially appreciated Stephanie's detail in describing how it felt, smelled, and was like on the ark. I felt like I was there with Neima and her family, suffering with them. I really liked the way she incorporated the animals into the story, if you know the story of Noah's Ark they're a huge aspect to the story. She was descriptive and made me fall in love with baby elephants!

I really, really enjoyed Forty Days. The cliff hanger ending sort of really sucked. Especially when I found out there's no information on the second book posted on Goodreads. Either way I loved this retelling of Noah's Ark and suggest you all give it a chance. It was a fun, easy read for me and really enjoyable.

Huge thank you to the author herself for giving me an advanced readers copy to review.

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### **Bonnie (A Backwards Story) says**

For as beloved as retellings are, it's rare to find a novel revolving around the Bible. Religion is very taboo for many people. Depending on your outlook, such books could either be labeled historical fiction or mythological fantasy. I won't make that decision for you, but for those who don't like characters being inserted into religion, FORTY DAYS might not be for you. It retells the journey leading up to the great storm from Noah's granddaughter Neima's POV. The only other retelling of Noah's Ark I've encountered is Madeleine L'Engle's classic novel MANY WATERS, a companion to A WRINKLE IN TIME. I'm not really sure how over/under-done retellings are, but I don't often see religious retellings. I was especially intrigued when I found out the story would be retold from a secondary character's POV.

By seeing everything through Neima's eyes, readers can see the way everyone ridicules Noah and his family. The women steer away from Neima when she does her laundry by the river or pretend she stinks. They whisper and tell stories about the entire family. Even Noah's own family is in a state of disbelief, believing Noah to be mad with old age, but willing to humor him...until he starts gathering up vicious beasts and filling his ark. When the rain begins to fall, Noah's family is boarded up in the ark, leaving behind everyone else. Neima dreams about her last memories of her friends and wonders why everyone save her family had to die. How are they any better than everyone else, especially her friends with kind hearts?

FORTY DAYS looks at the thoughts and feelings of one of Noah's granddaughters, who faced the ridicule and scorn firsthand. Exploring her psyche adds a new layer to the tale told in Bible School. We're taught all

about Noah and his family and the ark, but never really stop to think about everyone else's perspective. A twist late in the book reveals a new perspective altogether that will become the launching pad for **FORTY NIGHTS**, out this summer. My only major complaint with the book? I definitely wasn't expecting a cliffhanger ending when I picked this up, and being a novella, the two could probably have been merged into one longer novel. Just don't go into this blind like I did and be prepared for the drop! It will be interesting to see the way this new theme is embraced and developed as the second half of everyone's journey onboard the ark begins. My favorite element of the novella was the way readers are able to so freely emphasize with Noah's family, fleshing out Noah's Ark in new ways, and it will be interesting to see how we'll care in **FORTY NIGHTS**, when the family is already onboard the ship. I also like the way Parent chose to include only the animals known to Turkey, instead of every animal in the entire world, since Noah obviously wouldn't know about more-exotic animals far from home. I'm hoping to see more on this as well in the second book!

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### **Shelby says**

We've all heard of the story of Noah's Ark one way or the other. As children, we'd fantasize about living in close quarters with a bunch of fuzzy animals while it rained and rained and rained outside of the security of the hulking ark. But surely it wasn't all sunshine and roses. Have you ever wondered what it really was like? **Forty Days** give us a glimpse at just that.

I loved how Stephanie incorporated the realities of living on a huge boat with a bunch of animals. I've never really thought of how it might be to have a relative claim that God told him to build an ark in his backyard, and to be shunned by all your neighbors. Or how it might feel to leave all of humanity behind to die in a flood. Or how nourishment might be an issue when you have an ark full of beasts to feed. But those were, more likely than not, the realities of the flood, and it gives you a whole new perspective on the story of Noah's ark.

The main character, Neima, was rather easy to connect with, maybe because the book is written in first person/present tense, which I enjoyed. Present tense always allows the reader to become more engaged in the story. I feel like Stephanie used plot twists to deceive us, somewhat, into having varying opinions on characters- several times I found myself questioning the true motives of certain characters. Unpredictability is good.

There is a bit of romance in **Forty Days**, which I enjoyed. It wasn't overbearing or understated, as it often times can be, but seemed to be just right amount. Brownie points for the author in that regard. There's an incredible cliffhanger at the end (I think I might have shrieked a little when I realized where the story ended) so, thanks a lot, Stephanie Parent. \*wry grin\* On that note, I will most definitely be keeping an eye out for book two.

Quick Content Review: \*may contain spoilers\*

Language: None

Violence: Mild (deaths from flood; mentions of bodies floating in the water)

Sexual: Mild-Moderate (some kissing; an attempted rape, nothing happens)

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## **Tammi says**

What would you do if your family had the person who the whole village pegged as crazy? That is Neima's grandfather, Noah. Noah has been telling people of the end of days for years now and is now putting all his resources into building this ark.

Neima is affected by everybody thinking that her grandfather is crazy. There are some people in the village who won't even associate with her because of it. It isn't fair how it doesn't affect other people in her family like her cousin, Kenaan.

Then Noah calls a family meeting. Neima's mother thinks it is to announce that Kenaan and she will marry. Neima does not know if she is ready to marry and is worried about the meeting. Noah tells them that the time is come for the great flood and they need to prepare. As if things weren't bad enough, now Noah wants them to bring in animals to take on the ark with them. That surely isn't going to win Neima any friends. Good thing she has friends in Jorin and Derya, who don't bother with what people say about Neima's family.

Then the rains come. Her family is all in the ark. This includes Kenaan, who she still hasn't spoken to after the preparations. What will happen between Neima and Kenaan? Will Neima see her friends again?

Everyone has heard of the tale of Noah and the Ark. This story gives a little different spin on it. It is told from the POV of the sixteen year old granddaughter of Noah. When I first started reading this book, I couldn't stop thinking about Bill Cosby's "Noahs" and how comedic they were. I liked that this book thought up of some of the same issues.

I liked how you could tell that Neima was young by the problems that she faced, but they were still relevant to the time period. It is sometimes hard to understand the customs of another time period, especially one that is drastically different than your own. In *Forty Days*, it was well explained what the social norms were (i.e.: men sleeping in one room and women sleeping in another). I also liked how Parent explained why she wrote things in the way she did. I think that this was important given the sacredness of the story of Noah.

Neima as a protagonist is wavering. She has an ongoing battle with herself on what she wants to say versus what she really says. She doesn't always think inline with what the customs or social norms are. She is just finding her voice in this first book and it will be interesting to see how that develops in *Forty Nights*.

I only rated this as "like" or 3 stars because it can be a little heavy reading at times. Given the story, it would be difficult to be otherwise. I'm not saying that you cannot just read the story and really like it without all the "heaviness" (history, social norms, etc). I just couldn't bypass those. All in all, it was a good read and I'm excited to read *Forty Nights* when it comes out in June.

**\*\*I received this book as part of a blog tour in exchange for an honest review\*\***

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## **Melanie says**

Short review:

**This copy was given to me for review/blog tour purposes. See more reviews at YA Midnight Reads**

*"that Noah believes a great flood is going to destroy the world!" And there it is: the reason Grandfather has devoted himself to this interminable project, has forced my father and uncles to neglect their own duties in order to help him.'*

Stephanie Parent strikes again, with her new book, *Forty Days*. A historical retelling of 'Noah's Ark', Steph throws in romance and a action filled journey. While I enjoyed the idea, it's execution was rather poor, and I constantly felt bored of the monotonous writing and main character.

The 'character' aspect of *Forty Days* was poorly implemented. Neima was a rather okay-ish lead character for me. What I liked about was that she was strong willed and observant but constantly, I did not find much indifference with her. She wasn't as realistic or relatable as I would've expected. In addition, there were about two places where I came across as confusion. An example can be; a random aunty popping out of nowhere that we were introduced to about one fifth of the way in. Overall, most of the siding characters were too annoying and ignorant.

The major thing I loved about *Forty Days* was the idea Stephanie produced and lastly, the relief that for a short novel, there was a reasonable amount of depth. For just 123 pages, Stephanie managed to describe everything flawlessly and in depth.

Filled with romance, some action and great depth, Stephanie creates a beautiful retelling of 'Noah's Ark', while I got bored easily at times, I was still very curious and intrigued by the great depth and idea.

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### **Angie says**

Growing up in a Christian school, I'm very familiar with the story of Noah's Ark. I've heard it too many different ways to remember, but none were like *Forty Days*. The author has taken a well known story and turned it into some kind of awesome, exciting, historical, apocalyptic tale. Despite my upbringing, I would not consider myself a religious person at all. I have to say that you definitely don't need to be religious to enjoy this one! The author also includes a very well written Author's Note that explains the context in which she's writing the story, and a note on how she chooses to capitalize "God." She handles it all very respectfully.

Neima and her family are not exactly looked upon with favor in their village. Her grandfather Noah has been building an ark since before she was born and their neighbors find it quite the eyesore. Noah has been determined a mad man, because he claims God spoke to him and instructed him to build this ark. Her grandfather's actions have left Neima almost friendless and without any marriage prospects except for her jackass of a cousin, Keenan. However, once the worst rain in history hits, perhaps Noah isn't so crazy?

Once we're on the ark with Neima and her family, the author doesn't spare us any of the more unpleasant details. I mean, this is an ancient ark, not a luxury cruise liner. Motion sickness hits the family as well as the animals that they have stored, so things get messy very quickly. Life on the ark has caused Neima to consider the possibility that her grandfather's God is in fact the one God, but she has trouble coming to terms with the fact that he would destroy everyone but her family. She's also on edge because she feels like someone is watching her, and she wants to avoid Keenan at all costs. Luckily, she's good with a knife.

I really enjoyed *Forty Days*. Even though I knew it would abruptly end, as the story is split into two books, I was still shocked to reach the end. I was completely engrossed in the story, and the ending is quite a major

cliffhanger. I do have hope that everything will work out, but who knows, since the author has completely re-imagined this classic tale!

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