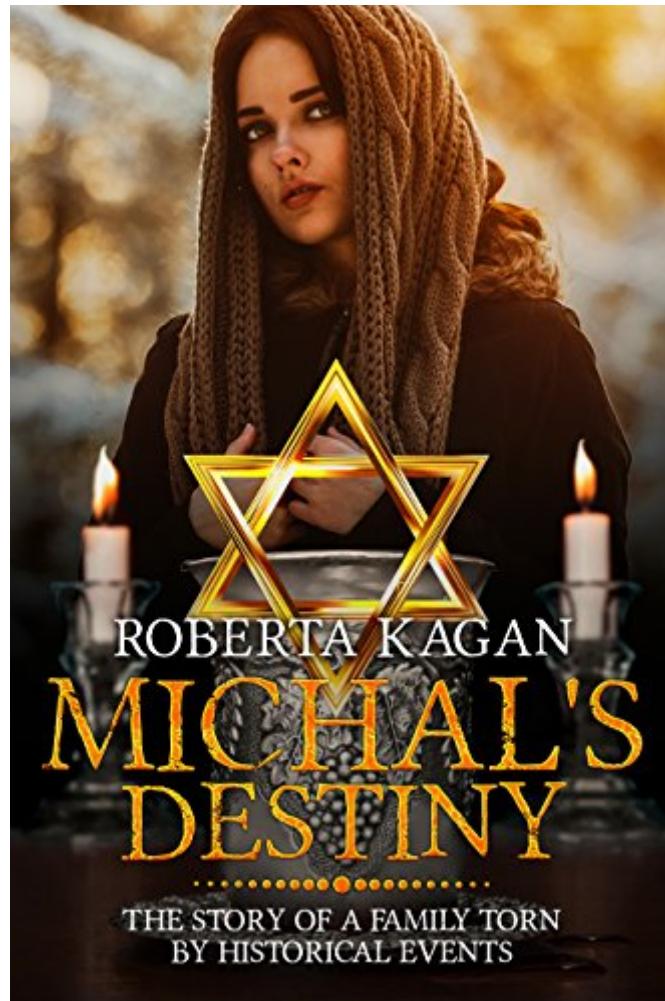




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Michal's Destiny



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Synopsis

Siberia 1919. In a Jewish settlement a young woman is about to embark upon her destiny. Her father has arranged a marriage for her and she must comply with his wishes. She has never seen her future husband and she knows nothing about him. Michal's destiny lies in the hands of fate. On the night of her wedding she is terrified but her mother assures her that she will be alright. Her mother explains that it is her duty to be a good wife, to give her husband children and always to obey him. However, although her mother and her mother's mother before her had lived this way, this was not to be Michal's destiny. Terrible circumstances would force Michal to leave her home and travel to the city of Berlin during the Weimar period where she would see and experience things she could never have imagined. Having been a sheltered religious girl she found herself lost and afraid trying to survive in a world filled with contrasts. Weimar Berlin was a time in history when art and culture were exploding, but it was also a period of depravity and perversions. Fourteen tumultuous years passed before the tides began to turn for the young girl who had stood under the canopy and said "I do" to a perfect stranger. Michal was finally beginning to establish her life. However, the year was 1933, and Michal was still living in Berlin. Little did she know that Adolf Hitler was about to be appointed Chancellor of Germany and that would change everything forever.

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Customer Reviews

I received a free copy of this book in exchange for my honest review. First of all, there is much to like about Michal's Destiny. The characters are well drawn and sympathetic, the writing is engaging, and the book focuses on a less known part of Jewish history. I enjoyed it enough that after reading the first few chapters of the free copy, I splurged and bought the actual book from . Ideally, I would've given the book 4 1/2 stars, but that wasn't an option so I went with 4 stars instead. The reason I took off a star was because of a few factors. 1. Although Michal starts off as incredibly frum and dedicated to Orthodox traditions, she changes rapidly after she leaves her homeland. I find it hard to believe that a widow who's horrified at the thought of remarriage, to another Jew at that, changes enough to have a lusty affair while her husband is off playing the field. 2. The book ends very abruptly at the brink of WWII. Michal seems relatively unconcerned about Hitler's rise to power, though perhaps many Jews felt that way. Certainly, most didn't try to escape until the writing on the wall was clear. From a literature point of view though, the book just ends. You turn the page expecting to find a continuation of the story and instead there's an acknowledgement page. Even though this is meant to be part of a series, an ending should feel like an ending. That said, Michal's Destiny has a lot of merit and is an enjoyable story that gives insight into Jewish culture in the early 20th century. I would recommend adding it to your library!

Roberta Kagan has a way of writing books that are like taking a ride back in time. You will feel the character fear and pain, it's like you're a person back in her time. She writes in a form that is very easy but amazing. She my favorite author about the Holocaust. She tells things through her character that are like a history lesson through someone who lived it. Her characters seems so real, it's like you're Papa telling a story. Alike her all my love detrick series I can't wait for this series to unfold, I'm waiting for the next book. This story is based on Holocaust Nazi times, alike many of Kagan books. This book is great.

With each book of Ms. Kagan, I am discovering how good her writing is. She is quickly becoming one of my favorite authors. This particular read starts in Russia and goes to the "Night of Glass" in Germany when Jewish businesses were terribly damaged followed by stricter rules for them.

Although there is sadness in the story, there are also lessons learned and forgiveness. These things were very well written and events of which most of us have to deal at one point or another in our lives. Perhaps it isn't brought on by war, but certainly present. These are ordinary people leading ordinary lives until world events change everything for them. There is also an issue that would make for a lively book group discussion. Do you turn your back on most of your religious beliefs in public in order to survive or do you stand solidly with them and expire? It is something for which the reader must think to understand some of the story. Yes, the story ends abruptly, but does it really? When thinking over history and all the night brought forth, so many lives were changed at that point. Isn't that a good place to end this particular story? You know things are never going to be the same for Michal and her family. For those who favor reading stories that take place in this time period, I highly recommend this read.

Michal's Destiny, Book 1 is by Roberta Kagan. This is a work of fiction but it does a good job of depicting the life of the Jews prior to World War II in Russia and in Berlin. It shows the good and bad sides of Jews who are strictly religious and those who are not religious at all. Both sides can have both good and bad people among them. Michal Habelowsky lived with her family in a Jewish settlement in Eastern Siberia. On June 12, 1919, she was to marry Avram Lippman, an apprentice shoemaker. She had never met Avram and knew only that he was seventeen. Her Father, who was violent and abusive had told her nothing else and did not consult her in any way about her marriage. Michal knew only that she wanted more in her marriage than her parents had. She just had to hope that Avram was not like her Father. Avram Lippman knew only that his bride-to-be was from a religious family. He had no idea if she was attractive or not or what her disposition was. Avram knew that he wanted more than a marriage, he wanted a happy marriage. He knew that this was most likely not what he was going to get; but he, also, had no choice. He would see his bride after the ceremony when he was allowed to raise her veil. Would he be happy with what he saw? Michal and Avram's marriage was destined to be short. It was shortened when the Cossacks overran their village in a pogrom. As they were fleeing, Avram was killed before Michal's eyes and she was raped. Before she could be killed though, Taavi Margolis, the carpenter she had admired long ago, caught her by the hand and pulled her to the woods towards, hopefully, safety. Michal knew it was wrong for him to even touch her, much less to run away with him, but circumstances were different. As far as Michal knew, the entire village and her entire family had been wiped out by the Cossacks. Her life was changing swiftly. Taavi Margolis believed the best thing for them to do was to go to Berlin where he could get a job in the

furniture business. Although Anti-semitism was in Germany he felt it was much worse off here under Stalin. With the promise of marriage, Michal went with Taavi to Berlin. Would this be the best move for them? Would they be happy? The rise of the Nazi party and Hitler provides the backdrop for their story. Being able to trust each other when they really didn't know each other became something they needed to work on. What paths would they each take to try to fulfill their hopes and dreams?

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