Ruth is a misfit. Within the protective Dome of Ark Three, she alone disrupts the Web, the perfect pattern formed by the psychic joining of minds. Other images fill Ruth's dreams, images of a red-haired girl from the far eastern mountains. Could it be that other Arks exist? Ruth must face a hazardous journey as she becomes involved in a dangerous rescue operation...

My Personal Review:
The Freedom Man danced out of the Ark/ Over the hills so shady/ Into the light and out of the dark/ To be with his red-haired lady.

It is a year in a far-flung future, when the survivors of mankind have retreated into small, isolated communities called Arks. Fifteen-year-old Ruth is a member of Ark Three, and can't seem to fit in or do anything right. Can this misfit find her place in the community? Monica Hughes is an accomplished author of Science Fiction for young readers, and knows her craft. This book is the sequel to DEVIL ON MY BACK, although the stories can be read independently of one another. Ms. Hughes sparks the imagination, creates compelling characters and leads readers on an adventure, not only in science fiction, but also of the heart.

The basic situation that underlies this story will be familiar enough. Ruth is the only one of her fifteen-year-old group that is strikingly different. She can't seem to do anything right, can't seem to fit in, can't seem to be happy. She keeps wondering what's wrong with her. Pretty much, this theme is a tenet of teen fiction, and Ms. Hughes knows this. But here's where the story changes: Ruth is part of a self-sufficient community that has developed psychic powers and links as part of their survival. At age fifteen, each child becomes an adult, joining the Web—the perfect pattern formed by the joining of minds of everyone in Ark Three. And every fifteen-year-old is given a vocation based on his or her talent. But Ruth has no talent; it seems, except for causing trouble, disrupting the web and generally being unhappy. But the fact is, Ruth does have a talent—a rare one. And it is her abilities that allow her to receive dreams that are being sent from another Ark. She will help spur her community into an exciting and dangerous journey through the outside to try and find this other Ark. But what they find may be the most dangerous thing of all . . . and it will
take all of Ruths abilities, along with those of her friends and new allies, to survive it and create a new future for all.

As with all of Ms. Hughes books, the author not only deftly threads the themes that are universal to youngsters and teens everywhere, but also maintains a social conscience about the kind of societies that are possible in this future. She looks at them critically, demonstrating their flaws, and their strengths, and proving that sometimes the most unlikely people can be the catalyst that changes society for the better. Ms. Hughes doesn't pull her punches when it comes to her characters; they wind up in real danger, and have to survive some true ordeals. But everything is coached in young reader terms, so older readers may find some of the events less sophisticated than they would like—this is not an adult reader's story and doesn't try to be. If your young teen reader is hungry for science fiction stories, and not quite ready to tackle the likes of 1984 or BRAVE NEW WORLD, then this kind of book is the perfect stepping-stone.

If you like this book, please be sure to check out DEVIL ON MY BACK, which this is a stand-alone sequel to. Also check out other books by Hughes like INVITATION TO THE GAME and KEEPER OF THE ISIS LIGHT. If you enjoy these sort of stories set in a post apocalyptic future, also check out THE CITY OF EMBER by Jeanette Duprau, OBERNEWTYN by Isobelle Carmody and THE GIVER by Lois Lowery.

Happy Reading! ^_^ Shanshad

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The Dream Catcher by Monica Hughes - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!