Red Ink

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15-year-old Melon Fouraki is left alone after her mother is killed by a London bus, her only family an Auntie Aphrodite hundreds of miles away in Crete. As Melon struggles to navigate in her new reality, she leans on The Story, the Fouraki family fairy tale, to help her make sense of her world. Melon is an honest, forthright, and even prickly narrator who refuses to accept the pat comforts or attentions of those who try to help her after her mother's death, including her social worker (and mother's ex-lover), Paul. The novel jumps around in time, before and after the day that Melon's mother passed away. As such, the narrative has the dreamlike feeling of a myth, particularly where it is interspersed with chapters from The Story. As Melon explains, the Fourakis have a family curse: they all die young.

Through the course of the novel, Melon's relationship with her mother, and by extension her family, is analyzed and deconstructed. Melon fashions a new identity for herself, one in a world where she is now alone. By rebuilding these ties and this mythos around her, she finds comfort in a resonant web that connects her to past generations.

Red Ink is a thoughtful, ambitious look at one young girl's search for identity, connection, and family, in a world defined as much by its stories as by its truths.

STEPHANIE BUCKLIN (Spring 2016)

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