

The Diamond Setter: A Novel

Moshe Sakal

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Moshe Sakal's *The Diamond Setter* is a spellbinding saga of love and family secrets. Characters' stories overlap, all connected by a famous blue diamond: Sabakh.

A handsome young man, Fareed, smuggles a piece of Sabakh across the border from Damascus to Jaffa, in hopes of returning it to its original owner, and in good faith that he will discover his roots and family heritage along the way. His travels completely alter the otherwise simple life of Menashe, a jeweler from Tel Aviv. During his stay in Jaffa, Fareed finds more than he anticipated. He is swept off his feet by an Israeli soldier, Honi, and his boyfriend, Tom.

The story follows these characters through their respective family ancestries in stride, delving deep into the history of the Middle East. Writing is literary and exemplary, with wonderful character development and a deliberate, calculated pace. The relationship between Menashe and his nephew, Tom, is heartwarming and strong, and the polyamorous relationship between Tom, Honi, and Fareed adds an intriguing romantic element.

The story is filled with a great deal of dialogue, creating an atmosphere of ancestral storytelling. The major characters each have their own unique, authentic voices. As the novel weaves between various characters, Middle Eastern history, and ancestry, it can be difficult to keep track of less dominant threads.

With its enigmas, romance, and literary takes on issues of immigration and Middle Eastern politics, *The Diamond Setter* is an artful reminder that in some way or another, we are all linked together.

HANNAH WILLIAMS (March/April 2018)

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