

Baden-Powell's Beads: Jerusalem: Book Four; Beads Series

Paul D. Parsons

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The hunt is on for relics as the clock ticks to an apocalypse in the exciting conclusion to this elegantly written series.

Baden-Powell's Beads: Jerusalem is an action-packed thriller that is sure to entertain. Author Paul D. Parsons combines biblical prophecies with modern fears of terrorism and the threat of an asteroid that could destroy the world. The result is a surprisingly elegant and tightly woven story.

In 1888, Captain Baden-Powell discovered twenty-four beads carved from the same wood used in the making of the Ark of the Covenant. To protect the world from their extraordinary power, Baden-Powell gave them away, scattering them across the world. In the present day, eight of the beads have found their way into the hands of a terrorist named Lij Mered. Three homeland security agents—Patrick Dartson, Adnan Fazeph, and Pam Blanchard—each in possession of one bead, race to stop him.

But a far more dangerous problem looms. An asteroid is headed toward earth, and its size and velocity will destroy the planet in just two short months. The agents race to stop Lij Mered, unaware that they are playing a crucial role in a much larger story.

Parsons writes with clarity and purpose, explaining his characters' actions and motivations as well as the climate of a world faced with possible annihilation. He describes not only chaos, mass suicides, and martial law, but also a restaurant staying open as the world is ending and a family sharing the last of its food with the three agents: "It wasn't long before food and stories were passed around; the table jabber in three, sometimes four, languages accompanied by much signing with hands to make a point when words failed. The baby fussed and Pam shared the motherly duties. Social barriers fell."

This well-described and believable social landscape is a perfect backdrop for the book. The realism of people reacting not just with terror and extreme behavior but also with quiet dignity and a search for human connection makes a story filled with prophecy and magic compelling and believable. Additionally, the actions of the three agents, sacrificing their opportunity to spend their last days with their own loved ones on the tiny chance that they might help the world, makes sense in this context.

Those who come to this book without reading the first three installments may find it difficult to catch up. The author provides little by way of recap, and the story is intricate. There are a few unexplained details, like Agent Adnan speaking in a stilted accent throughout the beginning of the narrative, that do not make sense. Additionally, some secondary characters, such as a villainous femme fatale named Cheri, have unexplained backstories and are ultimately flat in this installment as a result.

Baden-Powell's Beads: Jerusalem is fast-paced, unique, and highly enjoyable from the first page to the last. The conclusion is satisfying and neatly wraps up all of the story's elements. This final installment of the Baden-Powell's Beads series will not disappoint.

CATHERINE THURESON (September 26, 2014)

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