



The Shanghai Tunnel

Sharan Newman

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Portland, 1868. It is a rough hewn place, an exploding trading post that has dreams of becoming a metropolis.

Horace Stratton, one of Portland's wealthiest heirs, has decided to come home for good after amassing yet another fortune in Shanghai. With him comes his wife Emily, a shy daughter of missionaries, and their teenaged son. On the brink of that happy return, Horace suddenly falls ill and dies in San Francisco.

Emily and her son bring her husband home to Portland and they try to settle into this new culture. While they look as if they should belong, Portland is a strange and unsettling place for them.

Emily is guilt-ridden, but sorrow is one of the few emotions she didn't feel when told of her husband's passing. For Emily had learned more about her husband's past than anyone would believe. And she discovers that all of his schemes did not die with him.

His partners very much want Emily and her son to go away... by whatever means necessary. Emily will have to delve into her husband's seedy and painful past and set things right so that she can make a life for herself and her son in this strange land.

The Shanghai Tunnel Details

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Jennifer says

The characters were so well-written. This writer seems smart and witty and certainly does her homework. I love it that one of the characters comments that the mountains have come out. An odd expression until you've witnessed it - like the moon being out, only much rarer. And some one else asks when the rain should break - it's already March - and is told that it usually stops raining by the 4th of July. Perfect! I'm so bringing this back home with me!

Jeanne Choy says

What a great book! Portland in the 1860s and the sleuth is the daughter of missionaries to China. Deals with inter-racial tensions as well as a great mystery. I love this new series by Sharan Newman and hope there are more to follow.

Beth says

This was a terrific book, and I'm so glad it's the start of a new series. Late-nineteenth-century Portland is lovingly drawn here, and Emily, the main character, is a wonderful blend of traditional woman-of-her-time and budding feminist (feminist in a historically appropriate way, of course!). The plot is complex and compelling. Great stuff.

(I very much enjoyed Newman's previous series, set in medieval France, but I also thought that the last one showed signs of the author getting impatient with her own characters. Good to see her try something new that she's clearly excited about and ready to take on as a series.)

Jacqie says

I love Sharan Newman's medieval series featuring Catherine LeVendeur, a Jewish merchant's daughter. I had high hope for this series as well. However, after reading about 60 pages I ended up skipping to the back of the book to see how things turned out. The pace was slow, the characters seemed to lack depth. I know this isn't the current trend in literature, but I do like an author to give me some basic physical description of the main character, and I got nothing from this book to give me a mental picture.

Maybe it's partly that I enjoy medieval history more than American history. Maybe I was just wanting a faster read and didn't have the patience to wait out the plot development. But I don't think I'll read more of this particular series.

Wayne Kearney says

I have read many of Sharan's books in the past and purchased this one several years ago but hadn't gotten around to reading it. Her usual setting is medieval Europe, but this one was set in Portland Oregon soon after

the Civil War. Not my usual period of interest, either. However, I love her writing style and trusted her to give me a good story. And she delivered as expected. The characters in the story are the focal point rather than the history or the setting, as in some historical fiction. I never felt bombarded by a history lesson; there was no data dump. I think the book could have used some more fleshing out, but for the most part, it was very enjoyable.

Suzanne says

This books takes place in Portland, Oregon in 1868 and gives a great picture of life in that time and about the tunnels built under the city. Besides the mystery involved, the setting was the great part of this book. Very enjoyable reading!

Michele Karmartsang says

Solid mystery, and set in my home town, Portland, Oregon, circa 1868. Not a big mystery reader, and I admit that most of the charm comes from the setting, but the characters (except for the dastardly ones, of course,) are likable.

Linera says

I enjoyed this, not only because of the clean, readable prose, but because of the history of early Portland, a city I have always loved. I hope Ms. Newman writes more in this series, as I'd happily read them.

annebeth says

Loved it! Newman has left medieval France and headed to post-Civil War American west. Suspense novel set in Portland with a missionary's daughter who grew up and lived in China as the protagonist.

Angela says

This is a Portland author. She wrote the Catherine LeVendeur medieval mystery series. This one is set in Portland in 1860. Recommended if you like mysteries, history and live in Portland.

Marigold says

I'd give two and a half stars - but grading up a little because this is set in Portland, Oregon (where the writer lives). This is a fairly good novel of this genre, & it's fun to read about post-Civil War Portland. It seems like Newman did her research, & I wasn't really aware there was such a large Chinese presence in Portland at that

time. The characters were mostly stereotypical - but I liked Emily, the main character, & that made up for a lot. Great use of real historical characters like Thomas & Etta Eliot. My favorite part of the book was the scene where Mt. Hood suddenly appears on a clear day - previously unseen by Emily, who has just moved to Portland - & she says, "Who put that there?"! I would have liked a little more depth & a little more scary stuff in this book - the mystery felt...not very mysterious. But this is a decent, undemanding book, with an interesting female lead, & if you enjoy historical mysteries, or books set in Portland, you'll probably like it.

Jess Faraday says

From what I've been reading, this was meant as the start of a series. It's a shame it doesn't seem to be continued. The research was meticulous, but even more importantly, it was beautifully integrated into a well-constructed story with complex, interesting characters and a unique setting. It's a wonderful read from one of my favorite authors.

Teri says

I loved his other books.. Catherine is a wonderful heroine, strong and fearless. She really comes to know who she is and is afraid of what it means. This book is a far cry from that, Emily is fearful of her past, her present, and her uncertain future, doing what needs to be done because there is no other choice, and while she shows some determination to do what is right, it still feels like she acts only because there is no alternative.

Francie Shoemaker says

I lived in Portland and had no idea there were tunnels under the city, but not surprised. The West has all kinds of stories of this kind floating around. Fascinating book.

Carrie says

I really enjoyed this historical mystery about Portland set in the 1860s. Emily Stratton may be the daughter of missionaries to China but she's not that naive. She knows when she is being duped. She has to get to the bottom of her late husband's business dealings before someone gets to her and their son.
