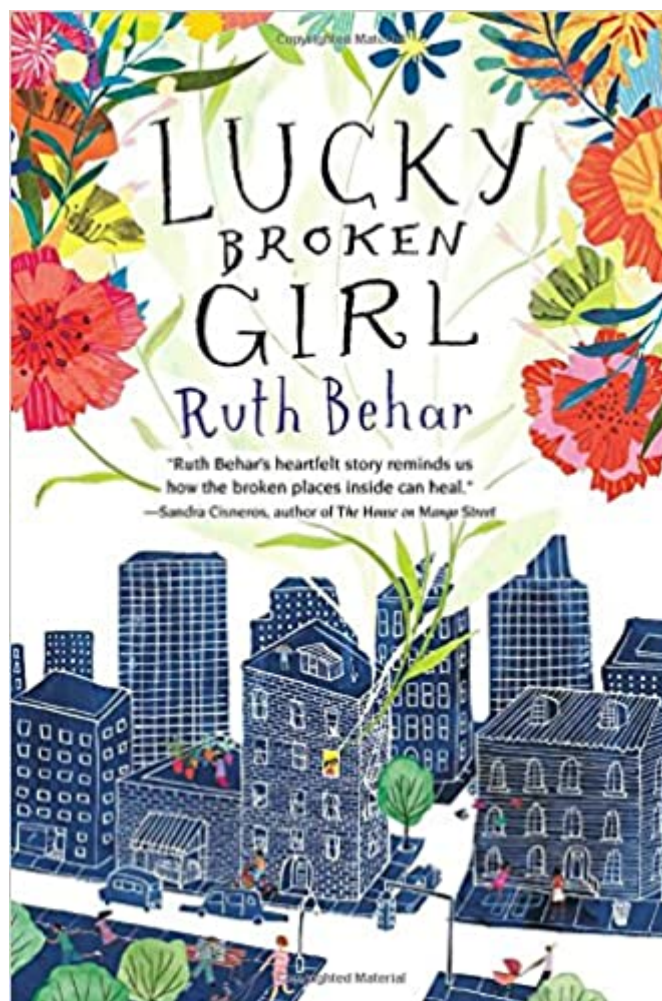


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# Lucky Broken Girl



## Synopsis

“A book for anyone mending from childhood wounds.” —Sandra Cisneros, author of *The House on Mango Street* — In this unforgettable multicultural coming-of-age narrative “based on the author’s childhood in the 1960s” a young Cuban-Jewish immigrant girl is adjusting to her new life in New York City when her American dream is suddenly derailed. Ruthie’s plight will intrigue readers, and her powerful story of strength and resilience, full of color, light, and poignancy, will stay with them for a long time. — Ruthie Mizrahi and her family recently emigrated from Castro’s Cuba to New York City. Just when she’s finally beginning to gain confidence in her mastery of English “and enjoying her reign as her neighborhood’s hopscotch queen” a horrific car accident leaves her in a body cast and confined her to her bed for a long recovery. As Ruthie’s world shrinks because of her inability to move, her powers of observation and her heart grow larger and she comes to understand how fragile life is, how vulnerable we all are as human beings, and how friends, neighbors, and the power of the arts can sweeten even the worst of times.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 0670 (What’s this?)

Hardcover: 256 pages

Publisher: Nancy Paulsen Books (April 11, 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0399546448

ISBN-13: 978-0399546440

Product Dimensions: 5.8 x 0.9 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 36 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #41,364 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #52 in Books > Children’s Books >

Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Illness #56 in Books > Children’s Books >

Geography & Cultures > Multicultural Stories > Hispanic & Latino #68 in Books > Children’s

Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Health > Diseases

Age Range: 10 and up

Grade Level: 5 and up

## Customer Reviews

\* — A cultural anthropologist and poet, the author based the book on her own childhood experiences, so it’s unsurprising that Ruthie’s story rings true. The language is lyrical and rich, the

intersectionalityâethnicity, religion, class, genderâinsightful, and the story remarkably engaging. . . . A poignant and relevant retelling of a child immigrant's struggle to recover from an accident and feel at home in America.ââKirkus Reviews, starred reviewâ

Beharâs first middle grade novel, a fictionalized telling of her own childhood experiences in the 1960s, is a sweet and thoughtful read, slowly but strongly paced, and filled with a wealth of detail that makes the characters live. Both poetic and straightforward, this title will appeal to young readers with its respect for their experiences and its warm portrayal of a diverse community. In addition to Ruthieâs realistic and personal voice, the novelâs strength is in its complex portrayal of the immigrant experience, with overlapping stories of who goes and who comes and the paths they travel. Recommended and relatable. Hand this to fans of Rita Williams-Garcia and those who loved *The Secret Garden*.ââSchool Library Journalâ

Strongly sketched novel. . . . Readers will get a powerful sense of the historical setting through Ruthieâs narration, but the novel is perhaps defined even more by her familyâs status as immigrants and by its memorable multicultural cast. . . . Behar successfully juggles several engaging plot threads, and Ruthieâs complicated relationship with her mother, given the demands of her care, is especially compelling.ââPublishers Weeklyâ

From facing feelings about the boys who caused her accident, to finding herself in painting and writing, to learning that she isnât âslowâ just because English isnât her first language, Ruthie faces everything with an impressive inner strength. Fans of character-driven middle-grade novels, particularly those looking for diverse books, should be easily charmed by Beharâs story, which is inspired by her own childhood as a Cuban immigrant in 1960s New York and her first-hand experience of surviving a car crash and spending a year in a full-body cast (an authorâs note offers some illuminating details).ââBooklist

â [Ruthie] smoothly integrates the layered immigration stories of her grandmother, Ramuâs family, her Mexican neighbor, and her own family, giving her story a pleasing accessibility that complements and expands impressions young readers may have of immigration, urban life, and coming back after tragedy.ââThe Bulletin of the Center for Childrenâs Booksâ

A touching story about friendships and losses, forgiveness and fear, vulnerability and determination, prayer and patience. . . . An exceptionally diverse case of characters and perspectives. . . . Teens will likely find the many lessons Ruthie learns to be valuable and often insightful.ââVoice of Youth Advocates

Ruth Behar ([www.ruthbehar.com](http://www.ruthbehar.com)) is an acclaimed author of adult fiction and nonfiction, and *Lucky Broken Girl* is her first book for young readers. She was born in Havana, Cuba, grew up in New York City, and has also lived and worked in Spain and Mexico. An anthropology professor at the

University of Michigan, she is also co-editor of *Women Writing Culture*, editor of *Bridges to Cuba/Puentes a Cuba*, and co-editor of *The Portable Island: Cubans at Home in the World*. Her honors include a MacArthur "Genius" Award, a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship, a Fulbright Senior Fellowship, and a Distinguished Alumna Award from Wesleyan University. Much in demand as a public speaker, Ruth's speaking engagements have taken her to the United States, Canada, Argentina, Mexico, Cuba, Spain, Finland, Israel, Italy, Ireland, Poland, England, the Netherlands, Japan, and New Zealand. She lives in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

The title grabbed me first, but it is Ruth Behar's writing and storytelling that kept me turning pages of this memoir. There are many things I like about this book: Spanish phrases are woven throughout the dialogue with the meaning in the same sentence or immediately following; the colorful descriptions of life in Cuba and NYC in the 1960's; the way the author portrays the struggles in a way that can help younger readers understand complexities of relationships; but what I like best is the skillful way Behar shows how normal it is to be afraid and hopeless at times, and that those feelings give way to just enough courage and resilience to get through. And all the characters have a story and a struggle, which should help the reader understand a kinship with others. This book is gorgeously written, flows well, and is expertly structured. This is a fantastic book for upper elementary, middle school, and high school girls, but I think boys would also like it.

*Lucky Broken Girl* exemplifies the "Coming to America" experience of immigrant children through Ruthie Mizrahi, a 10-year-old girl of Cuban-Jewish descent living in New York City. Just as she is making progress toward overcoming cultural and education hurdles, Ruthie sustains a traumatic injury that forces her to remain in bed, in a body cast for a full year, not moving and eating a subsistence diet so she doesn't outgrow her cast. That's when this novel invites us into Ruthie's heart and mind, where we may even learn something about ourselves. This Middle Grade novel is intended for children ages 10 and older.

A lovely story, though the first person present tense narration slows the pace immensely. This is billed as the author's first book for a younger audience, and it shows. She seems to talk down a bit to her audience, forgetting that young adults have complex tastes and appreciate a well-written sentence. Overall, I liked the story, but the writing could be better.

Even before I read Behar's entry in the back of the book that reveals that this is based on a real

experience in Behar's life, I thought, "Wow! I love the way this story is written." The child in this story is a recent immigrant from Cuba. Behar wrote the book just like an intelligent recent immigrant would tell her story. I love the writing style of this story so much. I love the story itself. I love the lessons learned from the story. Just a beautiful, beautiful story.

I was totally immersed in the broken little girl character of the title but as an immigrant found the experience of the characters surrounding the girl just as compelling. Tho this book is intended for children I highly recommend it to anyone struggling to deal with and or recovering from traumatic events

Bought for my nine-year-old granddaughter, an excellent reader, who enjoyed it very much.

this is a incredible story enjoyed a lot loved hurrahi give it \*\*\*\*\* six stars Well written and good from teen to adult

great book

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