

## Son of the Sea, Daughter of the Sun

**Marc Graham**

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*Son of the Sea, Daughter of the Sun is an exciting historical romance of epic proportions.*

A princess and a pirate uncover secrets from the past in Marc Graham's historical romance *Son of the Sea, Daughter of the Sun*.

Kidnapped by Mediterranean pirates, young Iudila grows into a brave fighter and a strong sailor. An ocean away, Lady Chakin, a priestess and the princess of the prosperous kingdom of Shukpi, is groomed by her greedy uncle to usher in a new age of war and bloodshed. Their worlds collide when Iudila, driven by a prophecy, journeys to Shukpi to join their bloodlines and plant the seeds of a better world.

Set in the seventh century, the story travels through a bevy of historical locations, including the colorful, clamoring port city of Tingis and Mayan temples filled with intricate carvings and atmospheric passageways. Each is rendered in strong, evocative detail. The inclusion of gritty details, like the proliferation of rats and lice onboard ships, adds a sense of realism to the narrative.

The novel is divided into three parts. The first, which relates Iudila's back story, seethes with exciting boat chases and brutal fight scenes. The second part, Chakin's back story, keeps a slow, tense pace as the young girl slowly but steadily deserts her peace-loving father in favor of her bloodthirsty uncle. Part three unites the two lovers even as political and mystical forces gather to tear them apart. Dark themes, including mutilation, rape, and pedophilia, are present throughout.

The depiction of Iudila, a white man, as a godlike hero to the people of Shukpi is disconcerting. The theological ties binding Iudila and Chakin, and the liberties taken with historical accuracy to make those ties possible, is sometimes distracting. However, extensive historical notes and a bibliography explain where fact becomes fiction and why such changes were made, making the adaptations easier to understand and appreciate.

Both heroes and villains display ruthless behavior. This cruelty makes the villains, especially Chakin's uncle Tok-Ekh, all the more despicable. In some cases, the heroes are manipulated into violence; in others, they commit merciless acts of their own accord, making it difficult to sympathize with them.

The book's structure forces the romance to take a backseat to historical and adventure aspects; the would-be lovers don't meet until over halfway through the narrative. The pair falls in love almost at first sight and realizes they are destined to be together; little time is spent on developing their relationship. The novel is better approached as historical fiction; its world building is stunning, its twists are devastating, and there's the appealing promise of more to come.

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EILEEN GONZALEZ (September 3, 2019)

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