



Daughter of Fire and Ice

Marie-Louise Jensen

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A sense of menace grew on me all morning. Not a vision. No glimpse of the future disturbed me. It was more a shadow of approaching danger. Snatched by a notorious Viking chieftain, Thora is set to leave her homeland on a ship bound for Iceland. But when her captor is murdered an altogether different journey begins ...

Daughter of Fire and Ice Details

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From Reader Review Daughter of Fire and Ice for online ebook

Zach says

I think that this book was amazing and although it wasn't entirely true of that time ('cause even though I completely love magic I don't believe in it) it really struck me as a good book and is, in short, amazing.

Nikki says

I promise I tried not to dismiss this out of hand. It's actually probably great for someone who doesn't know much about the Scandinavian peoples that are all too often just called "Vikings". Pedantry: you were not automatically a Viking if you were, say, Icelandic during that period. You were a Viking if you *went* viking, that is, raiding, trading, possibly even settling, in other countries. A young girl who has never left her home in Norway is not a Viking, she is a Norwegian. She might become a Viking.

Also, you don't refer to an Icelander by what you might think of as their surname. "Erikson", for example, is not someone's *name* on its own. It only tells you that the person using it as part of their name is the son of Erik. So when the characters keep going on about "Svanson", I start wanting to bang my head into or possibly even right through my keyboard -- a conditioned reaction after my classes in Old Icelandic where we all got scolded if we referred to Snorri Sturluson as "Sturluson", or whatever.

As you can see, I'm too pedantic about Scandinavian things to enjoy something that seems to me inaccurate, and this did. But it did have an enjoyable set-up to begin with, and a female protagonist who could look after herself -- it could be very worth reading for that. So my rating is very much "it just wasn't for me", and I think it might be quite enjoyable from what I read, for someone else.

Rebecca says

It was a really quick (but not too quick) paced, gripping, heart pulling story packed with tension, thrills, adventure, shock and surprises. Characters were all great figures with believable personalities and you couldn't help but love the heroes and heroines and hate the wicked ones trying to spoil the happy ending. The ending was the best part, full of climax and drama. Really brought to life the ways of viking women and men, the trials of exploring overseas, the perils of settling in a new land and the danger to life when a small community can't remain united and is split and divided by secrets, lies and treachery. A highly recommended read, perfect for teenagers and adults alike.

Clair says

Marie-Louise Jensen is a local author to me (she lives only a few towns away) and I have to say, she is a brilliant example of a historical/romance author, a genre which is sorely in need of authors. I consider the Vikings fascinating, and in fact, I'd love to see more historical romance novels that AREN'T about the Tudors/Stuart/Elizabethan/Renaissance/Victorian Period. Obviously, this was a breath of fresh air. It's set in the 9th century, when Norwegians were beginning to make claims on Iceland, a land where 'there are fields where cattle can graze all summer, but black sands where nothing can grow, fire mountains, glaciers as far as

the eye can see...'

Thora, our main character and narrator, is a seer, and a healer to boot. She's kidnapped in the beginning of the book by the cruel chieftain Bjorn Svansson (who is killed), but she manages to get a ship to Iceland along with a mysterious slave who has taken on Bjorn's name. That's the gist of this book.

And for the most part, it's really, really good! I learned a lot about Viking ways, Norse gods/goddesses... it's brilliant. Every character had a story that was tied up neatly at the end.

Speaking of the end, that's the only problem I have. It ends on a fight, and then seems very abrupt as Thora hopes for prosperity, and the book is over. But maybe that's just me.

Kirsty says

This novel follows a group of Viking settlers as they journey to Iceland in order to start a new life. The main character; Thora is a healer and she has fallen for Bjorn a man who is married to Ragna. Ragna despises Thora and goes out of her way to make Thora's life miserable.

I enjoyed reading this as it is about a period that I haven't read much from. I enjoyed seeing how the settlers created their new home from very little. I thought that the book was well written and it was interesting how the author incorporated the visions into the story.

I thought the pacing of the book was good but I felt that the ending was too abrupt. I would have liked to see a bit more from these characters. The book is left quite open and I would have preferred a bit more of a conclusion.

Susan says

Following an attack on her family, fifteen-year-old Thora is enslaved by a brutish Viking chieftain, Bjorn Svanson. A healer and a midwife, Thora is valuable. She also has visions of the future ...and in one she foresees Svanson's death. When her prediction becomes reality, Thora recognizes that another of Svanson's slaves is a man she has seen before—a man from recurrent visions who is destined to be part of her future. Assuming Svanson's identity, the slave and Thora use the dead man's ships to escape. Their destination is Iceland, the then uncharted 'land of fire and ice'. To succeed they must first win over Svanson's crew, and their journey is fraught with hardship and danger. But their troubles are only just beginning. Soon, newcomers are among them and someone is stealing from Thora's medicines to cause terrible harm. Under suspicion herself, can Thora unmask the real culprit and clear her name? And can Thora and the man now known as Bjorn ever really hope that their pasts won't catch up with them?

I enjoyed this book as I love books with a touch of 'sixth sense'. Thora is a seer and a healer and is a lovely character but her love interest, Bjorn, seemed very weak. I think it's really written for younger readers as the 'bad' character, Ragna, was almost like the typical high school bully! Probably I was over-analysing but in my opinion any group of settlers would just have got rid of her when she started causing so much trouble and dissent. The ending was quite abrupt but overall an OK book which I'm giving 3 stars because of the wealth of detail about the sea voyage and Iceland and the excellent characterisation.

Jenny says

This time around, Jensen added a bit of magic or ability, if you will, that adds a little spice to Thora's adventures. And while the story starts off at a happily normal pace, it doesn't stay that way. Before you know it your breath is catching, your heart is racing and you're punching pillows with reckless abandon. And then of course, there's the Viking history and culture that is fascinating, written 'up close' so you can appreciate their situations, sympathize with their every day problems, and experience it all first hand for yourself. Of course, I told my husband more than once (while reading it) that I never wanted to be a Viking! Everything ends as it should, thankfully, and you close the book with satisfaction (although your pillows may be a bit worn out).

My only problem comes from one chapter that bothered me mostly because I'm married. (And I feel that marriage should come with total and complete fidelity.) However, that's a personal opinion and is not reflective of Jensen's writing.

So, the final word? Read it!

Stephanie says

What I loved most about this book was the main character Thora, seeing the journey and hardships through her eyes kept the book so fast paced and exciting and emotional at points. She is a gifted healer and midwife that is greatly valued by the community set up and I found it very interesting to learn about the plants she has to gather to use as medicine. Although her love for Bjorn that she must keep hidden for her sake and his is a constant burden and torment to her, she always remains strong. One of Thora's features are her constant visions from her Gods, which hit her suddenly and seem to always come true, sometimes proving useful but also bring pain knowing that a terrible event is going to happen.

Through her actions she proves herself to be a very brave and spirited girl always looking to help others and from the first chapter I liked her immediately. This was very important as the book leaps straight into the action of the story, with Thora's life being turned upside down in the first chapter and for the reader to sympathise with and care about what happens to her, they must like her.

The setting of Iceland, a new and unexplored world for the people of Denmark in those times and the Viking characters made the book all the more enjoyable to me. Even though I have never read a historical book about Vikings, I know that people sometimes associate them with longboats and battles so it was nice to read an interesting take on a small community struggling to survive in the land of 'fire and ice.' A successful catch of fish and how many animals survived on the sea voyage was the difference between life and death in the book. Through Thora and the woman slave's chores in the household, I also learnt a bit about everyday life.

The plot was always introducing something new to keep you hooked and had many unexpected major twists at the beginning of the book that would influence Thora's life in Iceland for a long time to come. The way Marie Louise Jensen developed the distinct voice of Thora made such a difference and I shared her emotions all the way through the book, wanting life to have a happy end for her.

The ending implied things rather than reassured me that events were definitely going to happen which at first left me feeling a little disappointed until I discovered that a sequel is being released in January 2011 called Sigrun's Secret.

I have read all of Marie Louise Jensen's previous novels but I think this, her newest, is her best so far. The sense that I was there witnessing the story in Thora's world was created through descriptions that jumped out the page and into real life.

Verdict: Daughter of Fire and Ice is a compelling and vivid account of an attempt to start a community in the unexplored world of Iceland narrated by a sensitive yet feisty and persevering heroine matched with a handsome and wise hero. With a fast moving and emotional plot featuring survival, fear, joy and romance that cannot be, I would recommend Daughter of Fire and Ice to anyone fascinated by the past, romance fans or are just looking for a book with memorable and lifelike characters.

A Bear and a Bee Books says

Jensen really makes you care about her characters. I found myself relating to them like old friends early on in the novel. A great read for anyone that enjoys adventure, overcoming hardships, and friendship.

Rebecca says

Fifteen-year-old Thora is a gifted healer who has visions of the future. When her family's enemy, Bjorn Swanson, the chieftain of their district in Norway, kidnaps her, he plans to force her to accompany him on a voyage to Iceland, the new world. But a very different journey begins when Swanson's slave, a young man that Thora has seen in her visions, kills the cruel chieftain to avenge Swanson's murder of his sister. The slave takes on the identity of Bjorn Swanson, and Thora knows her destiny is to travel with this young man to Iceland.

During the voyage, Thora begins to care deeply for the young man she now knows only as Bjorn, and believes she is falling in love with him, and that he may have feelings for her as well. However, circumstances make it difficult for them to be together. And as Thora, Bjorn, and their fellow travelers struggle to build a home in the harsh and dangerous land that is Iceland, Thora realizes there is a murderer among them.

Daughter of Fire and Ice is a fascinating, exciting, and romantic young adult historical novel. I loved the unusual historical setting of ninth century Norway and Iceland, as I have not read much set in this time period. Thora is a wonderful narrator who brings to life the story and setting. I have loved everything I have read so far by Marie-Louise Jensen. I highly recommend her books to readers who love young adult historical romance, and I can't wait to read her next book.

Alastair Rosie says

Set in ninth century Norway about the time Norse settlers reached Iceland, this YA novel revolves around Thora, a healer and seer who is captured by Bjorn Svanson. Doomed to marry the brutal Norse warlord, her fate is irrevocably changed when another slave kills Svanson and steals his identity and his ship. Thora hitches a ride and they set off across the North Atlantic with Svanson's slaves to find a place where his kin cannot follow. Their hardships and trials don't end when they arrive in Iceland for along the way they have picked up another passenger, Ragna who serves as a useful counterpoint to the kind and generous Thora.

The book is aimed at teens so if you're expecting something like a Bernard Cornwell novel then think again but it's not a bad read and serves to hold your attention. There is violence in it of course but it's not that graphic, at least not by my standards anyway and it's appropriate to the storyline. One criticism has to do with the morality as I thought her Norse settlers are a little too clean cut but for something aimed at young adults she probably has to watch her Ps and Qs. The story is well researched and entertaining however and leaves the reader feeling satisfied. The story is a romantic one but as it's YA there's no sex, at least none we can see. Sorry if it's a spoiler but there is plenty of sexual tension, which most teens can identify with anyway. Thora is the more interesting character although I thought Bjorn could have been a bit grittier, this is the ninth century after all and hacking and slashing was part and parcel of the Viking world. I give it a four out of five.

Catherine Mayo says

This is a well-written book, with strong characters and plot movement from the very start. Fifteen year old Thora is a healer and midwife, but she will need more skills than that when she tries to escape the disaster her life has become. This book is aimed at younger teenagers. The style isn't majorly "historical" – mostly it's neutral - though "distress was still strong in me" on pg 36 is an example of a more overt historical style.

Laura says

I actually found this book quite enjoyable. It is the story of a group of Viking settlers as they start a new life in Iceland. The protagonist, Thora, is a healer who has somewhat incomplete visions of the future, and finds herself attracted to a man she cannot have. Of course, if a man can be had, there is no story! I don't think I had ever read a novel about vikings and I enjoyed learning a little bit about their way of life as they established a colony. It was a different setting and time in history from the usual books I read. I was amazed to learn that this writer educates her children at home. How does she get any work done! Amazing.

Rachel says

I had to read this book for Lancashire book of the year (I think) and didn't think I would enjoy it but surprisingly I did :) It's really different and interesting, so if you like books set in the viking age you'll love it! I can't really explain it on here but read it and you'll understand what I'm talking about. Also I can't remember when I finished the book >.<

Liza says

The central character, Thora, is a fifteen year old healer which makes her very valuable in the times of the Vikings. She finds herself escaping kidnapping by joining an escaped slave on a boat to Iceland. It provides a different view of these times and interesting information about Norwegian gods, the difficulties faced by the

Norwegian migrants establishing themselves on Iceland and the nature of slavery at the time. An enjoyable different read with a romantic storyline as well as a touch of supernatural powers.
