



As Sure as the Dawn

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The third installment in the Mark of the Lion trilogy.

Following *A Voice in the Wind* and *An Echo in the Darkness*, *As Sure as the Dawn* continues the chronicles of Hadassah, a Christian slave woman living during the height of the Roman Empire. She has saved the life of the scorned child of a disreputable Roman woman and the Germanic gladiator, Atretes. For her faith, Hadassah now languishes in condemnation, awaiting death in a dungeon beneath the arena. Atretes, who holds fast to his dreams of revenge for the slaughter of his people, wants his son back. So he seeks out John the Baptist, who is the key to finding the custodian of his son, and brings his war-weary soul closer to redemption.

As Sure as the Dawn Details

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From Reader Review As Sure as the Dawn for online ebook

Kels says

I'm not sure how to begin this review. Despite the one star review I gave it, I did enjoy it more so towards the ending and there was a lot of spiritual wisdom and entertainment speckled throughout it.. buutttt there were just some things I didn't like about this book. And since I got to start somewhere, I might as well get my "problems" with the book out of the way. So brace yourself peeps.

In this Mark of the Lion series, I noticed a discomfoting trend. The romantic relationships between the main characters (Hadassah and Marcus in the first two books, and then Atretes and Rizpah and the third) all began on tumultuous and dangerous grounds. I'm talking about abuse here, people: emotional, physical, and spiritual. You can argue that it is to be somewhat expected in the first two books due to Hadassah being a slave and Marcus her owner and although that doesn't make it right, I appreciate how Francine shows the darker nature of that time and slavery and the effects of living in it. But in As Sure As Dawn, it was very unsettling as I continued to read Rizpah and Atretes love story unfold.

As Sure As Dawn picks up with Atretes seeking out his son only to discover that the child, though still a babe, is not willing to depart from his mother so easily to be weaned by another and Rizpah is as unwilling to yield her son back to his father who abandoned him. Thus begins their rocky relationship. Though Atretes is cruel to her in speech and in his handling with her, and also regards her Christian faith mockingly, somehow Rizpah realizes that she has fallen head over heels in love with him. Uh... come again?

Let's rewind and push pause.

Problem #1: This literally happened out of nowhere and in such a short time frame from their meet. There was no build or possible sustenance to her love. He hadn't showed any amount of kindness to her, practically threw her out of his house when they first met, threatened to kill her, and exerted physical and emotional pain on her, and she constantly found herself brought to her worst when ever she was around him. This leads me to believe that ultimately, Rizpah fell in love with the handsome face and build of Atretes which is more akin to lust than I dare say would be called romantic love, so can we just call it that.

I admit it is easy to fall into this trap, I mean so many of real-life relationship abuse stories start off on rocky ground, so I appreciate Mrs. Rivers bringing this to light, however, the abuse Rizpah endured from Atretes seemed to be glazed over and unfronted as if it's something to be expected from such a "manly man". Pfft! It might as well been an issue that stayed in the dark if it was only going to encourage women who are in such situations to stay and endure, and that things will eventually get better!

Atretes had all the warning signs of being abusive. So are we really surprise when we find out that he is? I'm glad Francine didn't hide this even after Atretes "sees the light". However, at the same time, I felt like Francine may have undermined the effects of abuse. It was never challenged, or flagged as wrong but daily introduced as normal.

Problem #2: As soon as Atretes meets Rizpah, he begins to lust after her when he notices how beautiful she is and somehow that is translated into love. Um... no. I seriously did not see where his lust ended in his love began. Throughout the book, he makes it a goal to break down Ripzah walls to take pleasure in her as if she's a conquest. He orders her around like a slave (and she is in no way in bondage to him) and treats her like one as well. Multiple times he takes advantage of her by forcing himself upon his embrace and kissing her

harshly when she definitively says no and despite her pushing away.

Sidebar: If you are in a relationship that is showing early signs of abuse (possessiveness, jealousy, domineering behavior, etc.), whether through words or actions, don't stick around! That's a relationship that you don't need to be in. Seek guidance and help. And please don't marry them thinking it will make things better!

I appreciate books that bring the trauma of relationship abuse to the forefront but to make it okay or to dance it over it? Uh... NO. You have a choice and a voice in a relationship and women especially should see that walking away from this type of behavior early on is perhaps the best route to take!

I have no problem at all with Christian books bringing some of these "problems" to light in their books because these are real issues and life just isn't peaches and rainbows. But I just felt that the issues were hardly addressed as being negative, were glazed over, and to an extent encourages women readers that this type of behavior is okay and to stick it out. You shouldn't have to subject yourself to that type of treatment. Justifying staying in a bad relationship, or even encouraging someone to pursue or entertain someone in order to be a "light" in their life is not honorable or admirable. It's plain dumb, and I mean that in the most encouraging way. Seriously, don't be dumb.

Alright, I know I must sound like a broken record, but I just had to say it because it didn't seem like Mrs. Rivers ever would. My problems with the novel made it such a challenge for me to enjoy anything else that was going on in the story, and it wasn't until I got three-fourths of the way that my interest start to resurface, and a huge portion of this was due to the fact that it was slow pace (and that's a common trait I have found while reading Francine Rivers books). But even though it does get better towards the end, it was all just a little too late for me.

One last thing: Abuse comes in many shapes and forms and if you're lucky you will see the early warning signs. No one deserves to be abused. It is NOT an act of love. If you are being abused, please get help.

Sandra Baši? says

Izvršno zaokružena trilogija, svaka ?ast!

Jackie says

While I adore the 2nd book of the series, I think this was my favorite. Atretes is frustrating and intense, and while I wanted very much to come through the pages of the book and strangle him, I loved reading his journey. I think his struggle with anger and what was done to him is so similar to many people today, that stubborn pride that just won't let you loose to experience God even when He makes himself obvious.

And then there's Rizpah, my favorite character in the entire series. I can relate to her so much, especially with the why-did-I-say-that aspect. Her journey with Atretes, Theophilus (I love that Rivers pulls a real life

person into the story) and her baby Caleb is beautiful (reading about her son growing up through all of this was very gut-wrenching at times and at others brought a smile to my face).

One of the things that I really appreciate about this book is the miracles. I am naturally very suspicious of anything called a miracle. I know that God performed many miracles in the Old Testament and Jesus performed many in the New Testament, but they just don't happen today. In this book the purpose of miracles became very obvious to me; they aren't for the Wow-factor. They happen because there is no other way to reach the person. In "As Sure as the Dawn" there was no other way to reach Atretes and the Chatti people.

So I finished this book feeling a little sad that the series was over. I would have loved to continue reading about Haddassah and Marcus and Rizpah and Atretes.

Sarah says

Okay, I know these are Christian books, but I read them because they came highly recommended. The first two had good stories, good enough to overcome the preaching. The third basically drudged up some leftover characters from the first two books and had them quote the entire Bible to each other. Oh, plus there were some pretty outrageous "heavenly miracles" in this book, while the other two managed to tell a good story without depending on acts of God for the storyline to progress.

Kristine says

3.5 stars

First 75% of book = 5 stars; last 25%=2 stars

Loved this book up until the last part when Rizpah was betrayed by her husband. Frustrating all the way around how this whole scene happened. To me, it overshadowed the ending. I found it hard to forgive Atretes so quickly...would have liked to see him make things 'right' with Rizpah before the book ended. My goodness, he left her for weeks on end without her baby and food! All because she was trying to keep HIM from sinning. Didn't like this turn of events on this story AT ALL. Wished Rivers didn't keep writing 'things like this' in this trilogy. The only book, of the three, that didn't frustrate me was book 2. It's frustrating enough to make me hesitant to recommend series even though I couldn't put these books down. The storyline just got frustrating...kind of how I feel about Maas' TOG series. Oh well.

I had hoped this book would have weaved in tidbits of Hadassah and Marcus' story. For example, when Atretes went back to Rome for him to discover that Hadassah didn't die. Maybe Atretes ending up using one of Marcus' ships to sail (since Marcus found God). Also, weaving in Julia's death and Atretes making peace with that for Caleb's sake would have been nice.

On a side note, this book gives a nice synopsis of the Old Testament. That's not an easy task but Rivers does it successfully. It's a good overview of the people, places, and why behind things.

Overall, I liked the series but the 'things like this' (see above, lol) kept me from loving it. There were lots of

life lessons in this series that I appreciated and copied in my notes. I also like that these books made me think... 'Am I forgiving? Can I move on quickly when wronged? Would I help someone who tried to kill me?' (Ummm, that's a tough one)...and many others. For that, I'm grateful. And, that's a testament to the fact that books DO impact/influence us. Thank you Ms. Rivers for that!

Beth says

This book captured my attention much more than what I had expected. Francine delivers very intense scenes & doesn't sugarcoat the message of the Bible. As always, you feel like you're in the shoes of the main characters drawing you into their battles & their triumphs. In my mind I questioned some of the supernatural things that were attributed to the Lord, and then I wondered why He wouldn't show His power in the face of darkness. We have been amazed at what God is doing in these days to open people's eyes to the truth instead of being overcome by the enemy, especially in the Middle East.

Erin says

This book started out strong and with great potential to be a blessing like the first two... it in the last third of the book it got too weird for me! I know that God can do anything so the events in the book are possible- it was just a little ridiculous. There were lots of amazing miracles that flowed with the book and didn't seem over the top- but then there was a resurrection, and all of sudden two characters are amazed at their ability to suddenly speak German.

I did get a couple great things from the book though-

They are talking about being a poor witness, and the answer is "God takes the poor, foolish things of this world to bring glory to his name. Jesus wasn't born in the exalted halls of kings, but in a stable. You know who the enemy is. Satan is a powerful adversary who knows you almost as intimately as the Lord does. He attacks through the mind and flesh, trying to separate you from Christ."

"That doesn't fill me with confidence. Who am I to fight Satan?"

"You don't. The Lord is with you and goes before you into battle. You only have to stand firm in your faith."

I felt like this was sooo packed full of good stuff- first the part with her questioning her ability to be used by God, I worry about that sometimes, what if they ask a question I don't have an answer to? or what if I don't make sense or blah, blah, blah! This was a good reminder that if I'm willing and in tune with God's word- he'll take it and use it to his glory. If I just plant the seed- He'll provide the rain and the sunshine!

Then it was a scary reminder that Satan knows us and knows just what to do to pull us down- we have to be on constant guard!

Finally I liked the part about us not having to fight Satan! We just have to stand firm in our faith, and God will take care of him!

The next great section is talking about God's great gift of salvation-

and they have the thought that Salvation is a gift not something we can earn or appreciate fully. "Jesus left his heavenly throne, his glory and honor, took the form of a humble man. He suffered and died for me. And what do I do? More often than not, I take my salvation for granted. I fill my mind with unimportant things. Oh, that God would put it in my head and hear what he has done for me every morning as I awaken." That last sentence- WOW! That is my prayer as well- I'm going to start asking for that to be the first thought

in my head in the morning each morning. What a blessing that would be to have my first thought of the day be about my Saviour!

Shantelle says

...I don't want this series to end... but I must say it, yes, a fitting end to the Mark of the Lion saga. *As Sure as the Dawn* told another powerful story; another tale of a life completely turned around. This time, we focus on Atretes, the fierce and feared gladiator. Except he's not a gladiator anymore, but many would like to see him in the arena again. He now has his son, and the woman, Rizpah, who's become a mother to his son... Yet will his relentless anger take all that away from him?

Two hot-tempered individuals. They share the love of the little baby, Caleb. And in the end, they long to serve God, but will their human desires and drives ruin their attempt? Will everything crash and be demolished under the force of evil, or is God yet in control?

Powerful as always. Vivid. Real. This is no fluffy make-belief. This is a tale that makes your heart pound and goosebumps rise on your skin. Your heart sing in joyousness, or your soul cry out in terror.

Atretes had a fierce and vile anger and bitterness. But God's love was way, way bigger, much, much deeper. It was/is eternal!

This book was a little different from the first two, Hadassah's story (*A Voice in the Wind*) and Marcus's story (*An Echo in the Darkness*). It took us to a different place and setting, in Germania; we met a lot of new people. Atretes was really the only character from the first books that was in *As Sure as the Dawn*. Yet it still carried the same awesome message.

As Sure as the Dawn, another poignant story... I only wish it wasn't the last of the Mark of the Lion!

Kelly says

As Sure as the Dawn by Francine Rivers is the third book in an amazing series. Atretes a german warrior also revered gladiator is free. He won his freedom through fighting, but now his life is going to change forever.

I recommend this book to young adults.

This book almost felt like a stand alone. The characters are not related to the previous two books. Even though I missed the characters in the previous books I felt like I related to the characters in this book the most. Well more to the subject of being called to share the love of Christ with people who are not ready to hear it so you love them until they are ready to hear it no matter the cost. I am sad that this series is over but I am looking forward to reading more of Francine Rivers books she officially has me hooked.

One of my favorite quotes from this book was:

"God will not send us into battle without the tools we need to stand against the enemy."

Many people complained that this series was too religious and did not like it. This author feels her purpose is share Christ through story formats. So it is probably going to get religious at times. This author has an amazing gift so I suggest you try to look past that stuff and focus on the story. God may change your heart by the end. I want more books like this series.

Atretes is a very challenging character and there are many times I just wanted to jump through the book and knock some sense into him. This book had very real characters that you could relate to. The author doesn't sugar coat anything. In certain countries it is hard to be a christian. It is not an easy walk or decision to make and I love how her books reflect that. Jesus always said it is hardest to share changes in your life with your family because they knew you before and I think this book is a great example of that. I read this book last year and am now just getting around to writing the review and let me tell you I still cannot forget it. Many of Francine's books are like that you will still be thinking about them days, months and maybe even a year later.

I rate this book a 4 out of 4 stars.

Raya says

There are books that are good, even great, books that you will remember and offer glowing recommendations to all you meet. And then there are books like *As Sure as the Dawn*, which, days later, will still leave you in awe and wonder. There's power behind this story, that transformative, tremor-inducing power that makes you forget this is a work of fiction and not something that raised itself out of the ground.

This is considered Christian fiction, which by definition already holes itself to certain prejudices. Francine Rivers, however, is a tremendous story-teller who appeals to Christians and non-Christians without compromising the crux of her message. The characters are flawed, weak, and remarkably human, and not the perfect, holier than thou robots one might expect to find in this genre.

Needless to say, I loved everything about this final installment in this trilogy and would highly recommend.

Carla Palmeiro says

This book was a big disappointment for me, because I simply adored the first 2 books from the **Mark Of The Lion**, in fact, I don't remember crying as much while reading a book as I cried during *A Voice in The Wind* and especially *An Echo in The Darkness*. I adored Hadassah and Marcus and despite knowing that their story ended with Book II I sill wanted to read Book III and discover what happened to Atretes.

For the first time while reading these Christian books, the constant preaching and christianization bothered me deeply. I found all the characters very weak compared to those from the other books. Rizpah was in my opinion a poor copy of Hadassah and I even missed Julia that crazy, conniving bitch. I also did not felt a personal, strong connection with the love story between Atretes and Rizpah. As for the plot, I expected far more from Francine Rivers.

On a positive note let me say that I do not regret reading this, by all means, Francine Rivers is a great writer,

her books are still among my all time favorites, I just felt this book to be very different from the other two, it should have been a separate book and not the ending of the trilogy or at least some loose pieces should have been addressed here, for instance, Atretes knowing that Hadassah survived the arena, Hadassah knowing that Atretes found his son and ultimately discovered the lord among others.

Chy says

Dude, the first half of this book = romance novel. Straight up, with less nakedness and with the word "Jesus" muttered as something other than a curse or expression of sexual fulfillment.

The middle part = summarization of Bible stories through one character's pages and pages of talking. As if the people of the "projected" audience don't freakin' know. And as if anybody who appreciates good writing wants to see pages of info-dump via dialogue.

Second half of book = I don't even know. But, the actual ire I experienced was directed at the characters and managed to, at times, distract me from the frustration I had with the writer behind it all, that I bumped this up from 1.5 to 2.0 stars. Good thing, too, since we don't have half-stars around here.

Immediate reaction upon finishing = I tossed it onto the table and blew a raspberry at it.

Maloup says

This book really spoke to me until they reached the Chatti. Then it became sort of weird. I definitely found the power of Satan stronger in this book. I've got some great lessons from it, almost more so than the first two. I could identify with Rizpah and her struggles as a born again Christian. I was hesitant to read it in the beginning but I am so glad I did.

Suzannah says

It was awful--a 300-page, pressure-cookery romance novel. This book also had the most problematic theology of the trilogy, and an unsatisfying ending.

Let me just pick one big problem with this book. It's about a Christian woman falling in love with a very unsaved man (as are the previous two books in the series). Outside fiction, this is known as "dating evangelism" and it is madness. Apart from anything else, how can a woman respect a man who she's leading spiritually?

I mean no disrespect to Mrs Rivers as I know some of her books have been useful to some of my friends. I hear good things about "Redeeming Love", for instance. But this one was a bit of a dud and I will not be reading any more of her books while I'm a spinster.

Naomi says

It was a great book and a wonderful ending to an amazing series. It was sad to know that I wouldn't be able to follow the lives of Rizpah and Arteres anymore. As well as Haddassa and Marcus. :)

I suggest this series to everyone. Now I am a Francine River's reader. I am off to my next book of hers. :)
