



Daughter of the Zel (Daughter of the Zel, #1)

Phoebe Ritter

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Raised on the border between Nevda and Zel, Efa has two certainties in life.

Their country's neighbours, the warlike Zel, are to be feared.

Her touch will kill, so she can never leave the island.

When Efa is kidnapped and discovers she is half-Zel, certainty will be hard to come by.

Daughter of the Zel (Daughter of the Zel, #1) Details

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Author : Phoebe Ritter

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From Reader Review Daughter of the Zel (Daughter of the Zel, #1) for online ebook

Marla says

I really enjoyed this book. New lands to learn about. The Zel and the Nevda are warring countries. Eleven women from Nevda went to Zel and got pregnant. Now 8 of the children have been brought back to Zel to meet their fathers and train. But is that what really happened? Did the women go with the men willingly or were they raped and forced to give birth. Why collect the children now as they are close to 18 years old. The characters were well developed and I liked several of them and I didn't like a few of them like Cara. I'm still on the fence about Taymos. This is a great start to a series/trilogy (I don't know which it's supposed to be). I liked it so much I immediately purchased book 2 after finishing this one, which I won on Goodreads. Great YA fantasy story. Strong characters and just enough intrigue to make you want to read the next book. There were some typos and words missing. Hopefully those have been fixed. But I thought it was well written. When I can visualize what is happening without it feeling obvious, then I know the writer knows what they are doing.

Clipinchick says

I this book for free from the author/publisher in response for an honest review of the book. I have not had the opportunity to read this book at this time. I will add my review of this book once I have read the book. Thank k you for allowing me the optometrist review your work. I look forward to reading this book.

Meghan T says

I received this book for free as part of a hashtag contest (#IndieFeature) on Twitter. There was no obligation to post a review, however, I devoured this book in one night! Can't wait for the sequel.

I'm a speculative fiction reader, mostly of fantasy but I do like dystopic fiction as well. If you liked Divergent, I think you'll like DAUGHTER OF THE ZEL. But don't go into it thinking the protagonist is another Tris. There are similarities, but the two have different personalities.

I found Efa a breath of fresh air. She is not your typical teen, as she's lived a very sheltered life and been taught not let anger get the better of her. That means she reacted much differently to situations than a typical "strong" female heroine in YA. Her character arc was well-drawn and the Efa that emerges after her the trials and tribulations of the story, is a honed version of her herself, more confident and ready to take action and stand up for others.

It is set in the fictional countries of Nevda and Zel. There is no info-dumping, so the story reads very smoothly. As common with fantasy/speculative fiction, the reader is slowly given information about Efa and her world. The mood and pace of the first chapter reflect Efa's own little world of the sheltered existence she lives on an island with her family. Ritter's description conveys the details of this world so simply and genuinely, I felt as if I was right there.

The reader doesn't even learn Efa's name until after she is taken by Zel soldiers, who ask her. Her family do not seem to truly appreciate Efa and the lack of her name in the first two chapters highlights her liminal existence with them. Even Efa thinks of herself as a burden to her Nevda family. It seems like only the Zel want to truly know who she is.

Efa is captured along with seven other teens because they all had Zel fathers. There was a event in the Nevda/Zel conflict called The Twenty-Two. But as with most conflicts, there are two (or more) versions of history. The Nevda say they were liberating Nevda women who had been captured by the Zel to breed Zel babies. The Zel say otherwise. But as the story unfolds, neither version seems to be the complete truth. But this is the premise of the Zel re-taking the eight stolen babies, who are now all teens.

Group dynamics and training sequences can be difficult to write without getting bogged down or boring the reader. Ritter handled this part of the story quite well. There are friends, enemies, and two potential love interests, but these friendships evolve over time and change.

The romance is a slow burn and I quite loved it. (It's a very chaste romance.) And while there is a Zel and a Nevda-Zel who are both taken with Efa, it never descended into love triangle or jealousies. One suitor is absent largely. And the relationships become symbolic of the choice Efa has to make, torn as she is between her two heritages. I do hope we learn more about ***'s attraction to Efa. He starts out as a protector of her, but in the end she is the one protecting him. (Yeah!)

Other reviews have raised questions about the book that I'd like to tackle.

1. This book has tropes in it.

I challenge you to find a fantasy/dystopic futuristic book that doesn't. Or any book really. Romance is full of tropes. The tropes used and how they were put together worked for me.

2. The book DOES explain how Zel soldiers found out Efa was half-Zel. But you do have to keep reading. I won't spoil it for you. But that is not a loose thread. However, as stated, like most fantasy, the reader is not told everything a once. There is some mystery! For me, that keeps me reading.

3. There is world building, though it's on the light side. The Zel are a more militaristic nation it appears; the Nevda seem to value a quieter and more modest life. However, the reader didn't get a good look at Nevda culture in book 1, because Efa was kept isolated. I'm curious to see how Book 2 unfolds! So there could have been more about these two cultures, unless the goal was to show how similar the two nations actually were.

I was utterly shocked by the ending of the book. It wasn't what I expected and I liked that! Looking forward to reading book 2!

Kira Brighton says

Received free e-copy via Goodreads

I liked parts of this a lot, but on the whole it was... messy. Efa's POV has a repressed, fairytale-innocent vibe to it, which is understandable, but it made the story hard to get into at first. Things picked up after the first chapter, and I was pretty engaged, but I kept noticing parts I didn't like, too. There's the issue with the love triangle--or maybe square--those are hard enough to do anyway because a) they're a cliche and b) it's weird to have so many guys interested in one girl, but in this case, it also felt like the author kept dropping one guy to pick up the other, which made it really stilted. There were also a lot of places in the story where I had to go back and reread things because I got confused. I think this is in part due to an excess of named characters. I also feel like there wasn't enough story--like this book probably should have been combined, at least in part, with one of the future novels in the series. Ultimately, I had a lot of questions, some of which I'm sure will be answered in later books, but I also didn't have enough answers to want to keep going.

Brandi Collins says

Science fiction and fantasy is the genre I've chosen to expand my horizons since I usually stick to realistic fiction. I'll admit that I had trouble getting into the book at first, but once I got to the ending of the first chapter, I was hooked because I wanted to know what would happen to Efa. I became invested in her character and wanted to know more with each passing page. If you like SciFi/Fantasy adventure with a hint of romance, give this book a chance. I'm glad I did.

Natasha says

Review also on my blog

Twitter

Bookstagram

I received this book from the author in exchange for a free and honest review

Wow, okay, where to begin.

I think one of the biggest issues about the book is that it doesn't offer anything new. Girl doesn't know something about her, event changes her life, you get the drill.

But here's an even bigger problem, there's no world building. At all. Not a little. Maybe a little at the very end but even then, nothing.

I couldn't tell you anything about Zel and Nevda other than... well, they're territories? The Zel are feared but we're not exactly told why. Are they at war? Was there a war? I can't tell you for the life of me.

So as the story begins with Efa being taken away from her family by Zel soldiers, you're left in absolute confusion. Why do they have the authority to do that? Can't tell you. How the hell did they know she was Zel when Efa didn't know? Who cares! Got to get the plot started somehow. Along with that there's also that whole, I guess trope, where a character is taught to hate a certain race or group of people but it turns out they are part of that group of people.

Anyway, when they get to the facility these soldiers took them to, they just start training them in combat. For what? You might be asking. It's never made clear. And No one seems to be fighting to go home as there's just a group of Zel children that have been taken from their families.

It also has the trope of, kid being lied to for their own safety. But something added into this book was that to keep her sheltered on this island, Efa's mother told her that her touch was lethal. And this lie is just stretched out. She genuinely thinks her touch is lethal.

I also can't tell you anything about Efa. All I can describe her as is "sheltered". She had no personality.

Unfortuently, I really didn't like this book.
