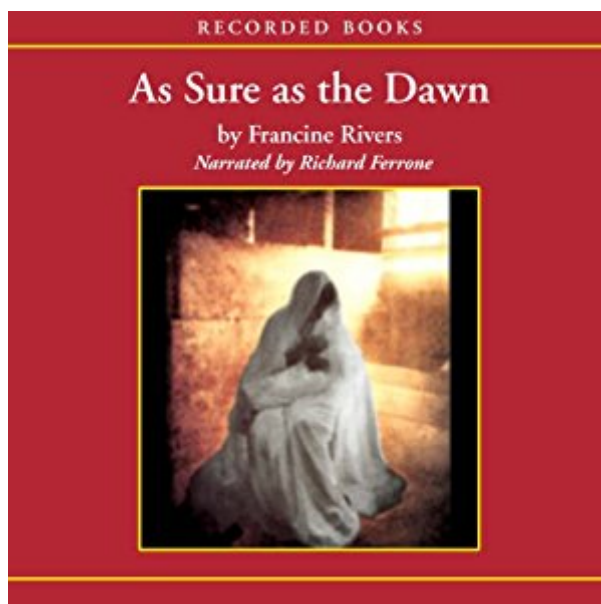


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As Sure As The Dawn: The Mark Of The Lion, Book 3



Synopsis

Atretes, a German barbarian who has won his freedom in the Roman arena, finds his life changed forever by an encounter with a young Christian woman. Atretes vows to move heaven and earth to find his son--the baby he thought was dead, and take him back to Germany. Only one thing stands in his way: Rizpah, the Christian widow who has cared for the child since his birth.

Book Information

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Romance > Historical > Ancient World

Customer Reviews

Although this book was different from the 1st two books in the trilogy, I must say that I did enjoy it. The 1st 2 books were dramatic, intense, heart wrenching, & tearful. While this one made me laugh out loud many times, especially in the beginning. This book is definitely not a tear-jerker like the first two. It was hysterical trying to picture some of the scenes described in the early part of the book. For example, Artetes, a total barbarian, arrives to live in a lush villa after living in a cave for 5 months. Some of the descriptions of his behavior and the responses of his slaves are priceless. Another hysterical description is when Artetes wants to confront the apostle Paul on an issue. He finds Paul at a gathering in which he is preaching to a large crowd. In the beginning Artetes sits under the tree waiting for the service to end. He gets tired of waiting and decides to interrupt. He breaks through the crowd, heading for the front to confront Paul at the same time there is a call for anyone to come forward who wants to be baptized. So, as Artetes is breaking through the crowd everyone is cheering him on and encouraging him, thinking that he has just given his life to Christ and wants to be baptized. His reaction to this and other interactions with believers is extremely funny. In contrast

to Hadassah (the main character in the 1st two books), who is gentle, soft spoken, and humble, Rizpah is independent, spirited, and strong-willed. This results in amusing interactions between her and Artetes. I did feel pretty sad at how Artetes treated his wife near the end of the book and wish more was written on his remorse. But other than that, I enjoyed the book. It really takes your mind off all of the drama that occurred between Hadassah, Marcus & Julia from the 1st two books. It was a nice way to bring closure to this amazing, well worth reading trilogy.

A lot of the people reviewing this final installment in the 'Mark of the Lion' series are saying how it is disappointing compared to the other two. This book seems to stand in a place by itself. To be fair you can't exactly take it as a continuation of the second book in the series but more as an alternate sequel to the first book. Let me explain: 'A Voice in the Wind' introduces us to all of the characters in the series, primarily revolving around the slave girl Hadassah and the German chieftan Artetes. Both of whom are captured and sold into slavery. The end of the first book leaves much in question and very little resolved. It is here that the story diverges into two directions. In 'An Echo in the Darkness' we continue the story of Hadassah and the Valerian family to which she belongs. We hear almost nothing of Artetes save a few passing references from other characters. We never know what Artetes is up to as the events of this story unfold. By the end of this book, most of the threads have been tied up and the book closes completely the story of Hadassah. 'As Sure as the Dawn' picks up around the same time that 'Echo' does. This story picks up the thread of Artetes again and we see the story exclusively from his perspective. Here the other characters we met in the series such as Hadassah and the Valerians are referred to only in passing, like Artetes was in 'Echo'. The story starts in Ephesus and then follows Artetes and a woman named Rizpah (whom we met briefly in the first book) as they journey north to Germania in search of Artetes' family. The romance and grandeur of the Roman Empire that gave the first two novels such a wondrous backdrop is almost non-existent here. Like Rizpah being uprooted from her home and taken to Germania, we are pulled out of what is familiar with this series and taken on a trip with uncertain results. Elements of the story are predictable, but others will leave you guessing. Some have criticized the use of the miraculous in the story. There are several events that occur that are miraculous, but keep in mind that these elements existed as well in the other two novels. Nothing Ms. Rivers describes seems to be out of line with scripture. None of the miraculous events occur casually, and they are treated with a great deal of respect. Sometimes we find ourselves in situations where nothing short of a miracle will save us, and Ms. Rivers does a good job of portraying just that. There are some dark elements that show the battle between good and evil. Artetes and Rizpah have to contend with pagan religion and

witchcraft in the later half of the story. One character is demon possessed at one point, and the account is a little unsettling, although the spirit is eventually driven out in the name of Jesus. However, the power of God prevails in all things in this story. Ultimately the novel is one that I read through rather quickly and was just as engrossing as the first two. Each novel in the series seems to have a different flavor to it, each unique. Like any series or collection, each individual reader will have their favorite installment.

This is the third and last entry in the Mark of the Lion trilogy. I felt that Atretes had slipped a little from his softening in the previous book, but as the book went on I could see how necessary his hardness was. The character of Anomia is a bit cliched, but to tell the truth, she's a well-written cliché and some people are truly that self-centered. I admired Rizpah's strength throughout the book and how her love for Atretes softened her and allowed the Lord to use her for great works. The level of detail in 1st century AD daily life is astonishing. Rivers fills the book with breath-taking descriptions and detail so that it's easy to fall into that world. I held off on reading this series despite the good feedback I'd heard about it, because I was concerned that it would come off as too stiff or so full of trying to preach that the story would be neglected. I should know better from Rivers. She never makes the story secondary to the message; they are always entwined so carefully and completely that one without the other would fall flat. And I've yet to read a Rivers book that falls flat. This whole trilogy is definitely a must read for Christians. We're blessed in this country that we have freedom of religion. These stories of people who have to hide their faith or die for it is amazing.

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