



## Stone Maiden

*Ann Aguirre*

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## **Stone Maiden** Ann Aguirre

So opens this extraordinary first novel, a new fantasy in the exotic storytelling tradition of Tales from the Thousand and One Nights. Muir is a slave, the lowest of the low. Yet hers is a magic great enough to shake the earth, great enough to topple kings from their thrones ... perhaps even great enough to free the gods from their ancient prisons—if only she can free herself first.

## **Stone Maiden Details**

Date : Published 2007 (first published June 3rd 2003)

ISBN :

Author : Ann Aguirre

Format : Paperback 420 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Fiction, High Fantasy, Magic

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## From Reader Review Stone Maiden for online ebook

### Yareader says

I think the best work from Ann Aguirre I have read so far. While I have enjoyed some of her other more "popular" works, this is a much more sophisticated read with layers of sub plot not evidenced in her other books.

The characters are engaging and have depth, no simplistic right or wrongs but yet shades of grey in all their choices.

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### Meredith says

A wonderful, if bittersweet tale. This book was written with sensitive understatement, and while the characters have gone on their journey and have a better understanding of the world around them at the end, the ending isn't necessarily a happy or fulfilling one for them. It reads like a fairy tale, evocative and clear, and in some cases, brutal. An excellent read. 4.5 stars.

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### jesse says

1.75/5

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### Kirsten Saell says

This was an interesting book. The story was quite complex, with just enough different plot threads to keep me eagerly reading. Muir is a very likeable (if perplexing at times) combination of strength, honor and naivete, and Rodhlann is engaging for all the opposite reasons. I believed in Muir's devotion to a man who "loathed" her, because it was clear that her devotion was born from her own sense of right and wrong rather than his worth as a companion.

But I found myself most drawn into the political goings on outside of the main plot, perhaps because those characters, both villains and heroes, seemed more real than the two primaries. I could relate more easily to Z'ev's patriotism and growth as a humanist, Harb's metamorphosis from weapon to human being, Sibal's long, lonely quest for vengeance and even Abrim's blind, consciousnessless avarice than I could to Muir's superhuman fairness or Rodhlann's almost sociopathic singlemindedness. It was the journeys of those more earthy characters that kept me turning pages.

Also, I found a degree of authorial intrusion early in the story, where the author stepped outside Muir's POV to apply a kind of "future understanding" to her early actions and reactions. In those places, I felt almost hurled out of obedient, inexperienced Muir's head and into the headspace of a much more evolved character. I can understand why Ms. Aguirre did this, but I'd have rather had those understandings manifest later on where they would have felt more natural.

Despite those nitpicks, this book was well worth the time and money invested. I'm at a place right now where my DNF rate is something like 50%, so the fact that I read this in just a few days means it's more than readable. If there's a sequel, I'll be picking it up.

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### **GoldenjoyBazyll says**

She is a maid of a royal family during very ancient times in India. While gathering water at a river she saves a stranger but he is no ordinary man as she soon finds out. He is armed with supernatural powers. When she brings him back to her village the community chooses to punish her for being gone all night (even though she was trying to save the stranger who was too weak to travel). Instead of letting harm come to her the stranger removes the people in the village with his powers. They are gone and the village is a ghost town. The maid goes on a mystical journey with the stranger to find a city that no longer is in the realms of man. At the same time a runner from the King comes to the village to find that it is there but missing its community. He goes back to report his findings and his path is forever altered as he goes on a journey with the King's brother/ a mute guard to figure out what happened.

There are many layers and story lines in this book so you have to be on your toes. I love magic built in to the fabric of the story. Particularly the background of the maid. She spends the better part of her life serving a mistress who abuses her and never does she realize that she has a rare gift until the stranger finds her- she is a seer. As she and the stranger move from tribal village to tribal village everyone wants her to stay but.... she cannot. She starts out following the stranger and gradually becomes his leader/ guide.

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### **Kim says**

A complex mosaic of an epic fantasy, set in an imaginary world with aspects of Middle Eastern and Indian culture. At the center of the tale is the slave girl Muir, who uses her earth speaking powers to save the life of Rodhlann, rebellious member of a fading magical race. A mystical bond is formed, taking both parties to places they could not have imagined. *Stone Maiden* is not only the story of Muir and Rodhlann, however; it is also the tale of the crippled ksathra (prince) Z'ev, and his guard Harb, a magically altered mute. It is the story of the boy Tah, a professional runner, the rebel Sibal, who hides her shame behind a crimson chador, and Yolante, reluctant concubine of Abrim the Wicked. In fact, there are so many complicated and fascinating characters here that if I have one complaint, it's that there are characters introduced whose backstories I want but never get to read. (The book would be much too long). Not even the villains are given short shrift here; whether or not you like them, you can't deny that they are fully fleshed out. In the end, you want to believe these are real people, whose stories intertwine beautifully in this compelling and magical tale.

Please note: this book is not available in bookstores nor, to my knowledge, at Amazon.com. Instead, please visit Aguirre's website to purchase a copy; the proceeds will benefit Equality Now! Here's the scoop:

<http://www.annaguirre.com/sm-intro.html>

Happy reading!

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### **Zimt says**

*Stone Maiden*, the debut work by Ann Aguirre, is a story about finding one's own destiny, even so everyone

is trying to influence us for their own good at every turn.

The book is available as a PDF for free or a Kindle/e-book for a crash price. I bought it for Kindle, because I liked the idea to support 1st Book.

The Story of Stone Maiden is a work of fiction with fantasy elements, set in a world full of magic around the area of Middle-Eastern in medieval times.

It is hard to state my impression of the book in simple words as like or enjoy, because the plot is just too complex for this.

At first, there are a lot of perspective changes, but in the end everything flows together again. On the one hand, it can be confusing and annoying to skip between the characters, but on the other hand, it provides more inside into the world with its races and their different politics. In Stone Maiden, it is necessary to understand the troubles Muir, Z'ev and Rodhlann are facing and the differences and similarities between those. Moreover, it explains their actions and how and why they change their way of thinking. And it doesn't matter that Rodhlann is some hundred years old or that Z'ev's vision of life should already be steadied with around 30 years of age. At least, Muir should have it easy to accept since she is only in her early twenties, but her experiences of life are a hinderance in her path. So, everyone has their difficulties but life is change.

Also, the ending is very open. If you read Sunshine by Robin McKinley then you know what I mean. That is, of course, not a bad thing, only a warning for the one's who do not like this kind of ending. Because of the complexity of Stone Maiden, there was no better solution as such an ending. The Story does not distinguish between black and white, it is more like everything is gray depending on which side you stand at one moment and then the other. So, there cannot be a final answer to all the problems, you need to find it for yourself based on what **you** believe is right or wrong.

Just a minor critique, I wished Ann Aguirre had had more pages for her story. The Story jumps from one place to the other with always so much action going on that it was hard to remember everything. That is because of the many places and gods/religions and races, they are easily confused. The book was just too short for such a great world (*which was **beautifully** built*) but I would have needed more time with a singular person and place to acquaint myself with them better.

This book/world had potential for even more, if it would have had more time to grow. Still, Stone Maiden is already awesome just as it is.

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### **Paula says**

The Stone Maiden is my favorite Ann Aguirre book. I enjoyed the story and the characters. The universe is well defined and interesting. The story is organized in sections. Each section focused on specific people who seemed to be on different adventures. The people and adventures came together revealing the big picture.

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### **Carlen says**

I'm in love with this book!

The writing is beautiful, the world Aguirre creates both wonderful and cruel and the story itself is epic.

Muir's life changes forever on the day she meets Rodhlann. Her personal growth and the developing relationship between her and Rodhlann are heartbreakingly beautiful and bittersweet to read. I dare anyone to read this book and not wish Muir a well deserved happily ever after. I myself rooted for her from the start.

Muir's life isn't the only one that's changed by her meeting with Rodhlann. The two of them set things on motion that will lead to death, betrayal, violence and hope. There are several storylines in this book following not only Muir and Rodhlann, but also others as they are caught up in the changes.

Aguirre succeeds in making all the characters in this story intriguing at the least and loveable at the best and I found myself caught up in the unfolding events, unable to put down the book as I had to know where it all would lead to.

I can advice this story to anyone who loves beautifully written fantasy. This book is going on my favorites shelf and will be reread often.

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### **Mike Holding says**

Captivating read, well worth the time

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### **Tracy Riva says**

*Stone Maiden* by Ann Aguirre was Aguirre's debut book. I liked the story, but it failed to truly grab me. I thought most of the characters' had earth shattering revelations and underwent dramatic changes, only to return, in one form another to their previous states, or a worse state, because they now had knowledge of what the world *could* have offered them.

I liked the mythological elements of the book, though I was hungry to hear more of the gods of old. I was pleased with the way Aguirre managed to tie in current aspects of the book with the presence of those ancient and forgotten gods.

While I don't think *Stone Maiden* in any way represents Aguirre's best work I think she has grown tremendously as a writer since its publication and I would like to see her turn her skills to a sequel for *Stone Maiden*. I think the basic back story is solid enough to build upon and there are several characters in the tale whose long-term fates, I would like to learn.

*Stone Maiden* is written by Ann Aguirre. Try as I might I was unable to locate an ISBN for the work. I downloaded it on the Kindle, actually, the Kindle for Blackberry application. That left me minus a cover page, but I'm trying to locate more information and will post it as it becomes available.

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## **Shay says**

Just couldn't get into this, and halfway through with my cultural appropriation senses tingling and the rest of me just a little bored, I had to quit.

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## **Darcey says**

I enjoyed this, but don't think it's a stellar piece of work. The plotline was somewhat predictable, the characterization lacking (ah, romances that start with loathing!), and while the setting was different (a Middle Eastern theme), it wasn't very well-developed.

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## **Marsha says**

(3.5 of 5 stars) When I was a little girl, my grandparents had the power to mesmerize me with their tales. "Stone Maiden" has that unique ability. The story feels as though it was written thousands of years ago but retold by generation after generation. The story line is complicated, filled with rich language and mysterious characters.

It is difficult to describe this tale because it is told from multiple perspectives with them all merging in the end. However, the central character is a slave girl named Muir. She is hard working and kind although her mistress can be cruel. Life has left its scars on her harshly laundered hands and sun baked skin, yet she is at loss not to help others.

While venturing from home to secure water to tend her garden, Muir stumbles upon a man lying prone on the desert sand. She seeks the counsel of the pool and is told to help him. Once he awakes she shares her dried fruit and a few drops of her blood (no he is not a vampire). His name is Rodhlann and his people are far above those of the lowly humans (or so he thinks). Yet, Muir assists him and brings him back to her village where she is accused of harboring an ungodly creature and is sentenced to die. However, before the sentence is carried out, Rodhlann comes to her aid burning down the village including all of its residents.

This one event sets the course of the events to follow. The reader immediately becomes embroiled into a world unlike no other. It is rich as a fine tapestry and the sub stories weave a perfect blend of intrigue, adventure and action. At times I thought I would tire of the multiple stories; but, in truth I continue to devour every page. Unfortunately, the ending left me quite dissatisfied.

I am a true fan of Ann Aguirre and this was her first book. I loved it and I am sure that if you love a richly told story, you will too.

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## **JG says**

This is not a series?! Damn!

Ok. There are some series that makes me feel dumb. Maybe because it's the kind of words used that borders

medieval or because the way it is written- full of cryptic words that makes you wonder if you're reading a novel or figuring out a puzzle.

Stone Maiden was an intriguing read. There are times when I'm not really sure of what magic mumbo jumbo was happening because I had given up trying to understand the passage (*one time i wasn't sure if they're having sex or not*) but I did get the flow of the story.

It was interesting, really but I honestly thought it was a series. There are things that are left off unfinished. I just wished the author tide up all the lose ends. And I'm still not quite sure what happened at the end though I did cry- I abhor sad endings.

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