



## Daughters of Ruin

*K.D. Castner*

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## **Daughters of Ruin** K.D. Castner

*Meet rumor with quiet, treason with cunning, and vicious with vicious.*

Rhea, Cadis, Suki, and Iren have lived together since they were children. They are called sisters. They are not. They are called equals. They are not. They *are* princesses. And they are enemies.

A brutal war ravaged their kingdoms, and Rhea's father was the victor. As a gesture of peace, King Declan brought the daughters of his rivals to live under his protection—and his ever-watchful eye.

For ten years they have trained together as diplomats and warriors, raised to accept their thrones and unite their kingdoms in peace. But there is no peace among sisters, and all plans shatter when the palace is attacked. As their intended future lies in ashes, Rhea, Cadis, Suki, and Iren must decide where their loyalties lie: to their nations, or to each other.

Alliances shift and the consequences are deadly in this stunning fantasy debut from K. D. Castner.

## **Daughters of Ruin Details**

Date : Published April 5th 2016 by Margaret K. McElderry Books

ISBN : 9781481436656

Author : K.D. Castner

Format : Hardcover 314 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Young Adult, High Fantasy

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## From Reader Review Daughters of Ruin for online ebook

### Amanda says

DNF @ 26%. Don't like the characters, not engaged with the story and the parenthesis. My god the parenthesis. Stop. Just stop.

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### Lexie says

DNF - I'm not sure where to begin. The opening prologue is kind of confusing and narratively a mess to read. I sort of liked Cadis and Iren at first, but ugh Suki.

I understand what the author was trying to achieve (Suki is basically emotionally and mentally unhinged), but her POV chapters were too long. You'd go from Iren, who made some very intriguing and intelligent observations to Cadis, who seemed the most hopeful of the bunch, to Rhea who was too afraid to be much use and then Suki who spoke in half thoughts and weird cryptic (always with the parenthesis (no thought had only one (multiple layers))) way.

So I skipped to the end and basically everything I read was mistaken and a lie and you know what life is too short to make sense of this mess.

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### Beth says

After winning a brutal war, Kin Declan takes three “queen heirs” of the rival kingdoms as adoptive daughters to keep the piece. He raised them with his own daughter making him a father of 4 queens in training. Training for war, training for battle and training to rule under King Declan’s hand.

Murmurs of unrest, rumors of a rebellion and political machinations all set in motion a plan that will rock all the kingdoms to their core.

The story is written from each of the future queen’s perspectives with lots of unexpected twists, turns and outright I didn’t see that coming.

I found the beginning extremely interesting but found my interest tapering off. I do blame part of that to the way Suki’s story is written by I can truly say I wasn’t a big fan Rhea as well, making me have issues with half the characters made it very difficult to invest in the rest of the story.

I would recommend this story to most teen fantasy readers with an interest in romance, action and of course medieval fantasy. Overall, it was easy, entertaining and quite inventive, it just wasn’t fully my cup of tea.

I received this ARC copy *Daughters of Ruin* from Margaret K. McElderry Books in exchange for a honest review. This book is set for publication April 5, 2016.

My Rating: 3 Stars

Written by: K.D. Castner

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Amazon: <http://www.amazon.com/Daughters-Ruin-...>

Barnes & Noble: <http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/daugh...>

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## **Take Me Away To A Great Read says**

Daughters of Ruin by K.D. Castner

Margaret K. McElderry Books

Release Date: April 5, 2016

Rating: 2 Stars

I would like to thank the publisher for providing me with an advance copy of Daughters of Ruin for an honest review.

Daughters of Ruin was one of most anticipated reads of 2016 and the synopsis when I read it made me so excited for this book. I have to be honest the book for me did not live up to my expectations. The prologue is over 20 pages and honestly could be summed up in 4 to 5 pages. It was so drawn out. The first 125 pages of the book are relatively boring and not much happens.

I wanted to relate to some of the POV's but couldn't. My favorite POV was Cadis, she was honestly the most relateable and least annoying. Suki was the most irritating as a spoiled, brat. Rhea was the one I wanted to connect to the most but just couldn't. I felt her POV sometimes was cold, and then not, almost contradictory in emotions. The story-line at times made no sense to me and I felt it was not what I signed up for. The second half of the book flowed a little better and did pick up as far as the pacing.

FULL REVIEW GO TO: <https://takemeawaytoagreatread.com/20...>

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## **Cori Reed says**

1.5 stars

I liked...the cover.

I (hated (the amount (of (bloody (parenthesis (please (dear (lord (stop))))))))))

And that's my review.

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### **Steph Sinclair says**

Hello, gorgeous cover. Be mine.

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### **Paige (Illegal in 3 Countries) says**

Read about 110 pages and gave up. aka a prologue and four chapters.

This *sounds* really cool, but once you dig in, you realize the premise makes absolutely no sense, is generally a recipe for disaster so obvious that you wonder how anyone ever thought it was a good idea, and creates a forced conflict where a perfectly organic one should be.

So after a big war, the king of the winning kingdom takes the crown princesses of the other three kingdoms (Iren, Cadis, and Suki) into his home to raise as his daughters alongside his own daughter Rhea. This will hopefully foster kinship among the girls and they will grow up to be queens friendly with one another. But the three crown princesses from other kingdoms never get to visit their own kingdoms or whatever. Instead, they stay in Meridan the entire time, learn to fight like hell, and are even pitted against one another in exhibition matches.

*That is a stupid idea.*

For one, pitting the girls against one another is a horrible idea that will create discord among them, especially when all but Rhea are mad because they were forced from their homes to live in Meridan. They'll all feel they're fighting for their kingdoms as well as themselves and any infighting as a result (see: the incredible tension between Rhea and Cadis) creates tensions among the kingdoms as well.

The girls don't seem to have any loyalty to each other anyway, with the exception of Cadis and Iren. Based on what I read, I wouldn't believe for a second any combination of girls except for the aforementioned would actually be conflicted about whether to choose her "sister" or her kingdom.

Want a better one? The girls growing up to really feel like they are sisters because they weren't, y'know, pitted against each other. Then they *actually* feel torn between their love of one another and the need to do what's best for their kingdoms. They don't need the exhibition fights against one another.

Another smart move would have been to rotate all four girls between the kingdoms over the years instead of keeping them in Meridan the entire time. It gives all of them an appreciation for each other's kingdoms and cultures, the other kingdoms actually get their daughters back for a bit, and it sets up a more harmonious relationship for the future.

Basically, keep the girls cooped up like hostages and they *will* be hostages who want to eventually kick your ass.

SPEAKING OF WHICH. Training them to be the ultimate warriors when they're angry three of the four

queens are pissed from being stuck in a foreign kingdom? Not a great idea. Did King Declan (Rhea's father) never stop to think about what might happen if they decided to turn on him? If they do, he's hoisted by his own petard, as the saying goes. His efforts to make them the best queens possible and foster peace between the kingdoms leads to his death. Whether he does or doesn't have his own motives for training them as warriors, it's a terrible idea.

The threat of being murdered by his own "daughters" making an alliance is stymied by their dislike of one another (which is part of the forced conflict), which is in turn a sign that his plan to have the girls grow up as sisters and create peace is failing.

Just SO. MUCH. NONSENSE.

And to top it all off, two of our four narrators (we get third-person chapters from each queen's perspective) have utterly irritating narrative voices and I don't care deeply about any of the four queens. Iren's chapter is choppy and painful to read; Suki's uses more parenthetical asides than I have in my entire history as a writer. **AND I LOVE ME SOME PARENTHETICAL ASIDES.** There are five in this review!

**THINK LIKE A VILLAIN, MAN.** Or a political scientist. Whichever comes first.

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### **Anna (Enchanted by YA) says**

*\*\*\*I received the ARC ebook from the publisher Margaret K. McElderry Books through Edelweiss in exchange for an honest review\*\*\**

A rich tale of betrayal and courtly relationships between four Queens from warring countries, brought together to be raised as sisters, in order to secure peace under King Declan's thumb. Told from four points of view all the girls had such unique voices (granted Suki's drove me up the wall! There were too many brackets by which I mean 9 at once which is 9 too many); from a glance you could tell whose perspective it was and their outlook played a part too. Each had different experiences, goals and opinions which shaped their personalities and relationships with others.

Admittedly I did find it hard to connect with any of the 4 main characters (to be honest I only genuinely liked 2) so while that means it was never going to be a 5 star book for me, it's still a great read. Written emotively the sister's connections with each other, and lack thereof, took centre stage over the action. Decisions led to changing dynamics until people's motives became unclear and people's thoughts clouded by often ill-founded emotions. It promises a lot more to come.

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Posted on Enchanted by YA

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### **Vicki Lee says**

Let's pretend you have a 12-year old nephew. You visit your nephew occasionally, see him during the holidays, play with him during the Fourth of July barbecue, buy him something off of his wishlist made by

his parents for Christmas.

Okay, so when he was growing up, he was a decent snot-nosed, endearing whiner. You used to tease him, play tricks on him, and laugh when he grew flustered. He liked to show you his collection of shovels and dump trucks and you would pretend to be utterly fascinated - for the forty-sixth time.

But then you went traveling for a year, took a break from the menial life of office work and Friday night traditions with your buddies from high school, and you climbed mountains, enjoyed the beach sun, and grew an appreciation for the ancient structures around the world that breathed of a history much more illustrious than yours.

So you come back, unwind in your new apartment rented to you by a friend of a friend of a friend of a co-worker, and settle into your old life, but with an enlarged life perspective, a greater understanding of the undulating tides of the universe.

So remember that 12-year old nephew you have? Right, so while you've been gone, you hear news that his parents had secretly been getting busy with a new family surprise and poof! A new, sparkling niece appears! You sent your congratulations while sipping some pleasant, slightly fruity cocktail in the lobby of a moderately-priced hotel as you scrolled through the usual "adorable" (which really means "unique" which really means "witty" which really means "clever" which really means "ripped right off of Pinterest boards" which really means "seen first on Instagram posted by some B-list actress, who throughout her career, gained a following decently-sized enough to keep her relevant for some odd years after her last big hurrah in the industry") first baby photos.

The happy couple sends the whole family an email detailing the birth and first precious days with their new bundle of joy along with more pictures of the wrinkly potato-like thing and her sibling.

Fastforward to the next family gathering, the celebration of the new addition to the family, and you come armed with two presents: one for the "baby" (which really means for the parents), and one for the older sibling so as to give him some attention and still make him feel like he hadn't been replaced.

The first present is some jingly baby toy in the shape of an elephant meant for the baby to shake and grasp and squeeze and love - of course, the baby loves it.

The second present is a book: some adventure-thriller-fantasy type tailored to boys with a male protagonist and magic and spells and of course, zero romance, because after all, your nephew was still a boy and a boy didn't want cooties.

At first, you had questioned the gift, thinking to give your nephew a new gizmo or some trinket marked with the image of a popular franchise, but no: his parents said he was really interested in reading and writing nowadays.

And at that family gathering/celebration, you realize your 12-year old nephew had grown up to be a 13-year old teenager.

Angst and all.

Obviously, most certainly, he loved his little sister, but his new haircut, with bangs that swooped over his eyes, and his new wardrobe, an overly baggy busy shirt with too much design and clunky new kicks, told

you immediately that he was absolutely wheedling for some attention.

And, as his eyes lighted up you - your new improved you who has figured out some of life's wonders - your heart grew heavy as you instantly realized who would have to be the one to give him such attention.

And so, for about two hours, you listen to him relate mostly everything about his life: school, girls, his new bike, books that he liked, some girls he didn't like, the teacher he secretly thought was super cool, his trouble with math, and blah blah blah - teenage stuff.

And since you love and adore your little nephew, you listen to the blah blah blah teenage growing pains.

Then, when you're about to leave - FINALLY - you remember to hand him your gift, and you see his expression absolutely light up because WOW! THIS WHOLE EVENT WAS FOR HIS NEW SISTER, BUT THIS LITTLE OLD GIFT IS FOR HIM!!!!

!!

However, his excitement suddenly becomes abashed as you watch his expression change into a struggle of emotions before he quite abruptly flees with only a loudly exclaimed, "Wait here!" to give you a hint to what he wants you to do.

You wait, your coat and shoes already on and a box of leftovers in your hand.

He comes back, eyes sparkling, goofy grin on his face, as he presses a red notebook into your hands.

"I want you to read this and tell me what you think. It's awesome!"

Slightly wary, but wanting to go home, you promise him you will.

Twenty-four days later, you remember your promise after a phone call to your brother to remind him of your parents' upcoming anniversary becomes a conversation with the whole family with even the baby momentarily being allowed to babble into the phone.

"Have you read it yet?" he asks, all anticipation and nerves.

You promise again that you will and you even tell him that you're opening the notebook now, but before he can hound you some more, your brother gets back on the line to tell your nephew that it's time for bed and that surely adults (namely you) have more important and more grown-up things to do like work or cleaning.

After he hangs up, you look at the opened notebook. A quick skim leads you to realize that your nephew, your only nephew (so far), has written a story!

Immediately, you see some flaws in his technique as the first page presents you with a dramatic summary that spoils the entire plot, but you're curious about this little endeavor of your nephew so you continue to read.

Three minutes later, your brow furrows and you frown as you realize the monstrosity you've just opened.

It... It's not *bad* per say, it... It just needs a little work.

A little refinement. He's only 13 so it's not like you should be expecting a work of art from him.

But still, as you read the 16th description of another "epic fight," you can't help but judge him immensely as you slowly take in the words written on the page.

It reads like this:

"Then the badass ninja takes out his super sharp katanas and he throws them over the guard's head as he punches the guy in the face and knocks him out. He laughs as he sees his two katanas have hit two other guards in the head. But then seventeen more guards come rushing out with swords and other sharp weapons. He was totally outnumbered, but they didn't know about his training!"

He closes his eyes as a white light envelops him. Claws grow out of his nails and he feels his fangs pop out. He was in his Grimswald form! With a battle cry, he lifts up his arms and speaks the words of the old Jeroku spell. Super sharp knives pierce the throats of everyone surrounding him, and when he opens his eyes, all he saw were dead bodies.

Too many dead bodies. He feels disgusted by what he did. He was a murderer.

'No!' He protests. 'I had to protect myself! I have to live!'

After all, he was the Chosen One, the only heir of Queen Vaslish and King Ferjanga, the next ruler of Imang, Protector of Minka, the Grimswald Incarnate, and the last-ever Micha of the Hufe Clan, destined to become Poling emperor."

The story ends so abruptly that you wonder if he meant to continue reading, but the "The End" written in his slanted writing tells you differently.

You close your eyes as you take it all in.

Your heart races as you wonder what you'll say so you won't break his little heart.

"Well, beloved nephew, ah - the idea's pretty good, uh, but maybe a little more, you know, character development would be nice? Add a backstory in there, explain some of the words and characters. Maybe take away some of the fight scenes. I'm sure if you just edit some, it'll turn out great."

You swallow a lump of guilt as you think about spilling the bad news or posing the question that would sound more like an accusation.

"Did you write it all by yourself?"

Because, as the words of the story rolls around in your head, you're sure you've read something like it before.

The undeveloped characters, the weak and unsatisfactory resolution, even the embarrassing trying-too-hard-to-be-cool names and "unique" lingo.

Yes, you think as the name of the book suddenly pops into your head, the style, the technique...

It all reminded you of *Daughters of Ruin* by K.D. Castner.

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### **Reading Teen says**

I'm sorry, did you say Graceling? Because yes.

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### **Madeline (The Bookish Mutant) says**

DNF at p. 132. Ugh.

Why is it that some books with pretty covers end up having terrible stories? Such a strange world we live in...

I didn't like a lot of things about this book. The story seemed halfway decent, but ended up being about 50% ballroom parties, 40% fighting in arenas, and 10% over-the-top battle and destruction. Also, the characters were terrible. 3/4 of them were basically different variants of Katniss Everdeen (Troubled Princess Katniss Everdeen, I-Fight-Because-It's-Fun-And-Not-Because-I-Need-To-Survive Katniss Everdeen, and Psychopath Assassin Katniss Everdeen), and then Suki was just a spoiled brat who had an EXTREME tendency to overuse parentheses. I mean, FOUR PARENTHESES IN A ROW. ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND? All in all, pretty lame excuse for a book. I now understand why it has such a low rating. I almost felt bad for it at first, but now...

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### **Kara-karina says**

2.5/5

I really did not like the format of this book, perhaps it didn't work for me particularly but it would for you? Hear me out.

The idea for the plot is great. Four future queens training together in order to bond into Pax Regina, so when they go back to rule their kingdoms they will feel about each other as sisters and won't start another war. The reality is something different.

We get a glimpse of training in their early years, and then suddenly transported into the present times. All the girls are in their teens and there is much dissent in their ranks. The narration is split between Cadis, Iren, Rhea and the youngest Suki. Suki's narration is the most annoying. I understand that she has mental problems and the attempt is made to show it with the disjointed stream of thought reading which was giving me a headache.

Rhea's character is another one built only loosely. She is caring but at the same time, insensitive, preoccupied with her father's politics, distrustful of her fellow sisters and at the same time wanting them to love her. She is blind and stumbling in the dark, unable to see what's happening and I did not feel for her.

Cadis and Iren were the most coherent and interesting characters, but they had too little time to develop. If it

was a book just dedicated to one of them (my personal favorite is Iren), it would have been a much stronger read. Otherwise despite multiple points of view very little happens and the whole book is just a prelude to what will happen in the next few books in the series. The author skipped the things deemed boring and just jumped over 2 weeks of traveling, for God's sake! This book was like bullet points. I am not a fan of such practice, too little meat for my taste, which is why a low rating.

Read it at your own discretion but I do not recommend.

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### **Jaime (Two Chicks on Books) says**

I really loved this book and probably would have given it 5 stars but there were a couple things that bugged the crap out of me hence the 4 star rating.

Let's start by saying I freaking hate this cover! Hate it with a passion! If it weren't for the awesome synopsis I probably wouldn't have read this book. The story is about 4 girls and has 4 POV's I really think they should have all had representation on the cover.

Ok now what I loved! I loved 3 of the POV's Rhea, Cadis, and especially Iren's! I love that we get to view this world through each of their eyes! I loved the world building and all of the secondary characters. I wish there would have been a bit more romance but, I'm ok with what I got.

The one thing that stopped me from giving this 5 stars was Suki's POV. She was an obnoxious brat and her inner monologue and the way it was written drove me crazy! Absolutely freaking crazy!

But other than that I loved this story and highly recommend it! Also I truly hope this is a series (there's no info saying it is but I hope it is!) because I need more!!!!

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### **Amy says**

Well...that was unexpected.

*Daughters of Ruin* puzzles me. I just finished it and probably should wait to write a review until I have processed it more, but I don't think I have the care factor at work. I'll never get around to writing a review if I don't do it now. As time passes, though, I think I will remember only that I enjoyed this book. It was different. Dark. Unique. But not...quite...enough.

### **Plot**

In an attempt to bring peace to four warring countries, the victor, King Declan, decides to raise the heirs of the 4 kingdoms together as Sister Queens. The idea is that their bonded relationship will lead to peace during their reigns. Rhea is Declan's daughter, suddenly saddled with 3 unwanted sisters. Cadis, Suki, and Iren, the other queens, consider themselves hostages, snatched from their families and constantly reminded of their own countries' treachery. They are meant to be sisters...but nothing can change the fact that they are enemies. When the castle is attacked, the 4 girls are left in crisis and forced to choose their own allies and enemies. Can they trust each other?

## Thoughts

The story is told with revolving POVs from the 4 queens. In some ways, I liked the POVs. They provided insight and depth into each queen and helped differentiate them. I liked the way it allowed glimpses of each girl through her sisters' eyes. However, some POVs were better than others and by the end I was distracted by nearly all of them.

Rhea should have been more relatable but she never *does* anything. She whines and bemoans her fate (view spoiler). At the end, her character hints at strength and purpose, but it is a scary, dark strength.

Cadis was the easiest to like, and she stays easiest to like. Her character growth is also real and weighty. At the same time, I felt her story tapers off at the end. Iren steals the show.

Iren, who I found absolutely boring at the beginning. Iren comes out of left field. She is the INTJ to Cadis's ESFP. Their relationship had immense potential because both were such rich, interesting characters.

However, instead of exploring it in depth, the book skims and flips back to the stupid love triangle of Rhea/Suki/Endrit. The ending is inconclusive (setting up for a sequel?) and frustrating. I felt like their friendship gets the short end of the stick, a victim to the sloppy way the author ended the story. I'd have stuck another dagger into Jesper for good measure.

Suki's POV was obnoxious. It runs (sort of random (majorly spastic (distracting and weird) and the author throws everything in parentheses (to explain tangents (that aren't always tangents.))) She is in charge of the final, climatic chapter and she ruins it through spastic parentheses. I couldn't follow what was going on. It was out of order and weird. I get that she's going insane (I assume she is going insane? She is super crazy, right??) but she didn't have character change as much as a mental disorder. At first, she is like any teenage girl in her puppy love. But then...her already weird character goes off the deep end. 'Twas bizarre.

I will hand it to the author...she's not afraid of going dark. The ending isn't happily-ever-after wrapped up in a bow. If she leaves it like this and doesn't write a sequel - or at least maintains this dark, uncomfortable growth in her characters - I'd be even more impressed. As far as characters go, this one is memorable. Yet the plot doesn't hold together long enough to make it...believable. (view spoiler)

An interesting read, worthwhile, and with a clever plot concept. However, the unanswered questions, confusing climax and love triangle kind of ruined it for me.

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## Justine says

3.5 stars

*She knew now they would never truly be sisters, the way her father wanted. They would never reign together and usher in a generation of peace among the four empires. His great dream of a Pax Regina--Peace of the Queens--would be a disappointment he would have to endure. And she would be to blame for it.*

Rhea's father, King Declan, instituted the Pax Regina at the end of a great War. He forced the surrounding nations to give their daughter heirs over to him as children to be raised alongside his own daughter, with the idea that as adults, the four Queens would rule their respective countries in peaceful coexistence with each other.

The young women are trained in combat and statecraft, live together and learn together, day in and day out. While some bonds of friendship are formed, they are not equal among the four, and hurts both old and new continue to divide them. But ten years later, King Declan's palace is attacked, and the time comes when each of the girls must decide where their true loyalties lie.

This political fantasy is told from four alternating POV's, giving overlapping insights into how each of the

four young women perceive their position living under Declan's rule as part of the peace treaty, and their relationship to each other. The writing style for each POV changes quite significantly to reflect each character's particular way of thinking, which I thought was pretty effective for the most part.

The story really picks up the pace after the attack and the four women are forced to make decisions on the spot about what to do. There were a number of little twists and turns in the plot that I didn't see coming and the book turned out to be quite engaging.

This book is supposed to be first in a series, but it has a complete enough ending to feel satisfying, yet still sets things up effectively for the next book. Overall this is a solid debut novel, with definite potential in future installments.

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