



Daughter of the Gods: A Novel of Ancient Egypt

Stephanie Thornton

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Egypt, 1400s BC. The pharaoh's pampered second daughter, lively, intelligent Hatshepsut, delights in racing her chariot through the marketplace and testing her archery skills in the Nile's marshlands. But the death of her elder sister, Neferubity, in a gruesome accident arising from Hatshepsut's games forces her to confront her guilt...and sets her on a profoundly changed course.

Hatshepsut enters a loveless marriage with her half brother, Thut, to secure his claim to the Horus Throne and produce a male heir. But it is another of Thut's wives, the commoner Aset, who bears him a son, while Hatshepsut develops a searing attraction for his brilliant adviser Senenmut. And when Thut suddenly dies, Hatshepsut becomes de facto ruler, as regent to her two-year-old nephew.

Once, Hatshepsut anticipated being free to live and love as she chose. Now she must put Egypt first. Ever daring, she will lead a vast army and build great temples, but always she will be torn between the demands of leadership and the desires of her heart. And even as she makes her boldest move of all, her enemies will plot her downfall....

Once again, Stephanie Thornton brings to life a remarkable woman from the distant past whose willingness to defy tradition changed the course of history.

Daughter of the Gods: A Novel of Ancient Egypt Details

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From Reader Review Daughter of the Gods: A Novel of Ancient Egypt for online ebook

Rhi says

The Gloriana of the Ancient World, Hatshepsut is the kind of historical personality who demands stories to be written about her. Strong, bold, powerful, she was a breathing force of nature. A commander who oversaw the battlefield as her loyal warriors suppressed the foes of the Isis Throne. A savvy politician whose capable fingers plucked the strings of her court like a master musician plays a harp. An absolute ruler with a vision, with the determination to realize it. And at the same time a tender mother and passionate lover. A flame burning brightly ... a fire dangerous to those closest and dearest to her.

Stephanie Thornton isn't afraid to take on a challenge. The infamous saying, "Well-behaved women rarely make history" is her motto and that is clearly reflected in her composition. Unlike many other historical fiction authors she doesn't cringe away from showing the dirt and tarnish her characters collected along the path to glory and power. If you're going to tell the story, then tell it! And she does. Her previous portrayal of Empress Theodora was magnificent, gritty, and poetic, if not exactly lyrical. I was delighted to learn that she was working on bringing Hatshepsut to glowing, pulsing life as well.

Thornton's Hatshepsut is dynamic and impressive. Her thoughts are vibrant, a strong will reaches out to snatch at your mind. The commanding personality and the intelligence that had to fuel this ancient She-Pharaoh comes across clearly in this story. Sadly, though, it didn't exactly take center stage.

More than anything, this book was a love story. As Elizabeth I had her Robert Dudley, Hatshepsut had her Senenmut. It's one of the tantalizing bits of racy gossip from history that has survived to the modern day. The female ruler and her beloved, lusty architect. Is this scandal a whisper that was blown all out of proportion, or did the lowly-born Senenmut actually claim a place in the bed of one of the most powerful women to cross the world's stage? Who knows, there is no definite answer as it stands right now. There is only imagination, and that makes the tidbit of potential romance fair game for the pen-wielder.

While the relationship Hatshepsut and Senenmut came to share was very sweet and well-written, it came to overshadow Hatshepsut's personal story of trial, accomplishment, and an immortal victory against history. That isn't to say we didn't witness her loneliness and sense of helplessness during her marriage to Thutmose, or the tension of her game of shadows against Mentehetep. Those episodes took a backseat, though. I have to admit I was disappointed.

Regardless, this is an excellent read and captures the world of the New Kingdom at the height of a Golden Age. The ending is an interesting explanation for the defacement of Hatshepsut's works, while also a fitting tribute to one who remade the world she lived in and conquered it for her own. Bravo!

Iset says

I re-read this book recently, and decided to write a new review to reflect some new thoughts and insights I had about it. In my old review, I praised how Thornton created vivid descriptions which reminded me of one of my all-time favourite authors, Pauline Gedge. For me it's one of the key elements in elevating a good story into a truly great story, and it's also something that is far too often sadly missing from a lot of historical

novels. It may seem like an unimportant element, but it is particularly crucial to historical fiction, where the author's skill is whisking the reader away to a richly realised, alien time and place is essential to immersiveness in the story and the reader's willing suspension of disbelief. Plus, on a personal note, I do enjoy a bit of inventive imagery from time to time; it adds a touch of freshness and engagement. In my previous review, I said that Thornton was reminiscent of Gedge on this point, but not quite there to the same standards, and on this re-read I discovered why. I highlighted all the examples of exquisite descriptions I came across, and it quickly became clear that while they were thick on the ground in the early book, they disappeared later on. I didn't have a single highlight after the 26% mark, and whilst that shouldn't be taken as an implication that everything after that was badly written, it does mean that amidst the competent writing in the rest of the book, I didn't find anything that particularly struck me as beautifully written, or a quote I simply had to share with the world. If I were speaking to Stephanie Thornton directly, I would say that I love these early gorgeous descriptions, and I just want to see her inject more of them beyond the first phase of the book where an author does naturally set the scene a bit more. Here's a couple of examples of passages I loved:

p. 4: *"A hippo calf with rolls of fat ringing its neck shaded itself in a papyrus grove at the edge of an island, its grey skin shiny in the sun... The wooden shaft arced into the reeds, sending a black-and-white ibis screeching into the blue sky. The little river cow honked his outrage at the disturbance, then splashed clumsily into the Nile and disappeared into the murky waters with a wiggle of his grey rump."*

p. 18: *"Shimmering orange fish darted like underwater flames to avoid their intruder. Drenched and mortified that she might be seen, Hatshepsut struggled to sit up amongst the floating lotus blossoms... Hatshepsut's head touched the coloured tiles as she swept into a full henu before her father. A kaleidoscope filled her open eyes, swirls of green, red, and blue."*

p. 23: *"They passed along the Walls of the Prince and under the palace's Great Double Gate, the guards a blur of white as Thut laughingly hollered at her to slow down. The gentle scents of lotus blossoms and fig trees were quickly replaced with the pungent smell of animal dung and baking bread, dust, and spices. They careened around a corner and passed a pile of mud-brick houses stacked precariously upon one another. The corner of their chariot almost clipped a wizened old man balancing a basket of silver-scaled fish on his head... Vendors with booming voices hawked wares of all kinds—hills of elephant garlic and onions, half-starved donkeys, and jewellery so cheap its gilding was already peeling. One cart was piled with dirty linen bundles, likely mummies of ibis, falcons, and dogs available to accompany the recently deceased to the Field of Reeds."*

Thornton's writing (based admittedly on this one book, as I haven't got around to her others yet) quietly excites me. It excites me because I can clearly see her linguistic skill, even if it isn't on show as much as I would like throughout the entire book. It excites me because at 442 pages in the edition I read, and a commendable dedication to accuracy, we get a much more nuanced and detailed picture of the life of Hatshepsut from Thornton than in other, shorter novels which I've read recently and felt like they were rushing so fast I couldn't connect to this extraordinary historical woman at all. It excites me because Thornton manages to balance several fresh approaches in the storyline (view spoiler) with some of the traditional tropes in Hatshepsut fiction which usually feel tired but here become genuine twists (view spoiler) and sticks more or less the right side of historically accurate and in-character (so far as we know). It quietly excites me because despite all that, the book still possesses some flaws.

Even with the generous page count afforded here, the book still felt a little on the rushed side in terms of pacing. I think Hatshepsut's reign is just so stuffed full of interest that it'd take a doorstopper tome to do it justice. My criticism here is the exact same one as I had upon first reading, so I have decided to let the following two paragraphs from my old review stand in this new one: First, the (view spoiler) After that I began to notice points here and there where I just didn't quite buy into things. I didn't believe that (view spoiler) I felt like secondary characters, whilst interesting, weren't developed or complex enough; characters

like Ti and Neshi, Nomti, Aset, Tutmose, and Neferure. I wanted more complexity, more subtlety, more sophistication to this intriguing cast. The pacing at the end didn't feel quite right either; after Hatshepsut becomes pharaoh, the chapters provide glimpses into this regnal year or that, but skip ahead a lot and omit a great deal. I feel that the heart of Hatshepsut's story should be her time as pharaoh, but *Daughter of the Gods* spends more time on the build-up of her time as queen and regent, than on her time as pharaoh, in my personal judgment it just didn't feel like it balanced right.

Perhaps most importantly, the characters were made a little too stupid in order to make the novel's climax work. After (view spoiler) It's a classic case of plot relying on character stupidity for it succeeding and not having the whole thing unravel when in real life people would actually start becoming suspicious and asking questions.

In terms of new criticisms, I wish Thornton had scrapped the prophecy element. I think it is way too overdone in historical novels and always to their detriment. Because we know what happened, it isn't subtle foreshadowing at all, but comes across as clichéd and takes something away from the poignancy and immediacy of these people's lives. Also, I had to giggle at the line "Great Per-A'a" at one point in the book. "Per-A'a" (the more accurate, Egyptian way of saying 'Pharaoh') means "Great House" much the same way that we today might refer to 'the Palace' when we actually mean the person of the monarch – so that line of dialogue is saying "Great Great House". I'm sure this was just one of those silly slip-ups, but it gave me a chuckle.

I don't think I would say that *Daughter of the Gods* has displaced Pauline Gedge's *Child of the Morning* for me as the best Hatshepsut book out there, but it's a solid, enjoyable read that shows promise, and on the strength of it I will be checking out the author's other books.

7 out of 10

Michelle (True Book Addict) Miller says

My fascination with ancient Egypt began when I was eleven years old. While browsing at the library one day, I came across some books on the discovery of and what was found in King Tut's tomb. I was hooked. My obsession continued into my high school years when I wrote my tenth grade term paper on ancient Egyptian burial customs (on which I received an A, I might add). However, despite my great interest in the culture and time period, I have not read many fiction books set in Ancient Egypt. I have read *River God* by Wilbur Smith, which I really enjoyed and, of course, my beloved Anne Rice set the origins of her vampires in ancient Egypt, but my repertoire of ancient Egyptian historical fiction reads is severely lacking. And now, along comes this fantastic novel of Ancient Egypt, *Daughter of the Gods*, about the life of Hatshepsut, an historical figure I greatly admire.

As she did with her first novel, *The Secret History*, Thornton has once again created a heroine to root for. Although completely different from *The Secret History's* Theodora and her origins, Hatshepsut is still an endearing and inspiring character. In a time when the Great Royal Wife of the pharaoh is destined to live out her days in the Hall of Women, Hatshepsut seizes the opportunity to rule when misfortune befalls her pharaoh husband. She brought success and great temples to Egypt and yet her reign was obliterated from history. I guess the dominant male culture of ancient Egypt didn't want it to be known that it was once ruled by a great and powerful female pharaoh.

Thornton is an historical fiction author that really engages a person who is truly interested in history. As much as I know and have read on ancient Egypt, I did not know that the women were bare breasted even

when dressed. Very interesting. As I was reading *Daughter of the Gods*, I kept thinking to myself, "I really must read more in depth about ancient Egyptian culture." And so, this leads me to state something that I have said many times before. Great historical fiction leads us to history. It leads us to learn more, above and beyond, what's in the book we're reading. This is an accomplishment that any author should keep in their back pocket.

If you have not read Stephanie Thornton yet, I urge you to do so...sooner rather than later. She is a new and exciting voice to the historical fiction genre. I can't wait for her next one, which just happens to be *The Tiger Queens: The Women of Genghis Khan*, coming this November.

Audra (Unabridged Chick) says

I was just swept up by Stephanie Thornton's first novel, *The Secret History*, about Empress Theodora and as a result, was waiting impatiently for this book and her third novel (about the women in Genghis Khan's life!). Thornton has that wonderful knack for finding nearly forgotten women from history and giving their credulity-straining lives notice, dignity, and vibrancy.

In this book, she turns her attention to Hatshepsut, an Egyptian royal who ascended to Pharaoh, only to be almost completely erased from history after her reign. A prophecy warned her that while she would bring glory to Egypt, it would come at the cost of everyone she loved -- a warning Hatshepsut was determined to circumvent. She wanted glory, but she wanted love, too.

When it comes to drama and big emotions, Thornton doesn't hold back. By page 10 -- the end of the first chapter -- I was wiping away tears. The reign of peace that Hatshepsut brought really came at dramatic cost for her, and I was hanging on every page. Love, betrayal, friendship, motherhood, war, and artistic endeavors: this book has it all!

Her Hatshepsut is strong-willed, occasionally stubborn, clever and ambitious -- believable traits in a woman who would crown herself Pharaoh. While many of her personality quirks and preferences are wholly invented by Thornton, they rang true for me, and felt authentic to her heroine and the era she was from -- something I always appreciate in a historical novel!

As with her previous novel, Thornton makes the scandalous grounded and what could be tawdry or licentious touched with humane warmth. Hatshepsut is married to her half-brother and is to sire his children, and Thornton handles that element in a way that recognizes history without totally alienating modern readers.

The historical details were well integrated in the narrative; through context, the reader is able to understand some of the more alien aspects of life in Egypt in 1400ish BC, and there's no over-explaining or info-dumping to slow things down.

Readers who love splashy historical novels with royal intrigue will want this one; Thornton joins the host of authors who shine a light on dynasties and families that give the Tudors and Borgias a run for their money. Those who are obsessed with Egypt will also want this one, as well as fans of Stephanie Dray, Kate Quinn, and Michelle Moran. Another highly recommended read -- perfect for the beach!

Sophia says

Before I get into my review, I have to tattle on myself a little. Usually, I'm a blurb reader and that leads me to actually take up a book, but I was distracted, glanced at the cover- saw female ancient Egyptian and assumed. Yeah... I was prepared for Cleopatra and got a little surprise. Not Cleo, but Hatty. And this book suddenly became sooo much more interesting for me. Hatshepsut is one of my favorite historical figures. I was thrilled to death to read this one.

Alright, so this was Hatshepsut's story from her early years as pharaoh's daughter, to a pharaoh's wife (yeah, they do that brothers marrying sisters thing to keep it all in the family), and then a regent before finally, she go's for the crown and becomes pharaoh. Exciting life to be sure.

I loved how the author went about this story. She doesn't try to paint a romance or a tale of a woman's story based on her male relationships. The author focused on Hatshepsut, her fiery temper, and her drive towards more. Yet, there are more facets in play here. There are a blend of public and domestic scenes, of points in this woman's life where heartbreak touched her. She finds fulfillment in her achievements, but also as a mother and lover, and friend. There were so many wonderful layers to the story. Hatshepsut and the land of Egypt during the New Kingdom era came alive.

And even though this is a real life story, the author takes the facts and manages to slip in some extra intrigue at the court with a few very believable additions that could have really happened even if there are no records to show for it.

For those who follow Egyptian history closely, you'll know that there is great speculation about Hatshepsut's relationship with the boy she set aside until after she was gone and his later decision to remove her existence from Egyptian history. I actually take the author's point of view so I was well pleased with how she wrote this part of the story.

All in all, this was a great colorful and engaging piece- historical fiction at its best, I thought. I would definitely recommend this to those who enjoy historical fiction bios.

My thanks to Penguin-Random House for the opportunity to read this book in exchange for an honest review.

Tara Chevestt says

Too often, historical fiction novels about women who held a position of power focus on not what they did or accomplished for their kingdom/country, but who they slept with or how many lovers they had.

That's why I was pleasantly surprised by this book. Oh--Hatshepsut has a lover, of course, but while the romance is ongoing throughout the novel, the story also tells us about the things Hatshepsut did--went into battle against the Nubians, ordered executions, heard peasants' complaints, funded a three-year expedition to bring Egypt new wealth and broker more trade.

And all the while, her throne is threatened from here and there, and she must sacrifice much to ensure her country does not see civil war.

And she builds tombs and obelisks. Lots of them. To be frank, this was the only downside to the story for me--all the details about tombs and stuff. I'm afraid I don't have a strong interest in pyramids or architecture. That's just a personal thing. Frankly, if I were in her position, I'd be doing more for the people and less worried about putting a ton of wealth into a pyramid, but this was a very different culture and a very

superstitious one. The superstitions were interesting to me--how she wrapped a heart to ensure someone went to the "Field of Reeds" and all the bits about gods and goddesses were intriguing, especially when Hatshepsut has a little "incident" with what could be construed as an angry god.

I'm not done. Full review here: <http://www.bookbabe.blogspot.com/2014/...>

Denise says

4.0 out of 5 stars - "Egypt will prosper, but those closest to you shall find only anguish and ruin."

This fascinating historical fiction account of the life and reign of Hatshepsut circa 1400s Egypt is rich in detail and demonstrates the author's meticulous research into a woman who would be Pharaoh. Although liberties are certainly taken with descriptions of family strife and the romance between Hatshepsut and the commoner Senenmut, the tale is rife with interesting glimpses into the social customs, religion and habits of those who lived in that period of time in the rich Nile River valley Kingdom.

I loved reading about the clothes, the food, the jewelry -- it was interesting that Hatshepsut shaved her head to wear the required wig and even had to put on a fake beard when appearing before her subjects in official capacity at times. That many had teeth worn to nubs because of the constant presence of sand even in the bread. I could almost feel the press of the relentless sun and heat in the daytime hours, and the relative coolness of the nighttime with a slight breeze wafting off the river that both gave and took life. I could see the crocodiles lazing about the banks of the Nile and appreciate the gloriousness of the shining gold and solid granite in the monuments, obelisks, palaces and temples. This type of description absolutely hooks me and I always want more of it! I would have LOVED to see a map illustrating this place during the years that Hatshepsut and family ruled the Horus Throne.

What didn't enthrall me? The romance. The "plucky" Hatshepsut at times seemed to make completely stupid decisions and choices. The development, or lack thereof, of the secondary characters. The constant reference to the many, many gods and the various names and forms of them. I realize that the ancient Egyptians had a fixation on their gods and made sacrifices and attributed everything in their lives to the gods they worshiped, but it seemed sometimes redundant how much of the book was about pleasing the gods, signs from the gods, the afterlife, spirits, etc. I'm sure it's just my own personal reaction and that other readers might not find it as irritating.

I did enjoy the book and I'd recommend it to anyone interested in how a second daughter of Pharaoh Thutmose came to such an unprecedented level of power, to become Pharaoh herself, and to bring a great time of prosperity to both Upper and Lower Egypt. Once again, this book brought out the researcher in me as I try to separate fact from fiction.

Oh -- I LOVE the look of the cover art chosen for this book. I'm a sucker for realistic depictions of characters on the front of a book -- only wish that I would have seen the kohl and the henna as described in the novel instead of the way Hatshepsut is shown without any of that.

C.W. says

Novels set in ancient Egypt are rare, compared to other eras. Perhaps it's because of the daunting challenges presented by the research itself or the ultimately alien mindset of this incomparable civilization; what is certain is that the epoch boasts some of history's most iconic female rulers - Cleopatra, Nefertiti, Tye - and, in Stephanie Thornton's DAUGHTER OF THE GODS, the legendary pharaoh, Hatshepsut.

Born into the royal dynasty and destined to be the Great Royal Wife, bearer of the heir to the throne, Ms Thornton quickly establishes her heroine as a rebellious tomboy, beloved of her father, and ill suited to the stifling duties awaiting her. However, the accidental death of her sister as a result of one of Hatshepsut's hunting antics, thrusts her into an inner struggle between who she is and who she wants to be. An arranged marriage to her brother - incest among the royals of Egypt was common - leads her into stultifying confinement in the Hall of Women, amid a bickering harem, but she soon seizes her chance when her brother's untimely death makes her regent for his underage son. In a realm when few women have ever ruled from the Isis Throne, Hatshepsut will guide Egypt into an unparalleled era of glory, even as she herself faces crushing losses that force her to question her belief in her right to rule and the very will of the gods.

DAUGHTER OF THE GODS thrives with details of life in ancient Egypt, from gilded ceremonial sacrifices to opulent palace feasts, barge passages along the crocodile and hippo-riddled Nile, and the intrigues of courtiers who hold their fate in the afterlife in almost as much esteem as daily power. The often incomprehensible existence of a people ruled by a preoccupation with death is deftly handled with a light touch, while the passions of the pharaoh herself show us the flesh and blood woman behind the granite monoliths. Hatshepsut's long-time relationship with her adviser, the commoner Senenmut, is given ample space; historians are still debating the actual tenor of this liaison, but Thornton's account rings true. And it is needed, as Hatshepsut faces a series of challenges that would defeat anyone without a lover like Senenmut at their side to offer comfort and support.

At moments, the story craves more depth than it's given, but only for those rare readers well-versed in ancient Egyptian history. For the uninitiated or the historical fiction aficionado, DAUGHTER OF THE GODS offers a riveting account of one of Egypt's most singular women - a queen who ruled like a man and lived like a goddess.

Libbie Hawker (L.M. Ironside) says

This fast-paced, entertaining read pulls the reader along from an action-packed beginning through some surprising twists and turns as the early life and some key middle bits of Hatshepsut's reign are explored.

I had a rough time with the author's first historical novel, finding the dialogue and some of the narration to be too anachronistic for my preferences...and I was happy to find that this was not the case with Daughter of the Gods. While the voice was light and very accessible, I never had any problem feeling like I was firmly in the past. And there is plenty of historical detail here, with ample information about the fascinating religious and social customs of New Kingdom Egypt sprinkled throughout the story.

For the more hardcore devotees of Egyptian history, you'll find some proposed answers to all the big questions surrounding Hatshepsut's rule, and they mostly feel like authentic artifacts (pardon the pun) of Stephanie Thornton's plot choices. How did Hatshepsut come to the throne? What was her relationship with her brother/husband like? What was her relationship with other members of the royal entourage like? How did her most famous monuments come to be built? What was Neferure's fate? Senenmut's? And of course, the two biggies: was Senenmut her lover, and why did Thutmose III destroy so many of her monuments? All are explored here in a way that feels organic and plausible (within the bounds of fiction, obviously!)

I particularly liked the decision to make Hatshepsut and Thutmose II rather close and loving (in the beginning, at least.) That's an assumption that isn't often made, either in the unfortunately sparse Hatshepsut fiction that one can find, or in nonfiction writings about the famous woman Pharaoh. The choice added a humanizing dimension to the character of Thut and made for some heightened drama, too, when things started to go down the drain between them.

That does lead me to my biggest quibble with the book. (I know; I have to find something to quibble about with every review. I'm the worst.) Some parts of the book felt oddly rushed, with characters making sudden changes in temperament that just didn't feel as fully natural as I would have liked. Thut's big change was the first and most glaring to me. (view spoiler) But there were a few other too-quick turns of character that left me a little disoriented.

All in all, though, it was an enjoyable book, perfect for the summertime, blending the qualities of good historical fiction with the fun and pacing of a classic "beach read!"

Jenny Q says

Last year I read and loved Stephanie Thornton's debut novel, *The Secret History: A Novel of Empress Theodora*, so I couldn't wait to get my hands on her second novel, *Daughter of the Gods*, a novel about Egypt's first female pharaoh, Hatshepsut. One of only three surviving legitimate children of Pharaoh Tutmose, Hatshepsut is raised in a world of privilege and luxury, but it is also a dangerous world, where the whims of the capricious Egyptian gods decide the fate of the people and the success or failure of their rulers. After the tragic death of her beloved older sister, Hatshepsut is thrust into a role she never expected to be in, that of the Great Royal Wife of the next pharaoh, her brother, Thutmosis. With their father on his deathbed, the marriage must take place immediately to stave off any unrest or attempts at undermining the royal family's claim to the throne. Forced to give up her wild ways, her hunting expeditions, her chariot races, and her handsome young lover, Hatshepsut accepts the mantle of responsibility the gods have handed her and attempts to transform herself into the perfect wife and matriarch of the Egyptian dynasty.

But much as she loves her brother, being married to him is more difficult than she'd hoped. Thut is an ineffectual ruler, and Hatshepsut longs to wield the power her brother is so careless with. With subtle manipulation, and the help of Thut's most trusted adviser, the handsome commoner Senenmut, Hatshepsut slowly takes command over many of her husband's responsibilities, taking control of her own life and the future she hopes to have. But the arrival of a rival for her brother's affections and the threat she brings to the royal succession begin to unravel Hatshepsut's carefully laid plans. Frustrated and lonely, she seeks out a moment of comfort and affection with Senenmut, but that one moment of self-indulgence will cost her everything she holds dear, harden her heart, and set her on a path of determination to seize the throne of Egypt for herself.

And that's all I'm telling you! Hatshepsut's life is full of drama, twists and turns, triumphs and betrayals, and heartbreaking tragedies, and I'll not spoil any of it! Since following generations sought to remove evidence of a female on the throne of Egypt, presumably to prevent it from happening again, much of Hatshepsut's life story is lost. While not much is known about her personal life, most historians agree that she presided over a long period of peace, wealth, and prosperity in Egypt, successfully keeping rebellious kingdoms in check and taking Egypt's monumental architecture to new heights. I think Ms. Thornton has done a great job of piecing together known facts with plausible fictional scenarios to paint a portrait of what a young Hatshepsut might have been like. It was very easy to care about Hatshepsut and root for her dreams to come true as a younger woman, but as she aged and took over the reins of Egypt, I found her a little harder to relate to at times, or at

least I had a harder time agreeing with some of the decisions she made. But I certainly respected her utmost devotion to Egypt, often at the expense of her own happiness. And I was a little disappointed at the abruptness of Hatshepsut's exit from the story since she still had at least a dozen more years left in her reign, but I did really like the poignant final scene, and I thought it a fitting ending to this pioneering woman's moment in time.

As she did with Ancient Rome in *The Secret History*, Ms. Thornton has once again brought a long-lost world to life and created a treat for the senses! In *Daughter of the Gods*, Ancient Egypt comes to life in all its hot, dusty, vibrantly colored glory. The depictions of royal and everyday life, the palaces, temples, and monuments, the wildlife, the mighty Nile, the barges, the chariots, the war campaigns, the celebratory feasts, and even the quieter moments of reflection in exotic gardens--it all serves as a lush and inviting setting for a story of a powerful woman, beckoning the reader to get lost in its depths yet always warning those who revel in it that a current of danger is ever present, nothing is guaranteed, everything exists at the pleasure--or displeasure--of the gods, and all can be lost in the blink of an eye. Stephanie Thornton's novels are perfect for fans of authors like Kate Quinn, Stephanie Dray, and Michelle Moran, and this fan can't wait for her third novel to be released this fall, *The Tiger Queens: A Novel of Genghis Khan's Women*.

Reeda Booke says

After reading this author's debut novel last year, which I loved, I was really looking forward to this one as historical fiction based in ancient Egypt is one of my favorite genres.

It certainly did not disappoint! It was a completely believable and captivating tale of the female pharaoh, Hatshepsut. Extensive research and brilliant storytelling made this a complete joy to read and I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in Hatshepsut's story.

Sandi *~The Pirate Wench~* says

Re-read

Setting: 1400 BC Egypt

As the second daughter of the pharaoh, Hatshepsut has no responsibilities until her older sister dies in a horrific accident.

No longer now in obscurity, she ends up getting betrothed to her half brother Thut which ensures his claim to the kingdom.

Hatshepsut is to be the mother of the heir, but another of Thut's wives gives birth to a son.

When Thut dies, Hatshepsut then becomes regent to her 2 year old nephew.

Now Hatshepsut must devote her life to the country, and also put aside her passion for her adviser in order to lead armies, build temples and guide Egypt to greatness.

I haven't read any books on this historical unconventional woman, and I'm glad I started here on this one.

Not only does the author shine here in her passion for history, she also made it colourful and realistic and I felt like I was right there.

The imagery of the court, the land, it's people and the politics as well as the wars and her struggle for power was really intriguing.

A fascinating and inspiring tale of vulnerable woman of her time and the choices she had to make.

Ashley *Hufflepuff Kitten* says

Thoroughly enjoyed this. Several friends' reviews have pointed out issues with character flaws that I can't ignore and actually have to agree with, particularly in the climax -- I don't like guessing the true villain while the characters run amok without any clue of who it is, especially when they've proven themselves to be quite intelligent up to that point of the book. So I'll give this a rounded-up 4.5 stars.

Beautifully written and the biggest thing, *plausibly plotted*. Aside from those minor issues, everything made sense, and that's high praise for historical fiction. After all, isn't that the point of the genre? To fill in the gaps to the best of our abilities and suggest how the things we know might have come to be -- that's a writer's job, and Stephanie Thornton has fulfilled it once again with this excellent book.

Erin says

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Hatshepsut. Daughter of Thutmose I, wife of Thutmose II, fifth pharaoh of the Eighteenth dynasty, and the longest serving indigenous queen of Ancient Egypt. All things considered it's not hard to imagine what drew author Stephanie Thornton to this enigmatic ruler, nor what prompted her to fictionalize her story in Daughter of the Gods.

Now, I adored Thornton's *The Secret History*, but contrary to what you might think, that is not a blessing. I am not one of those who finds an author I enjoy and promptly gives a five star rating to every book they release. Quite opposite in fact, I shamelessly hold five star authors to a higher standard. Bottom line, they've impressed me once and I expect them to maintain that measure of excellence.

The obvious question here is did Thornton succeed? Did she give me a heroine who can stand beside Theodora? Someone who is equally compelling, but uniquely different? Someone with her own motivations, personality, strengths and weaknesses? Did Hatshepsut's Egypt come to life with a singular rhythm and flavor or was it only a facsimile of Theodora's Constantinople? Does Hatshepsut's love affair with Senenmut bear too much resemblance Theodora's relationship with Justinian or does it burn with a fire and passion of its own? These are the questions that plagued me going into this novel, but looking back, I can honestly say I've no complaints.

Hatshepsut was equated to a God while she walked the earth, but Thornton doesn't bother herself with that legacy. On the contrary, she strips it away, giving her audience a realistic interpretation of a woman whose ambition earned her prominence and prestige. Her characterization is at times jealous, guilt-ridden, stubborn, selfish and resentful, but from that she cultivates a fortitude that one cannot help but commend, a tenacious intensity that transcends print and sparks the imagination.

Thornton's deep appreciation for Hatshepsut's cultural heritage is evident in every aspect of the book. Meticulously researched the text is saturated with historic detail, but that said, Thornton never allows fact to overwhelm the narrative. Enhancing the text, she treats it like a garnish, creating depth and dimension through the complementary application of truth.

At this point I think it obvious how much I appreciate the time I spent reading *Daughter of the Gods*, but my favorite aspect of Thornton's work cannot be seen in this novel alone. Theodora, Hatshepsut, Borte, Alaqai, Fatima, Sorkhokhtani... these are women who were meant to ornament ancient courts, not direct them. Through fiction, Thornton is exploring history from the perspective of those who defied convention to make

it. As an author, she is highlighting women who bore the responsibility of leadership with courage and persistence rather than raw sexuality and that thesis is something I both applaud and deeply admire.

Freshly original, Daughter of the Gods is both genuine and authentic, alive with the culture of Ancient Egypt, enriched with vibrant emotion, and augmented with irresistible intrigue. In sum it is an addictively enticing fiction that is impossible to put down.

Minni Mouse says

3.5 stars for a solid story, albeit a bit of a depressing one toward the end.

THE GOOD

1) Hatshepsut was an intriguing historical figure, and I applaud the author for filling in the blanks of what we imagine her story and personality to be like.

2) Never quite knowing who the antagonist was going to end up being.

THE BAD

Nothing, really. Similar to her other work, *The Secret History: A Novel of Empress Theodora*, the writing was a bit bland and detached, which saved it from bias but also prevented the reader from identifying with the characters.

FINAL THOUGHTS

I'm always going to read books about Ancient Civilizations.
