



The Midsummer Captives

Lea Doué

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A sorcerer's fortress. A lost heir. A determined princess.

Princess Gwen, second in line to the throne of Ituria, has given up on happy endings. After a neighboring kingdom's heir stole her heart and then disappeared four years ago, she buried her heartache and vowed to serve her eleven sisters. Her most recent mission: to arrange a match with her sister Hazel and the lost heir's youngest brother.

But when her traveling party is ambushed, her flight from danger leads her into the path of a blindfolded man with a familiar smile. Imprisoned with him deep in the forest, Gwen and her fellow captives are at the mercy of a treacherous beauty on a mission of her own. Contending with her schemes—and a love potion gone awry—they must find a way past enchanted guardians, who are capable of crushing not only their bodies but also their dreams.

The Midsummer Captives, inspired by Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, is the second novel in The Firethorn Chronicles, a series drawn from fairy tales and other classic stories. Follow the sisters on their adventures in a land where sorcery is feared, women can rule, and dragons fly.

The Midsummer Captives Details

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From Reader Review The Midsummer Captives for online ebook

Julian Daventry says

I can't say if I liked this book better or worse than the first one. I really enjoyed Lily but Gwen is also such a great character. I love how Ms. Doue does such a wonderful job writing these Princesses. They are capable, brave, loving, and while they are well and able to climb trees and ride horses, they also style their hair and wear beautiful ball gowns. I absolutely love these sisters.

One thing I personally think about retellings that are in a series, is that sometimes they seem slightly forced. Like the first book is good and makes sense, but then the ones after it seem a little forced to fit the retelling. I didn't feel that way here. It felt like a natural progression of the story, the characters, and the world.

Gwen's story was delightful. I suspected I knew the ending, but I still wasn't 100% certain that's how it would go. It was suspenseful, funny, and full of adventure. Sissi was downright creepy, Hazel and Bay were entertaining, and the three brothers were...well, perhaps you'd best read the book.

Content: There was quite a good deal more kissing in this one. And I think it's slightly understandable, given the nature of this book, but I still found myself annoyed at all the kissing and touching and hugged that seemed to pop up on every other page. Also, Sissi is plain, horrid creepy. As in, killing dragonflies to tape the wings on her windows creepy. There's also a good deal of sorcery/magic in this series, which I don't mind quite as much since it's only the villains who practice it. It's actually very entertaining to read about these characters trying to defeat magic...without having an ounce of magic. That is beautifully unique (at least, I haven't read anything else like that myself yet).

So, final report:

Vivid storyworld, well-written characters, entertaining plot. A lot of kissing, some magic, and a creepy girl. I might find myself re-reading this book sometime, as it's not out of the question.

(Also, don't start reading this one right before bed, because you will find yourself reading past midnight.)

Elise Edmonds says

Really enjoyed this fantasy read with a flavour of A Midsummer Night's Dream. The capture of the princesses in the forest formed a great backdrop to Gwen working out her true feelings. And I LOVE all the different types of dragons - so much fun!

Claire Banschbach says

I literally finished book 1, bought this one, and read it in one sitting. The only reason I have different start and ending dates is because I stayed up waay to late. :)

This book focused on Gwen, sister number 2. It picks up only a few months after the events of book 1, and

Gwen and Hazel are on their way to visit Prince Holic, also from book 1 who was adorable. But they get waylaid in the forest and Gwen gets herself stuck in a ruined castle guarded by living stone dragons that prevent escape. Pretty much her only companion is the guy she thought died several years before.

I loved Gwen's character! She's "strong" without being overbearing, she's sensible, she likes to wear trousers and ride horses but is still very feminine. She gets mad at the crazy girl for stealing her boots. To be honest, I would do the exact same. :) Even when she has three guys declaring they're in love with her, she keeps calm-ish, tells them all they'll discuss it later, and focuses on trying to escape.

So the romance. She and the guy were so great together. Again, I loved how the author made them be friends first (even if they had both kind of crushed on each other in the past), companions who trusted each other and worked together to figure a way out, and basically didn't have any overdone romantic feelings/thoughts on either part. For. The. Win. I don't want my stories to be cluttered up with girls (or guys) who are basically just focusing on romantic feelings about the other person and not doing anything remotely useful. So this book is awesome because Gwen is a sensible, awesome soul who just needs to learn how to let herself be happy!

The other characters were great. Like I said, at one point Gwen had three guys declaring their love for her which made for some frustration and amusement. :P Not sure how I feel about one aspect of the ending, but it made things work out, so... I love the world this author constructed. All the tiny dragons are awesome! Like I want a little weaver dragon. And how the girls basically crocheted their way out.

Recommended for anyone who loved re-tellings, awesome female characters, and gripping plots!

Melody says

Well 2-1/2 Stars

The characters in this book are dumb as a box of rocks. The heroine worst of all. The plot was weak and in your face obvious.

Edric kept warning about how dangerous Sissi was but the only impressive thing she did was disguise herself as other people. No one was smart enough to figure it out. Gwen couldn't even figure it out when faced with her own doppelganger. She saw Eddy kissing the girl and instead of wondering where a girl who looked like her came from she ran off and threw a fit because he kissed someone else.

H.L. Burke says

I honestly felt this was better than the first book in the series. Getting away from the palace and all the other princesses up the focus and it was easier to pin down the story ... plus to me Gwen is a more interesting character than Lily, better motivation, her conflicts felt natural to me, just generally a stronger girl.

The story moves at a good clip and Sissi is dang creepy/weird. Honestly, she's the Lady Gaga of the fantasy fashion world and I was just sitting there waiting for her to show up wearing a meat dress ... which she didn't, but she came pretty dang close a couple of times.

There was one "shout at the characters for being stupid" moment but the character figured it out like two pages later and I was like, "Good, now I don't have to hate you."

I'm excited to see where the other princesses end up.

Hanna says

[I mean, how can Holic kiss Gwen if she doesn't exist to her? Can he feel her? Could he bump into her? (hide spoiler)]

Ashley Stangl says

Cute, mostly bland story. The characters had little personality (What little they did have was told rather than shown). For some reason I kept mixing up Hazel and Gwen--which shouldn't have happened, given that Gwen was the POV character. I was often annoyed with the characters, who seemed to take forever to figure out really obvious plot points. Sissi and Tharius were the most interesting and complex characters, but even they had blandly two-dimensional evil moments.

As with the first book, the dragons were the most interesting part. There were several exciting moments, but they were nestled among too many moments of bland romantic angst. The writing style gave so little description that it was often hard to visualize what was happening. This was going to be a 2 star book, but there were two creative events at the end of the story that bumped it up one more notch. The book was just good enough to tempt me to pick up the next one, just to see what happens with Tharius.

Serethiel says

4.5 stars

I loved it even more than book one. <333

Shantelle says

I really enjoyed this one too! A retelling of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Midsummer Captives* by Lea Doue continues the FIRETHORN CHRONICLES with intrigue and romance and danger and hope. I'm really excited to see what happens next!

Coralie says

Mmkay, so I think--despite my love of the 12 Dancing Princesses--I may have liked a lot of this sequel better than the first book. Perhaps I was more acclimated to the writing style and used to the strange world-building (or lack thereof)? Maybe it was the smaller cast or the survival setting? I'm not sure, but I had a much easier time reading Midsummer Captives.

I liked getting to know Gwen and I really liked Eddy. I liked the antagonist and I liked the predicament the characters found themselves in. There were several problem-solving spots, which I enjoyed. I am wholly unfamiliar with *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, so I have nothing to compare the inspiration to and cannot comment on that aspect of the story at all. However, I liked the plot. I enjoyed the plot of the first book, but this setting and the limited characters felt more intimate and, like I said, it was easier to follow. I knew some of the rules of the world by this point and the author did expand on the dragons somewhat, though not as much as I would have liked. There was virtually no expansion on the history of the kingdoms, but the plot didn't really call for it either. There were a few surprising characters who reprised their roles, including my favorite character from book one there at the end. As well, there were quite a few new characters to get to know. I think my favorite part of the character aspect was getting into Gwen's head and learning her motives and personality. As for the setting, it was in the middle of nowhere with a bit of a magic castle, so how could I not enjoy that?! The plot was well-paced until the end. I felt it rushed to the end a bit, which kind of set me off kilter, but other than that it was engaging and a little mysterious. Oh! And that end. Okay, minor (view spoiler). Kay, had to get that out of my system. Let's just say, I was disappointed with the "resolution" to that minor subplot. I love my bro/sis relationships. Anyone who knows me knows that and that just...hurt. I'm sort of holding out for a better fix in the third book, but don't have high hopes...

Again, no language, mild violence and magic, no explicit romance—though quite a bit of talk about sorting through ones feelings. All pretty G-rated for the most part.

Katy says

I loved the first book in this series and have had this one in my TBR list for a while. I really liked Gwen as a character, and the section where she first comes to the fortress after having been trapped by the enchanted stone dragons is the best part. Once the others join the mix, it becomes confusing as to who is doing what and at times even who is speaking. Since it's loosely based on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, that might have been the point, but that section was more difficult to read. The weaver dragons (and all the small dragons, actually), the rescues from the rising water and the fire, the escape attempts, and the creepy antagonists are well done, but I was disappointed in the ending, which felt rushed and didn't end with a Gwen-worthy "punch." I do recommend it to fans of the series and look forward to reading about the other sisters.

Sarah says

So, not going to lie, I seriously thought this was going to be a *Beauty and the Beast* retelling when they got to the castle. And it was not. And I was mildly disappointed. However, reading other reviews tells me that this is actually a retelling of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and I just didn't pick up on it because I haven't read/listened to that particular play in years. So. That's cool, then.

In some respects, I liked this book better than the first, and in some respects I liked it less, so it all comes out even in the end, I suppose. I liked Sissi as a villain better than I liked Thurian, even if she is a bit of an idiot. And I liked Gwen, even if I did occasionally get fed up with her being too scared to admit she's in love. (That said, she did have three guys in love with her at one point, which is terribly awkward, so I can't blame her too much.) And I love the weaver dragons; they sound adorable and I want one. (I also want dragon-wing leather accessories and a weaver-dragon-silk outfit. Actually, no, I want multiple outfits of weaver-dragon-silk. Please. Apparently it doesn't tear, and I need that in my life.) Anyway. I liked Gwen with her guy, and

Hazel and her guy were already one of my favorite couples from the last book, so overall, I am quite pleased.

Also, at the end . . . Thurian. What are you doing? Explain please? I need another book!

J.M. Stengl says

Seriously, I enjoyed this story even more than book 1. It is beautifully written, with a really interesting setting. Gwen is a great little heroine, full of courage and kindness, and she is thoroughly confused not only by some very strange circumstances but by having ALL THREE brothers believe themselves in love with her, including the man her beloved sister loves. Is it real for any of them or only the effect of a love potion? Is there any cure?

I loved seeing Tharius again, and the dynamic between sisters, brothers, and other characters in this book is so much fun! The weaver dragons are great, and those stone dragons were really creepy. But Sissy steals the show when it comes to villains. Heh. She is bizarre! And the romantic resolutions are sweet and satisfying. I'm rather hoping to see both Theo and Tharius again in future books.

Loved it, and I recommend it. This series is FUN!

C.M. says

What was supposed to be a short trip to a neighboring country turns horribly wrong when Princesses Gwen and Hazel are attacked. Their attempts to escape only end them up in an enchanted castle – with no way out. Now they must find a possibly nonexistent route of escape past the stone dragons, with the assistance of one longtime resident of the castle. Add in mis-aimed love potions and a few little dragons into the mix, and you have a recipe for disaster.

I was very eager to read this one after thoroughly enjoying Firethorn Crown. I'm not exactly certain how much later this book takes place after book 1. The book was not too clear on that detail and I've long since forgotten the ages of the characters and other little details of Firethorn Crown. Midsummer Captives is loosely based off of A Midsummer Night's Dream, though since I have never read that story, I really can't say how much this book is or is not similar to it.

Gwen was a great main character, honest and loyal. She knows what she wants and isn't afraid to fight for it, or anyone she cares about.

And contrary to how the book description makes things sound, the identity of the blindfolded man and his reasons for wearing it are quickly discovered. I was a bit surprised by that, but not in a bad way.

Find the rest of this review and ratings here on my blog: <https://embersreviews.wordpress.com/2...>

Kristen Kooistra says

Another great addition to the Firethorn Chronicles.

This time the focus is on sisters 2 and 3(Gwen and Hazel) as they travel to Osha with Holic and his older brother Theo.

I liked how this story zoomed in on just a handful of characters. It was easy to get a good feel for all of them and since there are 12 princesses, having just 2 be the center of attention allowed for more time to learn about them.

When their traveling party is attacked by a stone dragon, Gwen is separated from the rest and after a fall from her horse, wakes up in the arms of a "wild man." Of course, he's not really wild, just poorly dressed and blindfolded with crazy hair and beard.

He leads her to a crumbling castle deep in the woods where some rooms have been restored thanks to a sorceror. The sorceror is long gone, but he left behind the creepy woman-child, Sissi, who is an unpredictable source of danger.

Slowly the wild man(Eddy) unravels how he came to be there, what has happened since then, and that he and anyone else driven into the circle guarded by not one, but countless stone dragons, is trapped.

The thing is, Gwen has no idea if she's the only one who got driven into the circle or if her sister and friends are wandering somewhere in the woods. Together, she and Eddy try to search(not even knowing if there's something to be found) for anyone lost, while avoiding Sissi, and running into an old acquaintance.

Besides being a fun adventure that keeps you guessing as to what'll happen and how they'll escape, there's a lot of threads woven in the story that leave room to build on in the future. I'm ridiculously interested in "T" and I've got a secret wish for reformation and some hope of love(Neylan?) in his future.
