



Sons of Thunder

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Sophie Frangos is torn between the love of two men and the promise that binds them all together. Markos Stavros loves Sophie from afar while battling his thirst for vengeance and his hunger for honor. Dino, his quiet and intelligent brother, simply wants to forget the horror that drove them from their Greek island home to start a new life in America. One of these "sons of thunder" offers a future she longs for, the other—the past she lost. From the sultry Chicago jazz clubs of the roaring twenties to the World War II battlefields of Europe to a final showdown in a Greek island village, they'll discover betrayal, sacrifice and finally redemption. Most of all, when Sophie is forced to make her choice, she'll learn that God honors the promises made by the Sons of Thunder.

Sons of Thunder Details

Date : Published February 1st 2010 by Summerside Press (first published 2010)

ISBN : 9781935416678

Author : Susan May Warren

Format : Paperback 367 pages

Genre : Christian Fiction, Historical, Historical Fiction, Romance, Christian, Fiction

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Melinda says

Sons of Thunder by Susan May Warren

As much as I really tried to like this book, I felt lost amidst the *deja vu* of the movie *Pearl Harbor*.

Markos and Dino Stavros are forced to flee their home in Greece when their older brother's wedding ends with multiple deaths including their brother and father. They leave for America with Sofia and her grandfather. Nothing seems to go well for them. Sofia's grandfather dies before they reach NY so she remains with the Stavros brothers. Circumstances separate them in Chicago. Sofia and Dino end up in Minneapolis where December 7, 1941 eventually reunites Sofia and Dino. Again circumstances separate Sofia and Dino. All three spend a few years drifting without sight of each other. The brothers find each other for a brief flash of time before they again are separated. Eventually Markos and Sofia return to Greece as WWII rages around them.

This story is a tale of the consequences of our decisions and how we take responsibility or allow the guilt to dictate our future decisions. The setting in Greece is phenomenal and I wanted to be there with the sun caressing the waves of the blue ocean. As the story moved to the streets of Chicago, I was transported to that time with flapper dresses and Tommy guns. The story ends in Greece as WWII changes the landscape of so many Nazi inhabited countries.

Unfortunately, I couldn't get swept away enough in *Sons of Thunder* to separate it from *Pearl Harbor*. The stories are too similar. Glaringly is the fact that *Pearl Harbor*, HI was attacked in this book. Even the twist of a third love interest for Sofia couldn't distract from knowing it was Ben Affleck and Josh Hartnett fighting over Kate Beckinsale. *Sons of Thunder* has more characterization and back story, but still the similarities were too multiple and it weakened *Sons of Thunder* for me.

As Laurie says in *Little Women* "my compositions are only a mediocre copy of another man's genius." *Pearl Harbor* is the mediocre one if comparing these two stories, however *Pearl Harbor* is the medium with more punch. I was waiting for Faith Hill to begin singing as I reached the end of the book. *Pearl Harbor* also gave brilliant visuals. While *Sons of Thunder* never visited *Pearl Harbor* for a setting, it didn't distinguish itself enough to KO *Pearl Harbor* and take the title.

Mandy J. Hoffman says

BOOK RECAP:

Sophie Frangos is torn between the love of two men and the promise that binds them all together. Markos Stavros loves Sophie from afar while battling his thirst for vengeance and his hunger for honor. Dino, his quiet and intelligent brother, simply wants to forget the horror that drove them from their Greek island home to start a new life in America. One of these sons of thunder offers a future she longs for, the other the past she lost. From the sultry Chicago jazz clubs of the roaring twenties to the World War II battlefields of Europe to a final showdown in a Greek island village, they'll discover betrayal, sacrifice and finally

redemption. Most of all, when Sophie is forced to make her choice, she'll learn that God honors the promises made by the Sons of Thunder.

Sons of Thunder launches the new Romantic Suspense line for Summerside Press - it will be available to purchase in Wal-mart mid-January. Also - its uniquely written - its an epic suspense story written as three novellas - 3 points of view, 3 settings.

MY THOUGHTS:

I enjoyed the lesser known history that was woven into the plot of this fiction book. It gave a fascinating view of life back then in ways that we normally do not think about. I also enjoyed the take of the book being written like 3 novellas. It added depth to the characters and thickness to the plot which makes the book a longer and more enjoyable read. Especially for those who can breeze through a book in just a few hours - it makes you feel you got your money's worth! However, while it is a lengthy book, the storyline moves so fast that it is still easy to read as you become sucked into the plot.

Susan May Warren is a gifted writer and has taken three settings with little in common (Chicago's clubs, WWII battlefields, and the Island of Greece) and created a romantic story filled with drama and suspense.

However, despite the attention capturing storyline, I recommend discernment in reading this book because of the shallow presentation of the Gospel and due to some of the content and situations addressed in this book, namely the Chicago club scenes. I would not suggest this book for teen girls.

I have enjoyed several other great books by Susan May Warren, and recommend the Team Hope Series if you like suspense.

MEET THE AUTHOR:

Susan May Warren is the award-winning author of seventeen novels and novellas with Tyndale, Steeple Hill and Barbour Publishing. Her first book, Happily Ever After won the American Fiction Christian Writers Book of the Year in 2003, and was a 2003 Christy Award finalist. In Sheep's Clothing, a thriller set in Russia, was a 2006 Christy Award finalist and won the 2006 Inspirational Reader's Choice award. A former missionary to Russia, Susan May Warren now writes Suspense/Romance and Chick Lit full time from her home in northern Minnesota.

Learn more about Susan here: www.susanmaywarren.com

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This review copy was provided courtesy of LitFuse Publicity.

Beth says

Forgot that I got this one as a Kindle freebie!

Victoria Bylin says

Highly recommended for readers interested in unique settings. The story takes place in pre-World War II Greece and Chicago, and it wraps up in Greece during WWII. Writing style is poetic. Story is grittier than a lot of inspirations. I enjoyed it.

Ruth says

Brothers Markos and Dino Stavros lived relatively idyllic lives as fishermen on the Greek island of Zante in the 1920s. Markos, the older of the two, quietly loved the beautiful Sofia Frangos, who worked in his family's taverna, and dreamed of a future with her. Those hopes were destroyed on the fateful night the Stavros patriarch and oldest son were murdered, and Markos himself was involved in the bloodshed when he killed one of their attackers. Trying to escape the past, Markos, Dino, and Sofia flee to America to start their lives anew, but instead of the sanctuary they'd hoped for, their "fresh start" turns into a crucible that will test their character and threaten to destroy the promises binding them together. Epic in every sense of the word, Sons of Thunder follows Markos, Dino, and Sofia from the gang-ridden streets of 1920s Chicago to the war-torn battlefields of Europe. Gritty and heart-rending, these three passionate individuals are broken and battered by the turbulence of the times they live in, only to discover the sweet promise of deliverance and redemption found in surrender.

I absolutely love it when I read a book and the journey within those pages meet me right where I'm at in my faith walk. Markos, Dino, and Sophia are three very different personalities, bound together by mutually shared tragedy and hardship. Despite the wildly varied paths their lives take, each one of them needs to learn what deliverance looks like in their lives – not something that can be forced or earned or saves them from trouble, but a precious gift that teaches them the true source of strength and deliverance is found in reliance on a never-changing God and His promises. This is probably Warren's grittiest, emotionally raw, real offering to date. The pain these characters endure and their joy at discovering hope and redemption brought me to tears on more than one occasion. Just when I think it's not possible for a favorite author to get any better, Warren surpasses herself with Sons of Thunder. This isn't a preachy novel at all – this is faith and hope finding individuals in their darkest hour, changing their lives forever. It's one of the best examples of seeing faith lived out in the pages of a novel that I've ever come across – spiritual truths are wrapped in compelling, unforgettable storytelling.

Since Susan May Warren is one of my all-time favorite authors, and World War II is the historic time period I love to study the most, this Brothers in Arms series is a dream come true. Sons of Thunder took a bit longer for me to really get into than other Warren novels, but once I found the rhythm of the story it grabbed my heart and refused to let go until the final pages. The novel is divided into thirds, the first section told from the point of view of Markos, then Dino, and finally Sofia. Since the book is basically three novellas strung together by common experience, the narrative can occasionally feel a bit choppy. That is most likely the reason this novel didn't "grab" me until towards the end of Markos's section of the story. There's so much action and emotional highs and lows packed within the pages of this novel, I would've been thrilled to see it as a trilogy. Warren presents a compelling, satisfying, life-changing story that left me wishing it would never end. With superb pacing, characters so real they'll break your heart, and a healthy dose of suspense set against the backdrop of world war, Sons of Thunder is a story to savor, the pages saturated with hope. I can't wait to read Warren's next installment in the series!

Amy says

wheeee!!! girly epic WW2 romance. So sue me if I like this stuff.

Amber Stokes says

It's been a while since a book has had me so enthralled! This is one of those books that once started, cannot be put down! I was touched by the author's note at the beginning, and I really think she did a great job of showing God's deliverance of the three main characters. The story wraps up beautifully, and the book is written poignantly.

Action keeps the story moving constantly, and there were times when I had a really hard time setting the book aside to go do other things! And the romantic elements—wow! Powerful, thrilling, and heartbreakingly, the romance kept me turning those pages.

This is an epic story that truly draws the reader in and stands as a reminder that God loves us enough to offer second chances and redeem us. While this could be intense for some readers—with deaths and strong romantic elements—I think they are handled well and contribute to the overall theme of our need for deliverance. I highly recommend this book!

Andrea Christenson says

I first read Susan May Warren's Sons of Thunder while relaxing on a beach in Mexico and celebrating my 10th wedding anniversary. Needless to say, I was pretty excited to hear that the book was being re-released, even though my hubby wouldn't take me back to the same spot to read it again.

Markos and Dino just want to do the right thing. They want to be men of honor. When unfortunate events at their brother's wedding start to undo their careful plans, they must flee from their beautiful Greek island to America. They travel with the beautiful Sofia and end up in Chicago at the height of prohibition. While in America, they must re-learn what it means to do the right thing, what it means to be men of honor. Will their faith in God carry them through?

The first in the Brothers in Arms series, Sons of Thunder does not disappoint, even when reading it in my own living room instead of on a beach chair by the sea. I once again enjoyed the raw, realness of the people in this story. They had hard choices to make, and they didn't always make the right ones. A good read, especially if you, like me, enjoy reading about Greece (the food! Swoon!), gangsters in Chicago, or WWII.

Fiction Aficionado says

Drama, pathos, love, sacrifice, and a winding, suspense-filled road to redemption—I was hooked from the first page to the last! This story is definitely on the edgy side of Christian fiction, and it involves its fair share

of sorrow, but if you're after a story that will take you somewhere different and hold you in its grip the whole way, then this is your ticket.

Susan May Warren has a wonderful ability to bring a setting to life, and I love that she's turned that talent to such diverse places as 1920s Chicago and a Greek island village. It's not just the sights and sounds; she captures the ambiance of each setting and embeds it in every line of the story, transporting you seamlessly to another time and place.

She also doesn't hesitate to put her characters in difficult situations, and that is the case with all three of these main characters, so don't expect an easy ride! Sofia's story was particularly heart-wrenching for me. Each of these characters must reach the end of themselves before they surrender to God, but Sofia goes from being an innocent young girl to a strong, but broken woman who has done what she needed to do to survive.

But through all the mistakes, they each learn that God is the God of second chances—not because we deserve it, but because it's who He is. He doesn't deliver us from trouble, but through trouble. *"We have to open our angry, stubborn fists and let it go. That's when we find our deliverance."*

This was authentic and riveting storytelling. I'm already a fan of Susan May Warren's contemporary books, but now I'll be hunting down the rest of her historical ones as well!

I received a copy of this novel from the author. This has not influenced the content of my review, which is my honest and unbiased opinion.

Ronna says

Even though I am not Christian nor am I a religious person, I somehow keep finding my way to Christian Fiction books because of the historical element many possess. And you know what? The ones I have read have been pretty good and this one is no exception. This is the story of two brothers, Markos and Dino, who are forced to leave their Greek island home after a tragedy and run to America. They travel to America with a woman, Sofia, who is also leaving the island for her own reasons and who it happens Markos is in love with. Ms. Warren's story captivated me from the moment we were introduced to the picturesque Greek Island of Zante, to the trip across the ocean to land in Ellis Island, to the Al Capone/Gangster era of Chicago, to the chill of a 40's era Minneapolis holiday season still reeling from the attack on Pearl Harbor, to the front lines of Omaha Beach and back to a Nazi-infiltrated Zante. I loved the individuality and strength of each of the main characters, and was completely invested in what happened to them. They all had secrets, secrets that were always near being uncovered and kept us on our seat waiting to see what would happen. The love triangle was well done, and the ending was appropriate. While the supporting characters and scenery took at back seat to the main stars and story, they were extremely well-written and added a necessary depth to the story. At times this book brought me back to old favorites of mine from the same era and similar locale, Captain Corelli's Mandolin by Louis de Bernières and The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows. If you liked those books, you will definitely like this book as well. With regard to the religious element, it is definitely in there. However, to me it was more about hope and faith than preaching, and it didn't bother me at all. Overall, a great read and a worthwhile read for fans of historic romance.

Michelle says

Incredibly romantic, tragically beautiful, heart-wrenching, and deeply moving, Sons of Thunder swept me away. This first novel in Susan's new series pulls you into each of the characters' lives in a powerful way. The passion, the heartache, the longing for love and acceptance. It's all in this story as well as the struggle to survive, the yearning for identity, the desire for someone Who will love you and always be there for you. This passionate tale of love and betrayal brilliantly portrays how an abiding faith in God is passed on by example and illustrated through an unwavering spiritual connection to the One Who is faithful and true. It also shows how God knows our greatest need and often allows us to go through the fire to bring us to where He wants us to be. Our trials cause us to grow up and live for others and not just ourselves.

There were so many incredible lessons to be gleaned within the pages of this powerful story that I could go on and on. The bottom line is that this was, in my opinion, Susan May Warren's best novel yet because she captivated me and made me care about every character in this story in a way that rarely happens when I'm reading. I've heard it said that the best stories are ones where the author imagines the worst thing that could happen to their character in every scene, then makes that very thing happen. Susan does a perfect job at building tension and providing a realistic plot that moved me to tears several times. And talk about edgy. Wow! But so tastefully done. These characters were so real to me and I learned a lot from them. Can you tell I loved this book? Sons of Thunder is making my top fiction list for 2010.

Carman says

Excellent! Filled with suspense, intrigue, and real characters. I loved this book. The writing was superb and the plot will draw you in from page one. Sofia is dealing with problems that many women face today. Feeling worthless, unloved, and alone. She is human and makes mistakes, but who doesn't? Dino and Markos are great characters. There is real growing up that takes place in this book; physically, emotionally, and spiritually. This is a book that you don't want to pass up. Move this to the very top of your TBR pile!!

Renee says

Yet another wonderful WWII novel!! I would DEFINITELY classify this one as "edgy" inspirational, with the ganster violence, underground clubs, and other subject matter. This is NOT for the younger Christian fiction reader! One of the best books I've read this year.

Full review in March for the tour with Litfuse publicity group!

Melanie says

Sons of Thunder is the first book in the Brothers in Arms series. The story takes place over a lot of years and you see the roaring twenties, as well as WW2. This book had my emotions on a roller-coaster and I almost didn't want to finish it (because I was weary of what was going to happen next)...but I couldn't put the book down. ;)

The story is not an easy one to read and does have some content I wasn't a fan of. I would definitely say it is edgy Christian fiction, as it had a great redemption story, but because of the premarital sex (no details) I only recommend it to mature readers.

The romance was crazy. I wasn't sure how things would go and there were so many ups and downs in the story. I loved reading it and it had a satisfying ending.

All in all, I loved Sons of Thunder. I recommend it to fans of this genre, as long as you don't mind some edgy elements.

I received a complimentary eBook copy of this book for my honest review. As always, all thoughts and opinions expressed are my own.

Haley Mathiot says

I loved the concept of Sons of Thunder. It had great potential and I've seen tons of five-star reviews for it. Sadly it didn't meet my expectations.

I had a hard time reading it for a few reasons. One was the writing. It had a sort of funny style. It was as if short dramatic phrases were placed at the end of a paragraph, but the phrases were not dramatic in any way, nor were they necessary. It made the whole thing feel awkward. It was also hard to follow and I got confused a lot.

The second was the romance. I immediately saw and understood how Markos looked at Sofia. But their relationship jumped around from courteous to in-love to friends to not-talking, and I couldn't understand where they actually stood or how they saw each other. It was like a whole first chunk of their relationship was missing from the book. There was no connection to the characters.

Third, I didn't like the Chicago club stuff at all. It turned me off right away.

As I mentioned above I didn't finish Sons of Thunder. There was nothing compelling me to continue, there wasn't any plot, and the characters were beginning to aggravate me and I didn't connect with them. I skipped to the very last page just to see what happened, and was not surprised to see that exactly what I thought would happen, did happen.

I was very disappointed by Sons of Thunder, especially considering all the five star reviews on Goodreads and Amazon. I really wish I had loved it, but I must share my 100% honest opinion. Please know that I and the few other readers who didn't like it are the minority by a landslide. I hope you'll consider other reviews before you make a decision.
