



## The Marsh King's Daughter

*Karen Dionne*

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**The Marsh King's Daughter** Karen Dionne  
THE INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER

“Brilliant....About as good as a thriller can be.”—The New York Times Book Review

“[A] nail-biter perfect for Room fans.”—Cosmopolitan

“Sensationally good psychological suspense.”—Lee Child

Praised by Karin Slaughter and Megan Abbott, *The Marsh King's Daughter* is the mesmerizing tale of a woman who must risk everything to hunt down the dangerous man who shaped her past and threatens to steal her future: her father.

Helena Pelletier has a loving husband, two beautiful daughters, and a business that fills her days. But she also has a secret: she is the product of an abduction. Her mother was kidnapped as a teenager by her father and kept in a remote cabin in the marshlands of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Helena, born two years after the abduction, loved her home in nature, and despite her father's sometimes brutal behavior, she loved him, too...until she learned precisely how savage he could be.

More than twenty years later, she has buried her past so soundly that even her husband doesn't know the truth. But now her father has killed two guards, escaped from prison, and disappeared into the marsh. The police begin a manhunt, but Helena knows they don't stand a chance. Knows that only one person has the skills to find the survivalist the world calls the Marsh King—because only one person was ever trained by him: his daughter.

## The Marsh King's Daughter Details

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## **From Reader Review The Marsh King's Daughter for online ebook**

### **Norma \* Traveling Sister says**

Wow! Well that was one heck of a good read!

THE MARSH KING'S DAUGHTER by KAREN DIONNE is an extremely gripping fast-paced suspenseful psychological thriller that had me totally engaged, entertained, and interested throughout this whole book. I was flipping those pages as fast as I could in anticipation and fascination finishing this book in less than 24-hrs. I could not put this book down!

KAREN DIONNE delivers an intense, atmospheric, and an angst driven read here with well-developed characters that is extremely well-written with a lot of detail. Just a warning that there is also a very graphic hunting scene that some readers might find disturbing.

THE MARSH KING'S DAUGHTER is told in our main characters, Helena's perspective alternating between the past and the present. When we first meet Helena we learn that she is happily married with two little girls and then she gets news that her convicted father has escaped from prison and then the action begins with a heart-stopping cat and mouse game of daughter against father.

From Helena's story in the past we learn all about her childhood of being raised in captivity where she is actually oblivious to the fact that her and her Mother are being held captive by her father. The way that Helena lived and survived while growing up in the marsh was actually quite amazing and I thoroughly enjoyed her story. Her story from the past and present were both equally compelling to me.

Although, I wouldn't say that this novel was all that suspenseful for me it was the pacing, setting, writing, and the characters that I found so compelling.

To sum it all up it was a riveting, enjoyable, suspenseful, fast-paced, quick and easy read with a satisfying ending. Highly recommend! This book is definitely going into my favourite reads list for 2017!

All of Brenda and my reviews can be found on our Sister Blog:  
<https://www.twogirlslostinacouleeread...>

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### **Larry H says**

I'd rate this 4.5 stars.

Helena and her parents lived an isolated life in a cabin on marshland in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. They had no electricity, no creature comforts, but Helena learned so much from her father—how to hunt; how to shoot; how to kill, dress, and cook an animal; how to appreciate nature and the outdoors.

She never understood why her mother always seemed so afraid of her father, although she knew he hurt her from time to time, and while he punished Helena and sometimes taught her very painful lessons, she still idolized him, and wanted to be just like him.

When she was 12 she finds out that her father kidnapped her mother when she was a teenager, and has kept her captive for 14 years. Helena was the product of this abduction. Although she is still too young to fully grasp the implications of this discovery, and is torn between still wanting to stay with him, and escaping a man she knows has the potential to be savagely violent.

"Most of the time when I look back at the way I was raised, I'm able to view things fairly objectively. Yes, I was the daughter of a kidnapped girl and her captor. For twelve years, I lived without seeing or speaking to another human being other than my parents. Put like that, it sounds pretty grim. But that was the hand I was dealt, and I needed to call a spade a spade if I was ever going to move forward..."

Years later, Helena's past is a secret from everyone, and in many ways, she is miles away from the girl she was when she was 12. She has a loving husband, two young daughters, and a business making artisan jams and jellies from the fruit that grows near her Upper Peninsula home. At times the niceties of social convention she learned late in life chafe her, and she must escape to the solitude and nature she cherished so much as a child. But despite her odd idiosyncrasies, her husband has no idea of her lineage.

And then, some 20 years after her escape from the marsh, she hears on the news that a prisoner has escaped from his maximum security confinement, killing two guards, and is headed toward the marshland. Her father. Suddenly Helena's life is wide open, much to her husband's surprise, and she realizes that her father is headed her way. She must do what her father trained her all those years ago: find him and capture him, before he harms others, before he destroys her family and the life she has made.

"The truth is, sometime between the officers' first question and when the door closed behind them, I realized that if anyone is going to catch my father and return him to prison, it's me. No one is my father's equal when it comes to navigating the wilderness, but I'm close. I lived with him for twelve years. He trained me, taught me everything he knows. I know how he thinks. What he'll do. Where he'll go."

In *The Marsh King's Daughter*, Karen Dionne has created a tense, emotional narrative, juxtaposing the story of a girl raised by a father she idolizes but doesn't understand, in an environment she loves but has no clue about the real reason they live there, and the story of a woman who has buried her past and tried, fitfully, to start anew, even though you can never truly lose who you are. Helena's past and present unfurl, and you understand what has brought her to this moment, but you don't really know how she'll react, when she's never truly felt comfortable anywhere other than the marsh.

I thought this was a really terrific read, and it's one of those books that will make a fantastic movie. I was able to visualize Helena's search for her father, the warring feelings inside her hoping she'll find him and hoping he'll have left her behind once and for all. Dionne is a great storyteller, and even though the plot may be a little predictable, you are pulled in from the beginning and don't want to put the book down until you see how everything unfolds.

A few caveats, however. For a book full of tension, I felt it dragged on a tiny bit too long—I wanted to know everything about her childhood on the marsh and how she got to present day, but I also wanted the confrontation between daughter and father to come quicker than it did, although the payoff is worth it. The book does have some graphic violence (towards men and women, and some towards a child), some graphic descriptions of hunting and butchering animals, and a little bit of animal cruelty, so be forewarned. One or a combination of these may be a deal breaker for some.

I hesitate using the term "beach read," but *The Marsh King's Daughter* really feels like one, full of suspense, action, and emotion. It definitely helps put your own life problem and your own relationship with

your parents in perspective, because I certainly hope the fictional life Dionne created for her far outweighs the complications of yours!!

See all of my reviews at <http://itseithersadnessoreuphoria.blogspot.com>....

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### **Dem says**

**I really think that 2017 is fast becoming the year of the Thrillers** and the The Marsh King's Daughter is without doubt a smart well thought out and entertaining read and one that I can see becoming a big hit over the summer.

When I read the premise of this Novel it really caught my attention and I couldn't wait to get my hands on it.....

*'I was born two years into my mother's captivity. She was three weeks shy of seventeen. If I had known then what I do now, things would have been a lot different. I wouldn't have adored my father.'*

*When notorious child abductor - known as the Marsh King - escapes from a maximum security prison, Helena immediately suspects that she and her two young daughters are in danger.*

The book alternates skillfully between Helena's past and present and the reader learns about Helen and her life. Characters are well drawn and the plot is well thought out and chilling in places.

I was a little afraid going into this one that it might be very graphic and while I did find a few of the hunting scenes quite tough reading, I understand the authors need to write these scenes as part of the bigger picture and they can be easily skimmed over if the reader finds them too much.

A really well written novel, chilling, suspenseful, fresh and certainly one I will be recommending to my friends to pack for holidays this summer.

*My thanks to Net Galley for the chance to read an advance copy in return for an honest review*

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### **Lindsay - Traveling Sister says**

5 stars! Wow - I'm still trying to catch my breath and slow my racing heart after finishing this fantastic book.

This book was SOOOOO GOOD! It was a fast paced, heart pounding, edge-of-my-seat, nail biting, suspenseful thriller. I was completely engrossed in the story from page one and addicted to finding out what would happen next - the intensity did not end until I hit the very last page. The story is so well-written and the characters are extremely well-developed – I was completely engaged and consumed in this riveting story.

I loved the main character, Helena, and connected with her right away. She was born into captivity and lived in isolation with her kidnapped mother and notorious child abductor father until the age of 12 when she and her mother escaped. Her story is one I will not forget.

I highly, highly recommend this book! It is going on my Favourites list! I feel terrible for whichever book I read next because it will be next to impossible to compare to the intensity and addictiveness of this amazing novel....

**Arah-Lynda says**

This book and I have a history. I first saw it some time ago on NetGalley and requested it immediately. Sadly I was denied but not deterred. I kept looking, hoping for a publisher that would favour me. So that didn't happen and then one day I saw it on the start reading shelf and snagged it in a heartbeat.

And then I sat down at last to read it and discovered to my horror that it was only a sampler.. Talk about !@#\$%^& messing with me.

Yes there is history and it is not all sunshine and lollipops.

Who cares. This story had my attention from the first word and it never let go.

*I was born two years into my Mother's captivity. She was three weeks shy of seventeen. If I had known then, what I do now, things would have been a lot different. I wouldn't have adored my Father.*

Helena grew up in the marsh land of the upper peninsula of Michigan. Deep in the marsh land where she had no contact with anyone for years other than her Father and her Mother. Little did Helena know that her Father had abducted her 14 year old Mother and held her captive lo these many years.

Flash forward and Helena has escaped the marsh, is married and has two girls of her own , when she hears the news announcement that her Father has escaped prison.

Helena has kept her past secret even from her husband. Even so she knows, the authorities will not find her Father. He is too clever by far. No she must do this, track him, on her own, as he has trained her to do.

I was always going to read this story, regardless of what the yard guards had to say. It is unnerving when you stop to think about it, but every perpetrator of every heinous crime ever committed is also someone's father, brother, mother, son, daughter, whatever. I remember when my girls were young and would find themselves in trouble for one thing or another, when all was said and done, they always looked to me for reassurance that I still loved them and would continue to do so, even if they had been bad. It was easy to give those assurances, while still attempting to instill the right versus wrong moral code you hoped would follow them into adulthood. But in the cold hard light of day, things are not so cut and dried. I don't believe that that kind of deep sustaining love ever dissipates completely, regardless of the circumstances surrounding someone's culpability in evil.

The story is told from Helena's perspective and moves back and forth in time, allowing an in depth look at her childhood and all the events of years past that have coloured and shaped the woman she is today.

Interspersed throughout Helena's story is the fairy tale of The Marsh King's Daughter as written by Hans Christian Andersen.

Gut wrenching and unputdownable *The Marsh King's Daughter* is a chilling and intense look at the bonds of love and the human condition. You will not want to miss it.

5 breathtaking, unnerving stars.

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## Deanna says

My reviews can also be seen at: <https://deesradreadsandreviews.wordpress.com>...

I came across this book a few months ago. I knew it wasn't going to be released until June but I couldn't wait to read it. Once I started reading I didn't want to stop.

The narrator tells us that her mother was famous for things no one would never want to be famous for. She says we may recognize her mother's name, but we probably haven't thought about her for years....but she is sure we would remember she had a daughter and we would wonder what happened to her.

***"But I won't tell you my mother's name. Because this isn't her story. It's mine"***

Helena was twelve and her mother was twenty-eight when they were recovered from their captor. Helena had no idea they were captives. She never went to school, never rode a bicycle, never knew electricity or running water and only ever spoke with two people in twelve years. Her mother and father.

We learn that after leaving the marsh, Helena really struggled with social skills. After years of living only with her mother and father, Helena had to learn how to fit in and how to act in public and social situations.

***"Shake hands when you meet someone. Don't pick your nose. Go to the back of the line. Wait your turn. Don't burp or pass gas in the presence of others"***

After all these years, Helena seems to finally have the life she deserves. The bad days are behind her. Happily married with two daughters and her thriving business.

Unfortunately, the past isn't as buried as deep she thought.....

The story begins in the present. Helena Pelletier is dropping off orders of her homemade jam. Tourists and locals love her jam and sales are good. Helena decides to take her three-year old daughter, Mari to the beach after deliveries are done. She loses track of time and needs to hurry to meet her older daughter's bus. She turns on the radio in hopes that the music will help with her toddlers current meltdown. As she flips through the radio stations she hears the words escaped....prisoner ....armed and dangerous. It repeats. A dangerous man has escaped from prison, killing two guards in the process. They believe he's headed for the wild life refuge close to her home. But when she hears the name of the prisoner her heart nearly stops.

Jacob Hollbrook aka "The Marsh King" was serving a life sentence for child abduction and other crimes. The reason Helena is so horrified is that SHE is the one who put him in prison.

Jacob Hollbrook.....is her father.

She worries the police won't find him. He's in his element in the woods. She may have felt safe from him when he was behind bars. But now everything has changed. She hoped she would be able to tell her husband, Stephen all of the things she meant to tell him all of these years. However, before she has the chance, the police arrive to question her. They want to know if she knows where her father is. Stephen is in shock and also terrified for his family. He decides they should go to his parents until her father is captured. Helena tells

him she must stay behind to help the police. Which is only partially true.

What she doesn't tell her husband is that she is going to go after her father. She's the only one who will be able to find him...using the skills her taught her himself.

She is The Marsh King's daughter and he taught her well.

The book alternates between the past and the present. Told from Helena's perspective, we learn a lot about her childhood. Her relationship with her father at the centre of it all. I can't imagine the internal struggle and conflicting emotions she would have, growing up the way she did. Twelve years is a long time and the bond has been created whether we like it or not. It would not be as easy as we think to turn off those feelings.

*"part of me that will forever be the little pigtailed girl who idolized her father"*

The Marsh King's Daughter fairy tale by Hans Christian Anderson, is interspersed between chapters, which added to the story.

I've often wondered about women like Elisabeth Fritzl, Amanda Berry, and Jaycee Dugard and so many other women who have escaped or been rescued after being held captive for years. I've occasionally wondered about the children as well but this book really made it hit home for me. Of course it's difficult for the women who were held captive, but the children who were conceived and born in similar conditions? How would they acclimate to their new world?...new lives?

The characters, setting, and the plot are very well developed. Karen Dionne did an amazing job bringing her characters to life. Helena is damaged but also very brave and strong. I'm not a hunter so I did have a hard time reading some of the aspects of the hunting, killing and cleaning of the animals. However, I don't feel it was done in a way to glorify violence but it's a part of the story. This is how they lived and survived and it's amazing the things Helena learned at such a young age.

An amazing read that I really could have read it in one sitting. As I neared the end there's not much that could have torn me away. Compelling, intense, and unputdownable. This book is one that is going to stay with me for a very long time. I can't wait to see what Karen Dionne writes next.

Thank you G.P. Putnam's Sons and Karen Dionne for providing an advanced readers copy of this book for me to read in exchange for my honest review.

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### **Susanne Strong says**

#### **5 Stars.**

#### **Truly Captivating (for Helena, and Me).**

**"The Marsh King's Daughter" hooks you from first few sentences: "I was born two years into my Mother's captivity. She was three weeks shy of seventeen. If I had known then, what I do now, things would have been a lot different. I wouldn't have adored my Father." How could it not? It keeps you suspended on that hook throughout.**

Helena is born under captivity .. yet she doesn't know it. She grows up, learning to fish, trap, wield a knife and shoot, all by the age of 6. And she adores her father and thinks he is the coolest. She lives in the marshlands with her mom, her dad and their dog Rambo and it's all she has ever known. Whatever she has learned has been through National Geographic or through her father.

Little Helena does not know that her life is not a normal one. Her mother was kidnapped at the age of fourteen by her father, Jacob Holbrook and he has been keeping her captive all this time. When Helena is twelve, she and her mother are rescued, Jacob is captured and all is revealed.

Years later, a grown-up Helena is living a new life with her family knowing absolutely nothing about who she really is. That is, until one day when her Jacob Holbrook escapes from prison and she has to come face to face with her past, in order to save her family and herself from the man she both loves and hates, her own father.

“The Marsh King’s Daughter” alternates between the past and the present: when Helena was young and she lived in the marshlands with her mother and father and the present day, as she is tracking her father after his escape from prison. The switch between timelines is effortless, worked very well and kept me in suspense the entire time. Helena’s ever-changing views on her father over the course of the novel were fascinating, as were her feelings for her mother. **Karen Dionne did a phenomenal job in creating truly compelling, multi-dimensional characters here – all of whom evoked different emotions from me at different times in the novel. The writing is stellar: gripping, compulsive and suspenseful.** And the idea of it? Scary as all get out. **If this book doesn’t grab your attention, nothing will.**

Published on Goodreads and Amazon on 8.27.17.

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### **Maureen says**

\*4.5 Stars\* Thank you to Shotsmag for my paperback copy, I have given an honest review in exchange\*

Helena was born in captivity, her mother having been abducted at the age of 14. To Helena, life in the marshlands is normal. She has no contact with the outside world, no electricity, no running water, no modern conveniences. She has grown to love her life of hunting and fishing; indeed she loves her Father and everything he teaches her about nature. Helena has no idea what her Father has done.

Helena’s only knowledge that there is a life outside of the marshes comes from some old National Geographic Magazines that she consumes with a passion. Her love for her Father is solid; but her mother on the other hand is something of an invisible creature, for she hardly ever smiles, never feels part of what Helena experiences with her father - so as the years pass, her mother becomes someone to be dismissed as inconsequential.

Helena knows her Father can be cruel and violent (particularly when he needs to teach her a lesson), but she doesn't know any other way of life so she accepts his punishments without question.

The narrative centered in the present day ratchets up the tension, for Helena is now married to Stephen and they have two young daughters Iris and Mari. She helps the family budget by making and selling jam to locals, and their life is good - until the day she hears the emergency broadcast announcing the escape of an armed and dangerous prisoner, the notorious child abductor ‘The Marsh King’, who is Helena’s Father.

Consumed with fear, Helena believes her Father will come looking for her as it was her fault that he was captured and incarcerated. She is now faced with confronting her past; a past she has kept hidden from her husband.

Despite the dark and disturbing theme, *The Marsh King's Daughter* is a beautifully written book that swings effortlessly back and fro between the past and the present, slowly revealing the events leading up to Helena's escape from the marshlands.

I should indicate that the narrative includes visceral scenes of the hunting, killing of animals (as well as the cleaning of carcasses), though not gratuitous for the wildlife were killed for food, for survival and not for pleasure.

Karen Dionne's remarkable thriller gives a fascinating insight into the relationship between captor and captive, as well as between hunter and the hunted. It is also a deeply engaging and thought provoking psychological thriller. The tension at times becomes unbearable due to the quality of the writing, making you turn the pages as if hypnotized by the narrative.

If you're brave enough to venture hand-in-hand with the author into the marshes, you'll certainly be well-rewarded, for *The Marsh King's Daughter* is exceptional and hugely recommended.

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### **Elyse says**

Daddy was a sociopath.....who liked to tell stories...

....and his biological daughter, Helena, .....protagonist...(child version of Stockholm Syndrome), was almost like daddy's counterpart ....or as they often say: "the apple doesn't fall far from the tree".

Helena's mother? - Her character was written in the shadow - yet - sad! Just sad!

I coasted through this book pretty quickly- (one sitting) .

I wasn't a fan of a couple of the graphic scenes - but overall it's not a 'heavy-tension' book -- actually rather simplistic writing.

I wouldn't give it glowing stars - but it was the type of story where readers can think about these type of situations:

.....a young woman kidnap-

.....a child is born - raised off the grid -

.....daddy is caught after many years -

..... daddy goes to prison

.....daddy escapes prison

..... daughter loves daddy ....

.....only Helena knows how daddy thinks. Having learned his skills from living in the wild - killing bears and wolves are as natural as washing dishes -- Helena must be the one to capture him herself....and send him back to prison...(of course we need a story)

.....back into the woods Helena goes ...

As for Helena's husband and two children - not to worry - they are only chop liver until Helena's wildness work is done!

Good - predictable ending --not Amazing - but for a quick-read library overdrive ebook readily available- its

not bad.

The Hans Christian Andersen inserts were clever. I also enjoyed the nature descriptions of the wetlands, lakes, and streams.... it added a great atmosphere to the storytelling.

This was enjoyable enough!!

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### **Jen says**

You know a story gets under your skin when you wake up in the middle of the night thinking about it.

This is a psychological thriller that has the added thrill of a spin on a classic fairy tale. The premise is disturbing. Helena is the daughter of a man whom abducted her mom, who was incarcerated for his crime but has now escaped- to the marshlands of Michigan- where she grew up and was held hostage for the first 12 years of her life. Now, the hunt is on and she needs either to be the hunter or be the hunted.

Helena, now on the search for her father, reflects back on her life growing up in the marsh as she searches for her convicted father. Her life, as she knew it until the age of 12, when she realized it was far from what a normal family should be. The episodes of patience and tenderness contrasted with violence and sadistic tendencies, make it a struggle between loving her father and hating him. Her imaginary friends she created, Calypso and Cousteau, who help her survival and in the end, her escape.

Interspersed with quotes from the Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale, The Marsh King, this is a fast paced, creepy one. A game of cat and mouse with a father and daughter whose paths are about to converge and the past to be confronted. 4.5??

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### **Cheri says**

!! NOW AVAILABLE !!

4.5 Stars

Growing up, Helena never knew that they were different from other families; she didn't know the story of how she came to be, didn't know that her father had abducted her mother for the purpose of taking her as his wife. She loved her father, and didn't think of him as a bad or dangerous man, although she knew that he was quick to anger toward her mother, at times. She really didn't know any better, and how could she? She was his "*Bangii-Agawaateyaa*", his Little Shadow. The cabin they lived in out in the wild marshlands of Michigan's Upper Peninsula was completely isolated. If it weren't for the old National Geographic magazines she had seen and read, she would know little about other people, about the world in general. But knowing about it, and living in it are different. She knew that there was a world out there, she just didn't know how close, or how different it was from how they lived. She just didn't know.

This is so beautifully written, the characters so fully drawn. Helena is a composite of her surroundings, her father, her isolation, her lack of understanding of any other kind of life than the one she's living – with the exception of those inside her magazines – such a wonderful, complex protagonist.

With confident, gorgeous prose transporting you back and forth effortlessly through time and place, from Helena's childhood to the day she hears the emergency news broadcast. The man she knows as her father has escaped prison, the prison where he has been for fifteen years. Since the day she put him there.

She knows the police will never find him. Only she knows how her father thinks, his skills, the things he taught her about tracking, the survival skills he has. She knows his ways, his stories, She also knows if she doesn't find him, her husband and her two girls lives will never be the same.

This suspenseful story has a somewhat brooding tone, atmospheric, troubled, with the sense of disquiet building as the memories come to light. There's an edge of psychological suspense, while you anxiously wait to see how the story unfolds. A tale certain to leave you breathless, heart pounding and wishing you could read it all over again for the very first time.

Recommended

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Pub Date: 13 Jun 2017

Many thanks for the ARC provided by G.P. Putnam's Sons

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### **Candace says**

Lately, I've been reading a little more suspense/thriller. 'The Marsh King's Daughter' is the most recent book in this genre to catch my attention. It certainly lived up to my expectations for a creepy, edge of my seat story.

The story centers on Helena, a woman with a secret past. While she lives her "normal" life as a mother, occupied with mundane daily issues, there is far more going on beneath the surface. She is always looking over her shoulder, never quite able to settle down or rest easy.

What Helena hasn't told anyone is that her father is the notorious "Marsh King". He abducted her mother when she was a young girl, holding her captive for many years and forcing her to be his wife. Helena is a product of her mother's abuse at the hands of her abductor.

Of course, Helena did not know this for much of her youth. She was raised in a cabin in an isolated marsh. She grew up hunting and learning to survive off of the land. Truth be told, she loved it. She didn't know of any other way.

Looking back, she can see that her childhood wasn't without hardship. Her father's rule was supreme. If she or her mother dared to cross him, they were punished swiftly and harshly. As a child, she didn't have a basis for comparison. Now, it is clear to her that his actions were abusive.

Helena has long since come to terms with the fact that her father is a narcissistic psychopath. Everything in their lives revolved around keeping him happy. They lived in constant fear of setting him off, knowing that he could turn into a cruel, sadistic monster with the flip of a switch.

When Helena receives word that her father has escaped from prison, she has no doubt that he will be coming

for her. After all, she knows that she was to blame for his eventual arrest. A man like her father doesn't forget and he doesn't forgive.

Her worst fears are proved true when a series of gruesome clues begins to pile up. It seems that her father is taunting her and trying to draw her back into a game that they used to play when she was little...only this time, she is hunting him. Sometimes, the hunter becomes the hunted though.

As Helena trekked through the wilderness in search of her father, I had chills. An eerie feeling pervaded this story from start to finish. All I can say is that it was creepy...very creepy.

Despite my enjoyment, I have to admit that I had a difficult time connecting with Helena. I admired her strength and the fact that she stood out from other heroines. However, I couldn't really relate to her much. It made it a little more difficult for me to connect with the story, but eventually I did.

Once this story got warmed up, it had my complete attention. As Helena's past was revealed through flashbacks, I began to piece together the entirety of the her life's story. Her father, who seemed harmless at first, was gradually shown to be a truly cruel man as the violence he bestowed upon his family increased over the years.

This was a great book. It kept me on the edge of my seat the whole time I was listening. There is something to be said for a book that can still make you want to check under your bed for monsters. If you're in the mood for something creepy and disconcerting, this is the one.

Check out more of my reviews at [www.bookaddictshaven.com](http://www.bookaddictshaven.com)

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### **Luffy says**

I knew that going in, it would be an uphill struggle for me liking ultra violent stories like this one. Many of my friends gorge themselves silly on gory murder stories. They appreciate the subtlety of pure unadulterated crime. Subtlety because of the nuances from book to sequel.

I realized, 2/3 into the book, that Helena would be a wonderful heroine. On one hand she is hardcore, experienced and intuitive. But when the story most demands it, she plays into the hand of her father, 'The Marsh King'. Where is her training when she needs protection the most? That's brilliant artistic manipulation for you.

I appreciate the pacing of the book. I also grudgingly give Karen Dionne points for presenting a tale that has a few atoms of originality. But this book doesn't need originality. I expected a more uniformly paced book, and okay sounding twists. But the book exceeded my expectations. It's a novel that I almost didn't read. So, I'm thankful.

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### **Mary Beth \*Traveling Sister\* says**

#### **What I liked about the book?**

I found this book to be unputdownable! It was dark and disturbing. I loved it. I was hooked from the very beginning and straight to the end. I didn't find this to be an edge of your seat thriller. It consisted of Helena's life in her past, being raised in captivity with her sociopath father and present, what her life was like afterwards. This book was very intriguing to me. I also found this to be very character driven. The author did Helena's character very well. My heart went out for Helena. Everything she went through was just awful. Jacob, the Marsh King was a sociopath. He was so self centered, centering himself on his needs and wants. He was a monster showing his true colors.

I always love a book that has a setting in a forest. Its my tranquil, peaceful spot and love the sounds of nature. I love to sit by the bonfire and always feel mesmerized by it. But I could never imagine having a life in captivity like this for years and years, and thinking that Helena thought her life was normal is just beyond me. Who wouldn't though, if this is the life you were raised up in.

### **My Review**

This review does contain spoilers. If you don't want to read this part, read what I liked and didn't like and that will give you a view of what it is about.

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Helena's mother was just barely seventeen years old and was raped and abducted by the Marsh King, Jacob. She lived in captivity for fourteen years. Helena was born in captivity. She did not know that her mother was raped and abducted. Helena lived in captivity for thirteen years of her life in the marsh. She did not have any contact with human beings except her father and mother. She didn't have any clue that this was not a normal life and that her father was a sociopath, a violent man. She loved her father very much. She went through years and years of abuse that was just awful. Her life was a nightmare and just unimaginable.

She then escapes from captivity. She has problems dealing with everyday normal life to fit in. The story goes from the past to present. What Helena's life was like in captivity and then what her life is like afterwards.

Helena gets married and has two kids and her past comes back to haunt her when her violent father escapes from prison and she has to protect her family.

### **What I didn't like about the book?**

The hunting scenes were disturbing and almost to much for me. I can understand why it was in the book though, since Jacob was an Indian and hunting was his life. This book isn't for everyone.

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### **Paromjit says**

This is atmospheric and brilliant storytelling from an author whose talent becomes increasingly obvious as you begin to read this tale. Its appeal lies in the twin interweaving of dark fantastical fairytale and the more human tale of the hunter and the prey, where these roles shift, change, merging into a hypnotic dance between father and daughter. Helena is married to Stephen, a photographer and has two daughters, Iris and Mari. She lives in Michigan's Upper Peninsula on the edge of the marsh wilderness. She created a new

identity to escape the media coverage that followed her mother's kidnapping at 15 by the notorious Marsh King, Jacob Holbrook, Helena's father.

Helena is brought up on the marshes, seeing no other humans until she is 11 years old. She is a wild child, a daddy's girl, and instrumental in ensuring that her father went to prison. Her family know none of her well publicised history. The Marsh King has escaped, killing two guards, with the consequent police manhunt and media spotlight. Helena can no longer hide, she knows the only person with the skills to find her father is her, no-one knows him better, he is Nanabozho, the trickster, and she loves him. She is determined that she will return him to prison. The book is an intimate character study delivered from Helena's perspective. Each chapter starts with a part of the *The Marsh King's Daughter* fairytale by Hans Christian Anderson with inescapable connections to Helena's life.

Her father is a storyteller whose tales whilst blurring the line between fact and fiction are hardwired into her psyche, into her blood, and her sense of identity. He is the sole contributor to her unsurpassed abilities in hunting, tracking, wilderness and survival skills. He is everything, her mother barely features. She is him, his shadow, the pea to his pod. We learn of her time growing up in the marshes, her obsession with 50 year old National Geographics - her only knowledge of the world outside, her enthralment with the Vikings, her use of the doll that her mother made for her for target practice. We are given glimpses into her father's volatility and his need for absolute control. But can Helena remember everything? What exactly happened? What of Cousteau and Calypso? A faint memory tugs from her subconscious...something about the story her mother told her. This shapes a dangerous and blood spattered hunt for her father where her family is at stake into a journey into the past to come to terms with and acknowledge who she is.

This is a wonderful novel, it burrows into your consciousness and takes residence. It has an insidious charm with its themes of what it is to survive, love, loss, memory, and the problems associated with doing the right thing in a complicated family set up. The book has a riveting narrative interweaving the fantastical with the everyday, of a nature red in tooth and claw side by side with glimpses of nurture and protection. Helena is complex and her life has not been easy, you cannot help but want to know more about her. We come to understand the call of the wild is a representation of home. The Marsh King is not purely a figure of evil but a father who loves and is intimately connected with his daughter. The family, the roles and relationships within it, is often a can of worms exploited in fairytales and fiction, the author beautifully explores this territory. Cannot recommend this enough. Many thanks to Little, Brown for an ARC.

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