

# KIRKUS REVIEWS

## TITLE INFORMATION

### DAUGHTER OF JERUSALEM

Otto, Joanne

FastPencil, Inc. (120 pp.)

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## BOOK REVIEW

In this YA debut, a plucky Bible-era heroine finds contentment by following her heart.

Mara lives in ancient Jerusalem with her demanding mother and compassionate father. Even though she's a girl, the Jewish Mara studies the Torah and yearns for a different life than the one expected of her: marriage, children and housework. One day, her friend Nathan tells her of a new teacher named Yeshua who claims to be the son of God and preaches a new sort of religion that involves finding God within one's own heart. When she discovers that Yeshua's life may be at risk, she embarks on a mission to protect the mysterious, wonderful man from harm, and finds enlightenment and danger along the way. In luminous, rich prose, Mara's tale delves into the daily life of a Jewish woman in biblical times. Mara is a relatable teenager, chafing at the rules of the adult world; she's unable to identify the source of her discontent until she realizes that it comes from her own search for identity. Although Yeshua (also known as Jesus) makes only scattered appearances throughout the book, his presence and teachings profoundly affect those around him, and readers witness this in Mara's response to him. Several characters refer to him with the lovely phrase, "His pure shining." The middle of this smoothly plotted novel hinges on an intimate conversation between Yeshua and Mara, a satisfying encounter for characters and readers alike. Mara understands that he sees her "as a ray of unselfish love," which "made her feel worthy and blessed." The ending presents a rather sophisticated message for modern young adults, as Mara finds acceptance and builds a new relationship with her parents by using the peace of her newfound faith. She reaches a conclusion that many people never do: Finding one's place in the world brings enough joy and satisfaction to fill a lifetime.

A moving, exquisitely written tale of a young woman's search for meaning.

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