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Preface

The Beekeepers Daughter is the first of five books in the Kingdom of Meridian Series. The story begins with Maria, a young woman struggling to survive in medieval Russia. Through a series of tragic events, she must travel across Northwestern Russia to find safety with relatives in a distant city. Along the way, her conservative life in a village fades as she navigates a new world filled with danger. Her experience becomes a personal journey in trust, adventure, love and destiny.

You are about to be taken on an exciting journey filled with folklore, Russian history, and romantic encounters. The pace is fast as Maria travels North on the Volga River trying to evade Tatar soldiers seeking to return her to Rostov. Armed only with a handful of items and the knowledge her parents gave her; she must trust her life to complete strangers while learning to survive in a world where nothing is as it seems. Her story unfolds with chaotic twists that drive her to a destiny far greater than she ever imagined.

A word about Russian culture, you'll notice the names shifting a bit during the dialogue between characters. This shift is intentional and is a key element in how conversations take place, beginning with full formal names and then as the familiarity grows the names 'soften'. For example 'Maria' becomes 'Masha' or 'Manya'. Mikhail becomes Misha, Svetlana becomes Sveta and Natalya becomes Natasha or Natalie. This trend continues

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throughout the book and reveals when the characters are formal, friendly, serious or playful.

It was my wish to make this a historically and geographically accurate tale, but there were some points where a fact had to be sacrificed for the greater good of the story. I hope you can embrace the fictional detours as a means to further enjoy the book.

-Shiân Serei

Language Notes: The story is replete with anglicized words, meant to capture the color of Russian and other languages. These words are written in the way they are pronounced, as a benefit to the reader. You'll find an index at the end of the book with the complete translation of each phrase.