



"History and fantasy rarely come together as gracefully or readably as they do in the novels of Guy Gavriel Kay." — *The Washington Post Book World*

CHILDREN OF EARTH AND SKY

A NOVEL

GUY GAVRIEL
KAY

International Bestselling Author of *RIVER OF STARS* and *UNDER HEAVEN*

Here's the easy (and accurate) plug: anyone jonesing for the next novel from George R.R. Martin can jump right into the new stand-alone work from best-selling author Guy Gavriel Kay. It's not a book to keep you sated until winter comes; it's a delight that will introduce you to a uniquely talented writer you'll quickly love. Here's another one: the novel "Children of Earth And Sky" is not really fantasy. It's historical fiction and people who appreciate and devour Sharon Kay Penman and Ken Follett's "The Pillars Of The Earth" will be right at home. Here's the truth: Kay is his own unique. This novel isn't fantasy, not really. It's certainly not historical fiction rooted in our world or alternative history a la Harry Turtledove. It's historical fiction inspired by key periods in our history but taking place next door or down the street from what we know of the Renaissance. And yet, it's entirely convincing in the creation of a specific and exciting world akin to our own. Anyone with a healthy imagination will love it. Anyone who is knowledgeable about history will enjoy the clever house of mirrors on display here. So what's the plot? It takes place in a time roughly akin to the Renaissance with the world consumed by huge empires and the burgeoning power of a merchant class. Religion still holds powerful sway and science is on the ascendant. Massive armies are on the move and everyone from the nobility to peasants are swept up in their wake. To be clear, like Dumas and Dickens, "Children Of Earth And Sky" is a rousing tale filled with engaging characters. The younger, cleverer son of powerful merchants heads to the heart of the empire to trade. A young artist is somehow plucked from near-obscurity to paint the portrait of the grand khalif, a task already fraught with peril even before he's asked to kill the khalif if at all possible. A scandalous daughter of a noble family is determined to somehow carve out a life for herself after being bundled off to a nunnery. A young boy is dragooned into the most powerful army in the world. And a fearsome female warrior is sworn to avenge the slaughter of her family by that same military force. Their lives criss cross, along with a seemingly endless stream of fascinating, compelling characters. Throw in city states, secretive ruling councils, foolish military leaders, pirates, brave townspeople who draw strength from their fearsome reputation and you start to get a sense for the broad, vivid tapestry he's weaving here. Kay is especially good here at showing how small decisions can snowball into major events, revealing the capricious and unpredictable nature of history though everyone likes to see it as inevitable or guided by fate and destiny, not an offhand desire to placate an ally or annoy an enemy. I've been eying Kay for years, waiting for the right moment to dive into his works of fantasy and semi-historical fiction that have gained ardent admirers. Since "Children Of Earth And Sky" is sure to be one of my favorite books of 2016, I think I chose right. -- Michael Giltz