



The Beast of the North

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There are no gods in the world of men.

There are only men, and their kings and queens, and some such rulers are always looking for trouble.

In the brutal north, thieves Maskan and Sand know the king Morag's justice is uncommonly harsh, while his politics seem to drive a wedge between allies and granting opportunities for their enemies.

The man is, in short, rumored to be mad, and one of those kings who find trouble.

Such politics and kings are no concern of theirs, until they pickpocket the wrong victim, and get caught in the aforementioned politics, and tangled with the harsh law of Morag.

In the end, both thieves find themselves allied with noble families, whose motives are shady, and perhaps, also, they find the world is not made only for men, and the king is not as mad as rumoured.

Something has crept into Midgard.

The Beast of the North is a book one in bestselling, savage story of the Nine Worlds, a Norse Mythology inspired epic, dark fantasy adventure.

The Beast of the North Details

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From Reader Review The Beast of the North for online ebook

Melissa Hayden says

*This audiobook was provided by the author, narrator, or publisher at no cost in exchange for an unbiased review at my request.

2.5 Stars

Jay is a new narrator for me. How does he compare to those I've enjoyed? Well... Off the bat, in the prologue he was very flat toned. I liked the prologue story wise, as it's what changed the world, but Jay didn't feel to have the emotion to make it hit hard. The title for Book 1 was repeated at the end of the prologue and at the beginning of Chapter one. He almost put me to sleep. His cadence is very slow, so clicking a faster speed helped with this. There are a few spots where it sounds like the sound warps or changes then back to normal. It's brief and made me wonder if I really heard it, but enough to steal my attention from the story being told. I'm sorry. This narrator misses so many opportunities to liven up the story. And by the way he speaks, it feels to bring the book down to basic simple terms.

A narrator can make or break a book. I feel this is a perfect example. I don't know if the book was better than what I heard, but Jay breaks this book. Was he bored while narrating? I don't know, but he wasn't into the characters at all. So much so that I almost DNF-ed this book. In the end of the book, last 5 hours or so, Jay had a little more life to his voice. Shame he didn't try to do that at the beginning, and more.

I go back and forth on my feelings of the story...

Fantasy has a slow grow to it with great details given. The novel fits that persona. However, there is a meeting at a tavern that Maskan and Sand overhear. The meeting that seems as though it's rather important is done on the steps of the tavern in an alley. Um, if this man is as ruthless as he's said to be and in charge of one of the roughest gangs in the city, why would he do such a huge deal on the steps outside where anyone could overhear? This is then brought up at the end of the book, explaining this, but it still felt out of place when happened.

The little things in Maskan's life lead to much more, hinting at darker things happening in the world with the kings. There is more going on behind the scenes that involves Blacktower family and Maskan stumbles along and gets involved, his family too. Then we learn more and things switch around for Maskan.

We get the plan for what's to happen when Maskan goes in to the King's mint. Then we get the plan a repeated to us a few times. It feels like some of this could have been cut from the story to keep it moving along. Then again with a plan of Maskan with another, we get it a few times which is Maskan repeating it to Sand, I know Sand needs to learn but it bored me hearing it all out again.

It feels as the characters speak in short simple sentences and they don't flow smoothly from what's being spoken, thought, or told. I'm not sure if this is the narrator or the writing, but either way it plays the characters down to being far to simple to come up with such plans and ideas.

Maskan's instant "love" for Shaduril was annoying at first. He falls in love with her from the first moment he saw her, her beauty draws his eyes. Then, finally when Maskan makes mention of feelings for Shaduril, she doesn't shoot him down but makes it seem as there could be something there. It feels sudden in the story. Is she playing him to get done what needs done? Probably, but Maskan is dumb in love. Then things seem to

iron out between them and easier to accept.

Once the story got going, I enjoyed the movement and twists that happen. There is more going on that Maskan isn't aware of, as he is too trusting. When I think that Maskan has started to grow and learn that many can not be trusted, he shows how naive he is once again. I almost feel disappointed in him from time to time. Even the love for Shaduril grew on me as they had a few more interactions that helped.

I do like the connection to legends and lores of Norse Mythology. Something that makes the world full and creative with magic and history. We see some of this in the beginning, but not as much as the High King is working hard to make all forget the Gods. However, in the end this impacts Maskan's life and we learn a great deal about the Gods and why they are here. This, along with the twist to the story, that saved the book in star rating.

When we think we have all the twisted plans figured out, they all completely flip inside out. I enjoyed the twists at the end.

Andrew Hale says

Slow but builds.

This was slightly slow in some parts through the first half or so but it was also time spent setting the stage. I would read the next book in line, hoping that the tale of ancient myths grows more and more intriguing as it goes.

SPOILERS AHEAD:

BotN is broken up into 5 "books".

Book 1: The Grim Jesters deals with Sand and Maskan's lowly life of thievery and the hierarchy of classes between the noble houses and the poor. One house leads as a King and Queen hell-bent on a devastating war. Maskan is apparently a little more moral than his family, or scared, but ready to throw everything he knows to the wind for the beauty of a stranger.

Book 2: Morag's Bane gives us more depth into Maskan's path, more detail on his obsession's (love interest) situation, and more detail into how the other houses are reacting to the King's maniacal obsession with going to war with the High King. We get a small history lesson on Norse mythology but presented as reality in this universe, even to Maskan's skepticism. This actually relates for me in that the story is a little hard to follow as far as the dialogue between characters and their motives/intentions with their words. I've felt this way before when reading Greek/Roman/Norse/Egyptian mythology stories. From the beginning of the story, I've felt that there might be some relation to the One Man cult and modern religion, which would dishearten me but by books end, that relation is not there like I thought. We also see that Maskan seems to cause immediate attention from his female peers who spill their heart out for their true feelings to him. He may have a special ability that gets discussed throughout this book but he has an even more "special ability" in his magnetism for women. And he is very "unfamiliar" with women as you find out early on. Yet, there may be more to that than mere coincidence.

Book 3: The Black Towers show a highly dysfunctional yet functioning family in the Blacktowers. Lead by

patriarch Balam, Maskan is caught up in lies, deceit, and secrets. The siblings, Taram, Lith, and Shaduril, are murderous backstabbers and it's getting hard to route for any one of them. They are all hell-bent on destroying each other, just not exactly outright. Keep in mind also, rape is rape, no matter what trickery was used to gain a false consent. Not saying this story promotes any such thing, just making conversation.

Book 4: The Queen's Bane takes a more interesting and exciting turn that I found to be more of a page-turner than the previous sections.

Book 5: The Tide is when you realize that characters you paid little attention to are now characters you wish you could see more action from. But is it too late? Deceptions galore.

Book 6: Hel's Horde is non-stop action with the introduction of ancient history and modern betrayal and the sacrifices needed to rectify it all.

Susanna says

This book is a compelling read for anyone interested in fantasy! I found this a most exciting book, full of fascinating characters and storytelling, very captivating! Warmly recommended, I'm keenly waiting for the next part.

Alaric Longward says

The Beast of the North is a sister series to the Dark Levy. Like that series, this one fall on the dark fantasy side. This will be a furious adventures with plenty of twists and action in the land of Midgard, home of men.

Jake Mcivry says

Well written with interesting characters, this was a nice foray for me back into the fantasy sphere. I'm a fan of Norse mythology and I thought the use of the mythological races and God names was fun and interesting. Purists might disagree, but this is after all a fantasy novel, not a re-telling of the Eddas. I'll be reading other books by Alaric Longward.

Jason Latshaw says

Incredible world building on display here, seamlessly weaving norse mythology into an epic tale of nine worlds. Strong characters, great twists, confident storytelling, and an intriguing plot. Highly recommended.

Anthony Dolce says

Awesome. every page is intense and has twists you couldn't imagine.

Peter Vojtko says

Amazing book! Interesting from start to the end. The story build-up is very well written.

Autumn Birt says

The Beast of the North is a really great story immersed in Norse mythology, but with a unique and new plot. I was impressed at how much Maskan developed as a character during the story - as well as how much my view of what was happening in the world changed as more and more was revealed. Truly a difficult feat to pull off as a writer - to completely alter the reader's perceptions through gradual nudges so that the big reveal feels perfect. My hat off to Alaric Longward for creating such a good plot that was as surprising as it was masterful.

I admit I initially felt disappointment that the book was written in first person. For some reason books written in first person do not resonate well with me. But once the world and characters clicked, it didn't make a difference. And looking back now as a writer, I can appreciate that short of using the POV of Sand, Maskan's friend, any other POV would have completely ruined the amazing build of revelations as the truth of Maskan's world and self is peeled away layer by layer.

In the end, what I thought was this was a great start to a new series and I'm looking forward to the rest of the books!

Jackie Wang says

This was an incredibly well-written novel. Alaric Longward is a new author for me so I didn't know what to expect. The results exceeded my expectations. This novel was well-crafted with a strong plot and an even stronger set of heroes. Any fan of dark fantasy will absolutely love this book. I'm not a HUGE fan of the fantasy genre but once in a while I'll find a gem that makes my time worthwhile. This is one such gem. There is plenty of twists and turns and lots of adventure and intrigue to keep you hooked. Longward's writing style is smooth and captivating and I found the pacing perfect. Sometimes I read fantasy novels that introduce like 15 characters in the first chapter and I immediately get turned off and overwhelmed. This novel had good execution of the introduction. Highly recommended book and author. 4.5/5 stars.

Jean says

Nothing is as it Seems...

This book was well written with a good character development.

I don't want to give away anything but I will say that the story line had Action and a few Twists.

Loved the plot twists and I am very interested in its Sequel.

Jay Markwart did well with the narration.

Note:

"This audio book was provided by the author, narrator, or publisher at no cost in exchange for an unbiased review."

Scott Collins says

Well, I'm hooked. Guess I'll be spending my book allowance on the next books in this series so I can follow the story to its conclusion. Great writing, well developed characters, plenty of action, and more twists than a gnarly roller coaster. Loved it, and can't wait to dive into book two!!!

P Bee says

I really enjoyed this book from start to finish. The story is so complex and multi-layered. With the rich Norse mythology, it's really a must read for any lover of Fantasy fiction. It was nice to have the map in the front, as well as the names and places. I read through them before I even started the novel and that made it a much more enjoyable read. As far as I'm concerned, this book is polished perfection that keeps you turning the page. I'm always impressed with the imagery the author created with the battle scenes. Overall the action was well-written. Not every author gets this right. I was impressed.

This is a story that contains all of the elements you would want in a good fantasy novel. I'm glad there will be a follow up book because I would certainly read another book by this author

Patricia Rose says

Alaric Longward's novel, The Beast of the North: Stories of the Nine Worlds (Thief of Midgard), has no place in Indie publishing. I say this with regret, because I am an Indie author myself. I know how hard Indies work and how remarkably excellent some of our writing is. Alaric doesn't belong here. He belongs in one of the Big 5. He belongs on the top shelf of every bookstore (that is left) in the world. He belongs on an HBO mini-series, right next to Game of Thrones. He's a better writer than I am, by miles, and better than most of the Indie writers I've read over the past two years.

His novel is high fantasy. It follows the life and misadventures of a thief, who is much more than a thief. There are unexpected plot twists and turns that will leave your brain spinning, but they are all logical, justified, and perfectly executed. The book is, quite simply, amazing. There are a few editorial errors, and I am an absolute stickler for at least noticing those, even if I won't ding the book for them. I noticed the errors and **SIMPLY DIDN'T CARE**.

Yes, the writing is THAT good.

Do yourself a favor. Pick up a coffee or hot chocolate, cuddle someplace out of this blasted cold, and settle in with The Beast of the North. If you love high fantasy, I promise it will be worth your time.

C.J. Rutherford says

Beast of the North is an incredible book. It was clear to me from the first page that Mr Longward had done a ton of research into the lore and history of Norse legend. The world he's created is rich and brutal, and the characters are well developed. The plot and storyline is one of the most original I've ever read. Well done! Other reviews have mentioned the twists in the story, and I can tell you that the rug was pulled out from under my feet on more than one occasion. Personally I think it's great when you think you know what's really happening, just to be blindsided and left reeling in shock.

An excellent mythological fantasy! A solid 5 stars.
