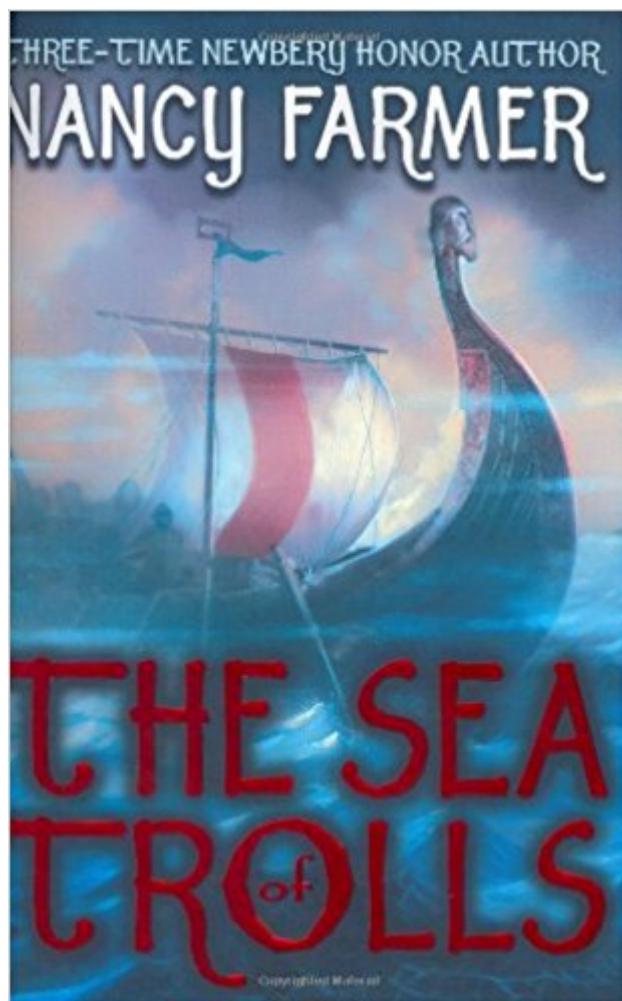


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The Sea Of Trolls



Synopsis

Jack was eleven when the berserkers loomed out of the fog and nabbed him. "It seems that things are stirring across the water," the Bard had warned. "Ships are being built, swords are being forged." "Is that bad?" Jack had asked, for his Saxon village had never before seen berserkers. "Of course. People don't make ships and swords unless they intend to use them." The year is A.D. 793. In the next months, Jack and his little sister, Lucy, are enslaved by Olaf One-Brow and his fierce young shipmate, Thorgil. With a crow named Bold Heart for mysterious company, they are swept up into an adventure-quest that follows in the spirit of The Lord of the Rings. Other threats include a willful mother Dragon, a giant spider, and a troll-boar with a surprising personality -- to say nothing of Ivar the Boneless and his wife, Queen Frith, a shape-shifting half-troll, and several eight foot tall, orange-haired, full-time trolls. But in stories by award-winner Nancy Farmer, appearances do deceive. She has never told a richer, funnier tale, nor offered more timeless encouragement to young seekers than "Just say no to pillaging."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Three time Newbery honor author Nancy Farmer's epic fantasy, The Sea of Trolls, is gigantic in every way. There are big Vikings and bigger trolls. There are big themes--hope, despair, life and death. At a substantial 450+ pages, the sheer size of this hefty tome is impressive. But, like all of Farmer's fine work, the large scale has room for enormous quantities of heart and humor. At the center of this massive adventure is a small Saxon boy named Jack, who's never been much good at

anything until the Bard of his medieval village makes him an apprentice. Then, just as Jack is learning to tap into and control his power, he is kidnapped (along with his little sister, Lucy) and taken to the court of King Ivar the Boneless and his half troll queen Frith. When one of Jack's amateur spells causes the evil queen's beautiful hair to fall out, he is forced to undertake a dangerous quest across the Sea of Trolls to make things right, or suffer the consequences--the sacrifice of his beloved sister to Frith's patron goddess, Freya. Along the way Jack faces everything from giant golden troll-bears to man-eating spiders, yet each frightening encounter brings wisdom and understanding to the budding young Bard. No quester who enters these pages with Jack will go away unsatisfied. Farmer's skillful melding of history, mythology, and humor, is reminiscent of both Tamora Pierce and Terry Pratchett's medieval fantasies, and will no doubt be HUGELY enjoyed by fantasy readers of all ages. --Jennifer Hubert

Gr. 6-9. In Farmer's latest, a battle-ax-size fantasy-adventure, rampaging Northmen (the polite term for Vikings) pass through a Saxon village and enslave two of its residents: an 11-year-old apprentice mage and his 5-year-old sister. When Jack offends the Northmen's touchy queen, she threatens to kill his sister unless he reverses a misfired spell--a task that requires a journey deep into icy troll country. The subsequent bouts with troll-bears, giant spiders, and dragons are thrilling, and boys in particular will delight in Farmer's portrayal of the initially terrifying Northmen as tellers of fart jokes and singers of rowdy songs. Lighthearted moments notwithstanding, Jack's archetypal quest is a dense one, heavily draped in Norse mythology, Old English lore, and ponderings about the differences between Christian and pagan cosmologies. In addition, many readers may find it difficult to accept Jack's deepening affection for his frequently barbaric kidnappers, not to mention the oft-repeated message, "All beautiful things attract destruction"--a worldview that comes to Jack straight from the bloody saga of Beowulf. Readers captivated by slash-'em-up Viking culture will happily plunge into this celebrated author's sixth novel, but many members of Farmer's traditional audience will emerge from the experience feeling alternately dazzled and dazed. Jennifer Mattson

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This is one of those rare books that you look forward all day to reading in the evening, and when you're getting close to the finish, you wish it had at least twice as many pages. Fortunately, there are two more excellent entries in this trilogy, and each of those is just as good as the first. If you love Norse mythology and are fond of marauding Northmen, trolls, goblins, elves, and dragons, then these books are a particular treat. This is not kid stuff, however—there are

occasional strong scenes of violence and killing (especially in the first book), and while they're not so graphic as to earn the trilogy a PG-13 rating, the intended audience is clearly young adults and up. As evidenced by the bibliography at the end of the book, the author thoroughly researched the period and setting. Consequently, she is able to immerse the reader in a vibrant world rich in authentic details and populated with an abundance of fascinating characters full of charm, eccentricities, flaws, and quirks. While you'll definitely come to love or hate some of these people more than others, the philosophical undercurrent woven into the tale never presents any of them—or their actions—as simply good or evil. A valuable lesson to learn, or be reminded of, for young and older adults alike.

As a middle school language arts teacher, I am always looking for books that boys will enjoy, as they are often more reluctant to read than girls. This story of a young boy captured by berserkers, moves quickly enough to keep boys engaged, but I think has enough fairy tale elements in it to appeal to girls as well. This book may not be suitable for students younger than sixth grade, since the descriptions of Viking raids are quite graphic. The story also invites students to grapple with what is true about life and death, as Jack (the protagonist) was raised as a Christian and must measure what he believes against Viking tales of Valhalla. This is definitely a worthwhile read and is ultimately life affirming.

The Sea of Trolls by Nancy Farmer I liked that The Sea of Trolls was an adventure/fantasy book. If you like the game Skyrim you might like this book because Skyrim is sort of a medieval game that exists in a similar world as The Sea of Trolls. Some similarities are berserkers, thrills, dragons, Nords, and magic. My favorite part was when Jack and Thorgill were at the mountain queen's palace and had to survive giant spiders. Jack saved them by playing a melody on the strings of the web and that made the spiders go to sleep. This book was a bit slow to begin but became a great book. Take the time to read it. Sent from my iPad

I am an adult, but I thoroughly enjoyed this book! I read the rest of the series as well.

Thrice honored by whoever awards the Newbery award, Nancy Farmer turns her attention from Africa to medieval Norway in "The Sea of Trolls." Weaving legends and fact together, Farmer crafts a thrilling, magical, and hugely entertaining story set in the old Norse legends. Jack was thrilled when the Bard took him on as his apprentice, especially when the strange old man taught him to do

magic -- or rather, to "use the life force." (Use the Force, Jack!) But his life is suddenly thrown into disarray when an evil Nightmare drives the Bard mad, and a band of berserkers captures Jack and his little sister Lucy. Now Jack is at the questionable mercy of Olaf One-Brow, who fortunately is pleased to have captured a skald (bard). But things go wrong again as soon as they arrive at Olaf's home. The sullen shield-maiden Thorgil gives Lucy as a present to the half-troll queen Frith, who is initially pleased by the pretty little girl. But then Jack accidentally says a spell that reveals the queen's true appearance (and it's not a pretty sight). Now the queen threatens to kill Lucy unless Jack goes to the legendary Mimir's well, and finds a way to reverse the spell. But Mimir's well lies in the middle of Jotunheim, a hideous wasteland full of trolls, dragons, carnivore plants and enormous beasts. It's hard to find a fantasy as textured as this one is. Farmer weaves history (Viking berserkers and the destruction of the Holy Isle) with legends (Jotunheim, trolls, Norse gods and Yggdrasil), and never makes you suspend your belief that it could have been like this. Plus there's a bit of Irish druidry, all wrapped up in the growing friendship between the Bard and Jack. The book is worth reading alone for the Bard's insights into nature and happiness. But unlike many less talented writers, Farmer doesn't make everything simple. The berserkers slaughter or enslave whole villages, yet they can be kind and honorable as well. Same with the trolls. And wrapped up in her grim tale of pillage and slavery, Farmer works in some humor as well. "Just say no to pillaging"? Priceless. Jack evolves wonderfully over the book, turning from an ordinary farm boy into a sensitive, intelligent bard. Thorgil takes a rather long time to become sympathetic, although Farmer creates a realistic background to explain why she's such a pill. Nancy Farmer creates another classic in "Sea of Trolls," a magical blend of history and myth. Remember -- just say no to pillaging.

The tale was unpredictable, yet it made sense. Strands of myth and history, and the strange, contradictory nature of humanity are woven together brilliantly. All the best features of story and adventure were present.

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