



Kalifus Rising

Alane Adams

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Combined with strong female leads, both heroic and villainous, the ever growing and changing cast of characters has something for everyone.

Thirteen-year-old Sam may be known in certain circles as “Samuel Elias Barconian, Lord of the Ninth Realm, Son of Odin” and “a force to be reckoned with” but he still has a lot to learn about his half-god, half-witch heritage. In *Kalifus Rising*, book two in Alane Adams’s fantasy adventure series, Legends of Orkney, Sam must learn to control the darkness within before it controls him.

Just when he thought he understood what it meant to both be a descendant of the great god Odin and come from a powerful but evil line of witches, Sam is thrust into the center of a plot that could alter the magical bonds separating the realm of Orkney from Earth, unleashing unthinkable chaos and violence. Luckily, Sam is not alone; his three closest friends from back home in Pilot Rock, Oregon, are sent to help out, and the foursome are faced with harsh lessons in courage, sacrifice, forgiveness, and of course, the bonds of friendship and family.

Saturated with Scandinavian folklore as well as Norse mythology, Orkney is a magical land filled with frost giants, troll hags, wraiths, and a wealth of other creatures of legend. Well-known names like Odin and Loki appear next to the more obscure Mimir, god of wisdom, or cow-like Audhumla, and artifacts of old such as the Horn of Gjall, which calls forth an undead army, and the cursed Sword of Tyrfinng round out the mythological component. Those unfamiliar with Norse mythology would benefit from a glossary of names and terms due to the sheer volume and variety included in the story, but most are at least briefly explored within context, so no previous knowledge is necessary to enjoy the unfolding events.

Keely, Leo, and Howie, Sam’s friends from Midgard, or Earth, are each quested with an arduous task that sends them in different directions from the frozen wastelands of the north to dark and dangerous dungeons and even the underworld, allowing the plot to branch off into four separate alternating story lines. Weak and uncertain in the beginning, all four must reach deep; profound character growth accompanies the hard-hitting action throughout as the journeys turn personal. The battle scenes and fights are well choreographed and intense, with themes of bravery, loss, and loyalty prevalent throughout.

Sam’s internal struggles and focus on the dark side of his witch heritage are reminiscent of Anakin Skywalker and will likely appeal to fanboys and fangirls, particularly as he “must face the darkness inside.” Combined with strong female leads, both heroic and villainous, the ever growing and changing cast of characters has something for everyone.

Fantasy, mythology, a touch of romance, and enough sword fights and battles to appease even the most action-hungry make *Kalifus Rising* a well-rounded, solid choice for those craving a new type of adventure.

PALLAS GATES MCCORQUODALE (October 13, 2016)

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