



## The Moon Pearl: Legends of Orkney

**Alane Adams**

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*A rich fantasy landscape, engaging characters, and a masterfully woven plot make this book hard to put down.*

*The Moon Pearl* is an enjoyable fantasy adventure filled with magic and mythology. Three friends must face some truly daunting challenges, struggling against the negative forces that confront them directly, as well as their own inner demons, in order to help another friend overcome the darkness that is trying to control him. Their loyalty and friendship will prove to be their most important magic if they are to save the world from the evil witches who want to take it over.

In the magical land of Orkney, Sam Baron, born to a witch and a son of the god Odin, fights to protect the land and its people. He is captured by evil witches, who torture him and plant lies in his head, attempting to force him to their side so that they can use his magic to destroy Odin and break down the barrier between Orkney and the human world. Fortunately, Sam is not alone. His three friends Keely, Leo, and Howie are summoned to Orkney in order to rescue Sam and save both worlds.

*The Moon Pearl* is a complex story. Each of Sam's three friends must accomplish their own piece of the quest to save Sam, so each has his or her own adventure. Keely must seek out Ymir, Howie must protect the city of Skara Brae, and Leo must find the Draupnir and enter the underworld. These tasks take them in totally different directions, but author Alane Adams does a masterful job of weaving their individual plot lines into a coherent story. The characters are well developed, and though each of them is there to save Sam, they all learn something about themselves on their journeys.

Additionally, Adams has done a wonderful job describing Orkney, bringing this magical land to life while keeping it familiar enough to be relatable; for instance: "The temperature began to rise. The forest thinned out to scattered brush and the sharp smell of juniper. Sand and rock began to replace the soil of the forest. For the first time, Leo felt at home in Orkney. It reminded him of the Umatilla wastelands back home. Open. Free."

This is the second book in a planned series, but the author offers very little by way of recap to introduce the characters and explain the events of the previous book that led to the current situation. Ideally, each book in a series could stand on its own; although there is a great deal to enjoy in this installment, that enjoyment will be much less for anyone who has not read the first book in the series.

Ultimately, *The Moon Pearl* artfully combines the elements of a high fantasy novel with Norse mythology to create an engaging story that will appeal to its young adult target audience. A rich fantasy landscape, engaging characters, and an exciting quest make the book hard to put down. The epilogue sets up the next story in the series, ending the book with a satisfying sense of anticipation for what comes next.

CATHERINE THURESON (August 4, 2014)

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