



The Winter Riddle

Sam Hooker

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Deck the halls and grab your Christmas garters! Sam Hooker's smart, snarky new novel, *The Winter Riddle*, is the best farce of the season.

The Winter Witch is sick and tired of Vikings, jolly old elves, and frost giants. Her arctic empire is overcrowded with mythical creatures. In a desperate attempt to blast them all to smithereens and get some much needed peace and quiet, the Witch partners with Santa Claus. Santa is a surly, salty, retired warrior, armed with a spring-loaded hammer: the last person whose lap you'd put a child on. Together, he and the White Witch try to head off the end of the world.

Drawing on classic winter myths and Christmas stories, *The Winter Riddle* is a topsy-turvy yuletide romp. Hooker weaves a hilarious yarn that delivers the same delicious quick pacing and quirky characterization that sparkled in his first novel, *Peril In The Old Country*. *The Winter Riddle* mixes well-loved figures from poetry and legend into a fantastic and saucy story. Nothing is off-limits, and Hooker gleefully runs his characters through a gory obstacle course through the tundra, over a few hundred grasping corpses, and into the fortress of a wicked necromancer.

It's a daunting task, even for a couple of semi-immortal demi-gods. *The Winter Riddle* is flippant but keeps tension running high through every twist and turn of the plot. Its dialogue is well balanced with exposition, keeping the novel from turning too slapstick.

The Winter Riddle is a sprig of holiday holly: spiky, lovely, and essential winter reading.

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