



Vanir, Warrior: Book Two of The Stormerki Prophecy

S. K. Falconer

Paul Bird

(373pp)

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Vanir, Warrior is an epic fantasy novel in which powerful magic is used to combat an ancient evil.

In S. K. Falconer's mythic series novel *Vanir, Warrior*, human and divine fates are in the hands of three special children.

As the novel opens, the remnants of the Vanaheim and Asgardian people have been exiled; their connection to Earth has been severed. They lost a great war; the Myrkvars were its victor. It soon becomes clear that not all of the exiled beings escaped, though—and the Myrkvars want to conquer them entirely. The Asgardians decide between saving their lost people or remaining safe and hidden from their powerful foes.

In this context: Zeke, Martha, and Elijah are guardians of the fabled and powerful stormerki stones. In a menacing opening scene, Martha is seen alone in the woods, aware that she is being watched and hunted. Indeed, all of the children are in danger, and all have visions and sensations that serve as mysterious warnings to them. And their connections to the stormerki result in amazing powers—while also representing a threat to Vanaheim and Asgard's people.

The book's descriptions of the various landscapes that the characters inhabit are wonderfully evocative. Strange planets with cavernous plants and hints of lost civilizations make for fascinating reading. Further, the children train in deadly virtual reality worlds, honing their fighting skills; contests are held in outdoor stadiums full of excited attendees. Here, even Earth is transformed via mentions of ancient Nordic tunnels, monuments, and spaces hidden in the mountains and rocks. However, the keen establishment of these differing settings sometimes drowns out the book's action.

The three children are reduced to pawns who act in service of the plot; there's little to define them beyond their statuses as special children. The supporting characters are better developed, particularly Odinn, whose "icy stillness" and "six-fingered hands" stand out. He is able to shift his form to match his surroundings. Also fascinating is the book's wily villain, who dupes the heroes well.

Much of the plot is devoted to the children's Asgardian allies working to determine what the children's visions mean; later, a new challenge arises, as people begin to age and die from an unknown, mystical disease. These tense developments push the story toward its explosive final showdown with the Myrkvars—a thrilling, combative conclusion to this series entry.

Nordic gods play into *Vanir, Warrior*, an epic fantasy novel in which powerful magic is used to combat an ancient evil.

JEREMIAH ROOD (September 1, 2021)

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