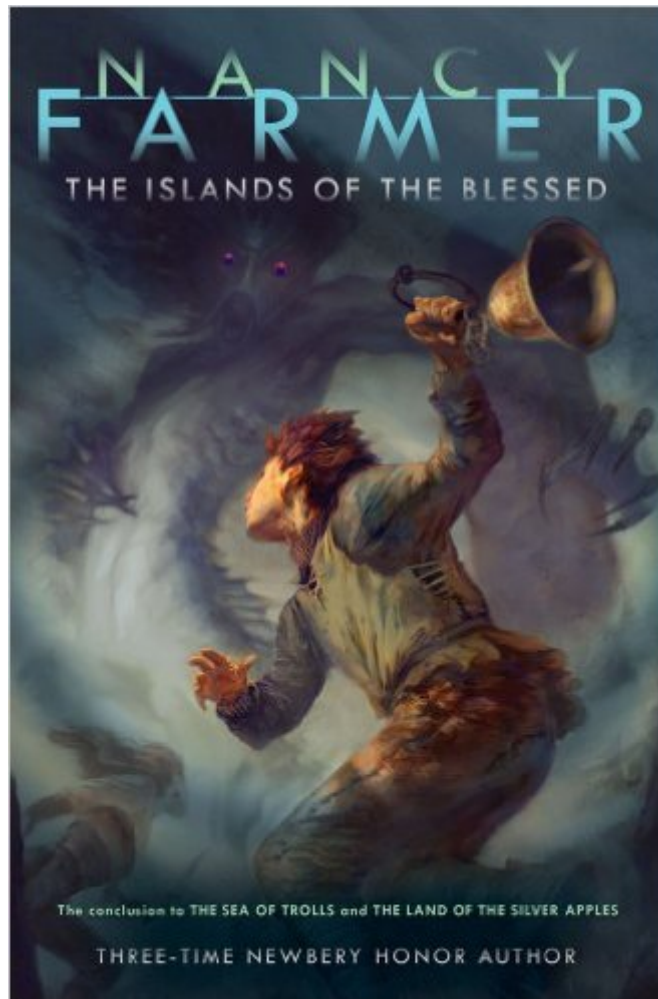


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The Islands Of The Blessed (Sea Of Trolls, Book 3)



Synopsis

In this much-anticipated conclusion to the Sea of Trolls trilogy, Notland is no place to seek one's true calling. Or is it?

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 730L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 479 pages

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Shipping Weight: 1.5 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars See all reviews (46 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #278,987 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #42 in Books > Teens > Science

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Jack, an apprentice bard, and his friend Thorgil, a shield maiden, have survived many adventures together. They have traveled the Hollow Road deep underground. They have visited Jotunheim, land of the trolls. They have even seen Yggdrasil, the world tree. But right now, life seems unbearably quiet in Jack's Saxon village. That is, until the ringing of a magic bell draws unwanted guests. Now, Jack and Thorgil must venture out again to quell restless spirits and right a wrong done long ago by their friend, Father Severus. THE ISLANDS OF THE BLESSED is the third installment in Nancy Farmer's The Sea of Trolls trilogy. Set after the Viking raid of the island monastery of Lindisfarne in 793, her series explores the collision of Christian, Pagan and Norse cosmologies against a background of magic and mythological creatures. The final book also confronts some of the uglier aspects of these belief systems, whether it is the severe penitence Father Severus demands of his fellow Christians or the ceaseless battle that is part of Valhalla, the Northman paradise. As servants of the life force, Jack and Thorgil must put aside their pasts and prejudices to heal the wounds that have been committed in the names of various different

deities. THE ISLANDS OF THE BLESSED continues Nancy Farmer's strong tradition of research. Some of the most fantastical elements of the story come from genuine historical beliefs and superstitions. Her descriptions of Notland, land of the fin folk, are very much based on lore and legend from the time. The same is true of her account of "the flying venom," a name for various plagues that afflicted the medieval world.

In this third and final installment of the series, Jack and Thorgil join the Bard for one last adventure--this time to put a mermaid's spirit to rest. While the story certainly had its moments, in the end it was disappointing as a conclusion to the series. I noticed a slower pace and wandering plot in the second book, but it became much more pronounced in this one. I remember looking down at one point and realizing I'd read 25% of the book, but still had no idea what the main conflict of the plot was going to be. This continued throughout the book, as several themes and plot arcs were introduced, given significant space in the text... but then lacked real significance for the overall plot (such as the Tanners or the princess/bride incident). The ending was abrupt, with no closure to much of the tension in the series (Thorgil and Jack's relationship, Brutus as king/redemption for Brutus, etc.). I was glad it didn't go the everyone-dies direction, but most of my satisfaction was in that it wasn't as bad as it could have been, not that it was good. The religious aspect of the book was ultimately disappointing to me. I appreciated in the Sea of Trolls that Christianity was allowed to stand with the rest, and that even the Bard put in a good word now and then. But by the end of the novel, Christianity/the Christian characters had gotten their wrists slapped more than anyone else. Perhaps the most frustrating moment to me was when Jack calls on the life force at the end of all things, so to speak, he does so almost directly quoting St. Patrick's prayer (I Arise Today)--but without any of the Christian elements. This is such a minor thing, and insignificant in the scope of the plot, but it really got under my skin.

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