



The Amber Isle: (An Epic Fantasy Novella)

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Roguish 'Never' is on a quest to lift a curse on his blood and to learn his true name; but upon joining a group of treasure-hunters he soon finds himself unearthing world-altering secrets that have long lain dormant within the mysterious Amber Isle.

The Amber Isle: (An Epic Fantasy Novella) Details

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Author : Ashley Capes

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From Reader Review The Amber Isle: (An Epic Fantasy Novella) for online ebook

Aderyn Wood says

Never has a curse. It's a useful curse to have at times, as it has saved his life on more than one occasion. But it's a curse nonetheless – or is it? Whatever it is, Never wants to know why he has it and what it means. He sets out on a journey to find out with nothing more than a hunch that the answer lies somewhere in the mysterious and remote Amber Isle.

The Amber Isle by Ashley Capes is a fantasy adventure novella that includes one of my favourite elements of the genre – the quest. We begin at an Inn (which I always love) where we meet our hero, Never. Never is wry, witty and just a touch cocky. While it's frequently secondary characters who get all the best lines in fantasy adventures – think Peregrin Took and Merry Brandybuck – in this book, the best lines are left squarely with the main character, Never. Yes, Never has a bit of a mouth that runs away with him and leads him into trouble, but he made me laugh on more than one occasion.

Capes is a master of imagery, and in this aspect he doesn't disappoint with The Amber Isle. The setting is conveyed beautifully. The political world is in somewhat of a mess as the empire of Malosa slowly falls to the Vadiya invasion. This tumultuous background, though not fully fleshed out, was interesting, and I anticipate we'll be seeing more of it in future installments of the series.

Readers who enjoy action, adventure, humour and a dollop of mystery with their fantasy will eat up this novella. For a short book, it also has an interesting cast of secondary characters and I hope we see their return.

Mary says

Love it!! So much humor packed action! This is definitely a great start to a series.

Phillip Berrie says

Book 1 of a series about a man called 'Never' who is searching for clues about and/or a cure for a magic curse that affects himself and his brother and makes them dangerous to be near when blood is being spilled.

Pros:

The world of the story is, for the most part, low magic and the characters—apart from the protagonist—are normal humans with normal believable goals. To my mind this not only increases the tension but makes their achievements and their deaths seem more real. I was particularly afraid for one character who both I and the main character have become quite fond of.

We get only a small look at the world where the story takes place but we are left with the distinct impression that beyond the pages of the book there is a real world out there with politics and intrigue that have little to

do with and no concern at all for the protagonist. For me this is a good thing.

Cons:

There is only one female character in the book and she is only there for a small part of the story, mainly it seems to save the hero's bacon. There were small hints that she might have her own mission but whatever that might be we will have to wait till later books in the series to find out (see above).

This is a fantasy story that doesn't let up—a real page turner.

Caveat: I won this book in a Goodreads competition.

Duncan says

like the character Never. Book is to short. Rate it a 3 because of length otherwise it would be a 4. Recommend it to those who like adventure stories.

3 because of length. It would be a 4 if longer. . Like Never. Recommend to those who like adventure stories.

Christina McMullen says

Disclosure: I won a copy of this book in a giveaway hosted by the author.

This was a fun, fast-paced read, which is something of a rarity for this style of hero's journey fantasy. Never is an interesting character with just enough mystery to be interesting, but so much that it overshadows his personality. Which, by the way, is wonderful. Never has the quirky sense of humor usually reserved for a side character, but works perfectly for the hero.

Easily recommended for fans of all types of fantasy and epic quest adventures.

Ulla says

This is a great adventure, a treasure hunt, but the main character Never is primarily looking for knowledge about his ancestors.

The characters are well developed, some nice, some dislikeable. The story has surprising twists, it evokes images because Ashley Capes is a master of concise description and this leaves me spellbound.

On his journey Never has to open magic doors and go through hidden passages. This reminds me of the "The legend of Zelda" (Nintendo) adventure games, which I really liked.

The sea creatures are frightful, but not too ugly for me as compared to the Alien in the movies of the same name. There is something strange about Never's blood, but comfortingly it is no vampire story. I'm not so

into vampire stories and there are already enough of them.

The story is always compelling, sometimes urging to read on, but there are also passages to calm down a bit and where things are explained. This is when some danger is passed and Never reflects on what he just went through.

I've read several fantasy stories which were loosely based on „The neverending story“ by Michael Ende, which was my favorite book for some time (now my favorite is „The fairy wren“ also by Ashley Capes). Some of these stories were good, others I did not like because there was too much violence in them. None of them really left me impressed for long, they were too similar, too much imitating their model.

Never's story is something excitingly new to me. I even get flashbacks on scenes from the book, for instance I was walking downstairs yesterday and all of a sudden I thought I had these amber walls around me...

The only thing to deplore is that there is only one woman, the archer in the green cloak at the beginning of the story, and to my regret she did not recur. As I expect that she might appear again in another of the Never books I will not reduce the points. (10/10)

Ben Mariner says

This is how you do fantasy right. We get to know the characters quickly with just enough background info for the story to work, but not enough to bog down the adventure. And that's exactly what this is, an adventure from start to finish. It's fast paced, well written, and highly enjoyable. An action packed first installment to a series that promises much more fun to come. Highly recommend!

Katie Rogers says

Never is searching for answers to who he is, where he comes from. Along the way to the Amber Isle he meets a rag tag bunch of treasure hunters, who he joins. At the same time he is also running from some who wish him dead. Never is cursed, although some say it's a gift, yeah right, he would say.

It's full of adventures, a few laughs, and a lot of fights. Its worth the read.

Bibliophilic Richard says

I received this e-book for free in exchange for an honest review.

To be honest, the book really had a lot of potential with its premise. The problem is, it just wasn't working for me. The first four chapters really caught my attention with the sense of mystery surrounding Never and what makes him so special. After that, everything went downhill. Believe me, I love fantasy and quests will keep me up at night but in this book's case, I really wasn't interested. I didn't like the description as I often found it hard to imagine the setting. I didn't see the logic behind the sequence of events and how everything wrapped up. Despite that, I like Never as a character. He has this spunk that reels you in and an attitude that will make you say "whoa!" a lot. I also like the magic system in this book. Even though it's not completely unique, Ashley Capes made it work and it fit well with the mystery tone of the book.

This book was enjoyable but it's just not for me right now. Time may come that I will be interested in reading it again and who knows, my opinion might change.

Moira says

8.1.2017 - 3,5*

Funny p?íb?h ve stylu Indiana Jones. Nebo mi to tak alespo? celou dobu p?ipadalo, ale bylo to milé. :) Je to takový relativn? pr?m?rný p?íb?h, ale hlavní hrdina mi je pro jednou vážn? sympatický a jsem zatracen? zv?davá, co jeho p?vod skrývá za tajemství, takže rozhodn? ?tu další. *smích*

I'm Booked says

Recently, I've been having trouble getting into every fantasy book that I've attempted to read. I was drowning in a sea of mediocrity until Ashley Capes threw me a life line and helped me reach the shores of The Amber Isle. I quickly lost myself in Never's story and the spell wasn't broken until the last page was turned. I can't wait for the second installment to be released! Thanks Ashley for helping me to rekindle my LOVE of fantasy!

Aly says

I really enjoyed this book too. I love adventure and mystery and a great place to let my imagination go wild. This book did that for me. It caught me right from the beginning! * I received this book from the author in exchange for an honest review*

Tiffany Jones says

I really enjoyed reading this book, which says a lot because I generally don't read novellas. But this one was incredibly well written. The characters were relatable from the beginning, which helped me get to know the characters early enough that I could understand their background info and how it related to the story at hand. I found myself lost in Never's story from the first page and was disappointed to reach the end because I knew I would have to wait until the next book to find out what's next for Never. It's fast paced but not so fast that it makes the story implausible or leaves out so much information that you feel like you've been left out of the entire process. I'm very much looking forward to reading more by Ashley Capes.

Grace says

The Amber Isle is one of those books I didn't seek out. It was "thrust" upon me by a friend to read and review. I have a sneaking suspicion they thought I'd like it. If only they knew the timing in which they gave it to me, they'd realise how much they upended my life as I sat reading "just one more page" as the time ticked by, edging ever closer to the big meetings I had coming up. I kept repeating to myself, "I should be reviewing my notes for my presentation... just let me finish this page, then I'll do that."

Several pages later, I realised I was done with the book. It was midnight, two hours into my normal night of sleep, and I had a presentation to do the next day to win a potential collaborator.

It would appear that all of Ashley's books will do this to me. City of Masks did, so why did I ever think that the characters in a short novella wouldn't be developed? Why did I think the story wouldn't grab my attention?

Characters

Never, a name you won't forget, has a weird affliction. He's out to find answers on the Amber Isles, a mysterious, deadly place. Along the way, he finds others but maintains a distance. His affliction -- a curse or a blessing -- is not something he wishes others to have to deal with.

Louis, just another lost adventurer looking for ways to pass life, endears himself to Never by not being afraid after he sees what the affliction can do. So far he's handy with a spear, a whistle, and even loyalty.

Ashley has a subtle way of showing you the characters. It's more refreshing than a smack-you-in-the-face-with-drama stuff that seems to permeate everything. In this short novella, you get a glimpse of who these two main characters are and their private struggles, but you do not see much more. It's just enough to tease you along in the mystery as you want to know what is wrong with Never, why his history is so cloudy, and what's up with Louis, anyway.

Ashley, in his ever so subtle way, also shows you that each of the characters has compassion, humility, and determination. It should be interesting to see how time and situations affect these two.

Story

Argggh. I was immediately enveloped in a fantasy world with names I didn't understand. They had no meaning, and yet it didn't matter. You got the feeling that Vadiya are tyrants on a mission to take over the known lands and everyone else just seems to be in the path.

Then, you get the idea that Never is hunted. You don't know why, but you cheer for him to find out who he is before the person hunting him catches up -- partly because you want to know what he is and what that affliction really means. The entire time Never is hunted, you feel your heart drop when he might get caught by something that stands between him and the truth.

By the end, I wanted to keep going. Ashley is also really good at cliffhangers that don't seem unnatural. It's frustrating, for now I need second book in both his fantasy series so I don't have to leave the worlds he creates so readily.

Maddalena says

Ashley Capes is a very versatile author: from the high fantasy of his “Masks” series, to the magic-tinged reality of “The Fairy Wren”; from the eerie ghost story of “A Whisper of Leaves” to the Outer Limits flavor of “Crossings”, I always look forward to his works, knowing I will find something different with each new foray into his different declinations of speculative fiction. So, when he asked me if I would read the ARC of this latest endeavor, a tale from a work-in progress collection, I jumped at the chance to sample his return to a fantasy realm.

The main character is a man who goes by the name of Never (an intriguing choice at that...) cursed by peculiar blood magic, something he can control only to a certain point and that makes him an outcast and a hunted man – not only for this but also because he stole some precious maps to the Amber Isle, a far-away, weird place where he hopes to find the answers to the mystery of his origins and the source of his deadly powers.

As the story progresses, we understand that the world Never inhabits grew on the remnants of a once-powerful and more advanced civilization, the kind of theme I find deeply fascinating: the main attraction here comes from the tiny glimpses we are afforded of that long-gone civilization, and the way Never’s questions remain mostly unanswered, while many others are added to the mix, creating a fascinating background that simply begs to be explored.

In his perilous voyage toward the mythical Isle, Never teams up with some treasure hunters searching for the lost riches of the past, and together they face the dangers of the journey: hungry monsters attacking from the sea depths, unsteady rope bridges linking the chain of smaller islands that runs from the continent toward the fabled Amber Isle, weird amphibian humanoids that my mind kept picturing as very similar to the Monster of the Black Lagoon. And again, the traps left by the Isle’s original inhabitants in the temple that’s the hunters’ goal - or maybe not so much traps but long-lost technology that the group simply does not know how to deal with... The increasing pace at which these events unfold makes for a quick, compelling reading, and one I recommend as a good sample of this author’s work for all those who have not yet read his books.

It goes without saying that following Never’s peregrinations will be an involving journey: certainly more comfortable for us readers than for the protagonist, but still filled with harrowing and suspenseful moments.

And since *The Amber Isle* will be published in March, you will have the opportunity to read it by winning one of the five e-copies that Ashley Capes offers for a giveaway hosted on his site. To participate go there and follow the link for the contest. Remember this is only the first installment in the series, so more will come in the near future. Good luck and... good reading!