



Heart of Fire

Bec McMaster

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The old eddas speak of *dreki*—fabled creatures who haunt the depths of Iceland's volcanoes, and steal away fair maidens.

Freyja wants none of such myths. *Dreki* seducing young ladies? Ha. They probably eat such foolish girls. But when the local *dreki* steals her last ram—costing her any chance of feeding her ill father through the winter—Freyja intends to confront the fearsome myth.

Sentenced to a life of exile from his clan, Rurik is fascinated by the furious woman who comes to claim her ram. She reeks of mysterious magic and challenges him at every step. He intends to claim the passionate firebrand, but to do so, he must take mortal form.

It's the only time the *dreki* are vulnerable, and with a dragon-hunter arriving on the shores of Iceland, he can barely afford the risk—but lonely Freyja, with her elf-cursed eyes and pragmatic soul, tempts him in ways he's never felt before. Is she the key to reclaiming his heritage? Or will she be his downfall?

Heart of Fire Details

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From Reader Review Heart of Fire for online ebook

Karina Read says

This was great! I've tried other dragon-shifter fantasy and it let me down, so i was wary starting this series but I was pleasantly surprised as it is really good! The writing is absorbing and well crafted and the protagonists are complex and intriguing. I want to know more about Freyja and her lineage and the dreki court at Hekla sounds so cool. Can't wait to continue this series.

Paula says

An intelligent h. I know I was startled to. Great story. Romance, action. Pleasantly surprised that it is the start of a new series but with so many strings to still tie up I shouldn't be surprised.

Shari Kay says

3.25 ★

I skimmed a bit and that's why I couldn't give it a higher rating. But, I still enjoyed the overall story of Freyja and Rurik and plan on reading the next book in the series eventually. (Though whatshername better have a damn good reason for doing what she did)

Freyja is different. She has mismatched eyes and can control the elements. Her mother wasn't normal either, but never told her daughter how exactly.(frustrating dangling info there) Now, it is only Freyja and her father, and he is blind and sick. She takes care of him the best she can, but the villagers (a particular one) is working against her and they are about to starve. With only one last Ram left to keep her flock going and food on the table, she is incensed when the local dragon steals him for his dinner.

With anger, desperation and the storm aiding her, she goes after what hers.

Rurik is in exile, and has been moping about it for 30 years. The villagers stopped paying tribute and he was forced to go find his own meal. It is only the feisty young miss who brings her rage to his front...cave, and demands the return of the already eaten and delicious Ram that rouses his interest after what feels like a very long sleep.

I loved Rurik, though he was a beta at unexpected times. He realizes fairly soon that Freyja wasn't just a brief conquest for him. In his man form, he is more vulnerable to harm, especially when 2 other dragons from his past enter his territory. But, he's determined to win Freyja's heart and won't give up. He doesn't take...he woos.

Freyja is attracted to Rurik (who wouldn't be) but is rightfully leery. Nothing in her past teaches her that giving her body or heart to a man is a smart move.

I think it was Freyja who lessened my enjoyment of this book just a bit. She was written to be strong and

independent, which she was...sometimes.

She felt the pull toward Rurik and would fight it, until he touched her. She capitulated quite quickly then, and only kept her *virtue* intact for as long as she did because of **interruptions** or Rurik halting things. She was basically all talk in the romance department. Her inner dialogue trying to justify her giving in to Rurik and then swearing she wouldn't was annoying. So though technically it took a while for them to 'get together' it didn't feel like a slow burn because Freyja would have 'given it up' long before she actually did. And this really bugged me (view spoiler) And then the 'conditions' she set for them to be together for one night...another useless justification.

Freyja was brave and badass when Rurik needed her, but then (view spoiler) Still, her actions tainted her character for me.

The next book in the series was set up well, though honestly, I'm going into feeling sorry for both characters, but not liking them much. We will see if BM can change my mind.

Julia says

Enjoyed every minute of this! The dialogue between the MC's was smart and refreshing.

Bubu says

It was okay.

Aly says

Iceland, 1880

Freyja lives with her ill and blind father on a farmstead. She also lives in a world where people have to pay an offering each new moon to the winged creatures they share the Earth with to keep the truce between them and humans. Dreki were created by a goddess when she tore her soul into pieces and gave them powers from the Earth, Air and Fire and they can also take human form. They're sensitive when being called dragons (because they're more like the cousin of dragons) but they still look like them. When one of the animals necessary for her survival is seized by the dangerous beast living near the volcano, Freyja decides it's enough and goes to retrieve it. Only the brave would dare enter the dragon's lair but only the special and mysterious who intrigue the creature with her fierceness and spirit could get out of it alive.

By now I probably said it in every review of her books but Bec McMaster has the knack to create amazing fantasy world-building. This one comes with a glossary, which I'm not a fan of but some of my favorite series comes with a lexicon so it's only laziness on my part ;p Some scenes reminded me of Beauty and the Beast (except with a smooth hero instead of a broody one) but it's not an attempt at a remake or something like that. I absolutely adore Loki the adorable... I'll let you discover for yourself what kind of animal he is but it's not a dog and it's not a wolf but it's a canidae ;p

The ending left some things unresolved (but the HEA we all expect is there) but you can see there's more to come in this universe.

I feel like I lack the words to describe this book properly and to express how talented this author is so I invite you to try any of her books. I've never read one that I didn't like so far and I think I must be close to a dozen now.

Umaiya ?Insignificant September? says

This!

How?

What?!

How does this even exist?

The last time I ran out of words for a book was when I read *The Wall of Winnipeg and Me*. And I mean both times. That is one book I will **never** be able to review, no matter how many times I read it or how old I get. Words can't describe it.

That was in 2016. And once again I'm blown away.

About 40% in I started thinking how this book made me feel and if it would qualify for my reading challenge prompt, "A book that shatters your soul". And I'm still on the fence on that one but I know for sure that this book made my soul ache with so much yearning I'm flat out surprised I'm not a bawling mess right now.

It wasn't a slow burn but it feels that way. The writing was so effortless. Every word filled with such deep meaning. Like every alphabet had a reason behind it.

shakes head

I'm just sitting here right now and sort of laughing at myself cause I'm this hot mess, close to tears because of a combination of words written on pieces of dead trees.

I have to say. This. This is how you write a Dragon Shifter book.

I am hooked on Bec McMaster.

Appalled people don't know this gem exists.

Horried how long it took me get to it.

And Devastated there are only two books in the series for now.

Heart of Fire is about Freyja, a young woman who lives on the edge of her village with her ailing father trying her damned hardest to just get through the bitter winter against all odds and challenges, when the local Dreki steals her last ram and all her hopes of survival.

I loved how you could literally feel her stark hopelessness and that moment where she'd just had enough. It was raw and so real. It was like flipping a switch. One thing. Just that one thing and you stop caring.

That's what happened with Freyja. The lamb stealing just pushed her over that ledge she'd been hanging on to by the skin of her teeth. She'd always played by the rules, paid her tithe when it was her turn, even when

she couldn't afford to pay it, in exchange for the Dreki to leave them alone. So the ram? Yeah.

And that's why we next see her when she's confronting the beast.

When the humans settled in his territory don't pay the tithe he rightly deserves, Rurik decides to take matters in to his own hand and takes the ram off of one of the settled humans. What he didn't expect was the fierce little woman chasing after him for revenge.

A human.

A teeny tiny itty bitty of a mousey shepherdess of a human challenging a Dreki?

ANND, she reeks of magic?

How can you not be intrigued?!

In Rurik's words,

For the first time in decades his interest, long dormant, stirred. The male in him had looked and seen a creature of flame and shadow, of mighty power, utterly bedazzling. A treasure beyond any he owned. He wanted her. Therefore he would have her, and together they would burn the world until he tired of her.

Now the ending left much to desire in terms of closure and unanswered question but I have a feeling there will future books to remedy that and the truth?

I'm in a world of my own.

And

"You're mine," he growled out, and there was nothing to say to that, no means with which to misunderstand him.

Freyja tilted her chin up stubbornly, aware the ground was shifting beneath her.

"Of course it's because you challenged me." His voice turned gravelly. "You're beautiful, but I have seen beautiful women before. No, what captured my attention was your fierce pride and stubbornness. Your determination. The storm brought me a warrior in female flesh, and I knew then that I wanted you. You were utterly glorious that night. Because you challenged me. Because, in all my long years in exile, I have never met a woman who dared."

?★Tinja★★ A Court of Pizza and Laziness says

Romance and Dragons in 1800s Iceland???

ERMAHGERD ????

Annie (Under the Covers Book Blog) says

As you can plainly see, I'm on a little bit of a Bec McMaster kick. After devouring her Dark Arts series, I plan on going back and reading all of the other books she has written. I was intrigued by this series because it's a Fantasy series, something totally different from her.

It's clear that McMaster is able to dabble in quite a lot of different genres. Her voice matches the genre well and I like how she is so readily able to customize her words/voice for this genre.

The beginning of the book moves at a very fast paced and to be honest, I was a little surprised by this. Usually with Fantasy novels, the author takes their time to explain the world a bit more, but since the action makes up for it, I can't really be too mad.

The heroine, Freyja, is a unique one. She's fierce and independent and I love the fact that she wasn't afraid to confront Rurik at all. McMaster always writes really strong heroines, so I guess I shouldn't have been so surprised to see her running headlong towards the dreki.

Rurik has a superior vibe to him, making him feel much more otherworldly and kingly. You truly get the feeling that he is something else entirely and I really loved that. However, the author also does a great job of bringing these two together. There's a lot of tension at first, but then it turns into something else entirely. I really enjoyed watching it all unfold.

Sunny says

3.5 stars ARC Review

Bec McMaster writes the best heroines. Freyja is fearless as she struggles to hold onto what little she owns to protect herself and her ailing father, even if it means confronting the menacing dragon terrifying her countryside. Except he is not a dragon, he is a dreki - an dragon-like creature with magical powers.

The world building in this story is complicate and rich filled with mythology, family feuds, and ancient creatures. Her characters are bold, especially Freyja. She is fierce as she defends herself against not only the dreki, but also the towns people who are wary of her different colored eyes. Rurik is a great balance of grumpiness and vulnerability. He is infused with a noble nature that cannot stand for injustice. My kind of hero.

However, curiously enough, what works less for me is the relationship between the main characters. There is just something missing in the chemistry. The narrative is strong enough that the story is still compelling. I just missed that little extra zing. Nonetheless, this is a strong start to a series and I'm looking to seeing what the author has in store for us.

Gwen (The Gwendolyn Reading Method) says

I like Bec McMaster. I definitely would not start here; it's not her very best. But, as a longtime fan, I enjoyed this one.

LAB? says

This is by far the best dragon book I have read since Dragonbound by Thea Harrison. In fact, it's one of the best fantasy romance books I have ever read. In fact, it's one of the best books I have ever read. I just cannot wait for March for the next book in this series. There were a lot of open issues left at the end of this book I need resolved ASAP!. No cliff hanger - but the story definitely continues for the H and h and other characters as well. It's been a while since a book really grabbed my attention and left me wanting more. So looking forward to more books in this series.

tess75 says

Plutôt 3,5/5

J'adore cette auteure que j'ai connu par sa série Londres la ténébreuse, dont les premiers tomes ont été publiés J'ai Lu. Malheureusement, la maison d'éditions ne manifeste pas l'intention de publier la suite donc j'ai voulu lire ce premier tome d'une autre série pour m'assurer que l'écriture de l'auteure en VO n'était pas trop difficile (et ce n'est pas le cas !). Si j'ai trouvé l'idée de cette nouvelle série originale, puisque l'histoire se passe en Islande et que le héros est un dragon, j'ai moins aimé que Londres la ténébreuse, que j'ai hâte de terminer !

Juliette Cross says

Utterly amazing. Original and compelling take on dragon shifters. But I love everything McMaster writers, so it's no surprise.

(Originally read in an anthology this book was in.) Can't wait to read more of this series!

Aila says

3.5 stars

I've really been enjoying Bec McMaster's books, and I'm so glad I found them on Amazon one day! They are a pretty awesome price on Kindle and the covers are actually really pretty. After enjoying her London Steampunk series (such good stories!), I found out about this fantasy series and was instantly intrigued. I'm so glad I took a chance on this one as well, because I really ended up enjoying Rurik and Freyja's romance, and the delightful *dreka*/Icelandic mythology that McMaster writes in. I would totally recommend this for fans of romantic fantasy!

+ I love the game of seduction Rurik plays that quickly becomes a push and pull with Freyja. At first, he is attracted to her because she has the courage to stand up for herself and actually enter his lair, but then he finds himself respecting her and wanting to protect her. He always gives her a choice when they're giving into their chemistry and is immensely patient.

+ McMaster writes an interesting setting, where dragons and dreki roam historic Iceland, and fairy tales come to life. Freyja herself long ago stopped believing in fairy tales, but being with Rurik might recapture that magic.

+ The romance was just so sweet and wholesome, which I can always expect from McMaster. It's also tied into a larger plot about royals and mysterious powers and whatnot, which guarantees a fun time.

+ One thing I'm a bit miffed at is how rushed the ending was and how many things are left unresolved with this particular couple. I know the next book is going to focus on other people, and wonder if we finally get answers in those next books about Freyja's powers and Rurik's decision? Either way, I'm excited to read about the next characters!

TW: mild violence, sexy times
