



Ransacker

Emmy Laybourne

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Rare powers. Precious metals. Deadly greed.

Sissel Hemstad and her siblings have been living peacefully in a small town in Montana, trying to blend-in and escape the violent events that haunt them, but they've all been tricked -- James Peavy, the handsome young man courting Sissel is secretly a Pinkerton spy.

The Hemstads possess supernatural powers bestowed upon their family by the ancient Norse gods. Now Sissel, the youngest at 16, discovers her gift: she is a Ransacker. She can find gold and other precious metals and pull them to her. Hers is an awesome and dangerous gift.

If James discovers her secret, he will undoubtedly report back to his boss, the ruthless Baron Fjelstad who wants desperately to control the Hemstads. But James is not the only person interested in Sissel. She's also caught the attention of a local mine owner, Isaiah McKray. He is convinced Sissel has a lucky touch when it comes to finding gold.

Sissel is torn between the two men, both determined to have her secrets. With betrayal lurking around every corner, Sissel must tread carefully. Harnessing her powers could summon great fortune... or doom them all.

Ransacker Details

Date : Published January 29th 2019 by Feiwel Friends

ISBN : 9781250134141

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Format : Hardcover 448 pages

Genre : Young Adult, Fantasy, Historical, Historical Fiction

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From Reader Review Ransacker for online ebook

Jana (HokuGirlReads) says

Defiantly worth the read! I liked that this being the continuation of Berserker had a dual perspective from both sisters points of view which offered a redeeming quality to some of the characters. I thought the author did a great job keeping your invested in the story.

BookClub Bestie says

This was a 3.5 book for me. The book just started out a bit slow for me. It did pick up and I ended up enjoying it by the end, but it took a while to get there. I also was not a fan of the main character, personally so I think that played a part of my lower rating. The author builds a great world and has great character development. I enjoyed the writing style as well.

T.J. Burns says

I received a copy of this book from Macmillan Children's Publishing Group via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Ashley says

If you haven't read the first book in the Berserker series, er, Berserker, then its sequel, Ransacker won't make a lot of sense. So, maybe you should go read Berserker. Or you could read about it in the review that I wrote a while back! It's got Henrik Ibsen references... Go ahead, I'll wait.

So its two years after the events of Berserker and now we're focusing on now 16 year old Sissel. Sissel is sick and tired of being treated like a little weakling, with Hanne hovering over her all the time and everyone else making decisions that directly affect her without her input. The Hemstads and Owen, now engaged to Hanne, live in a timber house on a farm outside Carter Montana. Unfortunately, and I'm not sure if you guys are aware of this, but during the summer, the entire Western half of the United States catches fire. Like, all of it. So a giant fire sweeps through the community, destroying the Hemstad's farm - with no hope of enough income to afford to marry, Hanne and Owen take off to join a cattle drive, Knut goes off to work as a laborer on an unaffected farm, and Steig, now the local schoolteacher, and Sissel go to live in the town hotel, managed by the hunky 20-year old Isaiah McKray.

While the Hemstads are enjoying these relatively normal 19-century-Western-immigrant life problems, they have no idea they're under constant Pinkerton surveillance, led by Mr. Peavy and a kid he hired to pretend to be his son, James. The Pinkertons were hired by the evil Baron Fjelstad from the first book and he seems obsessed in knowing about Sissel. James's one job is to woo Sissel, be her suitor and get her to spill her secrets. But the thing is, of course, James actually likes Sissel and is a bit wary of the intentions of the Baron and the Pinkertons.

Poor James has zero idea about the whole Nytte thing, by the way.

At first it seems like Sissel has no Nytte, until a funeral after the fire when she starts to feel something in the Earth calling to her... turns out Sissel is a ransacker, a very rare nytte in which a person can sense metals and draw them to themselves. Like gold. Gold is good. Have I mentioned that Isiah McCray also owns a gold mine outside of town? Yeah, he would very much like someone of Sissel's talent to work for him. And so would the Baron. Sissel has to keep her new gift a secret, but her family needs money and she can sense gold so...what could possibly go wrong?

Lots of things, as it turns out.

Beserker and Ransacker are both the sorts of book that I just start reading and then just breeze through - again, I'm a slow-ass reader, I take breaks, get distracted easily, have to work while at work and do housework while at home...I'm lucky if I can manage 1 book per week (maybe 2 if I have an audiobook on-hand), but with both Beserker and Ransacker, I'd start and then find myself having to drag myself away. Nooo, I don't want to do dishes, I want to read more about magical 19th Century Norwegian immigrants! That's way more fun than scrubbing bits of cat food off the cat dishes. You know who's really good at getting the bits of dried cat food off the cat dishes? The dog. Why can't he just do those dishes and don't say it's because he doesn't have opposable thumbs...

I was going to have this review done sooner but I'm currently at ALA midwinter, drowning in all the books they just give out for free. FREE. the two sweetest words in the English language: free books. Either way: though it may not work as a standalone book, Ransacker is an excellent sequel, and gives a highly satisfying conclusion to the story of the Hemstads. I'm not sure if this series is meant to be a duology or a trilogy or what, but I do know that Ransacker delivers one hell of an ending. I cried. It was great.

Carole (Carole's Random Life in Books) says

Initial Thoughts

Maybe 3.5 stars? I am going with 3 for now but may round up after I get the chance to think about it for a while. I liked this one but not nearly as much as I liked the first book in the series. Sissel wasn't nearly as easy to relate to as Hanne was and I have to admit that I liked the parts of this book that followed Hanne more than Sissel. Unfortunately, this is really Sissel's story so that was a bit of a problem. I didn't hate Sissel but I never felt connected to her and I thought that a lot of the decisions she made were poor ones and she spent way too much time feeling sorry for herself. I did enjoy some things quite a lot in the story and there were a few surprises along the way that I did appreciate.

ARC provided by the publisher via NetGalley. Full review to be posted soon.

Amy says

Many thanks to NetGalley and the publisher for providing me with an eARC of this title for review.

I read *Berserker* last year and was so excited to see that Laybourne was going to continue the series. This

story focuses mainly on Sissel and her discovery of being a Ransacker (this is the Nyette gift of finding and manipulating metals). The only reason I gave it 4 instead of 5 stars is that it started a bit slow, and even though it was mainly focused on Sissel, the storylines also diverged every other chapter early on to cover Sissel, Hanne, and James (a secondary character that wasn't as developed in the end as I would have liked). Besides all of these things, this ended up being a great follow up to the first book. The action is there and I found myself comparing it to the hit *Outlander* at the end. This idea of romance, set in a whirlwind adventurous/rugged setting, with magic, seems to fit that bill.

This is completely appropriate for grades 7 and up. There is some violence, but nothing worse than in other science fiction/fantasy tales. Also, there is no sexual content-just some kissing (and that is sporadic). There is little to no language (only a random "goddammit" throughout). Highly recommend.

Theresa says

I read this ARC via NetGalley. This is a very unique YA series. I loved how the first book, Beserker, infused Norse mythology and Norwegian culture into a family story of settlement in the US, 1880's. The characters were well developed and I felt attached to each of the 4 siblings as well as their guide Owen. Three of the siblings have a Nytteson gift that gives them fantastical abilities.

Since this book focused on Sissel, who was the least likable sibling from the first book, it was hard to adjust to liking her. However, the story unfolded well and the intensity of the story increased as you read. I really wanted more backstory for the secondary characters with the Nytteson gift, maybe in a 3rd book? If you enjoyed Beserker, definitely pick this up. Hanne and Owen go on a cattle drive, Sissel has two suitors, and plenty of untraditional beserker fight scenes.

Misty says

God, Emmy Laybourne has created such a great world and characters with this series.
Full review to come.

Nannette Demmler says

ARC provided by Macmillan Children's Publishing via NetGalley for an honest review.

Wow, this one was just as good as the first. I really enjoy the setting and characters and the mix of the old west with Norse mythology. Plus a strong family that loves each other and will do anything to keep each other safe.

This is Sissel's story. She is the youngest of the four siblings and in the first book she was the least likable. I could relate to Sissel though, I'm the youngest of four too and know how hard that can be. She also did not have a talent, which made her feel left out. But now her talent has manifested, later than the others, and it is one that could lead to disaster for the family. Sissel does grow quite a bit in this story, although her choices sometimes are questionable. She still isn't as likable as her siblings, but she does kind of grow on you.

Hanne and Owen are still involved, although why they were waiting to get married is beyond me. They spend some of the book working on a cattle drive, which was interesting again to read about. This time Hanne was working with the cook and so we got a different perspective of what a cattle drive is like. Her berserker instincts were still strong and important, but for the most part she can control them. Some of the sweeter parts of this book was when her and Owen had some time alone together.

James Peavy and Isaiah McKray are the two men vying for Sissel's attention. James is the Pinkerton spy, but I do believe he genuinely had feelings for Sissel. He didn't really know why he was spying on her and her family, and he didn't completely trust the Pinkertons. But I liked him much better than Isaiah. Isaiah was a bit of a swindler, and he started off just wanting Sissel for her ability. But I think by the end he really did start to care for her.

Steig story unfolds a bit more and I am hoping that the next book is the one that focuses on him. He spent most of this book being exasperated by Sissel, but really wanted to help her with her gift. He is a strong character with a lot of potential for his own story. Knut was not in this book much, but he also would make a good story for another book.

The plot of this book was just as good as the first, although it does start off a bit slow. The ending really makes up for the slow start though. The threat of the Baron is at the forefront of the families issues as is the old warrant for Knut arrest. Keeping Sissel's Nytte a secret is also a main part of the plot. Can you imagine how hard that one would be to hide? I don't blame Sissel for wanting to use it either. It could solve all of the families money issues. I will warn you that there are some pretty brutal violent scenes concerning berserkers and their violent ways of killing. Not quite as bad as the first book, but still disturbing.

I really enjoyed this duology and highly recommend it not to just historical fantasy aficionados, but any one who enjoys historical fiction as well. The detail of the setting will really draw you in.

<https://elnadesbookchat.com>

Shelley says

Sissel is a freaking moron. That is all
