



The Wizard and the Warlord

Elizabeth Boyer

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THE MAGIC IN THE BOX

Sigurd grew up with his grandmother, bothered only by the trolls that seemed bent on destroying their settlement. Then she died, leaving him a mysterious box he couldn't open and a confused warning against some dread warlord or wizard--he couldn't be sure of which from her final ravings. Then the grim warlord Halfdane came to abduct him by force into the Realm of the Alfar.

Now he was a virtual prisoner in the hill fort of Halfdane, caught in a bitter war between light and dark elves. And he seemed trapped on the losing side. His only hope was to escape and somehow learn what powerful magic was contained in the box and which everyone seemed bent on stealing from him.

Of course, there were a few walking dead, a cursed sword, and a multitude of savage trolls to be faced. But the strange wizard Jotull was willing--oh, very willing--to help him!

The Wizard and the Warlord Details

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From Reader Review The Wizard and the Warlord for online ebook

Ian says

It has been over 20 years since I read it, and I still remember the basic storyline, so it must have had a lasting effect. While not a "deep" novel by any means, it was an entertaining read and I could empathize with the characters, though thinking on it now, the antagonists were definitely one-dimensional - evil just for the sake of being evil, rather than having some logical reasons behind that stance.

Mike (the Paladin) says

I'm still trying to run down some of Ms. Boyer's novels. I found them first some years ago (like 20) and snatched up as many as I could find new and old and am still looking for them. These are great reads with great prose and I am close to giving them 5 each time, but feel they aren't quite up to the way I feel about say, Lord of the Rings or Deed of Paksenarion. I'd go 4.5 if I could...and I "at least plan" to read them again. It sort of depends on available time.

Mark Noonan says

Take the high rating on this one with a grain of salt. I read it when I was much younger and some amount of nostalgia may be coming into play.

I might have to read it again, I remember it being really short.

Arwen says

The was written by the same author who wrote the book that last year I snarled at the Big D for trying to make me put it down. While this book wasn't snarling good, I still enjoyed it. One thing that makes it interesting is that it delves into Scandinavian mythos with using the gods or Valhalla, so you learn a little about the lesser known elements of Scandinavian lore.

Stuart Macmartin says

I suspect I read this book before, because there were 2 scenes and one event that seemed familiar to me. Maybe I remembered what was in the box. Or maybe it was obvious. So the book must have managed to make a few lasting impressions while being otherwise utterly unmemorable. For those moments and the fact that I persevered this time through, this story gains its perhaps undeserved two stars.

It's really hard to identify with a character who is so utterly immature, arrogant and stupid. He's surrounded by people who are blatantly transparent in their guile or lack thereof, so I felt the author thought the reader

almost as stupid as Sigurd. Sigurd is told outright that one person is still alive, yet he remains convinced that he is not, and later parts of the story depend on this.

The writing is almost adequate. It has several significant flaws. Much of the story is told rather than exposed. In some of the fast forwards, there's an "oh, by the way I guess I should have told you this" feel: Oh, by the way, he learned how to do that thing I mentioned over the winter; Oh, by the way, they were married over a year ago. Many sentences try to be cleverly worded but the end result is unclear antecedents or other ambiguities that force re-reading. And the behaviour of all characters seems questionable. All characters in this book, from warlords to magicians to grandmothers to constant companions are stupid. Just not as stupid as Sigurd.

Ethics and morality seems to be another failure. There are two examples at the end of the book. One is very obvious. I wonder who else notices the second?

Rachel says

I bought this as a teenager and just decided to reread it. I still like the setting, a fantasy world based on Scandinavian mythology - there are Alfar and Trolls and restless dead men wandering from their graves. Unfortunately, the plot depends a little too much on the hero being kinda stubborn and thick. There were several points where I wanted to slap some sense into him. Admittedly, some of the other characters clearly had the same urge, so this wasn't bad writing but a deliberate choice. I still got annoyed. YMMV.

Lexi says

Meh, a little too adolescent boy drama for me but a good story otherwise.

Don says

Loved all of her books. Fantasy tales in medieval Scandinavia setting. hate that she quit writing these.

John says

Not one of Boyer's best, but still fun to read more about the Sciplings.

Kat says

This is the sort of book that as soon as the setup is done you think "OK, so X is going to happen" and then have to wait for 80% of the book for the quite heavily telegraphed thing to actually happen. I'd say that this is possibly the best of this (mediocre) series so far - the writing is definitely a bit better than the first couple of books - but it is blighted by a phenomenally stupid hero.

Gill says

It reads like a bad fanfic. Maybe later. (But probably not.)

Jonathan says

Assuming it doesn't manage to kill you, a sending can be a lot of fun.

Nick says

Pulp fantasy, yet something about it is worth a 4 rather than a 3. Maybe it was because I read this a long time ago?

Heather says

Read this whole series as a teenager and loved it! I've been trying to think of the author's name for at least a month and it finally came to me yesterday!

Medieval fantasy with a Scandinavian setting.

David Elsensohn says

While the story's conflict feels like a cautious shrug, it remains an interesting piece, with Scandinavian-myth inspired characters. Sigurd, the youngish protagonist, deals with the loss of his home and his beloved grandmother, only to be swept up with the very people she had warned him about. He struggles to understand a different world of magical folk immersed in a permanent war.

The protagonist, Sigurd, is meant to fill the role of young, impetuous, reluctant hero, but seems maddeningly young. He complains (a lot), makes demands, insists that he's going to do something or other, then doesn't, making him seem ineffectual. Even though he has been lied to, he is often horribly, frustratingly obtuse, despite obvious dangers and intentions of others. He does get to be the hero sometimes, although the book's strengths lie more in the area of description, world-building, suspense, and mythology than in action.

Boyer maintains a compelling ambiguity with the characters Sigurd encounters. The good guys may not be as good as advertised, and the bad guys are surprisingly pleasant and polite, at least to Sigurd, whose services they want. Everyone, really, except for bloodthirsty goblins, seems pretty nice to each other, and no one ever gets to a point of being properly backstabby and hateworthy. If anything, one feels appreciative of their having to put up with Sigurd's grousing (Rolfr, at least, remains Sigurd's steadfast, irrepressible friend throughout, and is likeable. He makes a superior Moonglum/Samwise/Wulphere to Sigurd's

Elric/Frodo/Cormac Mac Art). Why is Sigurd the hero? Because he's the focalizer of the narrative.

This contributes to a feeling (by this reader) that the story doesn't quite commit itself to anything: (view spoiler)

All that said, it remains a fun read. The writing is elegant, the descriptions compelling, and the moods well-developed.

Tim Franklin says

Even more so than the previous volume (The Thrall and the Dragon's Heart), I just didn't care. This time, not even enough to finish it. I put it down, picked up another book instead, and went from "I kind of want to know how this ends.. better slog on" to "I want to know what happens on the next page, right now!". Then I remembered that's how reading is *supposed* to make me feel. Life's too short and my shelves too full for poor-to-mediocre books.
