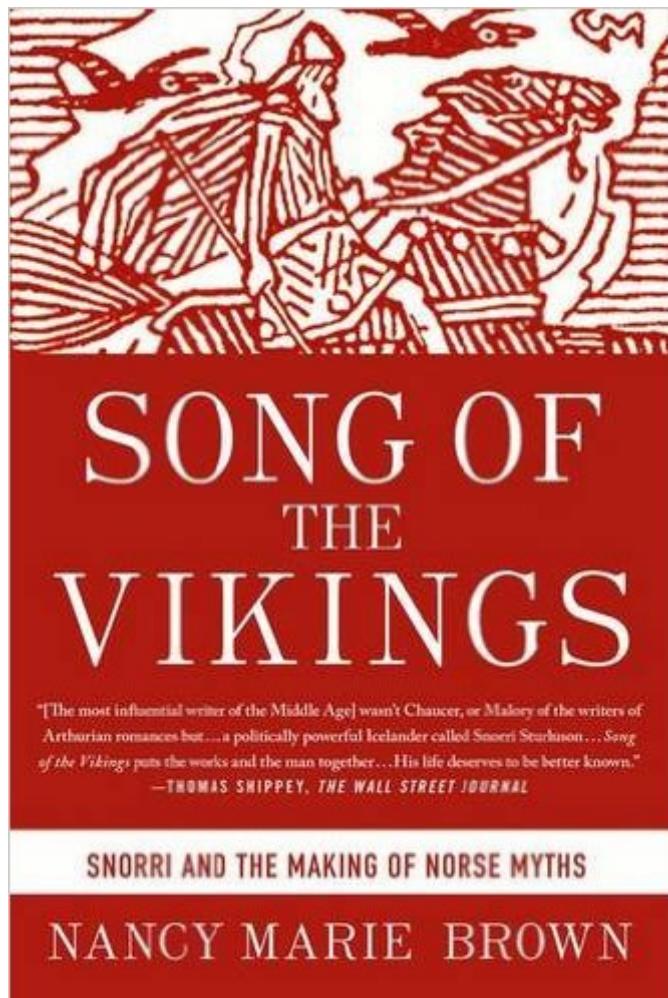


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Song Of The Vikings: Snorri And The Making Of Norse Myths



Synopsis

An Indie Next pick for December 2012, *Song of the Vikings* brings to life Snorri Sturluson, wealthy chieftain, wily politician, witty storyteller, and the sole source of Viking lore for all of Western literature. Tales of one-eyed Odin, Thor and his mighty hammer, the trickster Loki, and the beautiful Valkyries have inspired countless writers, poets, and dreamers through the centuries, including Richard Wagner, JRR Tolkien, and Neil Gaiman, and author Nancy Marie Brown brings alive the medieval Icelandic world where it all began. She paints a vivid picture of the Icelandic landscape, with its colossal glaciers and volcanoes, steaming hot springs, and moonscapes of ash, ice, and rock that inspired Snorri's words, and led him to create unforgettable characters and tales. Drawing on her deep knowledge of Iceland and its history and first-hand reading of the original medieval sources, Brown gives us a richly textured narrative, revealing a spellbinding world that continues to fascinate.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Overall, there is much of "Song of the Vikings" that I find very clever and make the book worth reading. Nancy Marie Brown spends a great deal of time tying Snorri and the myths themselves together, explaining why certain myths reflect points in Snorri's own life or how specific characters like Odin connect to Snorri himself. This not only injects the book with nice interludes of mythology but reminds the reader why we might be reading this book: Snorri wrote these myths down (if he didn't build some of them on his own altogether), and now we want to know about Snorri. However, while this Snorri/mythology thread weaves throughout the text very successfully, overall I find "Song

of the Vikings" a rather patchwork tale. Historically, Brown jumps all over the place. She often mentions someone, offers their entire life story from the get go, and constantly repeats these details throughout the narrative as they actually become important. While this may help someone remember all the names/dates/details, this gets very repetitive very quickly. It also makes it almost impossible to keep track of the time period in certain places, such as what events are happening when. Since so much of this story hinges on when someone is king or when so-and-so was a chieftain, this is an unfortunate and devastating flaw. My next issue, and it is a related one, is that I didn't see enough Snorri. Brown is obviously very well-versed in this history and literature, and she has a great deal to talk about. However, what often happens is Snorri will have some incident with someone who Brown then goes on a five page tangent about, only to rush back to Snorri as though this tangent in no way took away from the narrative.

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