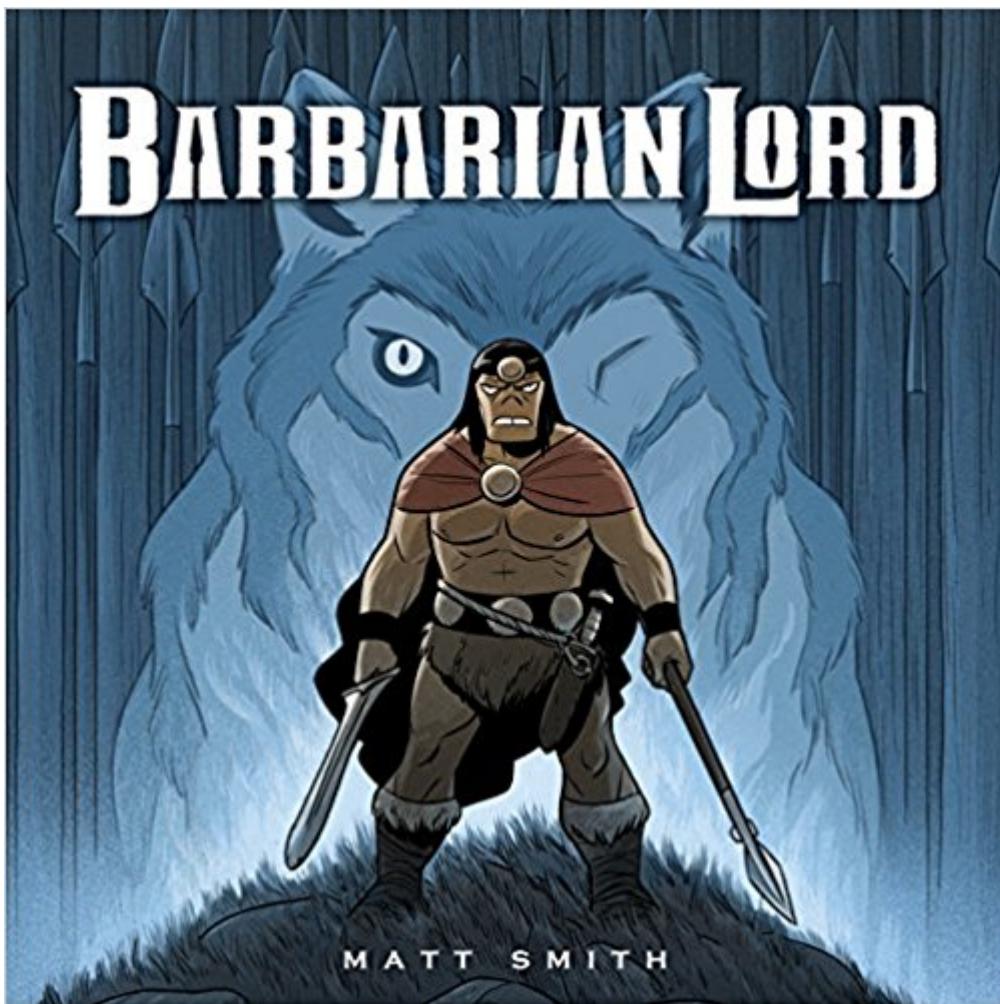


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Barbarian Lord



Synopsis

"A sword untried is a sword untested," says one raven to another as they set out to witness the fate of the finest farm in Garmrland and its owner, Barbarian Lord. When he is cheated out of his lands and banished, Barbarian Lord begins a quest for allies and for justice, encountering monsters, ghouls, gods, and mediocre poets along the way. Combining the rich traditions of the Vikings and Nordic lore with sword-and-sorcery-and slyly understated humor-this graphic novel introduces an original hero with classic flair, brought to life in Matt Smith's beautifully drawn, detailed, and action-filled black-and-white illustrations.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 47 customer reviews

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Gr 7-10 •Smith's debut graphic novel has guts, gore, and glory set against a harsh, Viking-influenced backdrop. After being exiled from his home and stripped of his lands by his enemies, the Barbarian Lord has but one goal: revenge and victorious return to his kingdom. He's got the anger and the muscle to take back his territory, but to get there, he'll have to go through snowstorms, face down trolls, and outwit skull-faced poets. With furrowed brow and clenched jaw, the Barbarian Lord is a scowling, merciless warrior of a bloodthirsty era. Interesting callbacks to Norse mythology will make this graphic novel an easy pleaser for fans of Rick Riordan's books and K. L. Armstrong and M. A. Marr's "Blackwell Pages" series (Little, Brown). Clean, blunt lines and

unapologetic vicious (if mostly bloodless) fight scenes make for a unique art style choice, but the illustrations often seem out of sync with the narrative. An easy summer reading pick for middle-grade graphic novel aficionados and reluctant readers. —Clair Segal, Horace Mann School, New York City

"This plot is nothing if not action-driven, the multitudinous battle scenes and abundant swordplay (and excellent sound effects) making this an excellent choice for readers interested in Game of Thrones but who perhaps aren't quite ready for some of its more mature subject matter." —Kirkus "All bend knee and hail! Barbarian Lord!" —Previews "An easy summer reading pick for middle-grade graphic novel aficionados and reluctant readers." —School Library Journal "An accessible, memorable thrill of a graphic novel." —Bulletin

Barbarian Lord fell into a nice sweet spot for me. One, it was released on my birthday and I just had to get a present for myself. Two, I'm a sucker for Norse sagas. Three, I grew up on a steady diet of Tolkien, Thundarr, He-Man, and Conan; things the author was inspired by and that I seen little influences of inside this graphic novel. I spent a lot of time looking into each of the panels. The author, Matt Smith has a simple, but complex art style. The choice to go full black and white with grayscale was a good one. Even though a coat of drab color (does any other color exist in Garmland?) would help the reader visualize the story, I think the grayscale palette helps give it an almost dreamlike quality. Imagine yourself closing your eyes as someone recants the epic of the Barbarian Lord and you'll 'see' what I mean. Unlike most Barbarian heroes, the lead in this story is a warrior-poet... More Egil's Saga than Conan (well, maybe a little more Conan). The dialogue is fantastically written and the story is paced very well. Again, I got the feeling of listening to an old warrior recounting the story of his past than of just experiencing it as it happened to him (another Howard influence). Although I just finished it, I can't wait to read it again.

Throw together the magical, mystical lands from Dungeons & Dragons, the adventures of Conan, comedic styling of Hellboy, add a dash of loose Nordic mythology, and you have Barbarian Lord. After being outlawed from his homeland for his crude and oftentimes violent ways, by his fellow Garmlanders, and the silver-tongued Skullmaster from Skullheim (who has his eye on Barbarian Lord's farmland), the Barbarian Lord sets out on a quest for revenge to regain his farm, and home from the conniving plots of the Skullmaster. These adventures lead him across the ocean to the land of a king, and into fierce battles with trolls, ghosts, and sea serpents. Matt Smith is

a top notch cartoonist whose designs simultaneously carry both the levity and grim surroundings of the Barbarian Lord's world. Smith's page flow is easy to follow and his plot keeps a good continuous pace throughout. All the art is black and white with grey scale shading which while well done, seems like an odd choice with a target audience of preteens. It shouldn't stop an older crowd from recognizing the work, but may stop a younger reader from initially gravitating to this book. Barbarian Lord is filled to the brim with sword fighting barbarian action, monsters, and even some poetry that are sure to leave your sword and sorcery entertainment needs (in a summer overflowing with science fiction work) quite fulfilled.

This is a fun take on the Nordic Sagas with a dash of humor added for good effect. I liked the narrative of the birds and their hip banter (hip if you're a barbarian). The art is superb, and while it is black and white, I didn't miss the color. The grays give a moody quality evoking a particularly foggy Icelandic winter. If you loved Conan and other assorted Barbarians as a kid and want to rediscover that world give this book a try.

I laughed out loud at the dry wit, while also marveling at the illustrations and creative melding of Icelandic tradition and Conan. The author's note about 'kennings' enhanced my appreciation of the text. The author clearly had a lot of fun not only drawing, but writing this. His choices for onomatopoeic words were hilarious and inventive . . . and really spot-on. That's exactly what getting hit with a barbarian club would sound like. I'm sure of it. This was a fast and hugely enjoyable read. I can't wait for the next one. We bought extra copies to give as gifts.

This is a departure from the horror/superhero comics I usually read. Having said that, I enjoyed this immensely. The artwork is awesome! I love Matt's style. There is a lot of energy and emotion in the human figures. His trolls and monsters are fun and menacing. Equalling his art, his writing is great. I am in awe of someone who can write and draw at the same level. This book is really well done and I would recommend it to anyone who enjoys humor mixed with their sorcery and sword stories.

This graphic novel is hard to pin down. It is at once a clear insight into the mind of its creator, and yet, despite the fact that we can see every influence and joy that created the sensibilities of the writer, it still somehow feels unique. It helps that it never takes itself too seriously. It is ridiculous, witty, cute, violent and above all fun. On top of all this, the birds within the Barbarian Lord are all well drawn, I can't vouch for the rendering of its trolls.

This graphic novel is exceptionally illustrated with rich detail. The story is what would likely happen if the poetry of Icelandic Sagas and the He-Man cartoons from the 80s had a love child and I mean that as a form of flattery. The humor is dry but there are a few moments where I may or may not have guffawed out loud while reading it. Highly recommended for anyone 8 and up who enjoys fantasy adventure.

A fun, entertaining adventure. It is, of course, in black and white, but the characters are full of life. I loved the hints of Scandinavian-mythology-esque lore to it.

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