

# A Short Note About Language

When the British monks first started to record the history and literature of their land, they wrote them in the Old English language but used the Latin alphabet instead of the pagan one. This was mainly for practical purposes, since Latin was spoken in nearly every European country at that time, usually by other priests and monks. The Roman system of writing was convenient, economical, and comprehensible to foreigners.

The problem, however, was that a few sounds used in English as it was at that time didn't exist in Latin and therefore had no letters to express them. To fix this, they decided to use the letters for those sounds that they already had, which came by way of the Scandinavians. A few of these letters and sounds were:

Þ, þ —called “thorn” and pronounced like the “th” in “thin”

Ð, ð —called “eth” and pronounced like the “th” in “then”

Æ, æ—also used to represent a vowel sound that was like the “a” in “ate”

Then England was conquered by France in 1066, and the English language went underground—all documents were written in Latin or French. When it started being used officially again several hundred years later, they didn't use any of the

old letters or even most of the old words. This was the start of Middle English.

However, everyone living in Niðergæard and nearly all the knights who were already sleeping when this was happening didn't know of this change and a lot of them still use the old letters, which is why you'll find them in these books.

Ælfred - AYL-fred

Cnafa - KNAF-ah

Cnapa - KNAP-ah

Ealdstan - ee-ELD-stan

Ecgbryt - ETCH-(ye)-brit

Gád - GAAD

Godmund - GOHD-mund

Frithfroth - FRITH-froth

Kelm Kafhand - KELM KAHF-hand

Modwyn - MOHD-woon

Niðergæard - NI-thur-gayrd

Slæpismere - SLAYP-is-mare-eh

Swiðgar - SWIDTH-gar

yfelgóp(es) - EE-fel-GOHP(as)

# Reading Group Guide

1. Freya and Daniel live with the knowledge that there is more to the world than what most people understand. How does this knowledge affect each of them?
2. “Black ops” officer Alex Simpson is committed to fighting the forces of evil. Do you believe that the presence of evil can physically manifest itself in the existence of malicious creatures? Do you believe, like Ecbryt, that “there are places that are more enchanted than others”? Where and why?
3. Despite his grim situation in life, Daniel feels as if he belongs to another time, to a greater purpose. Do you believe a person can choose his or her own destiny or that it is chosen for him?
4. Though Freya declares that her time in Niðergeard was the worst thing she’s ever gone through, Daniel fondly recalls it as the best thing that has ever happened to him. Why do you think two people, going through the same experience, have such different perspectives? How did Freya’s and Daniel’s experiences define each of them?
5. How are Freya and Daniel alike? How are they different? Why do you think they were each chosen for this task, and why were they chosen to do it together?
6. What parts of Freya’s and Daniel’s lives do you think were reality, and what parts were deceptions, meant to entrap them?
7. Daniel says, “I think I’d rather die doing something than die doing nothing.” How does the ideal of being a hero affect Daniel’s determination and course of action in the book? Does this ideal affect Freya’s perspective?
8. Freya has the opportunity to kill Gád and falters. What prevents her from completing the quest set before her? Why do you think she lies to Daniel about what actually happened?

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