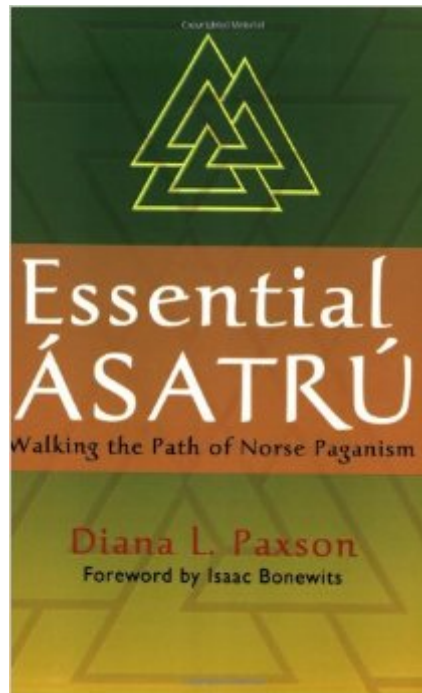


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Essential Asatru: Walking The Path Of Norse Paganism



Synopsis

Diana L. Paxson provides a clear and concise history of Asatru - a living religion that encompasses the magical practice of the Norse and Germanic peoples - and also provides thorough instruction on how to practice it and make it a part of everyday life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

When I received this book, I racked my brain trying to figure out why the author's name was so familiar. By the time I got to the acknowledgements, I had the light bulb go off in my head. Ms. Paxson is the very same author who penned those wonderful fiction books with Marion Zimmer Bradley. These very books were my introduction into the worlds of magic back in my 20s. I settled in for what I was sure was to be a very enjoyable ride. Each chapter starts off with a scene from a Heathen ritual. From this scene the chapter goes off into small segments of history, customs or mythology based on Norse Paganism. The chapters are divided into three sections called "Rounds" and follow the lines of a typical Heathen ritual. The first section (Round one) is dedicated to Heroes and Ancestors, the second is for Gods and Goddesses, and the final one is entitled Toasts, Boast and Oaths. Following these sections there are some pages with resources, a bibliography and an index. I'm not sure an index is necessary though, as the main body of the book is barely 200 pages long. This book is a basic introduction for a non-Heathen. It is very lean and briefly touches on many topics. It was an easy read and did not require much effort from the reader. I would have liked to see more of Ms. Paxson's story telling ability in evidence in the mythological sections instead of a bland recounting of the facts related to each personality. Although I have been to several boasting

rituals in the last few decades, I really wasn't aware of many of the backgrounds behind the rites. This book cleared up many of my misconceptions and some of my ignorance on this fascinating branch of Paganism.

There are a few books out now that offer a general overview of Asatru, and for the novice, I think this is the best one to start with. Diana Paxson has a great way of writing, and the book is a quick, fun read. I certainly don't think the aspiring heathen should stop there - the book IS of course only a brief introduction, but it covers the basics and provides plenty of resources to continue with. One thing I like about this book is that TO ME, at least, it seems that the author made a very solid attempt to remain un-biased. (Although I see that some here disagree). Remaining unbiased is very difficult in Asatru, because the source material is so far removed from us and thus rather mysterious and difficult to interpret. Thus, each scholar makes his or her own interpretations, and obviously every person has their own biases and pre-conceived notions that they can't help inserting into the lore they read. There is absolutely NO authoritative overview on Asatru, because each author colors it with their own biases. That is why in Asatru it is ESSENTIAL that a person read as many authors as possible (both those considered 'liberal' and those considered 'conservative') and read the lore themselves, and then make their own determinations. The remarks here about feminism, by the way, I don't even understand where they got this from. Is it because the Goddesses are given equal weight to the Gods? I don't see any other basis! But where in the lore does it say that the Goddesses are less important? I have a feeling that perhaps some people didn't really read the book, perhaps they just assume that a female author can't possibly write a good book on Asatru. Anyway, I do think that Ms.

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