



## Talus and the Frozen King

*Graham Edwards , Clint Langley (cover)*

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**Talus and the Frozen King** Graham Edwards , Clint Langley (cover)

Meet Talus-the world's first detective.

A dead warrior king frozen in winter ice. Six grieving sons, each with his own reason to kill. Two weary travellers caught up in a web of suspicion and deceit.

In a distant time long before our own, wandering bard Talus and his companion Bran journey to the island realm of Creyak, where the king has been murdered. From clues scattered among the island's mysterious barrows and stone circles, they begin their search for his killer. But do the answers lie in this world or the next?

Nobody is above suspicion, from the king's heir to the tribal shaman, from the servant woman steeped in herb-lore to the visiting warlord whose unexpected arrival throws the whole tribe into confusion. And when death strikes again, Talus and Bran realise nothing is what it seems. Creyak is place of secrets and spirits, mystery and myth. It will take a clever man indeed to unravel the truth. The kind of man this ancient world has not seen before.

## Talus and the Frozen King Details

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Author : Graham Edwards , Clint Langley (cover)

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# From Reader Review *Talus and the Frozen King* for online ebook

## Bookwraiths says

Originally reviewed at Bookwraiths Reviews

*Talus and the Frozen King* is a good old-fashioned murder mystery set in the Neolithic Age. It is a short novel, written in a simple, straight forward style where every word counts for something, and if it reminds you of a traditional mystery in the vein of Sherlock Holmes, you are not alone, since that seems to be a consensus of most reviews. However, where that similarity might be a negative for some novels, Graham Edwards does a good job of using the historical setting to make this more than just another mystery novel.

The story itself takes place on the small island of Creyak, where King Hashath is found dead and frozen in the village commons on the very same morning that two wanderers appear in town. Naturally, these two strangers are our protagonists throughout the book: Sherlock Holmes and Watson – sorry, I mean, Talus the bard and Bran the fisherman. These two immediately are suspected in the bizarre fate of the island's ruler, but Talus – ever quick-witted and silver-tongued – convinces the king's eldest son and heir to allow him to undertake an investigation into the identity of the real murderer.

No mystery is ever simple, however, and neither is the king's strange demise in this peaceful locale. Talus and Bran find themselves delving into the strange world of isolated Creyak and its island people. Old enemies of the king materialize. Family secrets rear their ugly heads into the light of day. And very quickly, all clues begin to point toward one of the king's own sons being the killer. A situation that promises nothing but imminent danger and possible death for Talus and Bran!

All in all, Mr. Edwards delivered a very enjoyable murder mystery with *Talus and the Frozen King*. It is a fast paced, intense whodunit mystery that starts out slowly but gains steam as Talus and Bran grow closer to the big revelation of the true murderer of Creyak's king. While it has little, if any, fantasy elements that I could personally see, it is still well worth a quick read by any book lover!

I received this book from Netgalley and the publisher in exchange for a fair and honest review. I'd like to thank both of them for allowing me to receive this review copy and inform everyone that the review you have read is my opinion alone.

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## S.B. Wright says

The tagline reads "Introducing the worlds first detective". If you have ever wondered what Sherlock Holmes crossed with the Neolithic era might be like *Talus and the Frozen King* will give you a reasonable idea.

The reader is introduced to two travelling companions on their way north following the Aurora Borealis in the hope that it will lead them to the place where all the worlds meet and one of the characters will be given one last time to talk to his dead wife. On the way they come across a settlement and hear the voices of people wailing. Never one to overlook a mystery Talus and Bran (who is having second thoughts about their journey) make their way towards the village where they find that a King has been murdered. Talus and Bran, are the only ones who can unearth the killer, but first they have to disperse the fog of suspicion that crowds around all strangers in this cold and isolated village.

The parallels between Sherlock Holmes and the two main characters are, I think obvious, and deliberate. Talus, the book's Holmes is a story teller, a bard who doubts the existence of the spirit world, who sees truth in patterns and concrete evidence but who has difficulty with emotions and understanding love. Bran, the Neolithic Watson, is a disfigured ex-fisherman, with a temper and a good axe-arm. Talus pieces the clues together and uses Bran to tease out the connections in much the same way Holmes does with Watson. We even have a criminal mastermind.

Talus and the Frozen King works well enough as a mystery and at keeping the reader guessing with a plethora of possible suspects and some interesting personal relationships. Where it fell down for me was in some of the world building. Edwards does a good job with the creation of the landscape and the physicality of the setting but a couple of things dropped me out of the flow of reading.

Now Talus and the Frozen King is set in the Neolithic age, aside from physical evidence left by these peoples, there's not much for a writer to go on, you're essentially writing fantasy. I found some of the names in the book jarring, they didn't seem to ring true to either historical names (which is fair enough, you try finding a neolithic baby name clay tablet) nor any sort of naming/cultural convention set up in the world that's been created. I felt as if the names were drawn from periods of history much later than the setting ie Talus is a Greek name, Tia an Egyptian queen from the 19th dynasty, Bran, a welsh name from the 12th Century. There was a chance here I think to create a certain verisimilitude by having names that could be linked to the culture in some way.

How powerful and important are names to a book's world building? This is highlighted in the name of Lethriel, one of the major characters in Talus and the Frozen King. If you dear reader are not automatically thinking of an eleven princess you are lucky. Such is the power Tolkien's pseudohistory/myth on the genre. It is such a seemingly small thing, but I felt there was a missed opportunity to spend a bit more time on the names of characters and how they might connect, support and evoke the setting. Especially since it looks to be a continuing series.

The second issue I had was with an instance of what felt like klunky back story exposition early on in the book that explains some of Talus' history. It's necessary for a later reveal but I was really conscious that I, the reader, was being told this information for a very important reason. I like my back story drip fed a little more.

I think what Edwards has tried to do is ambitious, how do you create a Holmesian character in a world where philosophy, science and logic are still in their infancy. How do you create the world's first detective without it feeling like it's Holmes and Watson in bear fur. I think the answer lies in exceptional world and character building. Which in all fairness is perhaps beyond what the author had scope to produce. You can have a pacey murder mystery set in the Neolithic which is a fun, light read or you can spend 10 years trying to produce something resembling Hild.

The landscape was beautifully evoked but I wasn't entirely convinced of the Neolithic world the characters inhabited in a cultural sense. I felt Talus and the Frozen King was still a fairly modern Holmesian murder mystery (and a reasonable one at that). So if you like Holmes and Watson-like characters in your murder mysteries and you are tired of the body count in Midsomer, give it a go.

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**Dave Cairns says**

Inconsistencies and grammatical errors. Predictable. Just read it to finish it.

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### **Kris43 says**

IDK...

not impressed.

its a fantasy-mystery hybrid with predictable plot and characters who are i didn't care about, much.

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### **Jessica Strider says**

Pros: intricate mystery, interesting characters

Cons: slow opening, characters never seem to sleep

Talus, a widely travelled bard, and his companion, Bran, a former fisherman, arrive at a Northern island the day after their king has died. A quick examination of the body reveals that the king was murdered, and Talus offers to help find the killer.

Talus is basically a neolithic age Sherlock Holmes. He examines the evidence and observes the world closely to see what others miss. And while he doesn't use much in the way of scientific deduction, he is highly observant and has a personality that alternates between charming (when he's telling a story) and abrasive (when he's exhorting Bran to pay attention and see what's happening around him). Also like Sherlock, he's not very good when it comes to relationship matters, and so tends to miss some of the human clues that crop up.

Which is where Bran comes in. Bran is hot tempered and still grieving the loss of his wife and the use of his right hand, which was seriously injured the day she died. He misses a lot of subtle clues but prompts Talus with regards to some of the more human elements of the case.

There are two strong women from the isles who have fairly prominent roles, while maintaining historical deference to the men around them.

The mystery is complex and while it takes a while for the more intricate details to come up, by the end of the book there's quite a knot of intrigue to untangle.

This is historical fiction and the only fantasy style elements - if you can call them that - are the character's beliefs in various gods and a judgement style afterlife.

My only complaint with the book is that the action takes place within a few days and the protagonists are constantly on the move. Even after Bran exclaims his exhaustion he and Talus never seem to actually sleep, as they deal with one crisis after another.

The book is fairly slow moving, focusing as much on character as on the mystery. If you like historical fiction and/or interesting mysteries, give this book a try.

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## **Mogsy (MMOGC) says**

4 of 5 stars at The BiblioSanctum <http://bibliosanctum.blogspot.com/201...>

Well now, this book was a pleasant surprise. Meet Talus, touted by the book's description as the world's first detective, which is indeed as marvelous as it sounds. The book has the feel of a Sherlock Holmes type mystery set in an icy Iron Age inspired fantasy world, but what really clinches this one that our "detective" is a bard! If you don't know, I have a serious soft spot for those traveling poets and teller-of-tales types.

Written in the tradition of the classics by Arthur Conan Doyle or Agatha Christie, I found Talus and the Frozen King to be a very enjoyable whodunit complete with all the ingredients that makes a good mystery. Talus, a wanderer and collector of stories, is a clever man and not without his little quirks. Then, because every good detective needs a trusty friend and assistant, we have stalwart Bran, who is the Watson to his Sherlock. And just to tease this book even more, let's just say a true detective also needs an arch nemesis a la Moriarty, but that's all I'll say about that in this review!

I very much enjoy stories like this. Talus and the Frozen King is a quick read, tightly told with a clear direction and goal in mind, but the author still leaves plenty of room to develop the characters and define the world around them. The setup is admittedly simple but still very well done; after all, most of the activity is mainly confined to an island, where the king of the local settlement has been found murdered under bizarre circumstances. No one is above suspicion in this plot-driven mystery, not even the king's six grieving sons, the women who love them, or the tribe's shaman, who all have their reasons to see the old ruler dead.

As the reader, I was given the chance to engage in the very same process of deduction as Talus carries out his investigation, through interviewing suspects or gathering and interpreting the clues. In the interim, I also got to learn more about Talus and Bran individually, discovering the motivations that drive them as well as the details behind their unique relationship. It added an extra layer to this story, rendering the situation more than just another mystery to be solved, because along the way I grew to care about these characters and became invested in them.

Nothing is as it seems. Names are continually added to the suspect list, then scratched off again as more clues come to light. As death strikes left and right, you can practically feel the urgency in the atmosphere as times begins to run out. Of course, you're not going to be getting a ton of information about the wider world out there due to the tight focus of the plot, but we still get plenty about the culture, traditions and myths of Creyak island and its people, and for such a relatively short novel, I think it packs a lot of emotion and tension.

There aren't a lot of books like this out there, that's for sure. While there's a strong element of fantasy in this one, at it's heart it really is a variety of your good old detective story. The prehistoric ice age setting garners huge points from me, and like I mentioned, so does our protagonist being an eccentric bard. I think both mystery and fantasy readers alike will feel right at home with this one. A very entertaining and fast read.

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## AnHeC the Paperback Obliterator says

**Word count:** didn't care enough to estimate (not too long, though)

**Rating:** Only if I'm stranded on an island and there's nothing else to read (like a dictionary, 'cause I'll take a dictionary over this any day)

*\*ARC provided by NetGalley*

I didn't feel like writing a review when I've finished this. Two weeks (or so) has passed and I still don't want to do it. I guess I have to accept that the desire to review this one won't come. Ever. And just force myself to type a few coherent sentences.

I didn't like this book. I didn't like it at all. It didn't have me enraged or anything. It's simply not enjoyable.

### **Writing:**

Awkward as a duck. A blind duck. A blind crippled duck. A blind crippled duck on acid. A blind crippled duck on acid made of jello that feeds on lost hopes and dreams. I'm not impressed.

### **Main character/s:**

a tall, bony storyteller in his 40's (or something)

+ his sidekick: a crippled fisherman that is very lonely and lost everything and now is just like 'fuck me' 'fuck you' 'fuck everybody' and is an impatient idiot with no self control

When you put a storyteller in your book and he tells some stories that you, the author, actually relate to the reader, you better be a fucking amazing writer to pull it off. It's really hard to write a charismatic bard. It is. So if you can't do it, don't try. Can you taste it? That's my disappointment. You made me weep embarrassment for you. Congratulations.

### **Story:**

Just fuck you. **Boring as shit.** And as unoriginal as possible.

Additionally **I didn't give a flying fuck about anything or anyone.** There was no time (or reason) to like/connect/start caring about any of that stupid shit.

And that book has no point. As far as I know it's not a part of a series. Meaning the whole, boring fucking thing that came out of nowhere is going to the 'nope' land.

Oh, wait, it is a first part of a prospective series? Well, I can't fucking wait for the second instalment (did you feel my sarcasm slap you across the face? DID YOU? Good.)

**Conclusion:**

It didn't make me angry. Just fed up with everything and everyone. God, it reads like something I could've written. When I was 15. In fact, I'm pretty sure my stories were better than this.

**My advice:**

stay away from this one.

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**Tom says**

I would give this 3.5 stars. It was a compact tale, and was pretty interesting. I'd classify it as borderline fantasy as it features an invented culture, but there aren't any real supernatural elements. It's set in our world, in a neolithic culture somewhere in Northern Europe. It's stone-age Sherlock Holmes, absolutely and unashamedly. The dynamic between the main characters is very Holmes-Watsonian. There's even a Moriarty-like figure revealed near the end, who will surely menace Talus and Bran in future books.

The nature of the crime and the ensuing mystery weren't mindblowing, and the ending held no immense reveals; but the big cast of characters and all their secrets kept me interested. The open ending, almost certainly setting up a sequel, was pretty good.

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**The Shayne-Train says**

This book was simply a pleasure to read. Think of it as a prehistoric mystery.

Other reviews of this I've read liken the main characters, Talus and Bran, to Holmes and Watson. I can totally see that. Talus is one of those knowledgeable, deduce-the-hidden-truth-at-a-glance types, and Bran is his capable-but-yet-always-a-step-behind companion.

The difference, to me, is that some chapters are told in Talus's POV. This doesn't really happen with Holmes, where the tale is normally told by Watson in a semi-awestruck, bromantic flavor. But in this book we get to step inside the mind behind the genius. We're given tastes of the experience behind the deductions, and shown that Talus is just a man. A wise and observant man, but still with his own doubts and flaws.

What really did it for me, though, was the setting. Men are about two shambling steps above cavemen in this. No wheels, no forges, just fire and rock and wood and bone.

Also, this gives a very clever twist to the classic 'closed room' mystery. It's set on an icy, windswept island that has been closed off by its overbearing king.

I'd recommend this for fans of mystery, prehistoric fiction, and pre-religious spiritualism.

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## Gemstreet Reviews says

*Talus and the Frozen King* is a fantasy novel set in the Neolithic Age, where people like intelligent detectives, philosophers and adventurers with gifts of rational and logical observations were rare. The cover of the book however, shows not a Neolithic man, rather a more medieval looking man. The armor is too sophisticated. An error in itself. Also I saw no elements of fantasy in the book. There are concepts of spirits and the afterlife, but nothing to place it in the fantasy genre. This book was a Historical Mystery to me.

Talus and his companion Bran are the Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson of the Stone Age. The similarities and character traits are too obvious to overlook. Now whether this is deliberate, a copy or an homage didn't make much of a difference to me, though it obviously makes it difficult to not draw comparisons instinctively. However, my observations have nothing to do with this issue.

Talus is a mysterious, highly intelligent bard accompanied by his friend Bran on a journey to the far north. They are following the Aurora Borealis in the hopes that it will lead them to a place where, they've been told, worlds meet and time converges; where they may find answers to their own personal quests.

Bran, a former fisherman, is almost at the end of his tether, travelling in the harsh, barren lands in extreme winter. He has lost the drive to seek the mysterious place. But before he can leave, he and Talus hear wild screaming coming from an island down the cliff where they stopped for the night. Talus persuades Bran to check out the dangerous looking island to see what ails the people on it.

They find the island's king sitting frozen on the ground, naked, surrounded by the villagers. The wailing they heard was the mourning women. Talus quickly deduces, to everyone's shock that the king was murdered, not frozen to death, and convinces his son, the king-to-be, to let him find the murderer so he can answer for his crime.

The rest of the story is about how Talus, through his observations, draws logical conclusions and finds out information to solve the mystery. Bran is his short tempered friend, with a few demons of his own, who though a bit slow, manages to see and understand things that escape Talus. Together they get embroiled in the lives of the people of that disturbing island, whose shadows are not safe for anyone.

*Talus and the Frozen King* is mostly a well written novel with an interesting and fairly intricate plot. The world building is well done, and the story very atmospheric. From the very beginning you sense that Creyak is a creepy, uneasy place and it remains so throughout the book.

There are just two female characters in the novel and both are strong, intelligent women who add depth to the story. I really liked that they weren't the helpless kind or barely there characters.

Coming to the protagonist, Talus is a bard and of course, he narrates a few stories in the novel. I found him to be an unimpressive bard. His language did not seem all that different from the others, but more than that, his storytelling skills were nothing to boast about. When you have a setting and atmosphere like this one, and the character is narrating something, the stage is set for something great. Something that pulls you in, where the words twine and twist through the air, weaving a web of sensations and rapture. Talus failed, quite badly. His oratory was not strong, and his tales too short, some even incomplete and interrupted.

Even his roundabout conversations with fellow humans, especially when he is explaining a clue, or an obvious fact, weren't always pleasing and fun. And most of the time as the novel was moving towards the

end and the answer, his explanations were half formed, incomplete. Too many distractions and cuts to delay the reveal, hence frustrating. Talus's cleverness had a forced quality to it. The withholding of information from others and hence us, got a little irritating after a while and made the conversations, the transition in scenes and the story stilted and wandering. This led to Talus not being as impressive as his fellow characters and the author make him out to be.

Bran is a little too stupid for my liking even though he contributes to the solving of the mystery in a way Talus can't. He understands human emotions and sees their connections. But most of the time, he's impatient and foolish. His tragic back story makes you sympathise. However I didn't like his attraction to, and fascination with, a female character simply because of her resemblance to someone in his past, and found it unnecessary. And I didn't feel the chemistry between him and Talus. You don't feel the bond that forged between them in the past and which has kept them together as a team.

There were also a few contradictions and mistakes on the characters' observations and reactions. The story began well. But as it hurtled towards the end, it was too rushed. The mystery itself was going at a languid pace even as the action wasn't, which was frustrating. The answer was forcibly delayed and interrupted constantly.

Another issue was that the characters seemed to not require sleep. Talus and Bran were already exhausted when they came to the island, and yet they don't sleep for even a few hours for the next few days. They are constantly on the move from one part of the village to another, or doing something or other.

The surprise twist at the end was a definite shocker. It was completely unexpected. Overall the story had promise but it has been weakly characterised and fails at execution. I hope the second book is better.

Review posted on Gemstreet Reviews

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### **Richard says**

A nice change of pace. Not really fantasy but not really historical fiction. Talus and Bran both have pasts that have driven them far, far to the north in search of where the Northlight touches the world. Both believe that only in this place do all worlds, even the afterlife, converge and anything is possible. Even reuniting with a lost love one. On this journey they reach land's end and the island of Creyak. Creyak is in tumult because the king has just been found dead outside in a common area. Of course Talus and Bran are given blame, but Talus is determined to find the truth. This book was a pleasure to read because of the size of the print and length of the chapters. My only beef with the story was how Tharn, the dead king's eldest son, doesn't know what a net is on page 38 but by page 259 he is comfortable saying 'as a fisherman casts his net'. Seems like an oversight. Regardless, this is a minor thing and it does no harm to the story. Check it out if it sounds interesting.

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### **Nathan says**

Fantasy Review Barn

A nice little diversion here, I forgot how readable murder mysteries can be. And that is what Talus and the

Frozen King is, a cozy little mystery set in the frozen north of an ice age. Not a lot more, but nothing less.

Talus is a traveling teller of tales with an eye for detail and an obsession with not leaving the unknown alone. He is joined on his journeys by Bran, the sidekick who is always a step behind the reasoning Talus is putting forth to piece together all the little puzzles in life. Their travels have taken them north, into the frozen lands, each searching for something different within the same thing; spirits in the aurora borealis. But along the way they end up in an isolated little village right as they discovered their king is dead. And you better believe Talus is digging into this mystery.

Let me tell you what I can't judge this book on; the mystery itself. I have no idea how to judge such a thing, have not read a mystery since a small Tony Hillerman run back in late high school. I saw where a few things were going, was a bit behind Talus a few other times, and was never real annoyed by info being hidden in ways that felt like cheating. For me it worked, for a die hard mystery reader? I couldn't tell ya.

What I did enjoy about this book was a fairly unique setting. The Frozen King of the title ruled over a village. A census of his kingdom could probably be done from memory. A much smaller setting than I am used to reading about, but it worked well for its purpose. The ice age setting was very different from most anything I have read. When Talus is eying the 'riches' of the king's home he is looking at shelves with bones instead of the usual riches. Fire is still precious enough that we get glimpse of many rituals behind it from different places seen through the eyes of Talus.

Likewise Talus was an engaging character, even if he was the most obvious Holmes homage in the world. Not the literary Sherlock, though admittedly it has been ten years since I last picked up Doyle. But rather he fits with what most of us think of the man; complete with Bran as Watson. Eventually we even meet his Moriarty. I wanted so bad to avoid the comparison, but the more I thought about it the less I was able to ignore it. It does feel more like an homage than a rip off though, so don't let it scare you.

What I didn't enjoy so much was the way the book went Clan of the Cave Bear on us. Never have felt it particularly clever to drop in small references that seem to pinpoint the invention of ideas. Talus inventing maps during a murder investigation, when he is a world traveler, didn't do it for me. Nor did brothers coming up with checkers out of boredom. It is good enough that we have the world's first detective, let's not get overly clever.

A fun little mystery with a different setting, this made a great cleanser between longer books.

3 Stars

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## **Jasper says**

originally posted at: <http://thebookplank.blogspot.nl/2014/...>

Last year saw a sort of emerging of a new trend, blending more of the crime solving/detective in a fantasy setting such as epic and historical fantasy. Most of the urban fantasy stories have this element but it wasn't often seen in other fantasy genre. I enjoyed Drakenfeld by Mark Charan Newton a lot, which also featured crime investigation in an historical setting and when I saw the release Talus and the Frozen King I had to read this book. Talus and the Frozen King is written by Graham Edwards who is well known for his The Ultimate Dragon Saga and his The Stone Trilogy. Talus and the Frozen King is his latest book and kicks off a

new and exciting series.

When I started reading *Talus and the Frozen King*, one thing directly came to mind. I have been a fan of the series *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* and one scene sprang to mind. There is this one episode where Grissom relates a story from I think feudal Japan where *CSI* was "invented", a brutal murder was carried out in a small village, a man's head was decapitated but no suspect was found, one wise man forced every villager with a shovel to stand in the sun and eventually the shovel of one man attracted flies... indicating that he had blood on his shovel and was thus the suspect. It is exactly this feeling that I got when I read *Talus and the Frozen King*. Graham Edwards neatly blends in the Sherlock Holmes feeling into his story, producing a one-of-a-kind read.

In *Talus and the Frozen King*, you follow the adventures of the traveling bard Talus and his friend Bran who are on the search of something traveling North. All of a sudden they hear screams coming from a village and Talus is drawn to find out just what caused these screams. They stumble on the dead king Hashath. The villagers presume that he just died of natural causes but Talus already starts to connect some dots and finds evidence that Hashath has been murdered. In his wake Hashath leaves behind six grieving sons... however due to the high amount of rivalry between the sons all the fingers start to point in their direction, that one of them must have murdered their father... Now that the murder has been made public, Talus finds himself intrigued to find out who murdered Hashath and why. I have to say that I thoroughly enjoyed the story of Talus. It's just what you want to read in a detective story. A nice case study, evidence is piling up that hardly makes sense to you and eventually a clever plot twist that will make you say out loud: "Why didn't I see this any sooner". Added to this is that Graham Edwards doesn't produce a simplistic story at all. Though the story is contained on the island of Creyak, Graham Edwards involves a lot of other factors into his story, relations good and bad with people from different islands. This nicely broadened the whole scope of the story. And Graham Edwards further shows that you don't need to write a lot to achieve this as *Talus and the Frozen King* is a fairly short read. He makes every word count.

As for the characters in *Talus and the Frozen King*. Talus himself makes up for an very interesting protagonist. He is a traveling bard and always has a good story at hand. He is very smart and first takes in everything of his surrounding before speaking or making a judgement. He isn't primarily a detective. Talus more drawn to finding out the things that make life go round and when opposed with an murder case to which no person can yet to be put to blame, it's for him to good an opportunity to let pass. What really made Talus's character great for me was the whole setting of the book, the neolithic atmosphere. There aren't any fancy tools that Talus can use to solve this murder, he has to rely on his observational skills, quick mind, sharp tongue and the questions he asks. Next to Talus you have his trusty companion Bran. Bran has a dark past and partly relies on Talus to show him a direction in life, Bran has lost the one person he loved in his life and this haunts him daily. Talus and Bran are on some front pretty opposite each other, where Talus lets everything sink in before acting, Bran acts on the fly and this produces some very frustrated scenes but also some very funny and humorous ones. Bran is the trusted sidekick to Talus, whenever Talus needs something Bran is by his side to do it, but don't think that Bran is just a mere follower. He does have his own opinion ready to let loose. I think this makes their relation even more dynamic and unpredictable. Besides these two main characters of the story, you do get to get acquainted with several of the inhabitants of Creyak. Mainly the six brothers and the village shaman. From the different brother I really enjoyed reading the story of Tharn. He is the eldest brother and heir to the throne so I more or less naturally comes down that he is the most likely one to have killed Hashath... Another side character that makes you think twice is the village shaman Mishina, it seems that his motive might not be that virtuous at all... .

One thing that caused me to be drawn into the story was the way that Graham Edwards write his story. I already mentioned that he writes in a minimalistic kind of way when it comes down to word, but this doesn't make the story a bad one at all. No, the way that he executes his story more shows that he is an great author and knows what he does and what he wants. There is no trade off in terms of character development and worldbuilding. It's by the investigation that Talus and Bran lead that you get to learn more and more about the island of Creyak and the eventual goal that Talus and Bran have, following the Northern Lights. What I like to see in a detective is to have the author "interact" with the reader, especially when it comes down to revealing clues and seeing how the character react to it. Graham Edwards briefly states facts and a short interpretation by Talus when he discovers something new but does allow you yourself to think about what it all could mean and sort of carry out your own investigation. This is something that I really enjoyed, even though I was wrong... When eventually the murderer was designates, at about 50 pages before the end, I had some reservations about if the book would have climaxed to soon, however, by revealing the murderer Graham Edwards readily transforms his story and a bigger plot twist, the actual reason behind the murder comes to show. Perfect!

Talus and the Frozen King is a unique book and to be honest I hadn't thought that the book would turn out the way it did. I had some expectations of the storyline but Graham Edwards went above my expectations. He has brought a Sherlock Holmes kind of feeling back to the neolithic era. The main protagonist is great to read about he has many essencetric habits that make him interesting, added to it is that he is a bard, not your average detective. This makes him very versatile and doesn't pin his character down as only solving crimes as the series continues. Definitely recommended for everyone who wants to read some new and exciting!

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### **Rob says**

...As a mystery I don't think it is the best I've ever read. Talus needs to do a bit too much explaining for the whole thing to make sense. That being said, the novel is a quick and entertaining read. Not heavy on history or bogged down by archaeologic detail, Edwards keeps the story going at a brisk pace. The mystery set before the reader in the opening chapters is fully resolved by the end of it but Talus and Bran clearly have a past and from what we get to see of it, I would be surprised if Edwards meant to keep it to a single volume. *Talus and the Frozen King* is an entertaining read that offers plenty of opportunities for further adventures. I for one, wouldn't mind seeing another one of these come my way.

Full Random Comments review

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### **edifanob says**

Mystery, history and detective story all in one.

Graham Edwards did a good job.

A bard and a former fisherman who try to solve a crime a log, long, long time before Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson.

I liked the story a lot and I really hope there will be at least one more book to explain the past of Talus the bard.

One thing I could not really understand. I know detectives are strong but as long as they are human they need some sleep. But it seems Talus and Bran "forgot" to rest ....

Nevertheless if you like a detective story set in a time long ago mixed with northern myths then you should not hesitate to give it a try.

In a couple of days I will add my full review.

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