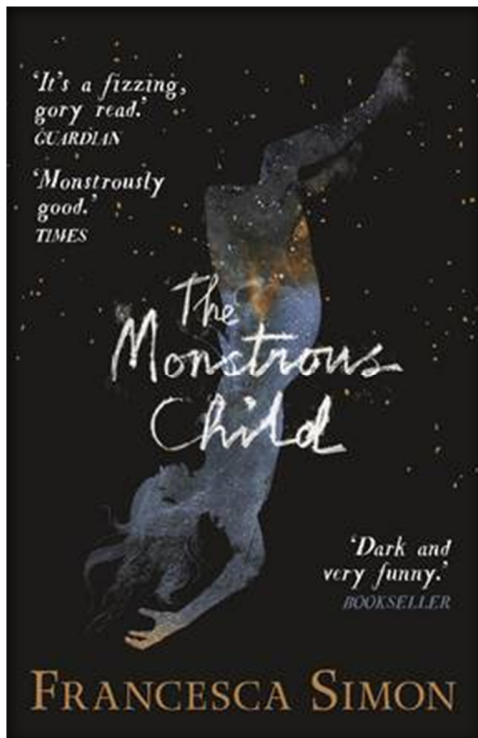


LoveReading4kids Reader reviews of **The Monstrous Child** By Francesca Simon

Below are the complete reviews, written by the LoveReading4kids members.



Rose Roberts, age 13

It's one of those books that is so good you find it hard to describe. Emotional, this book is page-turning in a different way. It isn't full of action, but you read it at a speed as if it is.

It is set in the eyes of Hel, the queen of Niffleheim: the underworld of the commoners in Norse mythology. She is often depicted as evil, but in this book, you see it from her point of view - and you start to realise how it really isn't her fault that she acts the way she does. You don't need to know anything about Norse mythology before you read it, but if you do, you start to understand the contrast between the

different views. I recommend this to fans of Magnus Chase. It tells the story from when she was born, to well in the future after Ragnarök - the End of the world when everyone is foretold to die (including the gods) and the spirits disappear from her realm. I really strongly recommend this book to anyone 11+, including adults.

Katie Adeniji, age 16

'The Monstrous Child' is an interesting read that - despite its dark undertones - will intrigue a reader looking for a witty and cynical heroine to fall in love with.

Based on Norse mythology, 'The Monstrous Child' is about Hel, the Queen of the Dead and how she ended up where she is. Throughout the novel, Hel's sharp and

cynical personality gets to the reader and becomes endearing as we see what she goes through. Despite its dark undertones her character is easy to relate to as the reader can relate based on the adolescent she has.

<http://ultradreamologistblog.tumblr.com>

Sidney Greenslade, age 13

'The Monstrous Child' is a compelling, fantastic and unbelievably vivid tale of Hel, a girl with a strange impediment and a life-changing story to tell.

Hel isn't any old goddess, nor is she an average teenager. Hel is the Queen of the Dead, and for a reason - her legs are that of a rotting corpse. Looked upon as a blight, a thing to be feared, something disgusting and shameful by all the other gods, Hel feels hurt and angry that nobody can see past her festering legs to the normal, unhappy girl inside. Hel's two animal brothers disgust her, but when they are all kidnapped and taken to Asgard, the land of gods, she finds that all three of them will need to fight to survive. Joramund is thrown into the ocean and Fenrir is buried alive while Hel is thrown into the dark, hostile underworld to be Queen, decreed to rule there until the worlds crumble and the mighty gods themselves are destroyed. Hel, trapped, desperate, lovesick and with hatred flowing through her veins, creates a fortress, a hallowed hall for all dead where she, Hel, can finally pass the laws. But up in Asgard, buried and bound in his pit, her blood brother Fenrir strives to break free, her snake brother, Jorgamund, writhes in the depths of the ocean and her trickster father, Loki, starts on a path that could destroy both worlds forever.

'The Monstrous Child' absorbed me completely. Compelling and incredibly, even scarily, vivid, I found myself utterly lost in Hel's beautifully described world. I could smell the smells, hear the sounds and I simply couldn't put it down! When I read it, I really felt like I really was Hel, experiencing the pain, the loss and anger that she was put through throughout the tale. I can only say to the author; thank you so much for writing this story!

Eloise Mae Clarkson, age 14

*This book focuses on Hel the daughter of a God and a giantess. She has been cast off into Niflheim (The Norse Underworld) and is the queen of the dead. I enjoyed the fact that the characters were recognisable gods. I love how the novel fused mythology and the story together. The ending hinted that there possibly may be a sequel which I am hoping for. **It was an enjoyable read and I***

would rate it five out of five stars.

Ella Bourke, age 12

Every single fantasy character you could think of lies within these pages. This book is not for the faint-hearted and not about lovable princesses.

This is a novel and interesting book. Every single fantasy character you could think of lies within these pages-from gods and goddesses to giants and dragons.

The book is written in the style of a diary, written by central character Hel. Forced to become the Queen of the underworld by Odin, King of the Gods, Hel tells you all about her miserable life. Hel's brothers, Jormung and the snake and Fenrir the wolf, were foretold to overcome the gods at the end of days, they were banished by the gods to stop this happening and Hel was banished too. Not her fault, not her choice, she never asked to be the underworld's Queen. This book is not for the faint-hearted and not about lovable princesses. In places I found that the story line became a little complicated and I would have to read it several times before its meaning was fully understood, however, this would appeal to readers liking a mystery as they would have to try to solve the meanings. I think this book is suitable for both boys and girls of 11-15.

William Longlands, age 13

6/10. Despite the low score I would recommend the book, especially if you want to find out about Norse Gods.

*This book was OK, but I would have preferred to be guessing more. It's a good book if you want to know about Norse gods a little bit. I already knew a lot and I may have liked the book more if I didn't, as I would not have known what was going to happen. The book is about a half corpse half girl who becomes a god but not one she likes. **The book is very descriptive and tells you lots so I would recommend it, especially if you want to find out about Norse Gods.***

Talia Jacobs, age 15

'The Monstrous Child' is an interesting, gory read incorporating Norse Mythology! Great for 10-13 year olds. Hilarious and amusing,

dark and gruesome, sorrowful and lovely, all in one!

A book which will definitely appeal to those who have an interest in Norse Mythology. Also, although this book is the third in a series, it is aimed at an older audience (though it is still great for 10-13 year olds) compared to the two books prior, and can be read as a stand-alone book.

Meet the very sarcastic, quite hilarious, and snarky main character, Hel. However, while I did root for Hel, much of what she did was whine and moan and she was full of self-pity.

The language was delightfully dark and grisly, but also had some lovely and some sorrowful parts.

A large part of the plot was rather slow, though there was also quite a lot of exciting action, thought-provoking scenes, and a wonderful ending. The slow, repetitive parts of this novel were even referred to by the main character to emphasise how long she had lived and how tedious and mundane living where she was is; so as-long as you don't mind a slightly dragging pace, you will be able to experience just how Hel feels.

At the beginning of the book, I thought that there were a few inconsistencies with the timing of events and contradictions of feelings, albeit some of these were solved, and others irrelevant.

I cannot say that this book is an absolute favourite of mine, but it is definitely worth the read; a compelling storyline, with an amusing main character and enticing language. This book also comes with gorgeous illustrations at the beginning of each chapter!

Chadwick, Melanie

A very dark tale based on Norse mythology which is steeped in death, disappointment and hatred.

The monstrous child is Hel, with a god for a father and a giantess for a mother, she is born full of vitality and healthy up to her legs which are rotting corpse limbs. As she is already half dead she is banished to be queen of the underworld, to live in darkness with the dead until the end of days. I found it a very bleak and uneasy read as it was unremittingly dark, and Hel hates everyone and everything except the beautiful Baldr, the god whom everyone loves. Even this love turns to ashes and it's not until after the total destruction of three worlds that Hel begins to see some light and a possible new way of living.

Edel Waugh

This is a story based around Norse Mythology. The story is told through the eyes of Hel, unloved and unwanted daughter of a giant and a God. She is a half dead child, her siblings are a wolf and a snake and the story begins with her own slithering birth into the world. The story is dark and grim with a real sense of menace and hopelessness. This foggy dark world Hel lives in has a dream or nightmare quality to it where just about anything could happen.

The world building in this book is exceptional, from the opening pages you know this is not going to be a light and fluffy read and with that known read on!

I would recommend this to those who like stories about the Greek gods.

Ruth Ward, Library & Resources Manager, Great Torrington School

You will be surprised at how this original story flows from the depths of darkness with strains of sarcastic humour. The Norse Goddess of the dead, Hel, tells her own ghastly story...deliciously loathsome tales await you...

Kyra, age 17

Doused with a concoction of mythology, a sassy narrator with a biting tongue, a world suffering under the vindictive reign of the Norse gods written in a darkly comical manner - you'll be bewitched.

'The Monstrous Child' would be brilliant for people who have a basic grasp on Norse mythology and who adore a protagonist with a fiery temper and a fierce tongue. Describing the hellish plains of the raging, blackened underworld in a lyrical manner that conjures perfectly the bleakness of the deadened land and these evocative images are accompanied by sorrow keenly felt by the reader, I felt quite caught up in the world Francesca Simon had reimagined. Luckily, Hel's cynical voice - comprised of melodramatic, sarcastic quips - transformed the dismal tone into one that is comical, albeit quite dark. Although I personally found a few problems with this book, it was an enjoyable read nonetheless.

<http://www.blogofabookaholic.blogspot.com>