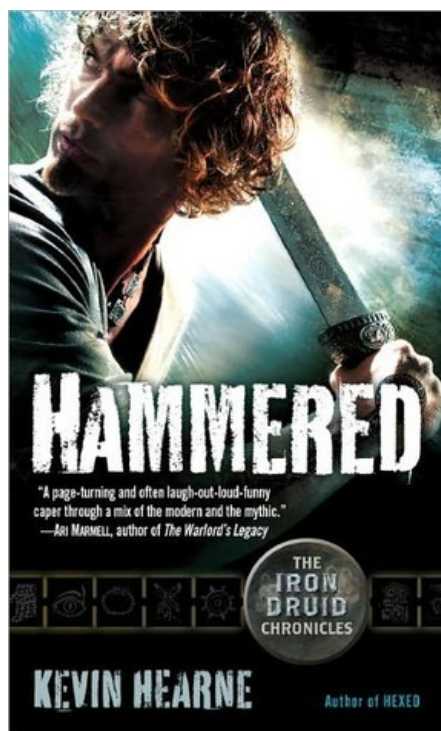




Hammered

Kevin Hearne

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BONUS: This special eBook edition includes a bonus short story set in the world of the Iron Druid Chronicles: "A Test of Mettle."

Thor, the Norse god of thunder, is worse than a blowhard and a bully—he's ruined countless lives and killed scores of innocents. After centuries, Viking vampire Leif Helgarson is ready to get his vengeance, and he's asked his friend Atticus O'Sullivan, the last of the Druids, to help take down this Norse nightmare.

One survival strategy has worked for Atticus for more than two thousand years: stay away from the guy with the lightning bolts. But things are heating up in Atticus's home base of Tempe, Arizona. There's a vampire turf war brewing, and Russian demon hunters who call themselves the Hammers of God are running rampant. Despite multiple warnings and portents of dire consequences, Atticus and Leif journey to the Norse plain of Asgard, where they team up with a werewolf, a sorcerer, and an army of frost giants for an epic showdown against vicious Valkyries, angry gods, and the hammer-wielding Thunder Thug himself.

Hammered Details

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Author : Kevin Hearne

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From Reader Review Hammered for online ebook

Phrynnne says

Another great book in this very readable series. My only criticism would be the absence for most of the story of Oberon because he is the source of most of the fun dialogue. However Atticus managed to keep laughs coming from time to time despite the fact that the book was generally pretty heavy. Lots of life forms died and there was some serious fighting going on. I am still intrigued by our young/ old main character and will be carrying on with the series asap.

Carol. says

A little more challenging for me than its predecessors, *Hounded* and *Hexed*. Much darker, and more clearly part of a series; the other two worked well as stand alone books but this one picks up where the last stops and has little in the way of exposition.

Character building seems a bit more uncomfortable; I'm not sure that I really like Atticus very much in this book. Officially, he is keeping both the letter of his word, to the witch Laksha and to the vampire, Leif. However, it means breaking his tenuous social obligations to his apprentice, his employees and business, and to his friend, Mrs. MacD and allies. This may be the crux of why I've started to become more uncomfortable with him as a hero. While he keeps his word nominally, frequently he does so begrudgingly, with dire consequences to those around him and at the cost of obligations to others. That forest we spoke of having an obligation to in *Hounded* and *Hexed*? Yeah, that's right--turns out he must not have given it his word. (view spoiler)

Although I am not at all religious, I found the Jesus section of the book to be somewhat uncomfortable. Has Hearne lost his way? The serious action moments of stealing an apple and sneaking back to town coupled with meeting Jesus for fish and chips seems a little odd--should I be laughing? Appreciating that he is equating Jesus to other immortals? I don't quite know what to think of his inclusion in the pantheon.

We lost most of Oberon's humor this time, and that's a big laugh hit. Atticus does have a number of funny asides, and the bits with the frost giants are funny.

I do like the storytelling device of having each member of the party look back and talk about his reasons to kill Thor. It added dimension to the characters, and made Thor seem to be almost deserving. I confess myself confused, however, as to why the Greek and Roman gods are true immortals and the Norse ones aren't. And, of course, there's the cliffhanger ending. Yes, the fight itself is resolved, but very little fallout is covered, and the book is ended on an escape scene. I personally feel as if cliffhanger endings are a cheap play towards improving sales and increasing buzz, so I tend to think less of an author who uses them. A strong character, world-building and sufficient plot will keep me coming back, especially if there is an overarching series conflict-building as there is in Atticus' world. Using a cliffhanger just seems like he's resorting to tricks instead of skill.

Overall, I'll catch the next in the series, but I'm not sure it's shelf-worthy--may just have to wait on the library.

Mlpmom (Book Reviewer) says

RTC!

Rane says

First off a big thank-you to Kevin Hearne and my great GR friends whom made this book extra kick-ass and brought me back into the UF genre I walked away from years ago a genre I've missed reading and would have kept missing without taking a chance and picking up this series!

Unlike Hounded and Hexed- Hammered gives the readers a more deeper and darker theme the books before it. Through-out your given glimpses into the long lived Atticus, this time around your given a even more better insight into his past and those he's loved and lost before. It tears at your heart, but makes you all that more connected to Atticus. Atticus for me is the perfect balance in a character. He's a guy's guy, he doesn't have all the answers and he makes some small and big mistakes along the way. He's may have lived a long time, but in the end he's very human in everything he feels and does, and I love him for it (AND OBERON!! I love that crazy dog!). In a world where people lie and break promises all the time, Atticus is a man of his word, and if I wanted anyone at my back and taking care of me, it be him.

There's a lot of great scenes in this book and stand out for me, and some humor that has become the trademark of the IDC still leaves it's mark with having the reader laughing until their sides hurt! Never going to think of the song "It's a small world" the same again!

With Atticus promise to Leif and others to finally kill the douchebag Thor, Atticus is warned by none other the Jesus (over beer, fish & chips) to be sure of his actions as their very far-reaching and will be very painful to those he's come to care for. After getting his affairs in orders in Tempe, Atticus and co. set off to destroy the thunder god. We're given a glimpse into the lives of those whose that Thor has hurt, making you not only step back and view the actions and very some huge surprises but truly feel the pain he's caused.

Hearne I felt did an great job playing with the whole god theme, with the balance issue of hanging on to our humanity or playing as spoiled little children with god powers. Questions of what makes us truly human, to the choices we tend to make shape our lives and the effects. But what would we do, if we're given gifts and long life and losing ourselves our lack of empathy tor not caring and doing damage on a whim. These are not only asked but shown, through Thor, Atticus and Lief. Many questions and What would you have done different stay with the readers long after.

There is a slight cliffhanger after all is said and done leading to the next book (;_ ; gotta wait till '12 though!) and a great little bonus story which focus on Granuaile whose really coming into her own. This is an excellent addition (new addiction) to this amazing series

..Marry me Atticus! *holds out a big diamond ring....and sword on bended knee*

“..Vampires inspire screams, not squees. Involuntary urination is common, I grant, but it properly flows from a sense of terror, not an ecstatic sense of hero worship.”

“It properly flows? Are we having a pee pun party?”

“If I do not aim carefully at my targets, I might cause a big splash at the stadium.”

“Oh, very punny. You will show them what yellow cowards they are” I said
“Right after I flush them out of the crowd”
“You will rain down upon their porcelain skin a deluge of justice.”
“Ugh! And I will have to wash my hands afterward.”

Tom says

The first two books of this series were interesting, but didn't make me enthusiastic to read more. I waited over six months before picking up this one while searching for something to read. Hearne just doesn't make Atticus feel like a well-developed character, and for someone who's supposed to be old and wise he acts and talks like someone with little experience. When he shows flashes of competence and power, they are jarring and out of place. That's why I didn't care so much for the first two books, and that trend continues with the third.

That's not why I rated it at one star, though. Hearne has characterized Atticus (as much as he has characterized him at all), as someone earnest and peaceful except in self-defense. That characterization is totally destroyed by this book.

(view spoiler)

There's also the issue of building up a certain narrative momentum toward the big showdown, and then stopping for chapter after chapter of backstory on characters just to show why they're there. The pacing was wrecked by this.

So, the story was told badly and any empathy I had for Atticus is gone. I may read the next book, but it will be in hopes of seeing justice for what was done in this book.

Wanda says

Actual rating: 2.5 stars

This novel in the series was disappointing to me. I didn't like Atticus as much as usual—and I'm often willing to cut the author some slack if I love the characters. I think that's one of the problems for me with this one—there's much less Oberon wolfhound extraordinaire, less of Druid-apprentice Granuaile, less of the whisky drinking widow, all of whom make these novels pleasant for me. Taking the action out of Arizona and moving it to the Norse realm left out many of the elements that allow Atticus to show himself to be a decent guy. Instead, he has been drawn into a revenge plot that he actually has no stake in besides keeping his word. Indeed, by insisting on keeping his word, he is drawn into a thoroughly no-win situation, ignoring excellent advice given to him by both Jesus and Flidais, and neglecting his responsibilities in

Midgard/Arizona.

Too much of the book required tenuous connections using various “hammer” puns. Plus, the whole section with the Hammer of God zealots and Jesus was actually in questionable taste, in my opinion, despite my lack of religious affiliation. It’s risky business to poke the bear of current religions, although I think it’s fair to show them as equal to Norse paganism or the ancient Irish religion.

I did enjoy Atticus and Leif’s dueling Shakespeare quotations, as well the pop culture references. I’m almost reluctantly drawn towards the fourth book, just to see how things work out.

Robin (Bridge Four) says

For me....The Druid Chronicles are fun and I have a really good time while I’m reading them but they are more like the Action movie I go see with my husband. Sure I enjoy myself at the movie and it is a good time but I could have probably inserted ½ different action movies into it and felt the same. These are more filler books for me, it is the series I read in-between other books but not the book I put everything else aside for. *Honestly I blame it on the lack of Romance. I know totally girly thing to say but I really want the hint of one to happen sometime in this series.*

“Wisdom eludes me yet, but foolishness I captured long ago and to this day it is my constant companion, though many people consider me wise.”

Atticus used to run and hide and had done so for a very long time. But when he decided to finally take a stand and quit running he had no idea all the trouble he would bring down upon himself. It seems he gains a new and greater enemy with every choice he makes. Maybe it is time to skip town altogether. But first he must fulfill a promise and help Leif kill Thor.

Again I really enjoy the mythology and lore in this series but I’m waiting for something to really grab a hold of me and make me really invest into all of the characters. This is a series I can still take or leave. I like a few of the characters and I totally enjoy the pop culture references and Shakespearean Duels but still Atticus needs something to really tie me to him and his destiny.

There is one thing that I really love about the series though and that is Oberon, Atticus’s dog. The conversations they have are hilarious and exactly what I think a dog would find interesting.

“ What's silly is paying five bucks for hot milk and flavored syrup! But now I see what's really been going on all this time! They charge you all that money because they need it for the R & D! Somewhere on the outskirts of Seattle, there's a secret facility with higher security than Area 51, and inside there are men with poor eyesight and bad haircuts wearing white coats, and they're trying to make the Holy Grail of all coffee drinks.

The bacon latte?

No, Atticus, I already told you those exist! I'm talking about the prophecy! 'Out of the steam and the foam and the froth, a man in white with poor eyesight will craft a liquid paradox, and it shall be called the Triple Nonfat Double Bacon Five-Cheese Mocha!'

I’ll continue on with the series as I enjoy the UF from a male PoV and I do like the lore utilized but like I said this is a between other things kind of series for me.

Ahimsa says

This is my review of the entire trilogy, and there are some minor spoilers

I'm a sucker for a good multi-pantheon tale. I think Sandman did it best, but Gaiman's reprisal with American Gods was also good. Thus I was excited to check out this trilogy.

Hounded, the first book, was a breezy book, entertaining enough, but its flaws grew as the series continued. The second and third book felt padded and stretched. With better writing and editing, they could (should) have been one book. This was made even more clear when a bevy of new characters showed up and told their stories. It worked for Chaucer, but felt out of place and forced here.

The pacing isn't enough to sink this ship, however. The main problem I have with the series is the utter difficulty in believing Atticus. It's fine to have a 2000-year old being, but he should act like he isn't just another guy. Connor McLeod, for instance, (a similar character) is kind of odd and still in his heart a Highlander.

There was nary a page that didn't break the narrative flow with some poor prose or unbelievable situation. There are more examples than I can list, but here are some of the flaws.

A running gag is that Atticus (and the Widow) hate the British. The terminology is sloppy. The British include the Welsh and the Scots, and no one hates the Welsh. What Atticus means is that he hates the English. But even this attitude is anachronistic. Atticus is from a non-united Ireland, centuries before it, or England, was a country. If Atticus has a loyalty, it would presumably be to one of the five counties of Ireland.

Atticus frequently sounds like Kevin Hearne talking to us. His many cultural references are hard-to-believe and will date the books something fierce within the next 10 years. Worst of all, at least in my opinion, is when he talks of "squeeing" from meeting Neil Gaiman. This is shoddy character-building.

He's also way too uptight to have been an ancient Celt. Though he "cavorts" with Goddesses, attractive women make him act more like Cliff Clavin than a man who lived for two millenia. He is traumatized from seeing two Giants "cavorting." Though he is an ancient Celt, he is more excited to meet Jesus than the gods of his (or any other) pantheon.

Some of the worst writing is when he teaches an ancient vampire how to speak in slang. Poorly conceived, it's embarrassing to read.

Equally bad, Atticus and several other dieties/demigods/super powerful beings, all of whom are at least 100 years-old, act as homophobic as high-school boys. None of them are originally American, but all of them share the same thought at one point: "does this make me look gay?"

Hearne is frequently the anti-Chekov. He solves many of the problems with an element he introduces in that very scene. I would have to go into some major spoilers to elaborate, but it's something that happens far too frequently. The scale of things are quite strange as well: a werewolf or a vampire is as strong as a god.

Though I finished the trilogy, they have become the worst books I've ever finished. Again, the idea, the set-up, is interesting. But the execution is just horribly inept. I wouldn't recommend these books to anyone.

Priscilla says

[The

Stacia (the 2010 club) says

If you'd like to read a *real* review which actually contains my feelings about this series, how about you Check out my review for book 1 by clicking this link.

I finished book 3 and am at a bit of a loss about what to say at this point. Kevin Hearne books are fun and full of action. Each book has its own story, so it probably shouldn't be too hard to come up with a new review for each installment, but I find myself wanting to gush about all of the things which are consistently the same with each book, so that's why I redirected you back to my review for book 1. If you're interested in possibly checking out the series, that would be the best point of reference.

For the people who are already fans of the series, they'll probably understand better why I was at a loss for words. I rarely do reviews in pictures but consider this my summary because I have nothing else to say :

IT'S THE (semi) EPIC BATTLE OF

edit pictures removed because my photobucket account broke and I'm too lazy to move pics from every review over to imgur.

Just take my word that there were pics of Atticus, Thor, a very buff squirrel, a stop sign, and a salad spinner.

DON'T YOU WISH PHOTOBUCKET HADN'T BROKEN MY STUFF?

...and here's a quote I liked.

"One cannot solve every problem through sheer machismo and violence."

"Why not? It works for Chuck Norris."

So that about sums it up. It's another awesome Kevin Hearne book. I missed Oberon's presence being in full force but otherwise the read was solid, if a bit confusing at first because it had been a while since I'd read book 2.

Is anyone else wanting Atticus and Granuaile to quit beating around the bush?

Mr. Matt says

My ADD with the Iron Druid series continues. There were parts of the book that simply made me laugh. And

those parts more or less revolved around Oberon. His natural sunny doggy disposition and sense of humor brighten up what, for me, was a very disappointing book.

Now on to my quibbles ...

First, this felt like a poorly structured book. The book felt like it really should have been broken up into two parts. There were a series of incidents in Tempe - Lief dealing with an incursion of vampires from Memphis, and Atticus dealing with the Hammer of God religious nuts outside his favorite Irish pub. And then there was the main story line - the quest to kill Thor (yes, Thor, the Viking God of Thunder). What was the connection between the two main lines? I think it would have been cleaner and made more sense to focus on one of the main lines, i.e., dealing with the fallout of the last book BEFORE going on to kill Thor.

The part of the book that I found really compelling were the stories that the companions shared with one another as they prepared to storm Valhalla. The fight that followed was more interesting because I found myself really pulling for Atticus' friends. There should have been more like this.

Next, Atticus is starting to get on my nerves. He's two thousand years old, yet he drops pop-culture references with the best of hipsters. Surely a 2,000 year old druid would struggle to pull it together so cleanly. I mean, if Lief (1,000 years old) and the werewolf alpha (300 years old) struggle to even dress in a contemporary fashion, why is it so easy for Atticus? Does being one with Gaia somehow also connect one with Star Trek? The part where this really made me cringe was when Atticus, Lief, the werewolf, and their companions actually catch two Jotunn (frost giants) bumping ugly. To get the soul rending imagery out of their minds, they decide to sing (I'm not making this up) 'It's a Small World, After All.' (Seriously. They do. Check it yourself. It's right at the end of chapter 22.) Related, for someone who is very up on his cultural currency, he seems to have no qualms about the Jotunn dragging off Freyja back to their lair and, presumably, having their way with her.

Finally, these books have a gargantuan logic problem right in their heart. It is, I fear, a fatal flaw. In the author's world Gods and Goddesses and Monsters seem to be constructed out of the zeitgeist. When people believe in Gods, they manifest, and gain in power. When no one believes in them, they grow weaker. As Perun, the (I think) Russian God of Thunder says to Atticus: 'They still weaker than before Christ, but much stronger than me. Because of words. Because now children in many parts of the world hear about them. And so they are bigger ideas.' If belief is all it takes to manifest and gain power, where then are the dark Elder beings such as C'thulu? How come random 2,000 year old Gods such as Bacchus can still manifest such power and be immortal? Presumably if he or she has few followers, they would be correspondingly weaker. Was belief at some time all it took to be that powerful? What about the belief of all those people who believe at one time of another that the world is going to end? There is something about what the author has built that I found kind of problematic.

Two stars out of five. I remain hopeful for the other books in the series.

Melissa ♥ Dog/Wolf Lover ♥ Martin says

I still love all of the characters in this book but this one wasn't for me ?

Kelly says

(4.5 stars) First things first: This one's more serious.

Oh, there's still humor here — and to butcher the nursery rhyme, when Kevin Hearne is funny, he's very, very funny. I cackled madly as Atticus geeked out over his favorite author and demonstrated his knowledge of Internet memes. On the whole, though, *Hammered* is a much more serious story than either *Hounded* or *Hexed*. While giving us two books' worth of side-splitting entertainment, Hearne has been sneakily laying the groundwork for *Hammered*, building up characters and friendships and subplots so that we care deeply about what happens here.

We begin in medias res. Atticus is climbing the World Tree to Asgard so that he can keep his promise to the witch Laksha by bringing her back one of Idunn's apples. The trip becomes messier than expected, which leads Atticus to decide that he's been in Tempe too long. He's too visible, and it's too easy for one of his ever-growing list of enemies to use his friends as leverage. Atticus does his best to put affairs in Tempe in order before going back to Asgard to keep a second promise, knowing he might never return. One conversation stands out as particularly beautiful; it's the kind of conversation we all wish we'd had with a loved one before it was too late, but so often don't get around to having.

That second promise is to help kill Thor, and he teams up with a group of allies who passionately hate the thunder god. Hearne surprised me by breaking with the usual structure of the Iron Druid books for a little while, employing a "Canterbury Tales"-type section that I loved. It fleshes out these allies, and in telling us why each of them wants Thor dead, it tells us a lot about Thor as well. When we follow Atticus & Co. back to Asgard, we're good and mad at Thor, too.

The central theme here is the question of how to hold on to one's humanity when one has great power and can live for hundreds or thousands of years. How do you keep from getting arrogant and seeing ordinary mortals as insects? How do you hold on to what makes you you — and conversely, is it possible to hold on too much, becoming consumed by a grudge that might not be worth all that you sacrifice to it? It's clear that Atticus is better than most at this balancing act, and it's equally clear that it's often his humanity that puts him in so much danger.

Hammered is not the end of this series, but it effectively closes a big story arc. It makes a good temporary stopping point as we await *Tricked*, due out in 2012. Kevin Hearne is evil, though, and packs in one more spooky plot hook at the end. It's not a cliffhanger for the plot of this book, but it's sure going to cause some trouble in the next one!

All that said, I think it's a little skeezy when Atticus (view spoiler)

Celeste says

Full review now posted!

Original review can be found at Booknest.

Not a bad way to kick off the new year. Not bad at all.

This series is what I always wanted the Dresden Files to be. It's funny and irreverent and action-packed, and it's filled with interesting characters from a variety of mythological backgrounds. While the Dresden Files are well-loved and theoretically interesting, there's something about the installments I've read so far that falls just a bit flat for me. Whatever that mysterious lack is, the Iron Druid Chronicles don't suffer the same

fate. This makes three out of three books that I've read thus far in the series that have all been a delight.

Atticus is charming and funny and is always getting into trouble on a cosmic scale. He's my favorite male main character I've come across in the Urban Fantasy genre, and I don't see his throne being usurped anytime soon. His Celtic background is fascinating, as are all of his relationships with deities from various pantheons as well as other mythical or magical beings. I love how mythologies from across the globe intermingle in these books.

As in all of these books, Atticus is faced with a challenge that he'd rather not deal with. In this case, that challenge is killing Thor. Not that he has anything personally against Thor, mind you, but it seems as though literally everyone else does. Including Atticus's friends and others to whom he owes various favors. So Atticus finds himself on a suicide mission with a vampire, a werewolf, and three other odd men of varied magical backgrounds, including an off-brand thunder god. This group of manly men spend a good chunk of the book telling stories around a campfire; namely, they're telling stories of why they each want Thor dead. This storytelling segment was very different, and I really enjoyed it.

Some of my favorite aspects of this book took place during the first half. In the first few chapters, while Atticus is on a scouting trip to Asgard, Ratatosk is present. That giant squirrel is hilarious, and he's made even mores by Luke Daniels' narration; the voice Daniels used for the squirrel was basically the voice of Gollum, which made every word that came out of his mouth that much funnier. Also, regarding the narration, there was a point in the beginning where Atticus was imagining Captain Kirk and Mr. Spock as angels of emotion and logic on his shoulders, and Daniels' impressions of them (especially William Shatner as Kirk) were spot on. Oberon remains my favorite character in the series, and his humor was spot on in this book. My least favorite part of Atticus's Thor-hunting excursion was Oberon's absence, even though I was glad he wasn't around to possibly die a horrible death on the fields of Asgard. Speaking of Asgard, Hearne's presentation of the Frost Giants was also hilarious. Aforementioned group of manly men singing "It's a Small World After All" to take their minds off of the Frost Giant sex they inadvertently witnessed was priceless.

If I enjoyed this book so much, why am I only giving it 4 stars instead of a full 5? There's one main reason: the action scenes. For some strange reason, I often have a problem staying invested during major action scenes, and that's exactly what happened here. I just wasn't connecting. That's not Hearne's fault, but it did affect my enjoyment of the story.

So far, I really love this series. The books are short and funny and fast-paced, which is exactly what I'm looking for when I pick up an Urban Fantasy series. I highly recommend the Iron Druid Chronicles both to those who love UF and those who have hesitated to dip their toes into the genre. It's a great place to start.

Lyn says

Hooked.

I'm hooked, Kevin Hearne has created in Atticus a character with whom I can relate and about whom I am interested in reading more and more adventures. I usually don't follow series but Hearne's Iron Druid books have me bound like an Irish druid. Star Trek, Smokey and the Bandit and other pop culture references, a fun and witty Irish wolfhound companion, fresh new connections to mythic and animistic legends, an endless supply of possible adventures and themes, what's not to love?

Hammered, Hearne's third novel length installment in the series has been foreshadowed since the first book,

Hounded. A showdown with a very different vision of Thor from the Marvel manifestation has been on the horizon from day one. Hammered, in that sense, does not disappoint.

Hearne delves into Norse and other world culture myth and pantheon systems in clear allusions to Gaiman's American Gods and with enough charisma to make Neil Gaiman blush (there is even a brief homage to Mr. Gaiman).

But ...

There were passages where I felt that Hearne became too informal, where he lost the quality edge of his earlier works; he seemed like he was reaching, sometimes in almost a jump-the-shark half-assed inventiveness, like he was bowing to some unknown advisor who was leading him down a bad path.

Also, from the early pages to the somewhat disappointing end, this is clearly a part of a series. The earlier books, Hounded and Hexed, though connected, also worked as stand alones, something that I was very excited about and that I lauded Hearne for creating.

Hammered was missing something the earlier two, and the short stories, had in spades, and I cannot exactly put my finger on it, this was just not as well put together. The subtle humor and personality that ran smoothly through the first two seemed here more forced, and many of the quips and intentionally funny scenes came out campy or farcical. In some ineffable way, Hammered lacked the charm of the earlier two (pun intended).

This is still substantially good, if not always procedurally, and there is still much to enjoy: a Shakespearean quote battle during a high-speed chase in a rented Ford Mustang, and a tribute to Chaucer where the different characters told their stories of how they came to hate Thor was probably the best part of the book.

Again, I like that he can use and borrow from an almost inexhaustible supply of heroes and gods (my favorite Dungeons and Dragons text was brought out Deities & Demigods: Cyclopedia of Gods and Heroes from Myth and Legend to check out the Finnish hero Vanamoinanmom).

The old saying about pizza and sex applies here: when it's good it's great; when it's bad, it's still pretty good.