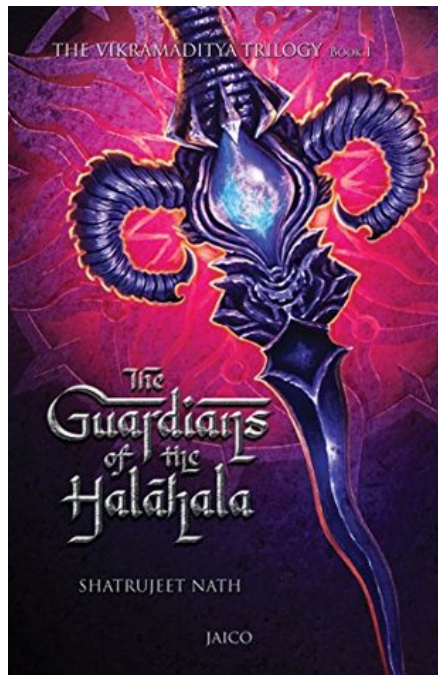




Vikramaditya Veergatha: Book 1 - The Guardians of the Halahala

Shatrujeet Nath

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The deadly Halahala, the all-devouring poison churned from the depths of the White Lake by the devas and asuras, was swallowed by Shiva to save the universe from extinction.

But was the Halahala truly destroyed?

A small portion still remains – a weapon powerful enough to guarantee victory to whoever possesses it. And both asuras and devas, locked in battle for supremacy, will stop at nothing to claim it.

As the forces of Devaloka and Patala, led by Indra and Shukracharya, plot to possess the Halahala, Shiva turns to mankind to guard it from their murderous clutches. It is now up to Samrat Vikramaditya and his Council of Nine to quell the supernatural hordes – and prevent the universe from tumbling into chaos!

A sweeping tale of honour and courage in the face of infinite danger, greed and deceit, The Guardians of the Halahala is a fantastical journey into a time of myth and legend.

Shatrujeet Nath has sold ice creams, peddled computer training courses, written ad copy and reported on business as a journalist and assistant editor at The Economic Times. His first book, The Karachi Deception, was published in 2013. He divides his time between writing fiction and poetry, reading, playing with his daughter, and dreaming of buying a small castle in Scotland. Till that happens, he plans to continue living in Mumbai.

Vikramaditya Veergatha: Book 1 - The Guardians of the Halahala Details

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Shatrujeet Nath

From Reader Review Vikramaditya Veergatha: Book 1 - The Guardians of the Halahala for online ebook

Ankit Singhal says

This series is going to be the best fiction work on Hindu mythology. You read this and then you realize Amish's work is highly over rated. This book has everything a fantasy fiction should have: a wonderfully crafted plot, a myriad of characters and each of them built with amazing details and high paced story. The interesting part of the book is that you desperately want to know the climax but since you are enjoying the story so much, you don't want to miss the details.

Just a caution that book is not a retelling of a mythological events like most other work in this field. Its a complete fiction where characters are inspired from the Hindu mythology, and I loved this style. You need huge creativity to write something like this. Its not mere re-imagining the already told tale but imagining a complete new saga.

Must read for fantasy fiction lovers!

Shreya Ganguly says

The title and the cover of the book is fierce and dominates the appearance a dagger looking royal and pristine, but bold enough to hint what the book beholds.

While many may contemptuously flick history as tales of the dead and gone, it has in recent times emerged as one of the best received genre. The art of combining fascinating history with appetizing mythology has not really been around but the Author seems to have carved his way in and has come to stay with a lasting impression. The recipe remains a guarded secret, for all you must know its voluminous amount of research and caliber served hot. The Author has fused legend, mythology, the known, the unknown and the lesser known with an applaud worthy element of mystery. He has sketched the characters of the tale racing against time and has maintained a generous pace. Bon Appétit!

The mythological element in the book is placed in a very contemporary setting, which runs parallel to the Vikramaditya era.

The tale runs a narration across an honour the legendary King Vikramaditya upholds interknitted with although debatable yet an indelible incident of mythology the Amritmanthan. The tale opens with an intriguing narration and holds the reader to a cliff hanger until the end. The Guardian of Halahala is themed on an unexpected plot. It's a tale of courage, wisdom, passion, kingship, deceit, defeat, greed and victory. The Vikramaditya trilogy sets off with a tale from mythology and history.

Review:

Epic narrates that Lord Shiva, the supreme god had swallowed the deadly, all destructive poison The Halahala that was thrown out during the churning of the White Lake. Halahala holds the capacity to annihilate the evil and the good, the Devas and the Asuras to nil.

But what remained untold and unknown was that, a diminutive portion of the Halahala was stolen by a conniving asura and was hidden in a dagger. What unfurls in this tale of strength and courage is the war to

poses the poison, coz the one who owns the lethal poison could destroy his enemy. Overpowered by greed and thirst for power the Devas and Asuras have embarked upon a fierce battle. Lord Shiva had acquired the poison and had guarded it for a time unknown, now it was time to bestow the guardianship of the Halahala upon a protector, safekeeper, the king of his words, the guard of honour, King Vikramaditya and his council of nine priceless courtmen. Duty bound to battle the Devas and Asuras, the King and his council aboard a journey to exploit their intellect and strength to guard the poison.

From the plots of the forces of Indra and Shukracharya, only mankind can contest the mystic powers to save the universe.

Shatrujeet Nath has created a very compelling and intriguing character sketch of Lord Shiva, every arch in the narration brings him to life. However to me, the portrayal of King Vikramaditya was the awe worthy, his might, his intellect, the courage the wisdom is very richly narrated. The language is affluent and the book speaks to the readers. There was no moment when the tale missed a beat.

What I loved : The entire novel is a fast pace thriller read. Although there are multiple characters and depiction, each one stands distinct of the other. A perfectly crafted hard-hitting, intense tale that takes readers to a time undiscovered. Shatrujeet Nath commendably blends reality and fiction into one compelling tale maintaining steady and unexpected twist in the plot.

What could have been better: There isn't anything essentially a put off in the book. But I believe there was a tiny scope where the Author could have spiced up the political angle of the tale. However with the lasting effect that the book has created this bit can be ignored.

All in All: The story is interknitted with action, brilliant storytelling, and insightful of mythological and legendary elements that get under your skin and challenges the way you perceive history, as only few of the talented authors can. This was the book 1 of the Vikramaditya Trilogy..looking forward to the the book two in the series!

Read full review at <https://thenotepadreviews.wordpress.c...>

Namratha says

During the legendary churning of the White Lake : Samudramanthan, one of the most heinous things to be thrown up was the poison **Halahala**. Halahala had the capacity to raze both the Devas and Asuras to dust and wreck untold havoc on everything. The task to save the world ultimately fell upon good ol'Lord Shiva, who swallowed the deadly poison (*ergo the blue throat*) and averted disaster.

Temporarily.

For Lord Shiva knew something that was oblivious to the rejoicing Devas and Asuras. A minuscule portion of the Halhala was stolen by a conniving asura. Whosoever lays hands on this speck of death will have a formidable advantage over his enemies. Although Lord Shiva has regained control of this leftover poison and guarded it for many millennia, the time has come to hand over it's safekeeping.

Enter legendary and good (*and also severely tried*) **King Vikramaditya** of Ujjain. Lord Shiva entrusts the safekeeping of Halhala into the hands of King Vikramaditya and his powerful crew of nine councilors.

Putting all their skills and strengths to the test, they must battle cold-blooded Devas and fiendish Asuras to keep the poison secure.

And thus are born **The Guardians of the Halhala**.

I always step into Indian fantasy with wary toes. Raised on a steady diet of Middle-Earth, Hogwarts, Narnia and their ilk, Indian Fantasy has yet to hold me in its thrall. **The Guardians of the Halhala** is a tentative and marginally positive start. Tweaking the legendary tales of King Vikramaditya, the author has done a fine job of providing us with a hero who is big in stature and pretty cool and bad-a** in the face of dire disaster. But even more likeable is his motley crew of councilors. The characters are well-fleshed out with interesting backstories and enough pages devoted to each of them to keep the reader engaged.

Gruesome battle-scenes are written with fervor and enough attention to gory detail to make you remember that eating while reading was not the best idea.

While inner-city politics and cross-country conspiracies might form an integral part of the mythical/historical fiction story, I could have done without them. More meat on Vikramaditya's heroism and chapters devoted to his councilors being all Matrix-y and lean, mean, thinking machines while dueling the Asuras and Devas alike would have been enough to keep me entertained.

In conclusion, the first in the Vikramaditya trilogy is a jolly good stomp into the world of Indian epic-fantasy. A little shorter and I would have been a happy camper.

Suresh S says

I am normally wary of multi-book fantasy sagas because I have a dread of that oft-used phrase in fantasy fiction - "world-building". I cannot be bothered to read through tomes of preamble and meandering description just to get to a stage where the characters and story finally get going. Thankfully, even with this first book of his proposed trilogy, Shatrujeet loses no time in setting the plot wheels in motion. In fact, with an ensemble of interesting characters and multiple narrative threads, the fun comes fast and furious. Drawing upon known Indian legends of the Halahala poison and of king Vikramaditya and his Council of Nine (that he has very rightly likened to the King Arthur legend), he has woven an intricate but efficient fiction. In both his reining of the various plot strands and in the description of the several large-scale battle sequences, there is a pleasing clarity that brings his prose to vivid life. In a good way, the book reminded me of the wonderful Krishnavatara series by KM Munshi. I was constantly engaged and entertained through the entire length of this first installment and can hardly wait for the subsequent installments of the Vikramaditya trilogy to come out. I hope they will match up to the promise of solid entertainment that Book 1 has engendered.

Pradyota Prakash says

Well, this book was a surprise find. Walking down Sapna's aisle, this book looked too inviting to not pick it up. I know I judged it by its cover, I decided to surprise myself. And surprise myself, I definitely did.

I had zero expectations when I started this book. I never knew I would end up falling in love with it. It's incredibly well written. I love Shatrujeet's style of writing. It's so rich, on par with the greatest literature

books. The only thing that actually put me off was that the scenes kept shifting frequently and there were too many things happening, it sort of pulled me back from the flow as I had to keep checking what was happening. The sequencing could have been done a little better since it kept dragging me out of the story.

The story keeps you hooked. I loved this take on mythology. It wasn't overly dramatic. It did not feel like a deliberate attempt to be different like Amish Tripathi's Shiva trilogy. It just felt right. Very few books feel just right. The characters were well brought out throughout the scope of the book. There was always something to learn about them as you progressed. The characters didn't take center stage, the story did and that is beautiful.

I am definitely looking forward to the next set of installments. Pick up a copy of this book if you haven't already.

I really wish writers like Shatrujeet Nath get more recognition, not people who shit words on paper, say, for instance, Chetan Bhagat. I now have hope for Indian writing.

Sreekant says

Shatrujeet Nath and I worked together briefly at A&M magazine, and, later, he was part of the start-up team (of three) when we started agencyfaqs! (now afaqs!). He was a passionate – if occasionally forgetful :) - colleague who felt strongly about whatever it was that he was writing about. We were together for over five years until he left, later to become the editor of Brand Equity.

At some point, Shatrujeet took a different route to pursue full-time creative writing. When his first book, The Karachi Deception, was published in early 2013, I loved it. I enjoy the occasional western thriller and 'Deception' was on par with anything I'd read. I could imagine the passion with which Shatrujeet would have written it. I thought it would make a great film, and still do.

I was hoping that Shatrujeet would write more action books so when he told me that he was going to write a mythology, a trilogy on the life of the legendary king, Vikramaditya, I was dismayed. I needn't have been.

The recently released first book of the trilogy, The Guardians of the Halahala, is gripping from the outset when four horsemen of the Frontier Guard come to a gory end. The Guardians is complex, with a strong layer of fiction on top and another philosophical one beneath about love and duty. The wonder is that Shatrujeet has managed to keep the entire cast of characters in control and the story constantly moving. It is his maniacal attention to detail that makes the first part of the trilogy such a delightful one. All the same, I rang Shatrujeet to grumble soon after having complimented him on 'The Guardians'. Now that I was hooked, when could I expect the second volume??

So folks, do read The Guardians and harass Shatrujeet to hurry up with the second book, would you please? :)

Arun Shourie says

The stories of Samrat Vikramadithya, the Superhero King of Ancient India, including the Vikaram-Betal Stories was what I fascinated most in my Childhood, when i used to read those stories in Chandamama. Fantasy was the major part in such stories. The Author Shatrujeeth Nath has choosen such part of fabled History which leaves much scope for him to add whatever fiction he wants, while at the same time using all the known contemporary characters associated with Vikramadithya (Nine Gems, Betal, Indra, Asuras etc.,) The Halahala part was a much bigger boost of fiction to the already fascinating history.

The Story begins with the churning of the Milk Ocean by Devas and Asuras for Amrita and the Emanating of Halahala and accidental theft of certain portion by Veedesha before The Omniscient Shiva gulps the same to his throat, has set the wonderful plot for the Story and from then the introduction of each of the Characters, the portrayal of each character, the narration of the story, suspense and thriller elements, fantasy, heroics, cunningness, plots, wars, twistsall have been so good that this book has become one of my favourite books in Indian Historical fantasy/fiction genre. The Author has really made an excellent addition to the Indian fantasy novel genre. As this is only the Beginning of the series and as many things are yet to unfold, expecting a much more engaging and enthralling story in the coming books.

I have not read the first book of the Author, but after I have read this book, I immediately ordered Karachi Deception and am eagerly waiting for the second Book of the Series "The Conspiracy at the Meru" which is expected by the year end. Why not have I started reading the Book after all the Three books in series have released.

Bookish Indulgences with b00k r3vi3ws says

I have to admit at the very beginning that I accepted a review copy of this book from the author without even reading the blurb. The reason behind it is the Author's debut novel "The Karachi Deception". I had absolutely loved it for his writing style. Then again, once I accepted and realized that this is a fantasy / mythological book instead of a gritty thriller, I felt apprehensive... what if the author isn't as good in writing in a different genre from what I have already read and appreciated. I need not have feared. Shatrujeet Nath follows up his stunning thriller with an equally enthralling fantasy book.

During the 'Samudramanthan' which produced a lot of treasure and 'Amrit' in the end, also produced a poison, Halahala, so potent that even the fumes of it dropped the bodies of devas and Asuras alike. Lord Shiva had swallowed it in order to save the universe from extinction. But what many people do not know is that a small amount remains and the owner of it could have a huge advantage in any battle. Both Devas and Asuras are in search for it. But Lord Shiva, who knows the potential of it, entrusts Vikramaditya and his Navaratnas to guard it with their life.

I found the plot quite engrossing and different from anything that I have read from an Indian author so far. We all know of the 'Samudramanthan' and Halahala, and we also know of Vikramaditya and his various tales. When put together, they indeed form something unique. Complimentary to the plot is its characterization. The author has taken the age old characters and presented them in a new avatar. The Gods, especially Lord Shiva, seem so human in the story that one can almost identify with them. But I have to say that Vikramaditya stands out among all of them. With a wide choice of Devas and Asuras available, I choose team human because Vikramaditya as the wielder of the Hellfires is really a formidable personality. The author's style of writing is opulent and easy to get into at the same time. He has not only maintained quality in writing, but has also improved upon it.

I would recommend it to all mythology and fantasy lovers as it guarantees entertainment with its plot, action and twists.

<http://www.b00kr3vi3ws.in/2015/01/The...>

Chitra says

Magnificence. This book is absolute magnificence.

Shatrujeet Nath is a brilliant author and if this book is anything to go by I will be expecting his others to be on bestselling lists all around. I'm surprised that this book hasn't gotten the attention that other, much less impressive, books have gotten

What is particularly great about Guardians Of The Halahala (GOTH) is that it gives every single character it's due. It doesn't make the male characters seem amazing and the female characters negligible. It doesn't make the Devas seem perfect and the Asuras seem awful. It gives everyone a perfectly believable amount of negatives and positives leaving just enough in the dark to cause intrigue.

Not to mention the authors skills at describing things is so beautiful that I felt like I was living in each moment. If you check 106 you'll see the most beautiful description of Ujjaini and in 192 a wonderfully described moment at war (not that war is wonderful, but the style of description indeed is).

Pick up this book and you'll be waiting eagerly for the next instalment just like I am. The Conspiracy At Meru is a must read for me.

I received a copy of the book in exchange for an honest review.

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Vikalp Trivedi says

Deceived by hordes of positive reviews and being a fan of Indian Mythology , I picked 'The Guardians Of Halahala' , the book one of 'Vikaramaditya Veergatha' , written by Shatrujeet Nath.

As I started reading the book the start was slow , the pace remained slow throughout . It felt like I was reading story of a Indian T.V. serial . The book qualifies every quality to be a perfect Indian daily soap . Useless conversations , nothing happening in many chapters , half of the chapters were wasted in character introduction , too many characters , the characters were not well-built . Author describes an event and forgets it for a long time and then reintroduce that event again later in the book .

Even in fantasy I am reading this first time that Holika was consort of Hiranyaksh (they actually were siblings) and Andhak (the blind Asura son of Lord Shiv) worked under Hiranyaksh .

Disappointing .

Done with the series .

1 Star .

Vishnu Chevli says

[Edit - Added Author Interview link]

Ever since I read "The Immortal of Meluha", I became huge fan of the alternate history or mythology genre. Half of my wishlist books are filled with this genre. The Guardians of the Halahala was in my wishlist for more than a year. I got my hands on the book few weeks back. And I considered myself lucky that I got author signed copy.

Indian mythological literature is pretty rich and deep. During our college times we used to think why Indian authors were not recreating those stories. Soon a trend of alternate history-mythology stories started. Today we find more than 300 books in the genre. But one has to put enough effort to leave an impact on readers. By combining stories of 'Samudra-Manthan' and Vikramaditya, Shatrujeet has created mind-boggling epic 'The Vikramaditya Veergatha'.

Trilogy revolves around poison called Halahala. In this first part, the Lord Shiva himself has given responsibility of the Halahala sealed dagger to Vikramaditya. As task was assigned by omniscient himself, Vikramaditya, being the Samrat of the Bharatvarsha and the king of Avanti, considered the responsibility as illustriousness. Vikramaditya didn't know why Shiva chosen him and Shiva didn't reveal it to him. His counsel of Nine had wholeheartedly accepted their kings decision to protect dagger. Before accepting dagger, Shindhuvrata was having threat from barbaric Huna & Saka from the west. After accepting dagger, Maghadh became aggressive and started taking military actions in the east to increase their prowess. Avanti started getting attacks from Devas & Asuras. Counsellor of Avanti with their power and technology were able to counter those attacks, but the devastation brought by attacks had already taken heavy toll on Ujjaini, the capital of Avanti.

With heavy anticipation and few exciting revelation author finished the first part on high peak. It is not possible for someone who liked the first part to not check second one. Shatrujeet was able to match my expectations. It is a sure shot best read of this year in the mytho-action-thriller. I will dig into second part ASAP.

Detailed review link - <http://chevusread.blogspot.com/2017/0...>

Author interview link - <http://chevusread.blogspot.com/2017/0...>

Priyanka Roy Banerjee says

For the uninitiated, Halahala is the poison that was churned from the oceans, expecting Amrit instead. It was deemed to be so potent that it could destroy the three universes and who better than the destroyer himself to consume the poison and save everyone. If the Halahala didn't exist anymore, what's the story about? You have to read to find out because it has been crafted so beautifully.

Kudos to Shatrujeet Nath for bringing back Mythology and Fantasy in my reading habitat. Recommended for everyone, especially for young adults to get familiar with our mythology which is mostly verbally passed on through generations.

Read the full review here: <http://oneandahalfminutes.com/2015/09...>

Durvankur Patil says

December, 2011

The Immortals of Meluha had cast a spell on me and left my mouth wide and gaping. I was in awe of the book like the rest of the country was; only thinking that this was the best book I ever read.

A few years later...

April, 2015

The spell was cast again and this time it was Shatrujeet Nath. The Karachi Deception had laid a solid foundation for the author and every book nerd knew that this man can tell a story better than the rest. The Guardians of the Halahala has left me speechless.

It's generally said that *too many cooks spoil the broth*, but Shatrujeet Nath made sure that all the cooks knew what they had to do. The ensemble cast is vast and every page reveals a new character or two. However, their part in the story and a little history makes one think, if the book should be sub-titled as Vikramaditya's Council's trilogy.

The plot is a riveting one right from the start. The samudramanthan might sound and feel familiar, but it's the last line of the prologue that sets the tone for the entire book. The pace of the book moves according to the story, which is very intriguing and engrossing. What really lifts the book for me is the language, which has been kept very simple and readable for the vast diversity of the Indian audience.

I am glad that I accidentally stumbled upon this book a month before its release. It gave me a chance to try out The Karachi Deception as well, which assured of a great second book from Shatrujeet Nath in the form of The Guardians of the Halahala. The disheartening part of this entire episode is the wait for the second part, which I gather is releasing by the end of this year. I am sure that the second part (The Conspiracy at Meru) will do a lot of justice to this grand opening. Kudos!!! to Shatrujeet Nath.

Guttu says

When I was 10, I was introduced to this story of King Vikramaditya and Betaal or "Vikram aur Betaal". I was fascinated by both the characters. Vikram, for being human and yet having courage to carry a ghost on his back and Betaal for his wicked sense of humor. Some years later, I was introduced to one more story of Vikramaditya, i.e. Singhasan Battisi. Since then I have seen him as a courageous and righteous king like no one. He was like Ram of modern world. My interest in these characters made me read this book.

I had read a great deal of praise about this book and I wanted to finish this last year. Somehow, I couldn't. It's for the good because it has given me a great start for this year.

Long time back during the Smaudra Manthan, Halahala (a deadly poison) was released. Devas and Asuras were both affected from the Halahala and it posed great threat to the whole creation. Both Devas and asuras approached Lord Mahadev to save them. Lord Mahadev decided to drink all the Halahala to save the world. But a small potion of the Halahala was stolen by an asura named Veeshada who had traps it safely inside a dagger. The dagger was under safe custody of Shiva, who is no one but Mahadeva himself living in the Himalayas. Shiva decided to hand over the dagger to Vikramaditya so that he could meditate in peace. Now it is Vikramaditya's responsibility to protect the dagger from both Devas and asuras who want to possess it to have an upper hand over their enemy.

The story is powerfully weaved never letting the grip loosen once the introduction part is over. The characters, Navratnas or the nine councilors or Vikramaditya, play major role in this book. There is more of them than Vikramaditya himself. It works so well that you'll love at least two of the characters from the Navratnas. Their background stories have been scattered over the book which I felt should have been packed into a chapter or two. It is annoying when a remark about a character's past is made and it is not revealed for the next 30-40 pages. This has been repeated throughout.

The fantasy elements in this book are admirable. The Ashvins, Maruts, Andhaka, Swords of Hellfire, etc.. will make you crave for more and more fantasy. The story would have been dull if not for these fantasy elements. One more plus about the story is that it effortlessly moves from one plot to another. It's not that easy when you have hundreds of characters and places in one story.

The flaws I found may not be of great importance to many. But I certainly thought they could have turned this into a much better book. The first was the annoying bombardment of unfamiliar words. It just breaks the flow of reading a thriller. Author doesn't have to impress the reader by diction but by the art of story telling. Secondly, There is a huge scope for humor in this story which hasn't been exploited much. It's like that one piece of cashew in good-day cashew biscuits. More would have made it tastier.

At the end of it, I won't be able to resist reading the next book in this trilogy. I'll have to put down everything else and read it. I doubt it will be limited to trilogy as there is scope for 5 books at least. Prepare to be blown away if you consider reading this.

P.S. - "Where there's Vikram, there's Betaal" :D :D

Roshan says

Let me start by stating the obvious.

The Guardians of the Halahala is unlike any book you have read in the Indian historical fiction genre till date. The beginning of a trilogy, it effortlessly combines religion, legend, history and even one of the most iconic characters from our fables, bringing a unique perspective to their story.

review Godyears bookIt all begins with one of Lord Shiva's most iconic moments - one that requires not just the devas and asuras but also Lord Vishnu to work beside each other. The churning of the Ocean of milk to attain the nectar of immortality (Amrit) first produces something else though - the deadly Halahala poison, which is swallowed whole by Lord Shiva as per mythology.

Only that is not entirely accurate. A small portion of the Halahala was in fact siphoned away by an alert asura who hides it within an object. When Shiva finally gets his hands on it, he is faced with a conundrum - neither does he wish to retain possession of the object, nor does he trust the devas or asuras where safekeeping of such a potentially dangerous weapon capable of mass destruction is concerned.

The one he finally chooses is no deva or asura but a mere mortal - Chandragupta Vikramaditya, the king of Avanti, aided by his Navaratnas, the nine 'gems' of his court. Vikramaditya will find out that being the titular Guardian of the Halahala is not nearly as simple as concealing the destructive object as he becomes the centre of attention not just of his mortal enemies but also the devas and asuras.

What stood out for me in this book?

1. Attention to detail.

That is essential in any novel but almost paramount when you endeavour to write historical fiction because the characters already exist in some form in the minds of the reader, unlike unique new characters we create in normal fiction. And that is where Shatrujeet Nath shows his class. Each character is immaculately fleshed out and precise thought is given to world building for a larger narrative. There is a map at the beginning to visualise the world you are entering and a glossary at the end to aid you in knowing places and people from history who grace the storyline.

2. Characterisation

In a good story, the characters are never easily defined as good and evil. Never is that more apparent than here as you get to see the various shades of morality depicted in the Gods and demons alike, both in a race to get this deadly power for their own selfish reasons. Vikramaditya and his loyal posse will win your heart as they stand out here - fighting the just fight against odds that on paper should be stacked heavily against them (Avanti vs the devas, asuras, Huns et al... gulp!). Even the Lord Shiva you meet is very different from what you imagined.

3. Pace

The author brings in the same frenetic energy from his previous book here. With so many characters at his disposal, he still does not allow things to slow down as he moves across scenarios and settings, making this a pure thriller for the reader as opposed to just a tale of historical fiction. The battle sequences too work brilliantly here as you can easily visualize them as you read.

4. Twists in the tale

The little twists and unexpected turns in the tale are essential to make the reader nod in appreciation. In a storyline of this magnitude, you need to have a few tricks in the bag to grant Vikramaditya the upper hand in his battle against the asuras and devas. Also look out for a face we are all familiar with as you traverse the 'transitional land between life and death.' That, and the utilisation of the character, is a mark of pure creativity.

5. Language

With his first book, Shatrujeet Neet had already shown that he knew how to tell a tale well. Here too, you do not need to worry as the same fluency and ease with language come into play. A big shout out to the editor too for a job well done here.

A couple of years ago, I had the pleasure of reviewing the author's first book "The Karachi Deception" and had found it to be one of the best spy thrillers by an Indian author. A part of me had been a little disappointed then when I had realised he was transitioning towards historical fiction because I really loved his style in the former genre and wanted more. I am happy to say that Shatrujeet Nath has made me a convert – this is an author who handles his devas, asuras and kings just as deftly and confidently as he had previously done with the various army men and spies across both sides of the border while executing "Project Abhimanyu" in his first book.

The Guardians of the Halahala (by Jaico Publishing) is a wonderful new world for you to enter – a thriller set in a world which seems familiar when you hear the names of the characters within it and yet will make you realise there is more to them as you get to know them.

I am going with a maximum rating of 5 out of 5 for this book. Anyone who can successfully combine the energy of an action thriller while creating a new iteration of a world that we thought we knew deserves no

less than that.

<http://www.godyears.net/2015/03/book-...>
