



[Home](#) > Black Maria; Eight Days of Luke

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# Black Maria; Eight Days of Luke

Books Reviewed:

[Black Maria](#) [1]

Books Reviewed:

[Eight Days of Luke](#) [2]

Issue:

[79](#) [3]

Reviewer:

[David Bennett](#) [4]

News to Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

0

Such an original and challenging fantasy writer should not be excluded from any library shelves. As ever, here are two books that work on many levels. In the first book Aunt Maria is the Queen Bee of Cranbury-on-Sea. Daily she is visited by ladies of the town, who dance attendance to her sinister wishes. Meanwhile the menfolk, zombie-like, lost their own champion years ago in the power struggle between good and evil, which is on the verge of eruption once more. If everyone is to be free to use the power, they need to be without division according to sex. The Queen must be destroyed and the destroyers must come from her own family.

**Eight Days of Luke**, a modern version of the Norse Loko stories, was first published in 1975. Troublesome and extraordinary relatives figure here, too. They finally induce the exasperated David to summon up such a curse that he unwittingly sets free from incarceration Luke, a boy who never plays by the rules. In doing so David is drawn into a desperate and dangerous search for Thor's missing hammer. The pace is fast, the excitement and tension unremitting, with enough pure invention to gladden any fantasist's heart.

Running Order:

34

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**Links:**

[1] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/black-maria-0>

[2] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/eight-days-of-luke-0>

[3] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/79>

[4] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/david-bennett>