



# Freya

*Matthew Laurence*

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*Freya is myth. She is legend. And she's about to make one hell of a comeback.*

Sara Vanadi is more than she appears to be.

In her prime, she was Freya, the Norse goddess of love, beauty, war, and death. Now all that's left of her legacy is herself. Her power comes from belief, and for an ancient goddess in the 21st century, true believers are hard to come by.

She's been lying low for a few decades, when all of a sudden a shadowy corporation extends an offer: join them and receive unlimited strength and believers—or refuse and be destroyed. Sara chooses neither; she flees with the help of a new friend named Nathan.

With a modern power rising that wishes to bend the divine to its will, Sara decides to fight back—but first she needs some new clothes.

## Freya Details

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Author : Matthew Laurence

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## From Reader Review Freya for online ebook

### Books are TARDIS says

DNF at 16%.

I love Norse mythology and all, but this book's pacing is doing nothing for me. I'm completely unattached to the characters. And since this is a Library loaner, I've zero qualms about quitting while I'm still ahead.

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### Vanessa says

So. I love Freya. She's by far always been one of my favorite deities. I love her duality of love and war. She she has a chariot drawn by cats. What is not to love?!

Naturally this book caught my eye. I mean in part LOOK AT THAT COVER ART! (Course after reading the book, I'm not sure it really fits the book...) And... I wasn't disappointed. Maybe that sounds lame. But after seeing countless books/materials treating Freya and a simpering pretty girl who's just sooooo pretty and barely touching the fact that she's a blood soaked war goddess... This book made me happy.

Probably the most interesting thing for me is our villain/s. I'm agnostic. Pretty strongly so. In part because I do see religion as... a thing that has done so much harm. How often has humanity torn itself part over religion? How many have died, and will die for a intangible and (to me) unknowable thing? So our villain here... I can get with them. I see their point. Although I think going after deities and not the religions themselves is an interesting choice... BUT. I digress. This is a villain I understand, I can sympathize with. And yet. I found them appalling. I was all with Freya for tearing them down. And that's good writing.

I also really enjoyed seeing non-standard deities in play. Freya and Sekhmet are both favorites of mine so seeing them featured made me very happy. also, since I'm such a myth person, its wonderful when I have to do some additional research! This book had me doing that!

Overall I found the book to be face paced, introspective (but not overly so) and fun.

I will admit although I find the cover lovely, I'm not sure its the right fit with the book. Like wise with the title. I'm not really sure the title would have grabbed me unless I was already a fan of Norse mythology. Also what will book two be called? Freya 2? Sara?

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### Sarah says

Totally awesome - it broke my Sarah J Maas-induced reading slump!

First things first – Freya is a debut novel by a cool dude about a badass woman. I always check out reviews of books before reading them, but this time, I was the first to post a “review” of sorts on Goodreads and in going back to read the new reviews since the book was released in March (I read it in November), I have to say, I understand the complaints, but the pros outweigh the cons and the promise of more outweighs what the

first book may have lacked.

Freya is the perfect book for young adults who spent their childhood reading Rick Riordan's Percy Jackson series and are looking for a mythology book that is a touch more grown up. The pacing is quick, the plot moves along at a steady pace, and the supporting cast of characters is richly described. While they may not yet be fully realized, there is a lot of opportunity for them to grow and for the readers to get to know the various deities and mythologies better.

Sara/Freya is a fabulous narrator – in a debut, first in a series, YA fantasy, the most essential part of ensuring readership is to have a fully realized main character and Sara/Freya is such a character. And while some may complain about a pretty big structural point, that Freya is in first person, and there are certain things about Freya, what she is thinking, her background, and such that we as readers are not privy to, I personally enjoy the suspense and delight in the “not-knowing” aspect of the final plan to take down the big bad corporation. Freya marries the best parts of first and third person narration spectacularly.

I have only two complaints, and one is a silly one at that. The first, if Nate is going to be our main supporting actor, he needs a bit more of a role than simply “worshipper of Freya.” And the second, the silly one, the name Sarah, my own name, should always have an “H” at the end.

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### **J A says**

I loved Freya from the beginning. The Norse Goddess of Love, War, Sex, Beauty, and Death, finds herself in modern Florida weak from lack of believers and passing her time in a mental institution. That works for her until she's kidnapped by the Finemdi Corporation to be added to the long list of gods they control. What follows is a romp in search of escape and vengeance-in the opposite order-with her brand new-and only-worshiper and High Priest, the mortal Nathan, at her side.

Mr Laurence has created a unique world and updated the realm of ancient gods in an action-packed, moving, and often hilarious portrayal. Freya is gorgeous, but vulnerable and thoughtful. Even insightful at times. As the author of a YA novel myself-Haunting of the Wired Monk-I know the pains, time, effort, and imagination, he's put into creating this unique world.

I'm reading book two already.

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### **Holly says**

The cover of this (and the title) caught my eye at the library. And then the premise took it from there.

I vastly enjoyed that. It was funny and exciting and suspenseful and interesting.

Freya and the other gods are delightfully flawed, but I'll speak about Freya (known as Sara in this book) since she's the main character. So even though (or perhaps because) she's a goddess, she's got a lot of flaws. She's short-sighted, vengeful, impatient, and brutal toward enemies. But she's also witty, clever, and able to analyze a situation from multiple angles in seconds. You really do start to like her from the very beginning despite her flaws. And it was actually fun to read about a character who was that flawed and really didn't

care. She wasn't ever really questioning her decisions. If she made a mistake, she shrugged it off and kept going. It was kind of awesome.

My one qualm with this book was her pal, Nathan. For being a main character, he is decidedly one-dimensional. I mean, even the villains feel almost three-dimensional but her best friend is flat? What kind of sense does that make? Nathan was a window dressing in this story, there for good looks and when Sara needed him. That was about it. I wish he'd had more of a role, or at least that we could see more about him.

The plot/premise is absolutely ridiculous and I loved every second of it. I mean, there's an agency that collects old gods and goddesses? Ok, sure. Sara wants to go into hiding from them? Totally get that survival feeling. So where does Sara go to hide? Disney World. It's just fantastic and so so funny.

The action is definitely worth it. There are excellent fight scenes, there's a lot of espionage and intrigue, and there's a lot of set-up early on to stuff to come later and you just know it's going to be good. I stayed up late to finish this book because I started getting to the really good stuff just before midnight. When there's that much action, you can't just put it down and pick it up tomorrow. That ruins the fun.

Anyway, this was absolutely delightful. I really enjoyed this.

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### **Sasha says**

This is a fun one!

In the 21st century belief can be hard to come by, especially when you are a thousand year old Norse goddess whose worshippers have long since died off or found other gods to worship. When a creepy guy named Garen turns up making Freya (who now calls herself Sara) an offer she won't be allowed to refuse she has no choice but to run and hide - dragging the hapless Nathan with her. Settling into a new life Sara realises the only way she'll have a chance is to find some true believers. However, Garen is relentless and the organisation he represents is determined to take control of divine powers at all costs. Pity that their latest target happens to be a goddess of War and Vengeance...

Laurence has managed to avoid the cliches common to YA - there is no love triangle, Freya isn't a hormone riddled whiny teenager (in fact none of the characters are teens), the introspection is kept to a minimum, and best of all NO TEEN ANGST!!! As an adult reader who enjoys YA it is refreshing. Thank you!

The story is fast and well-paced with plenty of distinct characters. There is humour as well as action and the world Lawrence has built has plenty of depth and room for expansion. Finemdi, the organisation Garen works for, manages to be the perfect level of hugely controlling, evil and mindlessly bureaucratic (mindless bureaucracy having its own sinister feel for anyone who's ever dealt with it).

I'm looking forward to seeing what happens to Sara and Nathan as the series continues.

\*\* no sex, some sexual references, some violence\*\*

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### **Abi says**

Awesomesauce! I loved how Freya was so good at heart with some things, and was so frank about her faults as well. I thought it was really interesting how gods knew their faults, and the paths of right and wrong, but

had to follow their natures. On a side note, that thing with Samantha at the end...well, I don't know what to think now. Also, I feel like Nate is going to snap one of these days. I really liked Pele, N?maka, Hi'iaka, and Sekhmet. I hope Freya lets out her inner Valkyrie one of these days! 4.5 stars

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### **Lexa says**

What a fun romp! Freya is a blast throughout and is a fast and furious read. Fantasy seems awash with "what if the gods are real and still hanging out in modern life" but this is a unique take on the idea that is informed by, but not copying, predecessors such as American Gods or Supernatural.

Freya (the character) is a mix of godly haughtiness and human foibles. At times vain and selfish (she is literally the goddess of vanity, after all), she tempers her divine persona with charm, cleverness, loyalty, and love.

Some of the back-and-forth quips are hilarious. The whole book contains a healthy portion of comedy, with a large heap of action, that rises into a delicious souffle. Already looking forward to the sequel!

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### **Rebekah says**

The main character, Sara (a.k.a. Freya) was often a lot of fun to read. She is spunky and has some good quips, especially when she is verbally sparring with a bad guy. Her fight scenes were well plotted and easy to follow. The magic system she uses is not complicated and feels original. She occasionally struggles with morality as she tries to justify using her divine powers to attain her goals, which is a nice layer of three-dimensionality for her character. Unfortunately, there aren't more layers. She seeks to defeat evil, but in almost every other way she is exceedingly shallow, existing only for pretty clothes, good food, and adoration.

There are positive and negative things about the other characters in the book, too. Physically, the author's descriptions of the deities are fantastic. Each one is unique and easy to picture (especially the Hawaiian goddess sisters). However, in terms of character, all the females fit the same mold: they are either already powerful, or they become powerful (except one, but she'll come into her own in the sequel. Yes, the author left the door WIDE open for sequels). Likewise, the men are all either bad guys or lapdogs. It seems like the author came up with a neat idea (or he read Neil Gaiman's *American Gods*) and then tailored it specifically to the YA female market.

The author also committed a significant faux pas. Freya formulates a plan to try and defeat the corporation, but even though the story is told in first person—so the reader sees through Freya's eyes and hears her innermost thoughts—for some reason we readers can't know her plan? Later, she refines the plan, and even shares it with some allies, but we STILL don't get to overhear it??? While not technically "wrong", this method of drawing out the suspense certainly feels like cheating. It also makes me skim big chunks of text so I can get to the good part and see what she's up to.

One final note, the author decided to include Jesus in the pantheons of myths he mentions. He doesn't play a role in the plot, but the author made a point of mentioning Him. I know not everyone will have a problem with calling Jesus a mythological being constructed by the human imagination, but I do. Maybe the author

didn't think it through, or maybe he has an axe to grind against Christianity. Either way, it's probably not smart to potentially offend the 70% of the Western world who consider themselves Christians. (Wikipedia:Western\_world).

Sexual content: only one kiss, but lots of innuendo & suggestiveness

Language: 4 curse words, no F-bombs

Violence: YES. Plenty of fight scenes.

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**\*A HUGE thank you to Imprint for this ARC which I got in exchange for an honest review\***

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### **Kylara Jensen says**

I read until about 30% and then just had to give up on it. At first I was intrigued but Freya and Nathan are just written super shallowly. There is no depth whatsoever.

And the premise is so damn intriguing too so it's kind of a bummer.

Freya doesn't really read as a God of Love AND War. Or even a real woman actually. Dude needed a few more ladies in his manuscript critique group.

But I just had to quit when Dionysus becomes like this mad rapist. Like dude. I have a soft spot for him because of Les Mis fandom and he definitely is not how he is portrayed in this book. (Fictional mythological character aside.)

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### **Odette Knappers says**

This is the last book I read as an ambassador for the Dutch publisher BlossomBooks last year. I loved this book, but I haven't heard anything yet about whether they are going to translate it or not. But the book is published now, so let me post my review :)

First of all, I love the idea of the book, and I love the cover. The idea is also not just good, but also worked out in a great way. I love the world and the interaction between characters and other gods.

I also love how amazingly badass Freya is. She is a powerchick with a great sense of humor and the guy is just hobbling behind her and doing bits and pieces. Just the opposite of an average YA where the guy is the hero and the girl is just being in love :)

The writing is very comfortable to read and very well done. I have a complete image of Freya and how she acts in my head. And I like little details about our society, (view spoiler)

The worldbuilding is done in a way that it is written in conversation, so you really only get everything you need, and no other nice things the writer has made up all fitted in some awkward history lesson or something. (view spoiler) I love these details seems to mock other YA books in their averageness.

I'm looking forward to the second book!

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### **Kathy Martin says**

Freya has been hiding out at the Inward Care Center for some years under the name Sara Vanadi. Due to a lack of worshippers, she hasn't very much power. When Mr. Garen comes to recruit her for a shadowy corporation that wants to control or destroy all of the gods from all of the pantheons. If she doesn't agree to come voluntarily, he won't hesitate to use force. She manages to defeat him temporarily but she knows he'll be back.

Sara grabs Nate, a new orderly, and makes him fall in love with her long enough for her to use him to escape from Garen. But, other than running away from Garen, she doesn't have a plan. Once at Nate's apartment, she encourages Nate to fall out of love with her but then convinces him that she really is the god Freya. He decides to throw in his lot with her in part because it sounds more interesting than his earlier plans for a job. Together, using Sara's gift to charm and persuade, they get new IDs, a new place to live, lots of cash, and a job at Disneyland for Sara who soon learns that the belief of the children is adding to her power.

Garen catches up to them though and Sara is brought to the corporation's Orlando facility where they try to convince her to work for them. Everything she sees convinces her that the whole corporation is evil and needs to be destroyed. This won't be an easy job for an under-powered god with one web site designer high priest.

This was an engaging story which combines fantasy and science fiction. There were lots of action scenes as Freya and the fellow gods she recruits attempt to bring down the building. I liked Freya's character. She has managed to convince the corporation that she will work for them while overcoming the stereotypes of her role as a goddess of love, beauty, war and death. Though a little of the beauty sneaks in when she goes shopping and envies the various types of bling she sees.

This was fun. I look forward to more books in the series.

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### **Cassandra Fay says**

DNF 26%: I'm not totally digging this currently. The writing confuses me. It reads like it is meant for a younger audience, middle-grade, but the mild sexual themes are,, not. I heard this compared to Percy Jackson & I got excited, Booklist actually went so far as to say "Move over, Percy Jackson ..." but he's not budging, not in my books. The author has a creative mind yes, but the execution wasn't the most grand. I might continue though, just because the sequel is a solid 4.30 stars.

//May 24th 2018//

Actually starting this today, thanks to my local library, I'm on chapter three and I can't say I'm not enthused so far! Nathan's character is goofy and I'm liking Sara/Freya so far. I'm anticipating that I'll fly through this.

//May 2nd 2018//

I need thiS.

All Norse myth books get an automatic fuck yeah from me, just found out my library has it & I'm yellingggg y'all I love this social media platform so much

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### **Rashika (is tired) says**

#### **\*\*\*This review has also been posted on Xpresso Reads**

I feel pretty let down by Freya? The question mark is there because I am not even entirely sure how I feel, just that Freya wasn't what I wanted it to be when I was looking for a book with norse myth in it. I love books that are set in the modern world and feature heavy doses of mythology and yet, while Freya-the book-was absolutely adorable at times, Freya as a character was kind of annoying. She was obnoxious and while it sometimes made sense since she was a goddess, it could also get really annoying.

I like the contrast the author attempts with her being badass and feminine at the same time, but I also feel like he wasn't entirely successful with crafting Freya's character as a blend of those characteristics. She read as being too special snowflake-y at times when she wasn't even the most powerful god in town and honestly, even though she was a goddess, I didn't buy all the convenient things that just ~happened~ to her.

The plot, while fun and engaging, was too much of a stretch sometimes. No one questioned Freya except for the big bad human corporation but even they didn't do much to her. Even though there was a villain in the book, the villain was more of an idea than an actual concrete thing (which is good in some books but the book really seemed to be going for a concrete villain as opposed to an idea.)

I do like that the world the author has created acknowledges the existence of other religions and their gods because we don't see that as much in (western) myth based books. I also really liked the friendships Freya formed. She has one important relationship with a human boy (also her new BFF) AND IT ISN'T A ROMANCE. I WAS SO HAPPY because it wouldn't have made sense for the story being told. There are also some other goddesses Freya becomes friends with and I liked that Freya was able to forge important friendships with other females. I was worried her character could fall into the trope of ~not like the other girls~ and was glad she didn't turn out like that.

Overall, Freya was a fun book to read but not really memorable in many ways. There are lots of people that will love this book because it is absolutely enjoyable as a brain candy novel but I needed more structure and I needed it to be a little bit more grounded in reality to have bought the plot and the characters. I wish there were a lot less conveniences and a lot more hurdles to jump over the course of the book but given how Freya ends, I am definitely expecting to see more of that in a sequel (and there better BE one because a book cannot just end like that.)

*Note that I received an advanced copy of this book for review.*

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### **Evelyn Romp says**

Hmmmm, er bestaat denk ik geen schrijfstijl die minder bij mij past dan deze :)

