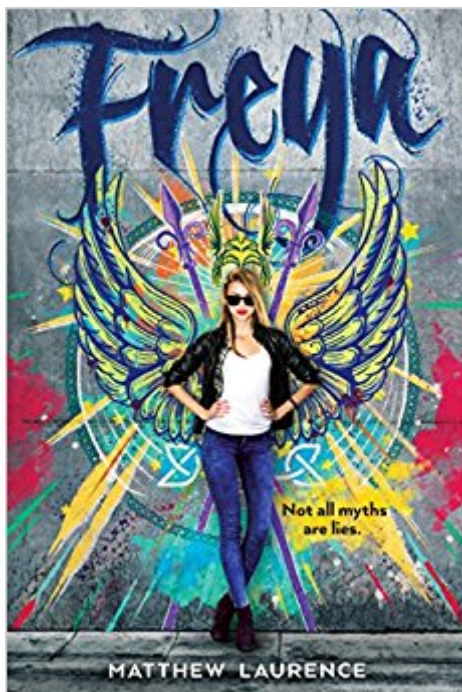


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# Freya



## Synopsis

Freya is the myth. Freya is the legend. And she's about to make one hell of a comeback. There's far more to Sara Vanadi than meets the eye. In her prime, she was Freya, the Norse goddess of love, beauty, war, and death - though that past hardly seems to matter now. For an ancient goddess in the 21st century, true believers - and the strength they bring - are painfully hard to find. But when a new, rising power threatens to remake the world by bending the divine to its will, Sara realizes her days of hiding have ended, and a chance to claw her way out of the history books has arrived. She'll just need new clothes and a manicure before she gets started. Blending elements of fantasy and sci-fi in a modern-world setting, the first novel in this new young adult series by Matthew Laurence is perfect for fans of Buffy the Vampire Slayer. An Imprint Book

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"This series debut blends philosophy (free will, destiny, faith), humor, multidimensional characters, and a fast-moving, well-constructed plot into a compulsively entertaining read." • Kirkus Reviews, starred review "Move over, Percy Jackson, there's a new girl in town."

• Booklist "Adrenaline-infused adventure." • School Library Journal "Boatloads of action, villains who are at once familiar and original in their quests for world domination, and a savvy team of multireligious goddesses make for a kick-ass adventure situated between science and belief."

• The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books (BCCB)

A designer and writer for over nine years, Matthew Laurence is consistently delighted that people actually pay him to make games. His career has taken him from Orlando and San Francisco all the way to Finland and now Munich, Germany. Besides playing games of all kinds, Matthew writes and cooks for fun, travels with his wife whenever (and wherever) possible, and maintains an unhealthy relationship with Netflix. Freya is his debut novel.

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 soufflé. Already looking forward to the sequel!

Reminds me of Rick Riordan. The protagonist is a unique spin on mythology, modernizing it in an interesting way, and imagining what it might mean to be a mythological god who survived into a time when people no longer really believe. Combining philosophy and some snappy dialogue, the protagonist is a well conceived and well executed character, Freya is a fantastic debut effort. I look forward to seeing what the future holds for Mr. Laurence.

Exploring the humanity of Gods and the idea that believing in them is a two-way street was something I'd never read before. Great debut novel!

Fantastic book! Ingenious twist of characters and highly entertaining for all to read.

Fun book, interesting spin on the relationship between humans and diety. When will we get the sequel? I kinda need it.

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.

In her heyday, Sara Vanadi was Freya, the Norse goddess of love, beauty, war, and death. But it turns out gods get their power from belief and in the twenty-first century there aren't a lot of true believers left. Sara Vanadi has spent the last twenty-seven fairly comfortable years living in a mental hospital. Sure the clothing options are limited, and maybe it's not the most happening place. But it turns out it's a great option for a former goddess who needs to keep a low profile. Sara's twilight years are ruined when a representative from the shady Finemdi corporation tracks her down to make an offer: join the corporation and receive new believers or die. Sara chooses option three and goes on the run with her unwitting accomplice (and first worshiper in decades) Nathan in *Freya* (2017) by Matthew Laurence. *Freya* is Laurence's debut novel and the first book in a series. This book is narrated by Sara/Freya who thanks to her unique position as a god offers an interesting perspective on the modern world. She is also unapologetically curvy and comfortable negotiating traditional feminine roles (she loves fashion and food) while also taking on the role of hero as she fights bad guys. These flipped gender roles are expanded further with Nathan who is comfortable taking on domestic roles and acting as sidekick while he and Freya try to take on the megalithic Finemdi corporation. Laurence begins this novel with a clever premise that is expanded thoughtfully

as the book progresses. Freya explains her own origins and the internal logic of gods from her pantheon and beyond surviving into modern times (this includes fellow Norse gods, Hawaiian goddesses, some figures from Egyptian and Hindu mythology, and Jesus among others). Despite the presence of larger-than-life gods and the high action beginning, Freya starts slow with Sara and Nathan going on the run and then literally standing still as Sara explains her position as Freya (something she chooses to withhold from both readers and Nathan for the first chapters of the novel despite the title eliminating any chances of a big reveal) and gathering the pieces they will need to go into hiding with new identities. Freya uses some of her remaining powers as a god to gather the resources she and Nathan will need but even for a goddess things come together a bit too easily. Freya is a novel that is fun and filled with action. Although the execution is interesting, the story is poorly paced with little time spent on characterization for anyone except the titular narrator. This novel will have the most appeal for readers (especially reluctant ones) who enjoy mythology and action. An obvious stepping stone for fans of Rick Riordan's novels looking for something new. Possible Pairings: Antigoddess by Kendare Blake, Temping Fate by Esther Friesner, The Lost Sun by Tessa Gratton, Wildfire by Karsten Knight, Gods Behaving Badly by Marie Phillips, The Raven Boys by Maggie Stiefvater

I liked reading this book. This book had a bad ass female character who does what she wants and doesn't run away from danger. Despite not having powers she doesn't let that stop her either. I also enjoyed the friendship between Freya and Nathan and how they interact. Nathan was a loyal friend who always stands by her no matter the risks. Lastly, what I excite me about the book is the fact that the book brings in a ton of gods and goddess from different mythologies. It was cool. I can't wait for the next book to come out.

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