



Valhalla

Jennifer Willis

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Sixteen-year-old Sally Dahl is a rare, modern-day Norse Witch with more power than she realizes. Playing sick from school in Portland, she's casting rune spells during a rare astronomical convergence to bring about a better, happier planet — and hoping her parents don't find out.

What Sally doesn't know is that the Norse gods are still around, albeit without their divine powers — Odin is a high school principal, and blustering Thor is about to lose yet another job as a photocopier repairman. But Heimdall has the perfect cover as a forest ranger while he and his kin hunt for the newly reincarnated World Tree and try to prevent Ragnarok, the literal end of the world that could be timed to the same alignment of stars.

Instead, Sally stumbles across Managarm the Moon Dog, a lost god who seems desperate for her magickal help. But does he really share Sally's vision of a more peaceful world, or are his intentions much, much darker? And what can she do about the ancient Berserker warriors she accidentally calls up, who pledge their allegiance and then demand junk food runs to Voodoo Doughnut and Burgerville?

Valhalla Details

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Author : Jennifer Willis

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From Reader Review Valhalla for online ebook

Charles Daniel says

You Can't Teach An Old Dog New Tricks. Nor, Apparently, Can You Teach Old Gods New Tech.

Thor and Loki both have problems with handling modern technology--though for drastically different, and sometimes numerous, reasons; Heimdall needs a nap and relationship advice; Frigga wants her husband and children to act more civilized; and everyone wants to find the new Yggdrasil.

He old World Tree has died; a new one grows; and the Old Gods must find and protect it to prevent Ragnarok. Meanwhile, modern technology and a naive young witch complicate their search

Kath says

Great read with Norse God's living among modern society. A little history, and a little excitement... to say the least.

OpenBookSociety.com says

Review brought to you by OBS staff member Annabell Cadiz

Synopsis: Sixteen-year-old Sally Dahl is a rare, modern-day Norse Witch with more power than she realizes. Playing sick from school in Portland, she's casting rune spells during a rare astronomical convergence to bring about a better, happier planet — and hoping her parents don't find out.

What Sally doesn't know is that the Norse gods are still around, albeit without their divine powers — Odin is a high school principal, and blustering Thor is about to lose yet another job as a photocopier repairman. But Heimdall has the perfect cover as a forest ranger while he and his kin hunt for the newly reincarnated World Tree and try to prevent Ragnarok, the literal end of the world that could be timed to the same alignment of stars.

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Review: As a fan of the story of the Norse gods and the legend of their epic battles, I was very happy to receive a copy of Valhalla by Jennifer Willis. For the most part, I did enjoy reading the novel. The pacing is pretty good, there where some parts that cause the novel to lag though. The suspense build up is well done. The plot itself is very thought provoking.

Sally was not my favorite character in the novel. She was too whiny and too weak. She was way too gullible.

She fell under Managram's spell way too quickly I just found it hard to believe. Freya was a lot stronger of a female role. Shoot! Opal, Sally's best friend, was a lot stronger of a role and Sally had far more to handle. Frigga was also a beautiful character. She is a loving and caring mother but she isn't afraid to get her hands dirty.

Thor and Heimdall are by far my favorite characters! Thor inability to handle day to day life among humans brought wonderful humor to the story. He is huge, tall, and ill-tempered. He was a lot of fun to read! Heimdall is much calmer and reasonable. I love the bond he shares with his wolf-dog, Laika. David, the Berserker, also cracked me up! That kid ate so much food he made my stomach hurt.

There were a few downsides to Valhalla. I could have done without the constant whinnying from Thor about living in the human world or Sally's inability to see past Managram's deceit. The fluidity of the story could have been a lot better as well. The constant switching of character view points, though I enjoy hearing the story from characters themselves, did not work too well in Valhalla. There were a few times I found myself bored with the tale because of trivial things being discussed. At times, the dialogue, especially the humor, just seemed to forced.

Overall, Valhalla helps to bring the story of the Norse gods to life with a modern twist. Willis manages to make the characters of legend relatable.

For all those interested in learning more about Thor and his kinsmen, Valhalla is a pretty good tale to venture on to learn some well researched history.

<http://openbooksociety.com/article/je...>

Elisabeth says

I like the concept. Norse gods roaming the modern world? Moon witch? Yes please! However, it didn't pan out for me. Beyond the minor quibbles, I have two major problems with this book:

One is that it seemed very young. I don't much like teenage protagonists anyway; their problems don't interest me and their ways of dealing with things are (often appropriately) juvenile. Not my cup of tea. But stories of teenagers CAN be well-written, and I just don't feel like this one was. The author seemed as young and shallow as her main character - and the supposedly adult characters did as well.

(MINOR SPOILER AHEAD) My other issue is the treatment of minor characters. Innocents were called up to do battle against their will, many were maimed and killed, and no one did more than shrug their shoulders over them. We saw nothing of their friends and family, or who they were. The gods certainly didn't care for them, and the main character saw them as nothing more than fuel for her adolescent angst. Even the ones who lived were treated poorly by the story - why should Rita feel the need to atone for things she did completely against her will and outside of her control? I'm not a fan of unfairness anyway, but unfairness treated as if it were perfectly fine is really not okay.

It's possible I would have liked this book if I were 13. I liked the idea; I just couldn't get on board with the execution.

Kathryn Kennedy says

I didn't expect

I didn't expect to like this book or look forward the next development in it, but I did...both. The characters are fun and interesting and the story is engaging. A nice read.

Heather Hollick says

Brilliant and fun. It took me a little bit of work at the beginning to learn all the Nordic names — I was a little rusty on my Norse mythology. After I created my own 'Cast of Characters' list in a note on my phone, the names and characters were quickly embedded in my psyche and it was smooth sailing after the first few chapters.

I can't tell you how fun it is to read about Thor wrestling with copier toner or ... well, I won't give away any more spoilers. This is a truly delightful read.

Terri Kleinberg says

It took me a couple of chapters to really get into this book. I read it two years ago, but wanted to refresh my memory to read the second book in the series so I picked it up again this year. It was a fun romp through the area around Portland, Oregon.

The Norse Gods have chosen to live in Portland to protect the 'tree of life' with interesting consequences. Thor in particular has a hard time fitting into this present day society.

Sally is a young girl who has started practicing Norse Witchery and finds she has a gift for it.

All of them eventually get together, along with the Valkyries, the Vikings and several others, they are a strikingly funny group.

This is definitely worth the read.

Michelle A. Nash says

Valhalla

I got this book for free - and it's a good thing I didn't pay for it. It has a very intriguing, interesting start and I would have been glad to finish it. The problem is there are so many repeated passages and, it seems to me, missing sections. I got tired of trying to find the same paragraph on the next page to continue reading. I am truly sorry I couldn't complete this book and file a review on the whole book.

Mtnbookworm says

Those more versed in Norse knowledge that I am will likely do better keeping the family tree straight. However, the character development and delivery of the tension and action keep the pages turning. Definitely in the cannot-put-down category. I suspect, as the series develops with future books, that we might be seeing the next Marion Zimmer Bradley (for our generation). Except Willis is much funnier. Very excited to read the next book!

Marlene says

Now, if only I had an e-reader. Wish it were on paper!

Tia Bach says

Thanks to my preteen daughter's fascination with all things mythology, my house was eagerly anticipating the movie, Thor. Finding Ms. Willis' book and learning it was about Thor in modern-day times fit in perfectly.

The story starts with Sally, she's experimenting with powers she doesn't fully understand when she meets a real Norse god, Managarm. Unfortunately, he's out to undermine the other gods and plays on Sally's naiveté and vulnerability.

Action abounds, but I found myself most drawn to the scenes of modern-day gods, stripped of their powers, trying to make it in the real world. They reminisce about their god days, feasts and battles, while trying to fit into their jobs and fighting with girlfriends. Can you imagine finding out your boyfriend is really the brother of Thor? He's fighting to save the world, but can't even explain why he's really late. Priceless. Add Odin as a high school principal, genius.

Sally's initial job is to call forth loyal, battle-ready warriors not to mention save the world, "Though she was only sixteen, this would be the great act of Sally's life. The world—and the ancient spirits she resurrected—would thank her for it." But would they? Other warriors are springing forth siding with Thor and his family. Between the two sides, you have everything from old ladies to an entire football team, the Vikings no less, fighting. Thor's brother, Loki, plays a role, but he's not the bad guy you would suspect from the Thor movie. He's misunderstood, fragile even.

I commend Ms. Willis on her ability to combine battle scenes and softer sides of the participants with humor and reality. She also did an excellent job tying in the lesser none (at least for me) Norse god mythology. I fell in love with Sally's cat based on name alone, Baron Jaspurr Von Pussington, III and my heart broke in a pivotal scene involving Frigga, Thor's mother. She was a goddess, but still a mother and certainly not impervious to loss.

I wanted Sally to "get it" before she did, but I can't imagine the teenage dilemma of finding out you are the Moon Witch, only reincarnated every twenty generations, and a pivotal player in a god-struggle. She comes through in the end in grand fashion, and the novel left me wanting to know more about her future adventures.

Well-written and expertly crafted, Valhalla is a must-read if you enjoy mythology, strong characters, humor, and action.

Susan says

This is a YA story, and I read it to see if I could recommend it to the girl I tutor in reading. She loves witch and vampire stories and likes to know about Greek and Roman gods and goddesses, so this was perfect. It's all about a witch and the Norse gods and it's set in Portland OR. Best of all it has a charming heroine with a sense of humor. I enjoyed it.

Kathleen says

I enjoyed reading this, even though it's not my usual cup of tea. I don't have a strong interest in Norse mythology, really. I did enjoy the humor sprinkled throughout the book, especially the idea of Odin as a high school principal. And Thor being unable to hold down a job. :-)
