ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

YOUNG ADULT FICTION

Freya and the Fenris-Wolf
Peter L. Ward
Trafford
978-1-4269-2510-8
Three Stars (out of Five)

When we last saw the Viking defectors of *Vimp the Viking's Epic Voyage*, they had landed in England and persuaded the citizens to let them stay. Freya, Vimp's friend and traveling companion, had disappeared—or so we thought. The seagull that flew low over the heads of the bewildered crowd did seem to know them. Now, we find that Freya has been escorted by two eagles to stand trial at Asgard, home of the Nordic gods. She is ultimately sentenced to return to earth (in human form and with none of the powers she once had), and care for the Fenris-Wolf, trickster god Loki's most disobedient and terrifying offspring. This is the setting for *Freya and the Fenris-Wolf*.

Back in England, Vimp's poet friend, Lief, has found his calling among the monks of Lindisfarne Abbey. When Vikings raid the Northumbrian coast and kill the monks, Lief escapes with not only his life but also a portion of the illuminated manuscript, the Lindisfarne Gospels. Circumstances lead Lief back to his friends, and the group ventures out to find Freya as she faces down Loki in a match made more dangerous by Freya's loss of powers.

There is much to appreciate in this sequel to *Vimp the Viking's Epic Voyage*. Peter L. Ward sustains a consistent authorial voice here; there are big ideas on the table, including the replacement of mythology with Christianity. Various themes are explored without weighting down the story. Characters are well-developed, and settings are described with visual flair. There are some great fights, and once again, Steve Crisp captures the action nicely in his illustrations.

But *Freya and the Fenris-Wolf* suffers, as *Vimp* did, for want of some very thorough line editing. Nothing takes the punch out of a battle like having to reread the same comma-flecked sentence multiple times to ferret out the author's intent. There are a few instances here, as in the first book of the trilogy, where an obstacle seems to disintegrate without much opposition. One confrontation with an angry god ends with the god dissolving when Freya simply dismisses him as a myth. More consistency between actions and consequences would make the story that much

more believable.

Nonetheless, these shortcomings do not diminish the fact that *Freya* is a solid improvement on, and worthy sequel to, *Vimp*. Readers who have come this far will want to read the final volume to see how things end.

Heather Seggel