ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

GENERAL

The Valkyrie Sagas: Mimir's Well
Gregory Pepper
Lulu
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Four Stars (out of Five)

In Norse mythology, Valkyries carry the souls of valiant warriors to the heavenly halls of Valhalla to celebrate their courage and victories for eternity. British author Dr. Gregory Pepper grew up with these tales and has used his love of them to craft a tale of a woman who discovers what it means to be among the Valkyrie ranks.

Dr. Katarina Neal walks home after a long shift at a New York City hospital, when she hears an altercation in an alley. A man is beating a woman, and when Kat tries to stop him, he fatally injures her and the victim runs away. But the man doesn't deliver the last blow; that is inflicted by Brunhildr, one of the Valkyries. She and her sister warriors travel to Midgard, their name for our earth, to not only bear the souls of heroes to Valhalla, but to perform retribution upon those who have committed grievous wrongs on others and locate potential Valkyrie candidates.

NYPD Detective Marcus Finch lands the Neal murder case and his investigation quickly becomes complicated. Why was Dr. Neal knifed after being shot? Who is the redheaded woman who pretended to be a cop?

FBI Agent Woods wants to interrogate "Officer" Jessica O'Brien, but she and murder suspect Ruby Knight magically disappear from a locked jail cell.

In Asgard, Loki's attempt to wed the Queen of the Valkyries to the King of the Giants reaches its inevitable conclusion, just as the magical wolf Fenrir and his lupine colleagues are reaching the walls of Asgard. Odin, the All-Father, wants to avert the devastating prediction of an apocalypse, which the Norse called Ragnarok, in any way he can. But Loki is determined to keep Fenrir free at any cost—even if it means bringing on the end of all worlds.

Against this backdrop of magic and intrigue, Kat learns a Valkyrie's skills and participates in her first battle as a Valkyrie maid. She also learns more about the apples of Idun and the mead the Valkyries regularly drink, which leads her to an unpalatable realization about where Asgard's power really lies. She embraces her Valkyrie maid role and, far sooner than she

expected, she learns whether or not she has what it takes to be a Valkyrie.

Pepper has taken Norse mythology and tweaked it just enough to give it an overall modern feel, with relationships just as varied and complicated as those in which humans engage on earth. His explanation of Mimir's Well is a clever bit of legerdemain, and Kat's part in the prophecy's fulfillment provides one of several plot engines as well as her main obstacle. Pepper provides a logical path down which readers can easily tread without feeling they've been there before. The landmarks are familiar, but the road goes in a different direction than the one laid out in the original Norse myths.

Mimir's Well is a well-paced, skilfully plotted adventure set in a world governed by an alternate Norse mythology that is certain to appeal to fantasy lovers.

J. G. Stinson