

NORSE MYTHOLOGY

or the Tales of North Men



THE NORSEMEN



“Norse” encompasses the peoples of Scandinavia (Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden) and Iceland

The Norsemen were fierce warriors and fearless sailors

Overpopulation in Scandinavia prompted some Norsemen to conduct raids the other European countries

These Scandinavian raiders were called “Vikings”

“Berserkers” were animal-pelt-wearing warriors who fought with a crazy fury, which they imagined to be the “spirit of Odin.” Historians believe they consumed drugged foods to inspire their frenzy. The word *berserk* originates here.



THE NORSEMEN

In Norse society women were treated as equals

Norse legends are filled with stories of shield-maidens or women who fought alongside their men

Living conditions in Scandinavia were frigid and cruel, which accounts for the gloomy Norse outlook on life

The Norsemen colonized Iceland, Greenland, and (around 1,000 A.D.) were the first to discover North America



I READ
COMICS,
TOO!



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BIFRÖST was the Rainbow Bridge that connected the worlds

THE WORLD

The Norse believed that there were nine worlds supported by the World Tree, Yggdrasil

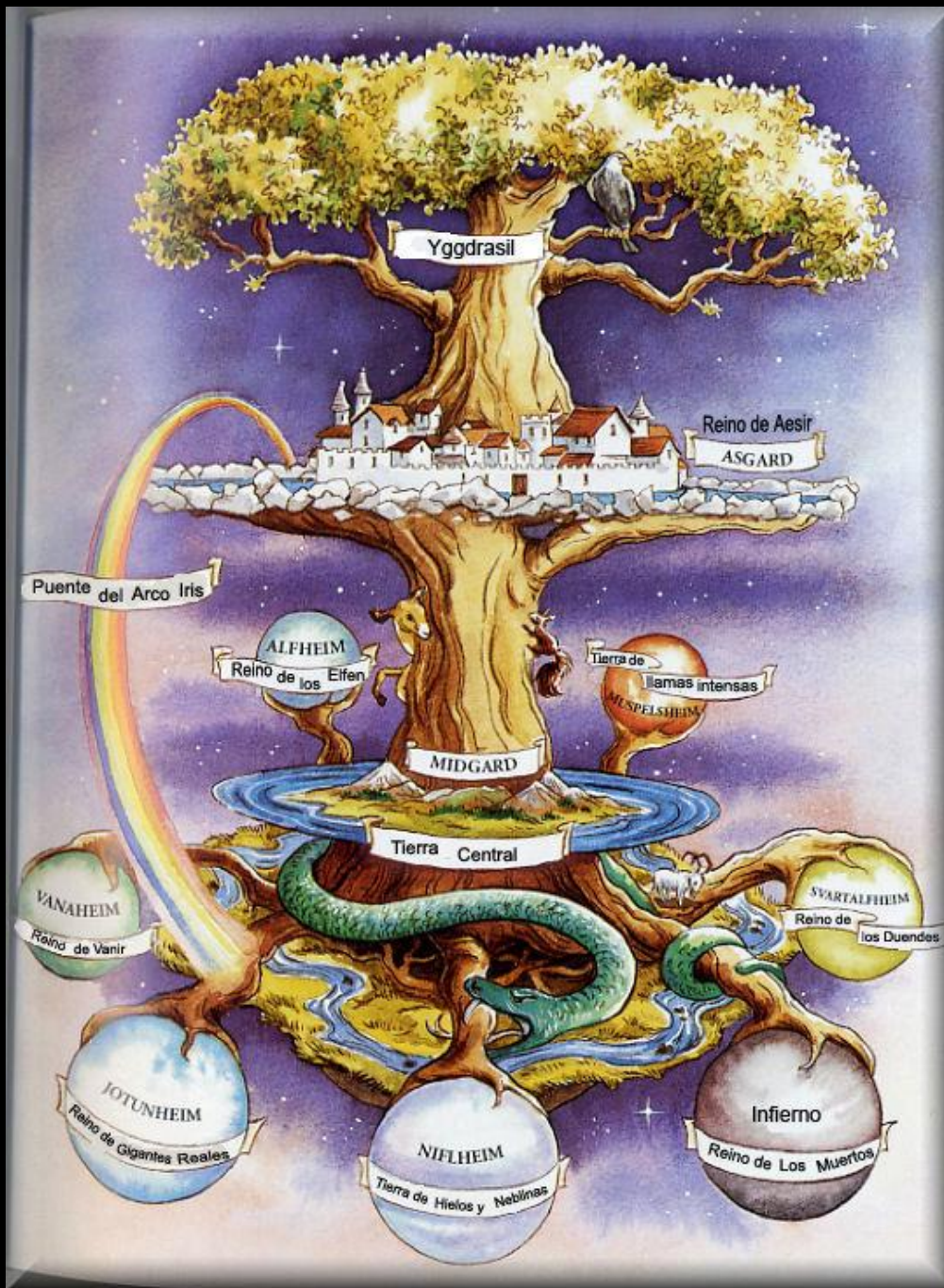
One world was **ASGARD**, Home of the Gods

Another was **JOTUNHEIM**, the Land of the Giants

Another was **SVARTHEIM**, the Land of the Dwarves (or Dark Elves)

Another was **MIDGARD** “Middle Earth”, the World of Men

Far below was **NIFLHEIM**, the cold Land of the Dead





ODIN

Also known as “Woden”
(Woden’s Day is named for him)

All-Father of the Gods

The Bringer of Rain

Two ravens (Hugin and Munin)
perch on his shoulders and bring him
news from around the world

Traded an eye for wisdom

Gave Runes (symbolic writing) to
men



FRIGGA

Odin's wife and queen

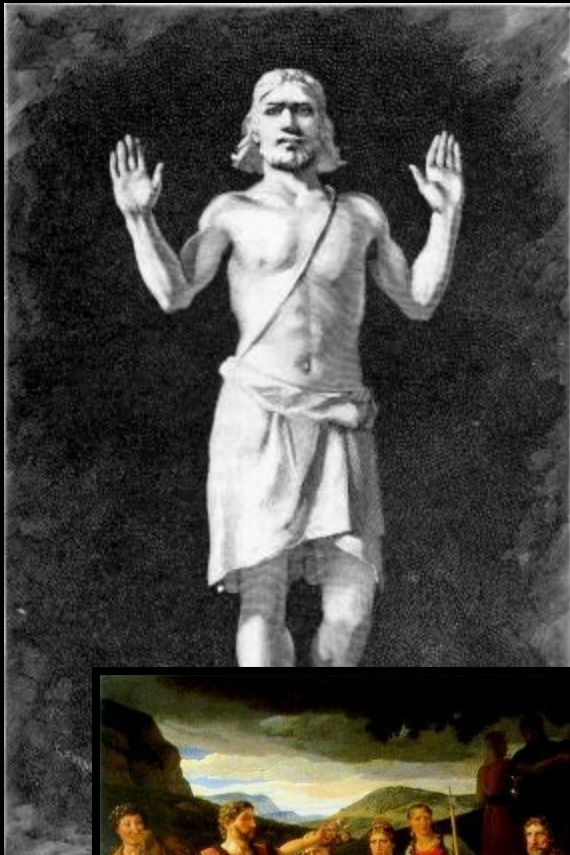
Protector of Marriage

Mother of Balder

Cast a spell on her most beloved son to protect him from harm

Sits at her spinning wheel day after day

Frigga Day (Friday) is named for her



BALDER

The most beloved of all the gods

Out of all he was totally pure

His death was caused through the
tricks of Loki

His death is one of the great Norse
tragedies





THOR

God of Thunder

Wears a magic girdle that doubled his strength

His magic hammer is Mjölhnir

His wife is Sif of the Golden Hair

The giants are his mortal enemies, and he constantly battles them

Thor's Day is named for him



TYR

God of Single Combat

Lost one of his hands to Fenrir, a
giant wolf

Tyr's day is named for him





HEIMDALL

Watchman of the Gods

Guard of Bifröst, the Rainbow
Bridge that leads to Asgard

His horn will sound the beginning
of Ragnarok, the Day of Doom



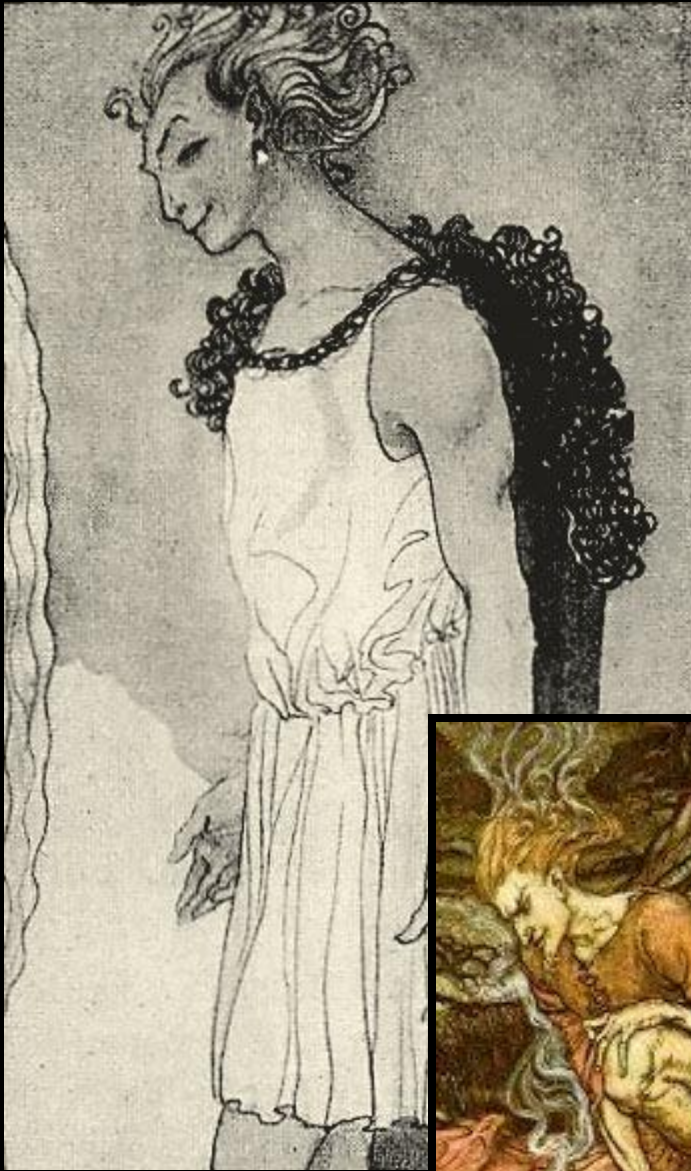
FREYA

Goddess of Love and Beauty

Wears Brisingamen, the Necklace
of the Dwarves

Also known as a battle goddess
who rides a giant boar into battle





LOKI

The Doer of Good and the Doer of
Evil

Crossbreed God and Giant

Master Trickster who is sometimes
helpful and sometimes hurtful



VALKYRIES

Odin's battlemaidens who determine the outcome of battles

Carry the victorious dead to the Hall of Odin, Valhalla

There these mortal warriors will feast and wait for Ragnarok

Then they will fight against Loki and the Giants with the Æsir



The NORNS

Three female creatures who control
the fate of all races

One sees the past, one sees the
present, one sees the future

Sit at the Well of Urd at the base of
the World Tree





GIANTS

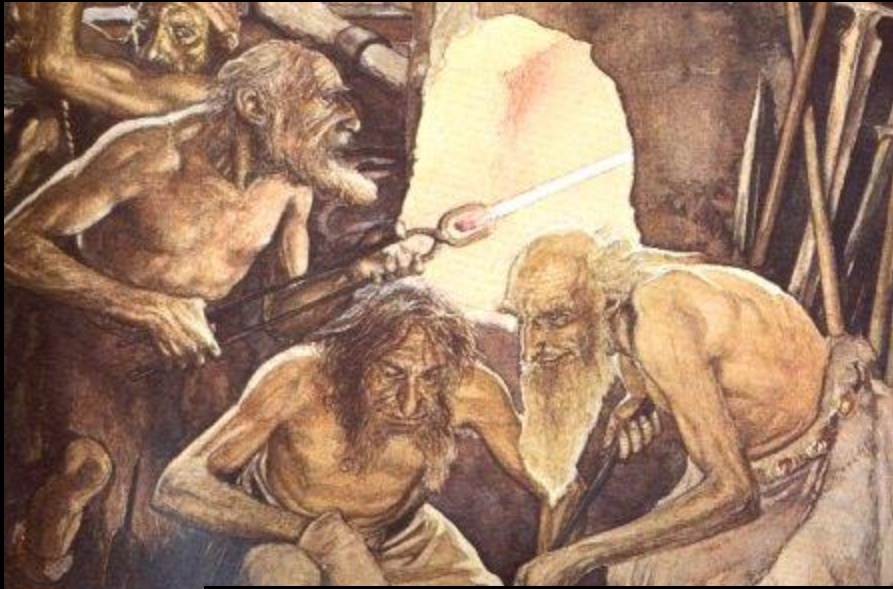
Enormous brutes who are the enemies of the Æsir

Continually plotting to destroy the gods through tricks and traps

Not all Giants are evil, but the majority are

Thor is the god that they hate the most





DWARVES

Short, hairy creatures that live in Svartheim, the Land of the Dwarves

Master craftsmen who work underground forging the treasures of the world

They are the makers of Mjölfnir and Brisingamen





RAGNAROK

The Day of Doom that will destroy
the Gods and the entire Earth

The Gods know this day is coming
and do everything they can to
prevent it

Loki, his children, and the giants
will overrun the Æsir

The World Tree will burn

Mani (Moon) and Sol (Sun) will be
devoured by the wolves of darkness
that chase them

From the ashes a new world will be
born, built by new gods