



THE BUILDING OF THE WALL

CAST

Odin *All-Father of the Gods*
Loki *Trickster, Half-god, Half-Giant*
Freya *Goddess of Love and Beauty*
Heimdall *Watchman of the Gods*
Tyr *God of Single Combat*
Thor *God of Thunder*
Balder *Most Beloved of the Gods*
Frigga *Wife of Odin*
Stranger/Giant *Builder of the Wall*
Svadilfare *Builder's Magical Horse*

NARRATOR: Long ago when the Nine Worlds had just only been formed, the immortal gods began their long trek throughout the World Tree, looking for a spot perfect for the building of their home.

The Æsir—as they were called—were led by the eldest, the All-Father, Odin. His hair and whiskers were white with age, but his body

was still quick and strong, and his noble presence was ever trailed by his mighty children.

As they journeyed—searching for the place where they would create their fortress— Odin told them the story of creation.

ODIN: In the beginning, there were only two things: fire and ice, floating in the midst of nothingness. And when these two things came together, what do you think they made?

HEIMDALL: Steam, Father.

NARRATOR: Heimdall, one of Odin's strongest son, replied. Odin nodded, and his son grinned—revealing his teeth made of gold.

ODIN: And from this mist came the first two creatures—Ymir the Giant and the Great Cow.

TYR: (*surprised*) Great Cow?

NARRATOR: Tyr was a dark-haired god with a knack for using a sword. While he was filled with youthful pride, he was also noble and true. His father accepted the question graciously.

ODIN: I was not there myself, but *my* father told it to be so. As I was saying, Ymir the Giant lived from the milk of the Great Cow, and losing her precious fluid, she became thirsty and began to lick the ice to quench her thirst.

NARRATOR: Frigga, Odin's stately wife, nodded her head in agreement.

FRIGGA: (*reassuringly*) It is true.

ODIN: From the ice a figure emerged. Slowly, inch by inch—more and more

appearing with each lick—came my father, and he was the first of the gods.

THOR: (*booming*) If there was only god and giant, where do more gods and giants come from?

NARRATOR: Thor was the mightiest son of Odin—powerful and strong. His mind was not the swiftest, but he made up for it with his unflappable courage.

ODIN: Ah. It was a magical time—one we can barely understand. Ymir’s children were born from his armpit.

TYR: Stinky children, eh?

NARRATOR: Balder, the kindest of the Æsir, laughed good naturedly at his brother’s joke. Odin continued with his story.

ODIN: Then my father mated with the she-giants. From this union came my brothers and I. I can barely remember it—as one remembers a dream.

THOR: (*angrily*) Thor hates giants!

ODIN: Yes, the giants have become our mortal foes, but it was not always so. The conflict between our people and theirs started way back then. Jealousy fueled it, and we warred against the first giant and his children. It was a mighty fight—one that shook the heavens. In the end, the giants fled, and Ymir was dead.

HEIMDALL: A-ha! The gods win!

ODIN: Yes, but there was still no world in which creatures of good could live. So from the giant’s body, we formed one. Working together we took his flesh and ground it into dirt. His blood flowed out and made the

oceans, rivers and lakes. His bones became stone, and his brains were the clouds. The high dome of his skull formed the sky.

NARRATOR: The gods had stopped their march. All were staring at one another with disgusted looks.

TYR: So everything around us was once the rotting corpse of a giant? (*pause*) Does that make anyone else sick to their stomach?

ODIN: Now, now. It was beautiful. Yggdrasil—the World Tree—grew from his body along with the new worlds. One was made for dwarves, one was made for men—

HEIMDALL: Where did those creatures come from?

ODIN: Well, the Dwarves came from the maggots that had infested the body of the giant.

TYR: That’s fitting.

ODIN: And the first man and woman were formed from two oak trees—which might explain their hard-headedness. Anyway, the last addition—the crown of it all—was Bifröst, the Rainbow Bridge, connecting each world to the other.

HEIMDALL: (*excitedly*) I cannot wait to see that!

ODIN: We will soon reach it. But now you know why we wander. We must find our own home—a home for the gods—where we can keep watch over all creatures and insure that good always prevails. We must always keep an eye on Jötunheim, the Land of the Giants. They have never forgotten that we killed their ancestor and will be seeking revenge for that deed forever.

NARRATOR: The group had been climbing up a rocky slope, and as they topped the crest, a wide valley was laid out before them. Vibrant trees surrounded a mirrored lake.

BALDER: (*breathlessly*) What is this place, All-Father?

ODIN: (*grandly*) We have reached the top of the World Tree. It is here that we shall build.

NARRATOR: And build they did.

Thor controlled the clouds above and gave them plenty of light and respite from the wind and rain. Day after day, Heimdall was sent down the Rainbow Bridge—which he now adored—into other worlds for supplies. Tyr—using his natural strength—laid block upon block of marble—slowly forming the outer wall of an enormous palace. Frigga spent her time mixing mortar from the water of the lakes, and Balder planted a glorious garden on the grounds.

Odin watched all of this with wise eyes and guided their every move.

In the end, the otherworldly hall was built.

FRIGGA: Husband, what shall we call it?

ODIN: Asgard—the Place of the Gods.

BALDER: Perfect.

NARRATOR: The Æsir were not the only creatures of their kind in the world, and soon word spread of their newly-created home—drawing others to come and see their great accomplishment. Many were the visitors to Asgard.

From a faraway tribe of gods called the Vanir, came two young twins—Frey, a handsome youth, and his glorious sister, Freya.

When Freya presented herself in the hall of Odin, she took the breath away from the entire assembly with her stunning beauty.

FREYA: (*humbly*) Lord Odin, our parents were killed by giants, and my brother and I have journeyed here. We have heard that Asgard was the most glorious place in the World Tree, and we desire to reside here with you.

ODIN: You two are most welcome! Here you will be safe!

NARRATOR: But as he said these words, Odin realized that they were not true. Asgard was a golden fortress, but there was no wall to protect it from danger. Any giant might tear off one of peaks that surrounded the hidden valley and crush their magnificent home with a single throw.

Odin called Heimdall to him and explained his new-found worry.

ODIN: We must build a wall around our hall, Heimdall, or it will always be in danger of destruction. It must be a strong wall—one built with magic and cunning.

HEIMDALL: Shall I go to the dwarves?

ODIN: No, no. They think only of jewels and gold. We need stone.

HEIMDALL: I will go to the Rainbow Bridge and wait. I will watch as the creatures move from one world to another. I will look for one who could build such a wall for us.

ODIN: That is a good idea. *(pause)* You love it there, don't you?

NARRATOR: The burly god looked at the All-Father sheepishly.

HEIMDALL: *(shyly)* I think it's the most beautiful place in the World Tree. I could stay there forever.

ODIN: Then perhaps we should make it your job to guard it. You must always be on the lookout for the enemies of Asgard, who might come to attack us. The Watchman of the Gods is what we will call you.

HEIMDALL: *(excited)* I would be honored!

ODIN: Go! And report back when you find our builder.

NARRATOR: Odin smiled to himself as his son joyfully left the room.

It was not a week later when a stranger appeared in Asgard. He was as tall as tree, yet spindly like a reed. His body was swathed in a concealing cloak, and a large hat covered his face. He came before Odin at once.

STRANGER: Lord of the Æsir, I have heard from your watchman that you are in need of a builder. I am the one you seek.

NARRATOR: Odin eyed the stranger suspiciously.

ODIN: Asgard needs a wall about it, but tell me, what is your price for such a project?

STRANGER: I cannot reveal my price until the job has begun, and I cannot stop until I have completed it. My gifts are magical, and these are their requirements.

NARRATOR: Odin snorted and looked to his wife. Frigga only raised her eyebrows.

STRANGER: Beg your pardon, All-Father, but you cannot survive without this wall. I have lived among the giants and only escaped with my life. They could tear this place apart in a day if they wished. Your splendid columns and fountains will all be laid to ruin if they are left unprotected.

NARRATOR: Images of destruction flashed through the old god's mind, and he knew that he must comply.

ODIN: We agree, but it must be done within a year. If it is not, we will not pay you your price—whatever it will be.

STRANGER: *(chuckle)* Not to worry. It will be completed. And it will be blessed with a spell that not even I can undo.

NARRATOR: The dark figure turned and disappeared from the hall.

FRIGGA: *(worriedly)* Husband, was that really a good idea? What if he asks for something we cannot provide?

ODIN: Frigga, my dear. He is obviously a giant in disguise. He thinks he has us fooled, but *we* have fooled *him*. There is no way such a wall can be built in one year by one giant—no matter how much of a sorcerer he is.

FRIGGA: *(distrustful)* I don't like it.

NARRATOR: The Æsir gathered curiously around to see what the stranger would do. It was the first day of summer. The task he had laid in front of himself was impossible.

At first they thought that he had given up. They found him standing in the courtyard

with his arms outstretched. He had no stones, no tools. Quickly bringing his gloved hands together, the stranger let out a long whine and a faraway whinnying was heard.

THOR: (*crying out*) Thor see horsey!

NARRATOR: He was right. Galloping down the path that wound out of the surrounding mountains came a giant horse. Huge tufts of hair nearly covered its hooves, and its neck was as thick as an oak. Behind it rattled an enormous wagon—filled with provisions.

GIANT: Here is my steed, Svadilfare.

NARRATOR: The horse and cart thundered to a stop before the gods who stared in shock. The beast gave them a wise glance, and much to everyone's surprise unhooked itself from the wagon and stood upon its hind legs. It was now as tall as its giant master.

TYR: (*shocked*) By the Norns! It's a monster!

SVADILFARE: (*booming*) I am no monster, miserable gods! I am a lord among horses, and I have come to see that this wall is completed by the summer and my master appeased. You have played right into our hands.

TYR: (*yelling*) You don't have hands, you freak! And if you did, I'd cut them from you!

NARRATOR: Tyr cried out and moved for his sword, but Odin held up a hand in warning.

ODIN: No blood will be shed here in Asgard. It is a place of peace. We have no choice. We must leave them to their work and hope that they are not successful.

NARRATOR: Tyr looked angrily to his father and then to the giant in disguise. He grudgingly put his weapon away.

TYR: After this is over, Giant. You and I shall meet for sure, and only one of us will walk away with a head.

GIANT: (*laughs*)

NARRATOR: And so the two giant beings fell into work at once. Stone upon stone was laid. The giant stood everyday upon the beginnings of the wall—muttering spells. The horse worked day and night—never sleeping. He was an enchanted beast to be sure. The gods began to despair.

BALDER: Perhaps, Father, he will not ask for anything that will be too devastating to lose.

ODIN: I do not know what he will ask for, but it will be something that will cripple us—rest assured. He has been sent by the giants for sabotage.

BALDER: (*confidently*) We must not give up hope. There is always hope.

NARRATOR: Hope did come—in a very unexpected form. A vagabond—a crossbreed—was brought to Asgard one day. Heimdall entered Valhalla dragging a skinny, kicking body down its length—coming to a stop before Odin's throne.

HEIMDALL: All-Father! I have found a suspicious creature passing along the Rainbow Road!

LOKI: (*hatefully*) Let me go, you brute!

ODIN: Put him down, Heimdall! Whatever he is, we must treat him kindly.

NARRATOR: The watchman threw the creature to the ground, and it at once jumped to its feet and looked up to Odin's throne.

LOKI: (*pleadingly*) Oh please have pity on me, Lord Odin! I am a miserable mongrel. My mother was one of your kind, and my father was a wind giant. My whole life I have been an outcast. I hoped to find shelter here from the cruelty of the world!

NARRATOR: The All-Father cast a suspicious eye on him. They had been tricked by one stranger before and had learned their lesson.

ODIN: Tell me... (*pause*)

LOKI: Loki.

ODIN: Tell me, Loki. What can you do for us? We are very careful here in Asgard these days as to who we accept as friends.

LOKI: (*helpfully*) I'm full of tricks, Your Majesty! Not evil tricks, but good ones! Let me show you!

NARRATOR: There was a flash of light in the hall, and where Loki had once stood there was nothing.

HEIMDALL: (*enraged*) ARGH! He has vanished!

LOKI: Buzzzzzzzz.

NARRATOR: Odin looked down upon his shoulder. There was a gadfly there. Its face looked very much like Loki's.

LOKI: (*small voice*) See? I'm very handy—good at spying, too.

ODIN: Hmmm. We do not need a spy.

NARRATOR: The buzzing reappeared in the air and grew so loud that it reverberated from every wall. There was a flash, and Loki stood in his original form before the throne.

LOKI: Oh, please, Odin! Please!

ODIN: Very well. We may find a use for you yet. But you must always struggle to overcome that giant blood of yours. Your father was of the enemy, and part of him is left in you.

NARRATOR: The conversation was interrupted by a boom from the great doors. The giant builder was there, and he slowly walked into the midst of the hall. Loki sheepishly moved to the side to let the enormous figure through.

GIANT: (*booming*) Gods of Asgard, I have decided my price.

ODIN: (*grimly*) Name it, and we are forced to answer. We have given our word.

GIANT: In exchange for such a wall as I am building, I ask for Mani and Sol, the Moon and the Sun, so that no light will ever shine on the World Tree again.

NARRATOR: There was a cry of shock from the crowd. This would spell disaster for all creatures.

GIANT: I am not finished yet. *And*—I wish for Freya, the most beautiful among you, to be my bride.

NARRATOR: The young goddess cried out and nearly swooned where she stood. Odin glared at the giant grimly.

ODIN: (*grimly*) We have no choice.

STRANGER: *(laugh)* Of course, you don't. It will be a good wall. I have promised as well. No force can break it. But it won't do you much good when you are trapped in a world of darkness! *(evil laugh)*

NARRATOR: The builder left the hall laughing his throaty laugh. Once he had gone, a unified moan came from the Æsir. Odin lowered his head into his hands. All was lost.

LOKI: *(clears throat)* Just a minute! Just a minute!

NARRATOR: They all looked to the spindly newcomer. His eyes were alive with a plan.

LOKI: There must be some way to trick this creature. Distract him.

ODIN: *He* is not the one to worry about. His horse does ten times as much work as he does. It works tirelessly day and night.

LOKI: Tell me. Is it a steed or a mare?

ODIN: *(surprised)* I guess I haven't really checked.

LOKI: Lord Odin! If I keep these two from completing their project, will you allow me to stay in Asgard?

ODIN: My dear Loki, if you did such a thing, you would be the better of all of us! We'll build you your own hall!

LOKI: Leave it to me! How long do they have until they must complete the wall?

ODIN: They have promised to finish by the first day of summer. That is only two days away.

NARRATOR: The newcomer jumped into the air and kicked his heels.

LOKI: *(laughs)* Not to worry! Not to worry! You will have your wall *and* light to shine upon it!

NARRATOR: Loki skipped from the throne room, and all the gods stared at one another in wonder. What did he plan to do?

Outside the hot sun was bearing down upon the giant and his steed Svadilfare. The wall had been built all the way around the Place of the Gods. The only piece missing was the grand archway at the entrance. The two giant creatures were there humming to themselves as they continue putting the final nails in the Æsir's coffin.

LOKI: *(snicker)* This will work *perfectly*.

NARRATOR: Loki watched for an hour—waiting for the master to take a break. Soon the giant began to yawn and stretch. The horse continued working steadily.

GIANT: Svadilfare, I am going to lie down. Do not stop working whatever you do!

SVADILFARE: *(sarcastically)* Of course not. Why would I need a break?

GIANT: *(angrily)* Silence! Or I'll turn you into glue for the bricks!

NARRATOR: The builder left his worker and disappeared to the shady side of the wall.

SVADILFARE: *(grumbling)* Where would he be without me to do his dirty work?

NARRATOR: Loki covered his mouth with his hand to stifle his laughter and with a wiggle of his ears turned himself into the

loveliest pink mare Creation had ever seen. He made sure to make his coat extra shiny and his rump especially plump, and with a feminine whinny he trotted out of hiding with plucky steps.

LOKI: (*feminine voice*) Svadilfare! Yoo-Hoo! Svadilfare!

NARRATOR: The horse looked up and almost dropped a block upon itself.

SVADILFARE: Jumping Giants! (*looking to heaven*) Gods, thank you! Thank you!

NARRATOR: He ran at once to the side of the filly—trembling with desire.

SVADILFARE: (*seductively*) Hey there! I haven't seen you around here before. New in town?

LOKI: I heard there was a stud farm in these parts, but I had no idea how true it would be. Tee Hee.

SVADILFARE: If I told you you had a nice muzzle, would you rub it against me?

LOKI: (*suddenly hard-to-get*) No thank you, Svadilfareslave.

NARRATOR: The steed looked at the mare with a puzzled look.

SVADILFARE: (*confused*) Why did you call me a slave?

LOKI: (*innocently*) Well, that's what you are, isn't it? I mean, you spent all day working with your *big* muscles, and you never get paid for it. Isn't that a slave?

SVADILFARE: No. I. Uh.

LOKI: Why don't you come away with me? We can run in the fields and eat the grass and, well, whatever. Tee Hee.

SVADILFARE: Oh Baby.

NARRATOR: Svadilfare, overcome with desire, began nuzzling Loki furiously.

LOKI: (*under his breath*) Oh Gods. I've got to get out of here—and quick.

NARRATOR: Loki the comely mare began to gallop across the field with the charging stallion hot on his heels.

SVADILFARE: (*musically*) Oh, my sweet! Playing hard to get I see! Come to me, Angel-Haunches!

LOKI: (*under his breath*) They owe me big time for this.

NARRATOR: And so the two horses disappeared from Asgard. Loki led Svadilfare miles away—through world after world.

When the giant woke to find his worker vanished, his roar filled the entire valley.

GIANT: (*angrily*) Svadilfare! Svadilfare! If I ever find you, you can kiss your hooves goodbye!

ODIN: (*coyly*) Is there a problem?

NARRATOR: The Eldest of the Gods sauntered up—a look of surprise on his face.

GIANT: Do not think you have won! I can finish it just as easily by myself!

ODIN: Can you? My, my. You know, that arch piece over there looks rather large. Make sure you lift with your legs. (*chuckle*)

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NARRATOR: Try as he might, the giant could not lift the huge arch piece. For the remaining days, he toiled—pushing it this way and that way—cursing every being under the sun. But it would not budge.

The first day of summer dawned. The Æsir were waiting at the gap in the wall to greet it. The giant was on the ground where he had fallen helplessly the night before.

ODIN: Thank you for the wall, noble giant. It will do much to keep your kind safely out of our city.

GIANT: (*hoarsely*) You mongrels have won this time, but we will find another way to destroy you!

TYR: (*playfully*) What's that? I can't hear you. You're a little *HORSE*.

(*laughter from all the gods*)

ODIN: Now, allow Thor to escort you back to Jötunheim.

NARRATOR: The blond god ran forward—gripped the Giant strongly at both ends—and sent him flying up, up, up, and over the hills. There was a slight popping sound as he touched down far away.

THOR: (*booming*) Thor say good riddance.

ODIN: Yes, we have averted certain disaster.

NARRATOR: Their attention was drawn to a bend in the path, where an exhausted Loki padded into view. All kinds of leaves and twigs were stuck to his body, and he looked as if the breath of life had been slowly squeezed from it.

LOKI: (*breathlessly*) I finally ditched him.

(*loud cheer from all the gods*)

ODIN: Loki! You have returned! Thank you, Brother. You have saved Asgard, and we welcome you as one of our own.

NARRATOR: Through his panting breaths, the Trickster gave a sly smile.

LOKI: There ain't nothing like outrunning an amorous horse.

NARRATOR: The Æsir cheered. Freya ran forward to kiss Loki upon the cheek for saving her from such a monstrous husband. Tyr and Thor lifted the skinny god up on their shoulders and bore him down the sparkling avenue between the mighty pillars of the newly-built Wall of Asgard.