NORSE MYTHOLOGY
or the Tales of North Men
“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.
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!
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.

**BIFRÖST** was the Rainbow Bridge that connected the worlds.
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 Mjölnir

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 Bifrost, 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 NORS

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 Mjölnir 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