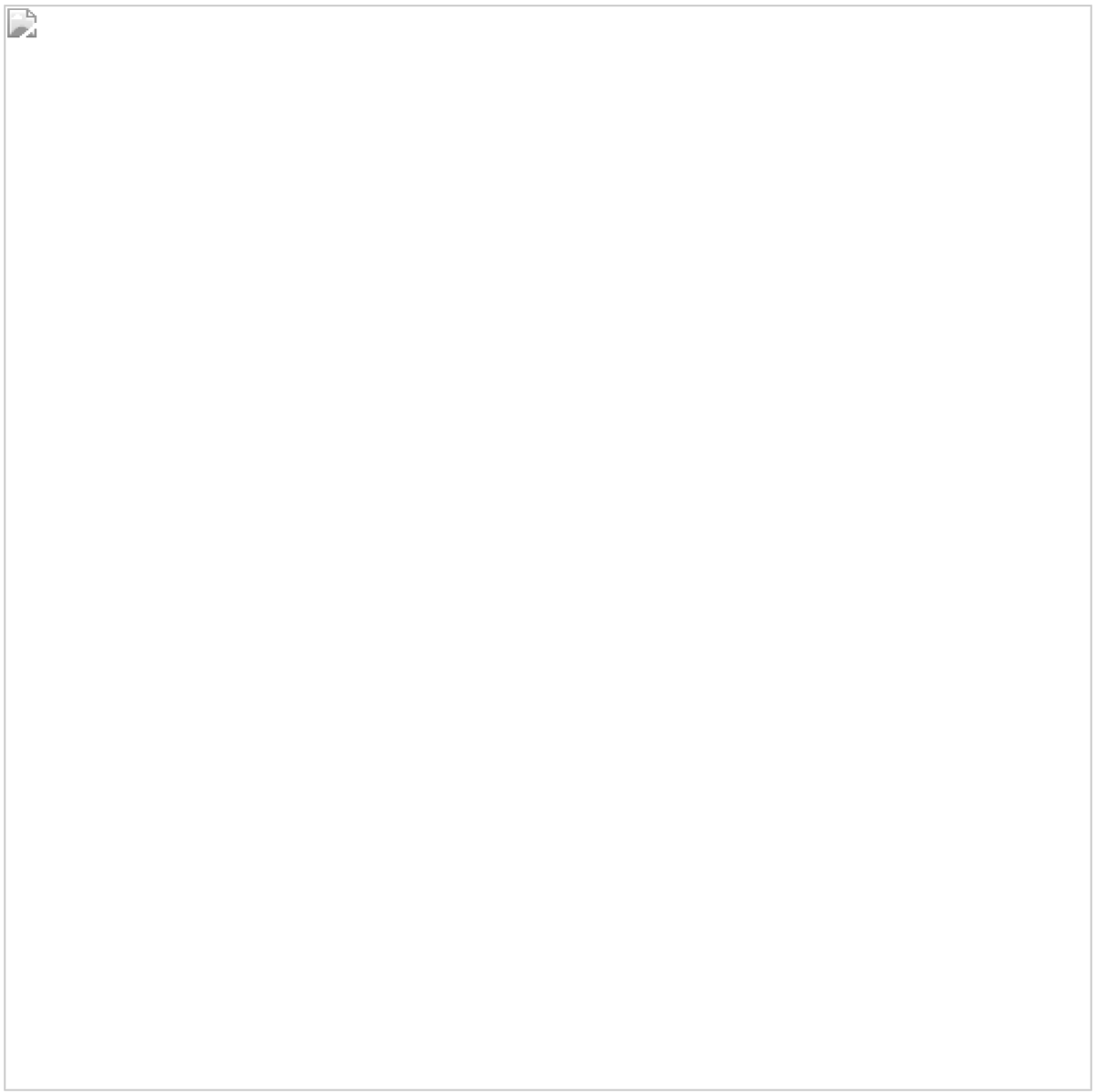
COLORING THE CLASSICS

Baldur

A Norse Myth



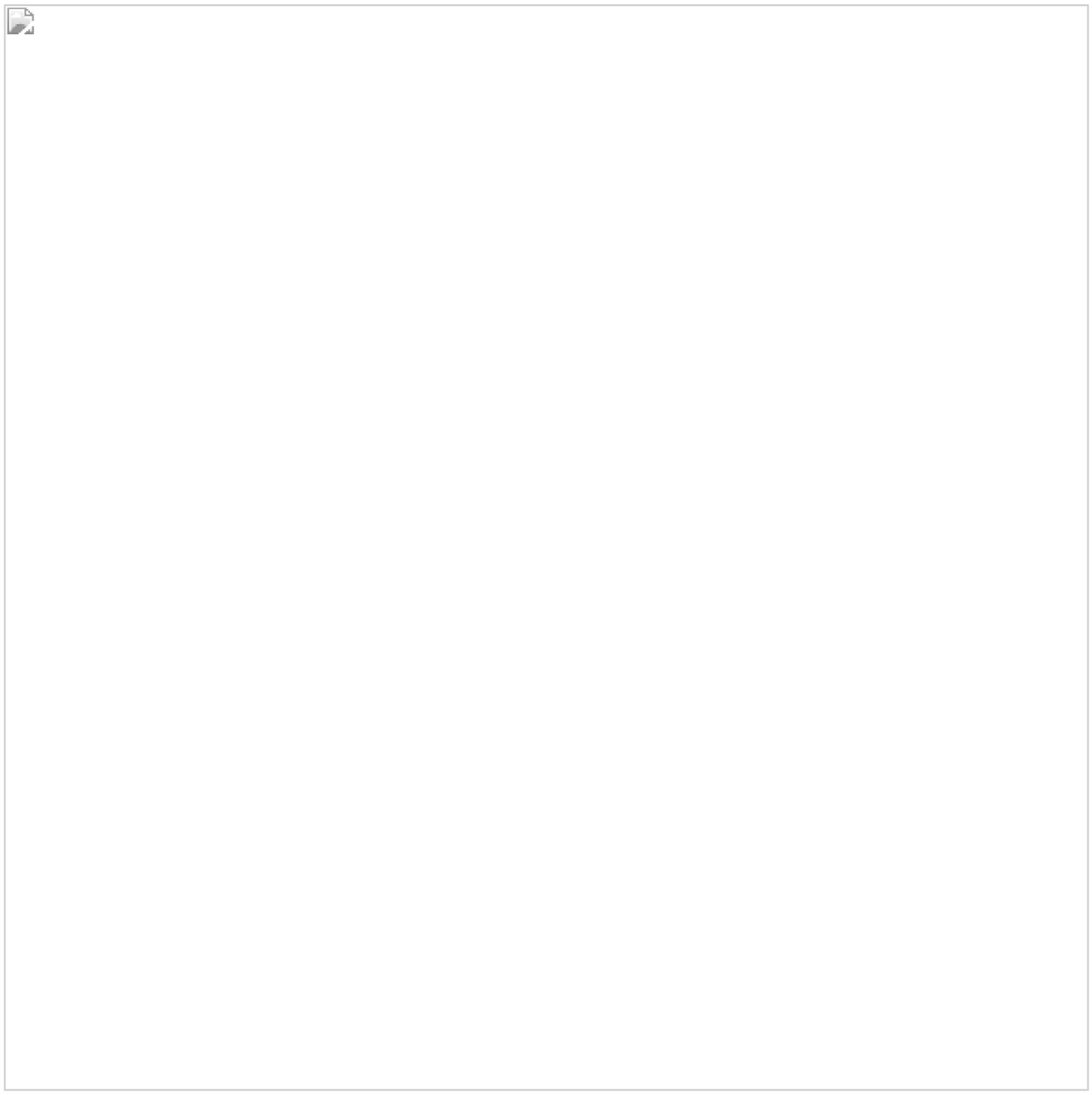
Baldur the Bright and Bold was loved by gods and people alike, and his home, Broadblink, was the sunniest palace of all.

TALK ABOUT IT

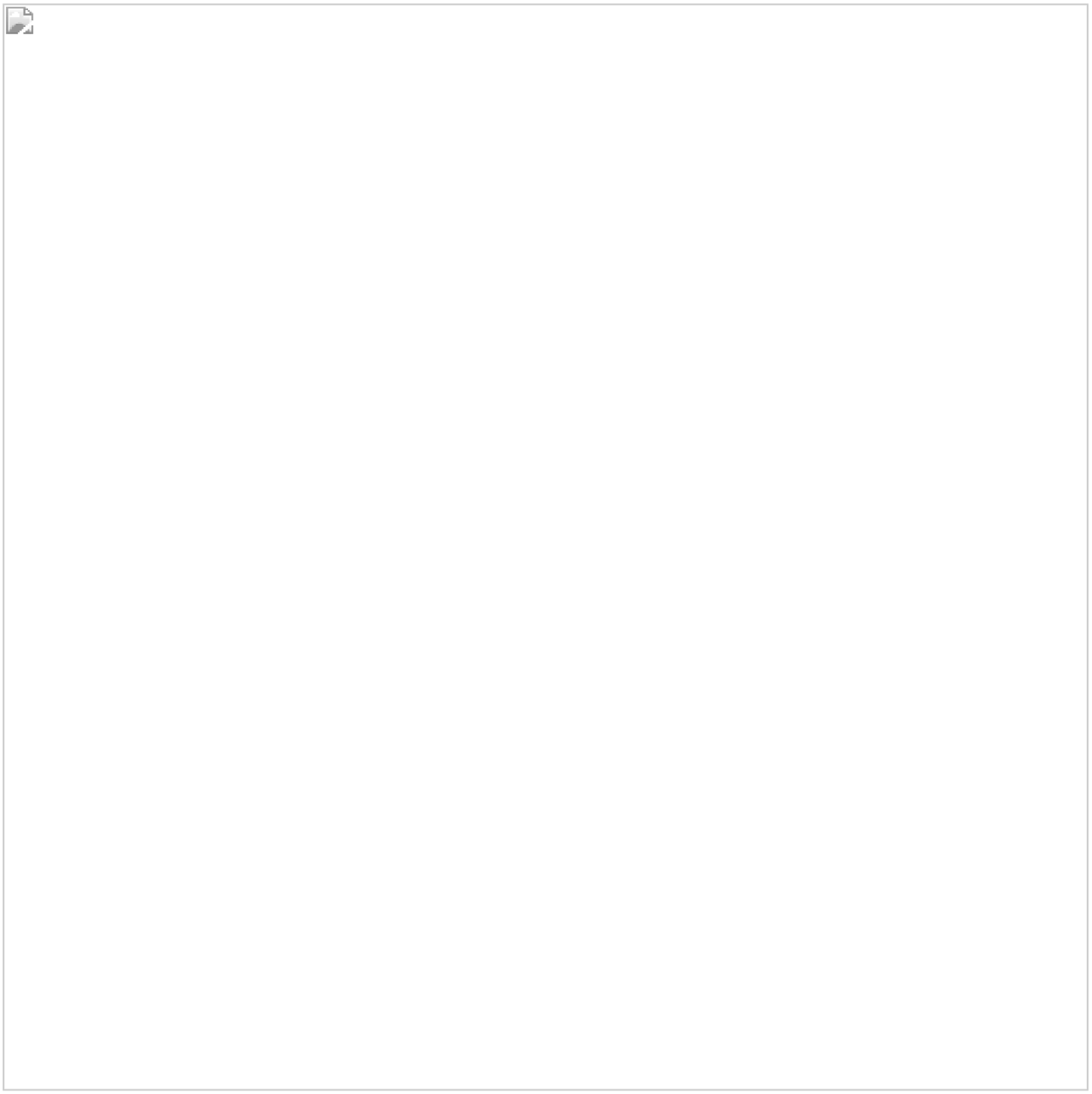
Who is someone everybody loves to be around? What are they like?

This book belongs to _____

Baldur · another picture



A Troubled Dream



One quiet summer afternoon, Baldur dreamed a troubled dream. When he woke, something heavy was inside him, and he walked to his mother, Frigga, and lay down at her feet.

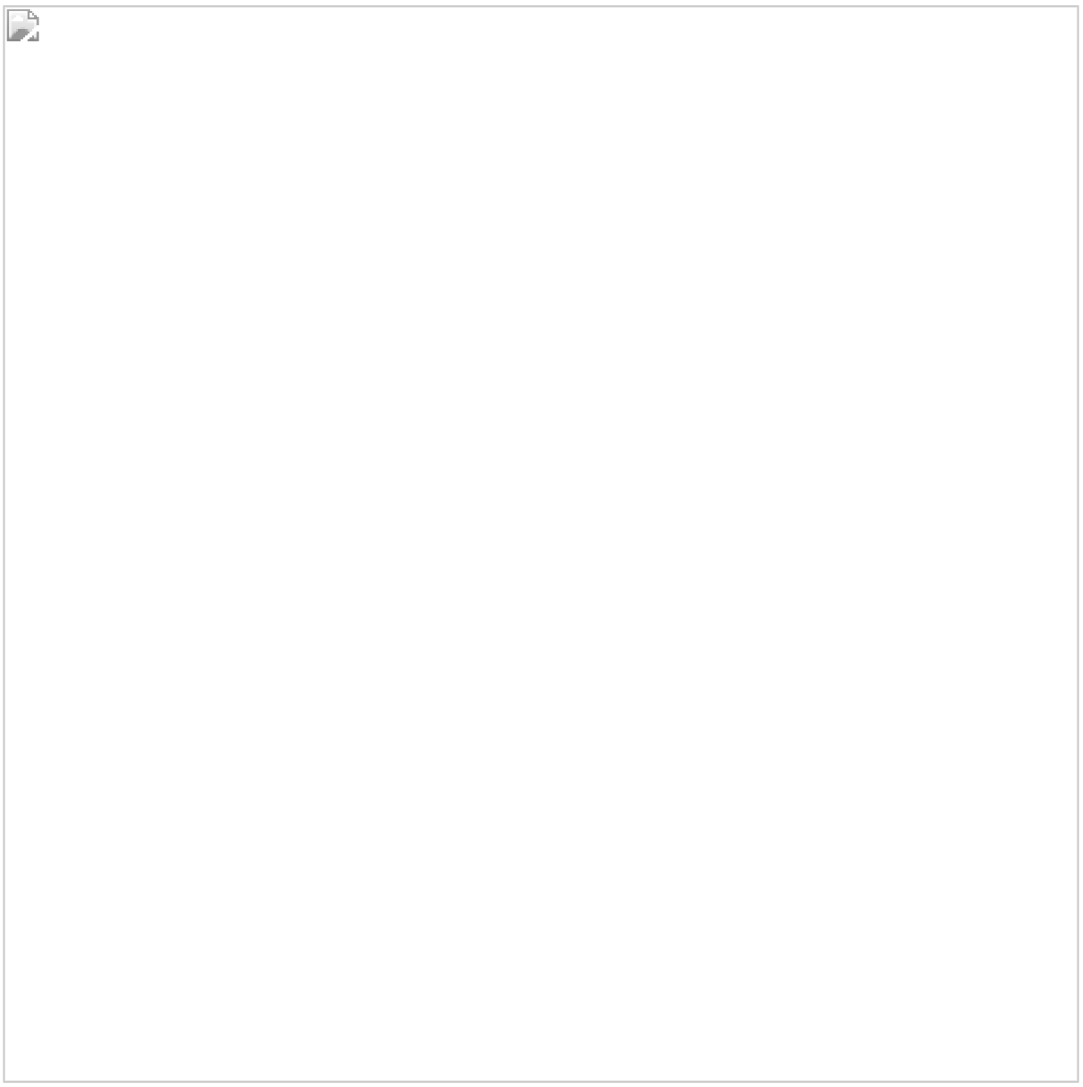
“What is the matter, dear Baldur?” she asked gently.

“I do not know, mother,” he said. “But I have a shadow in my heart.”

TALK ABOUT IT

Baldur went to his mother when he had a worry. Who do you go to when something is troubling you?

A Troubled Dream · another picture

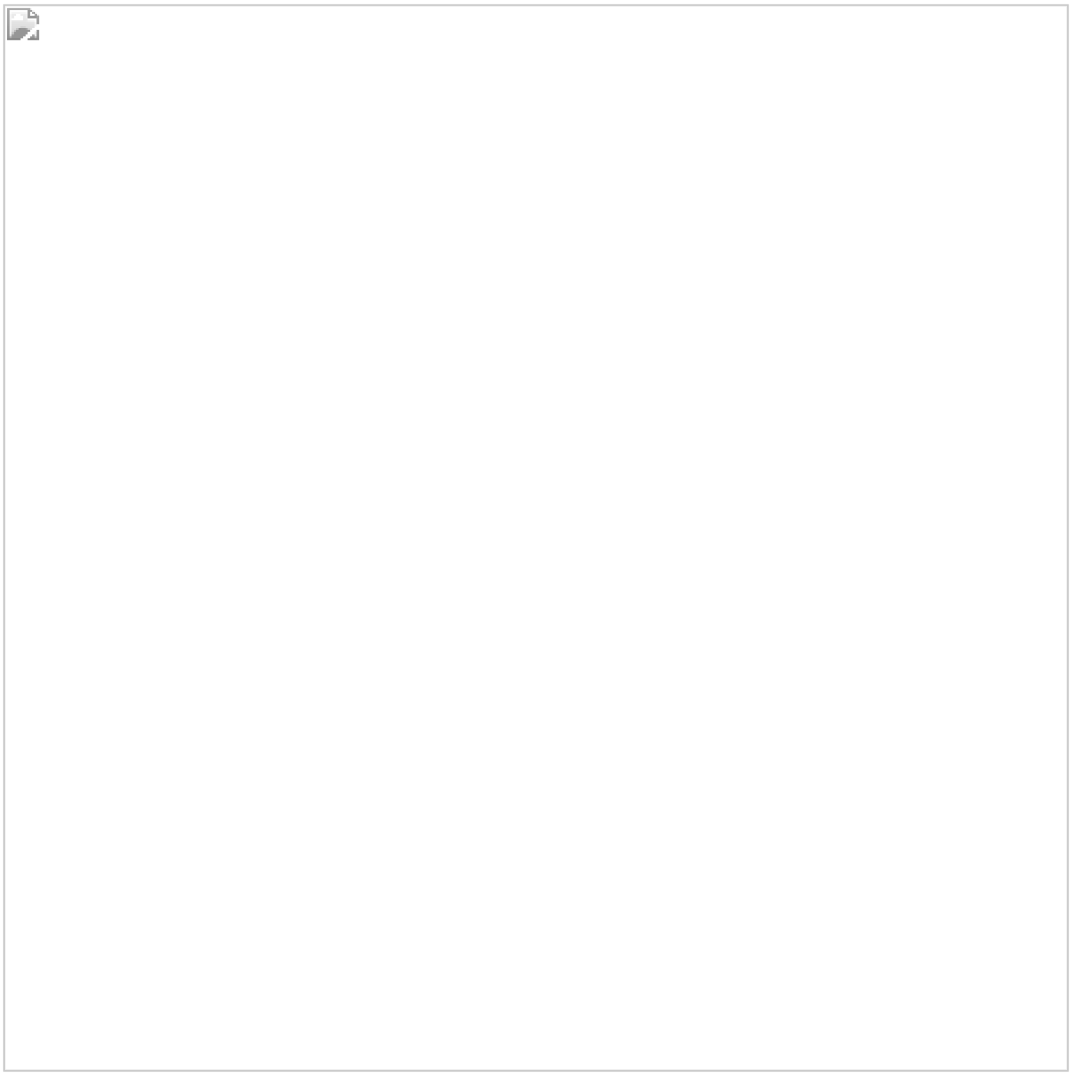


Think about it

1. What did Baldur tell his mother?

- ○ He was hungry
- ○ He had a shadow in his heart
- ○ He was lost

Frigga's Promise



Frigga laid her hand on his heart and felt the shadow. It was the shadow of death.

“I will die bravely, my mother,” said Baldur.

But Frigga said, “You shall not die at all.” She would not sleep until everything on earth had promised not to hurt him.

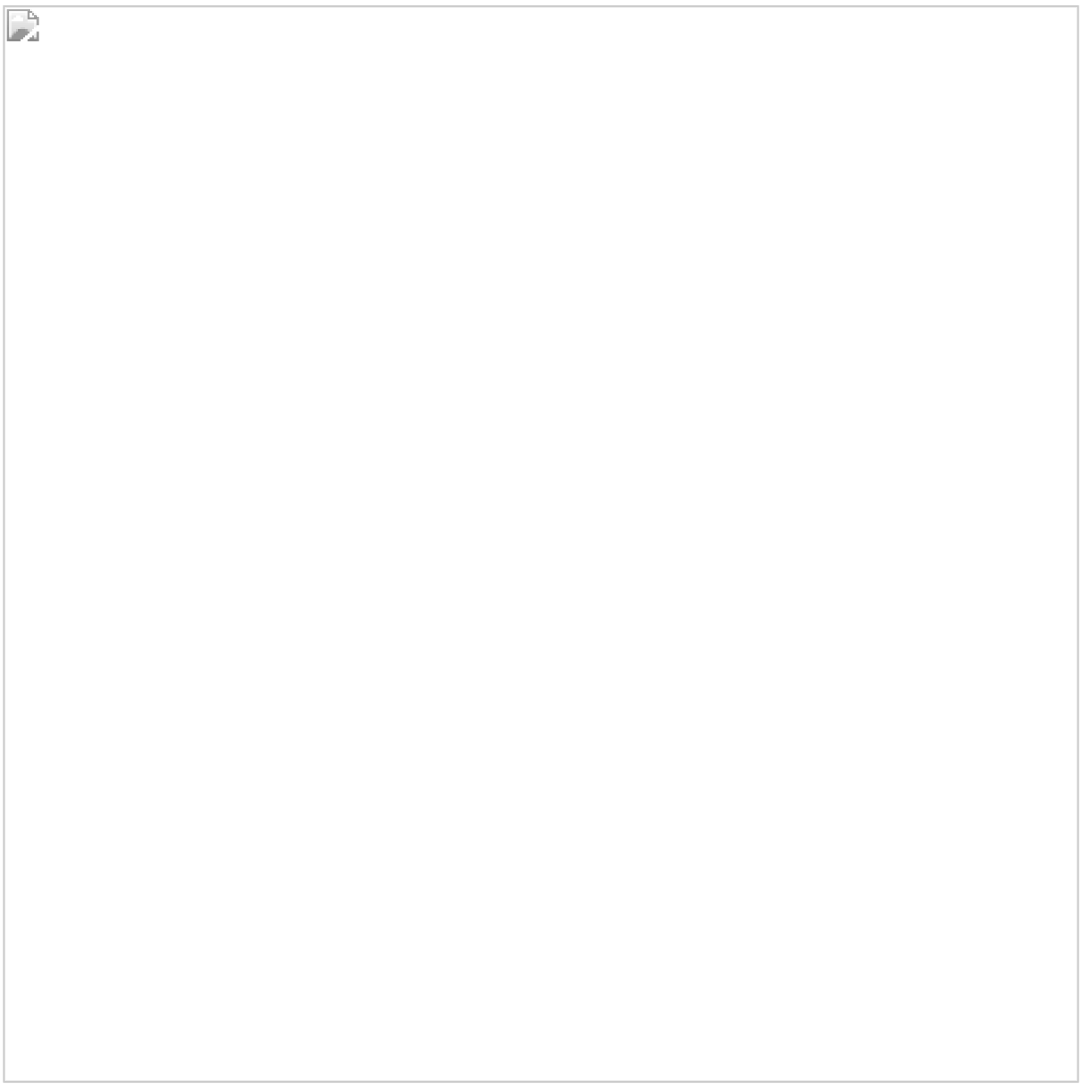
So she called them all. Iron and gold and steel, stones and trees, sicknesses, beasts and birds and snakes. One by one, each raised its voice and swore, “Swear to me that you will not injure Baldur.”

“Now, my son,” she said with a smile, “you cannot die.”

TALK ABOUT IT

Frigga did everything she could to keep her son safe. What do the people who love you do to keep you safe?

Frigga's Promise · another picture

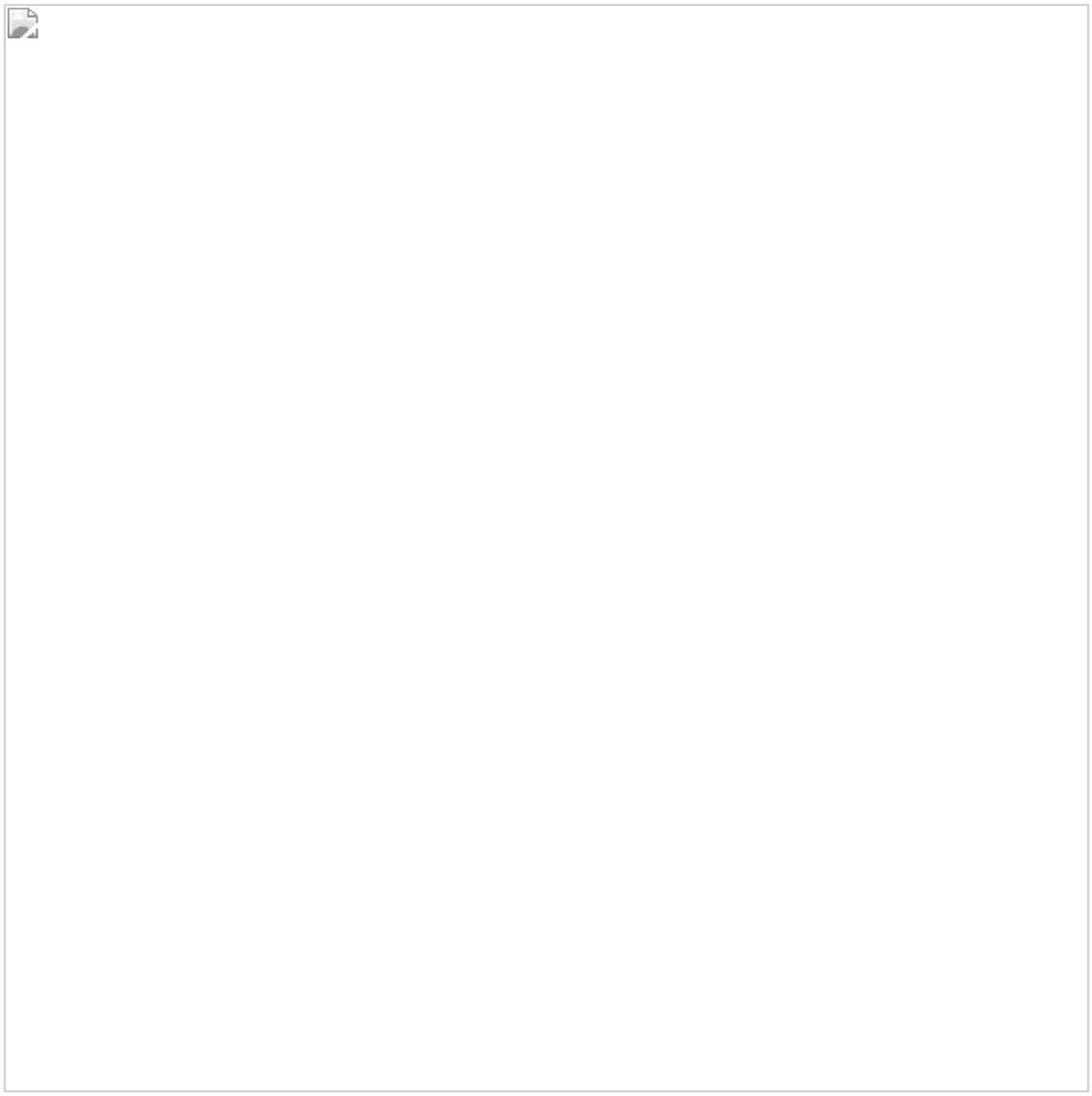


Think about it

1. What did Frigga ask everything on earth to promise?

- ○ To grow tall
- ○ Not to hurt Baldur
- ○ To be quiet

Odin Rides Down



Odin, the father of the gods, heard the whole story. But he did not smile. He saw Baldur's hands pressed to his heavy heart, and asked, “Is the shadow gone out of our son's heart, or is it still there?”

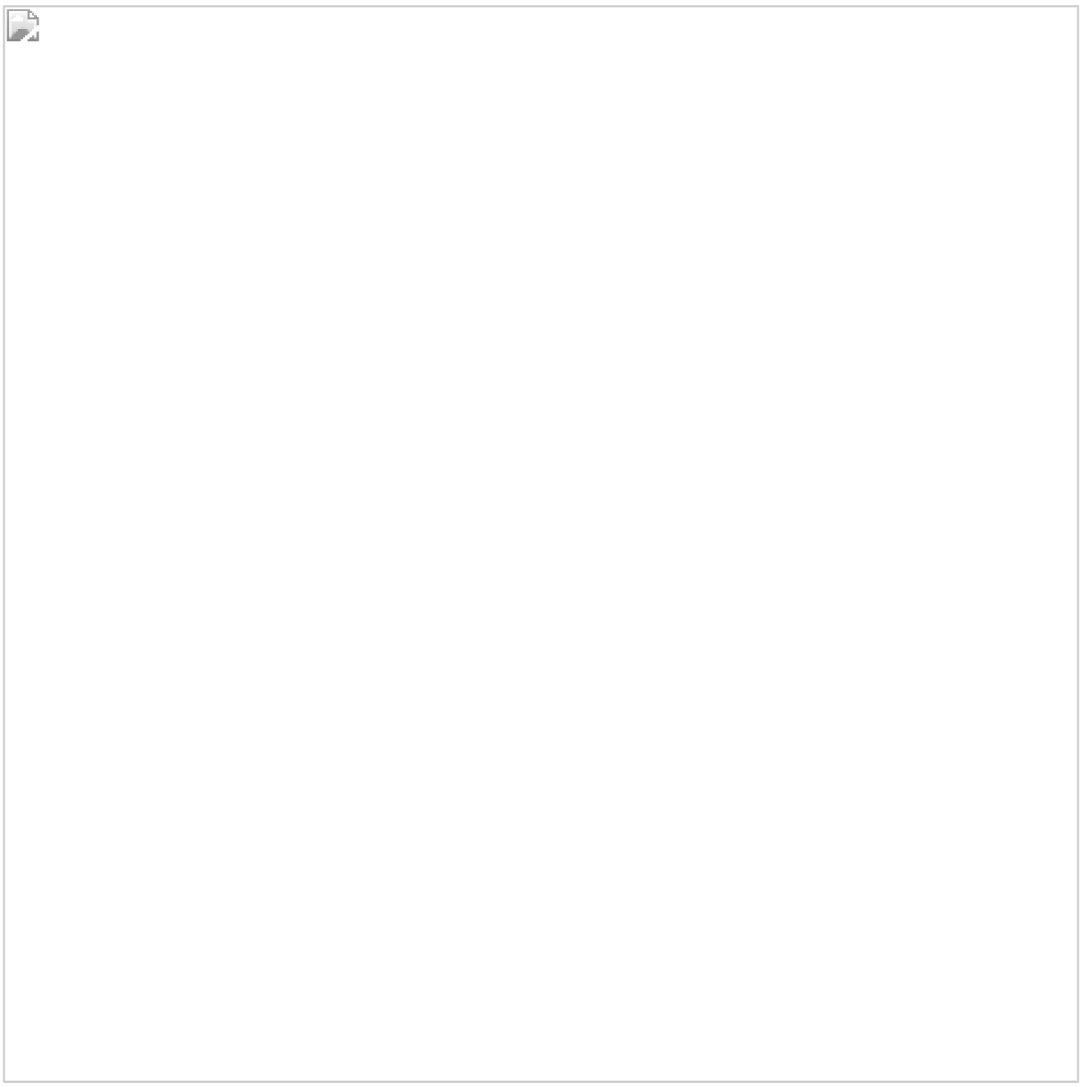
Odin saddled his eight-legged horse, Sleipnir, and rode down into the dark earth, past a fierce dog, to the grave of a wise woman long dead. He wanted to know if some great sorrow was coming.

He wanted answers so much that, for the first time in his life, Odin said something that was not true. He gave a false name: “My name is Vegtam.”

TALK ABOUT IT

Odin told a lie, and the story says it was the first one. Why do you think it matters that he had never done it before?

Odin Rides Down · another picture

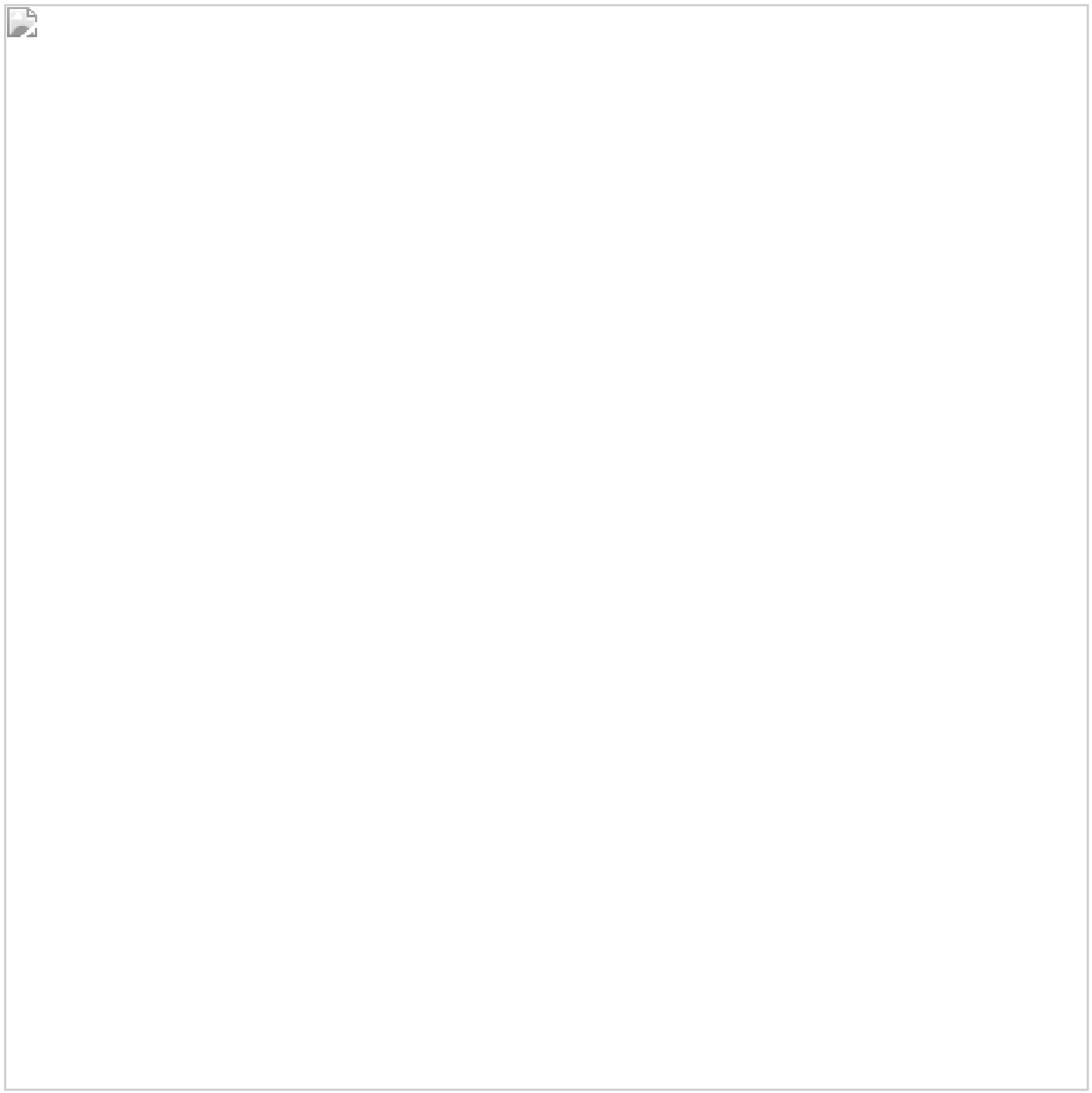


Think about it

1. Why did Odin ride down to the dead woman's grave?

- ○ To find a lost treasure
- ○ To ask if some great sorrow was coming
- ○ To run a race

What the Wise Woman Said



The wise woman sat up in her grave, sleepy and cross. Odin asked her who the gilded couch in Helheim was being made ready for.

“That is for Baldur the Beloved,” she answered.

“Will he never come back to Asgard again?” asked Odin.

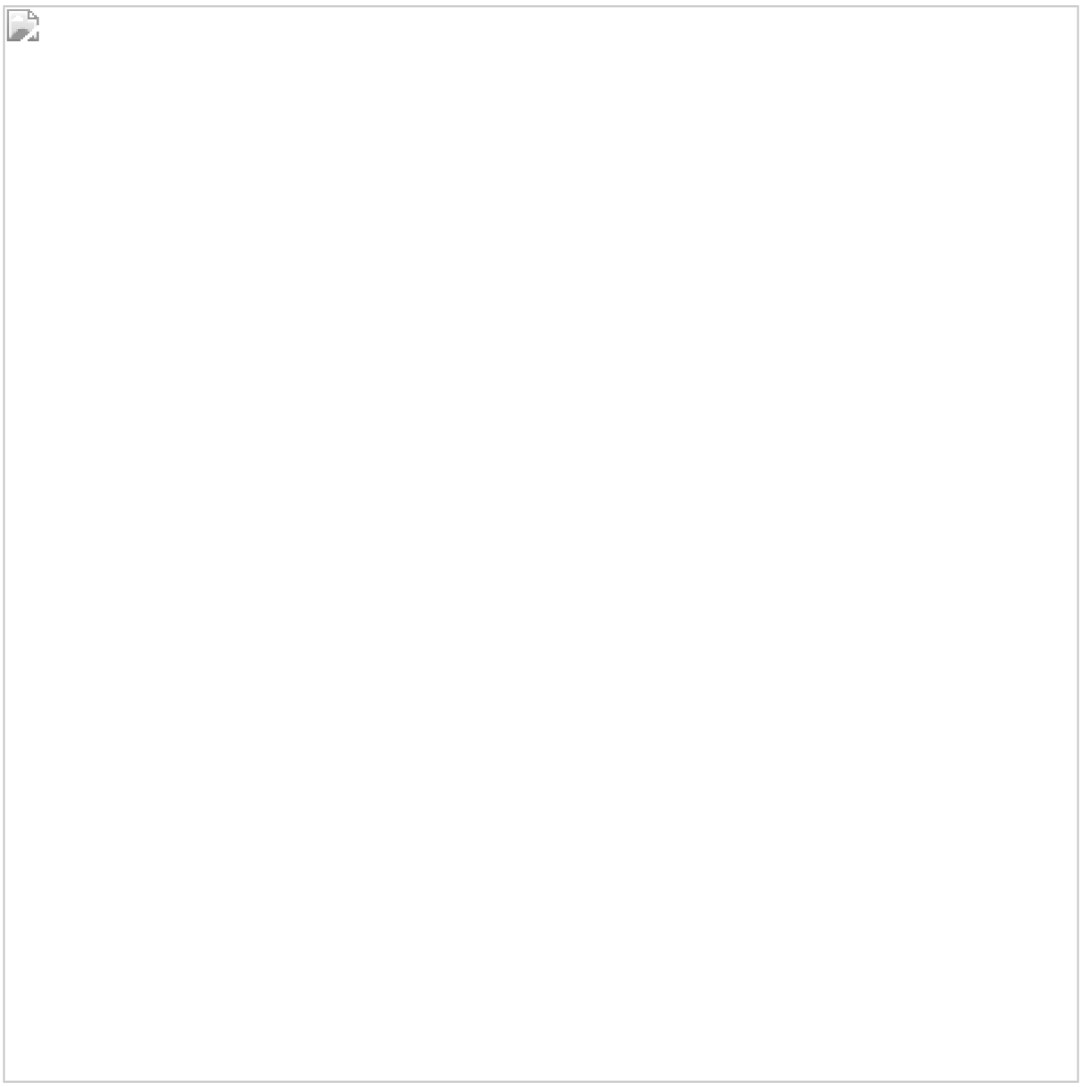
“If everything on earth should weep for him,” she said, “he will go back; if not, he will remain in Helheim.”

Then she knew who he was, and sent him away. Odin rode thoughtfully home.

TALK ABOUT IT

She said everything on earth would have to weep. Do you think that is possible? Why or why not?

What the Wise Woman Said · another picture

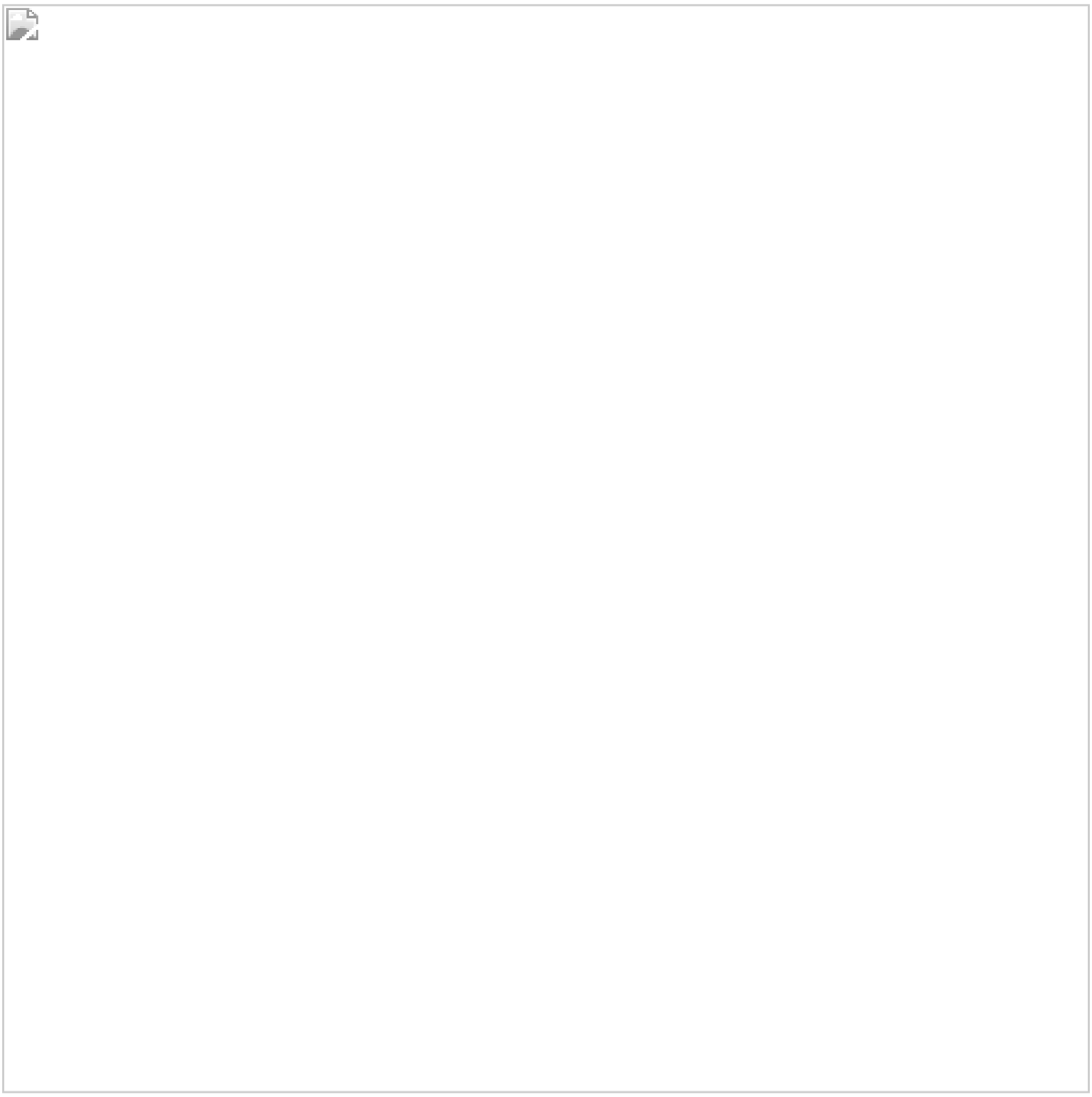


Think about it

1. What did the wise woman say would bring Baldur back?

- ○ A magic ring
- ○ If everything on earth wept for him
- ○ A great battle

The Peacestead



Outside the city of Asgard lay a green plain called the Peacestead, where the gods played games and held mock fights. The rule there was that no angry blow was ever to be struck and no spiteful word spoken.

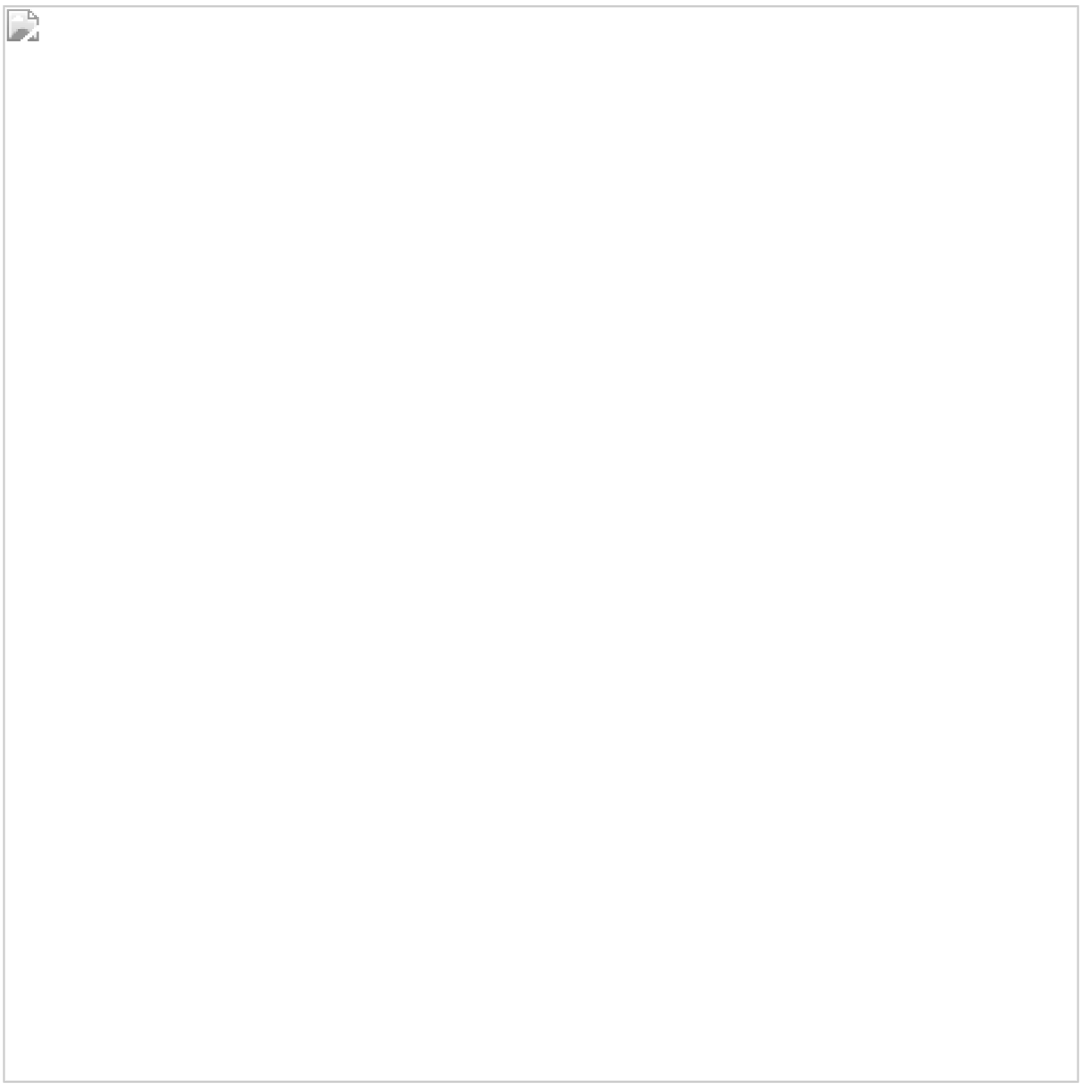
That afternoon, the gods had found a new game. Baldur stood in the middle, calm and smiling, while they threw stones, shot arrows, and swung swords and even Thor's great hammer at him. Everything bounced off, because everything had promised.

Loki, the trickster, came and watched from behind two of the gods. He was filled with envy. “And why is Baldur to be so honored?” he muttered.

TALK ABOUT IT

Why do you think the gods had a rule of no spiteful words at the Peacestead? What would your own Peacestead be like?

The Peacestead · another picture

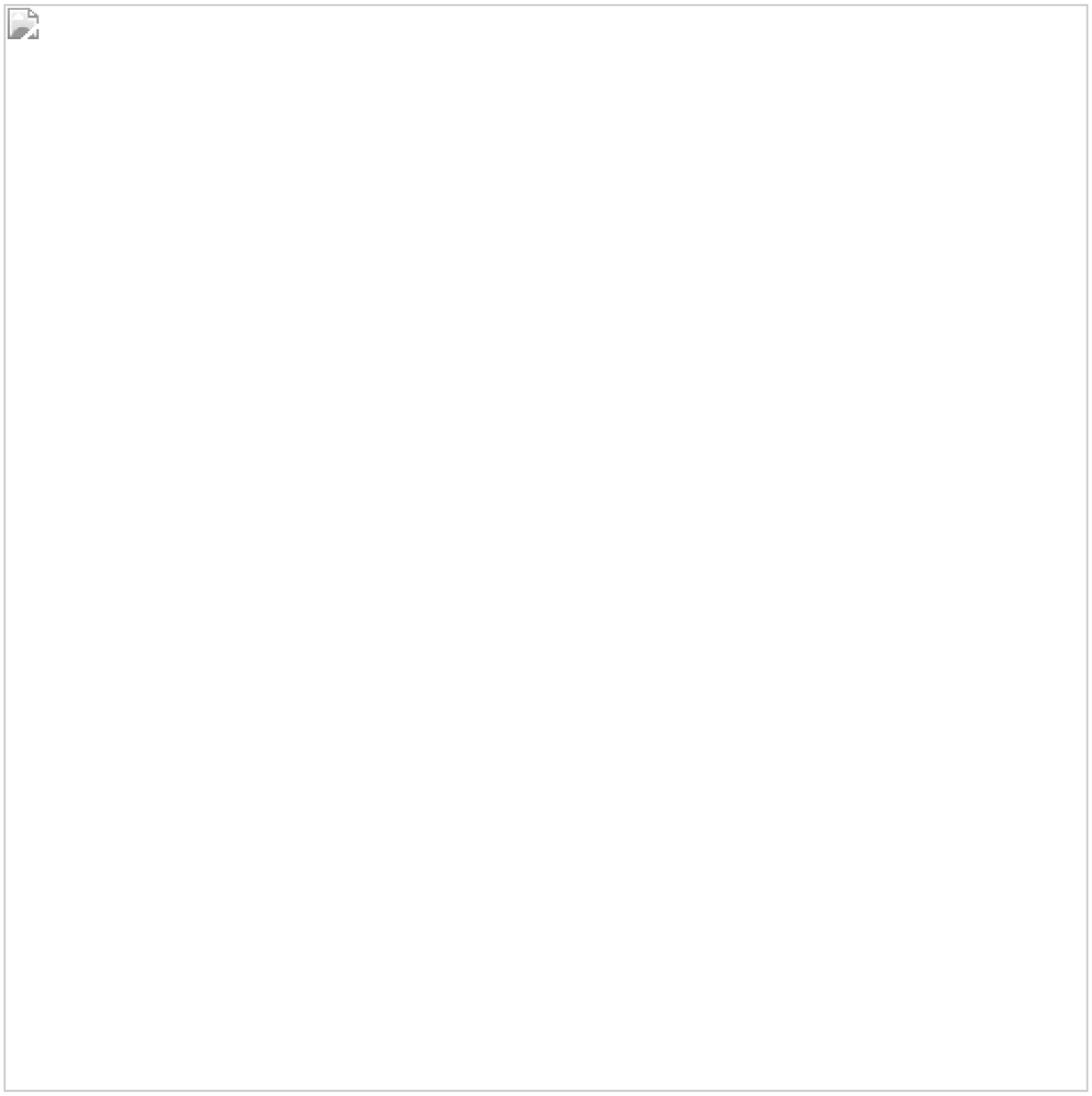


Think about it

1. What happened when the gods threw things at Baldur?

- ○ He fell down
- ○ Nothing hurt him
- ○ He ran away

Loki in Disguise



Loki turned himself into a bent old woman and hobbled to Frigga's crystal hall.

Kind Frigga got up to meet her. “Pray sit down, my poor old friend,” she said. “You have come from a great distance.”

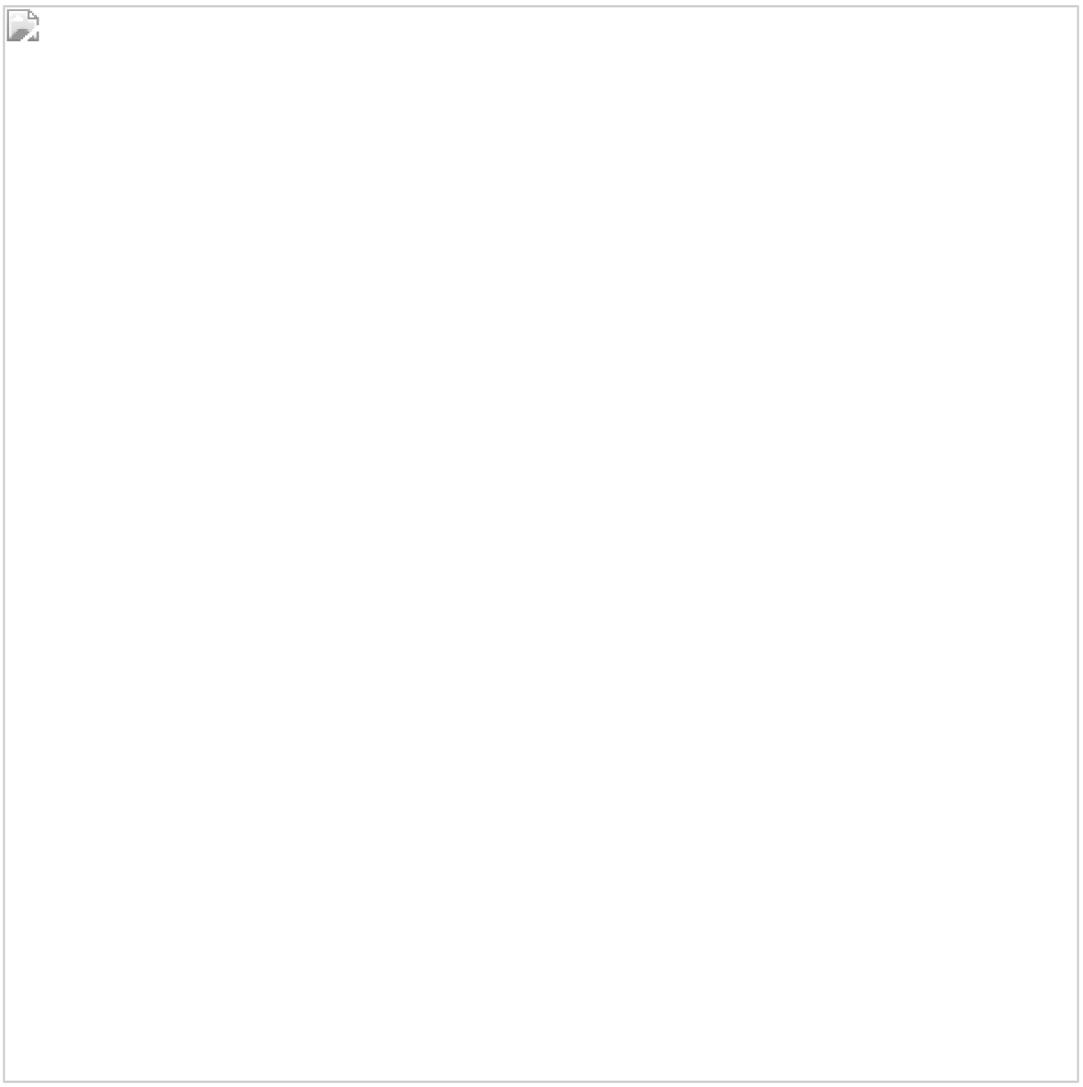
The old woman asked whether anything could hurt Baldur. Frigga smiled and said that everything had promised, all but one little shrub, the mistletoe, “because I thought it was too young to swear.”

Loki hobbled out, and a cold gust blew in. Frigga shivered. Then Loki changed back and cut a bunch of mistletoe. “Too young for Frigga's oaths,” he said, “but not too weak for Loki's work.”

TALK ABOUT IT

Frigga was kind to a stranger, and the stranger was Loki. What do you think about that?

Loki in Disguise · another picture

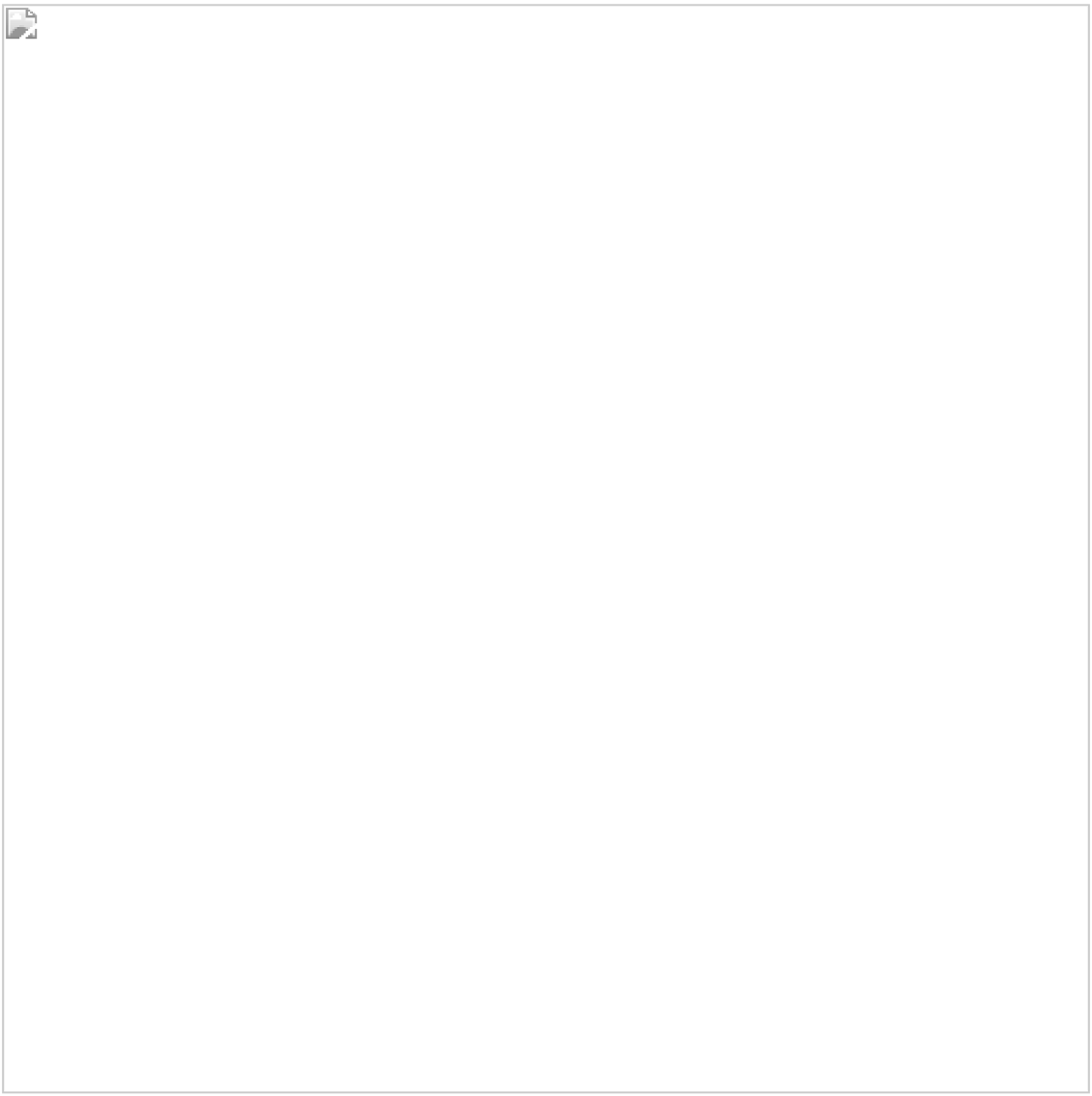


Think about it

1. Which little plant had not promised?

- ○ Mistletoe
- ○ An oak tree
- ○ A rose

Hödur's Throw



Back at the Peacestead, one god stood alone against a tree and took no part. This was Hödur, Baldur's blind twin brother. Odin did not let him join in sham fights, because he could not see.

Loki went up to him. “Why don't you throw something at Baldur?” Loki gave him a twig of mistletoe and offered to guide his arm. “Baldur might take it as a compliment,” he said.

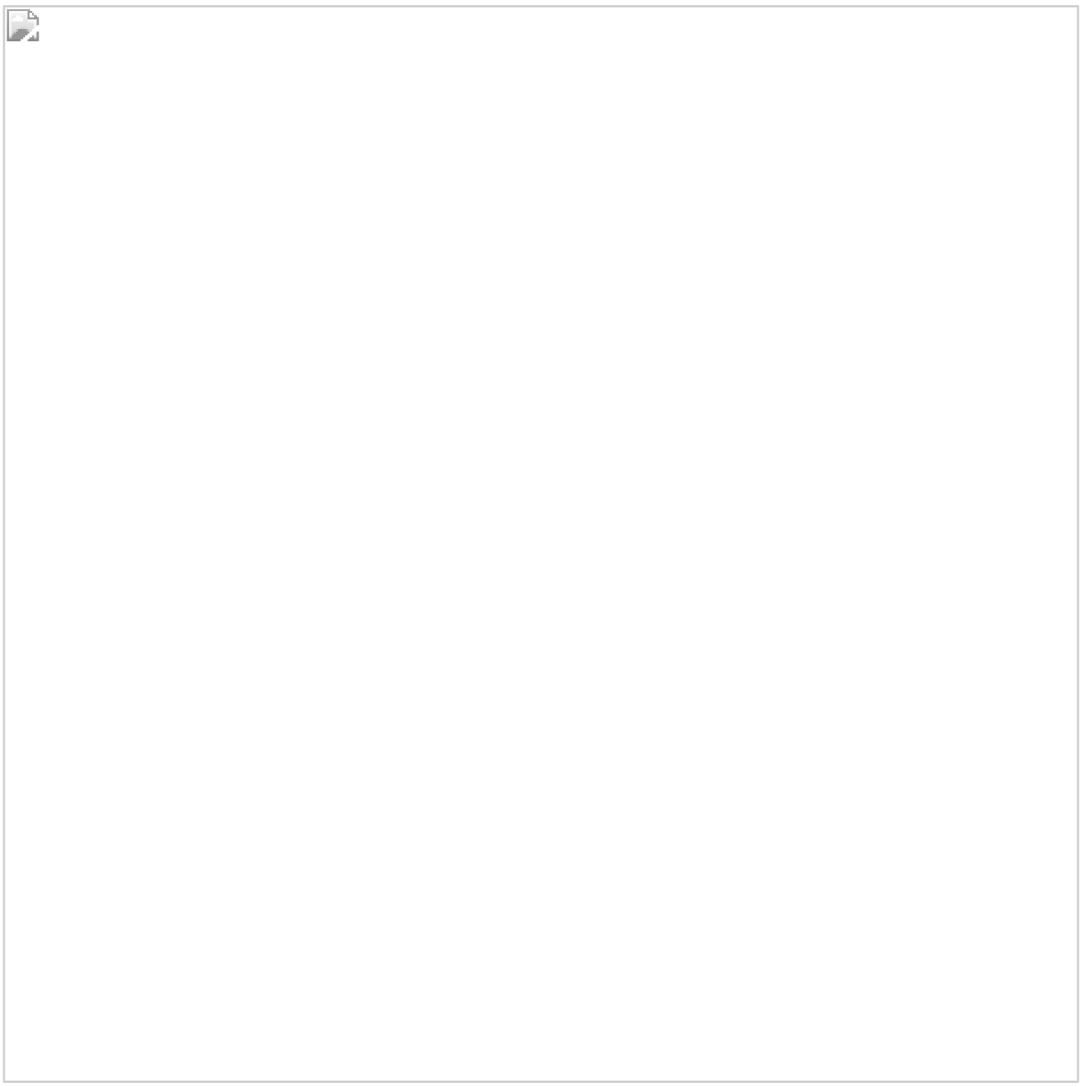
Hödur could not see what he held. He did not know what it was. He threw.

Baldur fell, and the shadow of death covered the whole earth.

TALK ABOUT IT

Hödur was standing all alone, and Loki used that. How can we notice someone who is left out and invite them in?

Hödur's Throw · another picture



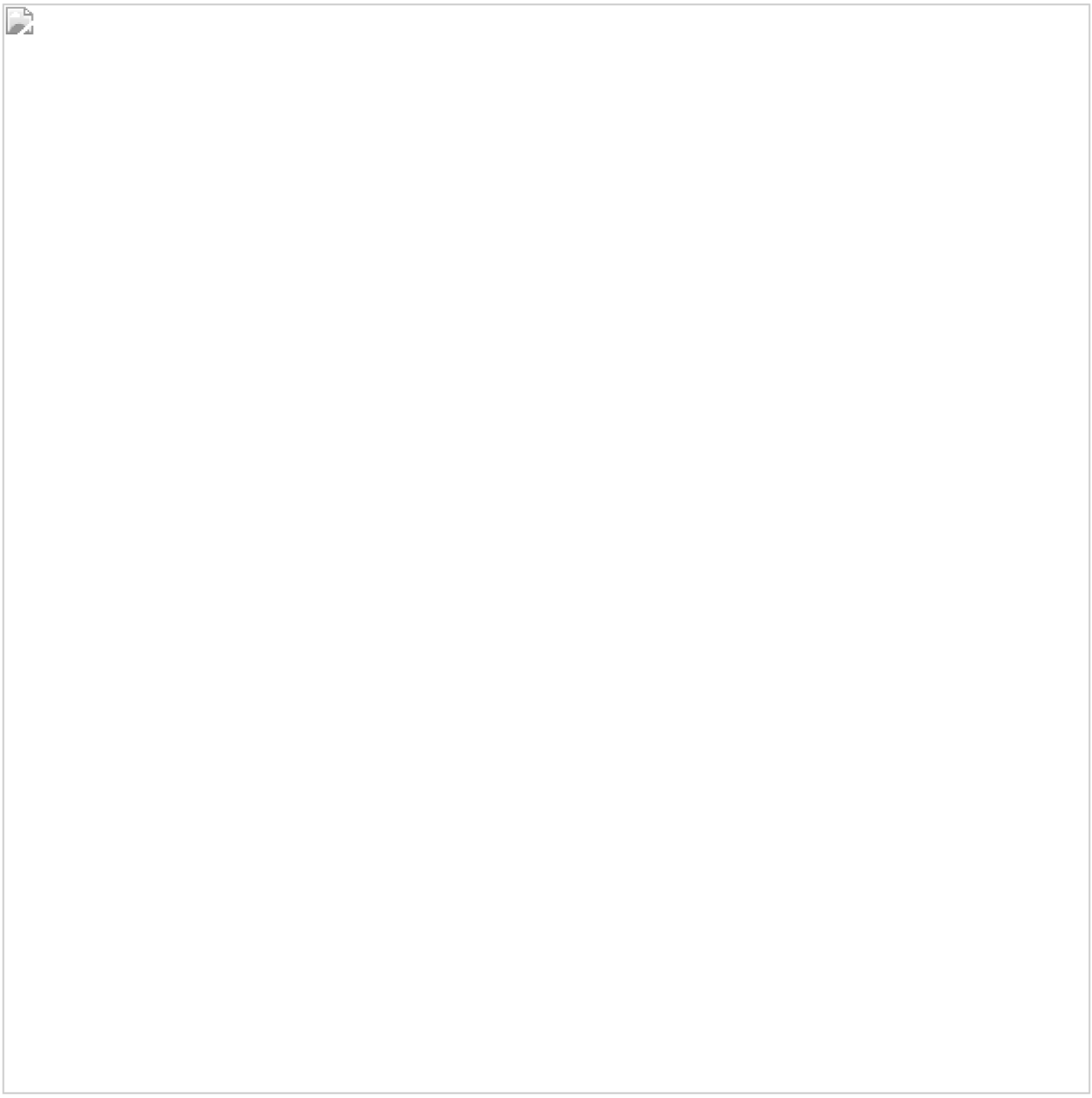
Think about it

1. Who was Hödur?

- ○ Baldur's blind twin brother
- ○ A giant
- ○ A servant of Loki

2. Hödur did not know what was in his hand. Does that change how you think about what he did? Why?

The Shadow in Asgard



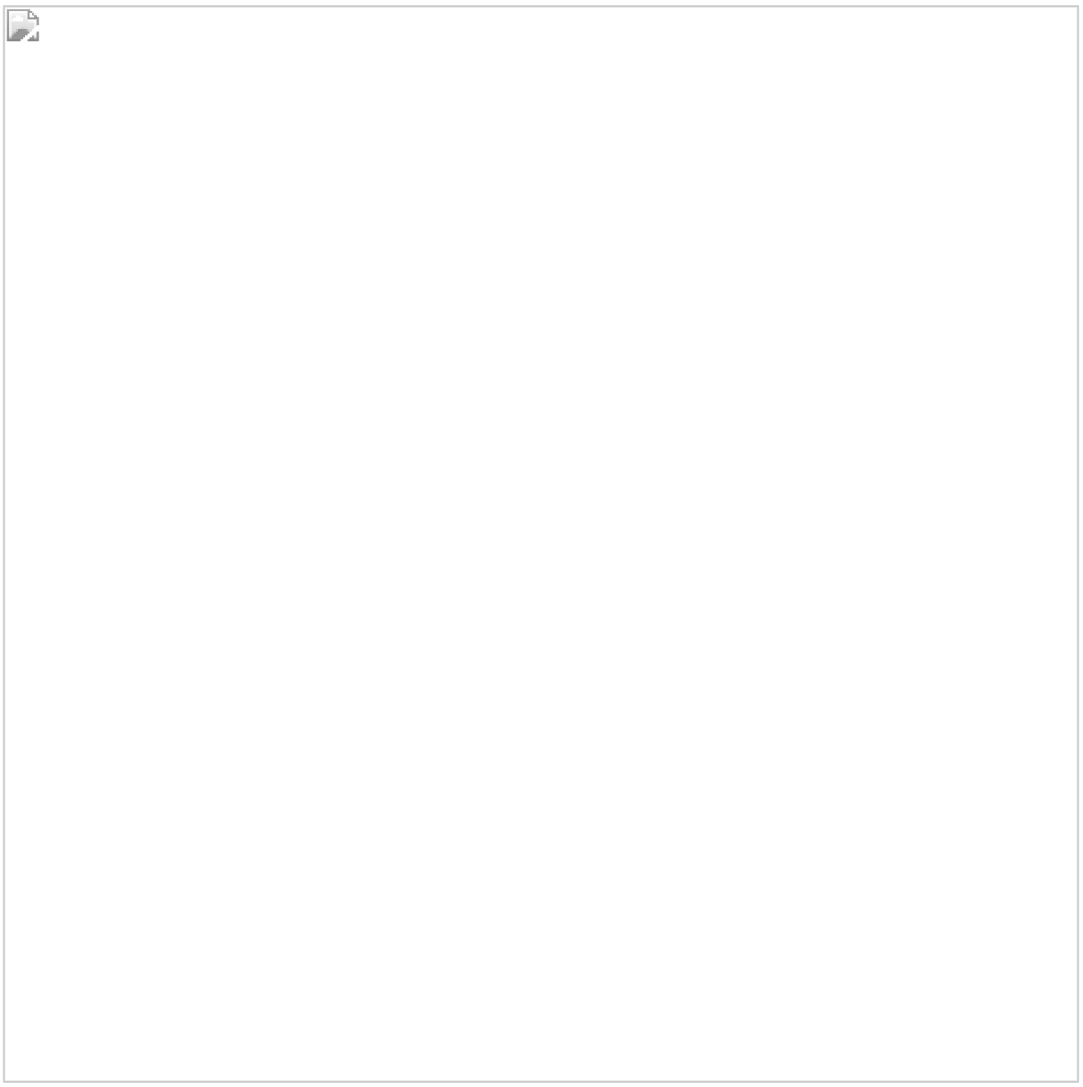
One by one the gods left the Peacestead. No one spoke. The shadow was in Asgard now, too. It had come through Frigga's hall and sat down on the doorstep of Odin's palace.

“Loki did it! Loki did it!” the gods whispered. But there was another name that filled all their hearts, and they were too sad to say it. Frigga said it first. “Baldur.”

They went to look at him, lying so peacefully on the grass.

TALK ABOUT IT

The gods were too sad to say his name. What do you do when you are very sad?

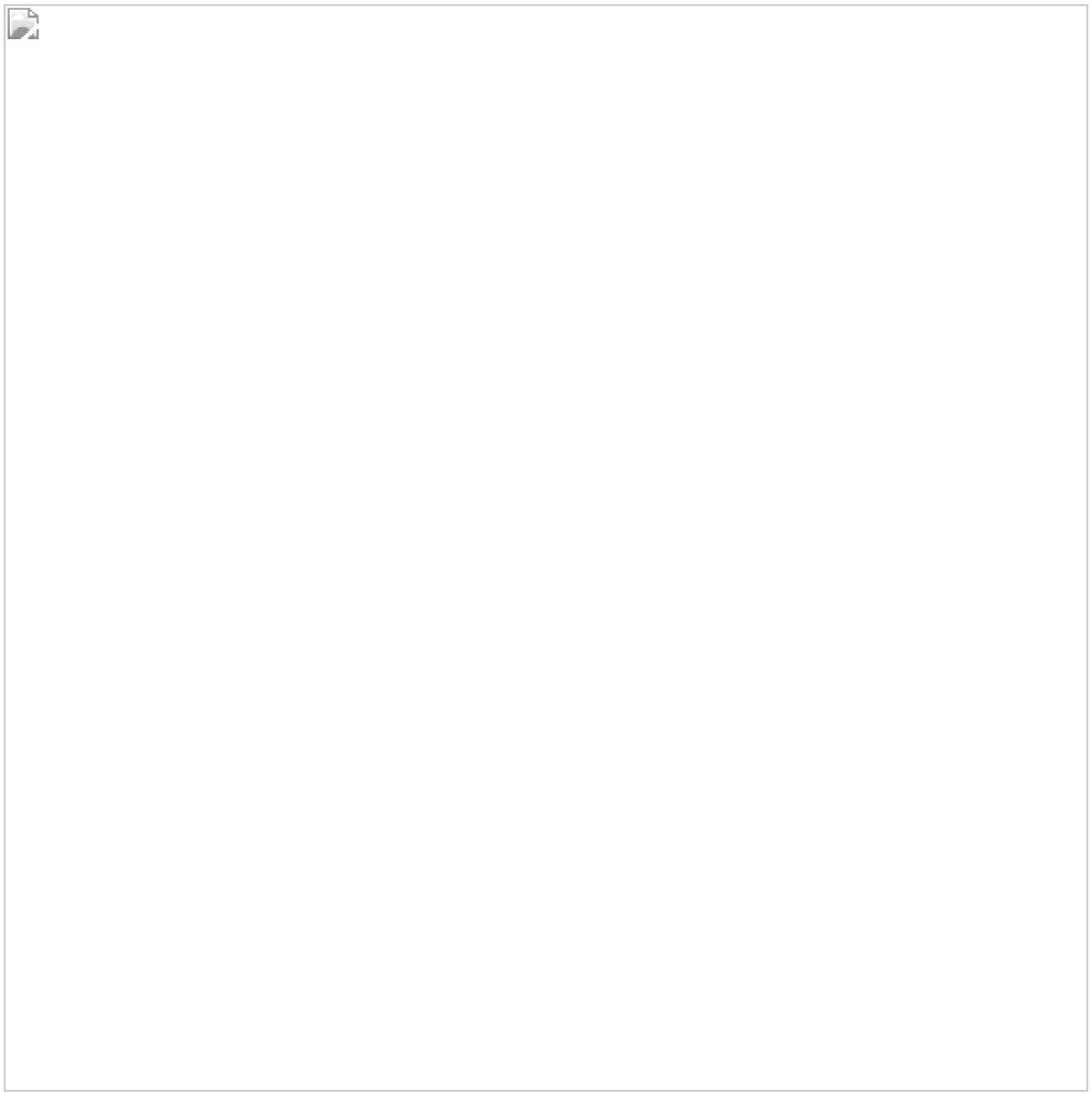


Think about it

1. Whose name did the gods whisper first?

- ○ Loki's
- ○ Odin's
- ○ Thor's

Ringhorn



Four gods carried Baldur gently to the seashore and laid him on his own great ship, Ringhorn.

Everyone came: Odin with his two ravens, Thought and Memory, Frigga, Thor, and all the gods. Even the giants crowded to the far shore.

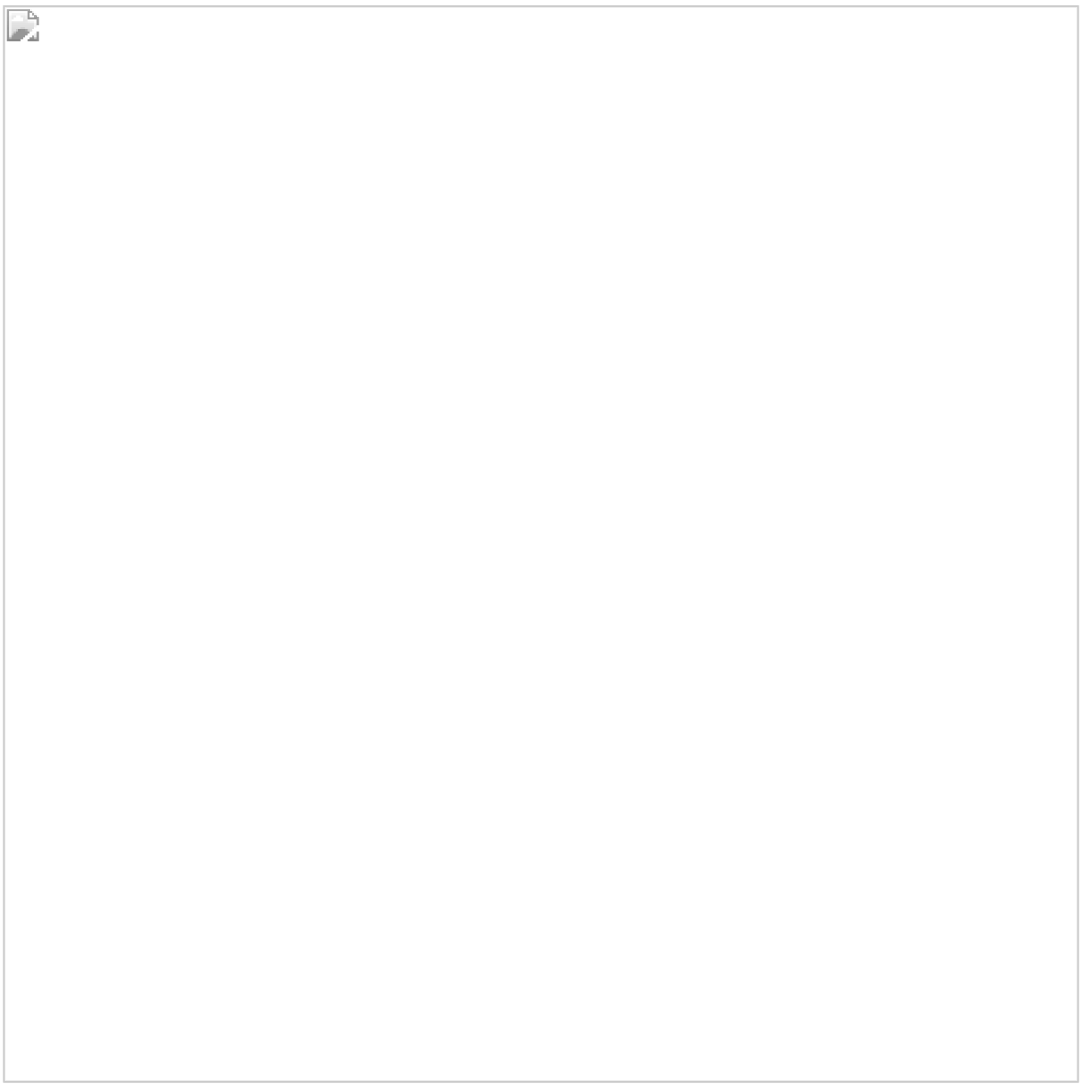
Baldur's young wife, Nanna, came too. When she saw him, her heart broke with grief, and the gods laid her beside him on the ship.

The gods were too sad to push the ship into the sea, so a giantess came to help. Then Odin lit the funeral fire. As the ship floated out, the winds came sobbing and carried the smoke away.

TALK ABOUT IT

Everyone came to say goodbye to Baldur, even the giants. Why do you think so many came?

Ringhorn · another picture

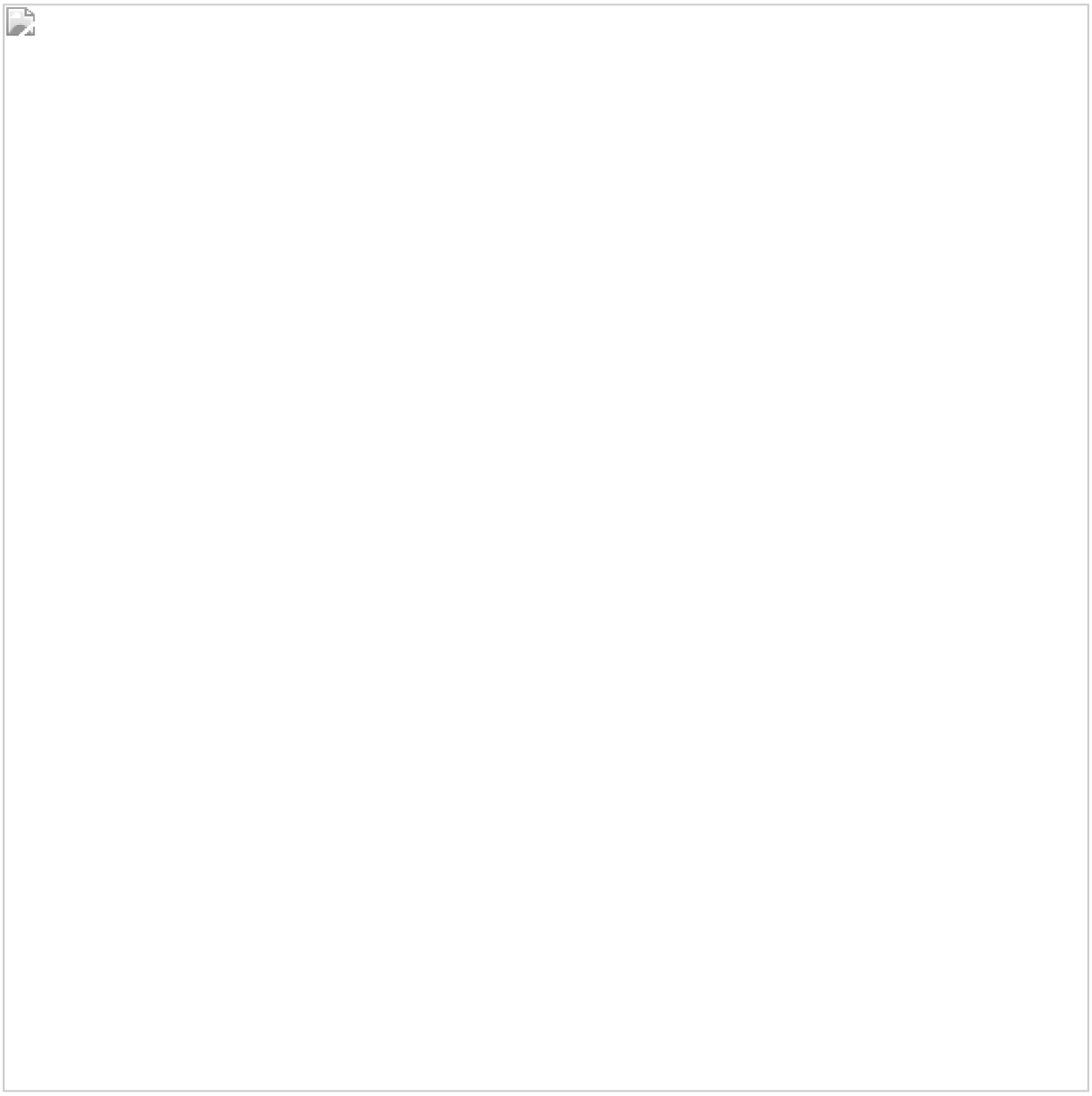


Think about it

1. What was the name of Baldur's ship?

- ○ Ringhorn
- ○ Sleipnir
- ○ Broadblink

Hermod Rides to Helheim



When the ship was far out, Frigga asked, “Will any one of you, my children, perform a noble action and win my love forever?” Someone must ride down to Hela, the mistress of the dead, and ask her to send Baldur back.

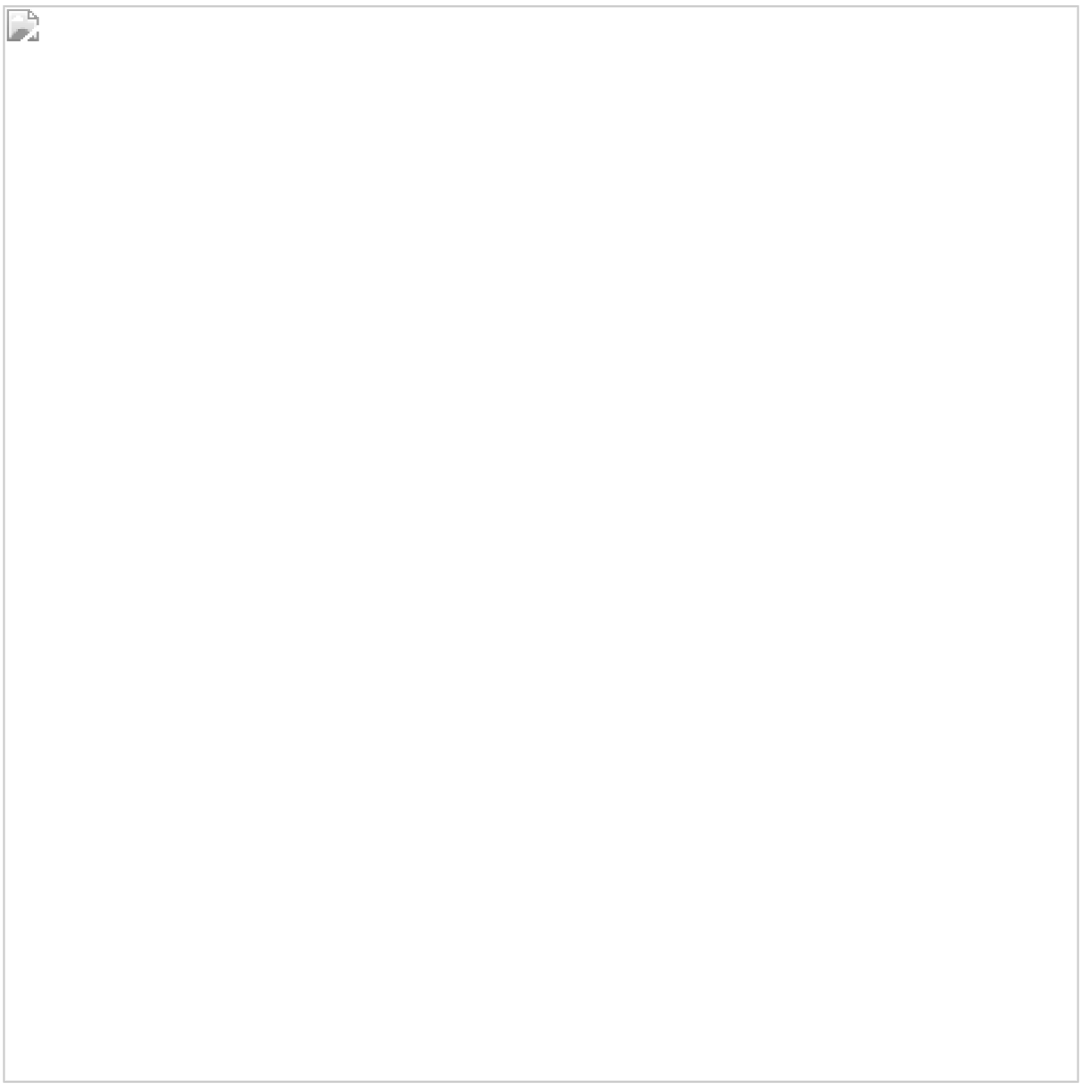
“I will,” cried Hermod, before anyone else could speak.

He rode Sleipnir down a dark, cold, slanting road to a bridge over a sounding river. Its stones glittered like gold, but they were tears, shed around the beds of the dying. “Only tears, and yet they made the way seem brighter.”

TALK ABOUT IT

Hermod said “I will” without waiting. When have you wanted to help someone right away?

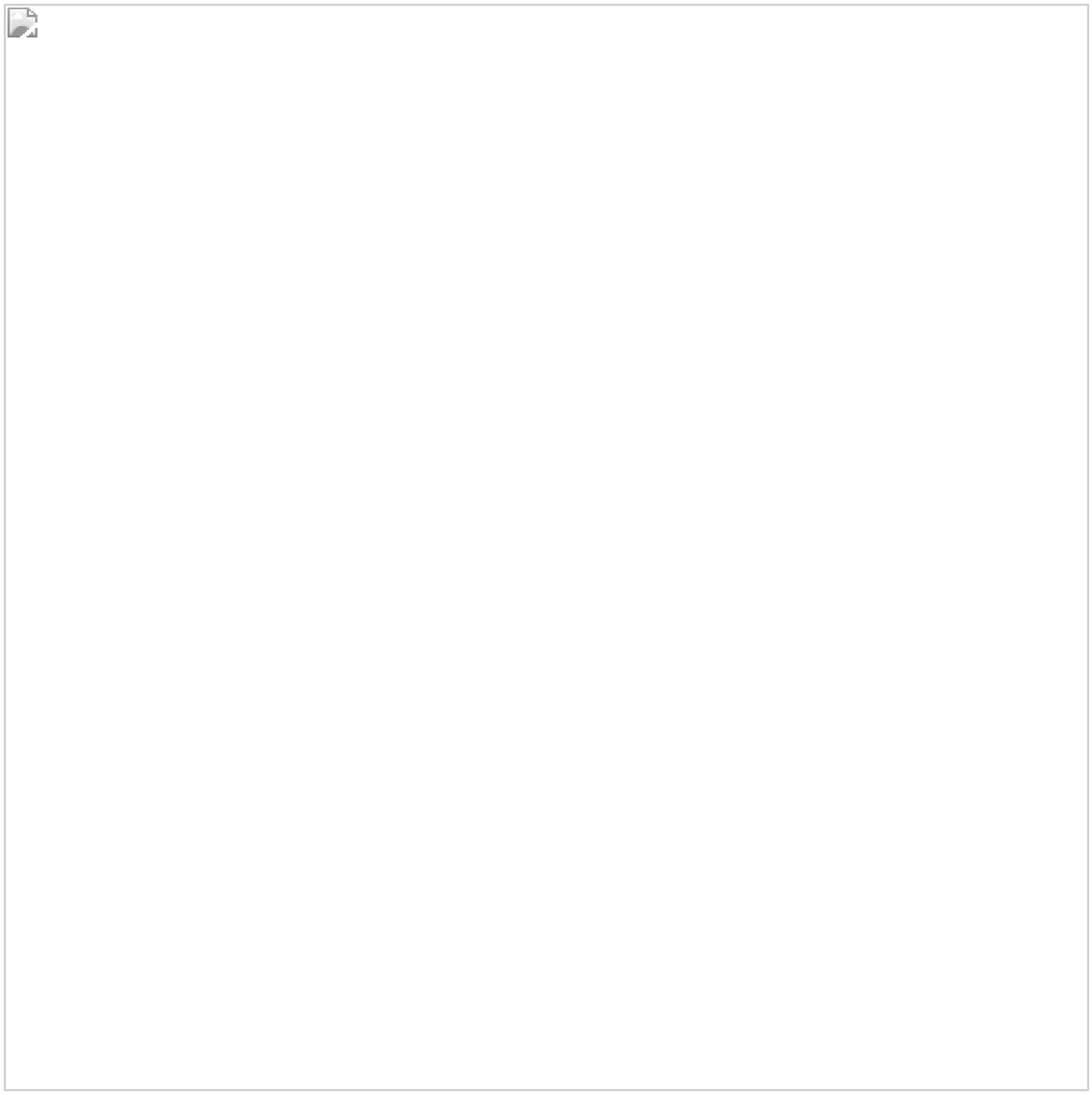
Hermod Rides to Helheim · another picture



Think about it

1. **Who rode down to ask for Baldur back?**
    - ○ Hermod
    - ○ Loki
    - ○ Hödur

Hela's Hall



Hermod leaped the gates of Helheim into Hela's great hall. There sat Baldur at her right hand, his pale young wife beside him.

All night they talked. Hermod could speak only of the past, and tears came to his eyes. But Baldur seemed to see a light far off, and spoke of what was to come.

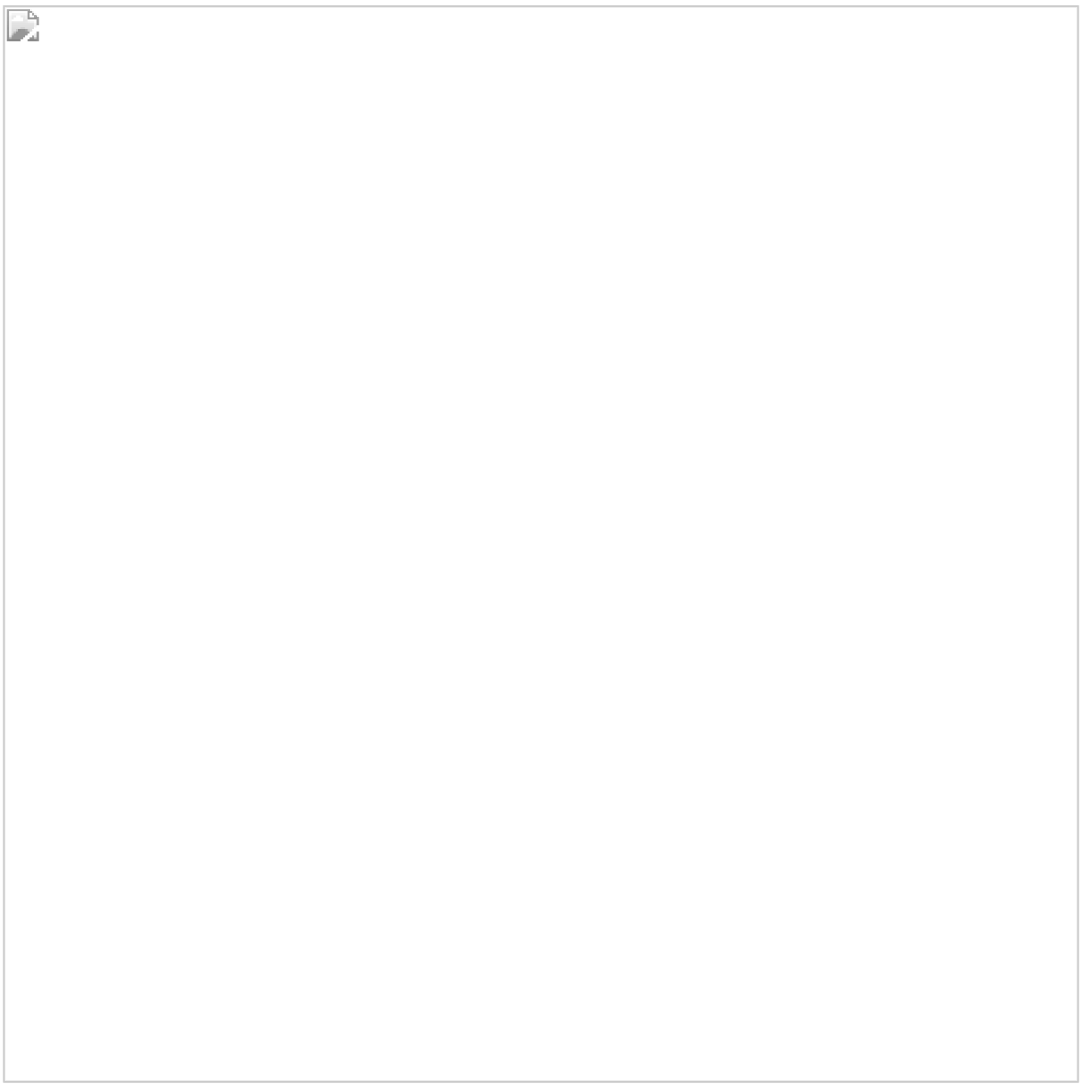
In the morning Hermod begged Hela to let Baldur go. She said, “Let everything on earth, living or dead, weep for Baldur, and he shall go home again; but if one thing only refuse to weep, then let Helheim hold its own.”

“Every one will weep willingly,” said Hermod.

TALK ABOUT IT

Baldur was looking at a light far away. What do you think he saw?

Hela's Hall · another picture

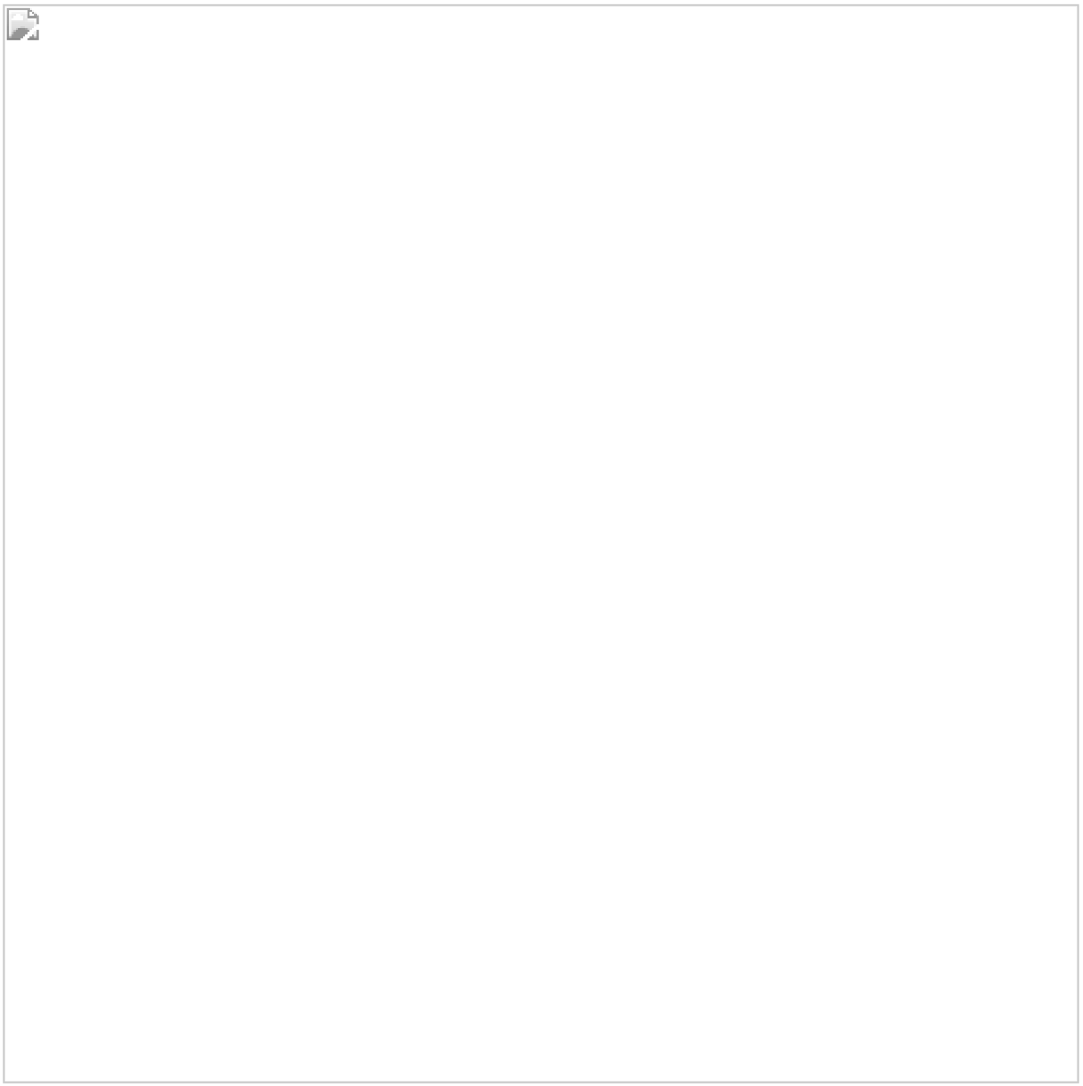


Think about it

1. What did Hela say would bring Baldur home?

- ○ Everything weeping for him
- ○ A song
- ○ A bag of gold

The Whole World Weeps



In Asgard they said, “Nothing can be more easy,” and soon there was not a dry eye in the city. But Odin said the whole earth must weep.

So he sent out the Valkyries, his messenger maidens, with three words: “Baldur is dead!”

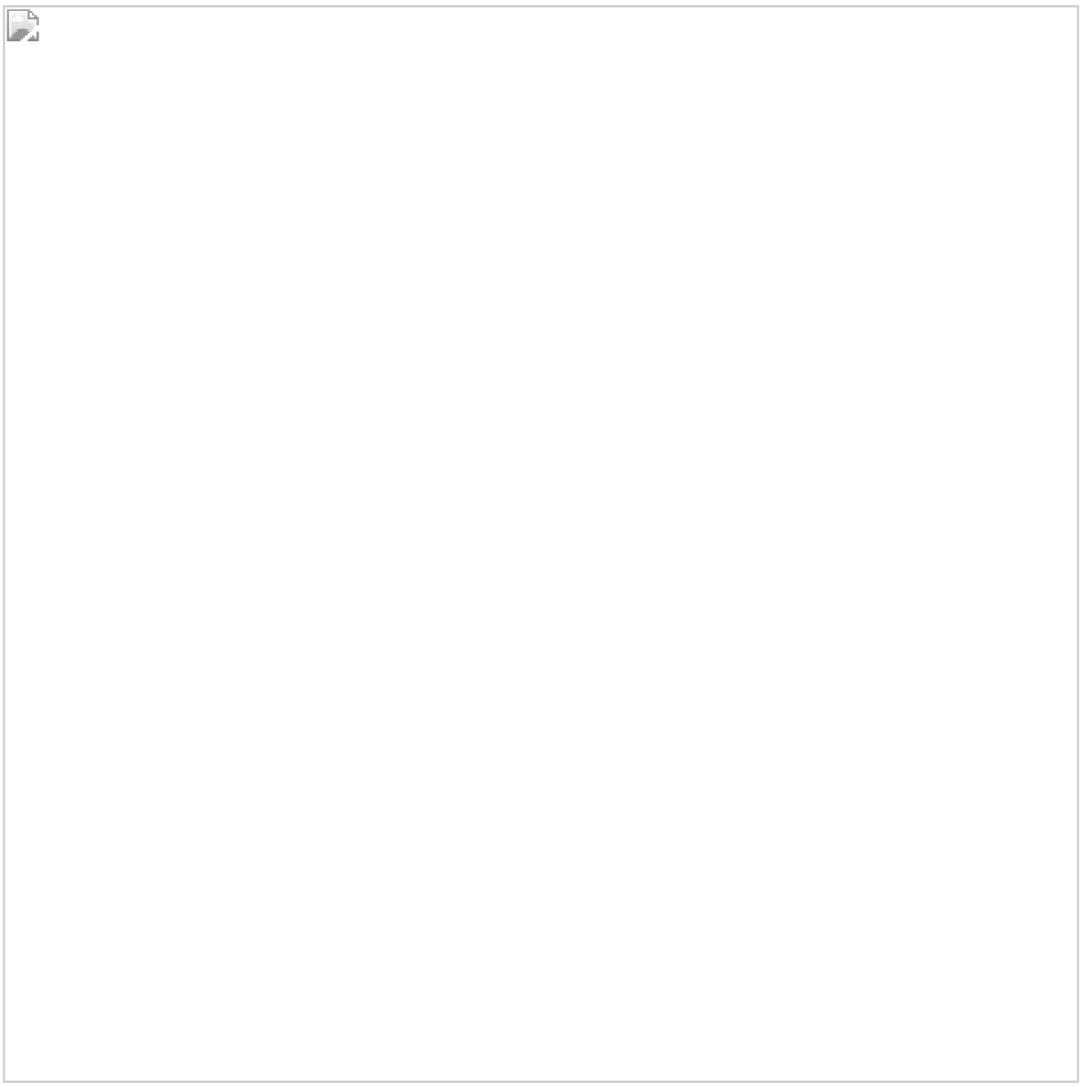
People left their work and wept. Children sat on the doorsteps and cried. The grass and the wildflowers wept. The stones wept. The old bones under the hills wept, and little streams ran out of every mountain. The giants wept, and the sea rained spray. The sea monsters and the fish wept.

“The world weeps, Father Odin,” the Valkyries said. “The world and we.”

TALK ABOUT IT

The whole world cried for Baldur. An old book says, “Weep with them that weep” (Romans 12:15). Who could you cry with, or sit with, this week?

The Whole World Weeps · another picture



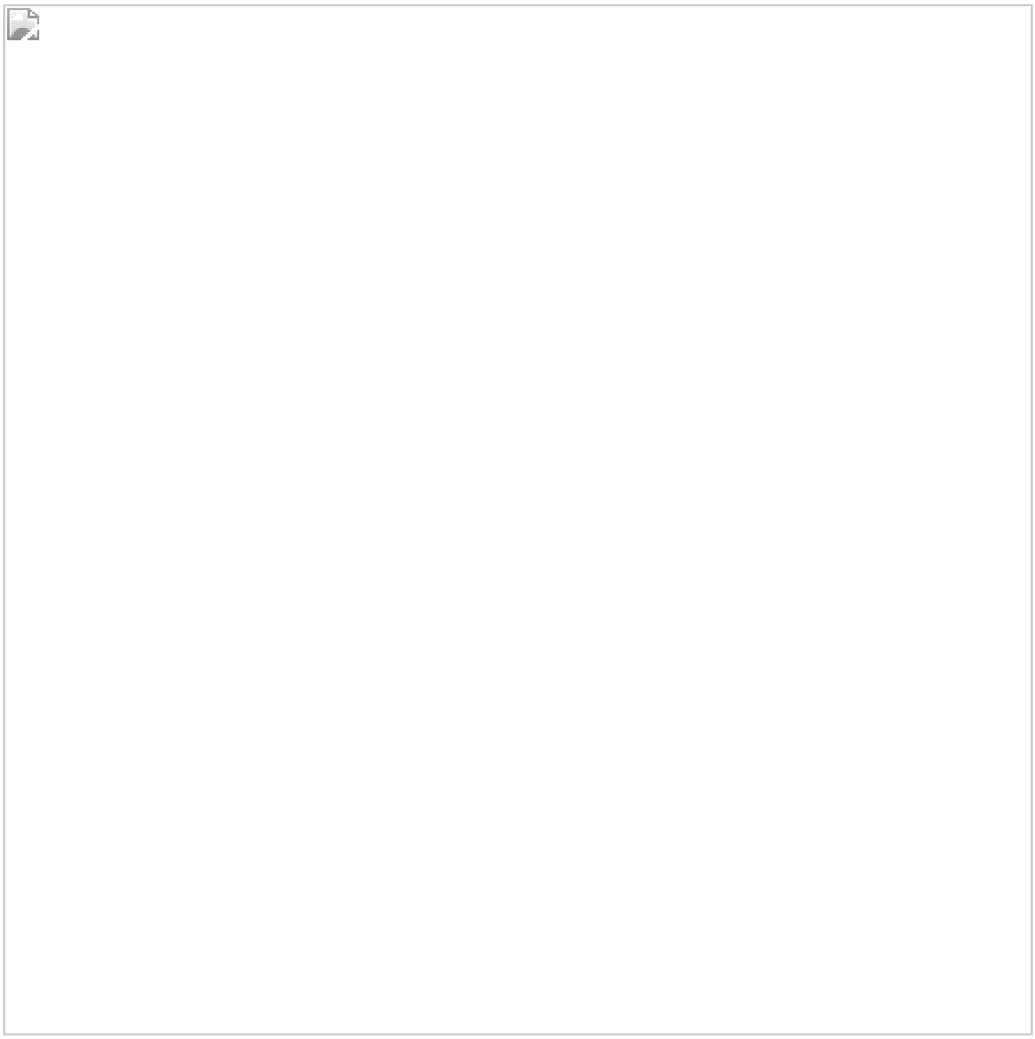
Think about it

1. What three words did the Valkyries carry?

- ○ “Baldur is dead!”
- ○ “Come home soon!”
- ○ “Where is Loki?”

2. Why do you think it mattered that everyone, even stones and giants, wept?

The One Who Did Not Weep



The Valkyries started down the dark road to Helheim to claim Baldur. At the mouth of a cave they found an old witch named Thaukt. “Weep, weep!” they told her.

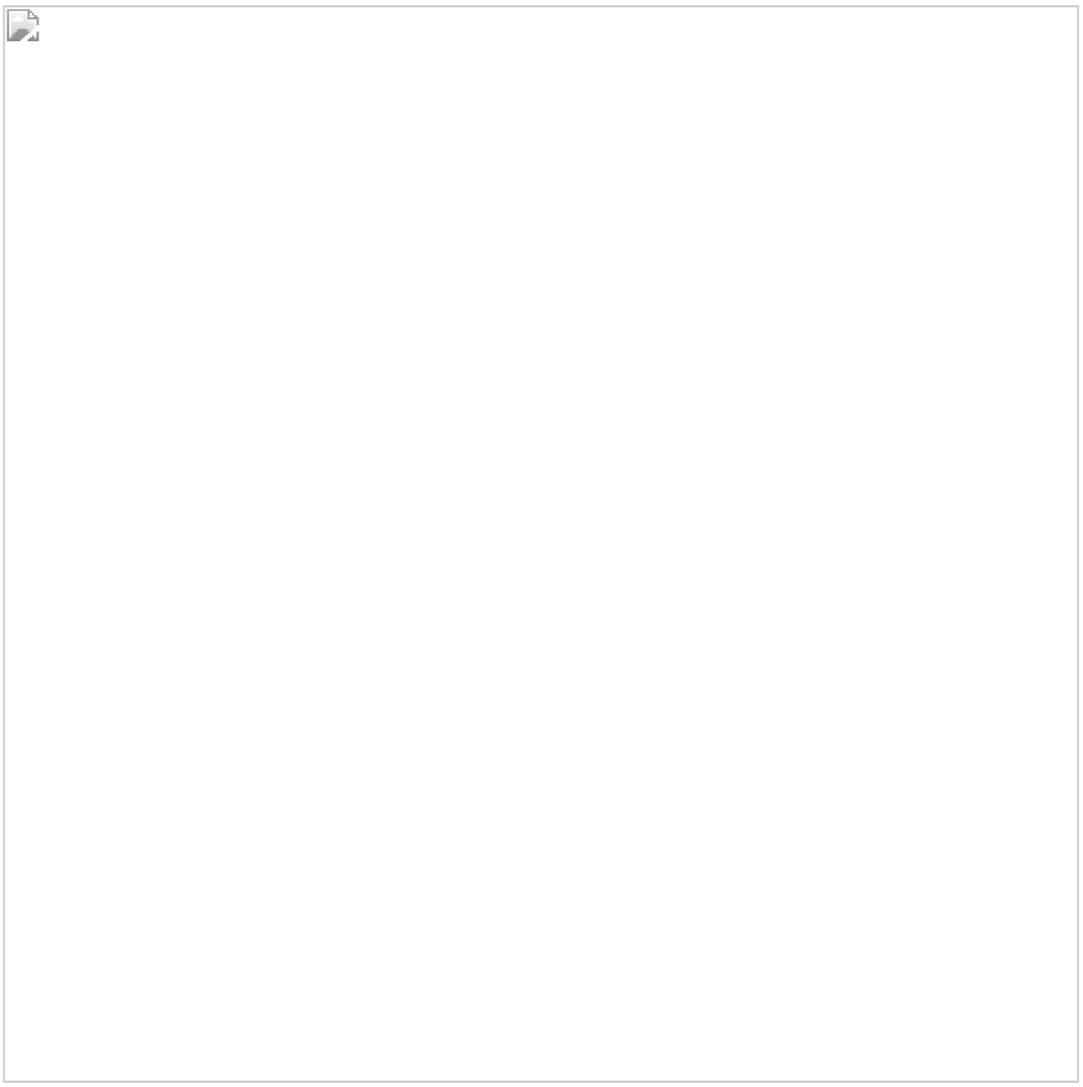
But she did not care. “Old Thaukt shall wail,” she said, and leaped into the darkness with a yell. “Surely that cry was the cry of Loki,” said one of the maidens.

Then Hela looked over the wall of her city. “One has not wept,” she said, “and Helheim holds its own.”

So Baldur stayed in Helheim. But he had seen a light far off, and the whole world had wept for him.

TALK ABOUT IT

All the world loved Baldur, but one would not weep. What do you think is the difference between those who wept and the one who did not?



Think about it

1. Why couldn't Baldur come home?

- ○ One would not weep
- ○ The road was too long
- ○ The ship sank

2. Baldur saw a light far off and thought of what was to come. What might it be?

“There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”

— Yeshua HaMashiach

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