

Loki and the Builder

Asgard, the home of the gods, was a magical place, full of riches and beauty. However, it was unprotected: it just sat there, glittering in the clouds, enticing all who passed by.

As time went on, the gods became concerned for the safety of their families and their homes. One day, a stranger came by on horseback. He approached Odin, the father of all gods, and offered to build a great wall to keep Asgard protected.

“That’s a fantastic idea!” said Odin. “It’s just what we need. Name your price, and we shall pay it.”

Now, these were gods, and the man knew that gods were capable of conjuring up any prize he could dream of. He thought and thought about what he might want in exchange. Then, he had it.

“All I ask is for the sun, the moon, and the beautiful goddess Freyja to be my wife.”

Odin and the gods were shocked. They could easily arrange to give this man the sun and the moon, but they were disgusted that he would ask for their friend and fellow god Freyja as his reward. They were just about to turn him away when Loki, Asgard’s most famous trickster, stepped forward.

“An excellent idea!” he said excitedly. “If you can finish the wall in six months, you’ve got a deal.” He shook the man’s hand.

The gods looked at Loki in horror. “What did you do?” they said.

“Don’t worry about it,” he said with a twinkle in his eye. “There’s no way he can build an entire wall around Asgard in six months. Freyja will be fine, and we’ll have half a wall done for free.”

The stranger returned the next day and began to build. He worked almost nonstop, day and night, in all kinds of weather. Five and a half months later, it became clear that the man, against all odds, was on track to finish the wall.



“What do we do?” cried the gods. “We can’t let him marry Freyja against her will! What were you thinking, Loki?”

Realizing his plan had backfired, he thought and thought. Then, he had an idea.

Loki could change form, so that night, he transformed himself into a lovely mare* to distract the stranger’s horse. As he had planned, the builder’s horse was so entranced by Loki’s new form that he ran right up to it. Quickly, Loki ran towards the woods. The horse followed, until Loki was able to run far enough ahead of it to hide, and the horse became lost. When he could no longer see the horse trailing behind him, he changed back into his usual self and made his way back toward the builder’s house.

As he was passing by, the builder came home. “Loki, what are you doing here? And where is my horse?”



“Oh, I don’t know,” said Loki in a mocking voice. “It ran off into the woods to chase a mare. Someone must have changed into one in order to lure it away.”

The stranger fell silent and began to rumble with rage. He couldn’t believe he had been tricked! All of a sudden, he sprouted up into his true form—he was a giant!

Quickly, Loki changed into a bird and flew back to Asgard to warn the others. “Wait,” said Thor. “This time, I think I have an idea.”

The giant arrived minutes later, fuming and angry. Thor readied his mighty hammer, then summoned up a huge lightning bolt to strike the giant on the head.

***mare**: a female horse.

How are the gods like people? How is Asgard like Earth?

How are the gods different from people? How is Asgard different from Earth?

What do you think the lesson of this story is?

