

Sif's Hair

The Norse god Thor was a tough guy. He was the god of thunder and the strongest god there was, so he was a little rough around the edges. But there was one thing that made him smile, that he always treated with love and care, and that was his wife, Sif.

Sif was known for her long, flowing golden hair. Her hair was longer than anyone else's, and fell down her back in soft waves. Sif was a goddess herself, and was responsible for helping farmers' crops grow fast and strong.

Though she had supernatural powers, she still had to take care of her luxurious hair. All day, Sif combed her soft hair with a glamorous, bejeweled comb, and washed it in sparkling ponds and streams, and would bask in the sun to let it dry. With hair as long and as thick as hers, it took a while to fully dry.

One afternoon, as she was drying her hair in a field, she fell asleep. What she didn't know is that Loki, the most mischievous god in Asgard, had cast a spell over her! He was tired of listening to Thor brag about his wife's precious golden hair, and wanted to take it from her. While she slept, he chopped off Sif's hair—every last bit! He scurried away, her golden curls spilling out from his arms.

When she woke, she felt a cool breeze on her neck. Instantly, she knew something was wrong. She rolled over to see she was surrounded by bits of blonde hair. Her precious hair was gone! She ran inside and cried and cried. As she cried, rain began to fall and ruined crops across the land. The farmers knew something was wrong with Sif.

When Thor returned home, he called for his wife, but she did not respond. He went out to look for her, knocked on neighbors' doors, but he couldn't find her. He returned again to an empty house. Again, he tried, "My dear Sif, I am home."

Then, he heard a small whimper from deep in the house. He followed it until he saw her sitting in a dark corner. He couldn't quite see her.

"My darling! What is wrong?"

"Don't look at me. I'm so ashamed."

"Of what, my dear?"

"My beautiful hair. It's gone!" she moved a little into the light. He could see the short ends of her hair sparkling in the light that seeped through the window. "I must leave Asgard," she said.

"What? But why?"

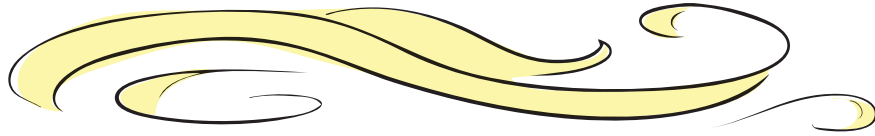
"Asgard is beautiful and perfect. I am no longer so. I do not fit here. I must go live among the mortals."

"That is ridiculous. You are and will always be the most beautiful woman in the world to me. Come into the light so I can see you."



She did so. It was true, Thor did still think her beautiful, but the joy had gone out of her eyes. He did not like seeing her unhappy.

“How did this happen?”



“Someone took it from me. Some mischief-maker; evil-doer.”

Thor’s blood began to boil. Now, it never took much to make Thor angry, but the one thing that angered him more than anything else was when others upset his beloved wife.

“Who was it?” he said angrily.

“I don’t know; I didn’t see them.”



“Then I will find out. Whoever it was, they are going to pay for what they did!”

The humans below heard the sky roar with thunder.

Thor and Sif went to the Court of the Immortals to meet the other gods to see what they could do. None of them knew who had cut Sif’s hair, but they all had a pretty good idea. “It must have been Loki,” they agreed. Loki was known for his mischievousness, which sometimes went too far.

Odin knew Loki wouldn’t come if he asked for him, so he put out his call. Odin’s call was a terrible noise, but it meant that all gods, even Loki, must stop what they were doing and come to the Court at once.

When the meeting began, Loki could see that all the gods knew he had done it. “Oh, come on,” said Loki boastfully. “You have no proof that I did it. Therefore, it must not have been me.”

“Please, come clean just this once, Loki. You’ve made Sif very sad, and Thor very angry. That is no way to treat your fellow gods—we always treat each other with respect. You must apologize and make it up to them.”

“What can I do? I can’t make her grow new hair,” he said smugly, which of course only made the gods angrier.

“Listen, you need to make this right. We all look out for each other here,” said Odin rather threateningly. Loki understood that he was serious, and went off to think of a plan.

Loki didn’t know where he could go to find Sif new hair. He didn’t know anyone in the Land of Giants, and he knew that the mortals on Earth could not help him. The only place left to go was under the earth, where the gnomes lived.

The gnomes were excellent crafters. Since they spent all their time underground, they passed the time by making things, and were talented metalsmiths, jewelers, glassblowers, and weavers.

Because they were cut off from the rest of society, they were also very trusting and sweet. When Loki arrived, he showered them with praise, and asked them to make him a wig, with long hair reaching down to the floor, the hair made from gold spun soft as silk. The gnomes agreed, no questions asked. The jewelers had a lot of gold, and they all worked hard, wearing down the gold until it was fine and soft like silk. Then, the weavers spun the golden thread for days and days, and fashioned it into a luxurious wig.

Loki was impressed. “You are master craftspeople indeed. May I take this in return for the heavens and earth?”

Since the gnomes lived underground, they did not know that they already had the heavens and earth, and quickly agreed. Loki traveled back to Asgard, taking care not to lose a single strand of hair from the golden wig. Upon his return, he proudly presented it to Sif, who tried it on and loved it even more than her own hair. Her new golden hair gleamed, and the sun came out once again, and the crops were restored to health.

What was Sif’s job as a goddess?

Why was Sif’s hair precious?

How does this myth explain what rain is?

