

A Story

Long ago in the far North, in a land of ice and fire there lived a people. Sometimes we call them the Vikings, other names we use are the Norsemen. Now, most people think Vikings were all swords and long beards, but they also told amazing stories about their gods made beautiful things.

Before the story begins, I must remind you all that the Norse Gods sometimes behave quite badly to each other. Just because they are Gods doesn't mean we should copy their bad behaviour.

This story is about Odin, he was the god of Wisdom and Knowledge. He gets his knowledge from his two talking Ravens who sits upon his shoulders. They are called Huginn which means Knowledge and Muninn which means Memory.

One night the gods were gathered around the fire and they began to argue about why the sky is blue.

Thor said it was a giant dome of ice, Baldur said it was the inside of a massive eggshell. Frigg said it was none of these things and that the sky only looked blue because of the way that the sun's light passed through the air.

Everyone laughed at Frigg.

"Mother" said Thor "your ideas amuse me, but you are a woman and shouldn't trouble your mind with such deep questions".

Then he threw a chair at Baldur, because that's what everyone did, and there was a big fight. You can see that the Gods aren't always very nice to each other!

The arguments and the shouting went on until morning. Odin was tired of his children's squabbling, he went outside and looked up and the clear blue sky. He turned to his Raven, Huginn, and said "Your name us knowledge, so go find me the truth so that I can have some peace!" At those words the bird took to the sky intent on bringing the answer back to his master.

Some time later Thor came out of the hall, he had a black eye from fighting, he stretched his arms and farted loudly.

"Breakfast time old one" he called

But Odin just stared at the sky, worrying about the fate of his loyal companion.

Thor shook his head and returned inside, he'd never understood his father's attachment to those wretched birds, their black eyes made him nervous and they left a terrible mess everywhere.

It was nearly lunchtime, Odin was still waiting patiently, the other gods had gathered round him for the answer. Odin had almost abandoned hope of ever seeing the raven again when he heard a thud not far away. There on the grass lay Huginn, he seemed to be dead, his black feathers crusted with frost.

"See" said Thor, "There is frost on his feathers, I told you it was ice" and he threw a rock at Baldur.

Odin picked him up, tears starting to well in his one eye and suddenly Huginn raised his head.

"Nay, my lord" he crowed weakly, "It is colder than Niffleheim but there is no ice. It is exactly as the Lady Frigg says, it is the light from Sol's chariot being turned blue by the air. And beyond the blue it is black as charcoal and the stars shine just as brightly as they do at night. "

Odin turned to Thor and fixed him a hard stare with his one eye.

"I believe you owe your mother an apology?" He said

"Lucky guess mother" replied Thor. Then he belched loudly, threw an egg at Baldur and walked away.

So what does this story tell us about experiments?

Experiments give us answers to things we don't know. For thousands of years people have been carrying out experiments.

The gods had lots of different ideas, but no one could prove what was right.

Odin experimented by sending Huginn to see what was really happening. We call this observation.

Huginn could have died so we must always think about doing our experiments safely.

Thor thought the ice on Huginn feathers meant he was right but in the end he had to accept that his idea was wrong. He was disappointed but he accepted the proof.

The experiment proved Frigg was right even though the other gods thought her ideas were silly. Also never forget that some of the greatest scientists in the world are women.

A little bit about the gods

Odin is the god of wisdom and knowledge, he has only one eye.

Frigg is his wife; she is the goddess of wisdom and lives in the swamps.

Thor is the son of Odin and Frigg. He is noisy, he makes thunder with a hammer, he is also quite rude and a bully. Thor is not someone you should want to copy.

Baldur is Thor's brother, he's not like Thor at all, he is kind and wise. Frigg made all the objects in the world promise to never hurt him (they all did except for the Mistletoe). The other gods think it's funny to throw things at Baldur because they know that they can never hurt him, but I think that's really mean.

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An attempt to profit from my time and toil,

Will surely make me seethe and boil

and so to compensate the hurt

I'll instruct my lawyer to take your shirt

and for each pound you've made I'll seek three.

To help the sick so mote it be...