

## NJORD MARRIED THE SECOND TIME

\*

\*

I could hear Idun's wailing cries. My father Thjazi, the giant kidnapped this goddess of eternal youth and brought her to our realm of giants- *Jotunheim*. My father had made a deal with Loki, the trickster god. With Loki's assistance, he abducted the wife of Bragi, the god of poetry. During her captivity, I grew fond of her. One day as I brought her our realm *special* meals- trough of delicious goat meat; she told me that she was the keeper of the magic apples of immortality, which the gods of Aesir must eat to preserve their youth. She knew that this was Loki's cunning plan, when she and her apples were seized by the giant Thjazi and taken to the realm of the giants; the gods quickly began to grow old. She pleaded to set her free but I was helpless, for only father had the power to release her from confinement and give her liberty.

On a certain dubious day, I heard the cries of a falcon soaring up high, over our realm. I rushed to see the open sky. The falcon was magnificent, by far bigger than any Midgard bird one has ever seen. The falcon then changed its course and swiftly flew towards Idun's cave of captivity. Before we knew it the falcon was flying off with a nut in his claws. Father roared with anger, rumbling the land making other giants scatter in fear as he recognised the gleam in falcon's eyes. The falcon was none other than Loki and the nut was none other than my beloved Idun. Such treachery! Father stomped after them. I was worried; Father was stubborn for his nature and he was trying to fight off the cunning God Loki, who shattered our concord. By word-of-mouth, I learnt that the Gods had forced Loki to rescue Idun. I waited worrying for father's safety as Loki couldn't be trusted but father did not return home after giving chase to Idun and her rescuer Loki.



*Falcon was flying off with a nut in his claws with the giant chasing after them in rage*

After few long dreadful days I realised that father must be dead. I, Skadi, daughter of the giant Thjazi must avenge him. With vengeance I travelled to Asgard. As I stepped into the gates of Aesir realm with black vengeful mist following me, I was welcomed by several gods with Heimdall, god of foresight in the lead. Heimdall must have seen my approach and warned the Aesir scum! I thought. Having no wish to prolong the feud, the gods asked if I would accept wergild. I steamed with anger, Gold as payment for my father's death!



*Skadi being welcomed by gods of Aesir at the gates of Asgard*

Never! I refused. I must exploit the Aesir, make them fulfil my desires that I learnt from Idun. I calmed my skin to speak of my demand. I put forth that I, Skadi would settle instead for a husband of my choice from amongst the gods. I heard whispers amongst the Aesir but I held my foot looking up with pride. The gods then agreed, provided I chose my husband by looking only at his feet.

Idun once mentioned of her acquaintance Baldr, the most handsome of the gods. I thought his feet would be as handsome as his build. I, therefore agreed, and Odin, king of Aesir and god of war, death and wisdom arranged for all the gods to quickly gather to appease me. With my eyes shielded I went on a round observing only the gods' feet. From smelly to withered paw, I condemned each foot. At last I chose the most shapely feet, thinking they were Baldr's. To my horror, the god that stood to meet his bride was not Baldr, but Njord. Njord, god of the sea is of the race of Vanir and is the father of Freyr and Freyja. His skin was withered from his long time at sea, and he smelled of salt.



*From smelly to withered paw, Skadi condemned each foot*

Njord then spoke of himself. As with the other Vanir, Njord was a fertility god, capable of providing good fortune in the form of safe sea voyages, wealth, and land. He calms storms, aids ships in distress, and causes favourable winds to blow. When hostages were exchanged at the end of the war between the Aesir and the Vanir, he and his two children came to live in Asgard with the Aesir. He spoke of his first wife Nerthus, the mother of Freyr and Freyja; and, who also happened to be his sister. Asgard's dwellers' disapproval of incest practices prevented her from coming to Aesir with the rest of his family. I agreed to marry him for he seemed to be jovial of the kind.

I then came up with a second bargain which was for the gods to make me laugh, something I thought they would be unable to do. Odin then called for Loki, the cunning scum of the Aesir to make me laugh. Loki therefore began to tell a tale of taking a goat to market. He tied one end of a thong to a goat's beard and the other end to his own testicles. The ensuing ridiculous tug of war made me laugh in spite of myself.

To my surprise Odin decided to please me further. He brought forth two liquid orbs, which I sorrowfully recognized as my dead father's eyes. Odin threw them up into the sky, where they became two stars, Castor and Pollux in the constellation Gemini. This pleased me tearfully.





*Odin throwing two liquid orbs- Thjazi's eyes into the sky that become stars*

My husband Njord and I decided to live for part of the year in my frozen hall in the mountains of Thrymheim, and part of the year in Njord's hall on the sea at Nóatún. But in time I noticed Njord didn't like the cold and the howling of the wolves in Thrymheim. Neither could I tolerate the motion of the sea and the noise of the harbour at Nóatún. We therefore agreed to live apart.

\*

\*

**-URSULA UDAY**

## **REFERENCE:**

- Author Snorri Sturluson tells the story in his book 'Skáldskaparmál'.
- The author's story- English translated gist:-  
William R. Short. (n.d.) "Njord". *Hurstwic: Norse mythology*. Retrieved from <http://www.hurstwic.org/history/articles/mythology/myths/text/njord.htm>
- The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. July 06, 2010. "Idun: NORSE GODDESS". *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Idun>