

Viking Myths

Vikings loved to tell stories and recite poems. Lots of their stories are about the Norse gods. Here is one called "Loki's children":

The Norse God of mischief Loki and the Giantess Angroboda had three monstrous children. The eldest was the wolf Fenrir; the second was Jormungand, greatest of serpents; and the third was a daughter called Hel. Hel's looks were quite likely to single her out. Although most of her body was normal, from her hips down, every inch of Hel's skin looked decayed and greenish-black. Her expression was always the same: gloomy, lazy and selfish.

"Expect nothing from them but the worst," one of the gods said. "Expect them to harm you and endanger you." And so the gods agreed that Loki's children must be captured. So a group of gods crossed by night into Jotunheim, the world of the giants. They burst into Angroboda's hall, gagging and binding her and they then kidnapped her children and carried them back to Asgard, the home of the gods.

The god Odin was in no doubt as to what should be done with the serpent. He picked up Jormungand and hurled him into the ocean surrounding Midgard, the world of men. Jormungand hurtled through the air smashing through the iron face of the water. There he lived and there he grew.

Odin was just as sure what to do about the serpent's sister. He took one look at Hel and hurled her out of Asgard down into the mist and darkness of Niflheim, the world beneath the worlds. As she fell she heard Odin's order that she should look after the dead, all those in the nine worlds who died of illness or old age.

Fenrir was dealt with as well, but that's another story . . .

Reading Comprehension

1. Give the names of Loki's 3 children

2. Where were the children taken to when they were captured?

3. Read the sentence about Jormungand being thrown into the water. Is he travelling quickly or slowly? How do you know?

4. Describe Hel's looks and personality in your own words:

5. Why do you think Odin punished Hel by making her look after people?

6. How do you think Loki and Angroboda felt when their children were taken away?

7. What do you think might happen to Fenrir?
