

LOKASENNA

Ægir, who is also called Gymir (the Binder), bade the gods to an ale feast after he had got possession of the great cauldron -- as already told. To this banquet came Odhinn and Frigg, his wife. Thor came not because he was journeying in the East-country, but his wife Sif was there, and Bragi, with his wife Idunna; Tyr also, who was one-handed, because the wolf Fenrir had torn off the other hand while the gods were binding him. There were Njörd and his wife Skadi, Frey and his servants Barley and Beyla, Freya, Vidar, the son of Odhinn, with many other gods and elves; there, moreover, was Loki. Ægir had two servants - Nimble-snatcher and Fire-stirrer. Shining gold was used in the hall for the light of fire, the ale bore itself, and the place was held as a holy peace-stead. Men praised Ægir's servants, and said oft how good they were; but Loki could not brook this, and he slew Nimble-snatcher. The gods all shook their shields and cried out again Loki, and chased him away to the woods, and then betook themselves again to drink. But Loki turned back, and finding Fire-stirrer standing without, he hailed him:

Loki:

1. Tell me, Fire-stirrer - but whence thou standest
move not a single step -
what are the sons of the war-gods saying
over the ale-cup here within?

Fire-stirrer:

2. Of their weapons are speaking the sons of the war-gods,
they board of their battle-fame;
but 'mid gods and elves who within are gathered,
not one is thy friend in his words.

Loki:

3. I shall now enter the halls of Ægir
this banquet to behold:
mockery and strife will I bring to the god's sons,
and mingle sorrow with their mead.

Fire-stirrer:

4. Know, if thou enter the halls of Ægir
this banquet to behold,
if reproach and slander on the blest Powers thou pour
they shall wipe out thy words upon thee.

Loki:

5. Know thou, Fire-stirrer, if we twain must fight
together with wounding words, -
if thou talk to freely thou soon shalt find me
in answering ready and rich.

Then Loki entered the hall, and when those assembled saw who was come in they all became silent.

Loki:

6. Thirsty come I, the Rover of Air,
to this feasting hall from afar;
I would ask the gods to give me but one
sweet draught of the mead to drink.

7. Why all silent ye sullen gods?
Can ye speak no single word?
Make me room on the bench, give me place at the banquet,
or bid me hie homeward hence.

Bragi:

8. Nor place at the banquet nor room on the bench
the gods shall give to thee;
well they know for what manner of wight
they should spread so fair a feast.

Loki:

9. Mindest thou, Odhinn, how we twain of old
like brothers mingled our blood?
Then saidst thou that never was ale-cup sweet
unless 'twere borne to us both.

Odhinn:

10. Rise up, Vidar, and give the Wolf's father
bench-room at the banquet,
lest Loki shame us with scornful speeches
here in Ægir's halls.

Then Vidar arose and poured out ale for Loki, who thus greeted the gods before he drank: -

11. Hail, ye gods, and goddesses, hail!
hail all ye holy Powers! -

save only one who sits within,
thou, Bragi, upon the bench!

Bragi:

12. Steed and sword from my store will I give thee
and reward thee well with rings
lest thou pour thy hate on the gracious Powers.
Rouse not their wrath against thee!

Loki:

13. Nor steeds nor rings wilt thou ever own
as long as thou livest, Bragi:
thou art wariest in war, and shyest at shot
of all gods and elves herein.

Bragi:

14. Were I without now even in such mood
as within the halls of Ægir,
that head of thine would I hold in my hand: -
'twere little reward for thy lie!

Loki:

15. Bold seemst thou sitting, but slack art thou doing,
Bragi, thou pride of the bench!
Come forth and fight if in truth thou art wroth;
a bold warrior bides not to think.

Idunna:

16. Nay Bragi, I beg for the sake of blood-kindred,
and of all the war-sons of Odhinn,
upbraid not Loki with bitter speeches
here in Ægir's halls.

Loki:

17. Silence, Idunna! I swear, of all women
thou the most wanton art;
who couldst fling those fair-washed arms of thine
about thy brother's slayer.

Idunna:

18. I blame thee not, Loki, with bitter speeches
here in Ægir's halls.
I seek but to sooth the ale-stirred Bragi,
lest in your fierceness ye fight.

Gefjon:

19. Wherefore, ye gods twain with wounding words
strive ye here in the hall?
Who knows not Loki, that he loathes all beings
and mocks in his madness of soul?

Loki:

20. Silence, Gefjon! I will tell that tale
of him who once stole thy heart, --
that fair swain who gave thee a shining necklace,
him thou didst hold in thine arms.

Odhinn:

21. Wild art thou, Loki, and witless now,
thus rousing Gefjon to wrath!
I ween she knows all the fate of the world
even as surely as I.

Loki:

22. Silence, Odhinn! When couldst thou ever
rule battles of men aright?
Oft has thou given to them who had earned it not,
to the slothful victory in strife.

Odhinn:

23. Know, if ever I gave to them who had earned it not,
to the slothful victory in strife,
eight winters wert thou below the earth
like a maiden, milking kine,
and there thou gavest birth to bairns,-

which I weened was a woman's lot.

Loki:

24. But thou in Samsey wast weaving magic
and making spells like a witch:
thou didst pass as wizard through the world of men, -
which I weened was a woman's way.

Frigg:

25. Tell ye to no man the shameful tale
of the deeds ye did of old, -
how ye two gods wrought in ancient time; -
what is gone is best forgot.

Loki:

26. Silence, Frigg! who has Earth's spouse for a husband,
and hast ever yearned after men!
Vé the holy, Vili the lustful
both lay in thine arms, wife of Odhinn.

Frigg:

27. Know, if I had but in Ægir halls,
a son like my Baldr, the slain,
thou wouldst ne'er come whole through the host of the gods
but fiercely thou shouldst be assailed.

Loki:

28. Wouldst have me, Frigg, tell a few more yet
of these shameful stories of mine?
'Twas I wrought the Woe, that henceforth thou wilt not
see Baldr ride back to the halls.

Freya:

29. Mad art thou, Loki, to tell thus the shame
and grim deeds wrought by you gods!
Frigg knows, I ween, all the fate of the world;
though she whispers thereof to none.

Loki:

30. Silence, Freya! Full well I know thee
and faultless art thou not found;
of the gods and elves who here are gathered
each one hast thou made thy mate.

Freya:

31. False thy tongue is! Too soon 'twill sing
its own song of woe, as I ween.
Wroth are the gods, and the goddesses wroth,
rueful thou soon shalt run home.

Loki:

31. Silence, Freya! Thou art a sorceress
all with evil blent:
once at thy brother's the blithe gods caught thee,
and then wast thou frightened, Freya!

Njörd:

33. Small harm it seems if haply a woman
both love and husband have;
but behold the horror now in the halls,
the vile god who bairns hath borne!

Loki:

34. Silence, Njörd! Thou wast eastward sent
as hostage from hence by the gods;
there into thy mouth flowed the maids of Hymir
and used thee as trough for their floods.

Njörd:

35. Yet was I gladdened when sent afar,
as hostage hence by the gods;
there a son I got me, the foe of none,
and highest held among the gods.

Loki:

36. Silence now, Njörd! Set bounds to thy lying;
I will no longer let this be hid -
with thine own sister that son thou gottest,
though he is not worse than one weened.

Tyr:

37. Nay! Frey is the best of all bold riders
who enter the garths of the gods;
nor wife nor maiden he makes to weep,
but he breaks the prisoner's bonds.

Loki:

38. Silence, Tyr! Who in truth couldst never
bring good will betwixt twain;
the tale will I tell of that right hand
which Fenrir reft from thee once.

Tyr:

39. If I want for a hand for thy Wolf-son, thou;
we both bear burden of want:
and 'tis ill with the Wolf who must bide in bonds
till the twilight come of the Powers.

Loki:

40. Be silent, Tyr, while I tell of the son
whom thy wife got once by me:
not even a penny or ell of cloth
didst thou get for thy wrong, poor wretch!

Frey:

41. I see Fenrir lying at the mouth of the flood;
he shall bide till the Powers perish;
and thou, mischief-maker, shalt meet with like fate
if thou hold not herewith thy peace.

Loki:

42. Wealth gav'st thou, Frey, for Gymir's maid,
thou didst sell thy sword for Gerd;
but how shalt thou fight when the sons of fire
through the Murk-wood ride, poor wretch?

Barley:

43. Were I of Ing's race even as Frey -
owned I a land blest as Elfhome -
I would crush like marrow yon croaker of ill,
and break all his bones into bits.

Loki:

44. What is that wee thing whining and fawning,
snuffling and snapping, I see?
Ever at Frey's ear, flattering and chattering,
or murmuring under the mill!

Barley:

45. Barley, I am named, too bold and brisk
I am called by the gods and men!
Here am I glorying that Odhinn's sons
all are drinking ale together!

Loki:

46. Silence, Barley-corn! Never couldst thou
even serve meat among men:
and when they fought thou couldst scarce be found,
safe 'neath the bed-straw hiding.

Heimdall:

47. So drunk art thou, Loki, thou hadst lost thy wits;
why wilt thou not cease from thy scoffing?
Ale beyond measure so masters man
that he keeps no watch on his words.

Loki:

48. Silence, Heimdall! That hard life of thine
was settled for thee long since:
with weary back must thou ever bide,
and keep watch, thou warder of gods!

Skadi:

49. Blithe are thou, Loki, but brief while shalt thou
with free tail frolic thus:
ere long the gods shall bind thee with guts
of thy rime-cold son to a sword.

Loki:

50. If in truth the gods shall bind me with guts
of my rime-cold son to a rock,
know that first and last was I found at the death
when we set upon Thiazi, thy sire.

Skadi:

51. If first and last thou wert found at the death
when ye set upon Thiazi, my sire,
know that in house or home of mine
shall be shown little love!

Loki:

52. Milder were thy words to Loki once
when thou badst him come to thy bed;
for such tales, I ween, will be told of us twain,
if we own all our acts of shame.

Then Sif came forth, and poured out mead for Loki in the foaming cup.

Sif:

53. Hail now, Loki! quaff this rimy cup
filled with the old mead full,
At least grant that I, of the kindred of the gods
alone am free from all fault.

Loki took the horn and quaffed: -

54. Thou alone wert blameless hadst thou in bearing
been sly and shrewish with men;
but Thor's wife had one lover at least, as I know,
even Loki the wily-wise.

Beyla:

55. All the fells are quaking, fast is the Thunderer
faring, I trow, from home!
He will soon bring to silence him who thus slanders
all beings here in the hall.

Loki:

56. Silence, Beyla, wife of Barley-corn
all with foulness filled!
Ne'er 'mid the gods came one so uncouth,
thou bond-maid stained and soiled.

Then came the Thunderer in, and spake: -

57. Silence, vile being! My hammer of might,
Mjöllnir, shall spoil thee of speech.
I will strike that rock-head from off thy shoulders,
and soon will thy life-days be spent.

Loki:

58. 'Tis the Son of Earth who enters the hall!
Why dost thou threaten so, Thor?
Ne'er wilt thou venture to fight with the Wolf;
he shall swallow the War-father whole.

Thor:

59. Silence, vile being! My hammer of might,
Mjöllnir, shall spoil thee of speech.
I will drive thee forth to the eastern land
and no man shall see thee more.

Loki:

60. Of thy eastern journeys never shouldst thou
tell unto men the tale;
how once in glove-thumb thou, warrior, didst crouch,
and scarce couldst think thyself Thor.

Thor:

61. Silence, vile being! My hammer of might,
Mjöllnir, shall spoil thee of speech;
this right hand shall smite thee with Hrungnir's slayer,
till each bone of thee shall be broke.

Loki:

62. Though haply thou threat'nest with thy hammer of might,
long will my life be, I ween;
sharp were Skrymir's thongs, mindst thou, when starving
thou couldst not get at the food?

Thor:

63. Silence, vile being! My hammer of might,
Mjöllnir, shall spoil thee of speech.
With Hrungnir's slayer I will smite thee to Hel,
down 'neath the gates of the dead.

Loki:

64. Before sons and daughters of gods have I spoken,
even as I was moved by my mind:
now at length I go, and for thee alone,
for well, I ween, thou wilt fight.

65. Thou hast brewed thine ale, but such banquet, Ægir,
never more shalt thou make.
May flames play high o'er thy wealth in the hall
and scorch the skin of thy back!

Then Loki went forth and hid himself in Franang's stream in the form of a salmon, where the gods caught him and bound him with the guts of his son Narfi. But his other son Vali was turned into a wolf. Skadi took a poisonous snake and fastened it up over Loki, so that poison dripped from it upon his face. Sigyn, his wife, sat by, and held a basin under the drops. And when the basin was full she cast the

poison away, but meanwhile the drops fell upon Loki, and he struggled so fiercely against it that the whole earth shook with his strivings, which are now called earthquakes.