

PLAYS FOR
New Audiences

A Division of Children's Theatre Company

Ragnarok

by Charles Way

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Ragnarok

Part One-Peace.

Part two-The well and the wall.

Part three- Innocence and

Immortality Part four-Mistletoe and

Mourning. Part Five- Ragnarok.

Characters:

- Thor
- Frigga
- Loki
- Odin
- Baldr
- Freya
- Mason
- Seeress
- Thjazi
- Idun
- Hod

Part One- Peace

[The Great Hall of Gladsheim at Asgard citadel of the Gods. A victory feast is being held-around which the walls of Asgard lie in ruins]

Thor Drink-Drink- Drink to his name- no- to his many names. Resounding one. The Wise One-Spear Shaker-Father of the slain-Fullfiller of desires. All-Father. Father-ODIN!!

All OOOODIN.

Thor Drink, Drink,- to—to the excellence of his feast.

All To the feast!

Thor Let us praise-the OX.

All To the Ox!

Thor And- and- and the lamb – and the pig and the horse and the bear- and- and----

[Laughter]

Thor Wait- wait. Let's drink to the drink. I give you Gymir's Mead.

All To the mead. To Gymir.

Thor TO VICTORY!

All VICTORY!

Baldr Brothers-let us honour the most patient, most brave and beautiful mother who ever weaved a cloud.

[Loki, Thor and Baldr bow towards Frigga, their Mother and wife of Odin.]

Frigga When they behave well husband they belong to me. Otherwise they're yours-

Thor And now-Immortal ones- let's drink to-to-to The OX.

[Laughter at Thor and cries of 'Again'?]

Thor To those who butchered it. [Cheer] Cooked it. [Cheer] And served it. [Cheer]

Loki Let's drink to Thor-who ate most of it.

[Cheers and laughter. Odin rises to speak.]

Odin Gods of Asgard, raise your golden glasses, and drink to those

who sit as shadows now in Niflheim.

Drink to those who suffered, and remember the waste of war

The grief and pity of it, so this first war will also be named last.

Drink to your enemy, the brave Vanir-God's like us in form and favour

Who like us were never vanquished-nor victorious.

Oh- surely we fought for something? Yes, we fought for friendship

We fought for our families, and for life itself.

These things we had before, so drink God's to the foolishness of war.

Don't look so dismayed-we have won a truce.

A time without turmoil stretches before us.

But how can we be certain this truce will hold?

Because gifts have been exchanged, and the gift granted us

Is a victory that cannot be denied. The gift of Freya.

[This news sends a shiver of anticipation around the hall]

Where she walks children are born.

Where she looks- seeds fall.

What she touches blossoms and multiplies. Freya.

[Music. Enter Freya]

Odin Welcome Freya to Asgard, home of the Aesir. Be happy here- be fruitful.

We will honour and protect you as our own.

Freya Thank you, All-Father.

Odin My wife Frigga-foremost of women.

Frigga Welcome Freya. We've heard much about you. Your necklace is more beautiful than any description of it-as are you.

Freya I have heard that you, foremost of females, can read the fates of mortal men-but say nothing.

Frigga Where's there's nothing can be done, then a woman holds her tongue.

Odin My son Thor.

Thor We're honoured Freya. Forgive the state of our defences. Your warriors fought well. No doubt they wish they stood in Asgard now with you- who is--really good looking.

Frigga Forgive our son.

Freya Thank you first son of Odin, your words are as sweet as the mead that fuels them.

Odin Here is Baldr-the brightest and the best of us.

Thor The blondest.

Baldr My brother speaks boldly and truly- as he always does.

The Vanir have suffered many loses,

but the greatest grief of all to bear

Must be the loss of you-so fair.

Thor I can do Rhyme.

Odin And Loki.

Freya Ah-the shape shifter.

[Loki stands with his wolf by his side on a leash. In his hand he carries a small snake. He bows slightly and the wolf and snake do likewise.]

Which of these three creatures is you? Snake, wolf-boy?

Thor Ha.

Loki Most excellent lady. I hear you enjoy erotic poetry.

Freya And you do not?

Loki I am hampered by good taste. But your magic gifts I do admire and was wondering if-I might borrow soon your feather cloak?

[Freya turns her back on Loki]

Welcome again.

Odin Gods of the Aesir raise your glasses

And drink to the peace promised here.

All To peace.

[A huge knocking at the door]

Odin Who knock's at Asgard's gate?

[The knock comes again]

Who beats at Odin's door?

[Baldr starts to go but Frigga summons him to stay. She leaves to discover who it might be.]

Thor Peace-of course we all want peace- but a hard truth remains-we are now defenceless. The Vanir were never our natural enemy-obviously. But those who have watched our walls reduced to rubble-are. I feel the breath of Giants on my neck.

Loki Perhaps you're a little bored brother and feel what you want to feel.

Thor Why do you speak across me? Last night you were in full agreement.

Loki As I am today-as Baldr is.

Odin Baldr?

Loki Has been having bad dreams again.

Baldr There is nothing new in them Father.

Loki No?

Odin Recount these dreams.

Baldr Today? The dream was as before—

Loki Broken battlements, crows on corpses- eternal winter- the usual stuff, but--

Odin Loki!

Baldr But through the mayhem and the mist came our distant brother, blind Hod. Stumbling- trying to find his way. That is all.

Odin Hod?

Loki I know, why Hod? We never see him.

Thor Who?

Loki Exactly.

[Frigga enters. She whispers to Odin who smiles and nods and then indicates to the others that they should retreat so that they cannot be seen but may hear what happens next. He takes Freya's arm –which is noted by Frigga-and her reaction is noted by Loki.]

Thor What's going on?

Loki A game brother-a party game. Hide!

[Frigga sits in the great hall as if alone. The door knocks again.]

Frigga Enter.

[Sound of a huge door creaking open. This sound is followed by the entrance of a little man pushing a wheelbarrow in which are some tools.]

Mason If I had a cap love, I'd doff it. [Looks about him] Had a bit of a do?

Frigga Do you realise where you are?

Mason Yes Mam, the fellow on the bridge-very professional.

Frigga Heimdall.

Mason That's him, made it all quite clear. Lovely bridge too. I appreciate beauty-craft. He said Mason, he said, the Gods will either slay you on the spot or welcome your proposition with open arms.

Frigga Mason?

Mason By name and nature. [He hands her his card] Professional job that too. If I could speak to the man himself.

Frigga I am the wife of the man himself. A proposition you say?

Mason Well-you need a mason- clearly.

Frigga Your arrival here is most opportune.

Mason Great lady-I am nothing if not opportune-by this merit a tradesman makes his way-see's what must be done and knocks on chances door. No job too small-or large in this case.

[Enter Thor, Loki, Odin, Freya]

Mason Ah-there you all are. And armed to the rafters-Doff, Doff, Doff. [He sees Freya] Ooh Doff.

Odin Mason. You can rebuild the walls of Asgard?

Mason I can.

Thor With one wheelbarrow?

Mason Certainly.

[The God's laugh]

Loki How long would it take you?

Mason Eighteen months.

Thor It would take you, little one, one hundred and eighteen months.

Mason No, no, no. I did my sums. One and a half years-that's my pledge- and if I don't do it in that time, pay me nothing, zilch.

Odin And what would your payment be?

Mason Ooooh. Looking at the state of the walls-and taking into account the full renewal of your security-which is not to be sniffed at-not these days-I would say the payment would be reasonable-reasonable. In return for this peace of mind- I would have the moon and-the sun. Yes-The sun and the moon. Did I say something?

Frigga You would leave us in darkness, both day and night?

Mason If the Giants were to attack-like now. What good would the sun and the moon be then? So-yes yes- I would have the sun and the moon- and you.

Freya Me?

Mason Where you walk children are born. I will have you for my wife. Shall I step outside while you discuss the matter?

Thor You think there's something to discuss- apart from your funeral arrangements?

Loki It really won't do brother- to start killing people at a party.

Thor Father?

Odin We will discuss your proposition.

[Exit Mason]

Thor Let me kill him Father-for lack of respect if nothing else.

Loki You said a moment ago that we are open to attack-that you feel the breath of Giants on your neck. To keep the peace therefore--we need the walls intact. Who among us can do this work?

Thor Can he?

Loki Can you? Let the Mason live Father.

Freya You want to marry me off --to a tradesman?

Loki There's a thought-might save us a lot of trouble.

Freya Will you let him speak to me like this! Is this how I am to be treated?

Frigga Don't worry Freya, Loki is the cleverest of us all.

Odin Speak Loki. Politely.

Loki We say yes to his plan-with no intention of paying him. Give him six months and see how he fares. He might complete most of it but when he fails in full his life will be forfeit—and Thor can do what Thor does best.

[Odin ponders for a moment then nods. Enter the mason.]

Odin The sun you shall have. The moon you shall have. Freya you shall—have, but only if the job is finished within six months.

Mason Oooh? Six? In this line of work the employer has the whip hand and no mistake.

Odin Do you accept these terms?

Mason If I may use my horse to help me.

Thor Let me rip out his heart-this stone hitter who dares bargain with Odin.

Loki Be calm-he asked for a horse. A single horse.

Odin Six months-or your life is mine.

Mason You won't regret it. {To Freya} Nor will you- great lady.

[Exit all but Frigga and Odin-who is lost in thought]

Frigga Baldr's dreams? What? I am his mother. He speaks to me.

Odin Why should Baldr- of all of us dream so darkly? And why of Hod?

Frigga Baldr misses him- and wants you to invite him home.

Odin My sons need no invitation. I won't be long away.

Frigga Thank you for the lie husband.

Odin I shall be swifter than light itself.

Frigga So you always say and there goes another year.

Odin I am the All-Father. How can I be called so if I don't know all things-?

[He puts on a wide brimmed hat and cloak.]

Frigga What-is that?

Odin A disguise.

Frigga Oh.

Odin People say to Odin what they think he wants to hear. What do you think?

Frigga ---It's excellent.

Odin Look after Freya.

Frigga Loki's right-she'll cause trouble.

Odin Ah-are you jealous?

Frigga Should I be?

Odin Of course-who can resist me?

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