



The Knot in the Thread

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Mythology, Retold Fairy Tales

My name is Loki, and I don't care what you think of me.

People have said a lot of things about me. That I'm a liar. A thief. A trickster. A murderer.

They're all true, except that last one. I didn't kill Baldur. I had nothing to do with that nasty business.

Let me explain.

Baldur was the golden boy of Asgard. Second son of Odin, beloved by all, especially his mother. He was prettier than most of the goddesses, and...that was about it, to be honest. He wasn't strong like Thor, or powerful like Freya, or clever like yours truly. He was good-looking, and apparently that was enough for everyone to love him.

And, like I said, his mother loved him most of all. Lady Frigga doted on her son, and, when she started having nightmares about him dying, she went into a panic.

She paced the halls of Valhalla, too worried to sleep, trying to think of ways to stop her dreams coming true.

Frigga's a powerful sorceress, but even she didn't know magic that would keep dear Baldur safe from any threat.

What I said to her, I meant as a joke. I was trying to cheer her up – and point out how paranoid she was being. I never expected her to take me seriously.

“Why don't you just ask everything not to hurt him?” I suggested. “Everything in the world. I mean, everything and everyone loves Baldur. Just make them all promise that they'll never hurt, kill, or even upset your darling boy.”

I didn't think she'd actually do it. I suppose you should never underestimate a powerful goddess who's also an

extremely protective mother. Frigga spent the next year travelling the realms, asking everything – literally everything – to give its word that it would never hurt her wonderful Baldur. Iron, wood, fire, water, every animal that walked or bird that flew or fish that swam. Every plant that grew, even. Except one.

There have been a lot of rumours that the old women who persuaded Frigga not to bother getting her promise from the mistletoe plant was me, in disguise. That's a lie. A convenient one for my enemies, an infuriating one for me. I mean, it's not as if Asgard is short of enemies. It's not as if those enemies don't include a fair number of shapeshifters. You'd think that they'd at least consider a few other suspects.

But no. Why bother doing a proper investigation when you've got a scapegoat right there?

I didn't know about the mistletoe. I didn't know that Hod's spear had a trace of the damn plant on its point. I didn't know that, when I led the blind god over and pointed him at his brother and told him to throw, that the spear would hit the newly invulnerable Baldur and he'd fall down dead.

It was just supposed to be a joke. I didn't know what would happen. But that didn't stop them from blaming me anyway.

I was run out of Asgard that night. I went to ground in a small, distant realm, hiding in a little hut beside a waterfall. I thought I'd be safe here.

But the gods don't give up. Not when their golden boy is dead and they've got someone to blame.

They've nearly found me. I can hear them coming.

Luckily, I'm more of a slippery fish than even the gods know. They won't catch me.

Not today.

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