

# ALVISSMOL (THE BALLAD OF ALVIS)

Alvis spake:

1. "Now shall the bride | my benches adorn,  
And homeward haste forthwith;  
Eager for wedlock | to all shall I seem,  
Nor at home shall they rob me of rest."

Thor spake:

2. "What, pray, art thou? | Why so pale round the nose?  
By the dead hast thou lain of late?  
To a giant like | dost thou look, methinks;  
Thou wast not born for the bride."

Alvis spake:

3. "Alvis am I, | and under the earth  
My home 'neath the rocks I have;  
With the wagon-guider | a word do I seek;  
Let the gods their bond not break."

Thor spake:

4. "Break it shall I, | for over the bride  
Her father has foremost right;  
At home was I not | when the promise thou hadst,  
And I give her alone of the gods."

Alvis spake:

5. "What hero claims | such right to hold  
O'er the bride that shines so bright?  
Not many will know thee, | thou wandering man!  
Who was bought with rings to bear thee?"

Thor spake:

6. "Vingthor, the wanderer | wide, am I,  
And I am Sithgrani's son;  
Against my will | shalt thou get the maid,  
And win the marriage word."

Alvis spake:

7. "Thy good-will now | shall I quickly get,  
And win the marriage word;  
I long to have, | and I would not lack,  
This snow-white maid for mine."

Thor spake:

8. "The love of the maid | I may not keep thee  
From winning, thou guest so wise,  
If of every world | thou canst tell me all  
That now I wish to know.

9. "Answer me, Alvis! | thou knowest all,  
Dwarf, of the doom of men:  
What call they the earth, | that lies before all,  
In each and every world?"

Alvis spake:

10. "'Earth' to men, 'Field' | to the gods it is,  
'The Ways' is it called by the Wanes;  
'Ever Green' by the giants, | 'The Grower' by elves,  
'The Moist' by the holy ones high."

Thor spake:

11. "Answer me, Alvis! | thou knowest all,  
Dwarf, of the doom of men:  
What call they the heaven, | beheld of the high one,  
In each and every world?"

Alvis spake:

12. "'Heaven' men call it, | 'The Height' the gods,  
The Wanes 'The Weaver of Winds';  
Giants 'The Up-World,' | elves 'The Fair-Roof,'  
The dwarfs 'The Dripping Hall.'"

Thor spake:

13. "Answer me, Alvis! | thou knowest all,  
Dwarf, of the doom of men:  
What call they the moon, | that men behold,  
In each and every world?"

Alvis spake:

14. "'Moon' with men, 'Flame' | the gods among,  
'The Wheel' in the house of hell;  
'The Goer' the giants, | 'The Gleamer' the dwarfs,  
The elves 'The Teller of Time.'"

Thor spake:

15. "Answer me, Alvis! | thou knowest all,  
Dwarf, of the doom of men:  
What call they the sun, | that all men see,  
In each and every world?"

Alvis spake:

16. "Men call it 'Sun,' | gods 'Orb of the Sun,'  
    'The Deceiver of Dvalin' the dwarfs;  
The giants 'The Ever-Bright,' | elves 'Fair Wheel,'  
    'All-Glowing' the sons of the gods."

Thor spake:

17. "Answer me, Alvis! | thou knowest all,  
    Dwarf, of the doom of men:  
What call they the clouds, | that keep the rains,  
    In each and every world?"

Alvis spake:

18. "'Clouds' men name them, | 'Rain-Hope' gods call them,  
    The Waners call them 'Kites of the Wind';  
'Water-Hope' giants, | 'Weather-Might' elves,  
    'The Helmet of Secrets' in hell."

Thor spake:

19. "Answer me, Alvis! | thou knowest all,  
    Dwarf, of the doom of men:  
What call they the wind, | that widest fares,  
    In each and every world?"

Alvis spake:

20. "'Wind' do men call it, | the gods 'The Waverer,'  
    'The Neigher' the holy ones high;  
'The Wailer' the giants, | 'Roaring Wender' the elves,  
    In hell 'The Blustering Blast.'"

Thor spake:

21. "Answer me, Alvis! | thou knowest all,

Dwarf, of the doom of men:  
What call they the calm, | that quiet lies,  
In each and every world?"

Alvis spake:

22. "'Calm' men call it, | 'The Quiet' the gods,  
The Wanes 'The Hush of the Winds';  
'The Sultry' the giants, | elves 'Day's Stillness,'  
The dwarfs 'The Shelter of Day.'"

Thor spake:

23. "Answer me, Alvis! | thou knowest all,  
Dwarf, of the doom of men:  
What call they the sea, | whereon men sail,  
In each and every world?"

Alvis spake:

24. "'Sea' men call it, | gods 'The Smooth-Lying,'  
'The Wave' is it called by the Wanes;  
'Eel-Home' the giants, | 'Drink-Stuff' the elves,  
For the dwarfs its name is 'The Deep.'"

Thor spake:

25. "Answer me, Alvis! | thou knowest all,  
Dwarf, of the doom of men:  
What call they the fire, | that flames for men,  
In each of all the worlds?"

Alvis spake:

26. "'Fire' men call it, | and 'Flame' the gods,  
By the Wanes is it 'Wildfire' called;  
'The Biter' by giants, | 'The Burner' by dwarfs,

'The Swift' in the house of hell."

Thor spake:

27. "Answer me, Alvis! | thou knowest all,  
Dwarf, of the doom of men:  
What call they the wood, | that grows for mankind,  
In each and every world?"

Alvis spake:

28. "Men call it 'The Wood,' | gods 'The Mane of the Field,'  
'Seaweed of Hills' in hell;  
'Flame-Food' the giants, | 'Fair-Limbed' the elves,  
'The Wand' is it called by the Waness."

Thor spake:

29. "Answer me, Alvis! | thou knowest all,  
Dwarf, of the doom of men:  
What call they the night, | the daughter of Nor,  
In each and every world?"

Alvis spake:

30. "'Night' men call it, | 'Darkness' gods name it,  
'The Hood' the holy ones high;  
The giants 'The Lightless,' | the elves 'Sleep's Joy,'  
The dwarfs 'The Weaver of Dreams.'"

Thor spake:

31. "Answer me, Alvis! | thou knowest all,  
Dwarf, of the doom of men:  
What call they the seed, | that is sown by men,  
In each and every world?"

Alvis spake:

32. "Men call it 'Grain,' | and 'Corn' the gods,  
    'Growth' in the world of the Wanæs;  
    'The Eaten' by giants, | 'Drink-Stuff' by elves,  
    In hell 'The Slender Stem.'"

Thor spake:

33. "Answer me, Alvis! | thou knowest all,  
    Dwarf, of the doom of men:  
    What call they the ale, | that is quaffed of men,  
    In each and every world?"

Alvis spake:

34. "'Ale' among men, | 'Beer' the gods among,  
    In the world of the Wanæs 'The Foaming';  
    'Bright Draught' with giants, | 'Mead' with dwellers in hell,  
    'The Feast-Draught' with Suttung's sons."

Thor spake:

35. "In a single breast | I never have seen  
    More wealth of wisdom old;  
    But with treacherous wiles | must I now betray thee:  
    The day has caught thee, dwarf!  
    (Now the sun shines here in the hall.)"

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