

LOKASENNA (LOKI'S WRANGLING)

Ægir, who was also called Gymir, had prepared ale for the gods, after he had got the mighty kettle, as now has been told. To this feast came Othin and Frigg, his wife. Thor came not, as he was on a journey in the East. Sif, Thor's wife, was there, and Bragi with Ithun, his wife. Tyr, who had but one hand, was there; the wolf Fenrir had bitten off his other hand when they had bound him. There were Njorth and Skathi his wife, Freyr and Freyja, and Vithar, the son of Othin. Loki was there, and Freyr's servants Byggvir and Beyla. Many were there of the gods and elves.

Ægir had two serving-men, Fimafeng and Eldir. Glittering gold they had in place of firelight; the ale came in of itself; and great was the peace. The guests praised much the ability of Ægir's serving-men. Loki might not endure that, and he slew Fimafeng. Then the gods shook their shields and howled at Loki and drove him away to the forest, and thereafter set to drinking again. Loki turned back, and outside he met Eldir. Loki spoke to him:

1. "Speak now, Eldir, | for not one step
Farther shalt thou fare;
What ale-talk here | do they have within,
The sons of the glorious gods?"

Eldir spake:

2. "Of their weapons they talk, | and their might in war,
The sons of the glorious gods;
From the gods and elves | who are gathered here
No friend in words shalt thou find."

Loki spake:

3. "In shall I go | into Ægir's hall,
For the feast I fain would see;
Bale and hatred | I bring to the gods,
And their mead with venom I mix."

Eldir spake:

4. "If in thou goest | to Ægir's hall,
And fain the feast wouldst see,
And with slander and spite | wouldst sprinkle the gods,
Think well lest they wipe it on thee."

Loki spake:

5. "Bethink thee, Eldir, | if thou and I
Shall strive with spiteful speech;
Richer I grow | in ready words
If thou speakest too much to me."

Then Loki went into the hall, but when they who were there saw who had entered, they were all silent.

Loki spake:

6. "Thirsty I come | into this thine hall,
I, Loft, from a journey long,
To ask of the gods | that one should give
Fair mead for a drink to me.
7. "Why sit ye silent, | swollen with pride,
Ye gods, and no answer give?
At your feast a place | and a seat prepare me,
Or bid me forth to fare."

Bragi spake:

8. "A place and a seat | will the gods prepare
No more in their midst for thee;

For the gods know well | what men they wish
To find at their mighty feasts.”

Loki spake:

9. “Remember, Othin, | in olden days
That we both our blood have mixed;
Then didst thou promise | no ale to pour,
Unless it were brought for us both.”

Othin spake:

10. “Stand forth then, Vithar, | and let the wolf’s father
Find a seat at our feast;
Lest evil should Loki | speak aloud
Here within Ægir’s hall.”

Then Vithar arose and poured drink for Loki; but before he drank he spoke to the gods:

11. “Hail to you, gods! | ye goddesses, hail!
Hail to the holy throng!
Save for the god | who yonder sits,
Bragi there on the bench.”

Bragi spake:

12. “A horse and a sword | from my hoard will I give,
And a ring gives Bragi to boot,
That hatred thou makst not | among the gods;
So rouse not the great ones to wrath.”

Loki spake:

13. “In horses and rings | thou shalt never be rich,
Bragi, but both shalt thou lack;
Of the gods and elves | here together met

Least brave in battle art thou,
(And shyest thou art of the shot.)”

Bragi spake:

14. “Now were I without | as I am within,
And here in Ægir’s hall,
Thine head would I bear | in mine hands away,
And pay thee the price of thy lies.”

Loki spake:

15. “In thy seat art thou bold, | not so are thy deeds,
Bragi, adorning of benches!
Go out and fight | if angered thou feelest,
No hero such forethought has.”

Ithun spake:

16. “Well, prithee, Bragi, | his kinship weigh,
Since chosen as wish-son he was;
And speak not to Loki | such words of spite
Here within Ægir’s hall.”

Loki spake:

17. “Be silent, Ithun! | thou art, I say,
Of women most lustful in love,
Since thou thy washed-bright | arms didst wind
About thy brother’s slayer.”

Ithun spake:

18. “To Loki I speak not | with spiteful words
Here within Ægir’s hall;
And Bragi I calm, | who is hot with beer,
For I wish not that fierce they should fight.”

Gefjun spake:

19. "Why, ye gods twain, | with bitter tongues
Raise hate among us here?
Loki is famed | for his mockery foul,
And the dwellers in heaven he hates."

Loki spake:

20. "Be silent, Gefjun! | for now shall I say
Who led thee to evil life;
The boy so fair | gave a necklace bright,
And about him thy leg was laid."

Othin spake:

21. "Mad art thou, Loki, | and little of wit,
The wrath of Gefjun to rouse;
For the fate that is set | for all she sees,
Even as I, methinks."

Loki spake:

22. "Be silent, Othin! | not justly thou settest
The fate of the fight among men;
Oft gavst thou to him | who deserved not the gift,
To the baser, the battle's prize."

Othin spake:

23. "Though I gave to him | who deserved not the gift,
To the baser, the battle's prize;
Winters eight | wast thou under the earth,
Milking the cows as a maid,
(Ay, and babes didst thou bear;
Unmanly thy soul must seem.)"

Loki spake:

24. "They say that with spells | in Samsey once
Like witches with charms didst thou work;
And in witch's guise | among men didst thou go;
Unmanly thy soul must seem."

Frigg spake:

25. "Of the deeds ye two | of old have done
Ye should make no speech among men;
Whate'er ye have done | in days gone by,
Old tales should ne'er be told."

Loki spake:

26. "Be silent, Frigg! | thou art Fjorgyn's wife,
But ever lustful in love;
For Vili and Ve, | thou wife of Vithrir,
Both in thy bosom have lain."

Frigg spake:

27. "If a son like Baldr | were by me now,
Here within Ægir's hall,
From the sons of the gods | thou shouldst go not forth
Till thy fierceness in fight were tried."

Loki spake:

28. "Thou wilt then, Frigg, | that further I tell
Of the ill that now I know;
Mine is the blame | that Baldr no more
Thou seest ride home to the hall."

Freyja spake:

29. "Mad art thou, Loki, | that known thou makest
The wrong and shame thou hast wrought;
The fate of all | does Frigg know well,
Though herself she says it not."

Loki spake:

30. "Be silent, Freyja! | for fully I know thee,
Sinless thou art not thyself;
Of the gods and elves | who are gathered here,
Each one as thy lover has lain."

Freyja spake:

31. "False is thy tongue, | and soon shalt thou find
That it sings thee an evil song;
The gods are wroth, | and the goddesses all,
And in grief shalt thou homeward go."

Loki spake:

32. "Be silent, Freyja! | thou foulest witch,
And steeped full sore in sin;
In the arms of thy brother | the bright gods caught thee
When Freyja her wind set free."

Njorth spake:

33. "Small ill does it work | though a woman may have
A lord or a lover or both;
But a wonder it is | that this womanish god
Comes hither, though babes he has borne."

Loki spake:

34. "Be silent, Njorth; | thou wast eastward sent,

To the gods as a hostage given;
And the daughters of Hymir | their privy had
When use did they make of thy mouth.”

Njorth spake:

35. “Great was my gain, | though long was I gone,
To the gods as a hostage given;
The son did I have | whom no man hates,
And foremost of gods is found.”

Loki spake:

36. “Give heed now, Njorth, | nor boast too high,
No longer I hold it hid;
With thy sister hadst thou | so fair a son,
Thus hadst thou no worse a hope.”

Tyr spake:

37. “Of the heroes brave | is Freyr the best
Here in the home of the gods;
He harms not maids | nor the wives of men,
And the bound from their fetters he frees.”

Loki spake:

38. “Be silent, Tyr! | for between two men
Friendship thou ne’er couldst fashion;
Fain would I tell | how Fenrir once
Thy right hand rent from thee.”

Tyr spake:

39. “My hand do I lack, | but Hrothvitnir thou,
And the loss brings longing to both;
Ill fares the wolf | who shall ever await

In fetters the fall of the gods.”

Loki spake:

40. “Be silent, Tyr! | for a son with me
Thy wife once chanced to win;
Not a penny, methinks, | wast thou paid for the wrong,
Nor wast righted an inch, poor wretch.”

Freyr spake:

41. “By the mouth of the river | the wolf remains
Till the gods to destruction go;
Thou too shalt soon, | if thy tongue is not stilled,
Be fettered, thou forger of ill.”

Loki spake:

42. “The daughter of Gymir | with gold didst thou buy,
And sold thy sword to boot;
But when Muspell’s sons | through Myrkwood ride,
Thou shalt weaponless wait, poor wretch.”

Byggvir spake:

43. “Had I birth so famous | as Ingunar-Freyr,
And sat in so lofty a seat,
I would crush to marrow | this croaker of ill,
And beat all his body to bits.”

Loki spake:

44. “What little creature | goes crawling there,
Snuffling and snapping about?
At Freyr’s ears ever | wilt thou be found,
Or muttering hard at the mill.”

Byggvir spake:

45. "Byggvir my name, | and nimble am I,
As gods and men do grant;
And here am I proud | that the children of Hropt
Together all drink ale."

Loki spake:

46. "Be silent, Byggvir! | thou never couldst set
Their shares of the meat for men;
Hid in straw on the floor, | they found thee not
When heroes were fain to fight."

Heimdall spake:

47. "Drunk art thou, Loki, | and mad are thy deeds,
Why, Loki, leavst thou this not?
For drink beyond measure | will lead all men
No thought of their tongues to take."

Loki spake:

48. "Be silent, Heimdall! | in days long since
Was an evil fate for thee fixed;
With back held stiff | must thou ever stand,
As warder of heaven to watch."

Skathi spake:

49. "Light art thou, Loki, | but longer thou mayst not
In freedom flourish thy tail;
On the rocks the gods bind thee | with bowels torn
Forth from thy frost-cold son."

Loki spake:

50. "Though on rocks the gods bind me | with bowels torn
Forth from my frost-cold son,
I was first and last | at the deadly fight
There where Thjazi we caught."

Skathi spake:

51. "Wert thou first and last | at the deadly fight
There where Thjazi was caught,
From my dwellings and fields | shall ever come forth
A counsel cold for thee."

Loki spake:

52. "More lightly thou spakest | with Laufey's son,
When thou badst me come to thy bed;
Such things must be known | if now we two
Shall seek our sins to tell."

Then Sif came forward and poured mead for Loki in a crystal cup, and said:

53. "Hail to thee, Loki, | and take thou here
The crystal cup of old mead;
For me at least, | alone of the gods,
Blameless thou knowest to be."

He took the horn, and drank therefrom:

54. "Alone thou wert | if truly thou wouldst
All men so shyly shun;
But one do I know | full well, methinks,
Who had thee from Hlorrithi's arms,—
(Loki the crafty in lies.)"

Beyla spake:

55. "The mountains shake, | and surely I think
From his home comes Hlorrithi now;
He will silence the man | who is slandering here
Together both gods and men."

Loki spake:

56. "Be silent, Beyla! | thou art Byggvir's wife,
And deep art thou steeped in sin;
A greater shame | to the gods came ne'er,
Befouled thou art with thy filth."

Then came Thor forth, and spake:

57. "Unmanly one, cease, | or the mighty hammer,
Mjollnir, shall close thy mouth;
Thy shoulder-cliff | shall I cleave from thy neck,
And so shall thy life be lost."

Loki spake:

58. "Lo, in has come | the son of Earth:
Why threaten so loudly, Thor?
Less fierce thou shalt go | to fight with the wolf
When he swallows Sigfather up."

Thor spake:

59. "Unmanly one, cease, | or the mighty hammer,
Mjollnir, shall close thy mouth;
I shall hurl thee up | and out in the East,
Where men shall see thee no more."

Loki spake:

60. "That thou hast fared | on the East-road forth

To men shouldst thou say no more;
In the thumb of a glove | didst thou hide, thou great one,
And there forgot thou wast Thor.”

Thor spake:

61. “Unmanly one, cease, | or the mighty hammer,
Mjollnir, shall close thy mouth;
My right hand shall smite thee | with Hrungnir’s slayer,
Till all thy bones are broken.”

Loki spake:

62. “A long time still | do I think to live,
Though thou threatenest thus with thy hammer;
Rough seemed the straps | of Skrymir’s wallet,
When thy meat thou mightest not get,
(And faint from hunger didst feel.)”

Thor spake:

63. “Unmanly one, cease, | or the mighty hammer,
Mjollnir, shall close thy mouth;
The slayer of Hrungnir | shall send thee to hell,
And down to the gate of death.”

Loki spake:

64. “I have said to the gods | and the sons of the gods
The things that whetted my thoughts;
But before thee alone | do I now go forth,
For thou fightest well, I ween.

65. “Ale hast thou brewed, | but, Ægir, now
Such feasts shalt thou make no more;
O’er all that thou hast | which is here within
Shall play the flickering flames,
(And thy back shall be burnt with fire.)”

And after that Loki hid himself in Franang's waterfall in the guise of a salmon, and there the gods took him. He was bound with the bowels of his son Vali, but his son Narfi was changed to a wolf. Skathi took a poison-snake and fastened it up over Loki's face, and the poison dropped thereon. Sigyn, Loki's wife, sat there and held a shell under the poison, but when the shell was full she bore away the poison, and meanwhile the poison dropped on Loki. Then he struggled so hard that the whole earth shook therewith; and now that is called an earthquake.

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