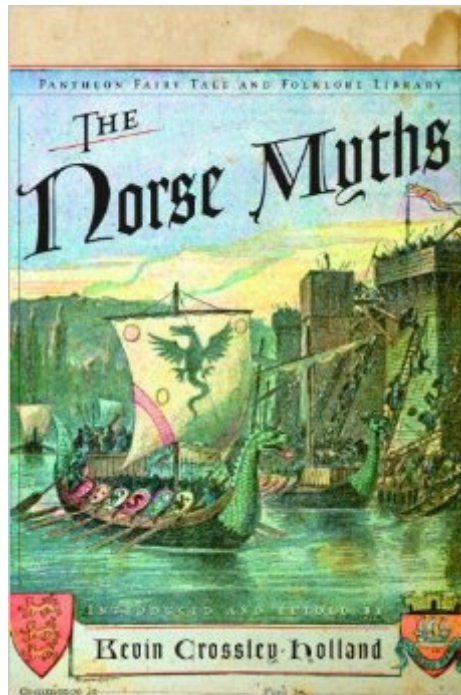


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The Norse Myths (The Pantheon Fairy Tale And Folklore Library)



Synopsis

Here are thirty-two classic myths that bring the Viking world vividly to life. The mythic legacy of the Scandinavians includes a cycle of stories filled with magnificent images from pre-Christian Europe. Gods, humans, and monstrous beasts engage in prodigious drinking bouts, contests of strength, greedy schemes for gold, and lusty encounters. The Norse pantheon includes Odin, the wisest and most fearsome of the gods; Thor, the thundering powerhouse; and the exquisite, magic-wielding Freyja. Their loves, wars, and adventures take us through worlds both mortal and divine, culminating in a blazing doomsday for gods and humans alike. These stories bear witness to the courage, passion, and boundless spirit that were hallmarks of the Norse world. Part of the Pantheon Fairy Tale and Folklore Library

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Customer Reviews

The author starts off with a 25-page or so introduction to the myths, covering the Norse world, cosmology, the pantheon of Norse gods, the sources, and the general structure of the myths. The heart of the book consists of 32 myths, arranged in basically a chronological order - beginning with the creation of the world / Ymir, and ending with Ragnarok. This is followed by notes (of a more academic nature) keyed to each of the 32 stories, where he gives additional information, sources, parallels in other cultures, and interpretations. The writing style moves well, and the myths are told in

a way that holds the reader's interest. Younger folks may well need to start with something a little simpler, like D'Aulaire or "Gods & Heroes from Viking Mythology" published by Schocken Books, but for adult readers looking for an intelligent introduction to Norse mythology, this book can't be beat.

The book brings Northern mythology to life. Kevin Crossley-Holland retells the myths in a flowing, easy-to-follow, contemporary style. This is also a very comprehensive collection of myths that includes thirty two stories, some of which cannot be found in more slender volumes. The book also contains an introduction, notes, glossary, bibliography, and index. The introduction is probably the most helpful of all introductions I found in books on Northern mythology. It starts with the role of geography in the shaping of Northern myths and proceeds to explain the cosmology and the pantheon of the ancient Anglo-Saxon peoples. It even contains a graphical representation of the mighty world tree Yggdrasill, which is very helpful in understanding the structure of various realms of the world of Northern mythology. I cannot tell enough good things about the myths themselves. And the only way to appreciate them is to read them. The first myth in the book is the myth of creation, and the last myth is, of course, Ragnarok. The notes complement the tales and can be read after you are done with all the myths. I find many notes enlightening. I highly recommend this book

I bought this book as a part of an analysis of Norse Mythology, and found it more than useful. Not only does the author show the myths in a new light, but also includes an in-depth background of each myth and an informative introduction. The bibliography has separate headings for each topic of research, and the glossary is useful for those who have trouble keeping track of the often confusing names.

There really isn't any other book of Norse Myths like this on the market today. This book is the product of an attempt to bring the myths from various sources together into a coherent whole and at the same time imbue them with tough earthy Anglo-Saxon diction. Dr. Holland has brought his lifelong fascination for the Norse world into this book and shared it out to all his readers. There still is a very real 'Norse' or 'Anglo-Saxon' element in the English-speaking world's mentality and this book helps us access it. In my case, I came across this book in my early Twenties and I liked it so much I read it again and again, reading one of the thirty-three myths every day. There is something about the courage of the Norse outlook that I found and find appealing seeing how our lives are so fraught with silly worries and artificial fears. I really do think that the Northern spirit of bravery and the desire to seek out challenges for the sake of reputation and the ability to tell a good tale has

played a large role in the development of science and of our civilization, and these Norse cultural ancestors of ours are the ones who gave us these qualities. This book helps us access these qualities and bring them into our lives.

Adult retelling of stories we think we know from the surviving original sources. Reading Crossley-Holland's book is like reading the real Grimm's Fairy Tales -- they are much stranger and more disturbing than you remember from the kiddie show about Thor and his hammer. The Aesir are a doomed race of flawed, violent, sometimes cruel but ultimately heroic gods. Odin is not always a benevolent father, but also is obsessed with knowledge and willing to kill, deceive and suffer intensely to get it. Freya is not only a war-goddess but a kind of personification of sex. The stories cover the building of Asgard, an ur-War between the Aesir and the ultimately allied Vanes, struggles between the gods and the Frost Giants, the mischief and ultimately evil of Loki, and an array of malevolent dwarves and monsters with names like Nidhogg (the worm that gnaws the root of the world-tree Yggdrasil, Fenris the wolf of the end of the world. Incidentally, Tolkien got many of the names of his characters from the sources. Highly recommended.

I picked this book up after I ran across many kindred websites suggesting this as text that would help one to understand Norse mythology. Before C-H even begins the tales, he sets up a general overview for you so that you are "on familiar ground" when you are reading the myths and have an understanding of the layout of the worlds. What is even more pleasing is that he has a picture layout of the nine worlds (for those who like 'visuals'). The Myths were set up in a storytelling format that is easy to read and enjoy....in other words its not 'textbook' style. Also, he has a lot of notes for each tale at the back of the book that go into depth about all the texts he used in his retelling of the stories as well as some interpretation of what the stories were getting at. I highly recommend this book for those people who are interested in learning about Norse mythology

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