

Peace, Not Revenge



retold by Kendall Conboy

- 1 Long ago a giantess named Skadi lived in a mountain stronghold with her father Thiazi. Thiazi was shapeshifter, and one day, in the form of an eagle, he came across three gods who had slain an ox and were preparing to cook it over an open fire. Thiazi hungered at the sight, so he cast a spell on the fire to prevent the meat from cooking. The gods were perplexed, until finally Thiazi revealed himself and his trick.
- 2 “Allow me to eat my fill of the ox, and you will be able to cook the rest for yourself.”
- 3 The gods agreed, and Thiazi swooped down and devoured the choicest parts of the ox. The gods were angered, and the strongest among them, Loki, chased after the eagle with a long stick. Thiazi took the stick in his mouth and flew fast and far. Loki feared for his life and begged Thiazi to let him go.
- 4 “On one condition. Bring the goddess Idun to me with her golden apples. Lure her into the forest, where I will capture her.”
- 5 Loki agreed, and Thiazi set him upon the Earth once more.
- 6 Loki and his companions returned to their home in Asgard, and Loki sought out the goddess Idun.
- 7 “Idun, while in the forest I spied some beautiful apples, with a color that rivals yours. Come and bring your basket so we can compare them.”
- 8 Idun was eager to see the apples and hastily gathered her apples. Loki led her deep into the forest where Thiazi was waiting. From his high perch he silently dove and seized Idun with his talons, carrying off to his mountain lair.
- 9 Now Idun’s golden apples were the source of the gods’ youth, and as the days passed and Idun did not return, the gods began to grow old. They searched for Idun, but to no avail. After many days, it was determined that Loki was the one last in Idun’s presence, and he agreed to seek her in the forest.
- 10 Borrowing falcon wings from Freyja, Loki stole into Thiazi’s lair and discovered Idun. Luckily, Thiazi was away, so Loki carried Idun back to the safety of Asgard. When Thiazi returned and found Idun missing, he flew into a rage and sped toward Asgard. As he gained upon Loki, the gods caught sight of the chase and built a huge firewall outside their gates. As soon as Loki passed, they set it afire, and the inferno engulfed Thiazi—the giant was no more.
- 11 News of Thiazi’s death soon reached his daughter, the giantess Skadi. Distraught, she gathered her strongest weapons and set out for Asgard. The gods saw her approach, and Odin their leader greeted her.
- 12 “Fierce Skadi, we are sorry for your loss.”
- 13 “I have come for revenge!”

14 “Let us appease you and bring peace instead. We shall give you a husband; you shall marry a god.”

15 Skadi considered this offer. She loved Baldur, god of light and goodness. She consented, as long as she could choose her mate.

16 But Odin’s kin warned him: “She will choose your only son! Beware!”

17 Odin continued, “You will choose your husband, but only by looking at his feet.”

18 Skadi was sure she could tell which feet belonged to the beautiful Baldur, so she agreed. The gods stood behind a curtain, revealing only their feet. Skadi looked carefully and pointed to the smoothest feet, well-formed, strong, and sure. She smiled, expecting Baldur to appear. But it was Njord, god of the sea, who revealed himself. Skadi started, but after looking into Njord’s kind blue eyes, she accepted him as her husband.

19 Still, Skadi was sad about her father. She asked Odin to give her laughter as well. He easily agreed to that request, and the gods did their best with tricks and jokes, but nothing could make her smile. Finally, Loki tied himself to a goat and began an outrageous tug-of-war with the confused animal. Skadi couldn’t help but laugh.

20 Odin could still see the sorrow behind her eyes, so he took her aside. “I know you miss your father, Skadi. I have here his eyes, plucked from the fire. They will forever shine down upon you.”

21 With that, Odin threw the eyes up into the northern sky, where they shine brightly to this day.