

Tales for Dark Nights: The Charm of the Chain

The Norse God Loki was a shape-shifter. On one occasion he turned himself into a horse, on another into a falcon.

Loki had three monstrous children. One of them was the wolf Fenrir. When Fenrir began to get out of control, the other Gods tried to restrain him. They made two chains, but Fenrir broke out of both of them. So the Gods went to the Dwarves for help.

The Dwarves were great metal-workers. They made a chain that was very thin, and very strong. These are the ingredients they used:

The sound a cat makes when it runs
A woman's beard
The roots of a mountain
The sinews of a bear
The breath of a fish
The spittle of a bird

When he was bound in this chain, Fenrir was unable to escape.

The full version of this exciting and gruesome story can be found in Kevin Crossley-Holland's The Penguin Book of Norse Myths. You can get it from the library, or buy it quite cheaply second-hand on the internet.

A shape-shifter is someone who can take on different forms. For example, the werewolf – a person who becomes a wolf when the moon is full. Can you think of any other examples from stories you have heard or read?

What was special about the ingredients of the Dwarves' chain? Try making up your own charm from magical ingredients.

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