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opening extract from

Encyclopedia Mythologica: Gods and Heroes

written and illustrated by

Matthew Reinhart and Robert Sabuda

published by

Walker Children's Books

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KINGDOMS OF THE FROZEN NORTH

✦ Norse Masters of Battle

Life in ancient Scandinavia was hard for the Viking people, who were battered by fierce ice storms and surrounded by war. Only the strongest survived.

✦ An Eye for Truth

Father **Odin**, grizzled lord of wisdom and magic, ruled the Norse gods. In his quest for truth, he sacrificed his own eye just to drink from the Well of Knowledge and gain wisdom of all that has been and ever will be. His dwarf-made spear never missed its target, despite his disability, and his eight-legged steed, **Sleipnir**, leaped over mountains with a single stride.

✦ The Greatest Viking

Only fools dared defy **Thor**, the sky god who thundered across the heavens, leaving lightning in his wake and bashing foes with his enchanted hammer, **Mjöllnir**. Beloved among the Norse people, this favourite son of Odin was the ultimate berserker, but had many human-like shortcomings and often made foolish decisions. During one of his misadventures, Thor pitted himself in a race against Thought and lost. Soon after, he challenged Old Age to a wrestling match, a contest nobody could ever win. Hammer-shaped amulets worn by young brides honoured Thor's bravery and were thought to provide protection from evil.

✦ Power of the Runes

The warlike Norse gods realized the great power of the written word. It was said that Odin invented **runes**, a 24-letter alphabet used by early Scandinavian people. Odin used the runic writing system to cast magic spells over his enemies and communicate his vast knowledge to his people.