

Want this ad space? It could be yours for just \$20, and we'll banish the auto-ads from this page! [Find out how.](#)

## Issues → July 2024

Change reading font!

# Odin's Other Eye

*Matias Travieso-Diaz*

*Then arises Hlîn's second grief, when Odin goes with the  
wolf to fight,  
and the bright slayer of Beli with Surt. Then will Frigg's  
beloved fall.  
Völuspá, Stanza 53*



The skies broke open and fire-giants from Muspelheim descended upon earth, led by a chieftain named Surtr who brandished a flaming sword brighter than the sun. They marched across the rainbow bridge to Asgard, advancing towards Valhalla, the fortress of the gods. Their stomping feet broke the bridge, which fell into the void amidst a deafening crash.

When the rainbow bridge collapsed, Heimdall the sentinel raised the Gjallarhorn into the air and blew it forcefully, issuing an ominous blast that heralded the beginning of the end of the gods.

Alerted to the impending peril, Odin rode to the world tree Yggdrasill and approached the well at the tree's roots. There he met the embalmed head of Mimir, the dead sage who knows all that is, all that has been, and all that may in

the future occur.

"I come to you, O great Mimir, as I did once before, to obtain wisdom in this direst of all hours."

"What ill news brings you here?"

"Ragnarøkkr is upon us!"

"Have there been portents of its coming?"

"There has been a Great Winter lasting for three years with no mitigating summers in between. The wolves Skoll and Hati, who have hunted the sun and the moon through the skies since the beginning of time, have caught their prey and darkened the heavens. Jörmungandr, the serpent encircling the world, has released its tail from its mouth, flooding the seas, and has thrashed onto the land, spraying poison to fill the air and water. The ship Naglfar has left its moorings, and carries an army of giants led by Loki, freed from his chains. Finally, the great wolf Fenrisúlfr, whom I reared myself, runs across the earth with fire blazing from his eyes and nostrils, devouring everything in his path."

"And what is your question?"

"What can we do to prevail against the forces of evil now that Ragnarøkkr has arrived?"

"You once gave up an eye to be allowed to drink from this well and gain wisdom. What do you have to offer this time?"

"My other eye?"

"You would be useless, and would be lucky if your steed Sleipnir could carry you safely back to Valhalla. What else do you have to offer?"

"Only my life."

"Sacrificing your life will gain you nothing. The dead cannot put their wisdom to use."

"I have nothing else to trade. We are all doomed!"

"Nay. I can tell you for free what you may do to prevent the world's destruction in the upcoming final battle. But the cost to you of averting such doom will be dearer than losing your life."

"How can that possibly be?"

"Dying, however painful, is over at some point. What would await you is eternal agony, without surcease."

"You speak in riddles. Pray tell me plainly what I must do."

"You shall meet Fenrisúlfr in battle upon a field called Vigrid. There, you and the wolf shall face off in mortal combat. The wolf will kill you and be slain. At the same time, encounters between the Aesir and the forces of Loki will rage all over the battlefield, resulting in everyone's annihilation. Everything, good and evil, will be destroyed, and Ragnarøkkr will run to its bitter end. Unless..."

"Unless what?"

"Unless you flee the battlefield. Your flight will break the spirits of your subjects and allow Loki and his cohorts to prevail. The evil ones, once victorious, will permit those who survive the battle to continue to exist, now in thrall to them."

"And what will happen to me?"

"Loki will spare you, but he will have you chained for all eternity. He will also put out your other eye, rendering you blind forever."

"You must be jesting to propose such an outcome."

"I speak in earnest, for even after death I would mourn for the end of all that exists. That is the only way to avoid the ultimate calamity."

"The choices you present to me are equally unacceptable."

"Nonetheless, you must choose one outcome or the other, and do so very soon."



Upon his return to Valhalla, Odin brushed aside the questions about his meeting with the head of Mimir, for he did not want the other gods to become discouraged. After a brief counsel, they all donned their armor and rushed to Vigrid to do battle with the fire-giants and other

monsters, who were already arriving.

Odin rode on Sleipnir wielding Gungnir, the magical spear that never missed its target. At the head of the fire-giant army, he spotted his blood brother Loki and threw Gungnir at him, intending to bring his existence to an end. But Loki turned himself into a tiny glowing cinder; the spear flew over him and struck one of the fire-giants, embedding itself in its corpse. Unable to dislodge Gungnir, Odin was left without his favored weapon as the battle continued.

Soon Loki's spawn, the wolf and the serpent, arrived and brought chaos as they inundated Vigrid, filling it with debris. Odin faced Fenrisúlfr, his stern gaze meeting the fiery eyes of the beast. "Ho, Fenrisúlfr, must we test each other in battle? Do you not recall that I was the one who allowed you to remain in Asgard and raised you as my own kin?"

The wolf's fiery eyes gleamed with hate as it snarled its response: "You also snared me and kept me in captivity for millennia until I escaped my chains. I owe you nothing. And know that wolf cubs are apt to turn on their forebearers."



As Fenrisúlfr advanced towards him, Odin made a gesture that summoned the vast army of the Einherjar, the dead heroes he had kept in Valhalla to assist him in the final battle. The human army attacked the wolf from all directions, attempting to pierce its massive body with their swords and lances. To no avail; the hide of Fenrisúlfr was hard as iron and deflected all blows. Then the wolf opened its gigantic jaws and started to devour the warriors as if they were nibbles, until they were all consumed.

"Thanks for the tidbits you provided!" growled the wolf as it faced Odin again. "Now for the main course. Come to me!" Fenrisúlfr's maw opened so wide that its upper jaw touched the heavens, and the wolf advanced upon its adversary.

Could such an exalted deity as Odin ever have experienced fear? No one knows. But an icy chill coursed through the Aesir's spine as he drew his broadsword and steeled himself to meet his enemy. As he did, the words of Mimir resounded in his ears: "Retreat, and you shall live, and the world shall not perish!"

Odin pulled at the reins of Sleipnir as if to make his steed turn away from the approaching wolf. Noticing his gesture, Fenrisúlfr let out a brutal laugh that shook the earth's every stone: "Run, you fool! I will catch you wherever you go!" And then, addressing Sleipnir, it added: "And you, little brother, throw your rider! I will be generous and let you live, but he must perish!"

Sleipnir, enraged at the wolf's words, turned around. Disregarding the pull of Odin's reins, he galloped towards Fenrisúlfr's open mouth and in two strides had plunged into it. Fenrisúlfr closed its jaws around horse and rider.

Only the Norns know whether Odin regained courage from the valor of his steed, or if he decided that extinction of the world's inhabitants was preferable to their survival in servitude to evil. Be that as it may, Odin thrust his broadsword into the roof of Fenrisúlfr's mouth, intending to force it open so he could ride in and strike at the beast's heart. Alas, the sword's blows were mere insect bites to the monster. The wolf spit out the sword and started to gulp, seeking to swallow the god and his mount.

Odin resorted to the only weapon still left to him. In a gesture that mimicked another he had made a long time before, he gouged his left eye from its socket and cast it into the wolf's throat, voicing an incantation that summoned all his power. The eye became a ball of fire that grew in size and intensity as it erupted in the wolf's throat and filled the mouth's cavity, incinerating Odin and Sleipnir, and consuming the inside of Fenrisúlfr's head.

The wolf writhed in mortal agony, the banging of its massive body cracking the surface of the earth, causing an earthquake that scattered asunder the bodies of gods and

monsters, live and slain, that dotted the scene of universal carnage that Vigrid had become.

An utter silence, more daunting than the din of battle that had preceded it, filled the ravaged earth. Nothing moved save for two crows, Odin's witnesses, who would course the skies seeking in vain a living being to whom they could relate what had come to pass that fatal day.

© Matias Travieso-Diaz 2024. All rights reserved.

### About the Author



Born in Cuba, **Matias Travieso-Diaz** migrated to the United States as a young man. He became an engineer and lawyer and practiced for nearly fifty years. After retirement, he took up creative writing.

Well over one hundred of his short stories have been published or accepted for publication in anthologies and paying magazines, blogs, audio books and podcasts. A first collection of his stories, "The Satchel and Other Terrors" is available [on Amazon](#) and other book outlets; additional anthologies of his work are scheduled for publication in 2025. Visit him at [his Wixsite](#).

Help [The Pink Hydra](#) support more writers like this! [Donate to our Ko-fi fundraiser](#).

[← Previous: Nicholas Samuel Stember \(sci-fi novella\)](#)

\*

[Next: Lyra Meurer \(fantasy story\) →](#)

\*

[Back to ToC \(July '24\)](#)



**Many heads. One mission. Get Writers Published And Paid.**