

The Sun and the Moon



When Odin and his brothers had finished creating the cosmos from Ymir's body, the nine worlds were held together by the branches and roots of Yggdrasil.

But still, everything was dark.

So Odin created sun and moon out of slivers from the fiery world of Muspelheim and placed them on chariots to be drawn across the sky he had made. They would light up the worlds now day and night. At some point later one of the new generation of giants by the name Mundalfari (a name sometimes translated as cosmic axis) had two children, a girl and a boy and in a fit of arrogance he named his girl Sol and the boy Mani (moon). This hubris enraged Odin and he forced the girl Sol to steer the chariot of the sun while her brother was placed on the chariot of the moon. They circled Odin's universe from now on, barely able to see each other again.

Sol carries a shield called Svalinn that she uses to make sure that her hot rays do not burn mountains and forests. The horses that pull her chariot are named Arwagr (Early Watch) and Alswidr (All-Fastest)

Later Mani watched two young kids who fetched water from a well and he lifted them up onto his chariot in the night sky to assist him. They were called Bil (Tiredness) and Hjúki (Recovery) and they still carry their bucket that they pour out and refill to make sure that the moon wanes and waxes.

And Sol and Mani are not without enemies.

Each one is hunted by a monstrous wolf. The one who hunts Sol is called Sköll (Malice) and the one who hunts Mani is called Hati (Hatred). When they come too close to one of the chariots an eclipse occurs. At the end of days when Ragnarok comes, it is said that the wolves will devour sun and moon.

How these vicious beasts came into being is another story to be told another time.