

Sif and her Golden Hair

Thursdays are meant to be loud, thunderous, stormy days, for they are named after Thor, the red-headed, hammer-yielding, thunder-clapping god of the Norse people.

Although Thor was a raucous fellow, he did, underneath it all, have one soft spot – and that was for his beautiful wife, whose name was Sif, and whom he loved tenderly and dearly. She had long, thick wondrous golden hair, that flowed down her back like a field of corn. In fact, it was Sif who made the Norse people's crops grow, and their fields yield long heavy ears of corn that would keep people well fed and happy.

Morning, noon and night, Sif combed her wondrous hair with a jewelled comb, and she often washed in pure sparkling streams, and lay it out in the sun to dry on a rock. Morning, noon and night, Thor was proud of his wife's golden hair.

One day, while she was sitting on a bank of the softest moss outside her house in Asgard, where the gods live, drying her golden hair in the sun, Sif went to sleep for Loki, the god of fire and mischief, cast a sleeping spell on her. He found her dozing with her gorgeous hair flowing all around her, and his evil mouth smiled at this chance to make trouble. He knew that Sif's hair of gold was Thor's greatest treasure - and he was determined to take it away from him.

Thus while she was asleep, Loki took his shears and chopped off Sif's hair, every single lovely lock! One by one they tumbled onto her shoulders and down her dress. Her head was bare.

A while later, Sif woke up. Her head and neck felt cold and light, - she looked up and saw the sun was still shining. Then she felt for her hair, - there was nothing there! Looking down, she caught sight of the clusters of curls that lay all around her. Horrified, she rushed inside and burst into tears...and rain fell in bucketfuls on all the corn in the north. She cried and cried and cried and floods covered all of Midgard.

That night Thor came home. And he heard his name, in a whisper. Sif stood in the shadows, so that Thor could only see her outline. "My husband," she sobbed, "I am ashamed for you to set your eyes on me so I must hide."

“Don’t speak like that. What has happened to you my sweet, that you say such terrible things?” asked the Thunder-God tenderly. “Come out so that I can see you.”

“My **crowning** beauty, my hair has gone. An evil-doer has cut it and taken it from me. I do not want you to see me like this, so I must leave.”

Thor saw that it was true, Sif had lost her hair. Her shaven head was still beautiful, but the dancing joy had gone from her eyes and her distress touched the heart of Thor.

And then the men of the Earth heard the skies roar with agonised Thunder for he knew this was the work of his brother, Loki.

Meanwhile, Loki, who was the god of fire, went down inside the **passages** of the earth for down inside the earth, the Gnomes were master smiths and the rich **guardians** of metals, **minerals** and crystals. They had learnt with **hammer and tongs** to fashion **articles** of much beauty and magic from them.

“Have you gold and skills enough to make a cap of floor-length hair as fine as silk?” he asked them. The Gnomes set to work at once. They stitched, threaded, **weaved** and span for days until finally the Cap of Golden Hair was ready! Even Loki was impressed. “Tis true, you are master smiths indeed. None are better. Will you give me this Cap in return for the Heavens and the Earth?”

The Gnomes who were not clever, gave Loki the Cap of Golden Hair, although the Earth was already theirs, and the Heavens were not Loki’s to give. Loki bid them farewell then he ascended to Asgard and the Heavens and went to find Sif.

“Take your **veil** off, Sif” he said “for you will have golden hair again”. And he wrapped the **Cap** around Sif’s head where it fitted perfectly. Sif was so overjoyed with her new hair that she twirled around, her long locks flowing behind her. Her eyes sparkled once more and as the glow returned to her cheeks, she looked truly beautiful.

And that is the story of how Sif lost and **regained** her golden hair.