

Erik and the Giants

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Erik's father had been a great Viking warrior. He did eventually meet his death while fighting against the giants whilst under Thor's command. Naturally, Erik wanted nothing more but to be like his father. One thing stood between him and achieving his dream of fighting for Thor; he must prove himself to be a smart and strong warrior. Let me tell you, it is not easy to impress the god of thunder.

While aimlessly wandering the filthy streets of Asgard, Erik spotted a flyer tacked to the side of his usual drinking spot, "Odin's Pub". The flyer stated that there would be a dueling competition. Better yet, Thor, the all powerful god with a hammer that only he was worthy of picking up, would be attending. One of the few things that Erik's father had taught him before perishing in the midst of battle was how to fight with a sword, and boy was he good at it. After training non-stop for weeks in preparation for the duel, Erik finally felt that he was ready.

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In the first match, Erik slayed his opponent and remained unscathed. Many matches later, he was covered with cuts and gashes, and the rink was stained with a dark, eerie, crimson red. He had but one competitor left. His name was Magnus, and he was the biggest and strongest warrior that Erik had ever seen. But even Magnus fell to Erik's unique and deadly technique. After the contest, Erik was congratulated by Thor, and in the excitement Thor made Erik his apprentice.



No more than a year had passed before Erik became Thor's greatest soldier. As he galloped into Jötunheimr, Erik thought about his bloodlust towards the giants. With that in mind, Erik focused on nothing except for the fact that he would make that frozen wasteland a place of carnage. He would bring terror into every giant living there.

A month into the war, Erik had killed over 150 giants, (numbers that were unmatched) but still nobody had come across the real reason that Thor had come there, to slay the most fearsome giant, Ymir. The army was feeling discouraged. 25% of the squadron was now either MIA, or dead.

As Erik traveled deeper into enemy territory than anyone had ever before, an eerie silence settled into his brain. In the rugged land of Jötunheimr every mile was covered with humongous glaciers, or mountains so tall they seemed to protrude into the realms above. With all of this natural beauty, quiet was fairly common, but never like this. Erik could tell that something was wrong.

While this thought was surfacing his mind, he turned a corner and there he was, Ymir. Erik was frozen in shock and fear, but quickly recovered his composure. He grasped his mighty battle ax and charged.



It was a great battle, Erik clearly had the upper hand. After having his arms ripped off, Ymir retreated. Erik could not catch up to the mighty giant, and returned home to camp empty handed.

Thor was furious that Erik had been so close to killing the Asgardians' rival, but failed. Though Thor's army had won the battle and claimed much land in the frozen wasteland, that is Jötunheimr, he could not get past Erik's failure.

With no more fight left in him, Erik fled back to *Odin's Pub*. After far too many drinks, and after racking up an impressive bar tab, a shady figure entered the pub. A normal person may not have even noticed the slim man enter the room, but let me tell you, Erik was no ordinary person. Even in his drunken state, he could tell that there was something off-putting about the man. Before Erik had gathered the courage to go confront the stranger, the man slithered towards the warrior and took a seat next to him.

The man stated that he was a merchant from a foreign realm, and that he had acquired a map with the location of Ymir. He explained that the giant king had been staked out in an ice cave farther into Jötunheimr than ever recorded before. The merchant blankly stated his over inflated price for the map, and left Erik to think. Within minutes, Erik accepted the deal, and paid

the man handsomely in Viking silver. Erik took one more swig of mead and headed home through the easily distinguishable crumbly streets of Asgard.

As Erik trotted out of Asgard he thought as though he had nothing more to lose. He believed that he was a disappointment to Thor and to himself. Erik would prove himself once again, he would slay the giant king and return a hero. Or so he thought...

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It had been five long years since the day when Erik decided to leave everything behind. And on this day that he would finally find what he came for, The giant Ymir.

Erik had gained the ability to summon his ax whenever needed, and it had paid off greatly. Erik had killed over 50,000 giants and made it so that it was almost rare to see one. He spotted the ice cave that he had sacrificed so much to reach, it was no more than 50 miles away.

Seven hours later, Erik reached the gaping mouth of the desolate looking cave. As he ventured down the long, dark passage, light became scarce. As Erik frantically struggled to ignite his torch in the unsettling darkness, the cavern suddenly lit up, temporarily blinding Erik. As soon as he had recovered his senses, he immediately froze. Ymir's decapitated head hung from the otherwise barren ceiling by a single chain. His steaming remains were scattered throughout the seemingly endless cave. And, in a chair of ice, sat Loki, the god of trickery and deception.

Loki explained that he had been expecting the warrior for quite some time. Erik practically screamed when he put together the pieces, and unearthed the fact that the mysterious merchant had been Loki himself.

Erik made an attempt to summon his ax, but as soon as he did so, with a swish of his hand, Loki sent dozens of chains at Erik. They shot through his body like it was butter. As Erik was losing consciousness, he heard a cackle that would have sent terror through any and everybody's veins, but now something different surged beneath Erik's skin, and sense to live again.

Erik ripped free of the chains, and charged straight at Loki. The god of mischief was caught heavily off-guard, and only had moments to react. After missing the god once, Erik stared right at his enemy, eyes glowing red. But with a rune that was nearly impossible to activate, Loki encased Erik in an unbreakable glacier, and returned home to his palace in Asgard.

To this day, Erik still attempts to summon his battle ax, but never succeeds. When the blade strikes the ice, it sends an enormous tremor somewhere on Earth. If you have ever experienced an earthquake, that is just Erik reminding you that he still sits in that fateful ice cave in Jötunheimr, waiting to be freed.