

IARNVITH

Early Norse myths talk about an ancient elemental deity known as Kari, who actually was the wind that blew down from the mountains. Kari was said to have mixed with mist and frost, and fathered Ymir, who was the first of the Giants. Ymir, in turn, spawned a race of His own kind. Unfortunately Ymir was slain by His own descendents and almost all the remaining Giants then drowned in Ymir's blood. The two who survived were exiled to a remote area of the world, located in the extreme northern reaches - an area of mountains, rocky wastes and snow that was called Jotunheim (from the word 'jotun' that meant 'devourer'.) In Jotunheim grows a huge, dense and mist-shrouded forest called 'Iarnvith' or Ironwood. Jotunheim is separated from Asgard by the river Iving, which never freezes over.

Because of the remoteness of the area, the two remaining Giants multiplied and reformed their race. Soon Jotunheim had three strongholds: Utgard, the chief city of Jotunheim; Gastropnir, home of the Rock Giantess Menglad; and Thrymheim ("house of uproar"), the mountain stronghold of the Frost Giant Thiassi (also called Thiazi, Thjatsi or Thjazi). Thiassi was well versed in magick and was a master shape-shifter who could turn Himself into almost any animal, although He most often assumed the shape of a huge eagle with sharp talons. In this form, Thiassi would leave the safety of Jotunheim and travel into the rest of the world. On one such foray, He made the mistake of stealing an oxen from the God Loki, who happened to be slumming about in the world of men. In the fight that followed, Thiassi was burned to death by the rest of the gods. Odin then took the eyes from the dead Frost Giant and flung them up into heaven where they shone thereafter as stars.