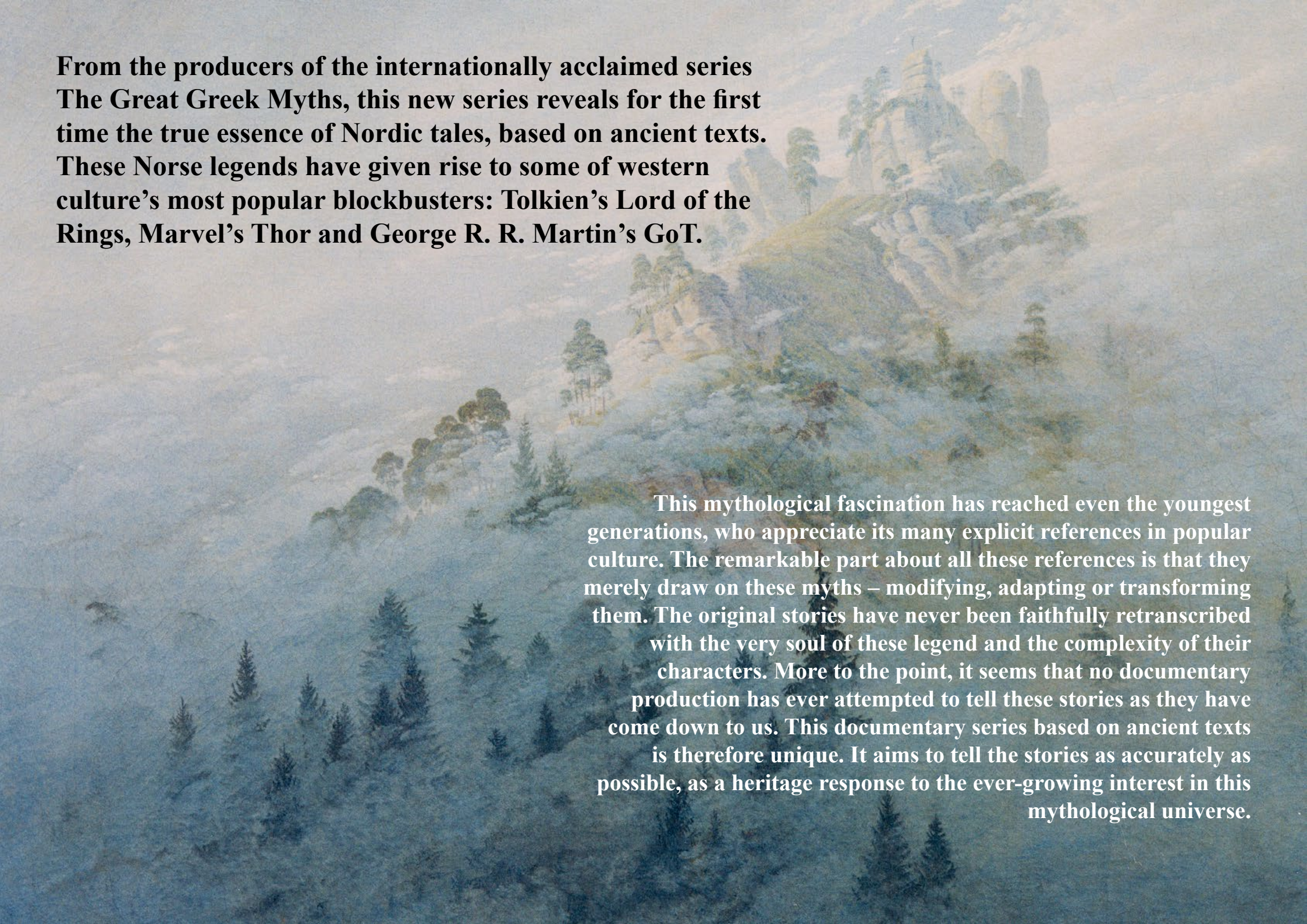


A Viking warrior stands on a rocky shore, looking out over a body of water. In the distance, a large, steep mountain rises, and several Viking longships are visible on the water. The sky is filled with dramatic, golden clouds, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The warrior is wearing a dark tunic with a brown, scale-like pattern and a long, dark skirt. He has a long, dark hair and a beard.

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THE GREAT NORDIC MYTHS

A series of 10 x 26 minutes episodes
Directed by François Busnel
Produced by Rosebud Productions

The background of the image is a soft, painterly illustration of a mountainous landscape. In the upper right, a castle with multiple towers sits atop a rocky peak, partially shrouded in mist. The middle ground shows rolling hills with patches of green and brown, suggesting vegetation and rocky terrain. The foreground is dominated by a dense forest of dark evergreen trees, their forms softened by the overall misty atmosphere. The color palette is muted, with a lot of greys, blues, and soft greens, creating a dreamlike and ancient feel.

From the producers of the internationally acclaimed series The Great Greek Myths, this new series reveals for the first time the true essence of Nordic tales, based on ancient texts. These Norse legends have given rise to some of western culture's most popular blockbusters: Tolkien's Lord of the Rings, Marvel's Thor and George R. R. Martin's GoT.

This mythological fascination has reached even the youngest generations, who appreciate its many explicit references in popular culture. The remarkable part about all these references is that they merely draw on these myths – modifying, adapting or transforming them. The original stories have never been faithfully retranscribed with the very soul of these legend and the complexity of their characters. More to the point, it seems that no documentary production has ever attempted to tell these stories as they have come down to us. This documentary series based on ancient texts is therefore unique. It aims to tell the stories as accurately as possible, as a heritage response to the ever-growing interest in this mythological universe.

SERIES SUMMARY

How can the Vikings' unfamiliar beliefs be told in an accessible way for today's viewers? Their strangeness in the eyes of modern society makes it a daunting yet fascinating task. How can we make them understandable, while maintaining the suspense, continuity and meaning of the story?

This series on Norse myths begins with a powerful event, that of knowledge, and the curse that goes with it: when Odin, gaining omniscience after a succession of unfathomably cruel trials, gains access to knowledge and, at the same time, discovers the limits of his power.

The Allfather, the jarl of the gods, now knows everyone's destiny – his own, that of his sons, his friends, the entire universe. He knows it, but he cannot prevent it. A classical element of tragedy.

This seems to be a fundamental component of the Viking mentality: the ideas of destiny and courage coexist in a singular dynamic. We are entirely subject to fate, whether god or man, without this leading to fatalism or resignation. We fight and struggle, we die weapon in hand... with no hope of ever thwarting destiny. It is said that a gesture is only beautiful if it is carried through to the end. The Viking and his god play their part to the very end, with no attempt to thwart the sentence of the Norns – those figures of destiny.

For the Vikings, there is no confrontation between Good and Evil; perhaps not even between order and chaos either. Rather, the striking idea that there is no order without disorder... Thus the god of chaos himself, Loki, resides at the heart of the kingdom of Asgard, bound to the king of the gods by a sworn brotherhood, the most inviolable of oaths. There is no security, no stability. No matter how hard they fight, no matter how much courage, cunning and strength they display, destruction is inevitable. This idea is a common thread for the entire season.

Thus, from the very first episode, Odin learns of the inevitability of the end of the world, Ragnarök. But while he knows that he cannot prevent it, he will still try. And so will his people: battles against giants and all the forces of evil will follow one another – a hopeless endeavor, as one might guess. The final, breathtaking episode is Ragnarök, the world's end... and its rebirth, since nothing ever really ends.

EPISODE SUMMARIES

Episode 1

Asgard, the kingdom of the Aesir, is under threat from monstrous creatures. To save Asgard, Odin embarks on an initiatory journey, during which he faces terrible trials to acquire knowledge: he loses his eye before being hanged for nine nights without eating or drinking, his side pierced by a spear. At the end of his suffering, he has finally acquired knowledge, and knows the destiny of all things. He now knows that Ragnarök, the doomsday battle, is approaching.

Meanwhile, back in Asgard, the god Loki plays a trick on Sif, the wife of Thor – his “sworn brother” and Odin’s eldest son. He cuts off her beautiful hair, provoking her husband’s ire.

Episode 2

To appease Thor’s fury, Loki, who has gone to the kingdom of the Dwarves, orders three wondrous objects – among which Thor’s hammer, Mjölnir.

In Asgard, Odin is haunted by images of Ragnarök. He knows that the foretold end of time will begin with the death of a God, heralding the many others to follow. To postpone this fatal moment, he summons a Vane sorceress, Gullveig, to teach him magic, but her greed infuriates Odin. He refuses to pay and throws his spear to the Vanes. This is the beginning of the first war in history. A war between gods.

Episode 3

After a protracted war, the Vanes and Aesir seal the peace with an exchange of hostages. Mímir, Odin’s faithful advisor, also goes to live with the Vanes.

Asgard must be rebuilt: the wall has been destroyed. A master builder arrives and offers to rebuild it in three seasons. In return, he demands the moon and the sun... Odin pretends to accept, but imposes more difficult conditions (only one season), betting on the fact that the builder will not succeed.

Meanwhile, the Vanes behead Mímir and send his head back to Odin. Odin embalms it with Freyja’s help: the head will remain his faithful advisor. The first words of a resurrected Mímir are a warning:

Loki’s children will be the gods’ downfall...



Episode 4

Odin, up on his observation throne, discovers the monstrous children Loki has fathered with the giantess: the wolf, the snake and the monstrous child. He sends his son Týr and the beautiful Freyja to bring them back to him. For his part, Thor decides to set off again on adventures in the land of the giants with Loki, and travels to the giants' fortress, Utgard.

Back in Asgard, Odin judges Loki's children, brought back by Freyja. Hel, half-child and half-rotten corpse, is hurled into the underworld, while the snake, still small, is thrown into the sea – where it instantly begins to swell at full speed, until it encircles Midgard. In his palace, Thor hears from Sif, who has heard from Frigg's handmaidens, all prophetesses, that the god of thunder will die fighting Jörmungandr, the Midgard serpent...

Episode 5

Meanwhile, Kvasir (the being born out of peace) goes out into the world and answers all questions with ease... So much so that the two dwarf brothers capture Kvasir, murder him, drain his blood and mix it with mead: thus creating the Mead of Poetry, a metaphor for poetic inspiration.

Odin saw these events from his throne of observation. He thus steals the Mead of Poetry and flies back to Asgard in the form of a hawk, pursued by the giant who has transformed into an eagle. On arrival, Odin spits all the mead into a specially installed vat. During the poetry banquet that follows, Odin discovers that Freyja is wearing a magnificent necklace around her neck, which she has obtained by working her charms on the four Dwarves. Jealous and furious, the father of the gods asks Loki to steal the necklace. The latter promptly obliges. But Freyja asks Heimdall, who is guarding the rainbow, for help. Heimdall fights Loki, wins and calls him a bastard. He questions the trickster's loyalty to Asgard. However, Loki had only stolen the necklace on Odin's orders – since the Allfather did not want to be directly involved, not wanting to get angry with Freyja. Furious, Loki swears revenge on the guardian of Bifrost.

Episode 6

Signs of Ragnarök accumulate. Odin tries to gather as large an army as possible. Odin and Loki set off on an expedition to observe signs of unrest in the 9 realms, along with one of Odin's brothers, Hœnir. All kinds of adventures befall them.

Along the way, they meet the giant Thiazi, disguised as a bird of prey, who shows them how to cook a beef that would not cook. As Thiazi takes more than his share, Loki hits him. But Thiazi wins the fight by default, by flying away with a distraught Loki, whose legs and knees bang on trees endlessly, as he begs for mercy. Thiazi agrees to spare him on condition that Loki brings him the goddess Idunn and her golden apples. The problem is, her apples are the gods' secret to eternal youth. A hesitant Loki returns to Asgard. But he ultimately kidnaps Idunn and delivers her to Thiazi. The gods begin to grow old...

Episode 7

In Midgard, the valiant young prince Sigurd attempts to slay a dragon guarding a fabulous treasure... Sigurd defeats the dragon and is spotted by Odin, who wants to recruit him into his army. Things are not going well in Asgard: in the absence of Idunn, the gods are growing old. Sigurd meets Gunnar, whom he befriends. Gunnar is madly in love with Brynhild, a virgin sleeping on a hilltop surrounded by a wall of flames. Only he who can cross the fire can marry her. Sigurd, who is invincible thanks to the dragon's blood, takes on the appearance of his friend and crosses the flames. Freed at last, Brynhild marries Gunnar, believing him to be her savior.

Odin, who wants Sigurd dead so he can recruit him, reveals to Brynhild the deception she has fallen victim to. Enraged at having married a coward, Brynhild orders the assassination of Sigurd, whom she holds responsible. In Midgard, Gudrun, Brynhild and their descendants will wage a long and bloody war, allowing Odin and Freyja to reap countless glorious deaths in preparation for Ragnarök.

Episode 8

Odin questions a seer, who reveals new details about Ragnarök. The gods and the giants, who have been at war since the beginning of the world, will perish at each other's hands... Monstrous wolves will devour the sun and moon, when Loki breaks free from his chains. Baldr, Odin and Frigg's favorite son, will be dead and without honor.

Frigg is a powerful goddess, ready to do anything to save her favorite son. So she decides to make all creatures on earth swear not to harm her son. Reassured, she then leaves Asgard on a long journey across the worlds. As for Odin, he gazes worriedly at the wolf Fenrir, whom his son Týr has adopted. Fenrir has grown since he was brought to Asgard, and is now a fearsome wolf, much larger than the gods themselves. Odin decides to get rid of him, and drives a sword through its throat, leaving it open-mouthed and bloody, mad with rage. Meanwhile, after restoring the gods' immortality, Loki is now plotting his revenge...



Episode 9

Frigg has made all creatures – animal, vegetable and mineral – promise not to harm Baldr. She is reassured that her son will survive. But a woman questions her innocently. Frigg confides: everyone and everything has promised, except the mistletoe. The woman is Loki in disguise. Later on, to prove his invincibility to the gods, Baldr submits to a barrage of objects that do him no harm. Loki then carves an arrow from mistletoe and hands it to Baldr's brother Hod. He shoots. Baldr collapses, shot through the heart.

A banquet is held in Asgard, during which Loki insults the gods, revealing their weaknesses and compromises. His punishment is terrible. Chained under venom that periodically drips on him, he must watch helplessly as two of his sons are killed, one of them devouring the other. Odin knows that Ragnarök is not far off, since Loki is now, according to the seer's prediction, in chains... And when he breaks free of his chains...

Episode 10

Calamities upon catastrophes befall Midgard, endless wars and three years of eternal winter... the signs are unmistakable. Ragnarök is here. The great confrontation between the gods and the forces of darkness is at hand. At the foot of Bifrost, Heimdall warns the gods by blowing his trumpet, but it is too late. Odin consults the head of Mimir, who tells him that the hour has come. The war rages on.

Fenrir devours Odin before being killed by the god Vidar. Fenrir's wolf children devour the moon and the sun. The gods' world is ending. Flames ravage all known worlds...

The world after : Baldr returns from Helheim, and two of Thor's sons have also survived. In a field, a man and a woman, Líf and Lífthrasir (meaning "Life" and "Lover of Life"), feeding on dew, emerge from the roots of Yggdrasil, the world-tree where everything begins and everything ends).



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