

Pääp's poetic ponderings – A collection of memories from Gimle

Regarding Urd

One day my belt broke, and as there were no proper shops around in which to purchase a new one, I found no other option than to have it repaired by local crafts-people. Urd, one of the seamstresses in Gimleby, offered to mend my belt in exchange for some sweet candies and a poem. Her lack of interest in gold intrigued me, and as the repairs were being made, we conversed for a while.

The woman, like many others in Gimle, carried stories and secrets of far greater depth than her unassuming appearance and manners would indicate. Urd spoke with a simple but solid wisdom, offering insights and advice on many topics, both practical and philosophical. When I asked about the curious drum that laid by her side, marked with strange runes and glyphs, she professed an ability to make contact with spirits and knowledge from beyond this material world, and the drum was one of her tools for seeing truths hidden from others. Having witnessed seers and oracles first hand, I had no reason to doubt her, but when she then claimed to be enslaved in the cursed shackles of a powerful prophet with nearly god-like powers, I took it to be mere fancy or allegory. Apparently, Thor - the Norse god of Thunder and Battle - has an envoy on Earth, a human man presently roaming the Gimle region. This man, she said, kept Urd eternally bound by magic, as one of countless other slaves around the world. I politely expressed my doubts in her story, but before I even had finished the sentence an old and grey-bearded man appeared, seemingly from out of nowhere. Exuding a calm superiority, he presented himself as Thor's Messenger and rightful owner of the woman Urd. He then raised his left hand, which was clad in a most peculiar glove. "The first flash of Thor's Minor Hammer shall strengthen your body", he proclaimed, "and the second shall invigorate your mind!"

You can imagine my shock when from his glove came two bright flashes of light, not unlike the lightning of a thunderstorm, but no sound of rolling thunder followed these unearthly flashes. I could feel my weary body, unaccustomed to the primitive sleeping conditions of quartering in tent, transmute its tired slouch into a virile and spry composure. From my mind a fog lifted, and for the first time in ages I seemed fully sober (a predicament soon thereafter remedied at the local tavern). All of my doubts in Urd and the truthfulness of her tale were swiftly cast aside. Here in the simple village of Gimleby, sitting on a simple stool, practicing her simple trade, was a woman whose hidden fate was in fact anything but simple.

Inspired by this unearthly meeting, and with my belt properly mended, I bid Urd and the Man of Thor good day and left for the tavern with mind still reeling from the strange encounter. The words eagerly flew from my pen as I sat down to write Urd's song.

The following day I met Urd and her master again and presented the poem to them both. So moved by these few lines of rhyme was the Prophet of Thor, that he decided on the spot to let Urd slip loose her invisible shackles and end her forced servitude. Once a slave, Urd was now finally free to follow her own mind along the infinite paths of life! Now, dear reader, you may think that I exaggerate this story in order to put my poetry in an unduly grandiose light, but those who truly know me can attest to my exceedingly deep and profound humility, as well as my unwavering dedication to the truth. And the truth is this: The power of poetry is simply an unstoppable force, one which not even the Voice of the Thunder God can withstand.

(Note: The inspiration that overcame me insisted on being expressed in the Nordic Language. For those of you who have not yet learned this coarse but rhythmic tongue, I have included a version of the poem in the Common Language. The translated version, however, is far from as precise and poignant as the Nordic original and should only be regarded as a basic reference.)

Urds tråd

Där sitter Urd med sin nål och sin tråd
Där väver hon visdom och bjuder på råd
Hon ser bortom slöjan som omger vår värld
Hör gudarna viska i glödande härd

Sömmerska, siare, sällskap en stund
En kvinna som vandrat i kunskapens lund
Hon lättar vår börda, så god och så klok
Men få av oss vet att hon bär på ett ok

Ty Urd lever fjättrad av osynligt band
En kedja, ett koppel i Torsmannens hand
Hur snart ska hon frias från livet som slav?
Kan bojorna brytas först vid hennes grav?

Urd, kära Urd, låt din ande gå fri
En dag ska även du obunden bli
Urd, kloka Urd, låt nu drömmarna fly
Han släpper dig loss innan dagen blir ny

The thread of Urd

*Urd with her needle sits plying her trade
Weaving her wisdom and offering aid
Seeing what dwells beyond mystical veils
Hearing the hearth whisper unspoken tales*

*A seamstress, a seer, a song that will soothe
A woman who's walked in the garden of truth
She eases our burdens, so kindly and good
But carries a secret not well understood*

*Eternally bound, to be free nevermore
She lives by the will of the Right Hand of Thor
Urd, will you ever be other than slave?
The shackles you wear, will they go to your grave?*

*Urd, my dear Urd, send your song to the sky
The day's yet to come when your spirit may fly
Urd, clever Urd, send your dreams on the run
He will let you go by the new morning's sun*

*By the pen of Pherryginus Pääp
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