

You're listening to the Faeries and Folklore podcast by Ronel.

I'm dark fantasy author Ronel Janse van Vuuren. With nearly a decade of digging around in dusty folklore books, researching creatures of imagination that ignited my curiosity, I'm here to share the folklore in a nutshell and how I reimagined it for my writing in an origin of the fae.

This is the Faeries and Folklore podcast.

Hi, I'm your host Ronel Janse van Vuuren. You can just call me Ronel. In today's episode, we're continuing our exploration of the fae realm.

This episode is brought to you by my Irascible Immortals series, available in ebook, paperback, hardback and audiobook. They've been alive forever. They've been bored for some time. And now they're showing it. Go to ronelthemythmaker.com/my-books/the-irascible-immortals-series for more.

We're continuing our exploration of the Immortals.

Today's immortal: Freyja

Folklore in a nutshell by Ronel

Unlike how many folklorists portray her, Freyja isn't a "party girl" or whore – she's an emancipated woman who doesn't need a man, society or anyone else telling her who she is or how she should act. Her name means "the Lady". She was widely worshipped during the Viking Age. It's only during the Middle Ages under Christian scribes that her stories became that of a seductress that needs to be shamed.

She is a powerful goddess of magic, cats, warfare, love, beauty, and fertility. She's the one who taught Odin how to use divination magic called "seidr". In some cases, it seems that she is more powerful than he is as he needed to make many sacrifices to use this magic and hers comes effortlessly. It's probably because she isn't Aesir, but from another race called the Vanir. The Aesir were built around rigid structures while the Vanir were closer to nature and freer in their associations.

After the Aesir-Vanir war, she went to live in Asgard as part of the treaty. This didn't last, of course, and she returned to Folkvangr ("field of the people") to rule over half of the fallen warriors. In some tales, she's seen as one of the Valkyries who choose who is worthy of going to Valhalla.

Freyja was considered the most beautiful goddess in existence. This caused a lot of trouble for the gods as she was always sought out by giants, dwarves and others to be their bride. Many tales revolve around the other gods losing or needing something and the price is Freyja's hand.

She was married to an Aesir named Odr. They had two daughters together who resembled their mother. Odr is known as the wandering god as he disappeared early in their marriage. Freyja had been looking for him all over the worlds. There is a theory that Odr is actually Odin as he, too, wandered the world in search of more knowledge.

Freyja has several important symbols. A gold necklace forged by dwarves called Brísingamen which she is known for – Thor even needed to borrow it when he impersonated her to get his hammer back. She weeps tears of red gold. Many have sought her tears for their own gain. Her chariot is pulled by two blue-grey cats who were a gift from Thor. Their names weren't bestowed on them by the ancient Norse, but apparently by a modern author, so we'll skip that. All tales show, though, that these two cats were brave and loyal.

Being a goddess of love, beauty, cats, war and more makes Freyja the most interesting of all the Norse goddesses.

Origin of the fae: Freyja

Freyja has become a very serious woman as time has gone by and her husband, Odr, has remained missing. Her daughters are grown and live their own lives. She has a duty to the fallen warriors who live in her realm, but she's not a very hands-on war goddess – she leaves them to train as they want. She is a goddess of fertility and abundance, so there's always enough to eat. She loves flowers. She has cats everywhere. Whenever a cat needs rescuing from the mortal realm, she scoops them up and takes them home with her. She can see the future, but doesn't share what she knows as it can only lead to trouble. As a love goddess, she tries hard to make sure humans are happy. She prefers to use her magic to bring beauty to the worlds.

I hope that you've enjoyed this episode of the faeries and folklore podcast and that you've learned something new about faeries.

Remember that you can get a transcript of this episode in the description. If you're new to the podcast, why not go and grab your free copy of Unseen, the second book in the Faery Tales series, on my website ronelthemythmaker.com? Loads of folklore, magic and danger await! Take care!