The Beginning of the Norse World

In the very beginning, there was no Earth, no ocean, and no sky. There was only a vast and silent emptiness called **Ginnungagap**. It was a deep void where nothing existed.

To the north of this emptiness lay a frozen world called **Niflheim**. It was filled with icy winds, snow, and thick mist. To the south burned a land of fire known as **Muspell**, a place of heat and bright flames. A powerful fire giant named **Surt** guarded Muspell with a blazing sword.

When the freezing air from Niflheim met the burning heat from Muspell, the ice began to melt. Drops of water fell into Ginnungagap, and from these drops, the first giant was born. His name was **Ymir**.

Ymir was not a god. He was wild and primitive, meaning he belonged to a very early stage of life. He survived by drinking milk from a magical cow named **Audhumla**, who had also formed from the melting ice.

As Audhumla licked salty ice-stones for food, she slowly uncovered a man named **Buri**. Buri was strong and noble. He had a son named Bor, who later married a giantess named Bestla. They had three sons: **Odin**, Vili, and Ve. These three brothers became the first gods and rulers of heaven and earth.

After some time, Odin and his brothers decided to create order in the world. They killed Ymir. So much blood flowed from his body that it caused a great flood,

which drowned almost all the giants. Only one giant, Bergelmir, and his wife survived by escaping on a small boat.

The three brothers then used Ymir's body to create the world. His flesh became the land. His blood became the deep oceans. His bones turned into mountains, and his teeth became stones and rocks.

To form the sky, the gods lifted Ymir's skull high above the earth. They placed four dwarves—North, South, East, and West—at the corners to hold it up. Sparks from the fires of Muspell were set in the sky as stars.

Around the middle of the world, the gods built a protective wall using Ymir's eyelashes. This safe place for humans was called **Midgard**. One day, the gods found two wooden logs on the beach. They carved them into the first man and woman, Ask and Embla, and gave them life.

High above Midgard, the gods built their shining city called **Asgard**. In the center of the universe grows a giant ash tree named **Yggdrasil**. Its branches stretch across the entire world and reach into heaven.

The gods travel between worlds by crossing **Bifrost**, a shimmering rainbow bridge crafted with great skill.

However, the gods know that their world is not eternal. One day, Surt will return with his flaming sword. The bridge will break, the sky will split apart, and the world will be destroyed by fire.

Glossary (B1–B2 Level)

- **Void (n)** – A large empty space where nothing exists.
- **Primitive (adj)** – Belonging to an early stage of development; not advanced.
- **Massive (adj)** – Very large and powerful.
- **Flood (n)** – A large amount of water covering land.
- **Carve (v)** – To cut or shape something from wood or stone.
- **Protective (adj)** – Keeping something safe from harm.
- **Crafted (v)** – Made carefully with skill.
- **Eternal (adj)** – Lasting forever.
- **Progenitor (n)** – The first ancestor of a family or race.
- **Encircling (adj)** – Forming a circle around something.