


YOUR VALKYRIE CHARMS

The Valkyries served Odin by helping the god to build his armies in preparation for Ragnarok. But they were also governed by the gentle goddess Freya and could grant wishes.

VALHALLA

Valhalla was the Hall of the Slain in Norse mythology. It was described as having 540 doors, benches made of breast plates, a roof of shields and rafters of spears. Odin presided over the hall and the Valkyries, sometimes called his foster-daughters, brought half of the souls of fallen heroes here; the other half were taken to the goddess Freya's hall, Folkvang.

The warriors spent their days fighting and their nights feasting.


 Valhalla's warriors were the Einherjar and were woken each day by the crowing of the cock Gullinkambi. They trained all day in preparation to join Odin in battle at Ragnarok, the end of the world. The greatest of the Einherjar was destined to ride with Odin.




THE FIRST ONE

The ancient texts are unclear but it is thought that the goddess Freya was the first Valkyrie. Freya was the Norse goddess of love, fertility and beauty and the chief of the Valkyries; though the Valkyrie Brynhildr was also said to be their leader.

with Odin. According to etiquette, ladies go first – so Freya was given first choice of the slain.

 Freya was linked to the swan maidens. Like them she had a feather cloak, but hers was made of falcon feathers that allowed her to turn into a falcon.

 Freya's celestial realm was Folkvang, and she shared half the souls of the fallen warriors


For Freya, be inspired by a falcon charm.



BRYNHILDR

Thanks to the German opera *Die Walküre*, or *Ride of the Valkyries*, by Richard Wagner (1813–1883), the most well-known Valkyrie in modern memory is Brynhildr. Brynhildr was asked to determine the course of a battle between two kings, but because she did not choose Odin's favourite she was cursed. Brynhildr was turned into a mortal woman and entered an enchanted sleep inside a ring of fire. The hero Sigurd rescued her.


Brynhildr was doomed to sleep in a ring of fire until she was rescued.

 Sigurd was to marry Brynhildr, but was tricked by a sorceress into marrying Gudrun. Following a tragic series of events, which saw Brynhildr tricked into marrying Gudrun's brother, Sigurd is eventually killed and Brynhildr wills herself to die.



WISHING CHARM

The Valkyries were sometimes known as wish maidens, because of their association with the swan maidens in later mythology.

 As swans have notoriously aggressive reputations, which makes them all the more appropriate as emblems of fierce warrior maidens, it would be inadvisable to attempt to capture one! Instead, make a

swan charm to beseech the Valkyries to grant you a wish. If you are lucky enough to find a swan feather, use this. Hold it up to the sky, make your wish, then release the feather to float down a river.

Find swan feathers to use as charms.

