



ABOUT THE BOOK

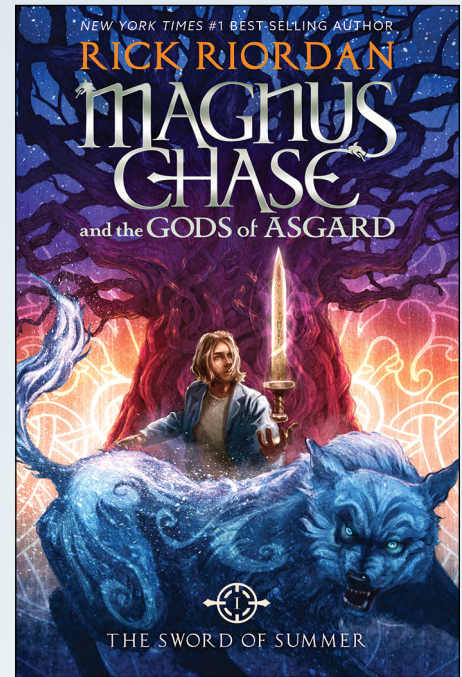
Magnus Chase has always been a troubled kid. Since his mother’s mysterious death, he’s lived alone on the streets of Boston, surviving by his wits, keeping one step ahead of the police and the truant officers.

One day, he’s tracked down by an uncle he barely knows—a man his mother claimed was dangerous. Uncle Randolph tells him an impossible secret: Magnus is the son of a Norse god.

The Viking myths are true. The gods of Asgard are preparing for war. Trolls, giants, and worse monsters are stirring for doomsday. To prevent Ragnarok, Magnus must search the Nine Worlds for a weapon that has been lost for thousands of years.

When an attack by fire giants forces him to choose between his own safety and the lives of hundreds of innocents, Magnus makes a fatal decision.

Sometimes, the only way to start a new life is to die . . .



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rick Riordan (www.rickriordan.com) is the author of three #1 *New York Times* best-selling series with millions of copies sold throughout the world: *Percy Jackson and the Olympians*, *The Kane Chronicles*, and *The Heroes of Olympus*. His Greek myth collection, *Percy Jackson’s Greek Gods*, was a #1 *New York Times* bestseller as well. His previous novels for adults include the hugely popular *Tres Navarre* series, winner of the top three awards in the mystery genre. He lives in Boston, Massachusetts, with his wife and two sons.



This guide was created by Dr. Rose Brock, an assistant professor at Sam Houston State University. Dr. Brock holds a PhD. in Library Science, specializing in children’s and young adult literature.



HEIMDALL: god of vigilance and the guardian of Bifrost, the gateway to Asgard

HEL: goddess of the dishonorable dead; born of Loki's affair with a giantess

HELHEIM: the underworld, ruled by Hel and inhabited by those who died in wickness, old age, or illness

HLIDSKJALF: the High Seat of Odin

HOD: Balder's blind brother

HONIR: an Aesir god who, along with Mimir, traded places with Vanir gods Frey and Njord at the end of the war between the Aesir and the Vanir



IDUN: she distributes the apples of immortality that keep the gods young and spry

JORMUNGAND: the World Serpent, born of Loki's affair with a giantess. His body is so long it wraps around the earth.

JOTUN: giant

LOKI: god of mischief, magic, and artifice; the son of two giants; adept with magic and shape-shifting. He is alternatively malicious and heroic to the Asgardian gods and to humankind. Because of his role in the death of Balder, Loki was chained by Odin to three giant boulders with a poisonous serpent coiled over his head. The venom of the snake occasionally irritates Loki's face, and his writhing is the cause of earthquakes.

LYNGVI: the Isle of Heather, where Fenris Wolf is bound. The island's location shifts every year as the branches of Yggdrasil sway in the winds of the void. It only surfaces during the first full moon of the year.

MAGNI AND MODI: Thor's favorite sons, fated to survive Ragnarok

MIMIR: an Aesir god who, along with Honir, traded places with Vanir gods Frey and Njord at the end of the war between the Aesir and the Vanir. When the Vanir didn't like his counsel, they cut off his head and sent it to Odin. Odin placed the head in a magical well, where the water brought it back to life, and Mimir soaked up all the knowledge of the World Tree.

MJOLNIR: Thor's hammer

MUSPELL: fire

NAGLFAR: the Ship of Nails

NARVI: one of Loki's sons, disemboweled by his brother Vali, who was turned into a wolf after Loki killed Balder

NIDHOGG: the dragon that lives at the bottom of the World Tree and chews on its roots

NJORD: god of ships, sailors, and fishermen; father of Frey and Freya

NORNS: three sisters who control the destinies of both gods and humans



NORUMBEGA: a lost Norse settlement in their farthest point of exploration

ODIN: the “All-Father” and king of the gods; the god of war and death, but also poetry and wisdom. By trading one eye for a drink from the Well of Wisdom, Odin gained unparalleled knowledge. He has the ability to observe all of the nine worlds from his throne in Asgard; in addition to his great hall, he also resides in Valhalla with the bravest of those slain in battle.

RAGNAROK: the Day of Doom or Judgment, when the bravest of the einherjar will join Odin against Loki and the giants in the battle at the end of the world

RAN: goddess of the sea; wife of Aegir

RATATOSK: an invulnerable squirrel that constantly runs up and down the World Tree carrying insults between the eagle that lives at the top and Nidhogg, the dragon that lives at the roots

RED GOLD: the currency of Asgard and Valhalla

SAEHRIMNIR: the magical beast of Valhalla. Every day it is killed and cooked for dinner, and every morning it is resurrected; it tastes like whatever the diner wants.

SESSRUMNIR: the Hall of Many Seats, Freya’s mansion in Folkvanger

SKIRNIR: a god; Frey’s servant and messenger

SLEIPNIR: Odin’s eight-legged steed; only Odin can summon him; one of Loki’s children

SUMARBRANDER: the Sword of Summer

SURT: lord of Muspellheim

SVARTALF: dark elf, a subset of dwarves

THANE: a lord of Valhalla

THOR: god of thunder; son of Odin. Thunderstorms are the earthly effects of Thor’s mighty chariot rides across the sky, and lightning is caused by hurling his great hammer, Mjolnir.

TREE OF LAERADR: a tree in the center of the Feast Hall of the Slain in Valhalla containing immortal animals that have particular jobs

TYR: god of courage, law, and trial by combat. He lost a hand to Fenris’s bite when the Wolf was restrained by the gods.

ULLER: the god of snowshoes and archery

UTGARD-LOKI: the most powerful sorcerer of Jotunheim; king of the mountain giants

VALA: a seer

VALHALLA: paradise for warriors in the service of Odin

VALI: Loki’s son, who was turned into a wolf after Loki killed Balder. As a wolf he disemboweled his brother Narvi before he was gutted himself.

VALKYRIE: Odin’s handmaidens who choose slain heroes to bring to Valhalla

VANIR: gods of nature; close to elves

YGGDRASIL: the World Tree

YMIR: the largest of the giants; father to both the giants and the gods. He was killed by Odin and his brothers, who used his flesh to create Midgard. This act was the genesis of the cosmic hatred between the gods and the giants.





THE NINE WORLDS

ASGARD: the home of the Aesir

NIDAVELLIR: the home of the dwarves

VANAHEIM: the home of the Vanir

NIFLHEIM: the world of ice, fog, and mist

ALFHEIM: the home of the light elves

MUSPELLHEIM: the home of the fire giants and demons

MIDGARD: the home of humans

HELHEIM: the home of Hel and the dishonorable dead

JOTUNHEIM: the home of the giants

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

As the pantheon of Norse lore may not be as familiar to students as Greek, Roman, or Egyptian mythology, consider building background information for students using the following activity.

FOR STUDENTS

To build a foundation for understanding *Magnus Chase and the Gods of Asgard*, work independently or with a small group to create a “Who’s Who of Norse Mythology” exhibit. Utilize the “Who’s Who” list of Norse gods, monsters, and creatures provided and select a research topic. Using the Internet and library resources, create a “biography” of the mythological figure that includes the following:

- Physical description
- Relationship to other important Norse characters
- Explanation of any significant connections to other mythological figures
- Any other important information (such as special abilities or powers).

You or your team should prepare a digital exhibit with a poster or slide show designed to inform others about your mythological figure as a means of creating background knowledge for the reading of *The Sword of Summer*.



Samirah



EXPLORING THROUGH DISCUSSION AND WRITING

The following questions may be utilized throughout the study of Magnus Chase and the Gods of Asgard, Book 1: *The Sword of Summer* as targeted questions for class discussion and reflection, or alternatively, they can be used as reflective writing prompts.

- 1 In the opening of *The Sword of Summer*, Magnus states, “Yeah, I know. You guys are going to read about how I died in agony, and you’re going to be like, “Wow! That sounds cool, Magnus! Can I die in agony too?” How does learning that Magnus dies set the tone for the novel? In what ways is learning this fact about his fate unique?
- 2 Early in the novel, readers learn that Magnus has been homeless for the past couple of years. He shares, “I don’t need your sympathy. I’m used to being laughed at. I’m definitely used to being ignored.” What do you think an experience like this has done to Magnus’s relationships with others and his general attitude? How does Magnus change throughout the course of the novel?
- 3 While thinking about his mother, Magnus shares, “After two years, my memories of her were still a minefield. I stumbled over one, and instantly my composure was blown to bits.” Why do his memories of his mother have such a profound effect on him? What can be inferred about his relationship with his mom?
- 4 Magnus shares, “Surt’s heat didn’t make me pass out. It just made me angry. I didn’t know who this fiery jack-hole was, but I knew a bully when I met one. First rule of the streets: never let a bully take your stuff.” Why does Magnus not initially understand the magnitude of danger he faces?
- 5 The author uses some unusual titles and first lines to introduce the chapters; which of them is your favorite? For what reason?
- 6 The last thing Magnus’s mother tells him is, “Magnus, run. Hide. Don’t trust anyone. I’ll find you. Whatever you do, don’t go to Randolph for help.” Why do you think she is so adamant that he stays away from his uncle? What does she fear for Magnus?
- 7 What were your first impressions of Blitz and Hearth? Were you surprised to learn who and what they are? What makes this duo so important to Magnus? In what ways do they prove themselves to be heroic?
- 8 Why do you believe Magnus awakens in the Grove of Glasir? What about this space allows him to feel comfortable?
- 9 What is it about Hotel Valhalla that Magnus finds so unusual? In your opinion, what are the best parts? What are the worst? Do you believe Magnus is really worthy of a place there?



- 10 Describe the Valkyries Gunilla and Sam. What are three things that you find most (or least) appealing about each of them? Are there any similarities between the two? What roles do you expect the Valkyries will play in further volumes of Magnus Chase and the Gods of Asgard?
- 11 Consider the list of favorite fantasy and horror authors Magnus mentions (Stephen King, Darren Shan, Neal Shusterman, Michael Grant, and Joe Hill). Are you familiar with the work of any of these other writers? If so, is there something written by them that you would recommend?
- 12 Why is Sam so distrusted by some of those in Valhalla? Do you believe they are right to feel that way? To what degree are we all really products of our families?
- 13 Magnus states, “In the old stories, Valhalla was for heroes who died in battle. I remembered that much. I definitely didn’t feel like a hero.” Why does Magnus feel himself unworthy of an afterlife in Valhalla? Do you think he’s right to think so? Why or why not?
- 14 In your opinion, do T.J., Mallory Keen, Halfborn Gunderson, and X prove themselves worthy friends to Magnus? If so, in what ways? What do you predict their roles will be in the further adventures of Magnus Chase?
- 15 Throughout the course of the novel, Magnus learns that the world as he knows it may never be the same. In what ways will it be better or worse for him? Have you had an experience that reshaped your life? In what ways have you changed due to this incident?
- 16 If you are familiar with Annabeth Chase from the Percy Jackson or Heroes of Olympus series, do you see any similarities between Magnus and his cousin? In what ways are they different? In what ways will having a closer relationship with Annabeth make life less challenging for Magnus?
- 17 In what ways does Magnus’s distress toward wolves make his task to keep Fenris Wolf bound so challenging? What are some things you believe he can do to overcome this fear?
- 18 *The Sword of Summer* features a number of characters that exhibit a variety of strengths. Who most impresses you with their skills/gifts? Explain your choice.
- 19 Consider the conclusion of *The Sword of Summer* and predict what adventures and obstacles will be in store for Magnus in the next installment of Magnus Chase and the Gods of Asgard.





CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

READING, WRITING, AND RESEARCHING EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

ARMED FOR BATTLE

In *The Sword of Summer*, preparing for battle is an ongoing pastime of those residing in Valhalla and a driving force to the characters in Magnus Chase and the Gods of Asgard. The Norse people were famous in history for being fierce warriors who terrified those who might fall to one of their raids. Using library and Internet resources, discover more about Norse warriors, being sure to investigate:

- Attire (what did these warriors wear?)
- Symbols of power
- Weapons
- Modes of transportation
- Additional facts you found fun or interesting

Investigate real longboats through a virtual visit to the Viking Ship Museum in Norway:
kvm.uio.no/english/visit-us/viking-ship-museum.

While virtually visiting the Viking Ship Museum, pay special attention to the three longboats on display (Gokstad, Oseberg, or Tune). Upon conclusion, demonstrate your understanding by creating an informational article about one of the boats that includes a description of the boat, where it was found, and what its discovery helps us understand about life in that time period.





LEIF ERIKSSON: EXPLORER

Norse explorer Leif Eriksson's visit to the edge of North America is regarded as a hugely monumental event in history. Using library resources and the Internet, learn more about Eriksson. Be sure to specifically discover the following:

- Who was Leif Eriksson?
- When and where did he live?
- What were his greatest accomplishments?
- What other interesting facts did you learn?

After gathering your information, select a digital tool of your choice to share your findings.

In the opening of *The Sword of Summer*, readers learn about Leif Eriksson's statue in Boston and Uncle Randolph's strong belief of a Norse presence and influence in the area. Beyond Eriksson, dig deeply to learn what you can about New England's Viking connections, making sure to consider:

- Did the Vikings come to North America?
- What evidence (if any) is there?
- What makes their presence in North America important?
- What interesting or unusual things did you learn? Share your findings with your classmates.

CHARACTER STUDIES

The descendants of the Norse Gods have some of their ancestors' attributes. Make a chart of the main characters, listing their traits, and then compare and contrast them with the ancestor they descended from. In what ways are the characters in *The Sword of Summer* the same as their ancestors? Use evidence from the text to show how they are similar. In what ways are they different? Encourage students to support their answers with text-based details.

On a basic level, *The Sword of Summer* can be seen as a book about the battle between good and evil, with most characters clearly identified as either one or the other. Create a chart that details and divides the novel's characters into these two groups. For each classification, offer textual evidence as support. Are there any characters that might fit in both categories? What do you believe is the greatest benefit of examining good versus evil? How does good ultimately triumph in the novel? After creating your list, pair up with a classmate and compare your lists.



HISTORY OR LEGEND

How much do you know about the Norse and Germanic worlds? Look at the statements below and circle “History” if you think the statement is true, or “Legend” if you think it is false.

1. In spite of many efforts, the Scandinavian and Germanic worlds were among the few in Europe never to be conquered by the Roman Empire.

LEGEND HISTORY

2. Viking warriors wore helmets with large horns to scare their enemies in battle.

LEGEND HISTORY

3. In order to go to Valhalla in the afterlife, one had to live a good and productive life.

LEGEND HISTORY

4. Viking sailors reached the shores of the Americas almost 500 years prior to Christopher Columbus.

LEGEND HISTORY

5. The Norse were a warrior civilization who had to raid neighboring regions for resources since Scandinavia was too cold for farming.

LEGEND HISTORY

6. Thanks to abundant forests and because of the cold climate, the Norse people constructed elaborate tree houses for shelter.

LEGEND HISTORY

7. Though commonly associated with evil, the Norse god Loki was actually associated more with trickery and mischief and could be involved in harm or good depending on his view of the situation.

LEGEND HISTORY

8. The Norse people celebrated a holiday similar to Christmas.

LEGEND HISTORY

9. Thor, the Norse god of thunder and lightning, was the king of the Norse gods.

LEGEND HISTORY

10. Norse women and girls enjoyed many more rights and freedoms than most other women in Europe in their time.

LEGEND HISTORY

11. The Vikings were a strong empire who ruled most of northern Europe in the Middle Ages.

LEGEND HISTORY

12. Most of the days of the week in the English language are named after Norse gods and goddesses.

LEGEND HISTORY



Loki

1. History: Rome's failure to conquer north central Europe—in spite of several tries—resulted in a great cultural split in Europe between a Roman-influenced south and west and a Germanic-influenced north and east. 2. Legend: Horned helmets were used in the costumes of 18th- and 19th-century plays and operas, but Viking soldiers never actually wore them in battle. 3. Legend: Valhalla was reserved for those who died bravely in battle. 4. History: Evidence of Viking settlements on the east coast of Canada date back to at least the 1000s AD. 5. Legend: Scandinavia actually supported very productive agriculture, and Norsemen were active traders all over Europe. 6. Legend: An interesting idea, but northern European peoples lived in homes made of wood, stone, or sometimes sod. 7. History: Though Loki was usually causing trouble, the Norse religion didn't really put their beliefs in terms of good and evil—just troublesome and not troublesome. 8. History: The feast of Yule (mid-winter) was celebrated on December 20–21, and was a day of merriment, feasting, and gift giving. After most of Scandinavia was Christianized in the 10th century AD, they celebrated the religious holiday of Christmas. 9. Legend: Though Thor was associated with the same powers in nature as Zeus in Greece and Jupiter in Rome, his father Odin was actually the king of the Norse gods. 10. History: Though not given equal rights as men, Norse women had a lot of social and economic freedom due to their husbands being gone for long stretches of time. 11. Legend: The Vikings lived as small tribal groups that didn't consider themselves united in any way with other Norse groups. 12. History: Only Sunday, Monday, and Saturday have Roman roots in the English language.



EXPLORE WITH THE NORSEMEN

The Norse were active traders and explorers, extending their presence to the far reaches of Europe as well as to North Africa, Russia, and across the Atlantic Ocean. Read the descriptions below and locate each historically significant place on the map of the Norse-influenced world. Write the letter of the location in the blank space next to its description.

- Scandinavia, the present-day countries of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway and the heart of the Norse world _____
- Remote Swedish Viking trade post that became the center of an active trade in timber, furs, honey, and slaves _____
- Greatest of the Norse settlements in Russia, this city would become the hub for trade with the Byzantine Empire and the Islamic Caliphates _____
- Norse merchants brought highly prized northern goods to this great capital of the Islamic Caliphates _____
- After a rocky start to their relationship, Viking links to the capital of the Byzantine Empire eventually made that culture the greatest influence on Russian civilization _____
- From a colony outside of this ancient North African city, Norse sailors extended trade and later ferried Crusaders to the Holy Land _____
- A successful raid on Palermo led to a short period of Norse rule over this island off of the coast of Italy _____
- The Pope was so terrified of a Viking raid on this holy city that he fled to his fortress in the Alps _____
- While Spain and Portugal were under Arab rule, Norse raiders repeatedly attacked these wealthy cities and even occupied one for a short time _____ and _____
- Using river systems, the Norse were able to raid the largest city in northern Europe _____
- Raids were so successful in this region of northern France that the Norse were able to set up a kingdom from which they would eventually invade England _____
- Norwegian Vikings established rule over this region composed of southern and eastern Ireland and much of Wales and Cornwall _____
- Some of the most infamous Viking raids in history led to Danish rule over much of the east coast of England _____
- Norwegian Viking control over the north coast of Scotland allowed for further exploration across the Atlantic _____
- Overcrowding and limited farmland in Scandinavia probably prompted Norse colonization of this Atlantic Ocean island _____
- Though today its massive glacier makes its name seem strange, a warmer climate in the tenth century left productive farmland for Icelandic Viking settler Erik the Red _____



ANSWERS: 1. F, 2. G, 3. J, 4. Q, 5. M, 6. O, 7. P, 8. L, 9. K and N, 10. I, 11. H, 12. D, 13. E, 14. C, 15. B, 16. A



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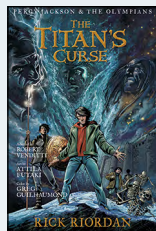
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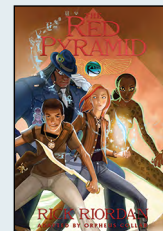
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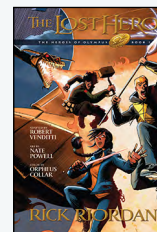
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