

Leif Ericsson Meets Lord Berserk

by Jim Gold

Leif Ericsson takes his adventure across the fiords, over the green mountains padded with growling grass and poison trees reaching out, touching him, torching him with belly-belching fire from the center of the Earth.

But Leif is unafraid. He trudges among foot bandages and gnarled knee trunks bent at the hip, plopping and piercing, foot after foot, on his unknown way to America. Discoveries are never easy, but what choice is there? Morning sandwiches have not yet arrived. Drinking coffee and eating doughnuts in an American restaurant is no mean feat, especially with the eleventh-century watching.

These are stories coated with the wax of ancient times. Vikings peruse a dark hall laden with Byzantine silks and images of pristine Druidic hordes from the Celtic East, where Tartar-running is the mode. Don't stretch too much, else the break comes.

Leif has no friends. Who else is as crazy as he? How can he relate to the mere sanity of these dullards and unadventurous louts living around him? To strike out across lonely, dangerous seas for unknown lands fraught with danger and hard beauty--that is the beatific life of a crazy man.

Leif kneels before his master, Lord Berserk. Dressed in bear skins and with traces of shaving cream still nestled in his beard, the nobleman crowns the bare head of his first and only subject. He declares in a deep fiordian voice: "Oh, Leif, sail on. Let no nascent whale or bloated walrus dent your enthusiasm for the insane. Let no lackey of dripping blues besmirch your belly-busting visions. You will conquer the world, my lad, and your tools will be blindness and foolishness! Let the dried-up hags of village politics vent their empty rages upon you. Let the empty-nested creators of thatched-roof philosophies rail against you. These mean nothing when a man is on a permanent search for spirit gold. And indeed, my Leif, you shall find it, far away beyond the dark field of seas. Therefore, my son, I give you my bear blessing. Go forth and conquer the black waves of fear, beat the wind with your iron fist, and create a new world on the fir tree ashes of the old."

"Thank you, Master Berserk," said Leif. "I am sinking into a murky dream. The camouflage beyond the treetops makes no sense. I will conquer the road beyond lands, reach for the path beyond stars. Bless me with your bearskin tunic. My journey will be long and

endless, and only burning love and fiery attachments will carry me to the edge.”

from Carlos the Cloud

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