

BALDUR THE BEAUTIFUL

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Baldur the Beautiful by Grace Denio Litchfield

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GRACE DENIO LITCHFIELD

**BALDUR THE
BEAUTIFUL**

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Baldur the Beautiful

By

Grace Denio Litchfield

Author of "Narcissus," "The Supreme Gift," etc.

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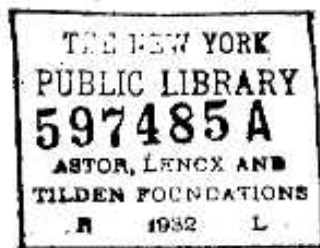
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TO
EDWARD HUBBARD LITCHFIELD

THE ARGUMENT

THE subject-matter is furnished by the story of Baldur, as told in the Prose Edda.

In Asgard, the city of the gods, are assembled the chief Scandinavian deities, with Odin, their father and king, who from his throne overlooking space catches occasional disturbing glimpses of Muspell, the final Heaven, whence, upon the Judgment Day of the gods (Ragnarök), is to come the annihilation of the existing hierarchy. Baldur, sometimes termed the Apollo of the North, one of Odin's sons—the Æsir,—is the god of light and love, or perfection. He is warned in dreams of impending peril, and Odin endeavours to save him by deputing his mother, Frigga, to demand an oath of the universe that nothing will do him harm. All take

The Argument

this oath except the mistletoe, exempted by Frigga on account of its weakness. By means of the mistletoe, therefore, Baldur meets his death, through the knavery of Loki, the destructive principle, better known as the God of Fire. Consternation immediately prevails. Valhalla being sacred to those slain in battle, Baldur's soul goes perforce to Hel, and Hermod, another of the Æsir, mounted on Odin's wonderful eight-legged horse, is sent thither to beg his brother's ransom.

After a terrible journey, bravely endured, Hermod reaches Hel. He there obtains from its queen, Hela, Loki's abhorrent daughter, promise of the surrender of Baldur's soul, upon the condition that everything throughout the worlds shall first weep his death. If a single creature withhold its tears, Baldur is to remain in Hel, for perfect beauty and goodness are to be won only through perfect love and unanimous desire.

The Argument

Hermod returns to Asgard with renewed hope. Odin issues imperative command that all shall weep for Baldur, and an unprecedented lamentation follows. Loki only, disguised as the hag Thaukt, stubbornly refuses to mourn. Hela's condition being thereby violated, Baldur's soul must remain unredeemed till Ragnarök. Upon that future day, as foreseen by Odin alone, a battle will be fought in which, after incredible marvels, all the gods, including Odin himself, will be slain. The universe will then be purified by an overwhelming conflagration, and there will be created a new Earth and a new Heaven, wherein Baldur is to live for ever. Ragnarök being, however, still far distant, the world, bereft meanwhile of all that Baldur represents, continues unconcerned on its way.

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