

The Myth of the Elves

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Elves were first thought of as being divine and possessing great powers; some thought them to be gods. In Norse mythology, they were then divided into three sub categories which you will read about in a bit. The word elf comes from a conjunction of the words nightmare and hiccup (which people thought were affliction caused by them). Many believed elf like creatures were mentioned thousands of years ago, but the first definition of elves and their popularity began in Norse mythology. So, without further ado, here is a bit of an explanation of the three types of elves.

Dark Elves

Some of you may have heard of dark elves, since they are portrayed in many popular video games and movies. Dark elves, known as Dokkalfar or Svartalfar in Norse mythology, are an assumable, evil sub race of elves. Dark elves have also been referred to as Drow, Dunmer, and Moriquendi in various works of fiction. Dark elves are usually characterized as having dusky or black colored skin. They are very mysterious creatures, usually partaking in evil and mischievous behavior.

Dark elves hated the sun tremendously and thus were never seen out during the day. One speck of sunlight on the skin would turn them into stone in a matter of seconds. They were believed to be quite hideous creatures, which was one of the reasons they liked to torture humans in one of their favorite ways.

Many people believed that at night, when they were fast asleep, a Mare or dark elf would emerge from the ground and enter their sleeping quarters. A mare would then sit upon a person's chest and whisper thoughts into their heads to haunt them as they slept. Some believed, if the mare were especially malicious, they could cause a person's death if the thoughts be horrible enough. They believed them to be the cause of what we know as nightmares. Some societies believed dark elves to be the evil counterpart to the light elf. This interpretation was usually used to teach children about good and evil. Dark elves are also spoken of in Scottish lore.

The Scottish refer to them as Trow and spoke of them much in the Orkney Islands. They mainly lived in caves and were neither seen as good nor bad. Stories portrayed them as helping villagers in need and, more commonly, partaking in mischievous behaviors. Drows are much like the Trow but are described

as small, evil elves who enjoy smithing.

It seems that, no matter what culture, dark elves were meant to portray evil; yet today, dark elves have become very popular (in video games especially). In video games they are known for their talents in the arcane and their amazing stealth abilities. I would have to say dark elves are by far one of my favorite creatures.

Wood Elves

Wood elves are very similar to other elves in appearance. They are characterized as having large pointed ears, slender bodies, and large enchanting eyes. What sets them apart is their light creamy white skin, atonement for the color green, and their love of all things nature. Wood elves are heard of in many cultures such as Celtic, Germanic and Norse.

All interpretations are very similar. Woods elves live in vast forests and worship all of nature around them. They are usually seen as the guardians of the forests. They take great pride in the vast trees that they have grown, and can become hostile if they catch someone harming them. In most folklore, they are said to be agile and master bowmen. Wood Elves are also highly publicized in works of fiction, and are seen in many, various video games.

High/Noble/Light Elves

I put these three types of elves in the same category because they are very similar and many see them as the same, but in different forms. In Norse mythology they are known as Ljosalfar. The light elves are known as the good counterpart to the Dokkalfar. They are a noble race of elves, and it is believed these attributed ideals came from early Christian influence.

Ljosalfar dwelling in heaven represent angels and Dokkalfar dwelling within the earth represent demons. An idea has been argued that light elves represent fertility, while dark represent death. High elves aren't much different than wood elves, though they were believed to live in large cities and in much larger groups than those of wood elves.

So, whether or not you believe in elves, take precautions. If you ever feel something heavy weighting your chest at night, this myth may just have become a reality.