

# Freyja



## WHO IS FREYJA?

In Norse mythology, Freyja (/ˈfreɪjə/; Old Norse for "[the] Lady") is a goddess associated with love, beauty, fertility, sex, war, gold, and seidr. Freyja is the owner of the necklace Brisingamen, rides a chariot pulled by two cats, is accompanied by the boar Hildisvíni, and possesses a cloak of falcon feathers. By her husband Óðr, she is the mother of two daughters, Hnoss and Gersemi. Along with her brother Freyr, her father Njörðr, and her mother (Njörðr's sister, unnamed in sources), she is a member of the Vanir. Stemming from Old Norse Freyja, modern forms of the name include Freya, Freyia, and Freja. Her falcon-feathered cloak allows the wearer to fly, usually in the form of a falcon, demonstrating Freyja's connection with shape-shifting magic - an aspect of Seidhr trance magic. Loki often borrows her cloak when he needs to solve a problem for the Aesir. A pair of cats work together to draw her cart, proving her sovereignty as a goddess. Diana Paxson suggested the names Bygul and Trjegul - "Bee-gold" and "Tree-Gold" - for Freyja's cats, to honor her connections with honey and amber. One of Freyja's titles is "Mare of the Vanir", giving her a connection with horses, and emphasizing her role as a fertility goddess. The Vanir in general are connected with swine, and Freyja is no exception; one of her kennings is "Syr", meaning "sow", and she is sometimes depicted riding a boar named Hildisvíni. Swine are also strong fertility symbols. Freyja's power and beauty are symbolized most strongly by the necklace Brisingamen. The four dwarven smiths, the Brising brothers, forged a golden necklace of unsurpassed beauty, which Freyja could not bear to let pass from her grasp. She offered them every object of value she could think of in exchange, but they wanted only service - a night in her bed for each of them. Post-Christian interpretations describe her acceptance of these terms as compelled by temptation despite the dwarves being hideous creatures. They describe it as infidelity to Odr, and many surmise that this infidelity is why he went away, leaving Freyja to wander the worlds weeping tears that turned to gold when they touched the land, and amber when they touched water.