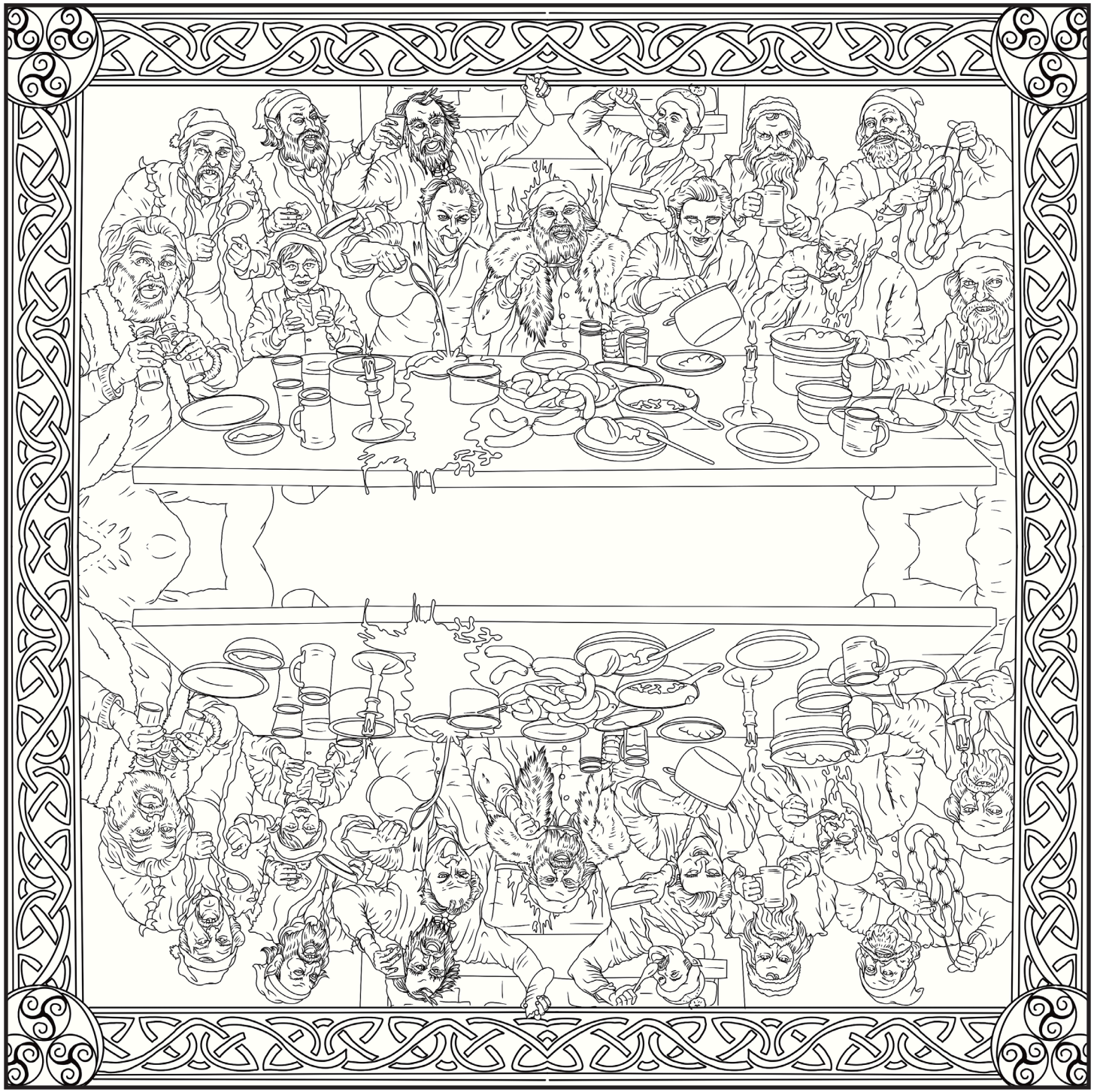
Jólasveinar

The Thirteen Yule Lads
Icelandic Christmas folklore

The Yule Lads, or Jólasveinar, are thirteen mischievous figures from Icelandic Christmas folklore. Traditionally portrayed as trolls or troublemakers, they are the sons of the fearsome giantess Grýla and descend from the mountains one by one during the thirteen nights leading up to Christmas.

Each Yule Lad is named for his particular bad habit. Spoon-Licker steals and licks wooden spoons, Door-Slammer keeps households awake by banging doors, Sausage-Swiper steals hanging sausages, and Window-Peeper peers through windows looking for things to steal. Together, their peculiar names reflect the everyday life and hardships of old Icelandic farmsteads.

Older stories portrayed the Yule Lads as considerably more frightening than they are today. Over time, they became gentler Christmas characters who leave small gifts in children's shoes, while naughty children might receive a potato instead. Their transformation from troublesome trolls into gift-givers makes them one of Iceland's most distinctive Christmas traditions.



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Hiemalis
a dark winter folklore colouring book