

# THOR AND THE GIANTS



It was the beginning of the summer, and Thor was bored.

'I'm bored!' he said to Loki.

'But this is Asgard!' said Loki. 'It's the most beautiful place in all of Yggdrasil.'

'Yes, but it's quiet here,' replied Thor. 'Too quiet.'

'So what do you want to do?' asked Loki.

'I think I should go and fight some giants!' he said. 'There are too many giants.'

'But if the giants are quiet, why don't we leave them alone?' asked Loki.

'Sooner or later they'll make trouble for us!' said Thor.

Loki did not think this was a good idea, but he knew that when Thor decided something it was impossible to stop him. 'Very well, then,' he said. 'But remember this, Thor - you need to be clever to fight giants. And you're not always very intelligent, are you?'

'That's ridiculous!' replied Thor. 'I was clever when I stopped the dark elf Alvis from marrying my daughter.'

'Yes, that's true,' said Loki. 'But that doesn't happen often. If you're going to fight giants, then I think I should come with you!'

'I'm not sure about that, Loki,' replied Thor. 'You might start playing some of your tricks.'

'I promise I won't play any tricks,' said Loki.

'Very well then!' said Thor. 'Together we'll be able to fight all the giants! Come on. Let's go! Right now!'

'It's late now,' said Loki. 'We should wait until early tomorrow. Then we'll have a day to travel to the country of the giants.'

Thor agreed, and the next morning they took Thor's chariot and put the two goats Tanngrisnir and Tanngnjostir in front of it. Thor's two goats were very special: they were very strong goats, so they could pull Thor's chariot through the sky. But at the end of each day, Thor killed and ate them. The next day, they came back to life.

Tanngrisnir and Tanngnjostir pulled Thor and Loki across the sky. They flew above Asgard, and looked down.

'Look how beautiful it is!' said Loki.

'Yes, it is,' said Thor. 'But I want to go and fight some giants! Come on, quick!' he shouted to the goats. They travelled all day, but when night came, they were still in Midgard, the country of the humans.

'We should stop here for the night,' said Loki.

'Can't we continue?' asked Thor. 'I want to see some giants, at least!'

'The goats are getting tired now,' replied Loki. 'Look, there's a farmhouse! We can stop there.'

Thor stopped the chariot on the ground, next to the farmhouse. The house was very old. It looked very poor.

'Does anyone live in this place?' asked Thor.

'I don't think so,' said Loki. 'But knock on the door and see.'

Thor knocked on the door of the old farmhouse. He was so strong he nearly broke the old door. To their surprise, a woman came out.

'Who are you, and what do you want?' she asked.

'We're the gods Thor and Loki!' said Thor. 'And we want a place to stay for the night.'

The woman looked very surprised. She went back inside, then came out with her husband, the farmer. 'Who are you, and what do you want?' asked the farmer.

'Don't get angry!' said Loki to Thor.

'I've just said - we're the gods Thor and Loki, and we want a place to stay for the night!' Thor said again.

'Of course you can stay here for the night,' said the farmer. 'But I'm afraid we have very little food, and no meat.'

'No meat?' said Thor. 'Don't worry about that - I have my two goats, Tanngrisnir and Tanngrjostr. I'll kill them now, and then we can all eat!'

They went inside the farmhouse and started a fire. Thor killed his goats, and they cooked them on the fire.

'This is our son, Thialfi,' said the farmer. 'Can he eat with us too?'

'Of course,' said Thor. 'There's lots of meat from the goats you can eat - but don't eat any of the bones!'

They were all very hungry, and ate both of the goats. Then they were all tired, so they went to bed. But the farmer's son, Thialfi, was still very hungry. When everyone was asleep, he got up and took a leg bone from one of the goats. There was a lot of meat on the bone, so Thialfi put it under his bed.

'I'll eat this later,' he thought. 'No one will know.'

That night, they all slept very well.

The next morning, Thor used his hammer Mjollnir to bring the goats back to life. The goats lived again, but Thor saw that one of them could not walk properly. 'Tanngrisnir has no bone in his back leg,' said Thor. 'I told you not to eat the bones, only the meat! That is why my goat Tanngrisnir has no bone in his back leg!'

Thor was becoming very angry now, and the farmer, his wife and his son were very worried.

'I didn't eat the bone!' said the farmer.

'I didn't eat the bone,' said the farmer's wife.

'Loki - is this one of your tricks?' asked Thor.

'No, it isn't,' replied Loki. 'I didn't eat the bone.'

Then very quietly, Thialfi said, 'It was me. I ate the bone!'

Thor was angry, and lifted up his hammer to hit Thialfi.

'No! Stop!' said Loki. 'Don't hit him! He's only a poor, hungry boy. I've got a better idea.'

'What's that?' asked Thor.

'Because the boy ate the bone, and we told him not to, he must come with us on our journey,' said Loki. 'He can help us fight the giants!'

'But he's only a boy,' said Thor. 'He can't help us!'

'I'm not sure,' said Loki. 'I think a human might be able to help us.'

'Very well then,' said Thor. 'Thialfi, you will come with us!'

The farmer and his wife were sad to see their son leave, but knew they could not stop Thor.

So Thor, Loki and Thialfi got in the chariot and flew off again. They travelled for a long time. They crossed mountains and seas, and when the day was ending, they stopped in the middle of a big forest.

'I don't like this place,' said Loki.

'What? Are you frightened?' asked Thor. 'The god Loki is frightened of the forest!'

'I'm not frightened,' said Loki. 'But we don't know where we are. And it's very dark here. Thialfi - go into the forest and see if there's a house near here.'

Thialfi was worried. He did not want to go into the dark forest on his own at night, but he knew he had to go. He walked off into the forest.

After a long time, he found a big house. It was a very unusual house. It did not have any doors or windows, for example. It only had a big space for a door.

'This house is unusual, but it's very big,' thought Thialfi. 'We can stay here tonight.' He ran back through the forest to Thor and Loki and told them about the house. The three of them went through the dark forest to sleep in the big, strange house.

In the middle of the night, there was a loud noise. It sounded like thunder.

'Is that you, Thor?' asked Loki. 'Making thunder with your hammer Mjollnir?'

'No,' replied Thor. 'I was asleep.'

'Something is not right here,' said Loki. 'Look - over there is a smaller room. I think it isn't so dangerous if we sleep in there.'

Thor, Loki and Thialfi moved from the big room to the small room, and again went to sleep. But after a few minutes, the loud noise came again. They looked around, but could see nothing, so they tried to sleep again.

Next morning they woke up and walked out of the house into the forest, and found out what the noise was. Next to the house was a giant, lying asleep on the floor of the forest. The giant made a loud sound while he slept. He was snoring.

'So that was the noise!' said Thor. 'This sleeping giant!'

They all looked at the giant. He was very big, even for a giant.

'I'll hit him with my hammer!' said Thor.

'No! Don't do that!' said Loki. 'It's more intelligent if we ask him who he is, and where there are other giants.'

'Very well,' said Thor, sadly.

They woke the giant up. When he stood up, he was taller than the trees.

'Who are you?' asked Thor.

'Skrymir,' said the giant. 'It means 'big man'.'

'I'm not surprised,' said Loki.

'I know who you are - you are Thor and you are Loki. But who's this boy?' asked Skrymir.

'That's Thialfi. He's helping us,' said Thor.

'Where are my gloves?' said Skrymir. The giant looked around, and then picked up the house.

'And so that was our house!' said Loki. They all looked at the house, and saw that it was not a house at all. It was the giant's glove! The fingers of the glove were the rooms.

'That's why it has no doors!' laughed Thialfi.

'I'm going to the country of the giants,' said Skrymir. 'Why don't you come with me?'

'I want to fight him now,' said Thor to Loki.

'Not now!' said Loki. 'He's a very big giant. We should go with him, so we can meet more giants.'

'Very well,' said Thor, sadly.



'But we have to walk there,' said the giant. 'I can't go in your chariot.'

Thor did not like this, but Loki told him it was the best thing to do. They left the chariot and the two goats in the middle of the forest.

They walked all day through the forest. The giant walked very quickly. It was difficult to walk as fast as the giant. When evening came, they were very tired.

'Let's sleep here,' said Skrymir.

'But we have no food to eat!' said Thor.

'Oh, I've got lots of food in my bag,' said the giant. He put a bag as big as five men on the floor. 'You can have anything you want. I'm going to sleep now. Goodnight!' And the giant lay down on the floor, and went to sleep.

Thor, Loki and Thialfi were very hungry.

'There's lots of food in the giant's bag!' said Thor. 'Let's eat.'

They tried to open the bag, but it was impossible. They pulled and pulled and pulled, but the bag would not open. Thor became very angry. 'That giant has tricked us!' he shouted. 'I'm going to hit him with my hammer!'

This time, Loki could not stop Thor. Thor picked up his hammer and hit the giant on the head with it, very hard.

The giant woke up. 'I thought I felt something,' he said. 'Was that a leaf falling on my head?' Then he went back to sleep again.

angrier

Now Thor was even ~~more angry~~. He picked up his hammer again, and this time hit the giant even harder.

The giant woke up again. 'I can't get any sleep tonight,' he said. 'Was that a bird on my face?' He did not wait for an answer, but went back to sleep, and started snoring again.

'There's nothing we can do,' said Loki. 'This giant is too big for us. We'll have to go to sleep hungry, and see if he takes us to the other giants tomorrow.'

The next morning they all woke up.

'I'm going this way,' said Skrymir the giant. 'But if you want to go to the country of the giants, it's that way. It's not far, but be careful! If you go there, you'll find giants who are bigger than me!' Then, he walked away.

Thor, Loki and Thialfi followed the giant's instructions and only an hour later, they found a very big castle. 'This is the castle of the giants!' said Thor. 'Now let's go and fight them!'

But when they arrived at the door of the giants' castle, it was closed, and they could not open it. They looked at the walls of the castle. They were very high, too high for them to climb over.

'How can we get in?' asked Thor.

Thialfi found a window. There was no glass in the window, but there were some bars in it, like the window of a prison. 'Look!' said Thialfi. 'I can go between the bars of this window.' And he climbed up and went between the bars and into the giants' castle. Loki could get between the bars as well. But Thor could not. Thor was too big.

'Help!' he said to Loki and Thialfi. 'I can't get between these bars!'

Loki and Thialfi had to pull, very hard, to make Thor get between the bars. After nearly an hour, they were all inside.

They walked into a big room which was full of giants - men and women giants, old and young giants.

'I've never seen so many giants!' said Thor.

'And these are the biggest giants I've ever seen!' said Loki.

The giants were so big they did not even see Thor, Loki and Thialfi at first. When they did see them, they only laughed.

'Hello little people!' said the biggest giant. 'I'm Utgard, king of the giants. You're Thor, aren't you?'

'Yes I am!' said Thor.

'I thought you were bigger than that,' said Utgard. 'And you're Loki!' he continued. 'But who's this?'

'I'm Thialfi,' the farmer's son said.

'Ha!' said Utgard. 'A human! So why have you all come here?'

'I have come here to fight you all!' said Thor.

'I'm sorry,' said Utgard. 'I didn't hear that. You have to speak loudly if you speak to a giant!'

'Shut up!' said Loki angrily to Thor. 'We can't fight all these giants!'

'Everyone in this castle has a special ability,' said Utgard. 'One giant is the strongest, another giant is the fastest runner, another giant is the most intelligent. To be in this castle, everybody must be the best at something. So tell me, Thor, Loki and Thialfi, what are you good at?'

Loki, who was very hungry, said, 'I can eat faster than anyone in this castle!'

'Ha!' laughed Utgard. 'Is that true? Then let's see.' Utgard told the other giants to bring a table of food into the room. It was a very long table, and there was lots of meat on it. Loki sat at one end of the table.

'This giant here can eat more than any other giant,' continued Utgard. Another giant sat at the other end of the table. 'Let's see if you can eat more than him!'

Loki and the giant both began to eat the meat on the table. As they ate, they moved their chairs closer to the middle of the table. Loki was very hungry, so he ate and ate and ate all the meat on the table. Soon he was sitting next to the giant in the middle of the table. But Loki only ate the meat, the giant then ate the bones of the meat as well.

'Ha!' laughed the giant. And then he ate the table as well.

'Loki,' said Utgard. 'You're the loser!'

Loki was angry, but he did not say anything.

'And what about you, human boy? What can you do?' Utgard asked Thialfi.

'I can run very fast!' said Thialfi. 'I'm the fastest runner in Midgard!'

'Is that true?' asked Utgard. 'Then let's see. Hugi is the fastest of the giants. He'll run against you.'

Thor, Loki, Thialfi and all of the giants went out of the castle into a field. Thialfi and the giant Hugi stood at one end of the field.

'When I say "go"', said Utgard, 'you'll both run to the other end of the field. Are you ready? Then go!'

Thialfi ran as fast as he could. He ran so fast his feet did not touch the floor. He ran so fast he felt he was flying. He knew he was going to win the race against the big, heavy giant. But when he arrived at the other end of the field, the giant Hugi was already there, waiting for him.

'Hello little boy!' said Hugi. It seemed Hugi only took two steps to cross the field. He did not have to run at all.

'Thialfi,' said Utgard. 'You're the loser!'

Thialfi was very angry, but he did not say anything.

'So you, Thor,' said Utgard. 'You're good at telling everyone how strong you are, but let's see what you can really do!'

'I can do many things!' said Thor.

'For example?' asked Utgard.

'Well, I can drink more than anyone else!' replied Thor.

'You can drink more than anyone else, can you?' asked Utgard. 'Then let's see!' Utgard told another giant to bring out the giants' drinking horn. The giants' drinking horn was

as big as Thor himself. 'This is what the giants drink from,' said Utgard. 'Let's see if you can empty it!'

Thor stood next to the drinking horn and started to drink from it. He drank and drank as much as he could. But the level of the water in the drinking horn did not go down one little bit.

'Ha!' said Utgard. 'Is that all you can drink? Try again!' Thor drank again from the big drinking horn. He drank and drank and drank, but this time when he finished there was more water in it than when he started.

'That might be a lot in Asgard, but it's not much in my kingdom!' said Utgard.

Thor was angry, but he did not say anything.

'Let's see what else you can do,' said Utgard. 'You think you're strong, don't you?'

'I am the strongest of all the gods!' said Thor.

'Look, then' said Utgard, and he pointed at a cat under a table. 'There's my little cat. Pick it up!'

Thor thought this was going to be easy. He took hold of the cat, and tried to pick it up. But even though the cat was small (for a giant's cat), Thor could not lift it. He pulled and pulled and pulled, but only one of the cat's feet left the floor. All the giants laughed at Thor. Now, he was really angry.

'Let me fight with any one of you!' he said. 'I'll show you how strong I really am!'

'You want to fight with one of us, do you?' asked Utgard. 'Very well then. Elli!' he shouted.

Elli arrived. Elli was an old woman. She was an old woman giant, but not much bigger than Thor. And she was very, very old.

'This is Elli,' said Utgard. 'She's my grandmother. Let's see if you can fight her!'

'But she's an old woman!' said Thor. 'I can't fight her!'

'I'm ready to fight you,' said Elli.

'Are you afraid?' asked Utgard.

'Of course not!' said Thor. And they started to fight. Thor tried to push Elli to the floor, but he could not. Instead, Elli picked Thor up and threw him across the room. Then she came and stood on top of him. 'I'm the winner!' she shouted. 'I'm stronger than the god Thor!'

All the giants laughed and laughed.

'Now,' said Utgard. 'I think we've seen who's the strongest here, and the biggest eater, and the fastest runner. And it's not you. So goodbye Thor, goodbye Loki and goodbye Thialfi. Go home now, and don't think you can fight with giants again! Let me show you the way home.'

Thor, Loki and Thialfi were very angry, but they did not say anything. They knew they were the losers in this competition. They followed Utgard out of the giants' castle.

Outside the castle, Utgard started to tell them something. 'I heard you were coming here,' he said. 'Skrymir told me. I was worried. I didn't want Thor and Loki to fight us.'

'What are you telling us?' asked Thor.

'You're too strong for us, I know that,' continued Utgard. 'So I used tricks to win those competitions!'

'Tricks!' shouted Thor. 'I thought it was Loki who played tricks!'

'Ha!' said Utgard. 'We giants know how to play tricks as well! While Loki was eating all that meat, but not the bones, we took the bones from the table and burned them. You were watching Loki, so you didn't see us.'

'And the running competition?' asked Thialfi.

'You're a very fast runner!' said Utgard. 'Perhaps the fastest runner in Midgard. A big, heavy giant couldn't win against you.'

'So what did you do?' asked Thialfi.

'We put Hugi's twin brother at the other end of the field,' said Utgard. 'You didn't even see!'

'And what about the drinking horn?' asked Thor.

'That drinking horn is so big because it's connected to the sea. The water you drank was the sea itself! Nobody can drink the sea!' said Utgard.

'I thought it tasted salty,' said Thor. 'And the cat?'

'That's no ordinary cat, said Utgard. 'That cat was actually Jormungand, the snake who goes around the world. He changed into a cat, because I asked him. Not even a god can pick up Jormungand!'

'And the old lady?' asked Thor.



'That was no old lady,' said Utgard. 'That lady is old age itself. And nobody, not even a god, can stop old age.'

Thor was very angry, and lifted up his hammer Mjollnir to hit Utgard, king of the giants. 'I'll kill you all!' he shouted.

'Wait!' said Utgard. 'We have used magic to win against you, that's true. But we can use magic again if we want. I will protect my kingdom from the angry gods!'

Thor brought down his hammer as hard and as quickly as he could, but it touched nothing. Utgard and the giants' castle were gone. There was nothing there. Thor, Loki and Thialfi looked around, but there was no sign of a giant or of a castle.

'I think we'll have to walk home,' said Loki. 'And next time you get bored, think of something different to do!'

- THE END -

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