

ODIN'S TALES

By

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(6 M, 5 F, 8 Either)

- Odin: HE is narrator of stories and oldest of the gods.
- Loki: HE/SHE is always getting into trouble and full of mischief.
- Thor: HE is god of thunder and strongest of all the gods.
- Freya: SHE is a great goddess and gives advice about love.
- Hoenir: HE is an ancient god and brother of Odin.
- Idun: SHE is daughter-in-law to Odin and keeps the golden apples of youth.
- Thyrm: HE is a mischievous Frost Giant.
- Thjazi: HE is a mischievous Frost Giant who can turn into an eagle.
- Skadi: SHE is a Frost Giant and the daughter of Thjazi.
- Troll: HE/SHE is the keeper of the bridge.
- Goat 1: HE/SHE is the smallest goat.
- Goat 2: HE/SHE is the middle-sized goat.
- Goat 3: HE/SHE is the biggest goat.
- Fisherman: HE is very kind.
- Wife: SHE is very kind as well.
- Daughter: SHE is very honest.
- Extras: Giant, one/two gods, and Njord.

All parts, with the exception of Odin, Loki, and Freya can be doubled or even tripled.

TIME

Now

PLACE

Here

SPECIAL THANKS

A special thanks to the Lanesboro Community Theatre for commissioning this play as part of their summer series, especially Denny Bell who first approached me with the idea.

To my family, Melisa, Jackson and Sophia.

PRODUCTION NOTES

All stories are interpretations of traditional, Norwegian folk tales.

The set can be as simple as a bare set with a few large blocks to play with or as elaborate as you'd like it to be.

The costumes can also be very simple with bare representations for each character.

Essential props needed are: A feathered coat, an over-sized hammer, a stick, coil of rope, a canvas sack, a pail with scrub brush, and possible food items.

AT RISE: Odin, the narrator of our story, enters and stands center stage.

ODIN

Welcome. I am Odin. I am also known as “wild” or “filled with fury” and many refer to me as the god of war. I am not only the oldest of the gods but the father and ruler of the Norse gods, including the mortals, which I created. I’m not one to talk about myself, but like any good grandparent I love to tell stories, especially about my children and their friends. I must warn you, however, that these stories tend to get a little violent. We gods tend to kill and ask questions later. Let me give you a little example of what I mean. This is an old Norwegian children’s story.

(Goats and Troll enter.)

Once upon a time there were three billy goats, all named Gruff, who like all good Norwegians were to go up the hillside to make themselves fat. On the way up there was a bridge they had to cross. Under the bridge lived an ugly troll with eyes as big as saucers and a nose as long as a poker. The troll was generally very grumpy and was always looking for a fight. It wasn’t long before the youngest Billy Goat Gruff came to cross the bridge.

(Youngest Goat begins to cross. Everyone offstage says the following line to correspond with the goat’s steps.)

ALL

(High voices) Trip, trap, trip, trap, trip, trap, trip!

TROLL

Who’s that tripping over my bridge?

GOAT #1

Oh, it is only I, the tiniest Billy Goat Gruff.

TROLL

And what do you think you are doing?

GOAT #1

I’m going up to the hillside to make myself fat.

TROLL

I don’t think so. If you cross my bridge, I’ll come up there and gobble you up!

GOAT #1

Oh, no, please don’t eat me. I’m too little. Wait a bit till the second Billy Goat Gruff comes.

He's much bigger.

TROLL

A bigger goat, eh? Very well, be off with you. (Goat #1 quickly runs offstage.)

(Goat #2 enters and begins to cross the bridge.)

ALL

(Regular voices) Trip, trap, trip, trap, trip, trap, trip!

TROLL

Who's that tripping over my bridge?

GOAT #2

It is I, the second Billy Goat Gruff.

TROLL

And what is it that you think you are doing?

GOAT #2

I'm going up to the hillside to make myself fat.

TROLL

I don't think so. If you cross my bridge, I'll come up there and gobble you up!

GOAT #2

Oh, no, please don't eat me. Wait until the next Billy Goat Gruff comes. He's much bigger than I am and he'll make a great lunch.

TROLL

An even bigger goat, eh? Well, I am pretty hungry. Very well, be off with you! (Goat #2 quickly runs offstage.)

(Goat #3 enters and begins to cross the bridge.)

ALL

(Low voices) Trip, trap, trip, trap, trip, trap, trip!

TROLL

Who's that trip-trapping over my bridge?

GOAT #3

It's I, the biggest Billy Goat Gruff.

TROLL

The biggest Billy Goat Gruff?

GOAT #3

That's right. I'm going up to the hillside to get even bigger.

TROLL

Not today. I'm going to gobble you up!

GOAT #3

Well, come along! I've got two spears,
And I'll poke your eyeballs out your ears;
My hooves are like curling-stones,
And I'll crush you to bits, body and bones.

TROLL

Ha, we'll see about that!

(Troll comes out of hiding and attacks the goat. After a brief tussle, the goat gets the troll down.)

GOAT #3

And here are my horns, troll!

(The Goat is about to stab the Troll when they freeze.)

ODIN

I better stop it here. The rest isn't pretty.

ALL

Snip, snap, snout.

ODIN

This tale's told out. Now that you get the idea about how most of our stories end, let me tell you a story about my favorite son, Thor. (Actors enter and assume positions.) One morning Thor awoke to find his hammer, which was named Mjollnir, was missing. He looked everywhere but could not find it. Full of rage and desperation, he came across Loki lying in a meadow. Loki was born from two Frost Giants, but left his parents to live with the gods. We all loved him like our own son, but he was always making practical jokes.

THOR

Loki, have you seen my hammer?

LOKI

No, is it missing?

THOR

Don't play games with me, Loki. If you took my hammer as part of some joke, I swear I'll make sure you never laugh again.

LOKI

Listen, Thor, I would never do anything to make you angry, especially take your hammer. Come, let us go to Freya's palace. Perhaps she can help.

ODIN

While Loki didn't do it, he had a pretty good idea who did. But in order to make sure he needed the counsel of Freya. Freya was an important goddess and one to go to if there was advice to be sought.

LOKI

Greetings, Freya. I hope life finds you well.

FREYA

And you as well. What can I do for you?

LOKI

Thor has lost his hammer. We believe it has been stolen. Will you lend me your falcon-feathered cloak so that I may fly to the Hall of Giants? I will to speak to the Frost Giant Thrym. Perhaps he knows something we do not.

FREYA

Of course, Loki. Take it, and may it bring you what you are looking for.

(She hands Loki the coat and he puts it on and pretends to fly about the stage.)

ODIN

The falcon feathers whistled in the wind as Loki flew to the Hall of Giants. There he found Thrym, a great Frost Giant.

THRYM

Hello there, Loki. How are the gods? What brings you here to see me?

LOKI

Everyone is distraught, Thrym. Thor's hammer has been stolen. Have you heard anything?

THRYM

You were wise to come to me, Loki. I have stolen the hammer of thunder and buried eight miles deep in the earth.

LOKI

But why, Thrym? Why would you anger the gods?

THRYM

How else am I to get their attention? Tell them I will return the hammer if Freya agrees to be my bride. That is all.

ODIN

The feathers of Freya's coat whistled in the wind once more as Loki flew back to Freya's castle. Thor and Freya were waiting for him when he landed.

THOR

I hope you have returned with a message and are not up to some mischief! What news do you bring?

LOKI

I have only news and no mischief. The Frost Giant Thrym has stolen your hammer and hidden it. He will not return it until Freya agrees to become his bride.

FREYA

That is ridiculous. I am already married to Odr, and I certainly would not marry a Frost Giant!

THOR

But I need my hammer back. What else can we do?

LOKI

I thought hard on my journey back and I think I have a solution.

THOR

What is it?

LOKI

We will dress you as Freya.

THOR

What?

LOKI

Yes, we'll put you in a dress, pin large brooches upon your chest, hang women's keys at your waist, a cap upon your hair and hide your face behind a bridal veil.

THOR

This is another one of your tricks, Loki. Seeing me dress as a bride will give you a mighty laugh. Besides, there is no way Thrym will fall for such a trick.

FREYA

Hold your tongue, Thor. If we do not get that hammer back, the Frost Giants could decide to attack our palaces. Without your hammer, we could be easily defeated.

THOR

Then you should go.

FREYA

I've already told you why I can't. You have no choice but to try, Thor.

THOR

Fine, I'll do it. But I better get my hammer back.

LOKI

I'll accompany you on your journey, Thor. I'll disguise myself as your handmaid, and together we will make fools of ourselves in front of the giants.

THOR

Agreed. Come, we must get ready. (They exit. Thrym enters.)

ODIN

And so the mighty Thor did as Loki suggested and put on the dress, all of the attachments and the bridal veil over his face. Loki disguised himself as well. Meanwhile, back at the Hall of Giants, Thrym was eagerly preparing for the return of his new bride.

THRYM

Arise, Frost Giants, and place straw upon my benches. The gods may arrive at any time with my bride. I am happy that I have beautiful, gold-horned cattle grazing in my fields. I am happy that I possess a great treasure of gold and many gems. I am happy that I have much to delight my eyes. I lack only the beautiful Freya for my heart's content.

ODIN

It was not long before Thor and Loki arrived in their disguises. (They enter.)

THOR

This dress is ridiculous. I can barely walk and I can see through this veil.

LOKI

Keep it on, Thor! Thrym must not suspect a thing.

THRYM

Freya! You have arrived.

THOR

Yes. (Changes tone of voice) Yes, I came as soon as Loki told me of your love.

THRYM

You are most gracious. And who is with you?

THOR

This is my handmaid. (Loki bows)

THRYM

Of course. Well, I have arranged a giant's feast in celebration of your arrival. Will you please join us at our table?

THOR

Yes, of course. It has been a long journey and I am very hungry.

ODIN

Thor and Loki joined Thrym at the table. Thor was so hungry that he began to eat everything the giants put in front of him. He quickly consumed all the sweet dainties that had been set for the women and then moved on to eat a whole ox, eight large salmon and drank more than three horns of mead.

LOKI

Thor, slow down. You're drawing attention to yourself.

THOR

But this is really good food.

THRYM

Has any other bride ever had such a great appetite? Has any other bride even taken such big mouthfuls of food or drunk as much mead?

LOKI

Uhhmmm, Freya has so longed for her wedding day that she has not eaten for eight long days.

THRYM

Amazing! I truly admire a woman who can eat her fill and drink like a man. Come here, Freya, and let me give you a kiss.

THOR

Right now?

THRYM

Yes, of course.

THOR

Isn't there going to be desert?

THRYM

Your kiss will be desert enough.

THOR

Yes, but I really wanted some pie or something.

THRYM

One little kiss. Please, Freya.

LOKI

Thor, you must do this before he becomes angry.

THOR

Very well, you may kiss the bride.

THRYM

(He leans forward and lifts the veil, but jumps back in surprise.) How fierce my beloved's eyes are! Dangerous fires blaze forth beneath her brows.

LOKI

Freya has so longed for her wedding day that she has not slept for eight long nights.

THOR

Think of it as angry passion.

THRYM

Of course. My apologies, Freya. I should like to have that kiss now.

THOR

Let's not be hasty, Thrym. If you would honor my wishes, I should like to be married first.

THRYM

Certainly! Bring forth Thor's mighty hammer in order to bless this bride. Lay Mjollnir upon her lap and wish us joy as we join hands and make our marriage vows.

(A giant brings forth the hammer and sets it in Thor's lap.)

THOR

Yes! Mjollnir has returned to me. (Removes veil as Loki removes his disguise.)

THRYM

Wha...what is this! I have been tricked!

THOR

And now you'll be smashed, Thrym. (He raises his hammer and they all freeze.)

ODIN

Perhaps the tale should end here. As I mentioned before, things tend to get a little violent at the end. Let's just say Thor and Loki were the only ones left and Thor got his hammer back.

(The actors break their pose, perhaps looking a little dejected, and exit. Loki stays onstage. Hoenir enters.)

ODIN

The theft of Thor's hammer reminds me of another story. I was traveling with Loki and my brother, Hoenir. We were walking along when we saw a herd of oxen off in the distance. Well, we were pretty hungry so we caught one and prepared it for supper. After cooking it for a while, we sat under a large oak tree to eat our meal.

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