

YOUR VERY OWN NORDIC FABLE

No ordinary book!

**A book you can read again and again,
by yourself, with your friends, brothers, sisters or parents.
A brand new approach to Nordic mythology
that everyone will enjoy.**

You will be sucked into the world of Norse mythology, meet the ancient gods and terrible monsters - and whether the story has a happy or a tragic ending is entirely up to you.

You decide what happens!

**Do you want to help the thunder god Thor catch the terrible Midgard Serpent,
or would you prefer to betray him and help the frost giant Hymir?**

What will you say when the trickster god Loki asks you to become his ally?

And who will be your companion riding into battle when Ragnarok comes?

Do you want to help Odin the Allfather defeat the terrible Fenris wolf, defend Bifrost the rainbow bridge alongside the hero Tyr, or would you prefer to stay in Valhalla and defend the kingdom with the goddesses?

Are you a hero or a coward? A true friend or a villain?

Can you hold the biggest cat in the world or wrestle with old age?

And do you feel up to babysitting Loki's children?

Will you survive the book or be eaten by a terrible monster?

It's up to you.

**The possibilities are endless -
there are fifty different endings to this incredible book!**

But be careful,

because Norse mythology can be deadly!

**And remember, if the book has a
tragic ending - it's your fault.**

You're utterly speechless.

The Midgard Serpent is the most disgusting thing you've ever seen – including the week you got a stomach bug right after you ate a whole pizza with extra cheese. He's like a massive snake that seems never-ending.

His head is like someone chopped a potato into quarters: four appendages, each turning in a different direction, revolting antennae.

And the teeth.

So many razor sharp teeth!

The monster roars terribly and the din is like a horrible mix of the buzz from a festival and babies crying.

"He's grown a lot larger than we thought," bellows Thor, just before the beast lunges and headbutts the thunder god, toppling him overboard into the churning sea!

The Midgard Serpent watches your companion slip beneath the waves and screams with excitement. Then he turns his attention back to the boat.

"Is he looking at me?" you think, and then you notice the beast has no eyes. The serpent bellows again and then dives, so suddenly that the boat nearly capsizes.

"What's going on?" grunts Hymir, sitting up. You let go of the oars, move to where Thor was standing and grab onto the side of the boat. The stench that has followed the boat is overpowering on this side – there is clearly something disgusting in Thor's bag. You look around. Where did he go anyway? Did he drown?

And where did that disgusting serpent go? You can't see anything but the waves, which only rise higher and higher. It's all you can do to keep your balance in the boat. Hymir comes over and grabs you.

"What's going on?" he asks irritably. "I'm trying to sleep here." He gazes around. "Where did the thunder god go?"

The words are barely out of his mouth when Thor pops up out of the sea like a cork, some distance away.

The frost giant stares in disbelief at this great hero paddling about like the last Cheerio in a sea of milk. You can tell right away that the god doesn't know where he is. The sea is loud and if you fall overboard it's easy to get confused. It has started to rain.

"Thor," you shout as loud as you can and see him look round like a wild man when he hears someone calling. "We're over here!" you keep shouting.

He sees you. Like a mermaid, Thor sets off swimming, thrashing towards you.

Hymir watches with great interest, a slight smirk on his face.

Then he waddles back to the middle of the boat and tears one of the oars loose.

"What are you doing?" you ask, puzzled. The frost giant looks at you with stony eyes.

"He looks good splashing about. I just want to make sure he won't get back on board. The oar will see to that."

You can't believe your own ears. What kind of monster is this frost giant? If Thor doesn't get back aboard the boat, the serpent will catch him! Hymir looks at you. Is there a problem?"* he asks. You're completely lost for words. You sit yourself down and catch a whiff of the stink billowing up around you.

"OK, what is that?" you mutter, snatching up the heavy sack. You shove one arm inside and start rummaging around.

"A head," says Hymir absent-mindedly, not taking his eyes off Thor approaching the boat. The frost giant holds on tightly to the oar and lifts it up – as if he intends to slam it right into Thor's head as he grabs onto the boat.

There's still no sign of the serpent. You wrench your arm up out of the sack.

It's covered in foul smelling slime. And some sort of red stuff.

"A head?!" you ask, shocked. The frost giant nods.

"An ox head. For the serpent." Then he smirks. "But it looks like we won't be needing it. The thunder god seems to be fine bait," and he points laughing out to sea. You see immediately that he's right.

A short distance from the boat, Thor is swimming at full speed.

And behind him – at full speed with his gigantic jaw wide open – the revolting Midgard Serpent!

What are you going to do?

**If you want to try to take the oar from Hymir
so that Thor can get aboard in one piece, turn to page 91.
If you want to jump overboard and swim to meet Thor,
turn as quick as you can to page 357.
Use the head! If you want to try and use the ox head as bait
and attempt to distract the serpent, turn to page 434.**

Let's stop that confounded frost giant!

You decide to try and take the oar from Hymir.

This giant is broader, stronger and taller than you, so there's no chance you can snatch the oar away from him, even if you managed to take him by surprise. You have to find another way.

The serpent approaches Thor at full speed and it's almost as if he's crawling *on the surface* of the water, he's going so fast! The thunder god puts his head down and swims so fast he must have set a Nordic record in outdoor sea swimming!

The serpent hisses and Thor speeds up. If you're going to do something, you have to do it *now!*

Hymir stands by the edge of the boat holding onto the oar with both hands, ready to whack Thor as soon as he gets close enough.

What can you do?!

Suddenly you have an idea. Yes, the frost giant is bigger and stronger than you – but that also means that he's heavier than you! You know that from experience, after trying to push him earlier today. But this time you're not going to push him in the middle – that's where he's heaviest. You start running, bellowing fiercely, and throw yourself with all your might at the back of his knees. The frost giant's legs buckle beneath him.

"*Ah-*" is the only thing Hymir manages to shout before he topples forwards and does a massive belly flop into the sea.

And then he sinks.

The oar floats right beside the boat. You look up.

Thor is almost upon you.

And the serpent is almost upon Thor!

The beast opens his jaw still wider, and it seems like a shudder works up its body right before the monster spews poison in all directions. Thor

roars and changes from front crawl to breaststroke and then back to front crawl – just to confuse the serpent.

“*Keep going!*” you shout, standing right by the edge of the boat.

“*He’s almost got you!*” Thor switches quickly to backstroke but decides that’s not a good idea (mainly because of the view, which is the gaping maw of a hideous nightmare) and switches back to front crawl. He’s doing well. It’s going to be all right. Everything’s going to work out. You start giggling and before you know it, laughter escapes from your mouth.

You stick one foot up on the edge of the boat and stand there like a hero on a film poster. Just like Thor stood before.

Your hair blows in the wind, you breathe deep and smile.

This is absolutely, completely brilli-

All of a sudden something grabs your leg.

“Runt!” snorts the frost giant Hymir through a mouthful of water.

He made it back to the surface!

The frost giant grasps your leg tight and you can feel his disgusting nails digging through your trousers and into your flesh. And then, with one quick tug, he pulls you overboard.

You splash into the ice cold sea and before you manage to do anything a wave surges right into your face, submerging you. For a split second you don’t know which way is up.

Sea water goes up your nose and your eyes sting. Finally you manage to drag yourself up to the surface.

At first you can’t see anything. Where did everybody go? You look around as fast as you can, trying to wipe the sea out of your eyes.

You are almost right next to the boat.

Thor is right beside you!

Which means that the serpent is also right beside you!

“Runt!” you hear again, this time behind you.

You turn as quick as you can and look straight into the eyes of the frost giant Hymir. He’s clambered back aboard the boat and is holding the oar over his head with both hands.

But this time he’s not going to hit Thor – now *you* are the target.

“Wait!” is the only thing you manage to shout before Hymir slams the oar into your head.

You sink to the bottom and are never found.

THE END.

Swim!

You decide to jump overboard and save Thor.

The frost giant is still standing at the edge of the boat, watching with excitement. The serpent approaches Thor at full speed and it's almost as if he's crawling *on the surface* of the water, he's going so fast! The thunder god puts his head down and swims even faster. If you're going to do something, you have to do it *now!*

You jump into the sea.

The waves are high and the sea is incredibly cold.

But you don't let that stop you and set off swimming as fast as you can towards the thunder god. At the same time, of course, you're swimming towards the serpent, but you try not to think too much about that. Thor powers forward, not noticing anything going on around him. So he is shocked when you almost crash into him.

"What are you doing here?" he shouts as he swims past you at full speed.

"The serpent's coming!"

"I'm here to save -" is the only thing you manage to say before the Midgard Serpent sinks his teeth into you.

THE END.

Setting the bait

You decide to use the head! No matter how disgusting the thought of the head in the sack is, you have to grit your teeth and get it out. You plunge your arm in again but jerk it out immediately. Something pricked you. You look at your palm and see that it's bleeding. There's clearly something sharp lurking in there as well.

“He’ll never make it back aboard,” laughs Hymir, watching Thor and the serpent excitedly. “Jormungandur is hungry today.” You look out to sea. The serpent approaches Thor at full speed and it’s almost as if he’s crawling *on the surface* of the water, he’s going so fast! The beast hisses and Thor speeds up. If you’re going to do something, you have to do it *now!*

You wipe the blood on your trousers and instead of blindly sticking your hand back in the sack, you tip it up and empty it into the boat. Out rolls a revolting ox head and a gigantic, razor sharp hook tied to a rope. The ox’s eyes are still open and its swollen black tongue lolls out of its half-open jaw. The stench intensifies and it takes some effort to avoid simply throwing up all over the head, the hook and the boat.

You look at Hymir – he hasn’t noticed anything.

“All right, then,” you mutter as you pick up the sharp hook and inspect it. You’re careful not to let it prick you again.

The rope tied to it is thick and rough and even if you grasped it with both hands you still wouldn’t get them all the way round. “What am I supposed to do with this rubbish?” you mutter, looking back and forth at the hook and the head.

And then you work it out.

You’ve been fishing a few times and you know that if you want to catch a fish, you have to use good bait.

Some people use worms, some people use sweets and some people use their little brothers and sisters (although this rarely works and I certainly don’t recommend it). You realise that this time the bait is an ox head.

A disgusting, foul smelling, slimy and slightly rotten ox head.

“He’s getting him! He’s getting him! *Iamsoexcited*” Hymir screams happily and you know that it’s now or never.

You have to get the head onto the hook!

You take a firm hold of the ox’s horns and lay it on its neck. The softest part is under the head, where the neck joined onto the body before it was chopped off.

It’s easiest to get the hook through there. Something vile leaks from the wound, the stink is overwhelming and when you see a whole family of little white maggots crawling about in the wound, you throw up a little.

“I can’t do this ...” you say quietly as you spit the vomit over the side of the boat.

“Mmm ... what’s that smell?” sighs the frost giant, without taking his eyes of Thor and the serpent. He mustn’t find out what you’re trying to do. You have to lie to him.

“Umm ... I ...” you say, and try to sound as convincing as you possibly can, “I was just ...” and you think as fast as you can, “I just farted,” you say finally, and hold your breath. The frost giant finally snorts contentedly.

“Good,” he says. “More of that, please.” Hymir prances excitedly by the edge of the boat, waving the oar about and giggling – like a little kid. You haven’t seen anyone so excited since the Icelandic football team qualified for the European Championship.

The waves get higher and higher the closer the vile serpent gets to the boat and you know you can’t give up. You pick up the heavy, rusty hook and lodge it as fast as you can in the ox’s neck.

There is a low *plomp* sound as the hook breaks the surface.

Pus and maggots spurt all over the place – including onto you! But you don’t have a spare moment to think about that. You take a tight hold of the hook to check that it’s definitely fixed and then – as if you’re competing in a strongman competition – you drag it to the side of the boat.

Thor is an excellent swimmer and has made it so close to the boat that you can see his face. When he spots the ox head, his expression of terror changes to the biggest smirk you have ever seen. Then he starts roaring with laughter – which is very difficult when you’re swimming. Hymir finally looks away from the thunder god, because he can tell something is definitely up. Why on earth is he laughing? Doesn’t he know that there’s a disgusting monster behind him?

The frost giant looks around and sees you standing by the edge of the boat. If you didn’t know any better, you could think that the ox was cheekily sticking its tongue out at him.

“*Come here!*” the frost giant bellows and rushes towards you. “*Don’t!*”

What are you going to do?

If you want to throw the head into the sea, turn to page 53.

If you dare to take on Hymir, turn as quick as you can to page 396.

If you just can’t decide, turn in your own good time to page 140.



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