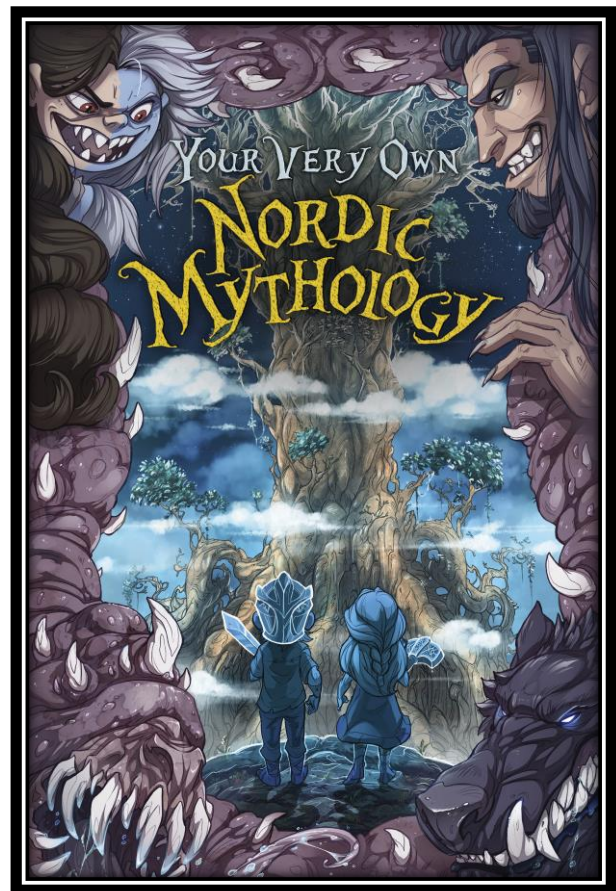
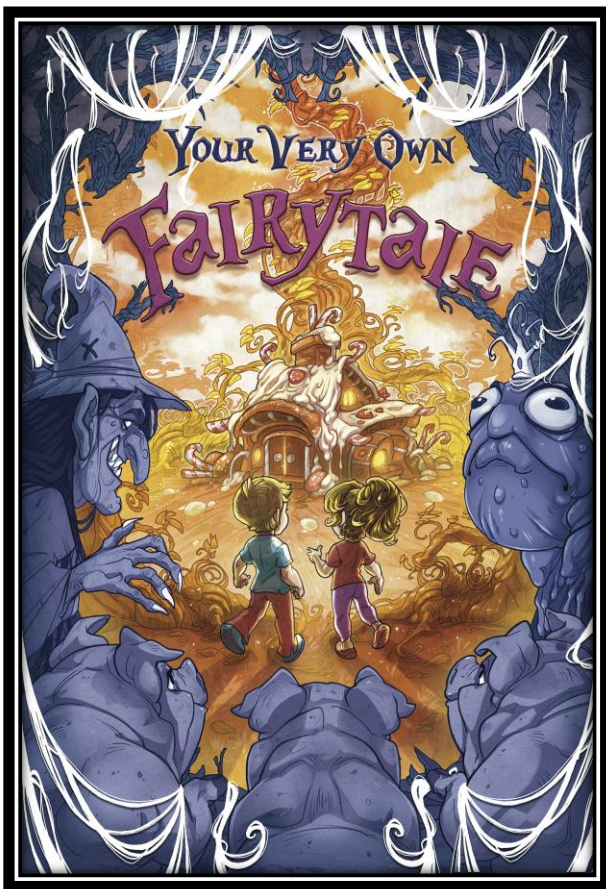


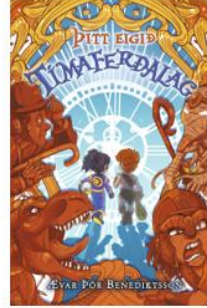
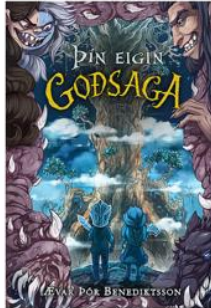
“YOUR VERY OWN” SERIES

by
AEVAR THOR BENEDIKTSSON

An Interactive Reading Experience
You Decide What Happens! For 8+



“YOUR VERY OWN” SERIES



YOUR VERY OWN FABLE 305 pp, publ. 2014

YOUR VERY OWN NORDIC MYTHOLOGY 450 pp, publ. 2015

YOUR VERY OWN SPOOKY STORY 282 pp, publ. 2016

YOUR VERY OWN FAIRYTALE 309 pp, publ. 2017

YOUR VERY OWN TIME TRAVEL 420 pp, publ. 2018

YOUR VERY OWN VIDEO GAME 400 pp, publ. 2019

**The reader is the main character and decides what happens
by making a series of choices.**

**In every book he visits a different world,
whether it is the world of Icelandic folklore, the Norse gods
or just what could possibly be the scariest night of his life.**

**Different endings, some happy, others not so happy,
all depending on the reader's choice!**



Aevor Thor Benediktsson (b. 1984) has become popular for his entertaining children's books and programmes, on the television and radio. He has won awards for scripts and stage plays as well as a recognition for his work in science and education. Benediktsson has also received numerous awards for his TV series about Aevor the scientist.

Aevor Thor Benediktsson's *Your Own Time-Travel Adventure* seems bound to become one of the year's bestsellers, which should come as no surprise, as other titles in the series have been extremely popular in recent years and received a number of awards. *Your Own Time-Travel Adventure* is the fifth book in the series, and just like before, the reader is in the driver's seat. This time, there are over 60 possible endings to choose from. A new play based on the series will premiere at the National Theatre of Iceland in January, and a new book about the adventures of Aevor the Science Man is expected this spring.

"It's amazing how well it's gone. What I'm doing clearly works and appeals to both children and parents. I can't be anything but extremely pleased," says Aevor Thor.

What is it about these books that children find so appealing?

"I think it's the blend of suspense and humor. The format of these books is such that the reader is in charge, which helps create some great family time. Parents read the books with their children, siblings read together, or friends read together. As author, my job is to regularly discover new worlds that I can turn into playgrounds for readers."

As you said, the reader is in the driver's seat with these books, and there are all sorts of possibilities. Have you heard about children who try them all?

"When *Your Own Fable* came out, I met some kids who told me they'd read the whole book, and they greatly emphasized the word 'whole.' A tiny girl who came up to me with the book said she'd tried all the options she could find and later flipped through the whole book to make sure she hadn't left anything out.

"This new book has more than 60 possible endings. You can read it over and over again and it'll never be the same twice, which makes for great conversations between children who've chosen different paths when they read. Suddenly they're talking about books the way they usually talk about movies or TV shows."

From an interview in *Frettabladid daily*, 2018

- In Other Words Shortlist, UK, 2018 (Aevar the Scientist)
- The Icelandic Booksellers' Prize 2017 (2nd place) for the Best Children's Book of the Year (Your Very Own Fairytale)
- Nominated for The Icelandic Literary Prize for Children and Young People's Books 2017 (Your Very Own Fairytale)
- Selected for the Hay Festival's Aarhus 39 List 2017
– A Collection of the 39 Best Emerging Writers for Young People from Across Europe
- Nominated for the Icelandic Literary Prize for Children and YA Books 2016 (The Robot Attack)
- Finalist and first International Selection of the DeBary Outstanding Children's Book Awards 2016 (Dinosaurs in Reykjavik)
- Special Award from the Icelandic government in the autumn of 2016, for contribution to the Icelandic language
- The Icelandic Booksellers' Prize 2016 (2nd place) for the Best Children's Book of the Year (Your Very Own Spooky Story)
- The Icelandic Booksellers' Prize 2015 (3rd place) for the Best Children's Book of the Year (Your Very Own Nordic Mythology)
- The Children's Choice Book Prize 2015 as the Best Children's Book of the Year (Your Very Own Fable)
- The Icelandic Booksellers' Prize 2014 for the Best Children's Book of the Year (Your Very Own Fable)
- Edda Awards Winner - Best Children's Programme, 2015 (Aevar the Scientist)
- Edda Awards Winner - Best Children's Programme, 2016 (Aevar the Scientist)
- Edda Awards Winner - Best Entertainment Programme, 2016 (Aevar the Scientist)
- Edda Awards Winner - Best Children's Programme, 2017 (Aevar the Scientist)

REVIEWS

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Your Very Own Fable is a very exciting and an original book.
It's incredibly fun to be able to be the hero of the story and decide your own fate.

MORGUNBLADID DAILY

Your Very Own Nordic Mythology is an interesting and fun experiment
which will without a doubt be a hit with young readers.

FRETTABLADID DAILY

Your Very Own Spooky Story is by no means a regular book
- but that is what makes it unique.

MORGUNBLADID DAILY

Your Very Own Fairytale is extremely funny and imaginative. BOKMENNTIR.IS

"From cover to cover, this book educates readers in an exciting and at times humorous manner. Readers are invited to meet Vikings, dinosaurs, T-rex, giant rats, and Romans, to travel to Egypt or into outer space, to explore plastic islands, to easily travel thousands of years into the past or the future – and much more."

MORGUNBLADID DAILY, ON YOUR OWN TIME-TRAVEL ADVENTURE

"The 'secret' ingredient' is that Aevar Thor Benediktsson is extremely skilled at placing the reader in the center of the reading experience and giving him or her control of the process. His prankish, schoolyard sense of humor is always on hand, making sure that no one gets too frightened, despite all the horrors on offer."

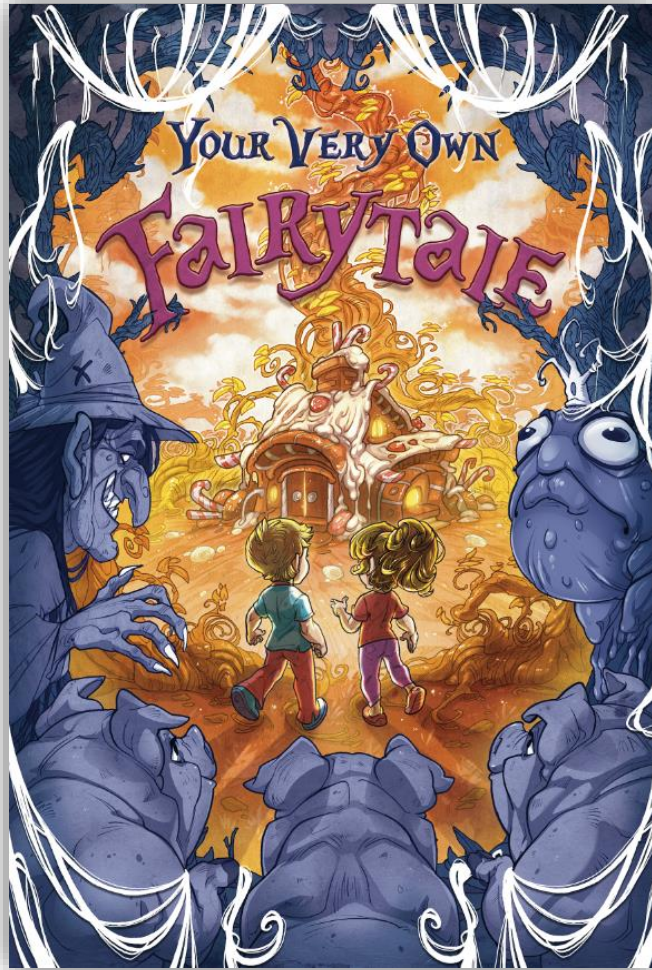
THE ICELANDIC LITERATURE CENTER

"Will appeal to anyone ... who is looking for a good yarn with plenty of action."

JILL COLEMAN, JUDGE OF BOOK TRUST, UK (ON AEVAR THE SCIENTIST)

"The author's command of teen-age angst is the salient feature of this prizeworthy book. In sum: This is an author who needs an English language edition."

THE JUDGES OF THE 2016 DE BARY OUTSTANDING CHILDREN'S SCIENCE BOOK AWARDS, US



YOUR VERY OWN FAIRYTALE is the fourth book in the ever-popular **Your own-** series. Here, you are the hero and you control the action. The setting is a very dangerous fairytale forest, packed full of strange creatures and monsters. Will you end up in the stomach of a wolf, or do you let yourself be tricked by a delicious gingerbread house? Will the thorn bush entangle you, or would you rather climb up a giant beanstalk? It's your choice!

- **Over 50 different endings.**
- **Endings include everything from eternal happiness to sudden death.**

PAGES 23-24

You're standing on the far edge of an enormous field. It's even colder here than in the forest.

In the distance is the most stunning castle that you have ever seen. You haven't actually seen many real castles in your life, but you can tell that this one is pretty darn spectacular. Numerous towers, an amazing drawbridge – there's even a moat* so that the castle is difficult to reach.

And then there's the hedge of thorns.

You were never really sure what the "hedge of thorns" meant. You expected something similar to a rosebush, with a thorn or two sticking out here and there. Something that would be easy to get past. Something low enough to step over.

The monstrous thing in front of you is definitely not like that. The hedge of thorns rises like a terrible wall around the kingdom. From where you're standing you can barely see over the top of it, and it seems like even the moat is full of thorns.

You walk carefully along the field until you get right up to the hedge of thorns.

*A moat is a deep trench that was often dug around castles.

The drawbridge would lay overtop so that it was possible to raise it and prevent unwelcome visitors from entering the castle. The author of this book thinks that we should all take up this tradition again. Then you could just raise the drawbridge if any boring guests came over, and say: "Sorry, no visitors today. The drawbridge is broken!"

There's a strange, sour smell coming from it, almost like it's starting to rot, even though it's standing up straight. You've seen barbed wire fences before, but they're nothing compared to this. Some of the thorns are tiny, like slivers. Others are the size of a bus.

Suddenly you see something.

Inside the hedge.

What the heck is that? You stretch left and right to get a better look, but the hedge of thorns is so dense that you can't see through. The only option is to push a few thorns out of the way.

At eye-level is a thorn the size of a kitchen knife.

It's pointing right at you.

This is awfully tempting.

You squint your eyes – yes, there's definitely something there beyond the thorns.

Your curiosity is killing you.

What are you going to do?

If you want to try to see what's hiding inside the hedge of thorns, turn to page 234. Be careful though, because you will have to push a few thorns aside to see better.

If you don't dare to touch it, turn to page 274.

PAGES 234-235

You touch the hedge of thorns

It can't be dangerous to touch the hedge just a tiny bit. Just push it a tad? Maybe just with your pinky finger?

You move your finger extremely slowly towards the tip of the thorn and touch it.

Just a little.

A tiny bit.

A titch.

Excruciating pain jolts through your body. It's like you've gotten an electric shock.

An "Ow!" slips from your lips and you jerk your hand away.

"Woah," you think. "Let's just let Prince take care of that." Without even thinking, you look at your pinky finger to see if everything's ok.

A tiny, pitch-black sliver is stuck beneath your skin.

You thoroughly examine your finger, but don't see anything else. You sigh and laugh. Although it's ridiculously annoying to get a sliver in your finger, it's not so bad. You stare at the sliver and smile.

"Alright then," you say, and start to speak to the sliver in a cutesy voice. "Should I use a fingernail to get you out, or maybe chew you loose ..." but you don't get any further.

The black sliver twitches, and then moves.

You shriek.

What was that?!

You stare at the sliver, now in a completely new spot on your fingertip. Are you hallucinating? Maybe it was there the whole...

It moves again.

And this time it disappears.

Into your finger!

You shriek again.

Where did it go? What happened? A strange, dull pain begins in your finger and moves at record speed into your palm. It's like the sliver has tunneled into you and is moving around. You try your best to scratch at the spots where you feel it moving, but it's just too deep!

Now it's in your arm!

Now your chest.

And now it's in your heart...

You fall forward.

The hedge of thorns grabs you.

THE END

You leave the thorns untouched

If enchantment has anything to do with this, then it's definitely safest to keep away from the hedge of thorns.

You walk back to the edge of the forest and call your companions. Slowly but surely, they emerge from the woods. Prince ties his horse to a tree at a secure distance and stares at the forbidding sight. "It's incredible," he cries. "Just look at that!" Gretel looks at him, annoyed.

"What did you think it was?" she asks. He shrugs his shoulders.

"A hedge of thorns, of course," is his answer. Gretel gestures to the hedge.

"That is obviously the hedge of thorns. What did you think the phrase 'hedge of thorns' actually meant?" Prince looks away, embarrassed.

"I didn't think it would be so enormous," he mumbles.

"Let's get a better look," you say, and you all set off.

You are standing at the hedge of thorns. It's freezing here.

"Alright," you say. "It's terrifyingly enormous, there's no doubt about it." Prince nods. Hans walks up to the thorns and inspects them, fascinated. "What do we do now?" you mutter.

"Well first of all," Prince says, drawing his sword, "no one should touch them." Hans stops, his nose practically in the hedge. Gretel runs to him and pulls him back.

"Be careful, you numbskull!" she hisses at him sweetly.* Hans nods his head.

“I just wanted to take a look,” he says. “I thought I saw something.” You look at him. Maybe he saw the same thing you did just now.

“He’s not goofing around,” you say. “I saw something in there too.”

Prince puts on a heroic expression.

“Stand aside,” he exclaims, brandishing his sword. He marches to the place where Hans had stood. “Here?” he asks, nodding his head toward the hedge.

“Yeah,” Hans says. Prince thinks for a moment, smiles impressively, and then swings his sword – into the hedge. Thick, black branches fall the the ground. Black sap leaks from the cut ends of the stalks onto the grass.

“Watch out for slivers!” Prince shouts excitedly as he continues hacking his way into the hedge. “Aha!” is heard from behind the branches. “Take that!” Prince yells cheerfully. “And that!”

And then he is silent.

Suddenly, all the noise stops.

You race to the hedge.

“Are you ok?” you ask as Prince recoils backwards out of the tunnel he has slashed. Black slime covers his well-polished armour and his face is white. Prince throws his sword down and loses his balance, landing heavily on his rear end. His armour clatters as he hits the ground.

*To be able to hiss sweetly at someone is a talent that only siblings possess.

“What?” Hans asks. “Did you damage your sword?” Prince’s eyes have grown wide. He stares ahead of him. “It got them...” he says quietly, pointing into the hedge of thorns. A cold chill shakes your body. You peek. Prince didn’t manage to get very far in, but he got far enough to reveal what’s hidden there.

Right at the end of the tunnel you see a man.

And behind him, another man.

And not far from them is the third.

And behind him is a whole heap of men.

Some of them haven’t been there long, and it’s almost as if they’re sleeping. Others have started to rot. At least two are practically skeletons.

They are all wearing armour. Some have capes, others are wearing crowns.

“Princes...” you say under your breath. What were these guys thinking? What made them believe they could just wade into the hedge of thorns? It’s enchanted – you have to be careful.

“It got them,” Prince mumbles. “I thought that they had all given up. The stories said so,” he shakes his head in disbelief, “but that’s not what really happened. The hedge of thorns got them. Swallowed them whole.” He looks at you, horrified. “It ate them.”

You look into the tunnel.

The man nearest you is pretty well-preserved and from a distance it’s almost as if he is standing there waiting for you. Prince hasn’t hacked all the way to the man, but you can still see him well. The black branches of the hedge hug him tightly – almost as if they don’t want to let him go. You see a bit of a thorny branch that seems to be creeping out of his ear.

“Ew,” you say softly.

You’ve barely let the word fall, when the man’s eyes open wide!

You scream.

“What?” Prince shouts. Perhaps he was upset a moment ago, but his blue blood is clearly in the right place when he’s needed. He jumps to his feet, swings his sword artfully in one hand, while pushing the children back with the other.

“He’s alive!” you cry, pointing. Prince sticks out his perfect chin and walks determinedly back into the tunnel. The half-dead prince still has his eyes open. He is shaking and making a strange sound. Prince doesn’t take his eyes off of him. The siblings sneak into the tunnel after Prince. You don’t even consider following them.

“Aren’t you going to free him?” asks Hans in a high voice. Prince shakes his head.

“We’re going to wait for a minute,” he answers decisively. “We don’t know what effect the hedge has on people. He might have been a hero before he came here, but there’s no knowing who he is now.”

“Do you know him?” Gretel asks. For one single moment, Prince lowers his sword.

“Yes” he says in a quivering voice. “I have seen him fight here and there. We princes meet often and compete with each other.” He sighs. “He was foolhardy, but no coward.” The man twitches and in a flash, Prince lifts his sword once more.

“What should we do?” you call into the tunnel. Hans and Gretel look at you, terrified, while Prince prepares himself for the worst. The man’s lips tremble.

“I think he’s trying to talk!” Prince yells. You peek into the tunnel and see that he’s right.

*It is sometimes said that royalty have blue blood. This is total nonsense, of course. Everyone knows that royals have bright green blood.

While the hedge squeezes him this way and that, the man is trying to say something. His lips quiver and for a moment it seems as if he must have a nervous tic. Suddenly the man stretches his mouth open wide. You hear a loud *plop* sound as his lips come apart. Prince takes a few steps back and nearly steps on the children. The man's jaw is gaping but you can't hear if anything is coming out.

"Is he talking?" you call. Prince stares at the man, who is certainly trying to say something, but no matter how he tries, no sound comes out. He makes faces and you can see that it's an incredible effort. You can also see that it hurts.

"What?" Prince shouts. "What do you want from us? Speak!" The man groans and strains so terribly that a small amount of colour at last returns to his pale cheeks. You see that Prince has begun to shake, and as if to confirm your suspicions, you hear his armour rattling. He is deathly afraid. All of a sudden you get the very strong feeling that you shouldn't be here at all. "Speak!" Prince commands, much louder than before – and that seems to be enough. The man opens his mouth wide and finally manages to scream one, single word:

"Run!"

He has barely uttered the word when thorny vines push themselves forcefully out of his mouth, wind around his head, and drag him deeper into the hedge. Prince, Hans, and Gretel scream in disgust.

A horrible sound begins to echo all around you. It is piercing and uncomfortable, like two stones being ground together.

It's the sound of the hedge.

The tunnel begins to close. Prince, Hans, and Gretel are still inside.

You look at the ground and see that the green grass everywhere around you is becoming blacker and blacker.

Suddenly you understand how all the princes ended up inside the hedge of thorns.

It wasn't clumsiness or foolhardiness. The mistake they made was in thinking that the hedge always remained in the same place. It's not like that at all.

The hedge is growing! The hedge is getting bigger!

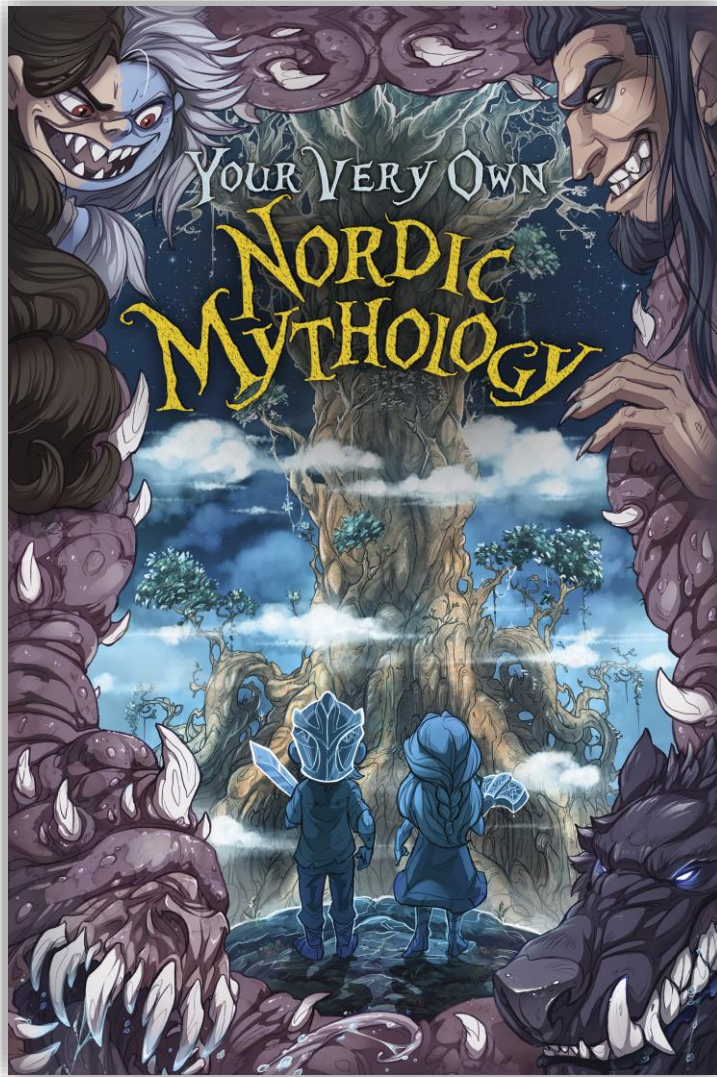
Branches and twigs and thorns burst out of the pitch-black earth everywhere around you.

What are you going to do?

If you want to run away, turn to page 49.

If you want to try to save Prince, Hans, and Gretel out of the tunnel before it closes, turn to page 308.

It's enchanted. If you want to think it over and try to find some way to turn the tables, go to page 212.



YOUR VERY OWN NORDIC MYTHOLOGY is 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.

Norse mythology is full of giants and monsters, gods and heroes. But what would you do if you were to meet these creatures? Here you are the hero and you decide what happens. It is set in the world of Norse mythology, with dangers lurking at every step. Take part in adventures with Thor the god of thunder, climb the Yggdrasil Ash tree, or try to survive Ragnarök itself – all depending on the choices you make.

Enjoy – and good luck!

- More than fifty different endings, from eternal happiness to sudden death.

PAGES 300-303

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! *I am so excited!*" 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 off 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.**

