

Thor's Hammer

A story from Scandinavia

Thor was the god of thunder. He was a great giant of a god with wild, red hair. When he threw his magic hammer, thunder rolled, lightning flashed, and his hammer flew back to his hand. He loved fighting and feasting, and was always ready for any adventure.



Thor was also the god of law and order. He was usually in a good mood, but he could get angry very quickly. The other gods were very fond of him,

56

but thought he wasn't very bright, and sometimes made fun of him.



Thor woke up one morning and reached out for his great hammer.

He always put it right beside his bed each night, but this morning he couldn't find it. He felt around, his huge fingers scrabbling on the floor, but it wasn't there. He sat up, opened his eyes, and roared, "Where's my hammer?" The mountains rattled and the clouds trembled in the sky.

Thor shouted and stormed about, looking for his hammer. The other gods were worried; there would be no peace until Thor's hammer was found. They had a quick conference, and decided that the god Loki should go in search of it.

57

Loki went to the beautiful goddess, Freya. He borrowed her magic cloak, and flew swiftly to the Land of the Giants. There, among the mountains covered with ice and snow, he met an enormous frost giant named Thrym. "What are you doing here?" Thrym shouted.

"I'm looking for Thor's hammer. Have you seen it?" asked Loki. Thrym grinned, his beard crackling with ice. "I stole it," he growled. "I've hidden it so deep in the earth, no one will ever find it. I'll only give it back if Freya will marry me."

Loki flew back to Thor and told him the news. Together they went to see Freya. "I'll never marry that horrible giant, Thrym," she screamed furiously. The other gods came to see what the noise was all about. They tried to persuade Freya to marry Thrym, but she just screamed, "No, no, no." Then the god, Heimdall, said, "I've got an idea. We'll dress Thor in a white dress like a

bride, and cover his head with a veil. Then he can go to Thrym, pretending to be Freya, and get his hammer back. Simple!"

"What a stupid idea. I won't do it," roared Thor, but the other gods persuaded him to try. They dressed him up so he was covered in beautiful white clothes, veils and precious jewels. Then they dressed Loki up as his maid. Still grumbling, Thor set off with Loki for the Land of the Giants.

Thrym welcomed them and invited them into his huge hall, where a great wedding feast was ready. With great ceremony, Thrym led Thor to the head of the table, and sat beside him. "What would you like to eat, my dear?" he asked. "Perhaps some salmon, and a little slice of roasted ox?"

Thor was hungry. Keeping his face hidden under the veil, he grabbed and ate three whole

salmon, and a whole roasted ox. Then he drank six cups of wine. Thrym watched in surprise.

"What a splendid appetite you have, my dear," he said fondly, but thinking that his new bride would cost a lot to feed. Loki was afraid that Thrym would guess there was something strange about his bride-to-be. He whispered to Thrym, "Freya's been so excited about marrying you, she hasn't eaten for five days."

Thrym smiled with pleasure, and raised the veil to give his bride a kiss. When he saw two huge red eyes glaring at him, he jumped back. "Don't worry. Freya hasn't been able to sleep for seven nights just thinking about you," whispered Loki. Thrym was delighted that his bride was so eager to marry him.

When the feast was over, Thrym called for Thor's hammer to be brought to the hall. He placed it on the bride's knees as a

present. Thor leaped up, threw off his veil, and swinging his hammer around his head, shouted, "I'm Thor and this is my hammer." Then he and Loki fought their way through the astonished giants, and out of the hall.

Laughing that the trick had worked, and trailing his ruined bridal clothes behind him, Thor led Loki back to the other gods. He showed them that he had his precious hammer back, and no one ever dared steal it again.

