

Loki and the Gifts
By Nicole Robinson

Sources

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Major Parts:

Loki
Thor
Brokk

Minor parts (one person can play multiple):

Sif
The Sons of Ivaldi (*one person can play all three sons of Ivaldi; use different voices*)
Etri
Odin
Frey

(text in italics are directions)

Thor: *(waking and stretching, looks over at Sif)* Ah, my beautiful Sif. With your blue eyes and pale skin, red lips, and dazzling smile. And, of course, your long, long hair, the color of a field of barley at the end of summer... Wait. *(Worried)* Sif?

Sif: *(waking)* What is it Thor?

Thor: *(puzzled)* What happened to you?"

Sif: *(also puzzled)* What are you talking about?" *(moves slightly, then touches her head)* My hair!

Thor: It is gone. He has left you bald.

Sif: He?

Thor: Loki! Loki has done this.

Sif: Why do you say that?

Thor: Because, when something goes wrong, the first thing I always think is, "it is Loki's fault." It saves a lot of time. Where is my belt of power, Megingjord?

Sif: You can throw Loki around normally, do you really need twice your strength?

Thor: *(Holding up his belt)* Yes.

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Thor: Of course his door is locked. *(breaks down the door)* Loki! WHY!?

Loki: Why what?

Thor: Sif's hair! My wife's golden hair! It was so beautiful. Why did you cut it off?

Loki: I, well, you see.

Thor: LOKI!

Loki: Well, I was drunk. It was funny.

Thor: Sif's hair was her glory. People will think that her head was shaved for punishment! That she did something she should not have done!

Loki: Well, yes. There is that. They will probably think that. And unfortunately, given that I took her hair from the roots, she will go through the rest of her life completely bald...

Thor: No, she won't.

Loki: I am afraid she will. But there are always hats and scarves...

Thor: She won't go through life bald, because, Loki Laufey's son, if you do not put her hair back right now I am going to break every single bone in your body. Each and every one of them. And if her hair does not grow properly, I will come back and break every bone in your body again. And again. If I do it every day, I'll soon get really good at it.

Loki: No! I can't put her hair back. It doesn't work like that.

Thor: Today, it will probably take me about an hour to break every bone in your body. But I bet that with practice I could get it down to about fifteen minutes. It will be interesting to find out!

Loki: Dwarfs!

Thor: Hmm?

Loki: Dwarfs! They can make anything! They could make golden hair for Sif, hair that would bond with her scalp and grow normally, perfect golden hair. They could do it. I swear they could.

Thor: Then, you had better go and talk to them.

Loki: Umm, just let me get my shoes... that's a long trip if you can't fly.

Loki: All right, Svartalfheim... Home to the dwarfs and their workshops. Let's see, who are the most ingenious craftsmen of them all? Surely the three sons of Ivaldi. Now, where are they.

Son 1: What do you want?

Loki: Hmm? Oh, hello, sons of Ivaldi. I have asked around, and people here tell me that Brokk and Eitri, his brother, are the greatest dwarf craftsmen there are or have ever been.

Son 1: No. It's us. We are the greatest craftsmen there are.

Loki: I am assured that Brokk and Eitri can make treasures as good as those you can.

Tallest Son: Lies! I wouldn't trust those fumble-fingered incompetents to shoe a horse.

Wisest Son: Whatever they make, we could do better.

Loki: I hear that they've challenged you. Three treasures. The gods of the Aesir will judge who made the best treasure. Oh, and by the way, one of the treasures you make needs to be hair. Ever-growing perfect golden hair.

Son 1: We can do that.

Loki: Well, good luck! I'm off across the mountain to check on them.

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Loki: How do you tell those three apart? Ah, hello Brokk, Eitri.

Brokk: What do you want?

Loki: Well, Ivaldi's sons are making three treasures as gifts for the gods of Asgard. The gods are going to judge the treasures. Ivaldi's sons want me to tell you that they are certain you and your brother Eitri can't make anything as good as they can. Actually, they called you 'fumble-fingered incompetents.'

Brokk: This smells extremely fishy to me, Loki. Are you sure this isn't your doing? Stirring up trouble between Eitri and me and Ivaldi's boys seems like the sort of thing you'd do.

Loki: (*as innocently as possible*) I'm hurt. Nothing to do with me, I just thought you ought to know.

Brokk: And you have no personal stake in this?

Loki: None whatsoever.

Brok: (*nodding*) Well, then we'll be happy to take on the sons of Ivaldi in a test of skill, to be judged by the Aesir. Because I have no doubt that Eitri can forge better and craftier things than Ivaldi's lot. But let's make this personal, Loki. Eh?

Loki: What do you have in mind?

Brok: Your head. If we win this contest, we get your head, Loki. There's lots of things going on in that head of yours, and I have no doubt that Eitri could make a wonderful device out of it. A thinking machine, perhaps. Or an inkwell.

Loki: (*still smiling*) Of course... My head. No problem.

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Loki: Today started out so well! I simply have to ensure that Eitri and Brokk lose the contest; the gods will still get six wonderful things from the dwarfs, Sif will get her golden hair. I can do this. I'm Loki! The sons of Ivaldi are making their treasures, I'm not worried about them. But I need to make sure that Brokk and Eitri do not, cannot possibly, win.

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Eitri: I've been keeping this pigskin for something just like this.

Brokk: You're the master craftsman.

Eitri: You work the bellows, Brokk. Just keep pumping them. I need this hot, and I need it consistently hot, otherwise it won't work. I've got to go outside to do some work on this. Just keep it at that temperature.

Loki: Buzz

Brokk: *(working the bellows)* Looks like Eitri let some sort of bug in.

Loki: Buzz-uzz

Brokk: *(still working the bellows)* That's not a horsefly, or a deerfly. That thing is huge!

Loki: BUZZ!

Brokk: *(still working the bellows steadily)* I don't like the look of that bug, it is the biggest, blackest fly I have ever seen. I can hear the sound of Eitri's hammers outside, and the sounds of filing and twisting, of shaping and banging. I'm just going to focus on that.

Loki: BUZZ-UZZ!

Brokk: *(still working the bellows steadily)* I have to keep pumping these bellows steadily. But now I've got this bug on the back my hand. I will not stop pumping to swat at this fly. OW!

Eitri: Good work! A fraction of a degree warmer or cooler and the whole thing would have been a waste of our time.

Brokk: What is that? It looks like a huge boar, with bristles of gleaming gold. Good work you too.

Eitri: Right, this next one will impress them. I'll need this block of gold. When I call, start pumping the bellows and, whatever happens, do not slow down, or speed up, or stop. There's fiddly work involved.

Brokk: Got it.

Eitri: All right, I'll be back in a few.

Brokk: Ok, just have to wait for Eitri to call.

Eitri: *(after a pause)* Start pumping!

Loki: buzz.

Brokk: *(working the bellows steadily)* That bug is back! I will keep working these bellows steadily... even as it lands on my neck! OW!

Eitri: Here we go! I call this ring Draupnir.

Brokk: The dripper? That's a funny name for a ring.

Eitri: Not for this one. All right. The last piece is something I've had in mind to make for a very long time now. My masterwork. But it's even trickier than the other two. So what you have to do is...

Brokk: Pump, and don't stop pumping?

Eitri: That's right. Even more than before. Do not change your pace, or the whole thing will be ruined. Now, where's that huge ingot of pig iron? All right, there we go. I'll be back! Start pumping!

Brokk: (*working the bellows steadily*) I can hear Eitri's hammers!

Loki: BUZZ.

Brokk: (*working the bellows steadily*) Hello again "fly." And here you are between my eyes.

Loki: BUZZ!

Brokk: (*working the bellows steadily*) I.. will... not... change... pace... no... matter... how... much... you... bite... my... eyelids! GAH!

Loki: BUZZ! UZZ! UZZ!

Brokk: (*working the bellows steadily*) Umm. Shaking head?

Loki: BUZZ!

Brokk: (*working the bellows steadily*) Umm. Blowing air!

Loki: BUZZ! UZZ!

Brokk: (*working the bellows steadily*) Umm... (*jerks head and makes faces*)

Loki: BUZZ! UZZ!

Brokk: (*working the bellows steadily*) FINE! Ahh... on the downstroke I can... one... two... three... (*grabs at the fly on his face*) gotcha! And pumping...

Loki: Yikes! That was close!

Eitri: Enough! I don't know what you were playing at that time, but you came close to ruining everything. The temperature was all over the place at the end. As it is, it's nowhere near as impressive as I'd hoped. We'll just have to see.

Loki: So, all ready for the contest?

Eitri: Brokk can go to Asgard and present my gifts to the gods and cut off your head. I like it best here at my forge, making things.

Brokk: I'm looking forward to cutting off your head.

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Loki: (*doing a ring-side announcer voice*) Here we are, in Asgard. Ready for the challenge of the... well, day. Our three judges sit on their thrones: one-eyed Odin the all-father, red-bearded Thor of the thunders, and handsome Frey of the summer's harvest, highest of gods. Before them are the three sons of Ivaldi versus Brokk, the black-bearded.

Odin: So. What are we judging?

Loki: Treasures! The sons of Ivaldi have made gifts for you, great Odin, and for Thor, and for Frey, and so have Eitri and Brokk. It is up to you to decide which of the six things is the finest treasure! I myself will show you the gifts made by the sons of Ivaldi. First is a spear called Gungnir. Look at this beautiful craftsmanship! These intricately carved runes! It will penetrate anything, and when you throw it, it will always find its mark! Just as important, an oath taken on this spear is unbreakable.

Odin: It is very fine.

Loki: And here is a flowing head of golden hair. Made of real gold. It will attach itself to the head of the person who needs it and grow and behave in every way as if it were real hair. A hundred thousand strands of gold.

Thor: I will test it. Sif, come here and restore your hair. *(pause)* Impressive! Good job! If anything you are even more radiant and beautiful than before!

Loki: Right? Isn't she? And the last of the sons of Ivaldi's remarkable gifts is this small folded cloth.

Frey: This looks like a silk scarf.

Loki: It does! But, if you unfold it, you will discover it is a ship called Skidbladnir. It will always have a fair wind, wherever it goes. And although it is huge, the biggest ship you can imagine, it will fold up, as you see, like a cloth, so you can put it into your pouch.

Frey: Nice.

Brokk: *(smiling)* Those are three lovely gifts. But, now, allow me to present the work of my brother and I. Great Odin, this arm-ring is called Draupnir. It's so called because every ninth night eight gold arm-rings of equal beauty will drip from it. You can reward people with them, or store them, and your wealth will increase.

Odin: It is very fine.

Loki: *(to the Ivaldi brothers)* didn't he say the same thing about the spear?

Brokk: Frey, this is a boar my brother made for you, to pull your chariot. It will race across the sky and over the sea, faster than the fastest horse. There will never be a night so dark that its golden bristles will not give light and let you see what you are doing. It will never tire, and will never fail you. It is called Gullenbursti, the golden-bristled one.

Loki: *(to the Ivaldi brothers)* The magical ship that folded up like a cloth was every bit as impressive as an unstoppable boar that shines in the dark. And I managed to sabotage the last one!

Brokk: Mighty Thor, I present you this hammer

Thor: The handle is rather short.

Brokk: *(nodding)* Yes. That's my fault. I was working the bellows. But before you dismiss it, let me tell you about what makes this hammer unique. It's called Mjollnir, the lightning-maker. First of all, it's unbreakable—doesn't matter how hard you hit something with it, the hammer will always be undamaged.

Thor: I have broken a great many weapons over the years, normally by hitting things with them.

Brokk: If you throw the hammer, it will never miss what you throw it at. Better, no matter how hard or how far you throw it, it will always return to your hand.

Thor: I have lost a number of otherwise excellent weapons by throwing them at things that irritated me and missing, and I've watched too many weapons disappear into the distance, never to be seen again.

Brokk: Finally, you can change the size of the hammer. It will grow, and it will also shrink down so small that if you wish, you can hide it inside your shirt.

Thor: Magnificent!

Brokk: And yet, as you have observed the handle of the hammer is indeed too short. This is my fault. I failed to keep the bellows blowing while my brother, Eitri, was forging it.

Thor: The shortness of the handle is a minor, cosmetic problem! This hammer will protect us from the frost giants. This is the finest gift I have ever seen!

Odin: It will protect Asgard. It will protect all of us.

Frey: If I were a giant, I would be very afraid of Thor if he had that hammer.

Loki: Yes. It's an excellent hammer. But Thor, what about the hair? Sif's beautiful new golden hair!

Thor: What? Oh, yes. My wife has very nice hair. Now. Show me how to make the hammer grow and shrink, Brokk.

Odin: Thor's hammer is better even than my wonderful spear and my excellent arm-ring.

Frey: The hammer is greater and more impressive than my ship and my boar. It will keep the gods of Asgard safe.

Odin: You and your brother have crafted the finest gift that Asgard has ever been given.

Brokk: Good to know... So, I get to cut off your head, Laufey's son, and take it back with me. Eitri will be so pleased. We can turn it into something useful.

Loki: I . . . will ransom my head! I have treasures I can give you.

Brokk: Eitri and I already have all the treasure we need. We make treasures! No, Loki. I want your head.

Loki: Then you can have it. If you can catch me!

Brokk: Thor, can you catch him?

Thor: I really shouldn't. But then, I would very much like to try out the hammer... Hang on.

Loki: No, you can't do this!

Brokk: Come here, Loki, I'm going to cut off your head.

Loki: Of course. You can, of course, cut off my head. But—and I appeal to mighty Odin here—if you cut off any of my neck, you are violating the terms of our agreement! Which promised you my head, and my head only.

Odin: Loki is right. You have no right to cut his neck.

Brokk: But I can't cut off his head without cutting his neck.

Loki: I'm so sorry to hear that. You see, if people thought through the exactness of their words, they would not dare to take on Loki, the wisest, the cleverest, the trickiest, the most intelligent, the best-looking . . ."

Brokk: *(whispers to Odin)*.

Odin: That would be fair.

Brokk: Come here for a second.

Loki: What are you doing? Wait, Odin? OW! OW! Mmmph? mmmph!

Brokk: I've sewn your lips shut! As long as it lasts, I'm sure for you the pain of being unable to talk will hurt even more than the pain of having his lips stitched into leather!

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Loki: So now you know, that is how the gods got their greatest treasures. It was Loki's fault. Even Thor's hammer was Loki's fault. That was the thing about Loki. You resent me even when you're at your most grateful, and you're grateful even when you hate me the most.