

The Citadel of Skrímir
By Ryan Robinson

Sources

Gylfaginning

Parts

Thor

Loki

Egill (can be shared with Skrímir)

Thjálfí

Röskva

Skrímir

Thor: Yo! Loki! Uncle!

Loki: Yes, Thor?

Thor: How would you feel about a road trip?

Loki: Anywhere in particular you have in mind?

Thor: Nah, let's just get out and see what's up!

Loki: Well, seeing as that's a perfectly reasonable plan about which nothing could go wrong... How can I refuse?

Thor: Excellent! I've already got the goats hooked up to the chariot!

Egill: Thjálfí! Röskva! Come here, children!

Thjalfi: Yes, father?

Egill: Go get cleaned up and help your mother. I saw a pair of travelers coming up on the road. They'll probably be looking for hospitality.

Roskva: Yes, father!

Thor: Hail!

Egill: Hail to you as well, travelers.

Loki: The hour is late and we seek hospitality.

Egill: Be welcome in the house of Egill of the Jotun.

Loki: Be calm, nephew. He is a herdsman keeping his own house.

Thor: But... Jotun...

Egill: Is there a problem, travelers? You are welcome to pass this house by, or come in with peace.

Loki: We shall share a fire, bread, and salt and keep peace between us. Right, Thor?

Thor: I guess.

Loki: Excellent! I am Loki Laufeson, and this is Thor Odinson! So pleased to meet you.

Egill: Odinson?

Thjalfi: Here is where you can put your goats and cart...

Thor: Chariot.

Egill: Thor?

Roskva: And here is where you can put your things and sleep later.

Egill: Umm... so, that's my son Thjalfi and my daughter Roskva. My wife has dinner over the fire.

Thor: So little?

Loki: They keep simple farms this far from Asgard.

Thor: Bah! We will have more meat than this tonight!

Egill: Did... did he just go back outside and kill his goats?

Loki: He does that.

Thor: Here! Put the skins over there when you take them off, then butcher these.

Roskva: Oh, wow, mister!

Egill: I ... don't know what to say ... This is will be a fine last meal.

Loki: What?

Egill: I said a fine evening meal!

Thjalfi: Wow, look at this Ro!

Roskva: These are huge!

Thjalfi: I've heard that if inside the bone is extra tasty. If I can just get my knife in here...

Thor: Yes! This is an outstanding meal! Just put the bones over on the skins when you've eaten the meat off them.

Roskva: Maybe... you shouldn't have done that, Fi.

Thjalfi: I'll just... put it back together. He'll never notice. It's a whole bag of bones...

Loki: Yes, thank you again for your hospitality.

Egill: Well, this *has* been a fine meal. Thank you so much for the meat. We have to rise early to tend the herds, so we should go to bed now. Come along, children. Dearest.

Loki: We should go to sleep as well. We want to be on the road early.

Thor: Yeah.

Thor: Well. Morning soon, I guess. Time to get started. Let's see. Goat bones on goat skin... Fold the skin over... Hammer up! Mjöllnir, I'm a god, do your thing!

Yup. Two healthy goats ready to pull my chariot!

Hmm. Maybe I should have done that outside.

Come on guys. Out the door. Shoo.

Are you limping, buddy?

Hey, Loki, is my goat limping?

Loki: Hmm? Thor, what are you doing up before dawn? The family of farmers aren't even up.

Thor: Yeah, yeah, wanted to get my goats back to life before dawn. Is the one on the left limping?

Loki: I mean, I guess?

Thor: It looks like the thigh is... off.

Loki: What would cause that?

Thor: I mean, if the bone was broken...

Loki: Like if, say, you put bones with fresh marrow in front of a family that's basically starving?

Thor: Oh. Wait. What?

Egill: You're up already? Leaving so soon! Well... sorry to see you... where did those goats come from?

Thor: Someone broke my goat's leg.

Egill: I... what?

Thor: Someone. Broke. My. Goat's. Leg.

Egill: I... I... don't know... weren't they dead? What?

Thor: I said to put the bones on the skins after the meat was off of them.

Egill: You did! We did!

Loki: It's not *missing* a thigh bone, Thor.

Thor: No, it's just *broken*. My goat is lame.

Egill: I thought your goats were dead?

Thor: I can fix that each morning. Unless someone breaks their bones. That has to, you know, heal.

Loki: Thor, these people had no way of knowing this.

Egill: How can we fix this? What can we do? We didn't mean any harm! Please don't kill my family.

Loki: Wait! wait! I have an idea. Servants.

Thor and Egill: What?

Loki: The son and daughter, Thor, they can be your servants.

Thor: They can't pull my chariot.

Loki: No, your goat will get better. In the meantime, you're probably better at pulling the thing than your goat anyway. But, you leave your goats here to heal, the kids come with us and do the whole fetch this, carry that, make your life easier bit. Debt paid.

Thor: Mmmm...

Egill: You want to take my kids and leave these goats here while you journey on?

Thor: I haven't killed any Jotun on this trip yet...

Loki: I mean, they'd be going to live at the palace in Asgard... and, if you want to sort out some other way to calm him down ... then I'm sure your children can keep living here.

Egill: The palace? I mean... if that's an acceptable price.

Thor: Fine. Whatever.

Egill: Kids! Come on!

Thjálfi: So, we've been traveling for a while now.

Loki: Yes?

Röskva: where are we going?

Thor: On an adventure!

Thjálfi: But... where's that?

Loki: Anywhere! That's the great part about Jotunheim, wander long enough and something strange will find you.

Röskva: But... how long is it going to take to find this adventure?

Thor: As long as it takes! It's all about the journey anyway. It's a road trip!

Thjálfi: Well, we went so far east we ran out of road and came to the sea.

Röskva: Then we crossed the sea.

Thor: And now we're walking up this hill. So, we'll continue!

Loki: I am a little concerned that there doesn't seem to be anything to eat around, nor shelter, and it's starting to get dark.

Röskva: What's that?

Thor: It looks like... some sort of cavern?

Loki: No, this material is constructed. Woven. Some strange sort of hall.

Thjálfi: But there's no door at the entrance?

Thor: See? Road trip! Interesting places! Interesting things! Adventure!

Röskva: There's some sort of branching cave over here on the right.

Thjálfi: And more halls further in along the back.

Thor: I don't see any signs of other people or creatures living in here. Do you, Loki?

Loki: It seems strange, but safe enough.

Thor: Thjálfi! Bring my bag! I'll see what we have for stores! Then, we get some sleep.

Skrýmir: Boom!

Thor: Loki! Wake up! Did you hear that?

Loki: I felt it as well! Like a great earthquake.

Thor: Thjálfi! Röskva! Wake up!

Thjálfi: What time is it?

Loki: It is close to midnight, but we need to move.

Skrýmir: Hummmmm... Boom.

Röskva: Are we really worried about earthquakes?

Loki: We hope that it is an earthquake.

Thor: Take the children into that passage, I will stand guard at the entry with Mjolnir.

Skrýmir: Hummmmm... Boom.

Loki: Try to get some sleep, children.

Skrýmir: Hummmmm... Boom.

Thjálfi: How long has it been?

Loki: It is nearly dawn

Thor: It is beginning to brighten, I'm going to go have a look around.

Skrýmir: Hummmmm... Boom.

Thor: What could possibly be making all that noise?

Skrýmir: Hummmmm... Boom.

Thor: and shaking the ground with it?

Skrýmir: Hummmmm... Boom.

Thor: Is this a man? He's huge! Syf complains when I snore, but this is impressive.

Skrýmir: Hummmmm... Boom.

Thor: Let me put on my belt of strength.

Skrýmir: Hummmmm... Boom.

Thor: This guy is a giant!

Skrýmir: Huh! What now?

Thor: Ah!

Thor hits Skrýmir with Mjolnir

Skrýmir: Ah, a nice breeze to wake up to...

Thor: What?

Skrýmir: Oh, where did my glove go? You there, did you take my glove?

Thor: Ah... I haven't moved a glove.

Skrýmir: Oh, there it is!

Thor: that's not a glove... that's where... Oh! Loki! Bring the kids here quickly!

Skrýmir: What's this in my glove? Empty that all out... and put it on.

Thor: that's a... big glove.

Skrýmir: Well, I'm a big person! Ha! Wait a second. I know you. You're the one they call Thor!

Thor: I'm sorry, but I don't know your name.

Skrýmir: Easy enough. I'm called Skrýmir.

Loki: Thor? What is happening? Did I just see the cave we were in get picked up and worn like a glove?

Thor: Loki, this is Skrýmir. This is Loki... and the kids.

Skrýmir: Well met! I guess it's time for breakfast. Would you four be interested in sharing a meal? Lets see if we can't make something more interesting from the different things we carry.

Thor: Ahh...

Loki: Sure! That sounds like a great idea. Right Thor?

Thjálfi: You're really big! I thought Thor was the biggest person I'd ever seen, but you're HUGE!

Loki: Yes... yes he is. Come on, kids, let's get to making breakfast.

Röskva: So, where are you going Mr. Skrýmir?

Skrýmir: I'm returning home.

Thjálfi: Mr. Thor says we're going on an adventure! We're going... ah... I think we were going that direction?

Skrýmir: Is that so? Perhaps we can travel together. That's the direction to my home!

Loki: Is that so?

Thor: Oh...

Skrýmir: Well, as soon as your done with breakfast, we can package everything up. I think I can carry your loads as well as mine and we'll make better time!

Thor: Oh... kay...

Skrýmir: So... the sun should be setting soon and this is the best camping spot in the area.

Thor: That's quite a pace you set...

Skrýmir: I suppose if you had legs as long as mine, you'd find the pace easier. Here! The bag with all our provisions which I carried. Perhaps some of you can make yourself some dinner. I feel like a nap.

Röskva: Neither of us can get the knots untied. They're too tight.

Loki: Oh, wow. Hey, Thor. Want to give us a hand with this?

Thor: Hunh. That's... a knot. Let me get my belt of strength on. ... UNGH!

Skrýmir: Hummmmm... Boom.

Loki: He's snoring already?

Thor: I've had it with this guy.

Loki: What are you doing?

Thor: Hitting him!

Loki: With Mjolnir? With your belt on?

Thor: YES!

Skrýmir: Huh? Did a leaf fall on me?

Thor: What?

Loki: Hey! Could we get a hand with the ties on this bag?

Skrýmir: What? Oh, no problem.

Thor: I loosened them for you.

Skrýmir: What?

Loki: Nothing! Thor just likes to mutter to himself!

Skrýmir: Well, I'm going back to bed.

Loki: Yes, yes. We'll get some food then do the same! Come on kids.

Thor: What is the deal with this guy?

Loki: Here, Thor, maybe after you eat and sleep, you'll be less grumpy.

Skrýmir: Hummmmm... Boom.

Thor: How are any of us supposed to sleep with THAT?

Loki: Now you know how the rest of us feel.

Skrýmir: Hummmmm... Boom.

Thor: What?

Loki: I asked if you were finished with your bowl. Yes? Great! Let's go to bed.

Skrýmir: Hummmmm... Boom.

Thor: I can't sleep.

Loki: But you've tried so hard, Thor.

Skrýmir: Hummmmm... Boom.

Thor: I'm going to try to shut him up.

Loki: How are you going to do that?

Skrýmir: Hummmmm... Boom.

Thor: With Mjolnir.

Loki: Again?

Skrýmir: Hummmmm... Boom.

Loki: I can't believe he survived a hit from Mjolnir already.

Thor: Two.

Skrýmir: Hummmmm... Boom.

Loki: What?

Thor: I can't take more of this. I'm going to do it!

Skrýmir: What? Did an acorn fall on my head? Oh, what's new, Thor?

Thor: Ah! No! I, uh, just woke up myself!

Skrýmir: What time is it?

Loki: Like, midnight?

Skrýmir: Ah! Good. Still plenty of time to sleep!

Loki: Well... sweet dreams? Right Thor?

Thor: Ah... yes.

Skrýmir: Hummmmm... Boom.

Loki: It's amazing how fast he does that.

Thor: I usually fall asleep quickly, but that is truly impressive.

Skrýmir: Hummmmm... Boom.

Loki: Let's get some sleep, Thor.

Thor: It's been hours...

Skrýmir: Hummmmm... Boom.

Thor: I can't sleep!

Skrýmir: Hummmmm... Boom.

Thor: Surely one more blow from Mjolnir will silence him!

Skrýmir: Huh? There must be some birds sitting in the tree above me. I thought I felt some dirt and twigs falling on me. Oh, are you awake Thor?

Thor: Umm... yeah. I was ... just going to wake up the others. Sunrise is coming and we should be moving on.

Skrýmir: Ah! You must be traveling to castle Útgardr. It's near enough! If you think my strides are long, you'll find men that make me look like a child.

Loki: Well, that does sound like what we're looking for...

Thor: What?

Loki: *quietly* Adventure...

Thor: Yes!

Skrýmir: Have you been there before?

Loki: We have not.

Skrýmir: Then I'll give you a word of wisdom; keep yourselves modest there. Útgarda-Loki and his men will not endure big words and boasts from those of such small stature. If you can't do that, I would advise turning back or, if you want to continue in this direction, turn to the east to bypass the castle. My way is to the north towards the hills you can see.

Thor: Well, we definitely aren't going north.

Skrýmir: Then I'll be off!

Thjalfi: Didn't the giant say that the castle was nearby?

Loki: If you look at the horizon you can see the castle starting to appear.

Thor: This would be so much easier riding my chariot pulled by goats.

Röskva: Loki's right! I can definitely see the castle on the horizon... that can't be too far! Let's get going!

Loki: Well, here we are! At the gates of this ENORMOUS castle.

Röskva: Look at the giant, metal grate across the entrance to keep people out!

Thor: No matter! I will simply move this grate and open our way!
(Thor makes straining noises)

Thjalfi: I thought you were, like, really strong?

Thor: I am! I mean... Loki, I'm like, really, really strong...

Loki: I mean... usually?

Thor: Come here, let me check something.

Loki: No, you're really strong Thor.

Röskva: I mean, it's a **really** big, heavy gate...

Thjalfi: If Thor can't even lift it, how do we get in?

Loki: Well, it is a *big* gate...

Thor: I think we covered that.

Loki: With big holes...

Thor: You may be accustomed to wriggling through whatever passage you can find... but I have standards.

Loki: So, you want to just turn around?

Thor: No! I mean... I guess. Fine. If you and the kids can fit through I guess I'll follow.

Loki: Thjalfi and Röskva are already on the other side.

Röskva: We're all waiting on you, Thor.

Thjalfi: We didn't even have to squeeze, come on.

Loki: Oh! there's a great hall up ahead!

Thor: Hold up, hold up! Don't get too far ahead.

Röskva: Well, it only holds two benches...

Thjalfi: Those are long benches...

Loki: And the people on them aren't small...

Thor: Come on, we've gotten this far. We should present ourselves to the lord of this castle.

Skrýmir: Ho! I am Útgarda-Loki! And this toddler must be Öku-Thor. How has your journey been so far?

Thor: Our journey has not been that far nor troublesome.

Skrýmir: Well, all those who feast in my hall must show some craft or cunning surpassing most men. You may be greater than you appear, but what sort of accomplishments are you and your fellows ready to show?

Röskva: They want us to perform for them?

Thjalfi: Hey, at least they aren't trying to eat us...

Thor: Yet.

Loki: I know a trick which I am ready to try, that there is no one here who eats his food more quickly than I.

Skrýmir: That is a feat if you can do it. Let us put your claim to the proof! Come forth, from the farthest bench, Logi, and test your prowess against this Loki! Bring forth a trough, filled with meat and set it on the hall floor! Each shall go to an end and we shall see where they meet. Begin!

Thjalfi: That's a long trough, but oh, wow, they both eat so fast!

Röskva: How are they even doing that? Are they even chewing?

Thor: It looks like they are evenly matched, to meet in the middle.

Skrýmir: Indeed! They have met in the middle. Yet while Loki has eaten all the meat from the bones, Logi has eaten not just the meat, but the bones with it, and the trough besides. So, Logi has won this game.

Thjalfi: Is that really how this works? Who eats the plates?

Skrýmir: So, what game do you play at, young man?

Thjalfi: I... guess I can run fast.

Röskva: Thjalfi is fast enough on his feet to give Ratotaskar a run for his acorns.

Skrýmir: Then, let us test how fast he is. Hugi, come forth, and let us all go outside.

Loki: I'm getting a bad feeling about this.

Thor: Now you get the bad feeling?

Röskva: You sure that isn't just a stomach ache?

Skrýmir: Behold the course lain out. You will run it together and see which is quicker. Ready? Go!

Röskva: Oh, look at them run! But this Hugi is so fast!

Loki: Hugi finished so much quicker... he's going back to meet up with Thjalfi on the course.

Skrýmir: Ho, ho. You'll need to try harder than that to keep up, Thjalfi. But, I've never seen someone come here who were as swift. But let us run another heat, and see if you can do better. Ready? Go!

Thor: Thjalfi seems swifter than before, but even farther from overtaking this Hugi.

Röskva: Hugi is turning back again before Thjalfi has even finished the course.

Skrýmir: You run the course well, young man. But I do not believe you will be able to win this game. But, let there be a third heat and see if you can change the outcome. Ready? Go!

Loki: Thjalfi barely made it halfway before Hugi had completed the course!

Skrýmir: Well, that answers the question of who is more swift. Howe about you, Thor. You let your companions strive, but what claims do you make? Men have made great tales of your mighty works.

Thor: I would most willingly contend with anyone in drinking!

Skrýmir: Ah! Very good! Serving boy! Bring the horn which my men drink from!

Thor: This horn does not seem so big, but seems awkwardly long.

Skrýmir: Indeed, this horn is well drained if it is drunk in one drink. Some drink it off in two; but no one here is so poor a man at drinking that it fails to drain it in three.

Thor: Well, I have worked up quite a thirst, so let us see.

Loki: Oh, pace yourself nephew, that's quite a swallow!

Thor: Ah!

Skrýmir: It is well drunk, but not too much. If someone told me that Ása-Thor could not drink a greater draught I wouldn't have believed them. But I know that you will wish to drink it off in one more go.

Loki: Well, I guess that's bottoms up.

Röskva: That's a mighty drink. How much is in there?

Thor: Ah!

Thjalfi: Well, the level is certainly lower than before.

Skrýmir: Well now, Thor? Will you shrink from one more drink? Do you think it might not be good for you? If you drink a third draught from the horn, it seems to me as you are beaten; you can't be called as great a man among us as the Æsir call you if you don't do better in the other games it you seem to have done here.

Thor: Humph.

Loki: And he goes again.

Thjalfi: Wow... that's a lot.

Röskva: Does he not need to breathe?

Loki: Thor? Buddy?

Thor: AH!

Loki: You ok man?

Thor: How has the level in this horn not lowered any further?

Thjalfi: It's certainly lower than it was.

Thor: No more! Take this horn away!

Skrýmir: Well, now I see your prowess is not so great as we thought it to be. Will you try your hand at more games?

Thor: It would have seemed wonderful to me, if such drinks had been called so little when I was at home with the Æsir. But I will try your other games. What do you offer?

Skrýmir: It is thought of as small consequence, young lads here are like to lift my cat up from the earth. I wouldn't have been able suggest such a thing to Ása-Thor if I had not just seen that you are far less i than I had thought.

Thor: This gray cat? That doesn't seem so great a task.

Röskva: It's just arching up to keep you from lifting it. You've got its body over your head!

Thjalfi: That is a huge cat, that it can stretch so much to keep its paws on the ground.

Loki: There! You've got one of its paws off the ground!

Skrýmir: Well, this game went as I expected. The cat is very great, whereas Thor is small compared to the huge men with us.

Thor: Small as you say I am, let anyone come wrestle with me. Now I'm mad.

Skrýmir: I see no man on these benches who would not hold it a disgrace to wrestle with you. Let the old woman who was my nurse come and wrestle with you. Elli has thrown men who have seemed as strong as you.

Loki: That's a truly old woman, Thor.

Röskva: Thjalfi, she looks older than our grandmother!

Thor: Let's do this.

Loki: I've seen grown men do worse with Thor's grabs.

Thjalfi: Is Thor supposed to look that off balance?

Röskva: Umm... did that old woman just get Thor down on one knee?

Skrýmir: Hold! I don't see any reason that this needs to continue, or that Thor should challenge men of my bodyguard. But, it is evening! And you strove well! Let us tarry and have good cheer!

Loki: Well... that was definitely a party.

Thor: Indeed! And look at this breakfast Útgarda-Loki set out for us this morning! Good cheer, meat, and drink!

Skrýmir: I am glad you feel well feasted and humored for the night and morning. You seem ready to be on your way?

Thor: Indeed!

Skrýmir: How do you feel your journey has been? Do you feel you met those mightier than yourself.

Thor: I cannot say that you have left me shamed, but I know you will call me a man of little might, and I am ill-content with that.

Skrýmir: I will tell you truths, now that you are out of the castle. If I live, you will never again come to this place. Indeed, by my oaths I know you should never have come here. If I had known before were so strong and that you so nearly placed us in great peril.

Thor: What are you talking about?

Skrýmir: I have set you against illusions.

Loki: How many illusions?

Skrýmir: I found you at first in the wood, and you sought to smite me three blows with your hammer. Even the first and least would have slain me if it had struck me. If you look, near my hall there is a saddle-backed mountain, cut at the top into dales. Those were the marks of your hammer. I put the saddle-back in the way of your blow, but kept you from seeing it.

Thjalfi: Casual parries with a mountain. Sure...

Röskva: That Thor put whole dales into.

Thjalfi: Right... traveling with gods. I forgot.

Skrýmir: When you wouldst have loosed the provision-bag, I bound it with iron and hid from you how to undo it.

Loki: That actually makes more sense than Thor fumbling with knots.

Skrýmir: The games were similar.

Röskva: What?

Skrýmir: The first, which was Loki's eating contest. He was very hungry and ate zealously. But Logi means "wild-fire," and like an unleashed flame he burned the trough no less swiftly than the meat.

Loki: What?

Skrýmir: Then Thjálfí ran the race. His opponent was called Hugi, which means "thought." How could it be expected of Thjálfí that he should match swiftness with my very ideas.

Thjálfí: What?

Skrýmir: Then we came to Thor's games.

Thor: What?

Skrýmir: When you drank from the horn, and it seemed to go slowly... by my faith, that was a wonder I never believed possible. The length of the horn concealed that the other end was out in the sea. But now, when you return to the sea, you will see what a diminishing you have drunk from it, what will be called ebb-tides.

Röskva: You had him drink the sea, and he... left a mark?

Skrýmir: When you strove to lift up the cat... we were all afraid when we saw you lift one foot clear of the earth. It was not a cat at all, but the Midgard Serpent which lies about all the land. Its length suffices to encompass the earth. You lifted it so high that was nearly to the sky.

Loki: Oh, nothing bad will come of that.

Skrýmir: Then there was the marvel of your wrestling-match. Elli, which means "Old Age," which you lasted so long against, and fell no more than to one knee.

Thjálfí: Wait, the Aesir don't really age?

Thor: It's complicated.

Skrýmir: Now I bid you farewell. And it will be better for all that you never seek me again. If you return I will defend my castle with similar spells or others, so you have no power over me.

Thor: I should smash you with my hammer. In the actual face this time!

Röskva: He's gone!

Thor: Then I will smash your castle to bits!

Thjálfí: It's gone too!

Thor: Fine! I guess that's enough adventure for now, and we should head home.

Loki: That seems like a fine idea.

Thor: Though... maybe I will look for a rematch with this Midgard Serpent.

Loki: Could you... not?

Thor: But what an adventure!