

Thrymskvitha

Prose version by Tim Morris (2020),
adapted from the translation by Henry Adams Bellows.

For class use only.

Thor was beside himself when he woke up and found that his great hammer was missing. He shook his hair and his beard and looked everywhere for it.

Thor: Loki! Listen to me. I can't find my hammer anywhere, in the heavens or on earth.

They went to Freyja's beautiful home.

Loki: Freyja, may I borrow that dress of yours? The one decorated with all the feathers? I need to go look for this hammer.

Freyja: I would give it to you, even if it were decorated with silver. Even gold.

Loki flew away. The feathers on the dress made a whirring sound. He flew all the way from the land of the gods to the land of the giants.

Thrym, leader of the giants, was sitting there on a big mound. He was holding his dogs by a golden leash, and grooming the manes of his horses.

Thrym: How are the gods doing? How are the elves? Why are you here all by yourself?

Loki: The gods and elves are both doing terrible. Have you got Thor's hammer somewhere here?

Thrym: I have hidden Thor's hammer eight miles deep in the earth. Nobody will get it back until I get Freyja for my wife.

Loki flew away. The feathers on the dress made a whirring sound. He flew all the way from the land of the giants to the land of the gods. He found Thor in the courtyard.

Thor: You usually find trouble. Did you find news, too? Speak right away. Sometimes after someone rests for a while they forget things. Or start to think up lies.

Loki: I found trouble and I also found news. Thrym, king of the giants, has your hammer. You will not get it back until he gets Freyja for his wife.

So they went to see Freyja.

Thor: Get your bridal veil on, Freyja. We're going to see the giants.

Freyja was angry. She snorted, and all of Asgard shook. Even the great necklace fashioned by the dwarves burst.

Freyja: I'd look sex-starved if I went with you to the land of the giants.

So the gods met in council. And the goddesses too. They all tried to think of a plan to get Thor's hammer back.

Heimdall made a suggestion. He was the fairest of the gods, and he could see into the future.

Heimdall: Let's put the bridal veil on Thor. We'll have him wear the dwarves' necklace, too. And a bunch of housekeeping keys. He can wear a gown and gems on his bodice and a sweet cap on his head.

Thor: If I went out in a bridal veil, the gods would question my gender.

Loki: Be quiet, Thor. This is serious. If you don't get the hammer back, the giants will rule in Asgard.

So they put the bridal veil on Thor, and the dwarves' necklace, too. And a bunch of housekeeping keys. He wore a gown and gems on his bodice and a sweet cap on his head.

Loki: I will be your bridesmaid. Let's hurry to the land of the giants.

They brought goats in from the fields, and hitched them to the wagon; they strained at the yoke. Mountains crumbled; the earth broke apart in flames; Thor drove to Jotunheim.

Thrym: Get up, giants! Put straw on the benches. They are bringing Freyja to be my bride, Freyja daughter of Njorth, from Noatun. I have cattle with golden horns. I have oxen black as jet. I have many gems and many jewels, but the one thing I lack is Freyja to be my bride.

Evening fell. The giants ordered beer. Thor sat down, and all by himself he ate an entire ox, plus eight salmon, plus all the appetizers set out for the women. And three barrels of mead.

Thrym: Who ever knew a bride to have an appetite like that? I never saw a maiden eat so much. Or drink so much mead, either.

Loki, the bridesmaid, was sitting nearby.

Loki: Freyja hasn't eaten anything for eight days. She was so hot to get to Jotunheim.

Thrym peeked under the bride's veil. He wanted to steal a kiss. But then he jumped back to the other end of the hall.

Thrym: Freyja's eyes are so fearful! They seem to be burning.

Loki, the bridesmaid, was sitting nearby.

Loki: Freyja hasn't slept for eight nights. She was so hot to get to Jotunheim.

The giants' sister came in. She boldly asked about the dowry.

Sister: I would happily take golden-red rings from your hands, if you would like to win my love.

Thrym: Bring in the hammer to honor the bride. Lay Mjollnir on the bride's lap.

Thor laughed when he saw his hammer. He killed Thrym with it. Then he killed all the other giants. He killed the giants' sister, who had asked for the dowry. Instead of coins, she got hammer-blows.

And that is how Odin's son got his hammer back.