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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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How Thor's Hammer was Lost and Found

For Thor, his magic hammer Mjölfnir was his most precious possession. Even the mighty Frost Giants feared this hammer. He always put the hammer beside him when he rested, and always, when he woke, he reached for the hammer first. How great was his horror and dismay when he opened his eyes one morning and the hammer was nowhere to be seen. With a roar of anger, Thor began searching everywhere for the missing hammer. He paced up and down his magnificent palace, built of thunderclouds. The sound shook the whole city of Asgard. But the hammer was nowhere to be found. Then he called Sif, his golden-haired wife, and asked her to help him look. But still, the hammer was nowhere to be found. It was clear that someone must have stolen the hammer. When he realized this, Thor's anger knew no bounds. His spiky red hair and beard stood on end, and from his beard and hair came a rain of fiery sparks. Soon, as angry Thor thundered through the palace, Red Loki came by to inquire what the problem was. It was unlikely that he had to do with Thor, but he wanted, always full of curiosity, to miss nothing of what was happening.

"What's the matter, Thor?" he asked. Thor replied in a soft voice because he did not want the loss of the hammer to be known to all:

"Listen well to what I tell you, Loki - for it is something not known on the earth below and not in the heaven above, but my hammer is gone."

This news was very interesting to Loki, who had long harbored a grudge against Thor. He did not dare to admit this openly. "Ho, ho!" he said. "Then the Giants will soon drive us out of Asgard, brother Thor."

"Not if you use your wits," growled Thor, still in a very bad mood. "Come, you call yourself a clever fellow. Find out for me who has robbed me of my lightning-fast hammer, my Mjölfnir."

Then Loki grinned, and with a wink, he promised to do what he could. Not because he cared for Thor, but because he loved to be important himself, and also really feared what could happen to Asgard if the magic of the hammer were no longer at hand. It was not long before he noticed that a particular kind of storm was raging in the regions below. Not an ordinary storm, but one with a bit of thunder, then some rain, and then a gust or two, like Thor did. Then a mixture of hail and wind and thunder and lightning and rain and snow, all together in a huge jumble, so that the earthly people thought that the end of the world had come.

This gave Loki a clue, and he began to look around among the clouds until he finally saw that the problem came from a certain hill that stood in the middle of Giant-land. At the top of this hill lived a certain Thrym, the prince of the Frost Giants, who had long been very

jealous of the power of Thor. He had indeed done his best to imitate Thor as closely as possible and had succeeded in making a very good imitation of lightning, hail, and rain. But he had not been able to control the lightning bolts because they could only be made through Thor's hammer, Mjölfnir.

Rode Loki was not surprised when he discovered that Thrym had somehow acquired the magical weapon because he was aware of everything that happened. Thunderbolts struck with incredible speed through the earth and the sky. When Thor was informed of this discovery, he became even more furious and wanted to immediately rush off to fight the giant. However, Loki, who preferred to achieve things through trickery rather than fighting, convinced him that violence would not work.

"Remember," he said, "that Thrym with the hammer is much stronger than Thor without it. This is a matter that must be managed by intelligence and craftsmanship, not by violence and shouting. Therefore, let me handle the whole affair."

Thor reluctantly agreed to this plan. Loki then devised a disguise that would allow him to safely visit Giantland since he was not afraid to risk his life. He went to the House of the Maidens, where Freya presided. She was the most beautiful of all in Asgard, her beauty like a spring flower as she passed over the frozen highlands with her golden hair. Loki found the goddess and begged her for her magical falcon feathers, with which she usually flew back and forth over the earth. When she heard what he needed them for, she gladly agreed

to his request. Loki then assumed the appearance of a large brown bird, spread his wings, and flew in the direction of Giantland.

It was a long journey, and although the storm was no longer raging, he found the land of the Giants darker, colder, and more somber than ever before. However, every journey comes to an end, and Loki eventually reached the mountain where the giant Thrym was seated, with his enormous legs dangling on the ground, playing with a puppy the size of an elephant.

Loki sat as close to him as he dared and gazed at the giant's bright, round eyes. He was just wondering how to begin when Thrym, who had seen through his disguise at a glance, calmly, but with a voice that sounded like Thor's thundering roar, said: "Oh, ho! Loki, what are you doing here, so far from Asgard? Aren't you afraid, little fellow, to venture alone in our land?" Loki replied, thinking that he could win the giant over with flattery: "Yes, it is indeed sad in Asgard now that the hammer Miölnir has disappeared. The one who took the hammer from Thor was clever. I think no one else but you, mighty Thrym, could have done it!"

The giant chuckled, pleased with the compliment to his intelligence, and admitted: "Yes, Loki, the hammer is now mine, that is entirely true. From now on, people will know who the Thunderer really is."

"Ah!" sighed the sly Loki, "some men are strong because of their weapons, and some are just as strong without weapons. You need little, o mighty Thrym, even without a hammer. But Thor is nothing without his hammer. Since the whole world knows that you are its master,

you should return his toy to him. Then we won't have to worry about his evil shouts anymore."

But although Thrym was as foolish as he was large, he did not want to be caught out by the people.

"No, no, little Loki," he said. "The hammer is mine, and I have buried it deep under the seabed. Go, and tell your Asa people that I will return the hammer on one condition only. Namely, if they send Freya, the most beautiful virgin ever, to me to be my wife."

Loki could hardly laugh, for the idea of sending the lovely Freya, the joy and delight of Asgard, to be the wife of this terrible Giant-Lord was too absurd for words. However, it was not important to him what happened to anyone else except himself, so he hastened to reply, "You can count on it, Thrym, that everything I can do to accomplish this will be done. And if Freya agrees, you will soon welcome that dearest girl in Giant-land. Farewell."

Having said this, he spread his brown wings and flew back to Asgard. He was delighted at the thought of the mischief he could now bring there....

First, he visited Thor and told him what had happened. When the Thunderer heard of Thrym's boastful words, he was filled with wild rage. He wanted to immediately dig up the Hammer from the depths of the sea. But Loki pointed out the difficulties that stood in his way. While leaving Thor to ponder his words, he hurried to Freya and told her of Thrym's proposal.

The lovely Freya was walking in her garden, wearing her famous starry necklace around her neck. When she heard Loki's proposal to marry a hideous Giant, she

became so angry that she broke her necklace. And all the stars fell rapidly from the sky, causing people to exclaim, "Look how the stars shoot!"

Meanwhile, the Asa-folk had gathered to think about everything that had happened. After calming Thor's anger, they pointed out to him that the greatest danger to Asgard would be an attack, while they were completely defenseless. After saying this several times, Thor became fed up and answered gruffly, "Fine. Let Freya go to Thrym and become his wife. Then Miölnir will be with us again to defend us."

When Freya heard this, her anger turned to tears and lamentation. She declared that it would be her death to send her to the bleak Giant-land. From there, she would never be able to visit the flowery meadows and grassy slopes of Asgard again. And the Asas, who could not bear the sight of her sorrow, all declared that they would never send her away from her home of bliss. Then Heimdall stepped forward, the guard who watches over the Rainbow Bridge day and night. Now Heimdall had the gift of looking into the future, and the Asas were always willing to listen to his words, knowing them to be wise.

"My plan is as follows," he said. "Let Thor borrow Freya's clothes and hang a thick veil over his face. Let him go to Thrym's castle like this and pretend to be the bride. And if he still can't get the Hammer when he's there - well, then he might as well give up the plan altogether."

At this proposal, the Asas clapped their hands approvingly, all except Thor. He looked very somber and was extremely unwilling to agree to the plan.

"Dress me as a bride!" he grumbled. "I have to pass for a pretty maiden? I'm ready to fight and I'm not going to make a fool of myself."

But the Asas begged him to do it, while Loki berated him for being cowardly. The beautiful Freya also appealed to him, with tearful eyes. So, with great reluctance, the Thunderer finally agreed to do what they wanted.

Fortunately, Freya was very tall, but it still took some effort to cover the bulky Thor with her garments.

Moreover, he insisted on wearing his own mail shirt and strong belt, which required many garments to be concealed. That evening, there was great laughter in the halls of Asgard as the handmaids brushed and curled Thor's long blonde hair and adorned it with a jewel-encrusted headdress. Finally, the maidens also covered his angry eyes with a silk veil. The merriment of the Asas was unprecedented. To complete the disguise, the maidens hung the famous necklace around



his neck, which had been restrung. Finally, Frigga, the wife of Allfather Odin, attached the large keyring that is customary for brides at weddings in the Northland to his belt.

As this was done, Loki, more than anyone, was pleased with the success of his mischief. Just the sight of Thor's repulsive glares and his large hands clenched with anger under the delicate veil made him almost burst with laughter. When everything was ready, he declared that there would be many more things to laugh about. "Let me come with you," he pleaded. "Look, I'll dress up as your handmaid. Oh, you might as well agree, for if I don't urge you, you will never play the role of the bride."

So Loki was dressed as a handmaid and took a very pleased seat next to Thor in the goat wagon. There was loud laughter in Asgard as the Asas saw the two of them ride away together and heard the roar of the Thunderer's voice, which came from the folds of the veil of a meek girl as he urged his goats on their course. The journey to Giantland was long and stormy because Thor was still in the worst of moods and drove so angrily with his wagon that the mountains collapsed and the earth caught fire. The goats' hooves clattered over mountains and waters, and wherever they touched a rock, sparks flew in all directions.

Thrym was overjoyed when he heard that a wagon with two girls was approaching his door. His servants ran away in all directions. Some with the task of preparing a great feast, others to prepare the bride's room, and still others to receive her at the door. The giant himself helped them out of the wagon and admired the impressive, stately figure of his bride. But he made no attempt to see her face, as it is customary

in the north for the bride to remain veiled until the marriage is consummated.

"A bride worthy of a Giant!" murmured his servants as the giant led her to a high chair next to his own great golden throne. They also looked pleased at the plump figure of the handmaid, who stood veiled behind her mistress's chair.

Now the journey had been long and cold, and the newcomers were glad to see that the preparations for the feast were complete, as they were extremely hungry. Giants are enormous eaters, and they all quickly gathered around the table, on which a huge roasted ox, huge salmon, and various other delicacies were displayed. But because the bride was a woman, and of course modest, they brought her small bites on a graceful golden plate.

This was too much for Thor, who had always had a very healthy appetite, and now had even more of a craving for a delicious dinner than usual. Slowly, he approached the table, and while the others were busy with their own meal, he managed to grab the dish of roasted ox and within a few minutes the whole animal had disappeared. Then he reached for the dish of salmon and in eight bites, he swallowed eight large fish. After this, he saw a large plate full of cakes and sweets that had been reserved for the ladies of the feast. He made short work of that too.

Finally, after his enormous meal, he was thirsty, so he grabbed two barrels of mead and poured the contents into his large throat. Then he leaned back in his chair, satisfied, and with a deep sigh. Loki had watched Thor's

actions with unease, but Thrym had his mouth open in disbelief when he saw what happened. Was this the usual appetite of this graceful maiden, who had eaten more than the entire company of giants? But Loki leaned towards him and whispered in his ear that the thought of marrying Freya had made her so nervous that she hadn't eaten anything for eight days, and that's why she was so hungry now.

This reassured the giant, and now that he himself was satisfied with the food, he approached and tried to lift the veil to kiss his future bride's cheek. But Thor, who preferred to keep the veil down, gave him such a fiery look that he quickly backed away and said, "Why does Freya's beautiful eye burn like a spark from an oven?" - "Oooh!" whispered Loki again, "that is nothing but her love for you, which has burned for eight days like a flaming fire."

This news was even more pleasant to hear, and Thrym cheerfully exclaimed, "Bring in the Hammer, my gift, with which I can trouble this woman. For if I have laid the hammer on her lap, she will be mine forever.

Together we will do terrible harm to the Asa people. The people I hate with all my heart." But what was that strange sound coming from under the silk veil at these words? Although Loki turned pale when he heard the sound, Thrym, who was busy getting the hammer, paid no attention.

Finally, the giant's servants returned, bent under the weight of Mjolnir. And while they bowed to the silent girl, who sat on the throne with her head bowed meekly, Thrym joyfully cried out, "Look, here is the

little toy of little Thor, it is beautiful, just right for his weak hands. Take it, beautiful Freya, take it as my gift." "And take this as my gift," roared Thor in a thundering voice, as he threw off the veil and stood up to his full height. And with those words, he swung the Hammer - and before the eye could even follow his movement, the Hammer struck through Thrym's skull and knocked over a dozen guests. Once again, the Hammer swung in the hand of Thor, and this time the hammer left no giant alive.

When the Hammer swung for the third time, the roof and walls of the palace collapsed on all sides, and only Thor and Loki remained alive in the ruins.

"Hahaha!" laughed Red Loki, "well done by you, the so-called honest Freya."

Thor, who was now busy throwing off his hated clothes and veil, looked threateningly at his companion. "No more of this, Loki," he said, "this had to be done, that is true, but never speak a word to me again about the work of this woman. We will only remember that I am the Thunderer and that my lost hammer has been found."

And so they rode peacefully back to Asgard.

And this is the end of the story of How Thor's Hammer was Lost and Found.