The Myth of Utgarda-Loki (part 1)

CHARACTERS

THOR

LOKI

PEASANT MAN

GOAT 1

GOAT 2

THJALFI

ROSKVA

NARRATOR

Like a shooting star across the indigo vault of the heavens, the devilish trickster Loki accompanied the magnificent Thor in his chariot. All the Nine Realms trembled in awe as the pair passed over indiscernible brushstrokes of mountain and sea, all towards some unknown destination. Perhaps it was strands of fate that guided them, or perhaps this trip was a divergence from their chosen paths. Regardless, although the blood of the Aesir flowed through them, both Thor and Loki agreed that a reprieve was in order.

THOR: Loki, witness how the sun dips below the horizon yonder. I suggest we take this fleeting moment of peace and tranqui—

LOKI: We should take a break. I said it first, I'm the best, you suck.

THOR: (groaning) Will your antics ever cease?

LOKI: When the snake swallows the sky, my dear.

THOR: My dear? (groans) Remind me why I let you come along.

LOKI: For the company. I know your nights have been lonely lately, so I thought I'd remind you of the warmth of another living being.

THOR: Deviant. Enough talk. I see the humble home of a farmer below. His roof shall offer us respite, lest he suffer the wrath of the gods.

LOKI: Always so intense. I understand your, uh, nighttime endeavors are currently…how should I put it? Unfulfilling. Still, there is no need for you to take out your frustrations on a poor, innocent farmer.

THOR: Am I being lectured by the same man who once got with a horse?

LOKI: A horse! (laughs) Are you sure *you* aren't the trickster, Thor? Ah, a horse. Who in their right mind would ever get with a horse? (winks)

THOR: A story for another time, then. Come, we are almost at the house.

With a manly flick of the reins, Thor drove his chariot towards the windswept fields, landing with a delicate yet thoroughly masculine grace. Stirred by the commotion, a middle-aged man left the embrace of his modest abode, followed by a young boy and girl.

THOR: Greetings, stranger. Might I ask if you would be so kind as to—

ROSKVA: OH MY ODIN, ARE THOSE GOATS?!?!

The youngsters eyes were fixated on Thor's chariot and the two stunningly majestic goats at its front, his loyal drivers.

THOR: I see you've noticed my chariot. Yes, those are indeed the finest goats you will ever lay eyes on.

GOAT 1: I'm bad to the bone.

ROSKVA: THEY TALK?!?!

LOKI: Unfortunately, goats do not have the most expansive vocabularies.

GOAT 2: (scoffing) (and in a British accent) (yay that's actually a reasonable demand in this country) Degenerate. Miscreant. Try using that pea-sized brain of yours *for once* before letting your blabbering mouth run amok. Young miss, I apologize for this one's crassness (motioning at Loki), and for my brother's…shall I call it *peculiar* nomenclature?

GOAT 1: I'm bad…to the bone.

PEASANT MAN: I've never seen goats like these before. And where did you fellows come in from? I swear all I heard was the whistling wind before your goat-drawn chariot suddenly showed up at my door.

GOAT 1: I'm bad to the—

GOAT 2: Ignore him, good sir. As you may surmise from my elocution, we are not your typical goats. Allow me to introduce ourselves. I am Tanngrisnir, and mister evil-to-the-skeletal-fragment here is Tanngnjostr. We are humbly at your service.

LOKI: Does your goat ever know when to shut up, Thor?

GOAT 2: How dare you. I ought to castrate you for that boorish remark.

LOKI: What is it with goats and my testicles?

PEASANT MAN: Sorry to interrupt, but what is it that brings you all the way out here?

THOR: Excuse that base creature over there, and pardon the goats as well. We are simply travelers seeking respite from the night's cold.

THJALFI: You're both gods, aren't you? You must be! Same with the goats.

GOAT 1: I'm bone to the bad.

PEASANT MAN: Thjalfi! Watch your tongue. Gods or not, these men and their goats are our esteemed guests. Please, come in.

Mystified, the peasant man led the two gods into his home, Thjalfi and Roskva following. The goats remained tethered to the chariot outside, much to the children's dismay. At the man's beckoning, Thor and Loki took their seats while the farmer rummaged around for any foodstuffs befitting of his guests. Reason and humility attempted to persuade him that the two men could not possibly be gods, but there was a seed of speculation in his heart.

THOR: I must thank you again for offering us lodging for the night, good sir. Although, tell me why you fluster so in your pantry?

PEASANT MAN: Please, don't feel the need to call these meager shelves a pantry. I'm just scrounging up the best I've got for you two.

THOR: Anything will do, I assure you. Do not stretch yourself thin on our accounts.

LOKI: (leaning forward) So, young ones. What are your names?

THJALFI: I'm Thjalfi. This is my little sister Roskva.

ROSKVA: Your goats are pretty, mister.

LOKI: Would you like to pet them?

ROSKVA: Yes!

THJALFI: I wouldn't mine eating one of them.

ROSKVA: Thjalfi! That's so mean!

PEASANT MAN: Damn it, Thjalfi, what did I tell you about watching your tongue?

THOR: Actually, that isn't a bad idea at all, young lad. Sir farmer, please rest easy and take a seat. I believe we shall have goat for dinner. It's the least I could do to repay you for your hospitality.

ROSKVA: NOOO!!! DON'T EAT THE GOATS! I WON'T LET YOU!!

PEASANT MAN: Roskva, calm down!

GOAT 2: (muffled) What's that about eating us?

GOAT 1: (muffled) I'm bad to the bone.

GOAT 2: (muffled) Good idea, let them think we're diseased. (shouting) Yes, I too am, uh, bad to the bone, as the saying goes.

THOR: Do not worry, little one. These are very special goats. Once they fill our bellies, a simple touch from my magic hammer will bring them back to life.

ROSKVA: You really mean it?

THJALFI: Pfft, there's no way. Dead things can't come back to life. If that were true, then Mom would still be here.

The table fell stiflingly silent. A cloud of sadness saturated the children's faces like raindrops kissing the morning dew. The peasant man, bereft of words, could do naught but stare at some memory fading into the distance.

LOKI: Talk about a buzzkill.

THOR: Damn it, you insufferable…(sighs) I'm sorry, little ones. If I had the power to bring your mother back, I would. For now, all I can offer you is the sustenance of my two goats.

GOAT 2: Can we just take a moment to reflect upon our choices tonight before someone does something they regret?

GOAT 1: I’m bad to the bone.

PEASANT MAN: You are truly too kind, stranger. If you insist, and if truly no harm will result, then allow us to indulge in your goats.

THJALFI: Mm, I can’t wait!

ROSKVA: You better not be lying about bringing the goats back to life. If you are, then I’ll never forgive you ever.

THOR: Fear not. The goats will have but a moment of darkness before knowing life once more.

GOAT 1: BA-BA-BA-BAADDD…to the bone.

GOAT 2: Are you really doing this, Thor? You bastard. We trusted you, we pulled your chariot, and this is how you repay us? Goatkiller! By my milk I lay a thousand curses upon thee and all thine descenda—

The goat said no more, for with a swift stroke Thor mercifully snapped its neck. The other goat soon followed. With deft dexterity Thor skinned both goats and fileted the best parts, dumping them in a stone pot. With the magic of the Aesir, Thor spiced and seasoned the delectable stew to perfection, cooking it simply with the heat from his smoldering looks. Once finished, Thor set the dinner on the table, inviting his hosts to partake.

THJALFI: Mm, it’s so good! Thanks for letting us eat your goats, mister.

ROSKVA: No, it’s yucky. (takes a bite) This is horrible, I hate it. (takes another bite) How could you cook your pretty goats like that? (mouth full) You’re so mean.

THOR: You will meet with my goats once more if your heart so desires. So, worry not, and enjoy the dinner.

LOKI: This reminds me of one time when I took a goat to the market…

THOR: For once, may we enjoy a peaceful meal in your presence, Loki?

LOKI: Who's the buzzkill now?

The peasant man's utensils slipped from his hands, clattering on the tabletop.

PEASANT MAN: D-did…did you just say Loki? As in, *Loki*?

LOKI: (grumbling) Way to be lowkey about it.

THOR: Ah, yes, this fool's name is indeed Loki. However, do not confuse him with Odin's jester. I mean, see for yourself. There's nothing godly about him.

PEASANT MAN: Oh, I see. I suppose that does make sense…

LOKI: Nice save, Thor. Nice save.

PEASANT MAN: Did you just say Thor?!

THOR: Wench! Things were going so well, but you just had to let your tongue slip like always, didn't you, Loki?

LOKI: You ride a chariot drawn by flying talking goats. In what universe did you think we could keep our lineage a secret?

PEASANT MAN: By the…there are gods in our presence. Oh, great lords of Asgard, please accept our humblest supplication for gracing these walls with your presence!

The peasant man dropped to the floor and prostrated himself, grabbing the backs of Thjalfir's and Roskva's heads and bowing them.

TJALFI: I knew it.

THOR: No, no, this is exactly why I wanted to keep our identities a secret. Rise, generous stranger. If you truly wish to do us service, then enjoy this meal I have prepared for you.

PEASANT MAN: Oh, thunderous Thor, your glory far surpasses all that the legends could ever hope to contain. I am truly blessed to behold you.

LOKI: (obnoxiously clears his throat)

PEASANT MAN: Now then, let us eat.

LOKI: Every time. Loki never gets any love.

THOR: I wonder why.

The two gods dined with the humans, feasting on delectable morsels of goat to the last bone. When all appetites were satiated, Thor instructed the children to lay the goat hides by the hearth and rest the remaining bones on top of them. Roskva complied, anxiously awaiting the goats' resurrection. However, Thor abruptly announced that they would first let sweet sleep descend over their eyes before setting off in the morning.

The farmer tucked his reluctant daughter into bed, while Thor and Loki curled up under a thin fleece. Soon, Thjalfi was the only one awake, his thoughts drawn towards the curious shrine to the goats.

THJALFI: Those goats can't really come back to life, can they? If they could, then I would eat them all over again, and keep on reviving and eating them. Unlimited delicious goat meat. Mm… great, now I'm hungry again.

Thjalfi took a long look at Tanngnjostr's thick, juicy femur.

THJALFI: Oh yeah, I could get into that so good.

Images of Thor's manliness and his sister's distraught face flashed through Thjalfi's mind, but they were ultimately drowned by the temptation of the savory nectar hidden within the goat's bone. Slowly slinking out from under his fleece, Thjalfi crawled over to the fizzling embers in the

hearth, grabbing a crude knife from the table on the way. Salivating, Thjalfi took the leg bone and cracked it open with the knife, joyfully sucking out every last drop of marrow. Satisfied, Thjalfi tucked the dry bone beneath the others and burrowed under his covers once more.

Morning came, Thor awakening with the dawn. He stirred the peasant family as well as Loki, and they all gathered around the goat remains.

THOR: Are you ready to witness something miraculous?

LOKI: Come on, man, keep your pants on.

THOR: May you be strangled by your own son's intestines. (to the family) As always, ignore the fool. Behold, as my godhood shall breathe into these goats new life.

ROSKVA: Yay!

THJALFI: Will we be able to eat them again for breakfast?

ROSKVA: NO!

THOR: Unfortunately, when my goats are brought back, we shall have to bid farewell. Now, tremble in awe.

With the finesse of a dancer atop a taut rope, Thor waltzed with his Mjolnir, pouring his vitality and sexiness into the hides and bones of the goats. Slowly, they began to hum, moving around on the ground and forming two skeletons. Once the foundations were laid, the hides wrapped around before closing together and manifesting Thor's beloved charioteers.

GOAT 2: What is this feeling? It's as if my joints are smooth mead sliding down my throat, like each fiber of my muscles is made of a thousand more mini muscles delicately intertwined. I need to do this more often!

ROSKVA: GOATS! I missed you so much.

GOAT 1: I'm b-b-b-b-bad to the bone.

THJALFI: Uh-oh.

While Tanngrisnir felt like a brand-new goat, it was clear that Tanngnjostr did not share the same sentiments. For, the poor goat was clearly crippled in the hind leg.

LOKI: Looks like someone pulled a hammy.

PEASANT MAN: What does this mean? Was there a mistake in the ritual?

THOR: …

THJALFI: (muttering) No, it wasn't my fault. I bet that wasn't even the same goat. It was the other one's bone. Yeah…

ROSKVA: Mister, what's wrong with the goat's leg?

LOKI: Well, it was nice knowing you folks.

THJALFI: (guiltily) M-mister?

THOR: There is…but one reason for Tanngnjostr's injury. One of you broke into his leg bone last night. You defiled the sacred vessel of the holy goat. For that, you shall pay with your suffering, and only then shall you surrender your lives.

Thunder cracked as the sky grew black. Torrential winds pounded pear-sized raindrops into the cowering, quaking forms of the mortals who had provoked the fearsome Thor's wrath. His knuckles turned white around the handle of his hammer, and the farmer's family for the first time knew the meaning of fear.

LOKI: Looks like you've done it now.

PEASANT MAN: W-w-wait, oh magnificent god, stay your hand, I beg you! What is it we humble mortals have done to spark your fury?

THOR: You know what you did. Now, die.

ROSKVA: (sobbing) You're scaring me, mister.

THJALFI: No, I'm sorry! It was me. I broke the bone to eat some of the marrow. Your goats were just so good, and you said you could bring them back to life, so I thought it would be okay. Please, don't kill us. I'm sorry.

PEASANT MAN: How could you? Thjalfi, you have murdered us all.

THJALFI: No! I'm sorry!

ROSKVA: Other mister, please help us.

LOKI: (whistles awkwardly)

THJALFI: No…

PEASANT MAN: Oh indomitable Thor, as awful in your terror as you are in generosity, I implore you…take my children as a sacrifice to appease your anger.

THJALFI: DAD?!

PEASANT MAN: You can do what you want with them. Just, don't kill us. Roskva makes wonderful company, and Thjalfi can…I don't know, do stuff. I promise you'll find some sort of use for them, so long as you find it in your heart to spare us.

With that, the storm ceased, and the skies cleared. Thor slowly dropped his hammer to his side, and the peasant man breathed a sigh of relief.

THJALFI: I can be a meat shield! That's something I can do.

ROSKVA: Wh-what's a meat shield?

THJALFI: It’s someone who eats all the incoming meat.

LOKI: We really ought to rethink our society’s educational system.

THOR: (sighing) I am afraid I lost my temper a bit there.

LOKI: I can see why things aren’t going so well with Sif right now.

THOR: You shut your lips. In any case, I will accept the service of your two children as atonement for Thjalfi’s mistake, good sir. I promise that neither shall die at another’s hands while under my watch.

PEASANT MAN: Thank you, oh magnificent god. How can I ever hope to repay your mercy?

LOKI: The man threatens to kill your entire family, and you want to repay him?

THOR: That is called piety, Loki, and is something you should learn.

LOKI: I’m quite sure it’s called extortion.

GOAT 2: Sorry to interrupt your enriching discussion, but will somebody do something about Tanngnjostr? He was already quite lame before, but now he is actually lame! How do you expect us to draw a chariot?

GOAT 1: I’m bad to the bone.

GOAT 2: No, you have a bad bone.

THOR: Hmm. Indeed, the children would not be able to pull the chariot in your places.

ROSKVA: Can’t you just magically make the goat better?

THOR: I’m afraid things just aren’t that simple. Well…looks like we’ll be continuing on foot!

GOAT 2: What part of lame leg do you not understand?

THOR: Who said you would be joining us?

GOAT 2: (dumbstruck) Are you…leaving us behind?

LOKI: Good riddance.

GOAT 2: Oh, are we but tools that once broken, purpose fulfilled, never again know what it means to be wielded in one's hands?

GOAT 1: I'm ba—

GOAT 2: The goatmanity!

THOR: Farmer, I shall exchange these two goats for your children. An even trade, I would say.

GOAT 2: How dare you liken me to a human child.

LOKI: I believe the real insult is the child being likened to you.

GOAT 2: (gasps)

PEASANT MAN: I have no right to accept such a generous gift, but if you insist, it is not my place to refuse.

THOR: Very well. You shall take care of my goats, while I your children. Alright then, Roskva and Thjalfi, from here on you shall be servants of a god. Rejoice and love me.

THJALFI: Will we get to eat more goats?

THOR: If you follow closely my instructions, you shall taste far better things than goat.

THJALFI: That's what I'm talking about. What are we waiting for? Let's go!

LOKI: Aren't you going to say goodbye to your father?

ROSKVA: Bye-bye, goats. I hope I see you again soon.

LOKI: I guess not.

GOAT 2: Goodbye, little lady. At least there is some hope for humanity after all.

THJALFI: Ha, she enjoyed eating you most of all.

ROSKVA: That's a lie!

THJALFI: You’re basically drooling right now.

GOAT 2: The sound of my feeble hopes being crushed.

LOKI: Enough dilly for the dally. Let us be off!

Loki and Thor, who now had a couple of new servants in tow, departed from the humble peasant man’s home on foot, leaving the two goats behind. Their eyes were set on Jotunheim, the dreadful land of the ancient giants, where their mettle would soon be tried.

THE END