

Escape From Ragnarok Mountain

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A Play in One Act

By David Barrett

The First Part of the Middlegarth
Trilogy

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Dramatis Personae

Tom, aged 13
Jack, aged 10
Alex, aged 11
Amy, aged 9
Melissa, aged 12
Librarian (voice of)
Tyr, Watchman of the Grinkengap (voice of)

At Middlegarth:

King Gunther
Sigmund
Siegfried
Osric
Henrik
Olaf
Gustav
Gudrun
Freya
Alana, Erika, Johanna (non speaking)

At Frostig (Ice Warrior Maidens)

Hilde
Ingrid
Kristin
Helge
Karen
Brigid

At Castle Valaholm, Aysgarth:

Wodec, the Great Wizard
Marog, the Raven of Memory
Hurog, the Raven of Knowledge
Oswald, the Apprentice

In the Forest of Alfheim (The Elves):

Trigg, the Elfin King
Moondag
Tostig
Trogg
Wenzel
Kirrig
Armeda, giantess

In the Underground Kingdom of Hadium, Magworts: (Trolls)

Gorm
Kraken
Gorthrop
Snorb
Snock
Droggle
Milder
Yukk
Deorc, Evil Sorcerer
Grundig, Dragon

Scene 1, The Old Library

ALEX I'm bored! Summer holidays are so boring.
AMY This is a wonderful library. Do come and look at these old books,
 Alex. The pages are all crispy, yellow and dusty.

(She blows the dust off the book she is holding. It blows into Jack's face and he coughs.)

- TOM Hey, come and look at this book, Jack, it's all about the history of giants.
- JACK Where? Let me see.
- ALEX Books are really boring!
- MELISSA But giants aren't real, are they, Tom? How can you have a history book about something that's not real?
- (She continues to browse through the books.)*
- AMY I'm jolly glad they're not real. After all, it would be pretty scary to meet a real giant.
- (Jack has crept round behind Amy and he jumps out at her with a loud roar. She screams.)*
- JACK Oh Jack, please don't do that. You frightened me.
- JACK It doesn't take much, does it?
- TOM This book is about folklore; legends of giants from different countries. Look here, for example, "In Scandinavian mythology the troll was a powerful giant that was an enemy of humans. They would rob and eat any travellers foolish enough to stray into their domain after dark".
- AMY Ooh, that's really scary. I don't like trolls.
- ALEX Trolls are boring. Anyway, it's half past four and we should be getting home for tea. Mother will be cross.
- JACK I had a troll once - it had blue hair, big, bulging eyes and a bare b.....
- TOM That's quite enough of that, thank you, Jack.
- MELISSA Oh Tom, do look at this won't you. 'Myths and Legends from Around the World'. What a wonderful title, don't you think?
- TOM Let me see the index. *(Tom snatches the book from her)*
- Myths of Creation, Superhuman Heroes, Shape-Shifters, Unexplained Disappearances.....
- MELISSA Unexplained disappearances - that sounds terribly exciting, don't you think?
- ALEX It sounds terribly boring to me. *(She yawns)*
- VOICE, LIB Five minutes until closing time, children. Please replace your books on the shelf unless you wish to borrow them.
- JACK What does it mean by 'unexplained disappearances', Melissa?
- (Melissa grabs the book back)*
- MELISSA Well, let's read it and find out, shall we? Here's an example: in nineteenth century Norway, a peasant girl by the name of Freya Svenson vanished without trace from a Norwegian mountainside. Some friends who were with her gave the most curious explanation for her disappearance.
- (Jack creeps unnoticed by the others into the wings. Tom takes the book and continues.)*
- TOM 'Whilst exploring the mountainside near their village, they discovered an enormous boulder known as the Ragna Rock. The boulder was covered with ancient runic inscriptions which the children did not understand'.
- (Alex begins to show an interest in this)*

Freya traced the words in the rock with her finger and, on the opposite side, she discovered a sentence in the old Norse language. She did not understand the full meaning of the words but she began to chant them aloud. After the third time there was a huge explosion and Freya disappeared into thin air.

- ALEX Wow! How is that possible.
- MELISSA It must have been magic.
- AMY That's very frightening.
- MELISSA Hey, where's Jack? *(They all look around in surprise)*
- TOM Jack! Where are you?
- ALEX He's disappeared into thin air.
- AMY That's really spooky.
- ALEX What are we going to tell mother?
Jack suddenly leaps out with a lion's roar. Everyone is startled.
- TOM Stop it, Jack! You're frightening the girls.
Tom buries his head in the book again.
- ALEX I'm not frightened.
- AMY That's because you're a tomboy. You're not dainty, like girls should be.
- ALEX Prissy, you mean. Like precious little Amy with her pretty ribbons and her frilly dresses. You're just a china doll!
(Amy looks as if she is about to cry.)
- MELISSA Stop it, you two! You'll spoil the fun. Tom, do go on with story. I want to know how it finishes.
- TOM Well that's just it. No-one knows what happened. It says that the other children were terrified, as you can imagine. Extensive searches of the mountain failed to discover poor Freya. Some people said she had been eaten by a bear, others that she had been kidnapped by trolls. But the most curious thing of all was that the huge boulder disappeared with Freya and it has never been seen since despite extensive searches of the mountain-side.
- ALL Wow! *(Melissa takes the book again)*
- MELISSA Professor Bjorn Tomson, an expert in Norse Folklore at the university of Helsinki, maintains that the inscription is an ancient Norse magical spell. He says it opens a portal into another world and that is where Freya vanished to. The legend states that before Freya could discover the reverse charm and return, she was set an impossible task by a mysterious person. Look! It even has the words of the chant printed here.
- ALEX *(Roughly grabbing the book)* Let me see the spell! I want to try it.
- AMY No, Alex you mustn't! It's dangerous.
- ALEX Oh, mustn't I, Miss Prissy. Just watch me.
(The others try to grab the book from her but she eludes them and begins chanting, faltering at first.)
- ALEX *þurb blæst ond regn ic gefare in drýlican eorðrice. (spoken three times)*
(through wind and rain I go into the magical earthly kingdom)
(Pronunciation guide:
Thurch blast and reenan itch yefare in drewleechun airthreacher)
- TOM Alex, stop it or you will go home at once.
(On the third time there is a loud bang and a flash as Alex disappears.)

The others are flung to the floor and stunned into silence for a moment.)

MELISSA Oh my goodness, what has she done?
AMY *(Distraught)* Alex, Alex, do please come back to us, please do.
(She starts to cry.)
MELISSA What are we going to do, Tom? I mean, we can't just leave Alex, can we?
JACK Why not? It will be more pleasant without her.
(Amy cries harder.)
TOM Come on, Amy, crying is not going to bring Alex back. Pull yourself together girl.
MELISSA I'll just have to follow her, wherever it is she's gone.
TOM What! No, Melissa, you can't. You simply can't. I'll go.
AMY You're not leaving the rest of us behind to do the explaining. If one of us goes - we all go.
TOM Oh very well, but we must be quick. Come on, let's hold hands.
Melissa - the book.
JACK I'm not holding hands with a girl.
TOM Just do as you're told, Jack.
(Melissa fetches the book and thumbs through to the correct page.)
Now, on the count of three we start the chant. Everybody ready?
AMY Oh Tom, I'm so frightened.
MELISSA Just hold onto my hand tightly, Amy, and you'll be alright.
(Amy whimpers.)
TOM One, two, three..
ALL *þurb blæst ond regn ic gefare in drylican eorðrice. (three times)*
(see pronunciation guide above)
There is a loud bang and a flash as they disappear in a brief blackout.
The lights come up again briefly onto an empty stage.)

Blackout

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Scene 2, The Grinkengap

(The scene opens as Alex is spinning and plummeting through the abyss of the Grinkengap. The stage is dim, bare and full of mist. U.V. lighting should be used if available. Upward moving gobos would create the illusion of the characters falling. In the background we see the roots of the world tree. Alex is sobbing.)

ALEX Help! Where am I? Why, oh why did I have to say that stupid spell. How will I ever get out of here? I wish I'd never been born.

TYR Patience, my child. Have patience and you will be rewarded.
(Throughout this scene the audience never see Tyr. He is but a booming voice in the void.)

ALEX Who.... who are you? Have you come to help me or to add to my misery?

TYR I am Tyr - custodian of the void - watchman of the Grinkengap. If you like, I am your friend.
(Wails and crying are heard as the others spin into the Grinkengap.)

TOM Alex, oh Alex, thank goodness you're safe.

ALEX Tom, please help me - I'm so afraid.

TOM Try to reach us Alex. We are safer if we stick together.

ALEX T-T-Tom, I'm not alone! There's a voice.....

TYR Welcome children, welcome to the Grinkengap.
(Whenever Tyr speaks, Amy cowers and covers her ears.)

ALEX This is Tyr, he's the custodian of something called the void. And we're in it.
(Amy weeps loudly.)

MELISSA That sort of makes him responsible for us then, doesn't it?

TYR You are correct, Melissa. I am your guide. If you believe in me I will deliver you safely. Only I have the power to release you from the Grinkengap.

MELISSA But how does he know my name?

AMY Then..... then, there is a way out - a way home?

TYR A way out, certainly. And a way home - perhaps, but first you have a mission to complete. There is a purpose in your being here.

JACK But I thought we were here because of the spell.

TYR Your presence here is part of a larger design, young man. It is greater than you and I and perhaps we should not question it. At present you are nowhere - you do not exist. The Grinkengap is where time begins and ends. Here, the beginning of the universe meets the end. The power locked up in the Grinkengap is beyond measure!

MELISSA But there is a way out? Is there a reverse charm?

TYR Ah, I see you are an intelligent young lady. But the reverse charm is only effective once you reach the kingdom of Middlegarth - and once your task is complete.

TOM Middlegarth? *(To Melissa)* Of course - the task. According to the legend, Freya had a task to complete.
Can you not stop us falling - it rather makes one feel travel sick, you know.
(SFX of lightning and thunder and the falling slows.)

TYR There, that is the best I can do. And now you will follow my instructions.

TYR Observe the World Tree. It has roots in every corner of the universe. Use it to travel - to the kingdom of Middlegarth. According to the grand design, you will help the mortals there.

MELISSA But what do we have to do Tyr? How can we help them? We're just children.

TYR You will know, Melissa, when the time comes. Trust me... you will know....
(His voice trails off.)

AMY *(Crying)* Tyr, please don't go. Don't leave us. You're the only friend we have.

JACK I understand now. This is like a black hole in space .. and the roots of the World Tree are like wormholes connecting every part of this world. How wonderful!

TOM Come on, we're wasting time. We must do as Tyr says, it's our only hope! Let's try to reach the tree.
The children struggle over to the tree and grasp hold of the roots.

ALEX Now what? Nothing seems to be happening yet. This is getting boring!

JACK But how does the tree know where we want to go?

AMY Why don't we just tell it?

JACK Oh yes, sure - talk to a tree. Do you normally do things like that?

MELISSA Our situation is hardly normal, is it, Jack? Anything is worth a try.

AMY Er, excuse me Mr World Tree, you see we're lost and we would like to get to the kingdom of - Mudguard!
They wait expectantly but nothing happens.

JACK Well that really worked, Amy, I don't think.

TOM Wait a minute, Jack. Amy said the wrong name - it's MIDDLEGARTH!

AMY Please Tree, can you help us get to the kingdom of Middlegarth?

Violent sound and light effects (not thunder this time but a supernatural sound). We hear screams from the girls fading into the distance as the light on stage dims to blackout.

End of Scene 2

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