

Noggin, King of the Nogs

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In the Lands of the North, where the black rocks stand guard against the cold sea, in the dark night that is very long, the Men of the Northlands sit by their great log fires and they tell a tale.

On þæm norðum landum þær þā blacan stānas wearde healdap wið þæs cealdan sæs on þære deorcan nihte sēo swīðe lang is, þā Norþmen sittap nēah miclum bēama brynum ond hīe spell reccap.

They tell of a prince and how he built a long ship and sailed beyond the black ice at the edge of the world to bring home his bride from the land of the Midnight Sun.

Hīe reccap sumne æðeling and hū hē lang scip worhte and siglde begeondan þæm blacan īse on þære worulde ecge þæt hē his brýde hām brōhte fram lande ðære middenihte sunnan.

Noggin the Nog was the name of the prince. He was the son of Knut, King of the Nogs, the aged ruler of that land of dark forest and snow which men call the land of Nog.

Noggin se Noga hātte sē æþeling. Hē wæs sunu Knutes, Nogra cyninges, se gamola baldor fram þissum lande deorcra holta and snāwes, þæt man nemneþ Noges land.

Now, every morning King Knut would rise from his bed, put on his boots and climb to the hill above the royal castle. At the top of this hill was a rock known as Knut's seat. The aged king would sit on the seat and as the sun rose behind the mountains he would begin to worry.

Ælcne morgenne ārās Knut cyning fram his bedde, scōde him his læsta and clamb tō ðære hylle abūfan ðæm cynehāme. On þæm coppe wæs sē stān Knutes Stōl gehāten. Se gamola cyning sæt on stōle and swā sēo sunne rās bæftan ðæm bergum swā begann hē gieman.

He would look down on the little town clustered around the castle walls and he would worry about his people and whether their roofs leaked and whether they had warm socks this cold weather. He would look down on his castle and he would worry about his son, Prince Noggin, and what would happen to his people if Noggin did not marry soon for it is the law in the Northland that the king shall be married. The old king knew that if he died Noggin would have to marry within six weeks of his death or he would not become king, and then the crown would go to his wicked uncle, Nogbad the Bad.

He sceawode ādūn ðone lytelan tūn gaderod ymb ðæs cynehāmes weallas and hē giemedde his folces ond hwæðer hiera hrōfas hlecig wæren and hwæðer hīe wearme soccas hæfden on þissum cealdan wedere. Hē scēawode ādūn þone cynehām and hē hogode unbliðe be Noggine aþelinge, his suna, and þætte ālimpe his folce gif ne beweddode Noggin fōrhraþe for þon wæs se gewuna on þæm norðum landum þæt sē cyning scolde beweddian. Se ealdan cyning cnēow þæt gif hē cwæle, þonne scolde Noggin binnan siex wucum hīwian elles ne bēo hē cyning, and þā wurde sē bēag tō his ārlēasum fæderan Noglobde þæm Ungecostan cuman.

The people of the town would look up at their king sitting there worrying and they would say: "Don't worry old king," but of course the king would go on worrying just the same.

Þæs tūnes folc scēawodon up hiera cyning þær sittende and giemende and hīe cwædon, "Ne giem eald cyning," ac andgitfullīce gelæste se cyning eallswā gieman.

Then, one day, the king rose from his seat as if to go down to his castle. The people watching him saw him shake and stagger and fall to the ground. The king was dead. Great was the sadness and loud the wailing. The flags on the houses were pulled down to half mast, and the great bell rang. All were sad, save one.

On sumum dæge āras se cyning fram his stole þæt hē tō cynehome gā. Ðæt folc þe hine bescēawiende beseah hine āhrēran and tealtrian and on eorþan befeallan. Se cyning wæs dēad. Micel wæs sēo gehornung and hlūd seo cwīðnes. On ðæm hūsum hnigodon ðā gūþfanan and seo greāt belle cnylde. Eall wæron hreōwige, nefne ānum.

In his black castle, Nogbad the Bad heard the distant sounds of sorrow and smiled a greedy smile.

On his ceastre mircan gehierde Nogbad se Ungecosta þa feoran hlēoþrunga, and smearcode grædige grennung.

In the Royal Castle, Noggin's mother, Queen Grunhilda rose from her bed and called for the prince.

Beinnan ðæm cynehāme āstōd of hire bedde Noggines mōdor, Grunhilda cwen, and beonn ðone æðeling.

"Noggin," she said, "the time has come for you to choose a bride. I shall summon all the maidens of gentle birth to the castle within seven days, and on the seventh day you shall choose your bride."

"Noggin," cwæp hēo, "Tīma is ðæt ðu brýde cīest. Ic langīge cuman ealla ða æðelborenan mægdenu tō ðæm cynehām binnan seofon dagum, and on ðæm sefoðan dæge scealt ðu þīne brýde cēosan."

Soon the sound of trumpets was heard throughout the land as, from the battlements of the castles, from the balconies of the tallest houses the royal heralds proclaimed their message. What excitement there was among maidens! What twittering and giggling! With hopeful hearts they put on their walking shoes and skipped away to the royal castle.

Fōhraðe wæs ðāra bēmena hlēoþrunga gehīered andlang ðæs rices swā bododon þa forebodan fram ðara burga torrum, fram ðara hīestra hūsa stānweorcum hiera bod. Swilc onwæcenness betweohn ðæm mægðum! Swilc gyllung and gālsmercung! Mid hyhtfulum heortum scōdon hīe hīe and hlēapetton to ðæm cynehām.

On the seventh day the maidens assembled, dozens of them, in lines across the hall. Slowly Noggin the Nog walked along the lines looking with great care and friendliness. There were tall girls, short girls, lean girls from the valleys with hair black as ravens' wings, fat girls from the castles on the mountaintops with golden plaits and eyes as blue as the sky.

On ðæm sefoðan dæge efencōmon ða mægdenu, fela folca, on rāwum, geond ðæt flet. Noggin se Noga pæðede, bescēawode mid micelum gýman and manascipe. Ðær wæron langa mægdenu, scorta mægdenu, mægera mægdenu of denum mid feaxum blacum swā hræfna fiðrum, fæta mægdenu of beorghleoðum, mid gyldenum wundenfeaxum and eāgum swā blæwen swā heofon.

Noggin came to the end of the line and he had not chosen. He had not found one maiden that pleased him enough to make her his queen. Standing calmly next to the very last maiden of all, Noggin saw a large green bird, a strange bird, the like of which he had never seen before. "You are not a maiden, you are a bird," he said.

"Your highness is observant," said the bird. "My name is Graculus. I have flown from the land of the Midnight Sun and from my master, Nan of the Nooks, I bring you greetings and a gift." The bird took from under his wing a knife. He placed it in Noggin's hand. "Thank you very much," said Noggin. He looked at the knife. It was made from a single faultless walrus tooth. On it was carved the likeness of a girl's face. Noggin looked at the face and he thought it beautiful, more beautiful than any of the maidens he had seen that day, or any other day for that matter. "Who is this maiden?" he asked.

"It is the likeness of my master's daughter," said the bird. "It is the face of Nooka, Princess of the Nooks."

Noggin, Prince of the Nogs, turned to his people and, holding up the knife, he cried out: "This is the maiden I shall marry."

What alarm and surprise there was in the castle!
What grumbling and grumping!
With heavy hearts the maidens put on their walking shoes and trudged back to their homes.

Noggin climbed the steps in the castle yard and addressed the Royal Guard and the people of the town.

"Who will come with me?" he asked.
"We will!" cried the warriors with one voice.

Noggin ancōm ræwe ende and he næfde ne gecoren. Hē ne fand nān mægden ðæt him līcode genog his cwēn tō wlencanne. Stille standende be ðæm endenēhstan mægðne, seah Noggin micelne grene fugol, wrætlicne fugol, swā æror ne seah hē nefre.

"Ðū neart nān mægden, ðū eart fugol," cwæð hē.

"Ðēoden mīn, ðū becēpst," cwæð se fugol. "Mīn nama is Graculus. Ic flēah fram lande ðære middeniht sunnan and fram mīnum hlāforde Nane ðæm Nōkan, ic inbrenge ðē grētingword and giefe." Se fugol ānōm cnīf of his fiðere. He ālēgde hine on Noggines handa. "Ic ðāncie ðē micle," cwæð Noggin. He āsēah ðone cnīf. Hē wæs of ānum leahterlēasum horshwæles tēþ geworht. Ðæron wæs sēo anlicnes mægðnes andwlitan gecorfen. Noggin āsēah ðone andwlitan and hē ðūhte him cyrten, cyrtenra ðonne æghwā ðara mægðena þe hē ær geseah oððe on ðæm dæge, oððe on æghwām oðre dæge tō bisne.

"Hwā is þis mægden?" āscode hē.

"Is sēo anlicnes mines hlāfordes dohter," cwæð se fugol. "Is se andwlita Nōkan, æpelan Nōkena."

Noggin, Nōga æpelung, bēag tō his folce and, hebbende ðone cnīf, gylede: "Þis is ðæt mægden ðæt ic gehīwige."

Swilc hrēamung and forfēhðung wæs in ðæm cynehāme!
Swilc bemurcende and ciorinde!
Mid hefelīcum heortum scōdon hīe ða mægðenu and forslāwodon tō hire hāmum.

Noggin clamb ða stægre in ðæs cynehāmes gearde and clipode ðone cyneweard and ðæs tūnes folc.

"Hwā begā mid mē?" āscode hē.
"Wē willað!" cealliaþ ða hererincas mid ānre stefne.

"Who will build me a ship?" he asked.
"We will!" called the carpenters.

"Hwā bytleð mē scip?" āscode hē.
"Wē willað!" cealliað ðā trēowwyrhtan.

"And we will paint it!" called the painters.
"And we will make you sails!" called the sailmakers.

"And wē mētað hit!" cealliaþ ðā mēteras.
"And wē metað þē seglu!" cealliað ða seglwyrhtan.

And so it was. The Nogs built a long ship of oak from the valleys. The mast was a single perfect pine tree. The high prow was carved and painted and gilded to a ferocious dragon's head. The sail was a square of stout canvas embroidered with the crest of Noggin and the face of Nooka. To protect the sides of the ship were shields of hammered bronze.

Swā belimpð hit. Ðæt Nogfolc cræftte lang scip mid acum of ðæm denum. Se mæst wæs ænga fulfremed furh. Þæt hēa forescip wæs forcorfen and fæged and gylden hrēohmōdes dracan hēafde gelīc. Ðæt merehrægel wæs feoðerscēte clæð mid Noggines tǣcne and Nōkan andwlitan becefed. Tō gewarianne ðæs scipes borda wæron bordweallas hamercnyssedes bræses.

"Do not grieve for me, Mother," said Noggin the Nog as he took leave of Queen Grunhilda. "The ship is strong, the men are brave. Graculus will guide us through the perils of the deep."

"Ne mē hrēow, mōdor," cwæð Noggin se Noga þende hē nōm geleafe of Grunhilde cwēne. "Ðæt scip is þyhtig, ðā menn sind dyre. Graculus wīsaþ ūs þurh ðæs dypes frēcen."

So the ship was launched. Noggin and his band of warriors raised the great square sail with the crest of Noggin and the face of Nooka. The wind took the sail and the ship moved away down the fjord towards the sea. The people watched from the quay and waved goodbye. Everybody was sad to see them go and afraid for their safety on the long and perilous journey. Everybody save one.

Swā wæs þæt scip utscofen. Noggin hōf and his eorlwerod ðone sīdan fēowerecgedan segl mid Noggines tǣcne and Nōkan andwlitan becefed. Se wind fēng ðone segl and ðæt scip fērde andlang ðære ēa ongēan ðæt brim. Ðæt folc bescēawodon fram ðære hæfene and hwearfodon. Æghwelc wæs geenged hīre aweggewitenese tō gewæccene and forhtodon for hīera unplēo æfter ðæm langum farelde and fræcenfulum. Eall nefne ānum.

In his black castle on the hill, Nogbad the Bad looked down on the little ship and he smiled. He knew that the journey to the land of the Midnight Sun was so long and dangerous that there was little chance of Noggin coming back and, as he thought of the royal treasure, the taxes and jewels and the crown which would soon be his, he chuckled to himself.

Beinnan ðære mircan ceastre on ðæm berge, lōcode Nogbad se Ungecosta adun on ðæm lytlan scipe and hē smearcode. Hē cnēow ðæt se fareld tō lande ðære middenihte sunnan wæs swā lang and plēohlīc ðæt lytel gesǣlnes wæs ðæt Noggin eft cyme and, swā ðōhte hē be þæm cynellīcan mǣpme, þæm feormum and gimum and ðæm gyldenbēage ðe sona bēo his, swā hlōh he selfe.

"Huh. Huh. Huh!"

"Hoh. Hoh. Hoh!"

A good wind blew the ship away from the land of Nog. Night came. The helmsman lashed the steering oar to hold the helm to the North Star and the band of Nogs sat round their stove in the canvas cabin and made hot buttered toast.

All the next day and night the wind blew them on. Then, one day, the wind dropped. The sun came out and it was really quite warm. As the sun set that night a storm blew up. The wind howled in the rigging. The thunder roared, the lightning flashed as the great waves tossed the little ship about like a cork. Graculus lay under a shelf feeling very, very sick. The Nogs huddled around their stove and prayed that the ship would not sink.

Morning came. The storm blew past and all was calm. They hoisted the sail and looked at it. No wind came to fill it. It hung limp on the mast and the ship stayed where it was, still in a calm still sea. The Captain of the Guard, the fierce Thor Nogson, stood at the helm.

"What do we do now, Noggin?"

"Row, I suppose," replied the prince.

The oarsmen took up their oars.

"Which way do we row?" asked Thor Nogson.

"Oh dear, I don't know," said Noggin the Nog.

They could not ask Graculus; he was too seasick to talk. So the Nogs got out their fishing rods and sat in the sun and fished. They did not catch anything but it passed the time.

"Land Ho!" came a shout from the look-out.

Not much land indeed, just a small, brownish grey island in the sea.

"Row that way," said Noggin.

Gōd wind blēow ðæt scip of Noges lande. Niht cōm. Se steōrmann geband ðā steōrāre ðæt gerēðru on ðæm norþsteorran tō gehendanne and þæt Nogwerod ætsæt ymb his fyrpollan on ðæm getelde and gebræddon gebladesod breād mid butere.

Ðurh þone oþerne dæg and þā niht beblēow se wind hīe fōrþweardes. On þys dæge þā endode se wind. Sēo sunne āscān and wæs gewisse wearm. Ðā sēo sunne āstāg þære nihte ðā áblēow hreōh. Se wind hrēop in þæm wæderápum. Sēo þunorrād swēog, se līgræsc fyrclode þenden hwearfodon þā mīcelan merefaropas þæt lytele scip swā flotwudu. Graculus læg benyþan þæm borde swiþe, swiþe untrymig ġefēlende. Ðæt Nogwerod hēapode ymb hira fyrpollan and gebæde þæt þæt scip ne āsence.

Morgen cōm. Þæt hreoh endode and eall wæs smylte. Hīe ahōfon ðone segl and hine āsāwon. Nān wind ne cōm hine tō afyllanne. Hē hangode drūsende on mæste and þæt scip abād þær, stille on stillum smyltum sære. Se werodtōga, se grama Þor Nogsunu, stōd on helman.

"Hwæt dōþ wē nū, Noggin?"

"Rowaþ, ic gewene," gēanþingode se æðeling.

Ða hāsætan afēngon hira āra.

"Hwider rōwaþ wē?" āscode Þor Nogson.

"Wā lā, ic ne cnāwe," cwæþ Noggin se Noga.

Hīe ne magon Graculus ascian; he wæs tō mereseōc tō wordlianne. Swā feahte þæt Nogwerod hira fisc-ferelan and sæt in sunnbeāme and fiscode. Hīe ne gefēngon nāwyht ac man ðurhdrēag.

"Hwæt, land!" forðcōm cirm fram ðæm dægwearde.

Næs micel land forðum, ānlīce wæs lytel eorðgræg īg in brime.

"Rōwaþ þider," cwæþ Noggin.

They rowed over to the island and Thor Nogson swung out on a rope and landed on it.

Hīe rēowon oð þā īge and Þor Nogsunu ūtswang on rāpe and gelandode þæron.

"Ooh, it's all soft and squodgy," he said, "and it's covered with sort of brown grass stuff."

“Ūh, is fūl softe and hnesce,” cwæþ hē, “and is gewrigen mid dunum gærslicum andweorce.”

"Explore the island," said Noggin.

“Aspyrge ðā īge,” cwæþ Noggin.

"Explore it? I can see all of it from where I am standing! There is nothing here except this brown grass stuff."

“Aspyrie? Ic mæg ealles sēon hwær ic stande! Nis nāwyht hēr būtan dunum gærslicum andweorce.”

"Dig some up," said Noggin.

“Fordelf sumes,” cwæþ Noggin.

They threw Thor Nogson a spade. He put it to the ground and dug. The whole island rocked under him. It reeled and shook and one end of it rose in a hill letting out a great roar of pain.

Costere gewurpon hīe tō Þor Nogsuna. Hē dyde hine tō eorþan and dealf. Eall īg hriþode undere him. Hēo ascōc and awegede and sum healf rās tō hylle micelne wræcsang clipiende.

"Earthquake!" shouted Thor Nogson.

“Eorþhrērness!” gylede Þor Nogsunu.

The hill turned on them and it was a great head with fierce whiskers and long sharp teeth.

Sēo hyll becerede and hēo wæs micel hēafod mid unhīrlīcum wangbeardum and langum scearpum tōþum.

"I say, do you mind?" it said. "That hurt!"

“Ic secge, hogiað nū!” hē cwæþ. “Þæt mē dereþ!”

It was a gigantic walrus. Noggin knew there was only one walrus in the world as big as that. They had met Arup, King of the Walruses. They greeted each other as kings do and Noggin offered his guest refreshment.

Se wæs grēat horshwæl. Noggin cnēow þæt nænig horshwæl næs on eorðan swā micel būtan ānum. Hīe mētton Arup, Horshwala cyning. Hīe gegrētton hīe swā cyningas dōp and Noggin offrode his gieste gereord.

"A ship's biscuit perhaps?"

“Scipes brādhlāf gewēne?”

"A ship's biscuit?" said the Walrus. "Why, yes, that would be nice. I'm feeling a bit peckish."

“Scipes brādhlāf?” cwæþ se horshwæl. “Hwȳ, gise, þæt sīe gewunsum. Ic hyngrige hwēne.”

Noggin's men went below and brought up a chest of biscuits.

Noggin's līpmenn ēodon inne and gebrungon erc brādhlāfa.

"How would you like them?" asked Noggin.

"Hū gepicge þū hīe?" āscode Noggin.

"Oh, just throw them in, throw them in!" replied the King of the Walruses and he opened his mouth.

"Oh, hlūtorlīce weorp hīe innan, weorp hīe innan!" oncwæp se Horshwala cyning and hē openode his mūþ.

The Nogs picked up ship's biscuits and threw them into the great mouth until the chest was empty. Then the Walrus closed his mouth and chewed.

Þæt Nogwerod āfēng þā scipes brādhlāfas and gewearp hīe intō þone miclan mūþ oþ þæt se erc lāere wæs. Þonne beclysde se horshwæl his mūþ and ceaw.

"Mm, delicious, haven't had ship's biscuit for years!"

"Mm, ārlīc, fela wintra næbbe ic nanne scipes brādhlāf!"

"Hi, what about me?" shouted Thor Nogson.

"Ēala, and ic?" gylede Þor Nogsunu.

"Throw him a biscuit, somebody," said Noggin.

"Gewearp him brādhlaf, gehwā," cwæp Noggin.

"No! I want to come back! You can't leave me on this monster all day!"

"Nese! Ic wille eftcerran! Gē ne sculon mē on þissum fifel andlangne dæg forlætan!"

"Manners, Thor Nogson, manners!" said Noggin severely. "Wait till the King of the Walruses has finished his elevenses."

"Gebæru, Þor Nogsunu, gebæaru!" cwæp Noggin teartlīce. "Ābīd oþþæt se Horshwala cyning endap his snædinge."

The walrus chewed another box of ship's biscuits with great pleasure and then offered to help them on their way.

Se horshwæl cēaw æfterne erc scipes brādhlāfa mid micelre glædnese and þonne bēad hē him helpan to fērenne.

"I am going towards the land of the Midnight Sun. If you just throw your gardener here a rope, I will give you a tow."

"Ic gā ageān þæt land ðære middenihte sunnan. Gif þū gewearpe þissum lēacwearde þīne līne, þā togie ic þē."

They threw Thor Nogson a rope. He tied it around the walrus's neck and quickly climbed back on board.

Hīe gewurpon Þor Nogsuna līnan. Hē geband hīe emb þæs horshwæles hneccan and hwætlice efthwearf on bāt.

"Right away!" called Noggin.

"Awegonwend!" bēad Noggin.

The walrus moved away though the calm water pulling the ship behind him. Swiftly he swam. All that day and night he swam. Through the next day and night he pulled the little ship until they were past the black ice at the edge of the world. Then he stopped.

"I'll be off now," he said. "I go South here, but there is a good wind. Keep the Midday Sun behind you. Watch out for icebergs. Good luck!"

The King of the Walruses sank beneath the waves.

The wind bore them on. That night the snow began to fall. Graculus climbed on to the prow of the ship and guided them past the icebergs while the Nogs took turns bringing him mugs of cocoa. Then, as dawn came, they saw before them the land of the Midnight Sun. It was a flat land. No mountains and forests like their own homeland, just flat ice and snow. Nan of the Nooks was waiting for them on the shore. He was a little man in a fur hood sitting on a throne made of blocks of ice. He was surrounded by other little men in fur hoods all jumping about with excitement.

"Greetings, Noggin the Nog. Do you come in peace?" he called.

"Hail, Nan of the Nooks. We come in peace," called Noggin the Nog as he leapt ashore.

Nan of the Nooks came down from his throne of ice and shook Noggin by the hand. "Perishing cold isn't it?" he said. "Come up to my place and have a cup of something hot."

Nan of the Nooks led Noggin to one of the round ice houses and went indoors. There was no door, only a sort of arched tunnel to crawl through. Inside, the house was bright and warm with a skin on the floor for a carpet. Nan and Noggin sat on stools and Nan's daughter brought

Se horshwæl awegonwende þurh þæt smylte brim, þæm scipe wiþhindan āpullende. Swiftlice swamm hē. Ealne dæg and ealle niht swamm hē. Þurhūt oþerne dæg and oþere niht apullode hē þæt lytle scip oppæt hīe gedēgdon þæt mirce īs æt eorþan ecge. Þonne gestillde hē.

"Ic feorre nū," cwæp hē. "Ic fēre sūþryhte, ac is gōd wind. Forðheald þā middægessunnan þwiþhindan. Bewarna wiþ īsbeorga. Gōd spēd!"

Se Horshwæla cyning āsanc under þā wægass.

Se wind bær hīe fōrweard. Þære nihte fēoll snāw. Graculus clamb on þæt forescip and stēorde hīe ymb þa īsbeorgas þenden hwearf hit embstemn þæt Nogwerod him ealowæge bringan. Þā dagung forþcōm, þā sāwon hīe þæt land þære middenihte sunnan. Þæt wæs brād land. Wæron nāne bergas ne nāne holtas hiera ēðel ungelīc, wæs brād īs ānlīce and snāw. Nan Nōkana bāsnode hīe on brimstæpe. Hē wæs lytel wer on crusenān, sittende on þrymselde of īsgicelum geworht. He wæs ymbstandend mid lytlum mannum on crusenān, eallum hlēapende on onwæcennesse.

"Eālā, Noggin se Noga! Cymst þū on frype?" ceallode hē.

"Wesþū hāl, Nan Nōkana. Wē cumaþ on frype," ceallode Noggin se Noga swā læhte hē on brimstæp.

Nan Nōkana forþcōm of his þrymselde īses and hrisode Noggines lōf. "Fulswiþe ceald tō soþe?" hē cwæp. "Cum on mīn hūs and drenc sumes hāt."

Nan Nōkana gelædde Noggin tō sum trendel īshūs and ineode. Næs nān duru, ānlīce bogen crȳpel þone man þurhcrēap. Binnan wæs þæt hūs beorht and hlēowfæst mid hȳde swā tæpped on flōre. Nan and Noggin sæton tō stōlum and Nanes dōhtor inbær bleacne lēafdrinc in seolfrenum līpwægum.

them black tea in silver mugs.

She was Nooka, the girl whose likeness was carved on the bone knife. Noggin looked at her and she was more beautiful than he had expected.

Nōka wæs hēo, þæt mægden hwæs gelicnese wæs on þæm bānan cnīfe ācearf. Noggin āseah hīe and hēo wæs forfægerra þonne hē gewēnde.

Noggin turned to her father. He said, "Nan of the Nooks, I have come far, through hail and wind, through snowstorm and sea mist, past the black ice at the edge of the world to ask your daughter to marry me."

Noggin nægde hire fæder wordum. "Nan Nōkana, of feorwegum cōm ic, þurh hæg and wind, þurh snāwstorm and meremist, begeondan þæt blace is on þære worulde ecge, þīne dōhtor tō ascianne hwæpere hēo mē hīwie.

"Yes, I know," said Nan of the Nooks.

"Giese, ic wāt", cwæþ Nan Nōkana.

"Well, er ..." Noggin faltered, "now I'm here, I feel a bit shy. Would you ask her for me?"

"Lā..." Noggin stamerode, "nū eom ic hēr, ic gefēle hwēne scēoh. Meaht þū hīe ascian for mē?"

Nan of the Nooks laughed. "All right then." He called his daughter. "Nooka," he said. "Noggin has come through hail and wind through snowstorm and sea mist, past the black ice at the edge of the world to ask you to marry him. Will you marry him and be Queen of the Nogs?"

Nan Nōkena hlōh. "Swā bēo hit." Hē laþode his dōhtor. "Nōka," cwæþ hē, "Noggin cōm þurh hæg and wind, þurh snāwstorm and meremist, begeondan þæt blace is on þære worulde ecge, þē tō ascianne hwæpere þū hine hīwie. Wilt þū hine hīwian and Cwēn þāra Nogenā weorþan?"

"Yes Father, I will."

"Giese, fæder, ic wille."

So Noggin and Nooka were married. There was great feasting and merriment in the land of the Midnight Sun. Fireworks lit up the sky and the Nogs and the Nooks sang drinking songs and ate roasted caribou meat.

Noggin and Nōka hīwodon. Micel wistfullung wæs and gleōgamen in þæm lande ðære middenihte sunnan. Fýrgeweorcas beorhtodon heofon and þæt Nogwerod and þæt Nōkfolc āgōlon drenclēoþ and æton bræddne hrānmete.

The next morning Graculus came to Noggin and Nooka and told them he was going to fly back to the land of Nog and tell the news that Noggin was married and on his way home. Otherwise Nogbad the Bad was sure to try and seize the throne. So Graculus flew away from the land of the Midnight Sun. Noggin, Nan and Nooka stood and waved until his strong green wings had carried him out of sight.

Ðý æfteran morgene mētte Graculus Noggin and Nōka and āsægde him þæt he oþflēoge tō Nogenalande and ācweþe þæt spell þæt Noggin hīwode and eþle edwende. Ælcra befō Nogbad se Ungecosta þæt þrymseld. Forþa forþflēag Graculus fram lande ðære middenihte sunnan. Noggin, Nan and Nōka ætstōdon and wafodon oþ his stranga grēna fiþere him aweg ābæron.

Far away, in the land of Nog, Nogbad the Bad stood in his black castle and looked out across the sea. High in the air he saw a bird, a green bird, flying very slowly like a bird that is very tired. He watched the bird flutter down and with the last of its strength land on top of the flag pole, fold its wings, tuck away its head and go to sleep.

Nogbad held the flag-rope and told his guards to haul down the flag. The guards pulled down the flag. and, as they did so, Nogbad was pulled up the other side of the pole. He reached the top and grabbed the bird by the throat.

"Aaark!" cried Graculus.
"Lower away, guards," said Nogbad.

They lowered him. He held out the bird to the guards. He said, "Take this and put it in the dungeon."

The guards took Graculus and put him in a dungeon. He sat there with a bowl of water and a bowl of birdseed and he wept. The days passed. Then one day the door was thrown open and there stood Nogbad in purple robes carrying a golden crown.

"Look at me, Bird," he said. "It is six weeks since Noggin went away. He has not returned and so, today, I go down to the council of elders in the town and they have to proclaim me King!" Graculus watched from the barred window of the dungeon. He saw Nogbad set out in a golden carriage.

A robin perched on the window sill.
"Robin," said Graculus. "Do you want Nogbad to be king?"
The robin shook his head. "Take this feather," said Graculus. "Put it in the hand of Queen Grunhilda and tell her I am here."

Unnēah, in Nogenalande, stōd Nogbad se Ungecosta in his mirce ceastre and forþbesēah lagulāde. Heofonhēah sēah hē fugol, grēnne fugol, swīþe slāwlīce flēogende swā swīþe wērig fugol. Hē hāwode þone fugol niþer floterian and mid his lætemestan mægene on fanalorgre gelandian, his fiþere fēaldan, his hioful helmian and onslæpan.

Nogbad gehende þā fanalīnan and bæd his weardum þone fanan tēon. Þā weardas tugon þone fanan and, swā hīe dydon, swā wæs Nogbad āhæfen on oðerre healfe lorgre. Hē ancōm on þone cnep and gegrāp þæs fugoles hrcan.

"Āāārc!" hrēop Graculus.
"Gryndaþ mē, gē weardas," cwæþ Nogbad.

Hīe gryndon hine. Hē geforþode þone fugol tō weardum. Hē cwæþ, "Tacaþ þisne and ingedōð hine in þæt dimhūs."

Þa weardas tōcon Graculus and hine in dimhūs ingedydon. Þær sæt hē mid bollan wætres and mid bollan fuglesfōdan and hē wēop. Þā dagas gewiton. On þýssum dæge wæs sēo dūru unlocen and þær stōd Nogbad cynegerelan gearwiende and gyldenbēah berende.

"Asēoh mē, fugol", cwæþ hē. "Ær siex wucan āweggewāt Noggin. Hē ne cerde and forða, todæg, gā ic tō witenagemōte in byrg and hīe sculon mē tō cyninge abēodan!" Graculus hāwode þurh ðæs dimhūses ēagbyrl. Hē sēah Nogbad in gyldenre feringe feran.

Rēadda gesæt on ēagbyrlriman.
"Rēadda," cwæþ Graculus. "Wilt þū þæt Nogbad tō cyninge weorþe?"
Se rēadda hrisede his hēafod. "Fōh þās feþer," cwæþ Graculus. "Ingedō hīe in Grunhilde cwene lōf and cýþ tō hire þæt ic bēo hēr."

Down in the town, Nogbad the Bad drove in state past the crowds of silent people. Nobody cheered or smiled but Nogbad did not care. He thought of the royal treasure and the taxes and he smiled to himself.

In the royal castle, Queen Grunhilda stood alone by her window and looked out across the cold sea. "Alas, my poor Noggin!" she sighed and stretched out her hand towards the horizon. A robin landed on her hand. It was carrying a green feather. "This is one of Graculus's feathers," said the old queen. "Where is he?"

The robin pointed with its wing towards Nogbad's castle.
The queen wasted no time. She called the guards.

"Take horses and go to the castle of Nogbad the Bad. Graculus is imprisoned there. This bird will show you the place. I am going down to the council of elders to deal with Nogbad."

At the council of elders, Nogbad was explaining what a good king he was going to be and how many extra taxes everybody would pay. Queen Grunhilda entered the hall, "Nogbad!" she cried in ringing tones. "What is the penalty for obstructing the king's messenger?"

"The penalty is banishment, Grunhilda."
"Nogbad," she commanded, "go and pack your bags!"

The elders laughed, but Nogbad twirled his moustache and scowled. "Madam," he began. "I could have you thrown into the dungeons for insolence, but as you were once Queen of the Nogs I will be merciful. I will let you go back to your castle, but you must stay there and mind your own business, for I am the king."

"Oh no you are not," came a voice from the doorway. There was Graculus perched on the shoulder of the captain of the Queen's Guard.

In niþerbyrig, ārād Nogbad se Ungecosta cynlīce þæm swīgan gecrode forbī. Nænige ne āmyrgdon ne smearcodon ac Nogbad ne gīemde. Hē gehogode on þæm cynelīcan fēo and þæm gafolum and hē smearcode hine.

Innan cynehāme, stōd Grunhilda cwēn ānne be hire ēagþyrle and forþbesēah geond þæt cealde brim. "Wā lā, mīn dēora Noggin!" hēo āsāc and āreahte hire lōf agēan þæt ēaggemearc. Rēadda gelandode on hire lōf. Hē bær grene feðer. "Þēos is Graculusre feðer," cwæþ sēo ealde cwēn. "Hwær is hē?"

Se rēadda wīsode mid his feþere agēan Nogbades ceastre.
Sēo cwēn ne essode nāne tīde. Hēo langode þa weardas.

"Tacap hengestas and gāþ tō ceastre Nogbades þæs Ungecostes. Graculus is þær gefested. Þes fugol fōrætywaþ ēow. Ic fēre tō witenagemōte Nogbades þing tō atēonne."

Æt witenagemōte, trahtode Nogbad hū hē gōd cyning sīe and hū gehwā manig nīw gafol forgielde. Grunhilda cwēn inēode þæt hof. "Nogbad!" ceallode hēo, hlūdswēge. "Hwæt is þæt wīte for hremminge þæs cyninges āres?"

"Þæt wīte is wrecscipe, Grunhilda."
"Nogbad," bēad hēo, "Gā and gefæt þīne beligas!"

Þā witan smærdon hine, ac Nogbad þwær his grane and ywde grame ansyne. "Hlæfdige", begann hē. "Ic mihte þē in dimhūs for ofermōde ingedōn, ac forþon þū wære ær Cwēn þāra Nogenā þonne miltsie ic. Ic ann þē þæt þū tō þīnum cynehām eftcierre, ac þū scealt bīdan and forswīgan, forþon ic eom cyning."

"Lā nese, þū neart," cwæþ stefn fram ingange. Þær wæs Graculus on þære eaxle þære cwene weardgerefan sittende.

"Slink away Nogbad, your time is up!" and Nogbad slunk away.

“Slinc aweg, Nogbad, þīn tīma is forealdod!” and Nogbad slanc aweg.

"Smoke!" cried the boy who sold winkles.

“Smīc!” ceallode se cnæpling se þe sealde scielfiscas.

"Smoke!" cried the harbour master.

“Smīc!” ceallode se portgerēfa.

The signal fire on the headland was burning to show that a sail had been sighted.

þæt bēacenfȳr bærnde on þære næsse forþæm segl wæs sewen.

They saw a ship. It was tiny and far away, but Grunhilda, looking through the harbour master's telescope, could make out the crest of Nog and the face of Nooka embroidered on the sail.

Hīe sāwon scip. þæt was lytel and unnēah, ac sēah Grunhilda lagulāde forþbesēonde Noges tācn and Nōkan līcnese on segle becefed.

Soon the ship sailed up the fjord to the harbour, where, amid great rejoicing, Noggin and Nooka stepped ashore to be greeted by their people.

Fōrhraþe siglde þæt scip andlang ðære ēa tō porte, þær, onmiddan micelre feowunge, bestōpon Noggin and Nōka on læþ and hiera folc hīe grētte.

Graculus told Noggin of Nogbad's wickedness and he sent soldiers to seek him out. They did not find him. Nogbad had put on his climbing boots and set off over the pass to stay with his granny in Finland.

Graculus ācwæþ Noggin be Nogbades wōhfulnesse and Noggin āsende ferdmenn Nogbad to nēosianne. Hine ne gefandon. Nogbad scōdde him his læsta and gestāh ofer þone ānpæþ be his ealdmēder in Cwēnlande to geardienne.

So Noggin and Nooka came home to their kingdom. They were crowned that day in the royal castle, Noggin and Nooka, King and Queen of the Nogs, and their reign was long and happy.

þus cōmon Noggin and Nōka tō ēþle, tō hiera cyningrīce. On þȳ dæge wæron hīe gebēagod in cynehāme, Noggin Nogenā tō cyninge and Nōkan tō cwēne, and lang wæs hiera rīce and eādig.