



*Newton Park's
Twisted Tales -
Bjorn Bendtner
The Viking
Inventor*



Bjorn Bendtner The Viking Inventor

Many, many years ago a race of people called Vikings inhabited most of Europe. They started life in Scandinavia, but decided they would explore and discover new lands, in search of wealth and other opportunities. They were, in essence warriors and their invasions were often barbaric. After a successful conquest the people of the conquered lands would be terrified, living in fear for their lives.

They didn't worship a single god like many of us do today, the Vikings worshipped their own gods and there were many. Odin was the Allfather, the most powerful among them. But there were others too who were worshipped and feared in equal measure; including Freya, the goddess of love, Loki the god of mischief, Hel, the goddess of the underworld and the mighty Thor, god of thunder, who protected the humans on Earth and wielded a powerful hammer named Mjöllnir.

Although war and conquest were their main goal, Vikings were not only warriors, some were skilled craftsmen who built weapons and boats that could sail through the deadliest of seas. They were also talented farmers, who had great knowledge of lands and what crops would grow and where. Their journeys took them all over Europe and beyond, but whether you were a warrior, farmer or craftsman you needed to be strong, fearless and ready for war whenever the situation called for it.

This brings us to the hero in our story, for in the far northern parts of Europe on the frozen island of Iceland, lived a young boy who was neither strong, nor brave. Bjorn Bendtner was an average teenager, living in a small, snowy settlement at the foot of the great mountains. The gigantic mounds towered into the sky as if they were the actual Gods looking down over the village. In fact, it was common belief amongst Vikings that Iceland was as near as could be to heaven on Earth, or Valhalla as it was known to them. It was a sacred place, where humans could be close to their Gods.

Bjorn obviously believed in the gods, but as to his home being like heaven, he wasn't too sure. It was freezing and the little boy was constantly sneezing. To him it felt more like a punishment to be there than a reward. He lived in a small hut with his mother and sister whom he loved very much. His dad was a well respected warrior and was often called off on different campaigns, following different kings, to invade new territories. Bjorn was exceedingly proud of his dad, everyone seemed to love and respect his father greatly. Bjorn was desperate for his dad's approval, but in truth he was a bit of an embarrassment to his father. He wasn't gifted with strength, speed or bravery, but what he did have was a keen intellect and an amazing imagination, which weren't desirable traits in a young Viking boy. But being a warrior was something he never aspired to be; his only aspiration was to be an inventor. It was Bjorn's dream to be renowned for his ingenious inventions.

Sadly, this hadn't turned out too well for him so far. His first invention was an armoured, metallic sock, which he thought was a great thing for warriors in battle, to give support and protection to the foot and ankle. While testing it in the deep snow of Iceland, the metal rusted, leaving poor Bjorn immobile in his combat training. The thin, weak boy didn't really need any more disadvantages, he was already the worst warrior in his class. So, after taking another savage, merciless beating, the little lad limped home and thought up his next idea.

Iceland was famous for its mountainous volcanoes, so he thought he'd make something he could share with his friends, in an attempt to try and make him more popular. He ventured up one of the mountains until he came to the very top. Bjorn liked it up in the clouds, partly because he was all alone, far away from the mocking laughter and harsh disapproval, but mostly because it was much warmer. Steam protruded from the rocks and heat soared out from the mouth of the volcano, warming the poor boy's tired bones. He sat on the rocky edge and looked up to the sky, pleading with the gods to make sure his next invention was a success.

But unfortunately, it wasn't to be. He spent the afternoon crafting a perfectly spherical ball made out of volcanic rock, thinking he would make a ball for his friends to play with. It was quite heavy, but he was famously weak, so he thought the normal boys and girls would be able to play with it easily. He struggled down the mountain with his ball of rock and threw it down in front of a group of young boys. They looked at him in confusion, so Bjorn told them it was a gift, a toy for them to play with. Young Ragnar, the biggest, bravest boy, stepped forward and attempted to kick the ball. The following sound of cracking bones and squeals of pain still haunt young Bjorn's dreams. The volcanic rock ball didn't even move a millimetre; young Ragnar however, crumbled to the ground clutching his broken foot. Tears streamed down his face as he hurled a torrent of abuse at the dejected Bjorn, who tried to slowly back away, but was quickly caught by the angry mob. They pushed him to the floor and took turns kicking the scrawny, little Viking. Again, Bjorn limped home defeated, battered and bruised.

His final invention was probably the worst yet. His sister Lagatha had nothing nice to wear for her evening celebrations. Unlike Bjorn, Lagatha was really popular. She was pretty, with long blonde hair tied up in a series of complex plaits. His sister was also the most accurate axe thrower in the village for her age, everyone knew she would grow up to be a far better warrior than Bjorn could ever dream to be. Their dad would pile praise on Lagatha; she was his golden child. Bjorn was always forgotten, pushed to the side, an embarrassment to the family name. That being said, Lagatha was always very kind to Bjorn and tried to protect him whenever she could. However, having his little sister fight his battles for him was incredibly demeaning for a young Viking boy. But he did appreciate her efforts and loved her very much. Bjorn hated to see her so sad, so he rushed outside and found as many leaves as he could, he spent hours climbing trees and selecting only the ones with the prettiest colours.

When he got back home he carefully stitched them all together and made the most beautiful, emerald green dress. Lagatha was so pleased when Bjorn gave it to her, she kissed his cheek and hugged him so tight it actually hurt a little. He was still a bit sore from the beating he had taken a few days previous. Happiness and joy seeped through his tiny, aching body, knowing that his creation would be useful to his sister. That night he went to sleep smiling and completely content with the world.

Bjorn was violently awoken from his dreams by being brutally beaten. His eyes shot open and a rage-filled, teary-eyed Lagatha stood over him, punching and kicking him. She was naked as she beat him so Bjorn averted his gaze. But the hate in her eyes hurt Bjorn more than the vicious, savage beating he took. By now he was used to the physical pain, but now it was coming from the one person he loved and that hurt so much more. Their mother eventually dragged Lagatha away, he could still hear her cries and screams as he lay there all alone, confused and sobbing. His mother finally came in and grabbed him by the shoulders, shaking him roughly. "Why can't you just be a normal boy?" she shouted in disappointment. "Why can't you learn to fight or farm or just do anything of use. You persist in these foolish dreams and you're just terrible at it. Your sister is distraught, your silly dress disintegrated out there in the cold wet air, leaving her naked and embarrassed in front of all her friends. Please stop. I don't care what your ambitions are, just fit in, be a normal boy, do what you're supposed to do. These inventions will never be of use to anyone."

The rant was over, his mother stormed out of the room and Bjorn was left feeling more upset than he had ever done before. Poor Lagatha, the one person who believed in him, was now full of venom towards him too. Maybe his mum was right, maybe he should give up on his dreams.

In the morning Bjorn got ready to go and train to be a warrior, like his mother wanted. He put on his armour, which was much too big for him, then went to leave, desperate to make his family proud of him, even if it meant dying in battle. The house was empty, he stood by the door and took in a deep breath then the door violently swung open.

Bjorn couldn't believe his eyes, in front of him stood the gigantic, muscular figure of Thor the god of thunder. His long blonde hair flowing under his silvery crown and patches of ice clung to his beard. He stormed in speedily as Bjorn rubbed his eyes in disbelief, convinced he was still asleep and dreaming.

The mighty Thor roared, "Bjorn, I need your help. My home realm is under attack, I threw my hammer and it didn't come back. Now, without my weapon it'll be incredibly hard to repel the vile beasts and save Asgard. I have witnessed your courage and admired your skill, can you help build me a weapon? Say that you will."

Bjorn was dumbfounded and didn't know what to say. He whimpered in self pity, "My inventions don't work, they're useless. You need someone smarter, much smarter than I. I'm a failure," he said and started to cry.

Thor put his huge, heavy arm around Bjorn's shoulder, "You only fail if you give up, my son. If you learn from your mistakes any battle can be won. To be successful can sometimes take years; you have to work hard, through blood, sweat and tears. But you will succeed, I know that you can and I'll be beside you holding your hand."

The supportive words from the inspirational god gave Bjorn a new sense of belief. His confidence grew and he rushed outside, gathering rocks, sticks and vines, as much as he could find. Then he brought it back home and with the help of Thor they constructed a great weapon. Thor lifted the huge hammer way above his head, Bjorn couldn't quite believe that his new creation would be good enough for the gods. Thor summoned lightning and a roll of thunder, but the power of the blast smashed the hammer to bits. Thor shook his head and gazed at Bjorn thoughtfully.

Bjorn slumped back in his chair, he'd failed again and felt incredibly stupid. He looked up at Thor and said sadly, "I'm sorry, I think I must be cursed. I've failed you again."

Bjorn's head sunk into his chest, but he felt the power of Thor's huge hand lift up his chin. He crouched down and looked Bjorn in the eyes; speaking softly he said, "Yes, we failed. So, let's think and try again. We keep on working until it turns out right, my friend."

Suddenly, Bjorn had an excellent idea. He searched and collected anything metal he could find. Knives, forks, armour and shields he tossed it all in a sack and handed it to Thor. The god of thunder took the bag and smiled knowingly, as the little lad hastily grabbed his armoured sock and volcanic ball of rock. Bjorn had everything he needed and he led the great god up the steep, steaming volcano to the very top. The sight of Thor in the village got everyone excited, they all followed them up the mountain-side to witness what was happening. Now Bjorn had a crowd, but he didn't have time to think about that, he needed to help Thor win Asgard back. The mass of people all reached the summit and Bjorn got to work. He melted all the metal in the heat of the volcano, then coated the heavy rock ball in the silvery liquid, finally he skillfully connected the ball to the sock, which became the handle of Thor's new mighty weapon. When at last the metal cooled he passed it to Thor, now it wasn't a hammer, it was more of a mace, but he could tell that he liked it by the smile on his face.

Thor lifted the mace up into the sky, summoned lightning and thunder and gleefully winked his eye. He was delighted with the weapon Bjorn had made and all the villagers watched on in total disbelief. Thor spoke, "Listen all. The gods are indebted to the genius, Bjorn Bendtner. He must now be revered, as the greatest Viking inventor." With that he flew off and was never seen again.

The villagers celebrated, rejoiced and held a feast in honour of their new hero, Bjorn. Today, the story of how little Bjorn Bendtner saved the Gods is told from generation to generation. As for Bjorn, well, he was just happy that his parents and sister were proud of him. They were a family once more and all worked together helping Bjorn with his inventions. Bjorn's dreams had come true and he honestly couldn't be happier.

The End