



The Greatest Gift: The Tale of Audun and His Bear

Readers Theater Play Script and Performance Notes

AUTHORS: Benjamin Knight, ***COUNTRY:*** Iceland, ***GENRE:*** Adventure/Legends



CHARACTERS

AUDUN

AUDUN'S MOTHER

NARRATOR

MERCHANT

VILLAGER #1 - *no speaking lines*

VILLAGER #2 - *no speaking line*

VILLAGER #3 - *no speaking lines*

VILLAGER #4 - *no speaking lines*

POLAR BEAR - *animal sounds*

POLAR BEAR OWNER

GUARD #1

KING HARALD

GUARD #2

KING SVEN

SERVANT

If there are performance notes, they can be found on the pages following the script

Scene 1 – Audun’s Farm in Iceland

[**Stage Set:** The play is set in Iceland about a thousand years ago. In a backdrop, the foreground should show a kind of farmhouse called a “longhouse” from old Nordic farms. The longhouse is as long as three or four homes. The backdrop should picture towering gray mountains and the sea beyond. Show one long narrow inlet of water stretching into the land (such inlets are called fjords (pronounce: feh-YORDZ). (See **Performance Notes**.) In front of the longhouse, AUDUN is untangling fishing netting, and AUDUN’S MOTHER is churning butter.]

NARRATOR:

Hello, everyone. Welcome to “Audun (pronounce: ah-DUN) and the Bear.” It’s a story from Iceland from over a thousand years old. That’s an island in the Atlantic Ocean between the U.S. and England. The story is brought to you by *Stories to Grow by*.

[A white-tailed eagle, signified by a cut-out picture attached to a stick, swoops by and screeches. The screeching sound can come from offstage by an actor or from a recording. AUDUN looks at the eagle in flight and sighs.]

AUDUN’S MOTHER:

(*while she speaks, looks down at the butter she is churning*) Audun (pronounce: aw-DUN), what’s wrong, son?

AUDUN:

Nothing. I’m fine.

AUDUN’S MOTHER:

(*stops churning and looks up, squarely, at Audun*) No, really. What’s on your mind?

AUDUN:

(*sighs*) Ah, Mother. Look at that white-tailed eagle in the sky! It flies where it pleases. It’s completely free.

AUDUN’S MOTHER:

Aren’t you free, too? We have hired hands on this farm. You may work in the fields, or go wherever you want.

AUDUN:

Where is there to go? Our farm is fenced in. There is nothing to do here.

AUDUN’S MOTHER:

Your Uncle Rorig (pronounce: roar-RIG) said there’s a new baby pig in the barn. Want to go see it?

AUDUN:

We had a baby pig last month. And the month before. It's all the same! What I'd really like to do is to go see other farms – farms all over Iceland!

AUDUN'S MOTHER:

My goodness, as if their pigs are any different! You would leave the safety of your home, only to run into elves and trolls? We already have everything we need right here. Cream and berries with porridge in the morning. Salted beef for dinner. And speaking of dinner, I'd best get it prepared!

[AUDUN'S MOTHER stands up and exits, carrying her butter churn.]

AUDUN:

(to audience) She just doesn't understand. *(returns to untangling fishing netting, then looks offstage)* Say, what's that? Why would a ship be coming in so late in the season?

[From the side of the stage from a large boat emerges *(a large cardboard/paper cut-out, carried by two people)*. MERCHANT stands behind it, in view of the audience.]

MERCHANT:

(shouts) Land hooooooooo!

[The boat comes to a halt, and MERCHANT steps off.]

MERCHANT:

(looks around) Young man, could you tell me where I am?

AUDUN:

(to audience) He doesn't know? *(to Merchant)* You're in the western fjords (pronounce: feh-YORDZ) of Iceland, sir! You see? *(points to backdrop that shows a fjord, described earlier)* The fjords. Where the water stretches into the land like little fingers.

MERCHANT:

(turns to look at backdrop) And so it does. Pretty, that.

[As MERCHANT is speaking, stage help enters and throws white ribbons over the boat, representing ice, or bath flakes.]

MERCHANT:

(shakes head) This boat is already icing up.

AUDUN:

It's that time of year. Why are you at sea so late in the season, if you don't mind my asking?

MERCHANT:

Well, I didn't intend to be, I can tell you that. But my journey was delayed. I feel lucky that at least I got my boat to shore in time. Look! (*points to boat*) By morning she will be completely stuck in the ice! At least my cargo is safe inside.

AUDUN:

What is your cargo?

MERCHANT:

Linen. Seeds. For trade. I intend to carry the goods up and down this fine coast. When spring comes and the ice melts, my crew and I will continue our journey to Greenland and do more trading. After that, we'll head back to Norway. Finally, sail back to Denmark. My home.

AUDUN:

(*to audience*) Greenland, Norway, Denmark! Such faraway lands! And Denmark, the land my mother used to tell me stories about - I always dreamed of going there! (*to Merchant*) Sir, let me help you carry the seed and linen this winter and be your assistant. If I work for you, when spring comes could I sail away with you on your travels?

MERCHANT:

Why not? I could use the help. And you are a fine, strapping young fellow.

AUDUN'S MOTHER:

(*offstage*) I hear voices.

[AUDUN'S MOTHER enters.]

AUDUN'S MOTHER:

Oh! We have company.

MERCHANT:

(*bows his head*) A pleasure to meet you, my lady. I was just telling your lad I could use a hand in trading my cargo this winter. And it looks like I have found a helper! (*slaps Audun's back*)

AUDUN'S MOTHER:

(*looks warily at Audun*) Oh does it, now? (*to Merchant*) For wages, no doubt?

MERCHANT:

(*surprised, then nods*) Uh, of course. No doubt.

AUDUN'S MOTHER:

(*nods approvingly to Audun*) Well then, all right.

[AUDUN pumps his fist in the air as if to celebrate "Yes!" AUDUN'S MOTHER exits. NARRATOR enters. A chest containing various items and cloths is brought onstage.]

NARRATOR:

Winter rolled on. Audun helped the Merchant sell his wares up and down the coast of Iceland.

[As NARRATOR speaks, VILLAGER #1, VILLAGER #2, VILLAGER #3, and VILLAGER #4 enter and pretend to exchange skeins of wool, dried fish, and animal pelts for the MERCHANT's linen and bottles of seed.]

NARRATOR:

Finally, spring and warmer weather came. The ice along the shoreline began to crack. Soon the seawater started to flow again along the coast. And the MERCHANT's boat floated once more.

[NARRATOR and VILLAGERS exit. VILLAGERS pull the blue ribbons off the boat as they go. AUDUN'S MOTHER enters.]

AUDUN:

(to Audun's Mother) Mother, the boat will leave soon. You remember what that means?

AUDUN'S MOTHER:

(gasps) What? Oh, I was afraid of this! It wasn't enough for you to travel weeks at a time, to farms who-knows-where. Running into elves and trolls—

AUDUN:

Mother, I didn't run into any elves or trolls—

AUDUN'S MOTHER:

So you were lucky! And now it's storms and sea monsters I have to worry about! Why must you sail across that wide ocean all the way to Denmark? What if something happens? I have no other children. *(sits down in despair)*

AUDUN:

Mother, please! I have to go. I just have to. Look, your own brother and the hired help will keep the farm going until I get back. And here. *(hands her an envelope)* These are my wages from the winter. This should help you manage until I return.

AUDUN'S MOTHER:

(accepts the envelope and sighs) I suppose. And when will you come back, my son?

AUDUN:

Three years from now. I promise, Mother.

AUDUN'S MOTHER:

Three years is a long time! Well I am not happy about this turn of events, not happy at all.
(*sighs*) But I see you are set on doing this. Oh, very well. Go if you must. But be safe, my son.

AUDUN:

I will be, Mother.

AUDUN'S MOTHER:

I'll be waiting for you.

AUDUN:

I'll come back, Mother.

[AUDUN and AUDUN'S MOTHER hug. AUDUN and MERCHANT exit.]

Scene 2 – An open market

[**Stage Set:** Under a different backdrop, MERCHANT and AUDUN sell their wares to VILLAGERS #1-#4. The boat has been moved to the other side of the set to reflect that they have traveled. NARRATOR enters.]

NARRATOR:

After a journey at sea from Iceland to Greenland and a few bouts of seasickness on the part of Audun–

AUDUN:

(*to audience*) I can't help it. I've never sailed this far before!

NARRATOR:

He sailed west with the merchant to Greenland.

[NARRATOR points to Greenland on an enlarged map of Scandinavia. (See **Performance Notes** for further detail.)]

NARRATOR:

In Greenland, the merchant wanted to do some more trading before he returned to Europe - first to Norway, then home to Denmark.

[NARRATOR exits.]

AUDUN:

(*to Merchant*) Brr, it's cold! They may call this "Greenland," but this place has more ice and snow than home in Iceland! Everything is white. (*points offstage*) Even those super-huge bears are white.

[POLAR BEAR enters from where AUDUN pointed. POLAR BEAR stays close to the edge of the stage, sniffing around. A rope around POLAR BEAR's wrist leads offstage.]

MERCHANT:

Audun, are you talking about that polar bear?

AUDUN:

That's what you call it! What a magnificent creature. Like nothing else I've ever seen! What I wouldn't give to buy one!

POLAR BEAR OWNER:

(*from offstage*) As it happens, this one's for sale!

[POLAR BEAR OWNER enters, and POLAR BEAR follows. POLAR BEAR OWNER is holding the other end of the rope.]

AUDUN:

(to audience) My lucky day! *(to Polar Bear Owner)* How much, may I ask?

POLAR BEAR OWNER:

Hmm. What do you have to offer?

AUDUN:

Five hundred rigsdaler (pronounce: RIGS-daler)?

[AUDUN pulls a pouch of coins from his pocket.]

AUDUN:

Is that enough?

POLAR BEAR OWNER:

It's a start.

[AUDUN hands over the pouch.]

AUDUN:

(thinks a moment) How about this necklace?

[AUDUN takes off a necklace he was wearing and hands it to POLAR BEAR OWNER.]

POLAR BEAR OWNER:

Better. What else?

[AUDUN removes his jacket and hands it over to POLAR BEAR OWNER.]

POLAR BEAR OWNER:

Hmm, yes. That will do. Very well then. The POLAR BEAR is yours!

[POLAR BEAR OWNER hands the end of the rope to AUDUN. POLAR BEAR OWNER exits. POLAR BEAR walks up to AUDUN and growls in greeting.]

MERCHANT:

You just gave away your jacket!

AUDUN:

It was worth it.

MERCHANT:

This is Greenland, what were you thinking! Ah, the young. What do they know? (*reaches into the chest and takes out a jacket*) Here. It's a good thing we have an extra one.

AUDUN:

Oh, thanks. (*puts on jacket*) What a fine gift this polar bear will make! I will offer it to none other but the king of Denmark himself, King Sven.

MERCHANT:

Let me get this straight. You just paid 500 rigsdaler and your jacket for this polar bear?

AUDUN:

And a necklace. What a treasure this is!

MERCHANT:

All for the king of Denmark?

AUDUN:

None other.

MERCHANT:

That will be at the very end of our journey.

AUDUN:

Perfect!

Scene 3 – A dock in Norway

[**Stage Set:** A dock in Norway. Gulls fly about in the sky (*more cut-outs*). Standing at the end of the dock is GUARD #1. AUDUN and MERCHANT hide behind the boat. NARRATOR enters.]

NARRATOR:

The boat stopped in Norway as planned. (*points to Norway on the enlarged map of Scandinavia*).

[NARRATOR exits. As AUDUN and MERCHANT step off the boat, POLAR BEAR begins to follow them. POLAR BEAR is no longer on a rope.]

MERCHANT:

Quick, he's off the rope! Back to the ship! Nobody must see this bear, or they'll be certain to ask questions!

[MERCHANT and AUDUN anxiously move POLAR BEAR back into the boat.]

GUARD #1:

(*to audience*) What a curious sight.

[MERCHANT and AUDUN notice GUARD #1, who has already seen POLAR BEAR.]

AUDUN:

(*to Guard #1*) Wait! Hold it right there!

[GUARD #1 exits.]

AUDUN:

Great! Now he will tell everybody.

[GUARD #1 returns.]

GUARD #1:

You are hereby summoned to the court of King Harald of Norway. You are also commanded to bring along that enormous white bear.

[AUDUN and MERCHANT glare at POLAR BEAR. POLAR BEAR shrugs.]

Scene 4 – King Harald's throne room in Norway

[**Stage Set:** A backdrop portraying a royal throne room. A decorated chair is the throne.]

[KING HARALD is seated on the throne. GUARD #1 stands on one side of KING HARALD, and GUARD #2 stands on the other side. AUDUN, MERCHANT, and POLAR BEAR enter.]

AUDUN and MERCHANT (together):

(*bow*) Your Majesty.

KING HARALD:

So. I heard about your amazing bear. (*walks over to polar bear, inspecting it*) Indeed, what a magnificent animal! Surely, this is a treasure fit for a king!

AUDUN:

(*uneasily*) Y...yes, sir, you're exactly right. With all due respect, sir, I purchased the bear to give as a gift to someone in particular. (*pauses*) Someone... else?

KING HARALD:

Someone ELSE, you say?

AUDUN:

Actually, the King of Denmark, King Sven.

KING HARALD:

I KNOW who the king of Denmark is! King Sven is my mortal enemy - our countries are at war.

[GUARD #1 and GUARD #2 unsheathe their swords and surround AUDUN and MERCHANT.]

GUARD#1:

Say the word, Your Majesty...

GUARD #2:

...and we take them away!

AUDUN:

(*to audience*) Whoops.

[KING HARALD paces back and forth.]

[GUARD #1 grips AUDUN's arm. GUARD #2 grips MERCHANT's arm.]

MERCHANT:

...Your Majesty, please reconsider. We know nothing of your war with Denmark.

[There is a long pause as KING HARALD stares at AUDUN.]

KING HARALD:

Very well, then. Guards, release them!

[The GUARDS release their grip. MERCHANT and AUDUN breathe a sigh of relief.]

KING HARALD:

Go in peace. I will not stop you. But I do require one thing.

AUDUN:

What is that, Sire?

KING HARALD:

When you return, you must come back here and tell me how King Sven of Denmark rewarded you for that treasure of a bear.

AUDUN:

I shall do so, Your Majesty.

[AUDUN and MERCHANT bow and exit to the side of the stage, out of earshot of KING HARALD.]

MERCHANT:

(to Audun) That was a close one! *(to audience)* Remind me never to travel with a polar bear again. It's not so easy to not be noticed.

Scene 5 – King Sven’s throne room in Denmark

[**Stage set:** Similar to Scene 4, but with a different royal backdrop. Show a lavish room furnished with tapestries hanging from the walls and gold statues across the floor. In the center, KING SVEN sits on a throne. NARRATOR enters.]

NARRATOR:

After their close encounter with King Harald of Norway, Audun and the Merchant traveled south to Denmark, as was their plan. (*points to Denmark on enlarged map*)

[NARRATOR exits. SERVANT enters. SERVANT walks up to KING SVEN and kneels.]

SERVANT:

Sire!

KING SVEN:

What is it, my servant?

SERVANT:

There are two merchants who seek an audience with you! Two merchants and... a giant white something-or-other. Some kind of bear, it looks like. But BIG!

KING SVEN:

As big as all that? (*to audience*) Sounds like something worth seeing. (*snaps fingers*) Send in the merchants!

[AUDUN and MERCHANT enter. POLAR BEAR follows them on a long rope. The rope is tied to POLAR BEAR’s wrist and not to POLAR BEAR’s neck. MERCHANT and AUDUN kneel.]

AUDUN and MERCHANT (*together*):

(*both bow*) Your Majesty.

KING SVEN:

Pray, tell me why you have brought this... amazing bear to my court.

AUDUN:

Sire, we have traveled all the way from Greenland to bring you this treasure of a bear. It is a royal gift to Your Majesty.

KING SVEN:

A gift for me, you say?

AUDUN:

Yes, Sire.

[KING SVEN stands up and inspects POLAR BEAR.]

KING SVEN:

And it is from the both of you?

MERCHANT:

It's from the lad, Your Majesty. He bought and paid for it, to bring it to you here.

KING SVEN:

I see. A majestic creature! Such thick, white fur. And what do you expect in return for such a magnificent gift?

AUDUN:

Only that you should accept it, Your Majesty.

KING SVEN:

Yes, yes, of course. But you sacrificed a great deal to bring me this tremendous bear from so very far away. This must not go unrewarded. Tell me, what is your name?

AUDUN:

Audun, Your Majesty. Audun of Iceland.

KING SVEN:

Audun, I offer you a position in my court as my royal cup-bearer. You shall be the only one to serve me, the King, my drinks at the royal table.

AUDUN:

That is quite an honor, Your Majesty!

KING SVEN:

That it is. And my personal invitation for you to stay at my palace for as long as you wish.

AUDUN:

I... *(looks at Merchant)*

MERCHANT:

Go ahead and take it, Audun.

AUDUN:

I am honored to accept, Your Majesty!

KING SVEN:

Splendid!

[KING SVEN hands AUDUN the royal cup.]

MERCHANT:

Farewell, my friend! Perhaps we will meet again someday on the high seas.

[AUDUN and MERCHANT shake hands.]

AUDUN:

Safe travels to you.

MERCHANT:

And to you.

[MERCHANT exits. AUDUN goes to stand by KING SVEN's side.]

[NARRATOR enters.]

NARRATOR:

Audun served happily and well as King Sven's royal cup-bearer. Time passed quickly. Before long, nearly three years had passed.

[NARRATOR exits.]

AUDUN:

(to King Sven) Your Majesty, a word, if you please.

KING SVEN:

Yes? What is it, my cup-bearer?

AUDUN:

Almost three years ago when I left Iceland, I promised my mother that I would return within three years. Already, I feel the warm spring air is coming back. I must set sail now if I'm to make it back to Iceland by the end of summer.

KING SVEN:

Hmm. Normally, I would not be pleased when a member of my court asks to take leave. But a promise to one's mother must always be honored.

[AUDUN sets the royal cup on a table.]

KING SVEN:

I am sad to see you leave, Audun of Iceland! And it does not seem that you should return no better than when you arrived. Especially when you brought me this magnificent treasure of a bear.

[POLAR BEAR primps to the audience.]

KING SVEN:

(thinks for a moment) Come to the window.

[KING SVEN and AUDUN go to the window that is painted on the backdrop.]

KING SVEN:

What do you see?

AUDUN:

The finest, largest ship I have ever laid eyes on, Sire.

KING SVEN:

She is yours! My gift to you for that wonderful, magnificent, treasure of a bear. That is the ship in which you will sail back home to Iceland.

AUDUN:

I am stunned, Your Majesty!

KING SVEN:

And the cargo inside? What pray tell do you suppose will happen to that?

AUDUN:

I imagine it must first be unloaded, Your Majesty.

KING SVEN:

Not at all. To further show my appreciation, the ship as well as all of the cargo belongs to you!

AUDUN:

Your Majesty, the honor you bestow on me is too much!

KING SVEN:

But wait! There's more. A ship can easily be sunk. If that happened, and if you had to swim to shore to save your life, how would people know you carried with you the blessing of the King of Denmark? That's why I give you a purse of special silver coins you must keep with you at all times, stamped with my royal seal!

[KING SVEN gives AUDUN a coin purse.]

AUDUN:

To say "thank you" hardly seems adequate—

KING SVEN:

(interrupts) Come to think of it, coins can easily be stolen, isn't that right? I daresay the seas are filled with cut-throats and pirates. And then how would others know you once did a great favor for the King of Denmark? And so I also shall give you the official signet ring of my court.

[KING SVEN gives AUDUN a ring.]

AUDUN:

(to audience) I hope I can remember all these gifts! *(to King Sven)* I am without words. This is most incredibly generous.

KING SVEN:

One more thing. If someday you feel compelled to give the ring to a great person for doing a great favor, then do not hesitate to do so. I believe in passing along good fortune to others who are deserving. Now, Audun, farewell.

AUDUN:

(bows) It has been an honor to know you, Your Majesty.

[AUDUN exits.]

Scene 6 – The dock in Norway

[**Stage set:** The docks are the same as in the previous scene. However, KING HARALD is already standing there, flanked by GUARD #1 and GUARD #2. AUDUN enters.]

AUDUN:

(*bows*) I have returned, Your Majesty.

KING HARALD:

So you have. Welcome back to Norway, lad. I imagine you gave that magnificent bear to the King of Denmark?

AUDUN:

I did indeed.

KING HARALD:

Tell me. What did King Sven give you in return for the bear?

AUDUN:

He gave me this wonderful ship in which to travel home.

[AUDUN gestures offstage. KING HARALD also looks in that direction, and reacts as if he has seen something grand.]

KING HARALD:

That truly is an impressive vessel. Were I in his position, I believe I'd have given you something similar.

AUDUN:

He also gave me all the cargo that the ship contains.

KING HARALD:

(*taken aback*) All the cargo? I would have thought the ship alone would have been sufficient.

AUDUN:

Yes, and there's more! A purse of coins bearing his royal seal.

KING HARALD:

All right, I get it! King Sven is extremely generous.

AUDUN:

One last thing. He gave me the signet ring of the royal Danish court.

KING HARALD:

I am impressed.

AUDUN:

Which I now give to you, Your Majesty. (*offers King Harald the ring*)

KING HARALD:

What?

AUDUN:

You could have taken my life, Sire, and that of my bear. But you spared us both. King Sven said I might give the ring to a great person for a great favor. And so I hope you will accept this ring as a token of my gratitude.

KING HARALD:

(*takes the ring*) This is most unexpected. (*looks at the ring*) It's been a long time since I've spoken to King Sven of Denmark, and his actions are not that of an enemy. We were friends years ago... Maybe it's time we had a conversation. (*to Audun*) Audun of Iceland! Because of this ring, I present you with a chest of silver coins!

AUDUN:

What? Why thank you!

[KING HARALD snaps his fingers. GUARD #2 exits, and returns carrying a small chest. He hands it to AUDUN.]

KING HARALD:

Take your treasure and travel safely, Audun.

AUDUN:

Yes, Your Highness.

[AUDUN bows and exits.]

Scene 7 – Audun's farm in Iceland

[Stage Set: As in Scene 1. AUDUN'S MOTHER sits, churning butter.]

AUDUN'S MOTHER:

Oh, summer's coming to an end. Now it's been three years since Audun left home. I warned him about those sea monsters! (*stands and paces*) I just know something terrible has happened to him! (*looks offstage, in the same direction as the Merchant's ship appeared in Scene 1*) Wait! Why, that's the largest sea-dragon I've ever seen! And it just entered the harbor!

[AUDUN enters, carrying the chest of silver coins.]

AUDUN:

Not a sea-dragon, Mother.

AUDUN'S MOTHER:

Audun! My son! You're back!

[AUDUN'S MOTHER rushes to embrace AUDUN. AUDUN sets down the chest of silver coins, and they embrace.]

AUDUN:

I promised I'd return in three years. Here I am.

AUDUN's MOTHER:

So you did! I am bursting with happiness.

AUDUN:

And look! (*gestures to the chest*) The King of Norway gave me this chest of coins.

AUDUN'S MOTHER:

What? Why would he do such a thing?

AUDUN:

And there's more. (*points offstage to the direction he came from*) You see that magnificent ship? The King of Denmark gave that to me too, and all of its cargo, too.

AUDUN'S MOTHER:

Two kings? I can hardly believe my ears!

AUDUN:

We can live comfortably for the rest of our lives!

AUDUN'S MOTHER:

You must tell me how this all came about!

AUDUN:

It started with an enormous white bear, unlike anything I'd ever seen before.

AUDUN'S MOTHER:

I told you to look out for monsters!

AUDUN:

This bear was special, Mother. And as enormous as the bear was, the Kings were even bigger.

AUDUN'S MOTHER:

What do you mean, "The Kings were bigger"?

AUDUN:

(puts his arm over his Mother's shoulder, and they start to move offstage) I'll tell you all about it, Mother.

AUDUN'S MOTHER:

There's a new baby pig in the barn. Want to see it?

AUDUN:

Do you think that can wait, Mother?

[AUDUN and AUDUN'S MOTHER exit.]

[NARRATOR enters.]

NARRATOR:

With his gold, Audun bought a fine Icelandic hall - a sort of castle - and staffed it with servants. He moved in and lived as a nobleman with his mother and uncle. From time to time Audun still caught the urge to travel, but he always returned home. For the rest of his life, Audun was esteemed by all those who knew him as the most deserving and fortunate of men. The end.

[If you have a curtain, close it now. If you do not, all actors come on stage and bow to the audience.]



Performance Notes for Audun & the Bear

THREE WAYS THAT STUDENTS AND TEACHERS CAN UTILIZE THIS PLAY

1. Students can read the play aloud while sitting in the classroom. Ask the readers to skip all bracketed stage directions. You may prefer to rotate your actors to give all students a chance to read the speaking parts.
2. Students can perform the play in the classroom. Clear an area that can be used as the stage. Have the audience sit on the floor in front of the stage. Students in the play can make simple costumes and/or sets as described below. When the scene change, the characters "on stage" simply walk to the back of the room where they wait until their next appearance "on stage."
3. Students can perform the play on stage. Refer to the production notes that follow. Ask the actors to enter from the back of the room and move through the audience as they approach the stage.



COSTUMES

- NARRATOR — Casual modern-day clothing.
- AUDUN — Simple brown/dull-colored clothing. He wears a jacket, boots and a necklace, too, which he gives to POLAR BEAR OWNER in scene 2.
- AUDUN'S MOTHER — Brown/dull clothing, with a white scarf around her head.
- MERCHANT — A backpack and a hat.



- POLAR BEAR — White clothing and a polar POLAR BEAR mask (if a full polar POLAR BEAR costume is not possible).
- POLAR BEAR OWNER — Simple clothing.
- GUARD #1 and GUARD #2 — Helmets and carry swords.
- KING HARALD — A crown and a blue cape.
- KING SVEN — A crown and a red cape.
- SERVANT — Very plain clothing.



PROPS

Scene 1

- A butter churn.
- An Eagle in fishing net. This can be done using piles of yarn or thin rope to signify fishing net and the Eagle can be a paper/cardboard cut-out attached to a stick, activated by somebody off-stage.
- MERCHANT'S boat. This can be portrayed by creating a large cardboard cut-out of a boat that, at most, three people can hide behind.
- A chest, filled with various colored cloths and small objects
- Blue ribbons, to be thrown over the boat.
- Items for trading and buying, such as wool, dried fish, bottles of seed, and animal pelts, and MERCHANT's linen. Fish, pelts, and bottles can be made by cutting out shapes from cardboard or paper, and wool and linens can be any fabric.
- An envelope for AUDUN to hand to AUDUN'S MOTHER.

Scene 2

- MERCHANT's boat (see notes for Scene 1).
- Various things for trading (see notes for Scene 1).



- A rope attached to POLAR BEAR
- An enlarged map of Scandinavia used by NARRATOR. This needs to be visible to an audience member. Should show the countries of Scandinavia, Iceland and Greenland. You might differentiate the countries by drawing a dark border and giving each one a different color. Be sure to label the countries prominently, so the names of the countries are easily seen by the audience.
- A pouch with coins for AUDUN to give to POLAR BEAR OWNER
- A necklace for AUDUN to give to POLAR BEAR OWNER
- An extra jacket for MERCHANT to give to AUDUN.

Scene 3

- MERCHANT'S boat (see notes for Scene 1).

Scene 4

- A seagull. This can be made the same way as the eagle in Scene 1.
- King Harald's throne, which can be a large chair. Optional: drape some fabric over the chair.

Scene 5

- King Sven's throne. This can be made the same way as King Harald's chair, but with different fabric.
- A royal cup.
- A small table.
- A small coin purse. This can be filled with anything for weight and shape, since the bag is never opened.
- A ring.

Scene 6

- A small chest of silver.

Scene 7

- A butter churn (same as in Scene 1),
- Chest of silver (same as in Scene 6).



SETS

- **Scene 1** — Audun's longhouse in Iceland can be portrayed as a long house built on a stone foundation with a wood frame, and a pitched thatch roof with scattered openings along the top. If you Google "Iceland longhouse" you will see pictures and reconstructions of the kind of longhouse built in Iceland a thousand years ago. Here is one example:



This can be represented with cut-out cardboard that is painted like wood and stone, with some green paint on the roof to represent the growing moss, or it can be painted onto the backdrop.

Either way, the backdrop can also be painted to show farmland with volcanic mountains in the background. As mentioned in the introduction to Scene 1, you can also show an inlet of water- a fjord- stretching into the land.



- **Scene 2**— Greenland can be portrayed by simply covering the set in white cloth, to simulate snow or ice. Another option is to add a painted backdrop to represent a marketplace, showing different tables with different items.
- **Scene 3** — Norway docks (scenes 3 and 6) could easily be a simple large plank of wood covering the floor to represent the pier. The cut-outs of seagulls also add to the scene.
- **Scene 4** — King Harald’s Palace can be portrayed by large patterned cloths, representing tapestries, hanging from the walls, and a small statue or two anywhere in the scene. Harald’s throne is in the centre of the scene.
- **Scene 5** — King Sven’s palace is portrayed in a similar way as King Harald’s, except tapestries on the wall, gold statues, and a window in the scene. A table.
- **Scene 6** — Norway Docks (see notes for Scene 3).
- **Scene 7** — Audun’s long house in Iceland (same as Scene 1).

