



# The Gatewatch - Learning Guide

## Chapter 1: Ascent

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Journal Entry #1: Tell of a time you went on a big trip. Were you anxious or excited? What did you have to pack? Did you forget anything important or did anything go wrong unexpectedly?

### Warm-Up

Take a look at the map of Noros at the beginning of the book. Which locations sound most interesting to you? Which places do you want to know more about?

### As You Read

1. Who are the three companions travelling up Shadowstone Pass?
2. Where are they headed and why are they going there?
3. Who do the companions encounter on their way up the path?

4. Why does Grimsa not trust the company they meet on the road?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What treasures do the companions choose from the treasure chests?

### Follow-Up

Which character do you think you would get along with best: Torin, Bryn, or Grimsa? Why?

The companions disagree about whether or not they should trust the *nidavel*. Would you have voted to take a treasure in exchange for a horse or would you have refused to trade? Why?



# The Gatewatch - Learning Guide

## Chapter 2: Arrival

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Journal Entry #2: Song lyrics are one of the most common forms of poetry today. What is your favourite song? Write down any lyrics you can remember by heart.

## Warm-Up

Did you know that Vikings were obsessed with **poetry**? Viking poets, known as *skalds*, had many intricate verse forms that challenged them both artistically and mentally as they told the epic tales and ancient myths. These *skaldic* verse forms were highly respected and anyone who could craft fine verses would be richly rewarded by Viking chieftains and kings. Even Odin, the leader of the Norse gods, wanted the Mead of Poetry so badly that he hatched an elaborate plan to steal it from a giant.

Where do we use **poetry** in today's society?

## As You Read

1. What do the companions realize about Drombir's cup?
2. Why does Torin wake up after he falls asleep in Shadowstone Pass?

3. Describe the creatures that the companions encounter among the rubble and the bones. You may describe the creatures with a sketch instead of a paragraph if you wish.
4. Why do the companions decide to hide the treasures they received from the *nidavel*?
5. When the companions finally reach Gatewatch they are stopped by a watchman. Why does the watchman check their eyes?

## Follow-Up

In the Viking Age, as with most of human history, people commonly drank alcoholic liquids because the alcohol would kill harmful bacteria that could make them sick. While the alcohol levels of these liquids were usually very low people still experienced the chemical effects of alcohol on their body.

Thanks to science we know much more about the effects of alcohol on the body today. For example, we now know that alcohol is both a **diuretic** and a **depressant**. Research what these terms mean and give definitions below.

**Diuretic -**

**Depressant -**

What negative effects of alcohol do the companions experience after they overindulge in fire mead?



# The Gatewatch - Learning Guide

## Chapter 3: A Feast in Fjellhall

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Journal Entry #3: Even though most Canadians primarily speak English or French we often borrow words from other languages even though we do not speak them! Find a partner then brainstorm a list of words that you regularly use from languages that neither of you are fluent in.

### Warm-Up

The characters have finally reached Gatewatch and are approaching Fjellhall. *Fjell* (f-YELL) is a Norwegian word. Guess at what it means and then look online to find out if you were correct!

### As You Read

1. Who stops Torin, Bryn, and Grimsa from entering Fjellhall?
2. Where are they sent to before they are allowed back into Fjellhall?

3. What proverb does Grimsa quote about busy people? What proverb does Bryn quote in response? Who do you agree with?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Gavring tells several stories of other people who were swindled by Drombir. Briefly describe one of these stories in the space given below.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What does Gavring call the creatures that Torin, Bryn, and Grimsa saw at Shadowstone Pass?

## Follow-Up

As the master of Fjellhall Keymaster Signy wears a silver key on her belt to signify her position of leadership and responsibility. In the Viking Age women also wore keys on their belt to display their prominence and their level of authority; the number of keys a woman carried and the intricacy of their design were important ways of signifying her social status.

What are some physical symbols of social status and responsibility that people carry or wear today?



# The Gateway - Learning Guide

## Chapter 4: Mead & Mayhem

Name:

Date:

*Teacher:*

Journal Entry #4: The Vikings believed that in Valhalla, the hall of fallen warriors, there was a goat that could be milked to give endless amounts of mead and a boar that would come back to life after being eaten every day. If you could have a limitless supply of any food, what would it be and why?

## Warm-Up

What is mead and how is it made? What makes it different from wine or beer and how was it important to Viking culture?

## As You Read

1. How does one of the newly arrived recruits insult Torin? What about this do you think Torin finds insulting?
2. What do each of the three companions declare that they are best at after Wyla challenges them?

3. How was the tie between Bryn and Wyla settled? Would you have settled it differently?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. How does Grimsa cheat in his contest with Wyla?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Wyla does not solve Torin's riddle. What do you think the answer could be?

## Follow-Up

Vikings believed in magic and feared it greatly. One of the ways a Viking could show his or her intense dislike for another person was to raise a *Níðstǫng* (A Scorn Pole) in the direction of that person's house. Historically this took the form of a tall pole with a horse head mounted on the top and curse runes carved into the wood. Occasionally this practice pops up in modern day Scandinavia, such as when an [Icelandic farmer raised a Níðstǫng](#) against his neighbour (using a goat head) for accidentally driving over his puppy. After introducing the *Níðstǫng* to the class discuss the following questions:

- How do people publicly protest or show their dislike of someone in today's society?
  
  
- What are appropriate ways of showing discontent in a public way?
  
  
- What are inappropriate ways of protesting? How could these be destructive or dangerous?





# The Gatewatch - Learning Guide

## Chapter 5: Untested

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Journal Entry #5: Do you usually perform well in stressful situations or do you freeze up? Describe a time that you succeeded or failed under pressure.

## Warm-Up

Creatures, both real and imagined, played a significant role in Viking culture. Viking ships, called *drakkar* (dragon) in Old Norse, had large decorative dragon-head prows which were removed when approaching friendly villages as a sign of peace. Certain warriors called *berserkers* (bear shirts) were famous for their trance-like battle rage in which they could do things like chew the metal rim of a shield without feeling pain. *Ulfhednar* (wolf coats) wore wolf skins instead; according to some legends like *The Saga of the Volsungs*, they were able to transform into actual wolves when they wore the cloaks.

What are some creatures that appear in the urban legends and modern myths of today?

## As You Read

1. Why do Torin, Bryn, and Grimsa rush out the door of Fjellhall as soon as they wake up?
2. Who do the companions find in Stonering Keep and what are they doing?

3. Describe the test that Captain Calder has devised to determine who is brave enough to join The Gatewatch.
4. After the trial is over, Almveig gives very specific instructions to the recruits. What does she tell them and what will happen if they fail to follow her orders?
5. When Captain Calder and Almveig leave, Wyla and Torin get in a brawl. What are they fighting about and how do they resolve their quarrel?

## Follow-Up

Wherever Vikings travelled they gained a reputation as fearless warriors. This was because the Vikings believed that they could only go to Valhalla, Odin's glorious feast hall, if they died bravely in battle. Those who died of old age or sickness were doomed to go to the gloomy realm of Nilfheim instead. There Hela, a zombie-queen who was half dead and half alive, would rule over them from her hall that had walls which dripped with snake venom. The myths also tell of a dragon called Nidhogg who would chew on the unfortunates who ended up there. Therefore, it is no surprise that the Vikings preferred to live bravely and die in battle than to suffer until the end of time in Nilfheim!

Every culture has its own idea about what happens after death. Choose an ancient culture from somewhere around the world and research what they believed about death and any possible afterlife. Present these ideas individually or in pairs to your classmates in a short, verbal summary.



# The Gatewatch - Learning Guide

## Chapter 6: Frostridge Falls

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Journal Entry #6: Tell of a time that you had to work with someone with whom you did not get along. Were you able to work out your differences or did the conflict spoil the project?

### Warm-Up

In the Viking Age children did not take on the family name of their parents as we do today. Instead, children took their father's first name followed by '-son' or '-daughter' as their last name; this is called a patronymic naming system. For example, one of the most famous outlaws in Viking history was Erik the Red who was outlawed from both Norway and Iceland before settling in Greenland. His son, Lief Eriksson, became famous after he sailed to North America, which he called Vinland (Grape Land or Wine Land). The surname 'Eriksson' signifies that he is the 'son of Erik'. In some cases children would take their mother's first name instead of their father's; in that case it is called matronymic.

This practice continues in Iceland today. Some of the most famous [CrossFit®](#) athletes are from Iceland and have been named with this system. Anni Thorisdottir came in first place for female athletes in both the 2011 and 2012 CrossFit Games. Who do you think she is the daughter of?

What would your last name be if you grew up in the Viking Age?

### As You Read

1. Who decides to come along with Torin, Bryn, Grimsa and Wyla?

2. Does Gavring think it is a good idea for the recruits to leave Gatewatch? Why does he let them through the East Gate?
3. Wyla takes Torin, Bryn, and Grimsa up to Frostridge Falls. What hidden secret does she reveal when they arrive?
4. All seems to be going well for the companions until something unexpected happens. What happens and why is everyone so upset?
5. By what route does Torin suggest they could return to Gatewatch. Do you think it will work?

## Follow-Up

Choose one character from the following list, and then write a retelling of how they ended up getting stuck on the top of Frostridge Falls as told from their perspective: *Wyla, Grimsa, Asa, Leif*.



# The Gatewatch - Learning Guide

## Chapter 7: Trolls

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Journal Entry #7: Tell of a time that you were tempted to do something wrong but you resisted. Afterwards were you glad that you did not give in to the temptation? Why or why not?

## Warm-Up

Trolls are the definitive villains of Scandinavian folklore. Cruel and greedy, these creatures are famous for looking like natural objects such as hills, rocks, or trees. According to these stories any troll will turn to stone when it is exposed to sunlight. Author, translator, and professor J.R.R. Tolkien references this feature of Scandinavian folklore in his famous novel *The Hobbit*, where one of the characters tricks a group of dangerous trolls into arguing until sunrise when they are turned to stone.

How is the modern use of the word 'troll' different from its use in Scandinavian folklore?

## As You Read

1. What does the company of recruits come across on their way back to Gatewatch?
2. What sort of trap is set for them and who gets caught?

3. Describe the trolls that Torin sees as he hides behind a stack of barrels.
4. The creatures decide not to eat the recruits they have captured. Why?
5. Torin hatches a plan to kill one of the trolls. Why does it fail?

## Follow-Up



*Trolltunga*

Many iconic land features in Norway refer to the trolls of Scandinavian folklore. The most famous is **Trolltunga** (The Troll's Tongue) which is located on the western edge of the Hardangervidda plateau. **Trollveggen** (The Troll Wall) is another famous location that attracts rock climbers and base jumpers as it is the tallest vertical rock face in all of Europe.

Research a local land feature in your area that has a name related to a legend or is named after someone famous. What is the story behind how it got its name?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

## Warm-Up

The Viking Age Icelanders had no king but instead held an annual gathering in a place called *Thingvellir* (The Gathering Field) for a legal and social event called the *Althing*. Here all free folk would gather to barter and trade, to visit and play, and to settle legal disputes according to a set of common laws. These laws would be recited by the Lawspeaker each year and legal cases that had been left unresolved over the winter would be presented and decided by a group of powerful chieftains from all over Iceland. Smaller local assemblies, called *things* or *tings*, would occur throughout the rest of the year for the same purposes.

Compare and contrast this legal system with the judicial and legislative system in your country.

## As You Read

1. What is the Trolting and where does it happen?
2. Describe what Torin sees at the Trolting.

3. What fate awaits Torin's friends at the Trolting?
4. In a desperate attempt to save his friends, Torin calls out from where he is hiding. What does he say and why does he say it?
5. What are the terms of the *bardagi* between Torin and Ur-Gezbrukter?

## Follow-Up

In the Norse myths, riddles are often used as a narrative way to recite knowledge about the world. In one particularly informative exchange, Odin travels to the land of the giants to challenge Vafthrudnir to a duel of wits. Each one asks the other a question about the origins of the world. For the Vikings who listened to this story, it would have been a mini-history lesson according to the Norse worldview.

In [\*The Influence of Norse Mythology in "Riddles in the Dark"\*](#), Erin Nordhof relates this famous exchange between Odin and Vafthrundnir to another famous battle of wits in fantasy: the riddles of Bilbo and Gollum. After reading the article, do you think Odin's last question to Vafthrudnir is fair?





# The Gatewatch - Learning Guide

## Chapter 9: A Game of Riddles

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Journal Entry #9: Riddles have fascinated people for centuries. Either record a riddle you know of, find a riddle online, or create a riddle of your own. Don't forget to include the answer!

### Warm-Up

Here is a riddle to warm up your brain: *What runs up and down all day yet never moves?*

Can you guess the answer? *A Staircase*

### As You Read

1. The riddles in this chapter take a specific poetic form. Describe this form briefly using one of the riddles as an example.
2. According to the traditions of the giants, what must happen after three riddles have been answered?

3. Explain the custom of the giants after six riddles have been answered.
4. Besides Torin's friends, who are the other two prisoners being held captive by the trolls?
5. What byname (i.e. nick-name) does Ur-Gezbrukter give Torin at the end of their *bardagi*?

## Follow-Up

In the Viking Age, especially in the Icelandic Sagas, bynames were a popular way to identify famous characters: Erik the Red, Hakon the Good, Grettir the Strong, Aud the All-Knowing, and Ketil Flatnose are just a few examples. Bynames can be praising or insulting, inspired by physical features, or related to where an individual comes from. Create a byname for yourself and describe why it is a good fit for you.



# The Gatewatch - Learning Guide

## Chapter 10: To Myrkheim

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Journal Entry #10: One of the most exciting and challenging things about travelling is interacting with different cultures. Tell of a time that you encountered a culture different from your own.

### Warm-Up

The longships made by the Vikings allowed them full access to the highway of the ancient world: the sea. As a class, investigate [this map](#) of routes taken by Norse explorers during the Viking Age. Make a list of all the different cultures that the Vikings would have interacted with.

### As You Read

1. How do the prisoners escape the dungeon below Fanghall?
2. What do the two *nidavel* suggest after the company escapes?

3. How are the underground caverns lit?
4. Who surprises the company at Nori's well?
5. What is Bari famous for?

### Follow-Up

Wherever the Vikings went, they brought their culture and customs with them. In many of the places where the Viking raided or traded, they eventually settled permanently. In every case these Viking immigrants integrated with the local culture, adopting some new customs and retaining some of their old ones.

Describe a cultural tradition or practice from your family that comes from outside modern North American culture. What significance does this hold for you, and why does your family keep this tradition or practice alive?



# The Gatewatch - Learning Guide

## Chapter 11: Secrets at Supper

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Journal Entry #11: One of the most exciting parts of experiencing a foreign culture is getting to try new foods and exotic flavors. Describe a meal that you had that was from a culture other than your own. Did you like it or was it not for you?

## Warm-Up

Scandinavians are famous for some pretty foul dishes. In Norway, Sweden, and Finland the dish *lutefisk* (white fish soaked in lye) is a key part of a traditional Christmas dinner. In Iceland is an even more stomach-turning dish called *hakarl*; this particularly pungent platter is made of fermented shark meat!

Have you ever tried a meal or a recipe that might make other people cringe?

## As You Read

1. Describe the underground city of Myrkheim.
2. Who greets the company as they approach Brok's house?

3. What does Torin think he sees when he is sitting in the baths?
4. Summarize the story that Bari recites during dinner.
5. What does Brok reveal after dinner that makes Wyla so angry?

## Follow-Up

The customs of the *nidavel* seem strange to Torin and his company. Based on the experience of the characters in this chapter write a short *Travel Guide to Myrkeim*. Be sure to include a description of the city, information about the language and the location, and examples of cultural customs.



3. How does the Mastersmith answer Torin's final riddle to Ur-Gezbrukter?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What gifts does the Mastersmith give the company?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. According to the Mastersmith who are the Watchers?

### Follow-Up

At the beginning of this chapter Wyla charged off without consulting the rest of the company. Did she do the right thing? Either defend her decision or explain why she should have acted differently.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

## Warm-Up

What do we associate beards with in today's culture?

## As You Read

1. What parting gifts does Brok give the company before they leave Myrkheim?
2. Who decides to go searching for Wyla?

3. What type of gathering does the search party stumble upon?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Describe the creatures that the company sees.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Who have the creatures taken as prisoners?

### Follow-Up

Torin, Bryn, and Grimsa swore a kin oath with Wyla back at Frostridge Falls. Although Torin is tempted to give up the search, Bryn insists that they push on despite the danger that might lay ahead.

Do you think it is ever justifiable to go back on a promise or should promises always be kept?



# The Gatewatch - Learning Guide

## Chapter 14: A Narrow Door

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Journal Entry #14: At some point in our lives we will have the unfortunate experience of being treated unfairly. We may also have the opportunity to ‘get back’ at the person who cheated, lied, or stole something from us. Recount a time when you had a chance to get revenge but didn’t, or when someone else had a chance to get revenge on you but decided not to.

### Warm-Up

In the Norse myths, the gods kill a giant named Thiazi for stealing the apples of eternal youth. Thiazi’s daughter Skadi demands compensation from them for killing her father. In a strange turn of events Odin offers Skadi any husband she wants from among the gods, but she must choose him from seeing only his feet. Skadi hopes to choose Balder, the beautiful god of light, but instead ends up picking the feet of Njord, lord of the sea. The marriage is not particularly successful and eventually Skadi returns to the mountains and Njord to his ocean home.

What are some ways that people today are compensated for wrongs done against them?

### As You Read

1. Who helps the companions escape the *skrimslis* attackers?

2. Where do the companions find Wyla?
3. Why did the *nidavel* lock Wyla up?
4. What weapon is Bryn given and why is it given to him?
5. Where does the company arrive at the end of the chapter?

### Follow-Up

Though Bari and Drombir are both *nidavel* they could hardly be less similar. Compare and contrast these two characters and identify key differences in how they treat Torin and his company as well as how Torin and his company thinks of them.



# The Gatewatch - Learning Guide

## Chapter 15: Familiar Places

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Journal Entry #15: What is the place you go to when you need to relax? Do you hide away at home or do you like to go outside and enjoy nature? Do you visit a friend or go to a restaurant? Give descriptive details about what makes this place special to you.

### Warm-Up

In Iceland the high level of volcanic activity leads to an abundance of natural hot springs. Vikings would build rock enclosures around these hot water sources to create outdoor hot tubs. The compiler of the Prose Edda, Snorri Sturluson, was famed for his love of lounging in his own personal hot tub, which can still be visited at his historic residence of *Snorrastofa*. Others who prefer a more modern experience might visit the world-famous springs at Iceland's Blue Lagoon.

As few North Americans have natural hot springs in their backyard, we must find different ways to relax. How do you unwind after a stressful day?

### As You Read

1. Where does the company find themselves when they reach the surface?

2. What does Bari do to punish Drombir for his treachery?
3. Why does Wyla leave the rest of the company when they arrive in Gatewatch?
4. What crime are Torin and his companions charged with?
5. What happened to the other recruits who did not get lost at Frostridge Falls along with Wyla, Torin, Bryn, and Grimsa?

### Follow-Up

An ancient saying goes like this: *An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth*. This means that if someone does something to you then you have every right to do it to them. Do you think that the companions should punish Drombir for trapping them atop Frostridge Falls and trying to ransom Wyla? If not, why not? If so, what punishment do you think would be appropriate?



# The Gatewatch - Learning Guide

## Chapter 16: Luck Turns

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Journal Entry #16: Tell the story of a time when you told the truth but someone did not believe you. Did you convince them that you were being honest or did they continue to think you were lying?

## Warm-Up

The Vikings believed that the fate of each person was woven by the Norns, three mysterious women who sat at the Well of Urd (Fate) at the base of the World Tree Yggdrasil. This meant that each person's fate was already determined and so whatever happened to them was meant to be. Philosophers call this belief *fatalism*, the belief that everything is predetermined.

In opposition to fatalism is the concept of free will, the idea that everyone is free to choose what to do with their life. Would you consider yourself a fatalist or do you believe in free will? Why?

## As You Read

1. Why does a fight break out between the company and the Greycloaks?
2. What does Captain Calder threaten to do if Torin does not tell the truth?

3. How does Torin plan on convincing Captain Calder that they are not deserters?
4. What angers Torin when Wyla is brought down to the prison to join them?
5. What punishment is given to the company by Captain Calder?

### Follow-Up

In a place such as Gatewatch the military structure of the Greycloaks provides services similar to policemen in cities today. From Almveig's point of view, write up a short crime report about why she is apprehending Torin and his company. Include important details from the story as told from her perspective.





# The Gatewatch - Learning Guide

## Chapter 17: The Drums of War

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Journal Entry #17: Fear is a powerful feeling. Tell of a time when you were really scared. Was your fear well-founded or did the threat turn out to be nothing at all?

## Warm-Up

Vikings had their own set of laws that governed how criminals should be punished. One of the worst sentences for any Viking to receive was outlawry. Outlaws had to flee the country because they had no rights, and anyone could kill them without punishment. Further, no one was allowed to speak to an outlaw or help them in any way or they themselves could also be declared outlaws. Sometimes outlawry was declared for a set period of time and sometimes it was for life. Many of the saga heroes, such as Erik the Red and Grettir the Strong, were outlawed at different points in their life.

What is the worst punishment one could receive in today's day and age? What sorts of crimes might cause someone to get sentenced?

## As You Read

1. Why does Asleif help the company escape the stocks?
2. Which of the eight towers along the western wall does the company decide to defend?

3. Describe the attack on the tower that the companions fortified.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. How did Torin manage to slay a troll?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Who was in the stone tower when it toppled over?

### Follow-Up

One of the reasons that the wall is so worn down is because Captain Calder believed that the Greycloaks would grow lazy if they had a big wall to hide behind. Now that Gatewatch is under attack, Torin and his company find themselves wishing they had a more formidable barrier to keep the trolls out. Do you agree with Captain Calder's decision to not maintain the wall or do you think that was a mistake? Why do you agree or disagree with his decision?



# The Gatewatch - Learning Guide

## Chapter 18: Blood & Steel

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Journal Entry #18: Recall a memory of the angriest you've ever been. Why were you so angry and how did you express your anger? What did you do to deal with your anger?  
Are you still angry about what happened back then?

### Warm-Up

Viking berserkers (literally 'bear shirts') were famous for being able to enter a trance-like rage before battle called blood rage. According to the tales, berserkers in a state of blood rage would fight with no armour and feel no pain. In a blind fury they would strike down friends and foes without mercy. After the battles they would collapse, totally exhausted, and sometimes sleep for days at a time. Historians have since questioned whether this could be achieved by rage alone or whether some sort of hallucinogenic substance helped them enter this state of perceived invincibility. Either way, they were feared by enemies and kinsmen alike.

What are some of the physiological symptoms of rage?

### As You Read

1. Why can't Asa keep fighting and who stays to help her?

2. Why does Bryn leave for the East Gate on the far side of town?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What happens when Captain Calder challenges Ur-Gezbrukter in Stonering Keep?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What news does Bari bring the companions?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. How will Torin, Grimsa, and Wyla catch up with Ur-Gezbrukter?

## Follow-Up

Of all the gods in Norse mythology, none has a more terrible temper than the mighty Thor. Known as the God of Justice, the Son of Odin, and the Lord of Thunder, most of those who ignite his far-famed anger are vanquished with a single swing of his enchanted hammer *Mjolnir*. Helene A. Guerber recites the tale of Thor's vengeance upon the bragging giant Hrungrir in [this animated video](#). After listening to her rendition of this myth create a visual representation of the duel between Thor and Hrungrir.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

## Warm-Up

What future events do people speak of as being a ‘sign of the end of the world’ in today’s day and age?

1. What happens to Torin as he rides Kvolda up to Shadowstone Pass?

2. What does Torin find where the lightning struck the tree?

3. What do the companions witness when they reach the top of Shadowstone Pass?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. How do the companions plan on using the Sunblaze to defeat the trolls?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What event fuels Torin's blood rage as he charges at the Troll King?

## Follow-Up

The most famous horse in all of Norse mythology is Sleipnir. The story of its birth is interesting as the trickster god Loki transformed himself into a mare (a female horse) and gave birth to the magical horse as its mother before giving it to Odin as a gift. Sleipnir's hooves are like the rumble of thunder and it is said that no horse can run faster than Sleipnir because it has eight legs instead of four. One of my favourite images of Sleipnir comes from the artist and illustrator Helena Rosova who also painted the cover art for *The Gatewatch*. Find one of her many depictions of this magnificent creature (pictured with Odin, his ravens, and his wolves) [here](#)!



# The Gatewatch - Learning Guide

## Chapter 20: The Burning Pyre

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Journal Entry #20: Everyone processes tragic experiences in different ways. Describe a time in your life when you tried to comfort someone who was grieving. How did they respond to your support?

### Warm-Up

When a Viking died in battle it was said that Odin would send his Valkyries, fearsome warrior women, to ride down to the battlefield and carry the bravest among them back to Valhalla. There the fallen warrior would feast and train with all the other Vikings who had fallen bravely in battle to begin preparations for Ragnarok where Odin will make his last stand.

Research the death customs of an ancient culture to find out what they thought happened to people after life, and then share your findings with the class.

### As You Read

1. Who finds the companions after the Troll-King is defeated?
2. How do the companions carry their fallen friend back to Gatewatch?

3. What nick-names are given to the companions after the other Greycloaks hear what happened?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What do the people of Gatewatch prepare for that evening?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What do the companions see in the night sky over the burning pyre?

## Follow-Up

Bifrost, also called ‘the shimmering rainbow bridge,’ is the magical road between the nine worlds of Norse mythology. While it is popularly depicted in comic books and in movies as a rainbow it is much more likely that the *aurora borealis*, or the Northern Lights, inspired this iconic element of Norse mythology. This wonder of nature can be seen year-round in both Norway and Iceland. Photographer Johannes Kormann from Sweden was featured in National Geographic for [this stunning photo](#) of the Northern Lights as the Vikings would have seen them. Write a visual description of the Northern Lights for someone who has never seen them before.



# Wrap-Up Activity: The Heroic Journey

Joseph Campbell (1904–1987) was an American professor and author who studied literature and mythology. He found an intriguing pattern in the themes and events of great myths across many different cultures throughout history. Campbell's conclusion was that all great stories follow a universal pattern which he identified through the twelve stages of "The Heroic Journey." Almost any great book, play, or movie will have strong elements of these twelve stages and many writers (myself included!) use Campbell's "Heroic Journey" as a guideline for crafting powerful stories.



*Image used under Creative Commons*

Compare Torin Ten-Tree's adventure in *The Gatewatch* to Campbell's "Heroic Journey" as shown in the infographic on the previous page. Can you match the twelve stages to specific events in the story?

1. The Ordinary World	7. Approach
2. The Call to Adventure	8. Ordeal
3. Refusal	9. Reward
4. Mentor/Helper	10. The Road Back
5. Crossing the Threshold	11. Atonement
6. Tests, Allies & Enemies	12. Return

Compare the events in *The Gatewatch* that you chose for the "Heroic Journey" to those chosen by another group. Identify any similarities and discuss differences.

Were there any stages of the "Heroic Journey" that you felt were not clearly present in the story? Which stages were these? Did anyone else in your group disagree?