

## **Græn Sól**

**By Amelia Rose Evans**

There is nothing particularly special about Fregnvíss. His diminutive stature, red locks, and pale blue eyes are not atypical of a child in his region. His only remarkable “feature” is his name. Even in his remote Scandinavian village, many find his name quite strange and difficult to pronounce. However, this never bothered the boy. In fact, it instilled in him a sense of pride. Fregnvíss rather likes to be considered different, and even strange. Like most boys his age, Fregnvíss has big dreams—dreams of heroism and adventure. He thinks himself quite the intrepid explorer, despite the fact that he has never ventured farther than the forest outside his tiny village.

Fregnvíss knows a lot about science, mostly because of the science centers and organizations near his home. The remote location is ideal for secret or risky research. Just across the forest is a facility called B.A.N.G., where high tech weapons are built. On the other side of the forest is another facility called S.C.A.T., that performs testing on animals for research on genetic mutations. Once every six months, the villagers are allowed to take a guided tour of these very large facilities. “To educate the uncivilized,” said Dr. Cornelius, the leader and owner of both societies. Fregnvíss never missed a single one of those tours. He believed that they did great work there, and that no harm would ever come to him and his fellow villagers, indeed, to all of Scandinavia, while those organizations existed. The research they did inspired him to do something important, something that science and humanity would benefit from immensely.

On his fourteenth birthday, Fregnvíss was having his usual stroll around the cleared, grassy plot that B.A.N.G. and S.C.A.T. shared. Normally, he would have been shooed away by passing one of the security guards that patrolled the building. “Go away, boy!” the men would say. “This is no place for children.” However, no guards seemed to be out today.

Feeling adventurous, Fregnvíss slipped by unnoticed, and discovered a small vent on the side of the building behind a row of hedges. Intrigued, he eagerly investigated. He was surprised to hear voices echoing through the ventilator shaft.

“Do you think it’ll work, doctor?” said one voice.

“Work?” replied another. “It’ll do more than work! This rocket will take us beyond the limits of the galaxy!”

“But doctor,” said the first voice, “we haven’t even tested it yet. And besides, it’s only set to go to the moon for now! Also,” the man continued, “we’ve left it completely unguarded. The rocket is fairly light and portable. What if someone steals it?”

“Steal our rocket?” laughed the doctor. “Who’s going to steal it? One of those dull-witted villagers? They haven’t got enough brains to build a simple automobile.”

“Yes, we do!” thought Fregnvíss indignantly.

“There’s just nowhere to drive an automobile in this place.”

“I’m only saying, Dr. Cornelius, Sir...” said the first voice.

“Oh, you worry too much, Ignatius,” sighed the doctor. “Just enjoy our success for once.”

The two men’s footsteps were receding into the distance. There was the noise of a door slamming, indicating their departure.

“A rocket, huh?” whispered Fregnvíss. “I have to see this.”

He peered into the vent and decided that it was just large enough for him to crawl through. But how would he open it? To his surprise, there was a latch on top of the van that read “OPEN,” with an arrow pointing to the left. He turned it, and sure enough . . . it creaked open. He chuckled at the simplicity of it all, almost disappointed that it wasn’t more of a challenge. He looked around quickly, then swiftly crawled inside, pulling the vent closed behind him, but being careful not to allow the latch to close.

He only had to crawl a short distance to a huge room within the building, with an opening in the roof. There, in the platform, was a beautiful rocket. Sleek, thin, aerodynamic, and perfect for flight. In shiny, red letters was painted the word, Freistnad. Fregnvíss whipped around to see that no one was watching. “Surely it won’t matter if I just have a look,” he said to himself.

Fregnvíss peered into the rocket. There was a myriad of controls and buttons. “I’m sure it’s alright to just sit inside,” reasoned Fregnvíss. “Just for a moment.” He climbed inside.

“Wow!” he breathed. “Wow, wow, wow!” He began to inspect the buttons. There was a big red one in the middle of the control panel. “I wonder what this does?” said Fregnvíss. Without thinking, he pushed it.

Suddenly, there was a loud roaring of the boosters. The top of the rocket shut. Fregnvíss was trapped. Alarmed, he tried to call for aid. “HELP!” he shouted. “HELP! I’M STUCK!”

The seat belt clicked. Fregnvíss heard voices outside. It was the two men from before. “Stop!” shouted Cornelius. “Thief!”

“Get out of there, boy!” yelled Ignatius. “You’ll be killed!”

They rushed over . . . but it was too late. In a cloud of blue-gray smoke, Fregnvíss shot into the air, through the atmosphere, and into space. The two men stood staring at the sky. A silence followed.

“I told you so,” said Ignatius.

“Be quiet,” snapped Cornelius.

Upwards Fregnvíss flew. Higher and higher. After he got over the shock, Fregnvíss relaxed a bit. “Hey,” he said, “this is actually kind of cool. I’m going to space! I’ll be the first kid on the moon!” He whooped for joy. “My dream is coming true!” he laughed.

He’d expected, as the scientists had said, to stop as soon as he’d reached the moon, but instead of halting, the Freistnad kept going, past Mars, then Jupiter, Uranus, Neptune. “What’s going on?!” Fregnvíss thought frantically, as he watched Pluto whiz by. “There must have been a mistake in the calculations!”

On and on he flew, now faster than the speed of sound, now faster than the speed of light, now the speedometer was broken. Fregnvíss saw a swirl of light ahead, and he gasped as he realized what it was. It was the edge of the Milky Way! “I’m flying out of the Galaxy!” he thought, his mind shrieking at him to get the controls and turn around. He wrestled with the levers, pushed any button he thought could be useful, but it was no use. Screaming at a speed no one had ever thought possible, he careened out of the Galaxy . . . and kept going!!!

Still he flew, on and on and on and on. “Maybe I’ll keep going forever and ever,” thought Fregnvíss, strangely calm now, as if he’d accepted his fate of forever hurtling through the universe.

Then, so abruptly and with such force that Fregnvíss fell out of his seat, the Freistnad stopped. Fregnvíss looked up. He was in an entirely new galaxy, one that had never been seen before by any human in the history of the universe. The Freistnad had stopped because it had crash-landed on the surface of a planet.

Fregnvíss stood up. After searching the back of the ship, he’d found a space suit that fit him strangely well. Fregnvíss took a deep breath, and opened the door.

He gasped in surprise. The surface of the planet was shimmering with every color known to man, plus a few that weren't. It was as bright as the sun on a hot summer day. The boy stepped out. He'd half expected it to be burning hot. However, the surface of the planet was cold as ice! He stooped to pick up a rock, and put it in his backpack.

When Fregnvíss looked about, he saw that the planets were revolving around what appeared to be a bright, strangely green sun. Hence, he called it Græn Sól, the old Norse word for "green sun."

Just then, Fregnvíss heard a strange noise behind him. He sensed a faint, almost mechanical zipping. He suddenly felt very dizzy, and then all went black.

When Fregnvíss awoke, he was in a strange room, blindingly bright, and largish in size. There was something that resembled an oxygen mask on his face. He tried to move, but seemed to be stuck. He looked around to see if any restraints bound him. Nothing. "Then why can't I move?" he thought, puzzled and alarmed.

There was a scuffling in the other room. The door opened, and someone that looked like a young boy just about his age walked in. He had something like a lab coat on. He glanced at Fregnvíss, then turned to some equipment.

Fregnvíss heard a voice. It seemed, strangely, to be coming from inside his brain. "Greetings, Earthboy," it said.

Fregnvíss started. "Who are you?!" he shouted. The other boy winced and grimaced. The voice spoke again. "There's no need to shout," it said. "I can read your thoughts."

"What am I thinking then?" said Fregnvíss.

"You are thinking that you can escape," said the voice.

The other boy chuckled a little. Fregnvíss had been hoping he could escape.

"What do you want with me?!" Fregnvíss shouted. The boy winced again. "I told you," said the voice, sounding rather cross, "there's no need to shout. I'm not deaf."

Well," thought Fregnvíss, "what do you want with me?"

The other boy smiled. "We're just going to do a few little . . . experiments," said the voice.

"What sort of experiments?" Fregnvíss asked, rather alarmed. The boy laughed. "Wouldn't you like to know," said the voice.

There was a pause. “My name is Bjóða,” explained the voice, in a conversational manner. “I’m going to do a series of scientific experiments on you. Don’t ask what they are or what their purpose is. It is classified information. The reason you can’t move is because I am holding you there with my thoughts. Normally a Grænsólman can’t mentally control things and telepathically converse, but I’m known to be quite a multitasker.”

Bjóða approached Fregnvíss. “Alright,” he said. “Is the mask on comfortably?”

“If you call being forced to wear a weird, otherworldly piece of lab equipment comfortable, then yes,” thought Fregnvíss with a smirk. Bjóða laughed.

He checked the tube attached to the mask. The tube led to a machine. Bjóða walked over to the machine, and flipped a switch. The machine began to make a chugging noise.

All of a sudden, Fregnvíss was breathing something that was not oxygen at all. Then another gas. Then another. Then still another. The boy was horrified. He knew some of these gases: Carbon Dioxide, Nitrogen, Helium, Neon, Oganesson, Argon, Krypton, Xenon, Radon, Hydrogen, and others, some that weren’t even known to man. These gases could easily kill him! He began to feel dizzy, nauseous, and faint. His vision blurred. Suddenly, he wasn’t breathing anything at all. Fregnvíss passed out.

When Fregnvíss woke, Bjóða was looking at him, smirking in a satisfied way. He actually spoke. “Humans can only safely breathe oxygen, and they can’t survive long without even that. Such dull, unadaptable, flimsy creatures, Earthmen are.” He crossed something off of a notebook. “Well, I’m sure that can be fixed when the time comes.” He exited the room.

He returned with a strange, helmet-like machine, and put it on Fregnvíss’s head. The earth boy couldn’t move a muscle, let alone struggle. There was a myriad of wires attached to the contraption that led to a different, box-like machine. He flipped another switch.

Fregnvíss felt something in his head. “Can you hear me?” Bjóða inquired.

“Yes,” thought Fregnvíss.

“Good,” replied the boy. “Now, I’m thinking of something. What am I thinking of?”

“But I can’t read minds,” replied Fregnvíss, confused.

“Just close your eyes,” insisted Bjóða, “and concentrate.”

Fregnvíss concentrated. Suddenly, he knew what Bjóða was thinking. “You’re thinking of . . . dysprosium?” asked Fregnvíss, not sure exactly why Bjóða was thinking of a chemical used in machinery when he was working with minds.

“Exactly!” beamed Bjóða.

He turned the machine to a different setting. Several times he did change it, but it only worked once. All that time, Fregnvíss began to feel fainter and fainter, sicker and sicker, and he had passed out yet again before Bjóða turned the machine off.

“What j-just h-happened?” Fregnvíss slurred, his brain still muddled.

“I tested different chemicals to see which would allow a human to read minds!” exclaimed Bjóða with gleeful excitement. “And the outcome was successful! A mixture of dysprosium, indium, rubidium, tantalum, and Europium, as well as the regular gadolinium, humans are able to see into the brains of other beings!”

“What!” shouted Fregnvíss, horrified. “A human can’t survive if his or her brain chemicals are added to or switched!”

Bjóða winced, and a frown formed on his lips. “If I’ve said it once,” he growled, “I’ve said it a million times. You don’t have to shout!”

The helmet was taken off, and Bjóða stormed out of the room.

When he returned, Fregnvíss still hadn’t recovered fully. “Excuse me,” he said, or tried to say. “Why are you performing these experiments on me? What is it to you if I can breathe Hydrogen or read minds?”

Bjóða sighed, as if he were exasperated. “I told you, it’s classified information,” he replied. Then, a thought struck him. “Well,” he said slowly, “we are going to do a brainwashing experiment, so I’ll tell you. We Grænsólmen want to know how easy or hard it would be to conquer earth in case we decide to someday. We also want to know if we can turn you into one of us, as our population is dwindling.” Bjóða waved a hand at Fregnvíss, who was just opening his mouth to protest. “Now, no more questions,” he said.

Several more experiments were done, including the brainwashing one, which only erased three point six seconds of Fregnvíss’s memory. Most of the other experiments were too brutal or otherwise harmful to mention. The more tests there were, the more dizzy and faint and confused and sick-to-his-stomach Fregnvíss felt. All the chemicals and such were definitely doing a number on him. By the time the experiments were finished, the poor earth boy was nearly dead.

Bjóða finished all checks and notes on his clipboard, and then turned to Fregnvíss. “All right,” he said. “We are all done here.” He looked at his fourteen-year-old experimental specimen. “There’s just one more little test we have to complete,” Bjóða said. He brought over a ray-gun-like object and pointed it at Fregnvíss.

“Since you are useless to us now,” laughed Bjóða, “we don’t really care what happens to you. So, if you are unable to move for yourself (I’m no longer holding you) and go back to whence you came,” Bjóða smiled darkly, “we will most unfortunately have to vaporize you. So sorry.” From the light in Bjóða’s eyes, even the most clueless person could see that he wasn’t sorry at all.

Poor Fregnvíss didn’t know what to do. His arms were like straws, his head was spinning, his legs were no more use to him than pieces of string, and he felt like he was going to throw up.

Nevertheless, he found strength in him to stand up and, weak and straining, stumbled out of the room and back to his ship.

As he left, he heard Bjóða mutter sulkily to himself, “Oh well. Maybe I could test this thing on the enemy Grænsólmen.” He patted the gun and smiled in a sinister way. “That’s what it’s actually for anyway.”

Fregnvíss climbed into the cockpit and blasted off once more. As he did so, he drifted out of consciousness. He was awakened when the rocket reentered earth’s atmosphere. His mind was still reeling from the events that had just occurred on Græn Sól. The cruel, horrible experiments, and the threat at the end. He had hoped that it was just a terrible nightmare, but it wasn’t. “Who could ever dream of doing such a thing to another living creature, or consider doing it to their own kind?” he thought.

Fregnvíss finally landed back on earth. The rocket had apparently been pre-programmed to return to its place of creation. After the rocket landed safely, Fregnvíss, who was still shaky and nauseous, exited as quickly as possible, and headed home. On the way, Fregnvíss read the signs for the places he so respected and admired: S.C.A.T. (Scientific Center of Animal Test-extremes), and “B.A.N.G. (Ballistic Atomic, Nuclear, and Gas bombs).

Suddenly, a terrifying reality dawned on him, as he was given an answer to his question.