

Brian Guehring
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Trolls!

a adaptation of Norwegian Troll Mythology for a large cast
written by Brian Guehring

When the Olsen family camping vacation goes awry during a thunderstorm, the parents start telling campfire stories about trolls. These stories come to life in their imagination as they hear the stories of Buttercup (about a young boy who is tricked by two troll hags), the Eating Competition and more

Trolls! was originally produced in the summer of 2008 by the Papillion-La Vista Arts Network summer arts camp with a cast of 60 students in first through 8th grades. The original production ran approximately 75 minutes. The original production team were:

PRODUCTION TEAM

Director: Brian Guehring
Producer: Dr. Debbie Kippley

Music Director: Jackie Fowler
Set Designer: Trish Place
Assistant Director: Anna Kippley
Choreographer: Sue Booton



Development Dramaturge: Michael Miller

Trolls! was later revised and produced as a 30 minute play for the Omaha Theater Company final project for the 12 students in the 5th and 6th grade afterschool acting class in 2010.

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Trolls!

a new play for a very large cast
written by Brian Guehring adapted from traditional Norwegian Troll mythology

The Camping Ground

Mom and Dad	Parents who like telling stories
Emily	Their 7 year old daughter, who is literal
Betsy	Their 5 year old daughter, who gets afraid
Peter	Their bitter 13 year old son

Story 1: Buttercup and Butterball

Buttercup	CONNOR	A naughty, lazy, greedy young boy
Butterball	MITCH	A naughty, lazy, greedy young boy
Butter Grandmother	NATALIA	Their mother
Butter Grandfather	ORION	Their grandfather
Goldtooth, Weiji	BETH, RYLEIGH	Their dogs (puppets)
Troll Hags	TESS, EMMA	Two nasty, hungry troll hags
Trolls	KEENAN, BETH	Two, nasty, hungry Troll Kings
Troll Daughters	TRICIA, ATARAH	Their two simple daughters

Story 2: The Troll and the White Cat

Halvor and Margrit	Two Wild Animal Trappers
Helga and Kirsten	Norwegian Farmers
Trolls and Gnomes	Lazy, Bad Mannered Trolls who want food
Polar Bears	Scary large bears

Story 3: The Eating Competition

Farmer	The Father with a bad back
Per and Paul	The older brothers
Ashley	The smart younger sister
Forest Trolls 1 & 2	Forest Trolls

SETTINGS

campground
the mountains and forests of Norway

TIME

Now
and a long time ago, in the time of trolls

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Scene 1: The Campground

(Family is setting up its tent at a campground)

MOM

I love camping.

BETSY

Me, too.

PETER (bitterly)

Why it is boring?

EMILY

There is nothing to do here.

PETER

No video games. No cell phones. No computer.

EMILY

I can't believe you wouldn't let me bring my homework.

MOM

We thought it would be a good escape from the stress of our lives.

DAD

We spend too much time in front of screens. Breathe in this beautiful weather.

PETER

It smells like bear urine.

DAD

Have you seen anything unusual in the mountains yet?

EMILY

No. Just rocks and trees.

DAD

Keep looking.

BETSY

I bet we see lots of cool things in the woods.

MOM

A wonderful four day weekend in the mountains.

PETER and EMILY

Four long days.....

DAD (*reprimanding*)

Children!

(*Thunder Sound Effect*)

Oh, great, now its going to rain. PETER

Could things get worse? EMILY

Yes, I heard there were thunderstorms in the forecast. DAD

Some call them thunderstorms, some call them Troll parties. MOM

Trolls? There are no such things. EMILY

Children always think they know so much. Everyone in the tent. DAD

I assure you, the countryside is crawling with Trolls. MOM

You mean outside this inn are lots of little green creatures with wild orange hair? BETSY

Oh, no. Not at all. MOM

Duh! PETER

Trolls are giants and ugly to look at. MOM

They can be so big their heads loom over the tallest treetops.
(TROLL shadows enter come up on tent walls) DAD

Their eyes are the size of potlids. MOM

Their noses are as long as rake handles. DAD

Their fingers as long as golf clubs. MOM

And when the trolls and gnomes dance..... DAD

The country side shakes as if there is an earthquake. MOM

And trolls love to eat small animals and especially children.... DAD

(TROLLS laugh evilly and exit)

BETSY (*a little scared*)

Really?

MOM

Yep, but the troll brain inside the huge head is tiny. It is easy to trick a troll.

PETER

I'm not scared of trolls.

EMILY

Me either. Because they aren't real.

MOM

You sound just like Butterball and Buttercup...

BETSY

Butterball and Buttercup?

MOM

Yes, Butterball and Buttercup were two young Norwegian boys about your age...

DAD

But they were HUGE.

MOM

That's right. They were really big, because all they did was eat.

DAD

They weren't scared of Troll Hags at all.

MOM

But Butterball and Buttercup were foolish not to be afraid...

DAD

Because Troll Hags are smarter than Trolls ...

MOM

And Troll Hags can be quite tricky.....

Story 1: Butterball and Buttercup

(Scene Shifts to BUTTER Home. BUTTER GRANDMOTHER is baking)

BUTTERBALL

May we lick the stirring spoon, Grandmother?

BUTTER GRANDMOTHER

No. It will ruin your appetite.

BUTTERCUP

No, mother. We are always hungry.

BUTTERBALL

And you are such a good cook.

BUTTER GRANDFATHER

Shouldn't you be outside hunting with your father?

BUTTERCUP

Not while grandmother is baking Krumkake.

BUTTERGRANDMOTHER

You need to start learning how to do things. You are getting old enough to help around the house.

BUTTER GRANDFATHER

You need to learn to be a grown man: how to hunt and fish and build things.

BUTTERBALL

Those are boring.

BUTTERCUP

We like staying inside!

BUTTER GRANDMOTHER

All you do is stay in the kitchen all day and all night long.

BUTTERGRANDFATHER

Getting bigger and bigger!

BUTTER GRANDMOTHER

You don't know how to do anything!

(BUTTERBALL steals the spoon)

BUTTERGRANDMOTHER

Except stealing my spoon. You are a naughty little Butterball!

(BUTTERCUP steals the other spoon)

BUTTER GRANDFATHER

And you are a naughty little Buttercup!

(BUTTERBALL and BUTTERCUP grin. WEEJIE and GOLDTOOTH, their Norweigan Elkhounds, bark)

BUTTERGRANDMOTHER

Boys, go see what Weeje and Goldtooth are barking at.

(BUTTERBALL and BUTTERCUP go to the window)

BUTTERBALL

There are two troll hags coming down the mountain

BUTTERCUP

And each is carrying a big sack over her shoulder

(BUTTER GRANDFATHER and BUTTER GRANDMOTHER runs to the window)

BUTTER GRANDMOTHER

Quick, my sweet Butterball and Buttercup, hide under the table!

BUTTERBALL

It's just Troll Hags. We're not scared.

BUTTER GRANDFATHER

Troll Hags that would like to cook you into a nice stew!

BUTTERCUP

We could trick them.

BUTTER GRANDMOTHER

Now be good little boys and listen to your grandmother! Hide under the table and don't make a sound.

BUTTERBALL and BUTTERCUP

Yes, grandmother.

(BUTTERBALL and BUTTERCUP hide and a knock is heard on the door. BUTTER GRANDMOTHER answers)

BUTTER GRANDMOTHER

May I help you?

TROLL HAG #1

I was wondering if your sweet sons, round little Butterball and Buttercup were home?

(TROLL HAG #1 drools as she says their names)

BUTTER GRANDFATHER

I'm afraid not. They're out hunting ptarmigan with their father.

TROLL HAG #2 (*looking around the home*)

Really? Neither juicy little boy is home?

BUTTER GRANDMOTHER

Not at all. It is just us and our dogs.

(DOGS growl. TROLL HAGS give them peanut butter to make their mouths stick together)

TROLL HAG #1

That's a shame.

TROLL HAG #2|

Because we brought some cake for them.....

(BUTTERBALL and BUTTERCUP moan under the table)

BUTTER GRANDFATHER(trying to cover)

Well that's very kind and it smells good, but neither Butterball nor Buttercup is here.

TROLL HAG #1

I guess we will have to return to the mountain with all of this buttery Eplekakke.

(BUTTERBALL and BUTTERCUP bursts out of their hiding place. TROLL HAG #2 holds GRAN MOTHER AND GRANDFATHER back)

BUTTERBALL

Here we are! We love Apple Cake.

BUTTERCUP

May we have a slice?

TROLL HAG #1

Of course, juicy little Butterball and Buttercup.

TROLL HAG #2

However, our back hurts and the cake is inside our bags.

TROLL HAG #1

Would you crawl in and get the cake yourself?

BUTTERGRANDFATHER

No!

BUTTERBALL

Wait a minute....

TROLL HAG #2

Yes?

BUTTERCUP

We'll need something to cut the cake with. *(Grabs a knife)* This knife will do.

BUTTERBALL *(grabbing a knife)*

I need a knife, too.

TROLL HAG #1

Now, just climb into the sack.....

BUTTERBALL

And get some Eplekakke.....

(BUTTERBALL and BUTTERCUP climb into sack
and the TROLL HAGS close it up)

BUTTER GRANDMOTHER

No!

(BUTTER GRANDMOTHER rushes the TROLL
HAGS, who easily pushes her to the ground)

TROLL HAG #2

It's too late. Your round little grand children will soon to be our stew!
(TROLL HAGS drag the boys off)

DAD

So the Troll Hags began to carry little Butterball and little Buttercup up the mountain.
(TROLL HAGS stop)

TROLL HAG #1

My round little boy is sure heavy.

TROLL HAG #2

Yes. Let us rest here before we finish the second half of our journey.
(TROLL HAGS fall asleep)

MOM

And Butterball and Buttercup used their knives to quickly cut a slit out of the sacks.

BUTTERCUP (quietly)

They were going to turn us into stew!

BUTTERBALL

And there wasn't even any Apple Cake in the sack.

BUTTERCUP

At least we had our knives.

BUTTERBALL

Now let's run home.

DAD

After a long, exhausting run, the two boys made it back home.
(BUTTER GRANDMOTHER hug the boys)

BUTTER GRANDMOTHER

We were so worried about you!

BUTTERBALL (*out of breath*)

We are so tired.

BUTTER GRANDFATHER

You naughty, greedy little boys! I thought I had seen the last of you.

BUTTERCUP

There wasn't even any Apple Cake in the sack!

BUTTER GRANDMOTHER

See what happens when you don't listen to your grandmother?

BUTTERBALL

Yes, grandmother.

(WEEJIE and GOLDTOOTH bark)

BUTTER GRANDFATHER

What are Goldtooth and Weeje barking at?

(BUTTERBALL and BUTTERCUP go to the window)

BUTTERBALL

The troll hags are coming back down the mountain

BUTTERCUP

And each is still carrying a big sack over her shoulder

BUTTER GRANDFATHER

Quick, my simple little grandsons, hide under the table!

BUTTERCUP

We aren't scared of two troll hags!

BUTTERBALL

We've tricked them once, and we can trick them again.

BUTTERGRANDMOTHER

Now be good little boys and listen to your grandmother! Hide under the table and don't make a sound.

BUTTERBALL and BUTTERCUP

Yes, grandmother.

(BUTTERBALL and BUTTERCUP hide and a knock is heard on the door. BUTTER MOTHER answers)

BUTTER GRANDMOTHER

May I help you?

TROLL HAG #1

I was wondering if your sweet sons, round little Butterball and Buttercup were home?

(TROLL HAG #1 drools as she says their names)

BUTTER GRANDFATHER

I'm afraid not. They're out in the forest chopping wood with their father.

TROLL HAG #2 (*looking around the home*)

Really? Neither juicy, tasty little boy is home?

BUTTER GRANDMOTHER

Not at all. It is just us and our dogs.

(DOGS growl. TROLL HAGS breathe on dogs who faint under the odor)

TROLL HAG #1

That's a shame.

TROLL HAG #2|

Because we brought some more cake for them.....

(BUTTERBALL and BUTTERCUP moan under the table)

BUTTER GRANDMOTHER(trying to cover)

Well that's very kind and it smells good, but neither Butterball nor Buttercup is here.

TROLL HAG #1

I guess we will have to return to the mountain with all of this buttery Kaffebrød.

(BUTTERBALL and BUTTERCUP bursts out of their hiding place)

BUTTERBALL

Here we are! We love Coffee Cake.

BUTTERCUP

May we have a slice?

TROLL HAG #1

Of course, juicy, tasty, soft little Butterball and Buttercup.

TROLL HAG #2

However, our backs hurt and the cake is deep inside our bags.

TROLL HAG #1

Would you crawl in and get the cake yourself?

BUTTER GRANDMOTHER

No!

BUTTERBALL

Wait a minute....

TROLL HAG #2

Yes?

BUTTERCUP

We'll need something to cut the cake with.

TROLL HAG #1

No. We have already cut the cake into slices.

BUTTERCUP

Then we need something to eat the cake with. *(Grabbing a fork)*. This fork will do.

BUTTERBALL *(grabbing a fork)*

I need one, too.

TROLL HAG #1

Now, just climb into the sack.....

BUTTERBALL

And get some kaffebørd.....

(BUTTERBALL and BUTTERCUP climb into sack
and the TROLL HAGS close it up)

TROLL HAG #2

Your round little children will soon to be our stew!

(TROLL HAGS drag the boys off)

DAD

So again the Troll Hags began to carry little Butterball and little Buttercup up the mountain.

(TROLL HAGS stop)

TROLL HAG #1

This round little boy is very heavy.

TROLL HAG #2

Yes. Let us rest here before we finish the second half of our journey.

TROLL HAG #1

And without a knife to cut a way out of the sack, they can't escape!

(TROLL HAGS fall asleep)

MOM

It took longer, but Butterball and Buttercup used their forks to cut a slit out of the sacks.

BUTTERCUP (quietly)

They were going to turn us into stew!

BUTTERBALL

And there wasn't even any Kaffebørd in the sack.

BUTTERCUP

At least we had our forks

BUTTERBALL

Now let's put some wood into the sacks so they will think we are still in the sacks.

(BUTTERBALL and BUTTERCUP fill the sack
with sticks)

BUTTERCUP

Good. Now we will have plenty of time before they find out we are gone and we can walk home.

MOM

After a long, leisurely walk home, the two boys returned to their home.

(BUTTER GRANDMOTHER hug the boys)

BUTTER GRANDMOTHER

We were so worried about you!

BUTTERBALL (*out of breath*)

We are so hungry.

BUTTER GRANDFATHER

You naughty, greedy little boys! I thought I had seen the last of you.

BUTTERCUP

There wasn't even any kaffebørd in the sack!

BUTTER GRANDMOTHER

See what happens when you don't listen to your grandmother?

BUTTERBALL

Yes, grandmother.

(WEEJIE and GOLDTOOTH bark)

BUTTER GRANDMOTHER

I'm afraid to know what Goldtooth and Weeje barking at
(BUTTERBALL and BUTTERCUP go to the window)

BUTTERBALL

The troll hags are coming back again?

BUTTERCUP

I wonder what food they brought for us this time?

BUTTER GRANDFATHER

Quick, my silly, naive little grandsons, hide under the table!

BUTTERCUP

We aren't scared of two troll hags!

BUTTERBALL

We've tricked them twice and we can do it again.

BUTTER GRANDMOTHER

Now be good little boys and listen to your grandmother! Hide under the table and don't make a sound.

BUTTERBALL and BUTTERCUP

Yes, grandmother.

(BUTTERBALL and BUTTERCUP hide and a knock is heard on the door. BUTTER GRANDMOTHER answers)

BUTTER GRANDMOTHER

May I help you?

TROLL HAG #1

I was wondering if your sweet, succulent, tasty sons, round little Butterball and Buttercup were home?

(TROLL HAG #1 drools as she says their names)

BUTTER GRANDFATHER

I'm afraid not. They're in the stream fishing with their father.

TROLL HAG #2 (*looking around the home*)

Really? Neither juicy, tender, tasty little boy is home?

BUTTER GRANDMOTHER

Not at all. It is just us and our dogs.

(DOGS growl. TROLL HAGS step on their paws, they whimper and run away)

TROLL HAG #1

That's a shame.

TROLL HAG #2|

Because we brought berries and cream for them.....

(BUTTERBALL and BUTTERCUP moan under the table)

BUTTER GRANDFATHER(*trying to cover*)

Well that's very kind and it smells good, but neither Butterball nor Buttercup is here.

TROLL HAG #1

I guess we will have to return to the mountain with all of this creamy dessert.

(BUTTERBALL and BUTTERCUP bursts out of their hiding place)

BUTTERBALL

Here we are! We love cream and berries!

BUTTERCUP

May we have some?

TROLL HAG #1

Of course, juicy little Butterball and Buttercup.

TROLL HAG #2

However, our back hurts and the cake is inside our bags.

TROLL HAG #1

Would you crawl in and get the dessert yourself?

BUTTER GRANDFATHER

No! Don't do it!

BUTTERBALL

Wait a minute....

TROLL HAG #2

Yes?

BUTTERCUP

We'll need something to eat the dessert with.

A spoon is all you need.

TROLL HAG #1
(BUTTERBALL and BUTTERCUP grab spoons)

Now, just climb into the sack.....

TROLL HAG #2

And get some cream and berries.....

BUTTERBALL
(BUTTERBALL and BUTTERCUP climb into sack
and the TROLL HAGS close it up)

Your round little children will finally be our stew!

TROLL HAG #2
(TROLL HAGS drag the boys off)

MOM
So again the Troll Hags began to carry little Butterball and little Buttercup up the mountain.
But this time the Troll Hags didn't stop to rest. And the spoons the boys had couldn't cut
through the sacks. And at sunset, the troll hags made it to their home in the mountains.
(TROLL HAGS arrive at home. TROLLS wake up
come out.)

Did you bring boys?

TROLL #1

The two big juicy boys?

TROLL #2

Yep.

TROLL HAG #1

They are right here!

TROLL HAG #2
(The TROLL HAGS open sacks and the heads of
BUTTERCUP and BUTTERBALL pop out)

Oh, mothers, you did it!

TROLL DAUGHTER #1

We were starting to get worried.

TROLL DAUGHTER #2

Took too long.

TROLL #1

We rest.

TROLL #2
(TROLLS exit)

TROLL HAG #1

Now daughter, you must cook the Butter Boy Soup.

TROLL HAG #2

We are exhausted and are going to sleep.

(TROLL HAGS exit)

TROLL DAUGHTER #1

Go ahead. You need to make the Butter Boy Soup.

TROLL DAUGHTER #2

No. She told you to make it.

TROLL DAUGHTER #1

I bet you don't know how to make Butter Boy Soup.

TROLL DAUGHTER #2

I bet you don't know how to make it either.

(pause as TROLL DAUGHTERS stare at each other)

BUTTERBALL

We can help you make the soup.

BUTTERCUP

We watch our mother cook everyday.

TROLL DAUGHTER #1

Oh, good. Because my sister doesn't know anything.

BUTTERBALL

And our mother is a very good cook.

TROLL DAUGHTER #2

Then this Butter Boy Soup will be very tasty. Which is better than it would be if my sister made it.

BUTTERCUP

First you have to put the pot over the fire.

(TROLL DAUGHTER #1 does so)

TROLL DAUGHTER #1

I'm glad I told mother I wanted little boy soup rather than goat soup tonight.

TROLL DAUGHTER #2

Why is that?

TROLL DAUGHTER #1

Because goats couldn't tell us how to cook them.

TROLL DAUGHTER #2

But I was the one who asked for Butter Ball Soup tonight.

BUTTERBALL

Anyway, when the water is ready, you put in the salt and spices.

Brian Guehring is the Playwright in Residence of the Omaha Theater Company, one of the nation's largest professional theaters for young people. Brian has adapted the world premiere scripts of the Newberry Award winning novel **Julie of the Wolves** (directed by Everett Quinton), **Miss Bindergarten, If You Give a Cat a Cupcake, The Misfits, Holidays Around the World** and **Sacagawea: Discovering History**. Brian's scripts have won several national and regional awards. His adaptations of **Where the Red Fern Grows** and **Old Yeller** and his original Theater in Education play **The Super Adventures of Pyramid Man and Dr. Nutrition** won AATE (American Alliance for Theater and Education) Unpublished Play Project Awards. His script **The Bully Show** was selected for the 2002 New Visions/New Voices new play development workshop at the Kennedy Center. Brian received a playwriting fellowship from the Nebraska Arts Council in 2002. His new adaptation of the Newberry Award winning novel **The Giver** was honored as one of the best theater productions of 2008 in Omaha by the Omaha World Herald. His original script **King Chemo** won the Southwest Theater Association's 1997 Best New Play for Children, and his original play **Creating Haley's World** was selected in 2003 for development in the inaugural Playwrights in Our Schools program. His plays have been produced by Imagination Stage in Washington, D.C., Lexington Children's Theater, Walnut Street Theater in Philadelphia, Barter Theater of Virginia, South Carolina Children's Theater, A. D. Players in Houston, Apple Tree Theater for Young Audiences in Chicago, Town Hall Theater in Dayton, and other schools and theaters. **King Chemo** and **The Bully Show** are published by Dramatic Publishing Company. He also contributed to Dramatic Publishing's **The Bully Plays**, an anthology of 10 minute plays about bullying for teen performers.

Brian is also the Education Director of the Omaha Theater Company which does drama and dance education outreach for every single child in over 80 local schools each year. His teen theater troupe **Pride Players** (which uses improvisation to explore issues facing gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, and straight allied teens) won a Human and Civil Rights Award from the National Education Association in 2006. In 2010, Brian was elected to the Board of Theater For Young Audiences/USA. Brian earned his MFA in Children's Theater and Creative Drama from the University of Texas at Austin.