

[literally stories](#)

Short story fiction from around the world



[All Stories](#), [Fantasy](#)

The End of All Things by Matias Travieso-Diaz

[September 9, 2025](#)[literallystories2014](#)

*Thor shall put to death the Midgard Serpent, and shall stride away
nine paces from that spot; then shall he fall dead to the earth, because of the venom which the
Snake has blown at him.*

Völuspá, Stanza 55

The Æsir gods sat around the great table in Valhalla's dining hall, waiting. Some took desultory sips of the mead in their drinking horns, yet there was no wisdom to be gained from the magical mead, for all that remained to be learned was the outcome of Odin's ride to consult with the embalmed head of Mimir about the meaning of recent portents. Had Ragnarøkk, the day of the world's final battle, arrived? Would evil god Loki and his children overcome the Æsir? What could the gods do to prevail against Loki and his cohorts?

Thor sat near the head of the table, holding a horn but not drinking the mead in it. He was pondering, as he often did, what he should do once the fatal day was at hand. The Norns had prophesied that Thor would meet his doom at Ragnarøkk. He would slay the World Serpent Jörmungandr, and then he would perish, poisoned by the snake's venom. He did not fear the end of his existence, but dreaded leaving the final battle before its conclusion. He hoped to thrust Mjölner, his hammer, at Loki's insolent skull and crush him, in a blow that would hurl the corpse of his hated enemy into Jötunheim, the realm of the ice giants. Would he be able to do so?

There would be much critical fighting, and Thor lamented that he might miss any of it.

Thor was still contemplating how he could best assist in the struggle when there was a loud rumble outside the walls of Valhalla and, shortly afterward, Odin rushed into the dining hall. He had his face set in a rigid mask as he stood at the head of the table. He was immediately assaulted with questions about his meeting with the head of Mimir, but Odin's sole response was: "Never mind that. We must prepare to do battle. On my way here, I saw fire-giants and monsters already arriving at the plain of Vigrid. Arm yourselves and let us gather outside the walls and march to Vigrid to fight them."

Upon reaching the Vigrid plain, Thor found his father Odin already engaged in combat with one of Loki's monstrous spawns, the wolf Fenrisúlf. As Fenrisúlf advanced towards him, Odin made a gesture that summoned the army of the *einherjar*, the dead heroes he had kept in Valhalla to assist him in the final battle. Thor was making a move to assist his father and the *einherjar* when a deafening roar resonated on the battlefield. It was coming from the ocean surrounding Midgard and was accompanied by a vast tremor, as an unimaginable force thumped on the ground. These signals evidenced the arrival of another of Loki's children, the sea serpent Jörmungandr, who up to that moment had encircled the earth, holding his own tail in his mouth. Jörmungandr now had freed the tail and was advancing towards Vigrid to destroy the Æsir forces. This was as it had been foretold, and it was Thor's destiny to meet the worm and fight it to their mutual annihilation.

Undaunted by the immensity of the serpent, Thor began to draw upon his powers to match those of his enemy. He summoned flash after flash of lightning, each bolt striking directly the head of Jörmungandr. The serpent roared and his scaly head began to exhibit scorch marks that soon became deep burns from which oozed a thick dark fluid.

Nevertheless, Jörmungandr continued to advance towards the ongoing battle.

Thor then sought to halt the snake's progress by unleashing high winds that momentarily barred Jörmungandr's progress. Jörmungandr, however, charged with all his might and little by little overcame the force of the hurricane and kept approaching the battlefield.

Thor then realized that he could not stop his opponent's progress by natural forces alone and had to become physically involved. He flew high into the air until he was level with Jörmungandr's head. There, he seized his hammer Mjolnir and began throwing it time and again towards the eyes of the snake, intending to blind him. In reaction, Jörmungandr vomited waves of hot venom from his fangs, bathing his opponent in a sea of greenish poison.

Thor was immensely strong and was able to withstand a high degree of physical trauma, but realized he could not last long under Jörmungandr attack. He flew closer up until his arm was

within reach of one of the serpent's eyes and hit it viciously with Mjolnir, in a series of blows that would have reduced a mountain to a mound of rubble. The snake wailed and coiled upon itself.

Thor took a deep breath and gazed upon the battle below. A band of light caught his eye and he observed Surtr, the leader of the Jötunn fire giants, raising his flaming sword over the prone figure of Freyr, Thor's kin and close friend. With an anguished cry, Thor ceased pounding on the serpent's head and thrust Mjolnir down, striking Surtr and slaying him – alas, too late to prevent the blow Surtr's sword cut Freyr's body in half.

Thor was overcome by grief at Freyr's death but summoned Mjolnir back to his hand. In the meantime, Jörmungandr had recovered and was able to release a stream of venom at Thor's head. The venom ate through Thor's hair and scalp at the same time Mjolnir struck a final blow into the serpent's head. Jörmungandr fell dead with an impact that carved a deep gash on the surface of the earth.

Thor descended to earth and took a few stumbling steps before the snake's venom entered his brain. As he fell to the ground, he realized that his attempt to save his friend's life had been the direct cause of his own death. He smiled bitterly, but felt no regrets, only one final thought: *"When facing the end of all things, one must not be content with saving oneself, but must lend such aid to others as lies within one's powers."*

[Matias Travieso-Diaz](#)

Image by [Георгий](#) from [Pixabay](#) – A sword against a background of mists and lightning with a glowing blade.