



Path of the Forest Trolls

STORE MOSSE NATIONAL PARK



Kråkfot
Natur AB



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Hello and Welcome to the path of the Forest Trolls! Along the path of the Forest Trolls, you will take part in a fairy tale. You will meet trolls and other folklore beings as well as get to know some of the plants and animals that live here in Store Mosse.

I can't promise that trolls, fairies and other beings are for real – but I can assure you that all facts about plants and animals mentioned in the story are true. I know that for sure, since I'm the one who has written it.

Eva Götbrink, storyteller and biologist

The path is about 500 metres long. The story is divided into 17 chapters and takes approximately 20-30 minutes to read.

1. A voice in the forest

It was a beautiful day in May. The sun was shining and the birds were singing. I was walking in the forest, all by myself. Suddenly, I came to a large birch tree, standing alone among the spruces. It looked old and had two towering trunks that disappeared straight up into the sky.

As I was standing there, I heard a knocking sound coming from the back of the tree. What could that be? I snuck around the tree to take a look. There, on the tree trunk sat a large bird pecking with its beak. It had a green back and red head.

‘I wonder what kind of bird that is?’ I said to myself.

Then I heard a voice from the other side of the tree: ‘It’s a green woodpecker’.

I flinched. Who could that be? Wasn’t I alone in the forest? I went back to the trail, but it was empty! There was not a soul in sight. But a bit further along the trail, I heard two muffled thumps and then a rustling sound. What on earth could that be? I hesitated, but then walked slowly in the direction of the sound.



Green woodpecker.



2. Tryfflan

I gazed into the forest, between the tree trunks and fallen branches. Roots were winding on the ground. Suddenly, one of the roots moved. I froze. What was that? Was it a snake? But then I saw it; it was no snake – it was a tail! A large winding tail!

The tail went behind a rock, and something was moving behind the rock. Then I saw a silhouette of a big head, and then suddenly I saw a pair of close-set eyes gazing straight at me in the dim forest light. I was standing there face-to-face with a real living troll.

‘Hidey ho’, the troll said and straightened her back. ‘My name is Tryfflan, and I’m a forest troll. Who are you?’

‘I’m Maja’, I replied.

The troll took two quick jumps towards me. Now she was standing so close that I could smell her. She smelled of wilderness and the forest.

‘I’m looking for my lost little brother’, Tryfflan said. ‘Will you help me?’

I hesitated for a second, but then replied ‘Sure, I will!’

‘Great!’ Tryfflan smiled. ‘He is really tiny you see. He’s not supposed to be out in the forest on his own, but he ran away. He does that sometimes. We have to find him before he gets into some mischief. I was just on my way to my friends Hombulus and Bombulus to ask if they have seen him’, she said. ‘Come on, let’s go’.

3. Bilberry flowers and dribbling beavers

When the forest became less dense, Tryfflan stopped. ‘Look at all these bilberries. Then, Hombulus and Bombulus shouldn’t be far away’, she said.

‘Bilberries?’ I said. ‘Where?’

‘Everywhere’, she said. ‘You are standing right among the bilberry sprigs.’

‘Oh, the sprigs’, I said. ‘I thought that you meant berries’.

‘No, no’, Tryfflan answered. ‘There aren’t any berries now in May, are there? Just bilberry flowers. Look how cute they are. They look like small pink balloons. Way too cute for trolls to like, actually. Us trolls – we are like that’, she continued. We like things that are a little wrinkled, untamed and gross instead of things, which are cute and sweet. We like dribbling beavers, slimy slugs and cat owls that throw up. But Hombulus and Bombulus, on the other hand, they absolutely love bilberry flowers.’

‘But who are Hombulus and Bombulus anyway?’ I asked.

‘Wait, you’ll soon see’, replied Tryfflan and headed along the path.





Bilberry Flowers.



4. Hombulus and Bombulus

Suddenly, Tryfflan stopped. 'I can hear them now!' she yelled enthusiastically. 'Hombulus! Bombulus! I'm here!'

Then, I saw two bumblebees come flying and land on Tryfflan's hand.

'Oh, you're so brave. Won't they bite you?' I asked.

'No', said Tryfflan. 'They don't have any teeth. Instead, they have a trunk'.

'A trunk?' I asked. 'Like an elephant? Can they trumpet with it?'

Tryfflan giggled. 'No, the trunk is more like a straw. When a bumblebee is hungry, it flies to a flower. It rolls out its trunk and sucks the nectar out of the flower. Nectar is a kind of flower juice which it uses to make honey, Bumblebee honey. But female bumblebees have a stinger they can sting with. But they only do that when someone is really mean to them'.

'Hi there soft cuddlies', said Tryfflan to the bumblebees. 'Have you seen my little brother Gnarp? He is on the run again you see'.

The bumblebees buzzed for a while in Tryfflan's hand before flying away.

'Gnarp was here for sure', Tryfflan said thoughtfully. 'Hombulus and Bombulus saw him waddle by here this morning. He was carrying an adder snake in one hand and his security blanket in the other. We better hurry onwards!'



5. It smells of gnome!

Next to a large dead tree, Tryfflan stopped and turned towards me.

‘Can you smell that?’ she asked, putting her big nose up in the air. ‘It smells like a gnome!’

‘What do you mean it smells like a gnome? How do they smell?’ I asked. I tried to smell the air, but I couldn’t smell anything other than the smell of the sunny pine forest.

Tryfflan looked excited. ‘They smell sour and peevish. And this one – it smells particularly sour and particularly peevish’.

A second later, a disgruntled yelp echoed from somewhere in the forest. It was followed by a grumpy mumble.

‘Yep, it sure is always a peevish and grumpy gnome’, Tryfflan whispered. ‘We have to go there and see what has happened. Perhaps Gnarp is in trouble. Stay close to me. They don’t bite, but they can be a bit unpleasant to deal with when they’re in a bad mood – which they usually are’.

We went closer towards where the sound came from.



6. Barren-Happie the gnome

‘By all Stinkbugs and Carrion beetles! Is it you that has stolen my walking stick?’ The little gnome stood beside an uprooted tree and squealed angrily.

‘What kind of times are we living in? Can’t a poor gnome stop and rest, without being robbed by thieves and swindlers?’ he screamed and stared angrily at us.

‘Hello Barren-Happie!’ Tryfflan kindly greeted the gnome. ‘Are you saying that you lost your stick? That’s too bad’.

‘Caterpillar hunters and Burying beetles’, the gnome squealed. ‘I’ve been robbed!’

‘There, there!’ Tryfflan said in a calm voice and smiled her most friendly troll-smile. ‘The stick can’t be far away. You just stay here; we’ll find it for you’. Then, she left with a quick farewell.

‘Whew! That was a close one’, Tryfflan said when we had come a bit on. ‘Now we have to rush’. I can guess who it was that took that stick, and it is best we find him first, before the gnome gets to him.

Who do you think has taken the gnomes walking stick?

‘Stink bugs and carrion beetles’, ‘Caterpillar hunters and Burying beetles’ the gnome squealed. Did you know that those creatures are real. This is what they look like:



Caterpillar hunter.



Burying beetles.



Stink bug.



Carrion beetle.

7. Mosses, lichens and a surprise

A bit further ahead, lay some large rocks. Tryfflan rubbed her nose between the rocks and examined them thoroughly.

‘What are you doing?’ I asked.

‘Looking for tracks’, she said. ‘But all I can find are moss and lichen’. She put her finger on some small greenish grey fluff. ‘This is trumpet lichen. It has a small cup from which fairy babies drink morning dew. And that’s ragged lichen. And up there, in the tree grows my favourite, beard lichen! Too bad I can’t reach it; they are so fun to stuff up your nose. Mum usually does that to us troll-children when we have nosebleeds. Beard lichens contain Usnin, a substance that kills bacteria and makes wounds heal better’.

‘But I don’t think that’s the reason she puts it up our noses. It’s probably just for making us laugh and forget about the nosebleed’, she said and smiled. Then, she jumped further along the row of stones. ‘And this is broom moss and that is woolly moss. And this...’ Suddenly, she stopped. ‘... is a sign of Gnarp!’

I went to Tryfflan, who was down on her knees in front of a flat stone. On the stone, there was a footprint with four toes. Tryfflan examined it carefully. ‘Hmm ... He has gone that way’, she said and pointed. ‘He is heading out towards the mire. Come on, let’s go! And, look out for footprints - perhaps we can find more?’





Beard lichen.



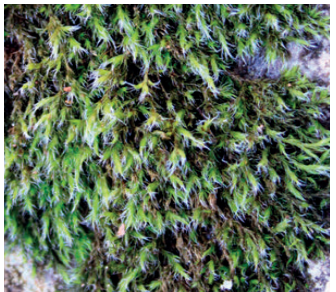
Broom moss.



Trumpet lichen.



Ragged lichen.



Woolly moss.

8. Frogs, Toads and Troll love

We followed the footsteps towards the mire. All of a sudden, Tryfflan stopped and pointed at something. A big, grey figure moved around out there!

‘Don’t be afraid’, Tryfflan said. ‘It’s just a crane. It’s probably looking for food. Cranes like to eat frogs and I’ve seen a lot of frogs here’.

‘Look! There’s one!’ I said and pointed to the ditch at the side of the trail.

‘Nah’, Tryfflan said. ‘That’s a toad’.

‘Oh, well?’ I said, feeling a little silly. ‘How can you tell the difference?’

‘A toad is chubbier than a frog’, Tryfflan replied ‘and it has bumps on the skin. It can’t jump very well either. It sort of crawls and grovels forward. But you can learn the most important difference if you by mistake put a toad in your mouth instead of a frog. Toads are poisonous! Their back is full of poisonous glands!’

‘But why would someone want to put a frog in their mouth?’ I asked.

‘Well,’ Tryfflan replied ‘Let’s say that you want to impress someone that you’re in love with. Then, you take a small animal, like a frog, and hide it inside your mouth. Then, you go to the one you are in love with, open your mouth and let the frog jump out. It will be a happy surprise for the one you like. That’s what we trolls do when we want to be romantic’, she proudly explained.





Toad (left) and frogs (right).



Crane.



9. The bird watching tower

We came to a wooden tower.

‘It is a bird watching tower,’ Tryfflan explained. ‘In the spring and summer, I sometimes go here early in the morning and watch the birds. But the tower is also a great place to hide in, if you want to throw pinecones on the fairies, while they are dancing on the mire’, she said.

We went up in the tower and peered out over the mire. Maybe we can catch a glimpse of Gnarp? All of a sudden, I heard Tryfflan gasping.


‘Look!’ she said pointing towards the open mire.

I looked in the direction she was pointing. There was a huge object lying out there and glistening in the sun. It shimmered like gold!

‘What’s that?’ I asked. I had never seen anything like that before.

‘It’s the Mire Queen’s crown!’ Tryfflan replied. ‘The Mire Queen watches over the mire and its surrounding lands. She is very, very wise and very, very powerful. All beings obey her - all fairies, gnomes and trolls. The Mire Queen protects the mire and woods where we live. Sometimes you can catch sight of her crown lying in the forest, and then you know that she is not far away. But she very seldom shows herself’.

Tryfflan looked at me anxiously. ‘I really hope that Gnarp hasn’t done anything foolish when the Mire Queen is around’, she said. ‘Come on! We have to continue our search immediately!’





Bank vole.

10. A beady-eyed animal

Suddenly, Tryfflan stopped and seemed to be listening for something. Then, she threw herself into the moss next to a spruce tree and started to rummage around in between the roots. When she came back up, she smiled with her whole face.

‘Come!’ she said. ‘Come and look at the little sweetie-pumpkins!’

I leaned forward and peered down among the bilberry sprigs.

‘A rat?’ I exclaimed. ‘It’s a rat!’

Tryfflan looked offended. ‘It’s NOT a rat. Rats are much larger. They like junk food and sewage pipes and that’s why they live in cities. This tiny little fluff is a bank vole. Wait until you see what I have in my pocket. Here, I have seeds, buds and berries. That’s what bank voles like. Sometimes they also climb up in trees to eat lichens’.

The tiny reddish-brown animal crawled up into Tryfflan’s hand and began to eat. It looked at me with its beady eyes.

‘How old can a become?’ I asked after a while.

‘They merely become one or two years old’, Tryfflan replied. ‘It’s not a particularly long life. We trolls, on the other hand, we can be several hundred years old’.

‘What?’ I said. ‘Several hundred years? But Tryfflan – how old are you really?’

‘I turned 134 last winter’, Tryfflan proudly declared. ‘But tiny little Gnarp is only 42 – almost just a baby. That’s why we have to find him now quickly!’



11. Dancers in the mist

Suddenly the forest came to an end and before us lay the mire in infinite vastness. The sun was shining and colourful butterflies filled the air. Then, we heard a delicate voice coming from one of the trees.

‘Hello’, the voice said. ‘You, the troll with the big nose, hello!’

Tryfflan looked puzzled. ‘Me?’ she asked.

‘Yes, you’, answered the voice.

I looked up in the direction of the voice. There, I saw the most beautiful being I’ve ever seen. It looked like a small human but was almost transparent and had small wings sitting on its back. It was a fairy. Then I saw several of them up in the trees.

‘Hidey ho, little fairy’, Tryfflan said. ‘What are you doing out at this time of day? You are the dancers in the mist and are usually only out during dawn and dusk’.

Then, the fairy, whose name was Goldheart Moonspell Morningdew, told us that she and the other fairies encountered a fierce troll baby earlier that morning. He had come sneaking through the forest, carrying a walking stick, which he used to poke into the fairies’ nest. When they tried to save themselves, he threw his dirty baby blanket on them and tried to catch them.

‘He was completely mad! We fled here, and now we are afraid to go back’. The little fairy looked heartbroken.

‘We can help you with the wild baby!’ Tryfflan said. ‘Just show us the way to your glade’.

The fairy hesitated. Trolls were not known to be gentle and helpful. Could it be something fishy with



this sudden helpfulness? She thought for a moment and then said, 'If you swear on the Mire Queen's Crown to protect us from the wild troll baby, we'll show you the way to our glade'.

'I swear on the Mire Queen's Crown', Tryfflan answered solemnly.



12. The crown of the Mire Queen

The fairies led us to the place where the Mire Queen's crown was laying, glistening in the sun.

Tryfflan stopped and whispered to me 'The Mire Queen watches over the mire and forests around here. We trolls, fairies and other beings have all vowed to help her protect nature. To protect those who give us everything, but have no voice of their own'.

'Protect who?' I asked.

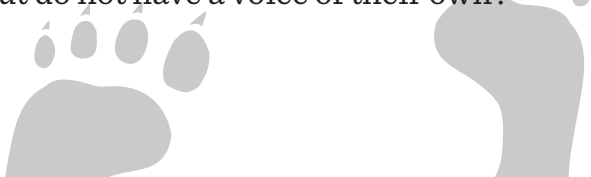
'Come, let me show you', Tryfflan said. She walked over and put her chubby hand on the crown and then looked at me seriously. 'Come and place your hand on it too', she said.

When I did, the strangest thing happened. It was like an ancient force was moving under my hand. In my mind, I could suddenly see – no, I rather felt – the lakes, mires and all the creatures of the forest. I felt their unbending power and light in their beauty, but also their exposed vulnerability.

Tryfflan looked at me. 'I can see that you feel it too. We must all work together to protect them', she said seriously.

Together, we swore the ancient oath of the Mire Queen.

'I promise to protect the forests
and lakes, mires and streams
–those who give us everything,
but do not have a voice of their own'.





Store Mosse.

13. A hungry acquaintance

We followed the fairies towards their glade where they lived. Suddenly, Tryfflan poked me in the side with her chubby finger. When I turned around, she stretched out her hands towards me. They were cupped around something.

‘Guess who can lays eggs, eat until the skin bursts and turn it into soup?’ she asked.

‘Umm ... I don’t know’, I replied. ‘A hungry hen with a runny nose?’

‘Ha-ha! You are funny!’ Tryfflan howled and stomped her feet on the ground. She opened her hands and showed me – a butterfly!

‘Oh, how beautiful’, I said breathlessly.

‘It’s a swallowtail’, Tryfflan said. ‘It has probably just hatched’.

‘Aha’, I replied ‘hatched from the egg you mean, like you said in the riddle?’

‘No, no’. Tryfflan shook her head. ‘This is how it goes: Mummy swallowtail lays her eggs on a plant like this. It’s called milk-parsley’, she said and pointed to a nearby plant. ‘One week later, the egg hatches and a small caterpillar crawls out. The caterpillar is very hungry. It just eats and eats. And it grows and grows until it finally becomes so big that its skin bursts. But that doesn’t bother the caterpillar at all. Under the old skin, there is a new larger skin. So the caterpillar just continues to eat until the new skin bursts as well. And so it goes on. At the end of the summer, the caterpillar has grown big and has changed its skin several times. Then it settles on a plant and starts to spin’.

‘Spin?’ I asked. ‘Like a wheel?’

‘No’, Tryfflan giggled. ‘It spins a thread of silk, which it uses to tie itself to a plant. Then, the skin





Swallowtail caterpillar on milk-parsley.

cracks open one last time, and a new hard skin appears. This new skin is called a chrysalis, and it hardens into a pupa. And now something peculiar happens. Inside the pupa, the caterpillar dissolves into a kind of soup. Out of that soup, the actual butterfly is formed, with wings and all. The following spring, the butterfly hatches from the pupa and comes out’.

I just stood there with my mouth wide open. ‘Is that really true?’ I asked.

‘Yep’, Tryfflan nodded proudly. ‘That’s what butterflies do’.



14. The fairy glade and the blanket

We arrived at a beautiful glade close to the mire.

‘Here, it is’, said Goldheart Moonspell Morningdew.

We looked around. The glade was empty. Gnarp was nowhere to be seen. But a small dirty cloth lay on one of the soft moss beds. It was Gnarp’s blanket!

‘He has been here all right!’ Tryfflan said and looked at the blanket.

‘Oh dear! It stinks!’ the fairies complained. ‘We must remove it immediately from our beautiful glade’.

And before we knew it, they had flown away with the blanket and hung it in a tree a short distance away. Tryfflan was about to object, but just then a small bird landed on her shoulder.

‘Hello, little bullfinch’, Tryfflan said. ‘Have you seen my baby brother Gnarp?’

The bird chirped and squeaked for a while. ‘This is Frost-Apple’, Tryfflan said when the bird became quiet. ‘He says that after the fairies fled, Gnarp bustled around in the glade for a while. Then, he crept up in a bed of Maidenhair moss and fell asleep. When he woke up again, he set off that way’, Tryfflan said, pointing along the path. ‘Frost-Apple will also give us a clue to help us along the way.

He says:

When birds are many
but you’re all out of clues,
the wren will point out
which way you should choose’.





Bullfinch.



‘I wonder what he means by that’
Tryfflan pondered.

We thanked Frost-Apple and Goldheart
Moonspell Morningdew – or Oldfart Poosmell
Boringspew as Tryfflan chose to call her, after she
refused to bring the blanket down from the tree.
And then we started to walk again.

15. The Wren will point out which way to choose...

As we walked along the path, the air was filled with birds singing. We stopped and looked up. The trees were filled with birds.

‘Hey Tryfflan’, I said ‘there are a lot of birds here. Frost-Apple told us: ‘When birds are many, but you’re all out of clues, the wren will point out which way you should choose.’

‘Yes, you’re right’, Tryfflan answered.

‘Well, you know a lot about birds Tryfflan’, I said ‘do you see any wrens?’

‘I see blue tit and great tit, robins, wood nuthatch and chaffinch’ Tryfflan replied. ‘But I don’t see a wren’. ‘We’ll have to look for it’, I said. ‘What does it look like?’

‘It’s brown on the back and brighter on the belly’, Tryfflan replied. ‘And it’s very small. Actually, it’s the second smallest bird in Sweden. It usually doesn’t jump around in the canopy but prefers to be closer to the ground, in thickets and turned over roots. So it might be a little difficult to find’.

I started to look around for it. And then – in front of me in the thicket I saw a small, brown bird.

‘I’ve found it!’ I whispered. ‘I’ve found the wren’.

‘Which way does it point?’ Tryfflan asked eagerly.

‘Point?’ I asked.

‘Yes, in what direction is its beak pointing?’ she clarified.

I looked at the bird. ‘That way’, I said.

Tryfflan looked in the direction I was pointing. But there was something that caught her attention, in a birch tree a short distance away. Can you guess what it was?

And now, my friends, you must also find the wren. If you see which way its beak points, you can also discover what Tryfflan saw.





Nuthatch.



Great tit.



Pied flycatcher.



Blue tit.



Wren.



Chaffinch.



Long-tailed tit.



Robin.



Blackbird.



Waxwing.

16. Gnarp is found

The thing hanging from the birch tree was a small stick. It was made of wood and had a silver mount at the tip. It was nothing other than the gnome Barren-Happie's lost walking stick! It hung quite high up in the tree. Tryfflan jumped up on an uprooted tree to reach it. Just as she was about to grab the stick, she stopped.

She smiled and waved for me to come, at the same time putting her finger over her mouth to let me know to be quiet. I sneaked up to the fallen tree and peered down on the other side. There, a small troll baby was lying curled up sleeping. We had found Gnarp!



17. A happy end

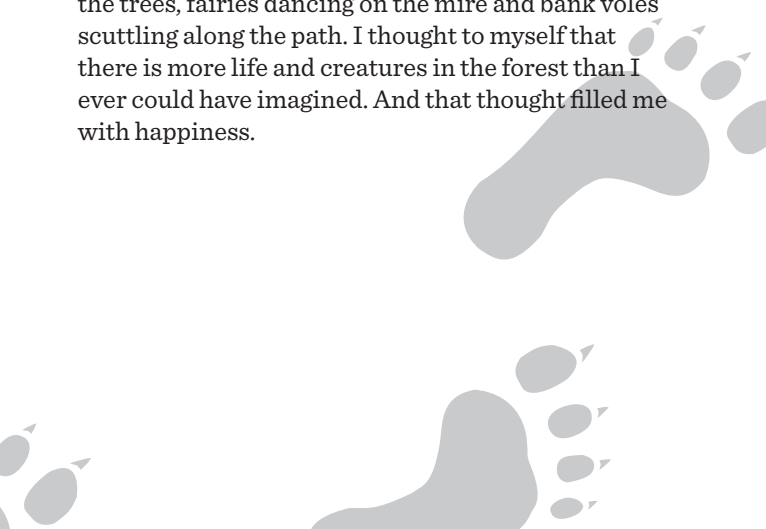
It was a happy reunion for Tryfflan and Gnarp. They fell into each other's arms and rubbed their noses against each other. Then, Tryfflan wound her tail around Gnarp and said: 'You must never sneak out alone in the forest again. Promise!'

'I promise', Gnarp replied, adding 'but perhaps sometimes I will have to go for a short stroll. Just around a root or something'.

'Possibly around a root', Tryfflan said. 'But not further than that. Not until you're 75 years old at least!'

Then, we went and gave the stick back to Barren-Happie. Tryfflan told him that she had found it hanging in a tree – which, in a way, was the truth.

That evening, the trolls had a party to celebrate that little Gnarp was found again. Deep in the forest, among the trees and roots, we danced the whole night under the shining full moon, to the thumping troll rhythms. As the sun rose and I walked home alone in the twilight, I saw beard lichens swaying in the trees, fairies dancing on the mire and bank voles scuttling along the path. I thought to myself that there is more life and creatures in the forest than I ever could have imagined. And that thought filled me with happiness.





Länsstyrelsen
i Jönköpings län