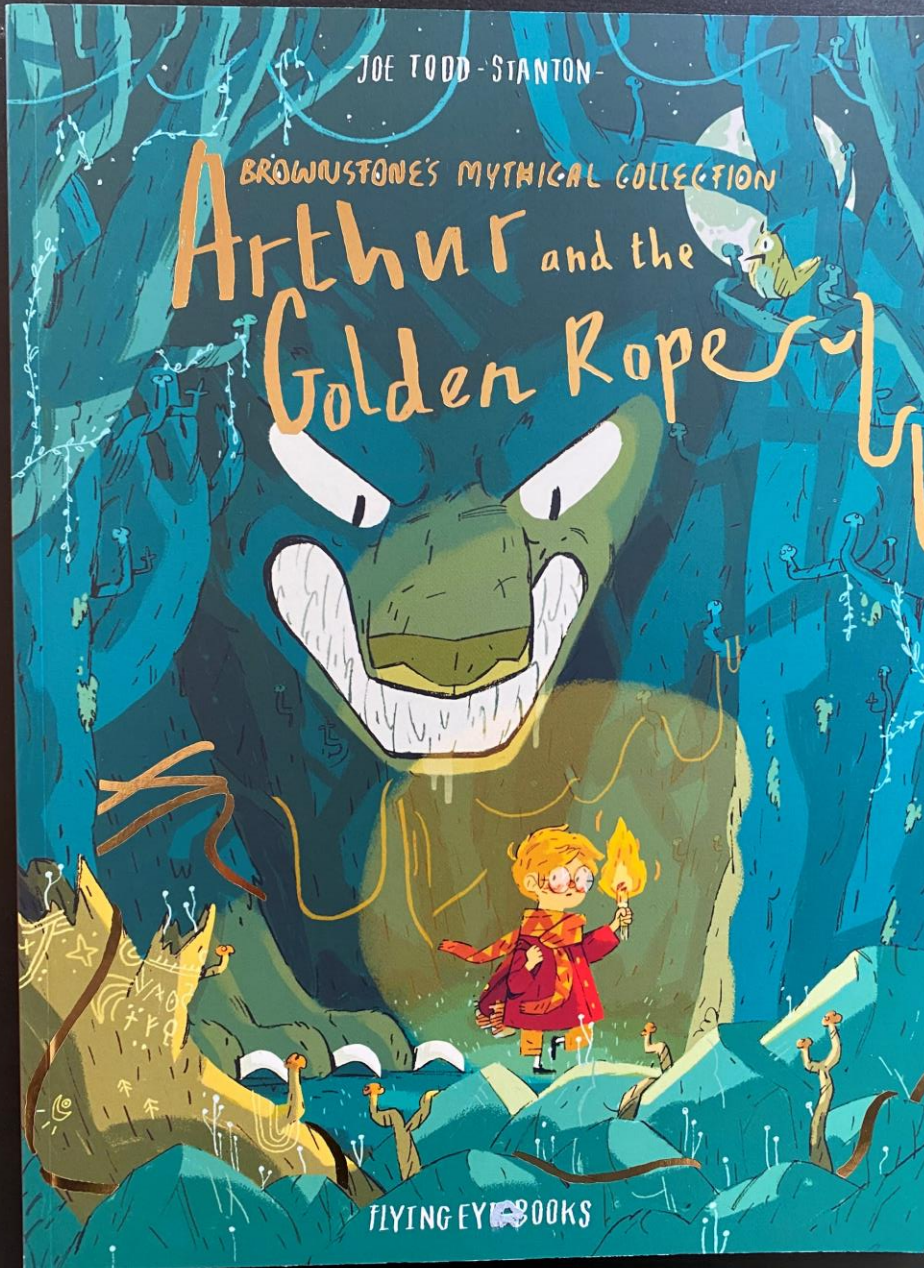


JOE TODD-STANTON

BROWNSTONE'S MYTHICAL COLLECTION

# Arthur and the Golden Rope



FLYING EYE BOOKS



Hello, dear reader, and welcome to the Brownstone family vault. Within this room lie artefacts of great power and rarity, collected over thousands of years from every corner of the globe.



My most treasured possession is actually this humble collection of books. They contain tales of lands and creatures long forgotten, as told by the people who collected these amazing objects – my ancestors! They include such adventures as...



... Eleanor Brownstone's discovery of the Crystal Kingdom and her subsequent death-defying escape.



My great-great-grandfather Eric Brownstone's epic battle with the hundred-headed snake king of Tuckernuck Island...



...and many others.

But before all that, there was  
the first adventure a Brownstone  
ever had. This is the tale of Arthur,  
the unlikelyst of heroes.



Born long ago in a small Icelandic town, it was clear from an  
early age that Arthur was always going to be a bit different.





As soon as he was old enough to explore the forest, he showed a great interest in the strange creatures that lived there.



At night, while the townsfolk would gather around the safety of the great fire, Arthur would sit and listen to Atrix, the town's wise woman. She would tell him wondrous and frightening tales about distant lands and ancient magic.

12



Arthur soon began to journey into the forest in search of adventures. He even started to carry with him some of the more unusual items he had found.

13

For returning her egg, the mighty bird Wind  
Wenver gave him a special feather that would  
grant him help at a time of need.



14

By putting an end to the great (or rather,  
tiny) war between goblins and fairies,  
he was given an enchanted staff.



High in an ancient tower, he discovered the Hand of Time,  
which held the power to freeze anyone who touched it.



And Atlix gave him this very Journal I am reading from,  
after the most dangerous challenge of all...



...rescuing her cat from a tree.

15





One day while Arthur was attempting to track down a rare species of magical worm, he was startled by a terrible howl.



A moment later he was plunged into darkness, as a huge black shape bounded over him and disappeared.

16



Arthur quickly clambered up the nearest tree and poked his head over the top of the canopy. Right there, heading straight for his town, was a monstrous black wolf!



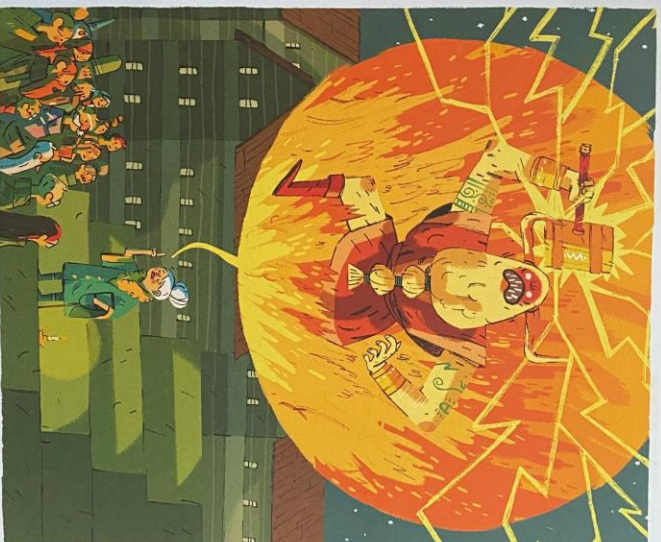
He could only watch in horror as the wolf put out the great fire, before it leaped back into the darkness of the forest.

17



Arthur hurried back to the town and felt the cold close in on him. The final embers of the great fire were dying and everyone was huddled together as Arix began to speak.

18



"Without the great fire warming our town, every house will be frozen solid in less than a week..." Arix warned, "...and all of us soon after." The townsfolk gasped in fear.

"But wait! There is a way we can be saved. Across the sea lies the land of the Viking gods. In a mighty hall on top of a mountain, there lives a god with a hammer that can command the skies. He alone has the power to relight our fire."

19



As the townsfolk looked around, they realised a slight problem with this plan. Everyone had been injured by the wolf. From their toughest warriors...



...to their toughest bakers.



20

There was no one to send

"Arthur's not hurt!" piped up one of his classmates.



He's much too small. He wouldn't last two seconds in the land of the gods!

I wouldn't be surprised if all his meddling brought the beast to us in the first place.

And the only reason he has remained unhurt is because he spends all his time in the forest with those demons!

Yeah! He's just a no good meddler!

21



That night, Arthur lay wide awake, the harsh  
word of the townsfolk running through his  
head. Maybe he was a meddler and had led  
the wolf straight to the town?

22



Taking a deep breath, Arthur decided that he must go and find the  
god of storms. Packing up his most useful possessions, he climbed out  
of his bedroom window and headed for the harbour. He'd had many  
adventures in the forest, how much harder could this be?

23







26

After a long journey, Arthur finally reached the great hall. The powerful doors swung open and a voice boomed, "Welcome, young traveller! I am Thor, god of sky and thunder!"

The warrior god listened intently as Arthur recounted the fate of his town. At last he nodded gravely.



The wolf is Fenrir, son of the evil god Loki, and he has ravaged many villages over the past years. I will relight your great fire, but only under one condition ... You must help me capture the beast," said Thor.



Arthur could only tremble in his boots as Thor explained how the gods had already failed to trap the wolf.

27





Freyja had nearly squished Fenrir, the goddess of love, while she had tried to cast a spell.



Then there was Baldur, the god of justice, who had only just escaped from the jaws of the beast despite his amazing strength.



And Thor's own brother, Tyr, had his hand bitten off when he tried to outwit the wolf.

28



"The only way to stop Fenrir is with a rope made from two incredibly rare items: the sound of a cat's footfall and the roots of a mountain..." said Thor, "...and by the looks of things, you have collected many strange things already!" Before Arthur could refuse, Thor handed him two glass bottles and sent him on his way.

29

If Arthur was to catch the sound of a cat's footfall, he would have to find a very big cat. He remembered Atrix's tale of a serpent who could turn into a colossal cat so large that Thor himself could not lift it. As you can imagine, it was not too hard to find.



Arthur only knew one way to make such a big cat jump.



30



31



A gigantic boom echoed around the valley as the beast's huge paws hit the floor.



Arthur held on tight to Thor's jar and captured as much of the sound as possible, before making a quick getaway.



34



35

For his second challenge, Arthur was truly stumped. He had heard of a huge library within the gods' hall... perhaps he could find something useful there?



34

He searched for an entire day and night, but found nothing. It was only when reading the last book from the very last shelf that an ancient piece of parchment fell out.



35



It was an old map of the Norse world. It showed the realms of the gods, the humans, and the giants, and connecting them all was a great tree. The huge, mountainous World Tree, Arthur thought to himself... That was it — the World Tree was the mountain with roots!



36



It looked much bigger in real life ... but with no time to waste, and legs as sturdy as two cooked noodles, Arthur began the climb.

37



38



39







Odin, the father of the gods, appeared and emptied the jars into a giant cauldron. With a sudden flash of light, a huge golden rope began to rise, winding its way up through the air.



Just as Arthur thought he was in the greatest peril, Wind Weaver swooped down and caught him in her talons. She carried Arthur all the way back to the gods' hall, where he triumphantly handed both glass jars to Thor.

Thor tied the golden rope to his belt and turned to Arthur. "You are truly a brave young adventurer. But you still have one challenge left. You must distract the wolf just long enough for me to tie him up. Then I can save your town."



Arthur nodded solemnly, but quivered with fear as he looked at Thor's one-handed brother... what would happen to him if he confronted the beast? He would have to come up with a plan, and quickly!

42

The path of Fenri's destruction was clear to see. It tore through the forest and stopped right outside a small village. The group slowly descended and looked around for a sign of life when Arthur spotted something...



43



It was a trap! A loud roar erupted from the forest  
as the most terrifying of creatures appeared.



Arthur looked on, feeling impossibly small and helpless ...  
and then he saw the beast right behind him! In fear,  
Arthur ran as fast as he could into the forest to hide.



Fenri's powerful nose quickly sniffed Arthur out, and a gigantic claw began to creep closer and closer.

46



In that moment, Arthur was struck with an idea. He jumped up, ready to bash the wolf on its nose –



— but Fenri was too quick. With a loud CRUNCH he bit Arthur's hand straight off...

47





...and then Arthur pulled out his real hand. Fenit had been tricked! The huge beast had bitten the hand of Time and swallowed it whole. His whole body froze in an instant except for his eyes, which blinked in confusion.



46



After defeating Fenit's minions, Thor was able to tie Fenit up while Arthur beamed with pride.

47



As they flew back to Arthur's frozen town, a bolt of lightning crashed down from the clouds into the main square. The great fire burst into life and the ice began to melt again.



50



The townsfolk cheered and gathered around to hear Thor speak. Arthur went quietly over to Arix with his journal full of the adventures and creatures he had seen. When Thor explained that it was actually Arthur who had defeated Fenrir, they all went to celebrate with him, but by then he was already fast asleep.

51



And that is the tale of the very  
first Brownstone. Maybe one day you  
will hear some more of my ancestors'  
adventures, but until then, dear reader,  
I hope you go out and find some of  
your own ... because sometimes the  
greatest heroes are the unlkelellest.







