

Once upon a time a woman lived on a farmstead in Hérað by the lake Lagarfljót. She had a small maiden and gave to her a ring of gold. The young maiden asked;

"Oh mother! How can I prosper from this gold?" "By covering it with a heather worm," replied her mother.

The maiden found a heather worm, lay it on the ring and then hid it in her caskets. The worm guarded the gold for quite some days. When the girl came to look at her caskets the worm had grown so much they were about to burst. The young girl became so frightened she grabbed the caskets and threw them and all their contents into the lake.

Time passed and people soon became aware of the presence of the

HAVE YOU EVER SEEN THE MONSTER OF LAGARFLJÓT LAKE? worm in the lake because it had taken to attacking and killing people and livestock by the lake. Sometimes it would stretch upon the shores of the lake and spew terrible poisonous fumes.

This caused great problems for the locals but no one knew how to stop it or trap. Finally the people decided to beg the assistance of two Finnish shamans. They were to kill the worm and retrieve the gold. The two of them dove into the depths of the lake but soon returned to the surface. They claimed the problem was guite overpowering and killing the worm and retrieving the gold was too great a feat. They maintained that another worm was guarding the gold from below and that it was much more hazardous.

They fastened the worm to the bottom of the lake with two great ropes. They fastened one behind its flippers but the other around its tail.

Since then the worm can harm no one, man nor beast, but occasionally it is said to have shot up its form and bare its tossing hump. Such appearances made a great impression and were considered to bode misfortune, such as the asperity of a cold season and grass failure. Those who do not believe in the existence of the worm say it is only a deception. They also claim to have truthful knowledge about the travels of a certain vicar who rowed his boat across where the worm supposedly rests, in order to prove the truthfulness of its nonexistence.

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