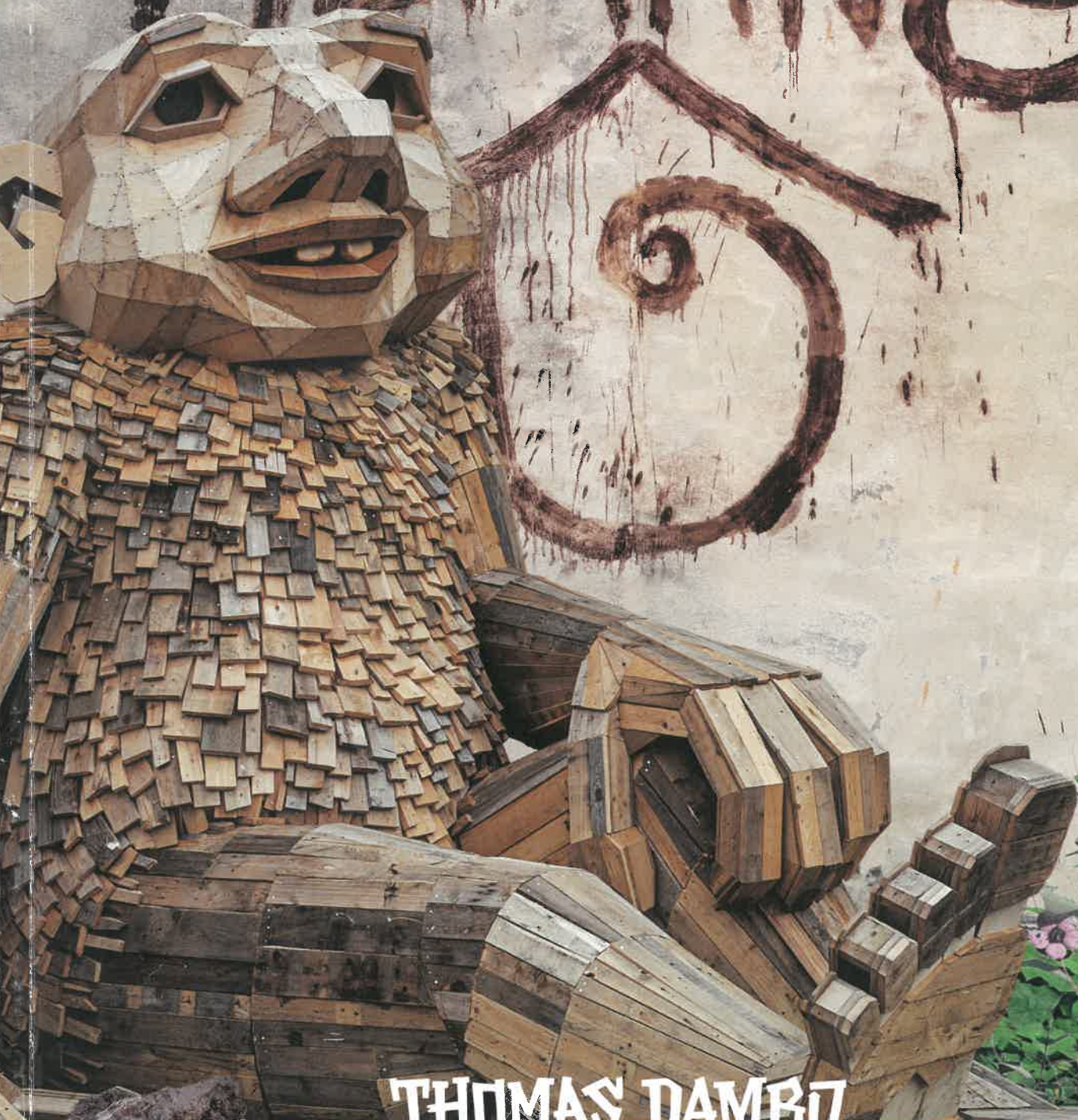


TROLLS

SO SAVED THE
HUMAN ANO



THOMAS DAMBIT



SAVE THE HUMANS

Chapter 2 in Trail of a Thousand Trolls

Every two-hundred-and-eleventh year, all the trolls from all over the world meet at a big gathering in a secret place. Some call this gathering the great “Trolliefolkfest,” but it’s really not that festive. Two hundred and eleven years might sound like a lot to little humans, but to a giant troll, it feels like a single summer. At this gathering, the trolls sit around a fire and talk about the humans. The trolls know that the humans are good beings at heart and mean no harm, but time and time again throughout history, the humans have emptied rivers, cut down forests, and hollowed out the mountains. Choices that have put the humans themselves in danger but also the trolls, the animals, and the plants that all live and breathe in the world we share.

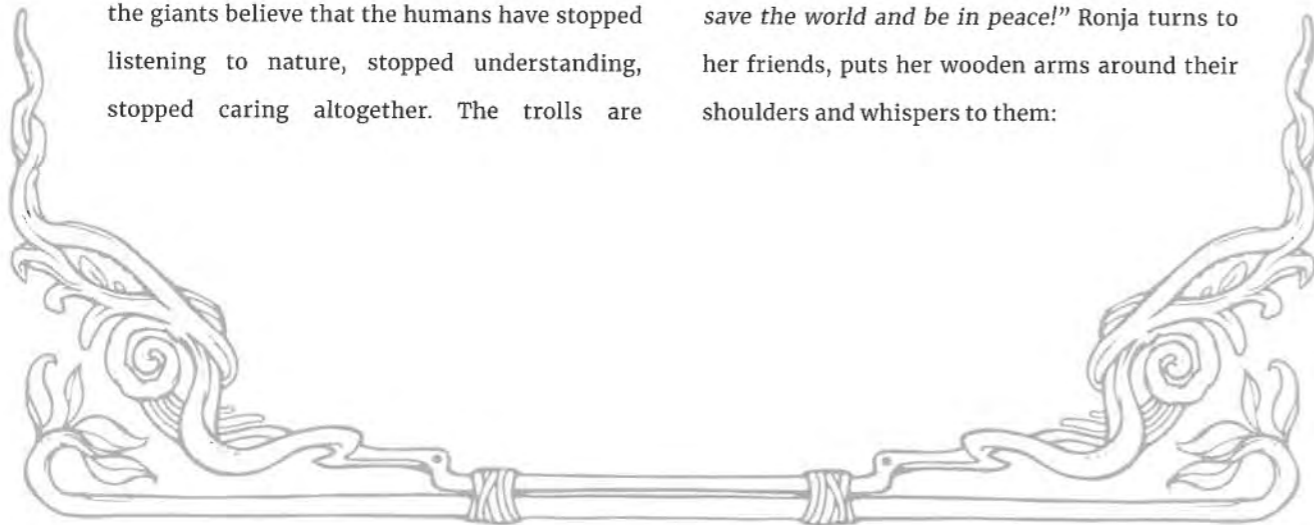
It’s exactly two hundred and eleven years since the last troll gathering, but something is certainly different at this one. As they sit around the fire talking, anyone listening could hear that the giants believe that the humans have stopped listening to nature, stopped understanding, stopped caring altogether. The trolls are

furiously yelling at each other, and, to be frank, it’s not a place you would want to be.

The old troll, Bo, who has walked all the way across the snowy mountains, rises from his stone and shouts, “*Let’s eat all the humans, and solve this problem once and for all!*”

“*Agreed, indeed!*” Isak Heartstone yells from across the fire, and all the trolls join in a loud roaring “*JAAAA!*” which is a saying trolls use when they agree on something.

While the old trolls chant, “*IT’S TIME TO CHOMP!!! CHOMP!!! CHOMP!!!*” A group of six young trolls — Ronja Redeye, Basse Buller, Rosa Solfinger, Ibby Pip, Kamma Can and Sofus Lotus — sit in the shadows furthest away from the fire. These six trolls are best friends and have traveled to the gathering together. Just as all the old trolls start chanting, “*Eat the humans, have a feast, save the world and be in peace!*” Ronja turns to her friends, puts her wooden arms around their shoulders and whispers to them:





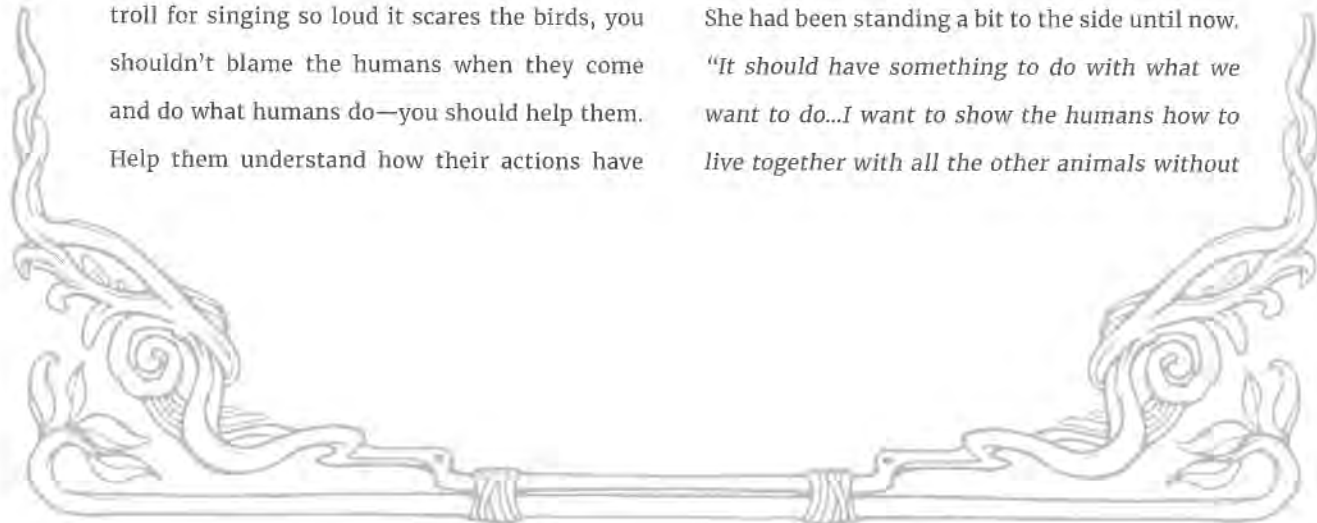
"We must save the humans! We must help them change and be better, save them from themselves before the old trolls start cleaning their teeth with human bones—we cannot let that happen!"

Ronja Redeye is one of the smallest trolls, but what she lacks in size she makes up for in her flaming passion. That's why she's called Redeye—after the fire that lights up her eyes when she sees something unfair. The humans are a bit slow and don't understand that if they throw their trash in the river, it ends up in the ocean, and if they chomp down a mountain it will take millions of years for a new one to grow. But, Ronja doesn't think this means that humans are evil, they just don't know any better. Humans only live around eighty circles of light, and because they are so small and young, they simply can't grasp the bigger picture. Ronja believes that just like you shouldn't blame a hungry dog for bolting all of its food at once, or a happy troll for singing so loud it scares the birds, you shouldn't blame the humans when they come and do what humans do—you should help them. Help them understand how their actions have

consequences, and what they can do to be better. While Ronja is talking, Basse Buller, Rosa Solfinger, Ibbi Pip, Kamma Can, and Sofus Lotus are listening intently. Ronja has a way of saying things that make you listen so hard that you forget everything around you...which is good when a thousand trolls are standing around a gigantic fire, singing about eating humans and stomping their feet so loud that every mole on the continent pokes its head out of the ground to see what's happening!

Basse Buller agrees with every word Ronja says, and as she finishes, shouts excitedly, *"Let's make a troll gang and go save the humans,"* he says. *"It'll be awesome! I can make us a flag with a cool mark, so everybody who wants to join knows who we are."*

"But...hmm...what should the mark look like, and what should we call our gang?" Ibbi Pip ponders. She had been standing a bit to the side until now. *"It should have something to do with what we want to do...I want to show the humans how to live together with all the other animals without*



scaring them away," she says. *"Teach them to be careful not to crush the ants, just like we trolls are careful not to step on the humans. And how to make room for the birds that live among us by building birdhouses for them."*

"That's great! A birdhouse!!!" says Basse Buller. Right away, he starts thinking about how he could paint a cool birdhouse mark on the flag.

Now, Kamma Can, who has been listening to the conversation while braiding some branches into a beautiful finger ring, pipes up with her own idea. She explains how she's always wondered why the little humans keep losing the colorful eternity material all over the forest. Kamma thinks this is so odd. After all, it's no secret that the humans really like the eternity material. They wrap their food in it, wear it on their bodies, and give it to their babies, so why would they just leave it in the forest and not take it home? Besides, the colorful eternity material isn't good for nature: unlike the forest, it will never become a part of the circle of life. The eternity material will stay

the same for all eternity, so if a little mouse eats it, it'll get a bellyache and be sick for at least six days. Kamma's idea is to show the humans how to collect all the eternity material from the forest and teach them how to make beautiful finger rings and necklaces from it. Maybe then they'd stop throwing it everywhere. All six trolls agree it's a great idea.

"It's going to be so much fun!" Rosa Solfinger exclaims. *"I just can't wait to see what you will make! But what should I do? How can I help save the humans?"*

"Well, what's your name?" says Basse in a teasing voice.

"Mmmmh... Rosa?"

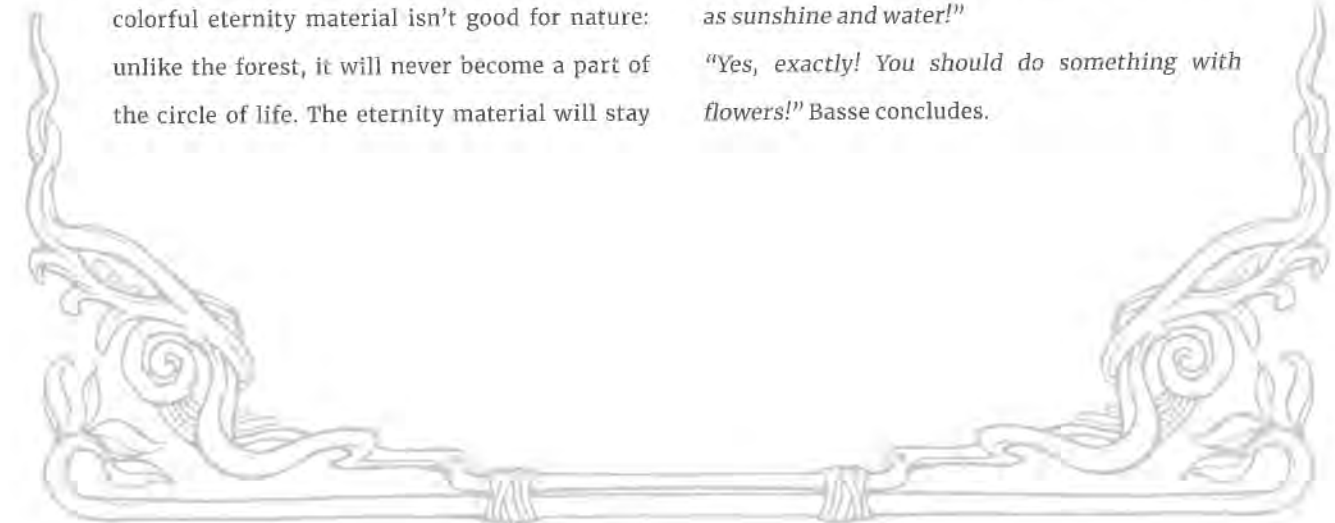
"No, your full name."

"Rosa Solfinger?"

"Yes, and what does that mean?"

"It means Sun finger. It's a name my mother gave me because she thinks I'm as good for the flowers as sunshine and water!"

"Yes, exactly! You should do something with flowers!" Basse concludes.





Rosa has always loved flowers, and she loves to care for them, so instantly, she gets an idea. She will take the tops off the smelly metal boxes and plant flowers in them. She knows the little humans love to sit inside the metal boxes while running back and forth on the long black lines. And as all smart trolls know, the metal boxes are blind, which is why they sometimes run into animals trying to cross the black lines. But, if Rosa were to plant flowers in the metal boxes, the animals could see them coming more easily. Also, the flowers would help take some of the smell away. Rosa's not really sure why the metal boxes smell so bad, but she's heard that they get really gassy bellies when they drink the magic black juice—but also that they are destined to drink it, or else they'll fall asleep.

Now Sofus looks up. He likes to keep to himself, far away from the black lines and the smelly metal boxes. Sofus stays where he can hear the worms digging and the birds tweeting and the leaves swaying in the wind. Sofus mostly likes to listen. But, after hearing all his friends talking, he also gets an idea. *"If we're going to save the*

humans, we should teach them to listen because only a human who listens will hear when Nature talks." He pauses, and when he speaks again, it is in a whisper. *"Only a human who listens will hear when Nature talks,"* he says again, which is something you do when it's really important. And when you are quoting a famous sentence from the oldest and wisest troll of them all, Ivan Evigvår from the little country of Denmark, it's really, really important... but we'll have to save that story for another day.

"But what is Nature trying to say?" Ronja whispers back to Sofus.

Sofus shrugs his enormous shoulders. *"No idea. You have to listen for yourself."*

"That makes sense," says Ronja. *"I'm so happy we're doing this!"*

"Me too!" says Ibbi and gives Ronja a big hug.

They sit looking into the last flames of the fire when Basse Buller, who very few would call a thinker, suddenly thinks a thought and shouts out, *"Let's just call our gang Save the Humans. I think everyone agrees with that! I'll make the flag tomorrow, and then, let's save the humans!"*

