



The other day I was trying to explain Thorbjørn Egner's neo-norse-mythology classic for kids *Karius & Baktus* (1949) to a non-Scandinavian:

It's about two pieces of mouth bacteria (Karius and Baktus) residing in the gums of a young boy named Jens, but manifest as two male trolls/miners, but miners who mine not to extract resources but to create for themselves a humble home in the cavities. In a way it's like *Succession*. You really don't know with whom, or where, to place your sympathy. As a blond skando kid you're just sitting there listening to it, baffled, with your mouth open and teeth being the only thing not covered by the welfare state. And of course, eventually, Karius and Baktus are wiped out by twentieth century dental hygiene, and pretty much the last third of the story is just about witnessing their annihilation. But here's the really messed up thing: in the original illustrations the trolls/miners/mouth-settlers have teeth themselves - like, really fucked up teeth.