

FROM THE BESTSELLING
AUTHOR OF **HORRIBLE HISTORIES**
TERRY DEARY



**TERRIBLE
TRUE TALES**
VIKINGS

Inside illustrations by Helen Flook

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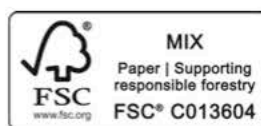
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VIKING TALES

THE EYE OF THE VIKING GOD

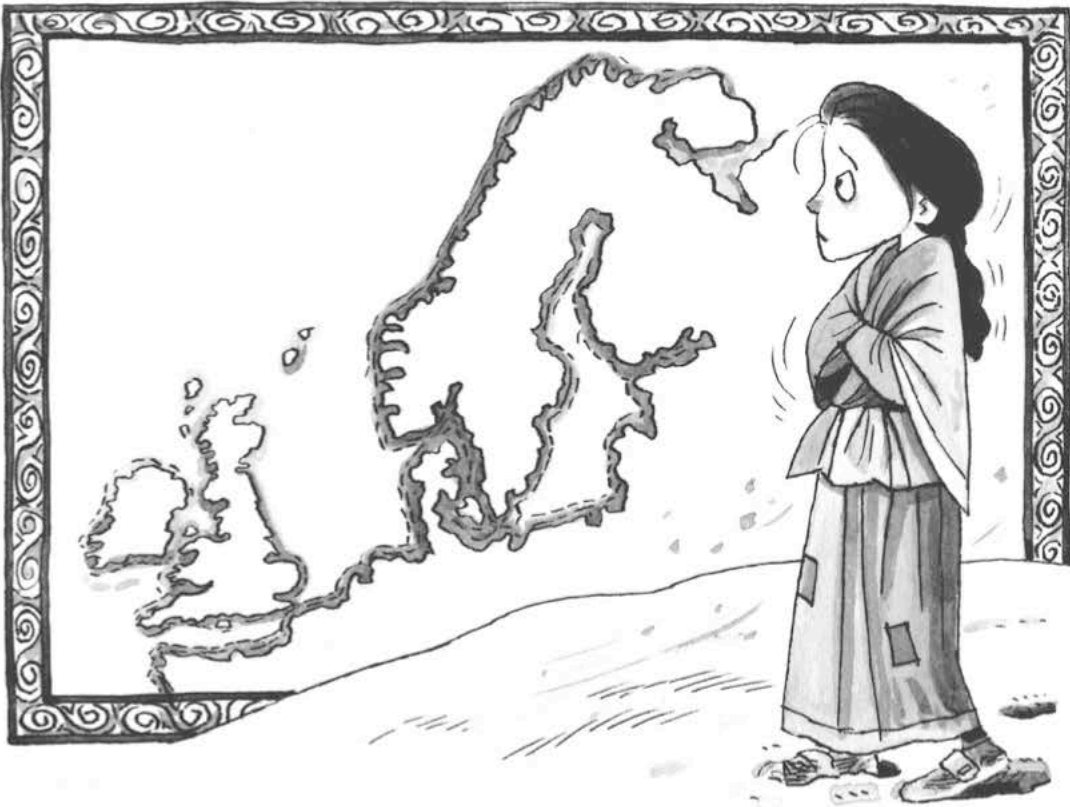


CHAPTER ONE

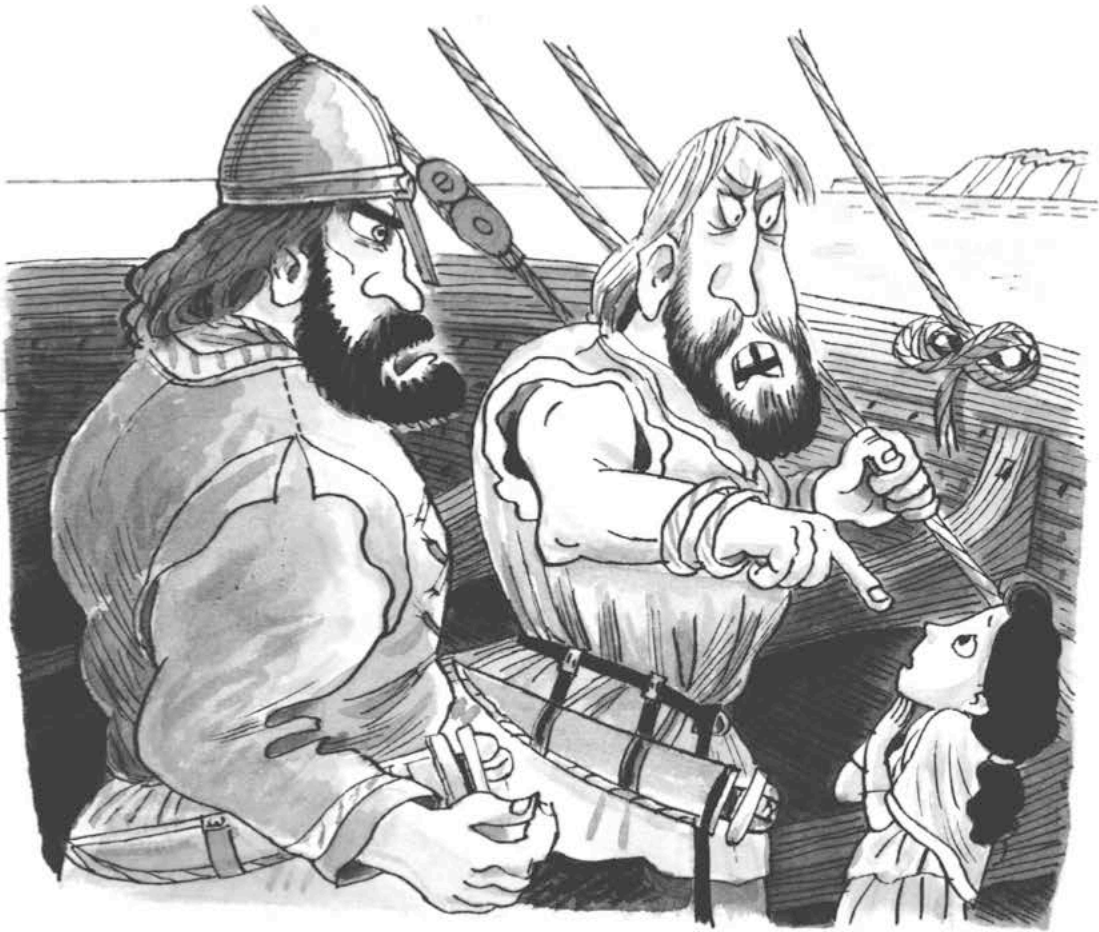
FLEECE

Norway, in the year 793

The girl had no name. She had been snatched from her family when she was a small child and had never known what her father and mother had called her.



She had been taken by the Viking raiders to be a slave back at their ice-blown, grey-grassed, mud-pathed, stony-field village across the sea. They had thrown her in the bottom of their longboat. She was too shocked to cry. If she died on the cold sea journey, she died, the Vikings said.



But the girl lived and was kept as a slave by one of the raiders, a Viking farmer.

The farmer let her eat scraps from his table. He made her feed the chickens and gather firewood. She slept in the loft of his barn, warmed by the cows below.



The farmer's family hardly ever spoke to her. Sometimes the small, round-faced, spiteful son shouted at her.

“Fetch me some bread and cheese. Understand, English slave? Bread. Cheese. Fast. Or I beat you with my stick.”

His name was Sigurd, and he was about her age.

When the girl grew older, she was sent out into the bleak boulders of the hills to look after the sheep and lambs. She built herself a small hut from rocks for shelter. It was high on the hill, and looked down on the village below and over the sea towards England and the home she had forgotten.



When an old sheep died, the girl skinned it with a sharp stone and made herself a coat to keep out the winter winds. She wore

it with the wool on the inside and was the only person in the village to have such a coat. They called her 'Fleece-girl' and then 'Fleece'. Now the girl had a name. Of sorts.

In the summer, the warriors sailed away in three longboats the villagers had built. Before the autumn gales arrived, they returned with stolen corn, cows and sheep. Sometimes they had golden crosses and silver cups, which they'd taken from the monks, they said.



That last autumn they had returned with barrels of honey-wine the English monks had made.

Sigurd had sneered at the girl. “We are having a great feast in the hall tonight. I’ll be there. We’ll roast a whole ox and drink the English honey-wine. If you are good, I may save you a bone to chew on. Would you like that, Fleece?”



“Yes, Master Sigurd,” she said quietly. If she didn’t call him ‘master’ he would kick her until she ached.