

Finding a New Land

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502 West Euclid Avenue, Arlington Heights, Illinois 60004

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A publication of
CHRISTIAN LIBERTY PRESS
502 W. Euclid Avenue
Arlington Heights, IL 60004
www.christianlibertypress.com

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Introduction

History often seems dry and uninteresting to children. They think of it as only a list of events and dates. They tend to consider history to be something for and about adults. Children often do not realize that they are just as affected by history as adults.

Finding a New Land seeks to change that attitude by showing how young people were part of the exploration and settlement of the New World. This colorful reader is designed to provide children with a better understanding of how the events and personalities of early America affected the lives of the people who lived during this time in history. Through historical fiction, true stories, biographical accounts, and poems, *Finding a New Land* gives young readers a window into what life was like during the early days of America. This book will help children appreciate the blessings of freedom and liberty in America.

In addition to enjoyable and uplifting reading selections, this book provides young students with vocabulary definitions, enabling them to better understand the reading selections. Parents and teachers will be able to assess their students' reading comprehension through the use of the comprehension questions and additional activities within the text. Along with this reader, we have also developed an accompanying answer key to help instructors by providing answers to the reader's questions. Finally, we created a set of tests to help parents and teachers evaluate their students' understanding of the stories further.

We are confident that young readers will find this well-illustrated book to be both enjoyable and informative. More importantly, we trust that it will help them to gain a better understanding of how the events and personalities of colonial America affected the lives of young people many years ago.

May God bless you and your students in the use of *Finding a New Land*.

The Publishers
Arlington Heights, Illinois

Unit 1

Biarni and Leif the Lucky

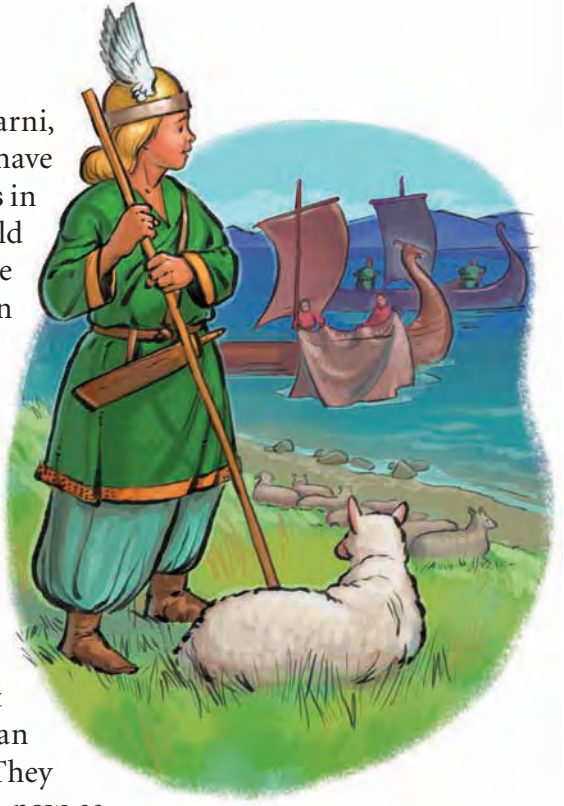
Kindred Viking Spirits

Carolyn Sherwin Bailey

You may have heard of Leif Ericsson, the young Viking who sailed to America; but do you know what made him sail? It was a story of another Viking boy named Biarni Herjolfsson. Read to find out how Biarni influenced Leif to set sail and find the New World.

His name was Biarni, and if you could have been one of the **Vikings** in the year 1000, you would have known him by the pair of wings he wore in his cap.

It seems hard for a boy of today to believe that Biarni Herjolfsson took a ship and tried to find his father, but those were days of our history when the brave Vikings were more at home on the seas than they were on land. They lived in what is known now as Norway and Sweden, bleak and cold and unsheltered.



The boy Biarni was a mountain lad. Tall, strong, fair, and with clear blue eyes, he roamed a **barren** country, tending a flock of sheep and cattle for a living. There was so little pasture land that the boy had to lead his flock from one place to another in order to find enough grass to keep them alive. While he was doing this, his father was fishing along the coast or taking short sailing trips for deep sea fishing.

Sometimes Biarni's father, Herjulf the Viking, joined a company of other **rovers** excited by a voyage of discovery. Since there was no way of letting his son know where he was—no mail, telephones, not even a messenger—there might be months when the two did not see each other.

The Viking boats were wonders of strength with adventure built into every plank and oar. Each of these **vessels** was at least fifty feet long with a high **bow** and **stern** so that it could ride the waves in safety. A huge dragon was carved at the bow, and there was a great square sail, as well as forty to sixty men taking their turns at the oars.

The crew was bravely dressed in skins and the winged caps such as Biarni wore. Armed against pirates, with only the sun by day and the stars at night to guide them, there were few such brave sailors in the world's history. Sometimes in storms and fogs they did not know where they were, nor if they would live to come home again.

It came about that some Vikings began to make trips to England and France, where they struck terror in the people on the seacoasts, robbing their huts and killing their cattle. They began to discover strange islands, and sometimes a few of the Vikings would decide to stay on one of these islands, particularly if it was warmer and offered better hunting and fishing than their homeland. After a while, **Greenland** and **Iceland** were settled by the Vikings.

Every boy is born with a love of adventure in his heart, and this long-ago Biarni was not different in this respect from the boys of today. He knew of Greenland and Iceland. Perhaps, he thought, his father might have gone to make a home for his family on some new and strange island. Possibly he was shipwrecked not so far from their own coast. Anyway, Biarni decided to take a journey to look for his father.

His was not a planned voyage, so he probably did not even have as much food as the average Viking ship carried. He was probably a **stowaway**, and when he was discovered at sea, he was put at the oar and made to work like a man for his passage. He had to **coax** very hard to get the owner of the ship to search for his father. Imagine, if you can, the freezing cold, the miles of icebergs and fog banks, the driftwood and floating timber that could easily have cut holes through the sides of the ship.

They could hardly tell where they were sailing. Biarni measured the distance in days; each was a threat of death on the next. However, they soon were astonished to come to less icy waters, and at last a thin line of gray land that turned to green met their eyes. After months of this dangerous voyage, Biarni saw a new island rising from the waters before his weary eyes.

This undiscovered land looked interesting. The dragon ship was rowed nearer until it could almost scrape the sands. Suddenly, Biarni saw a slight motion among the forest trees that stood thick and green not far from the beach.

“My father!” shouted Biarni, standing in the bow and holding out his arms toward the moving branches. But what did he see?

It was a sight that no Viking had ever seen before—an Indian! Long, straight, black hair braided with bright feath-

ers! Bronzed skin instead of the white skin of the Vikings! A bow and a **quiver** of poisoned arrows in place of a Viking's silver-handled sword of **hand-wrought** steel! It was not to be believed, this vision of a man different from any the northern races had ever seen.

Somehow, the crew believed that it was all the fault of the boy, Biarni, that they had taken this voyage and come upon this strange shore. They would have thrown the boy overboard then and there except that they had lost several good oarsmen by starvation and cold, and Biarni had strong arms.

They rowed away swiftly into the fog and the cold—wandering, half-starved adventurers of the sea.



About this time, there was another Viking rover who had left Norway named Eric Thorvaldson, better known as Eric the Red. This Viking had a reputation of wanting his own way and fighting for it. At last he had to flee Norway, and he sailed with some of his friends to try to discover a land of his own where he could live and die as he liked. He got a very fine dragon ship, set sail, and traveled until he came to a great land of ice and snow. They did not wish to stop there, but their supplies were gone. It was either stop in that cold, barren place, or **perish**.

“We will set up our own country here,” decided Eric the Red, “and call it Greenland, in order to attract other Vikings to join us.”

Like many other settlers, Eric and his group discovered that the troubles they had in their homeland were small compared to those they had now, but they went boldly to work building shelters, fishing, and hunting.

Eric had a son named Leif. Like Biarni, Leif loved adventure and spent his days exploring up and down the coast of Greenland. One day he sighted a tattered sail; then a broken, dragon prow **thrust** itself up over the skyline. At last Leif called Eric, his friend Herjulf, and the other men of the village to come down to the shore to rescue the battered ship drifting toward them. From among the half dead crew, Herjulf carried his son, Biarni, to land. At last, Biarni had found his father!

When he was fed and clothed, Biarni told the Vikings of the strange land and the red man he had seen. They could not believe him. It was a sick lad's imagination, they said; but the story stuck in Leif's mind. He was called "Leif the Lucky" because he had such success in fishing; perhaps he would be so fortunate as to find that wonderful land, he thought, if he were to study Biarni's record of the days, the stars, and the tides, and then set out toward it. In that same year, 1000, Leif prepared to start out.

How do we know all this?

The Vikings loved stories just as much as boys and girls of today. They called their stories *sagas*, and there were certain men of the Vikings whose whole business it was to remember all the important happenings of their life and put them into verses that they sang on feast days. Soon these songs were written instead of sung, and the stories of Biarni, Eric the Red, and Leif the Lucky appear in three of these old sagas.

Leif's ship was built to look like the great dragon of Viking fairy tales, and was seventy-seven feet long and sixteen feet wide. It was, of course, an open boat with no shelter for the crew except their sleeping bags that were made of oiled seal hide. Instead of ropes they used walrus hide, and the sail was made of hand-woven wool. Leif Ericsson set out in this boat for the land Biarni had told him about.

They tried to follow the same course, and after quite as difficult a voyage as that of Biarni, they came to a treeless, rocky waste of flat stones. Beyond this they found a coast covered with dense forests of pine and oak trees, extending down almost to the edge of the land. The beaches in front of these forests were white as snow, but warmer winds than of the north began to play in the ship's sail. We call that first land of stones Newfoundland and the next coast of the mighty forests, Nova Scotia.

After two days of sailing out in the open sea, they went ashore and decided to stay there for the winter. They built great shelters of logs and named this settlement **Vinland**. In the spring they started out again, sailing down this coast, passing north of Martha's Vineyard and sailing up into Vineyard Sound. They saw and traded with the strange red men, trading their trinkets of silver for **wampum** and the new hard woods to take back to Iceland. When one of them died, they set up a crude cross on a hill overlooking the sea. They touched even Cape Cod!

Leif the Lucky, son of Eric the Red, had discovered America almost 500 years before Columbus touched the West Indies!

The old Viking records tell us that Leif was but twenty-nine years old when he found America. Perhaps if he had come from a race that did not care so much about adventure, he would have stayed and built a kingdom on the red man's shore, but Leif was a son of the sea. It was enough for him that he had gone over the course that Biarni had taken when he was seeking his father; that he had landed and dealt with the red men that none except he and Biarni had seen before. He set off again on his way home to show his wampum and woods. When Eric the Red died twelve years later, Leif was made king in his place, and finished his days hunting walrus and polar bears.

So the long line of our discoverers started with a lad named Biarni, who left his cows and sheep to search for his father, and ends—ah, who shall ever know the end? The history of America was set down first in a saga of the Vikings, a story of grapes and green meadows told to the Norse girls and boys in their land of ice and snow.

Vocabulary

barren: without trees

bow: the forward part of a ship

coax: to gently urge or flatter

Greenland: an island in the North Atlantic off the coast of North America

hand-wrought: made by hand

Iceland: an island southeast of Greenland

perish: die

quiver: a case for carrying arrows

rovers: people who like to wander and explore

stern: the rear end of a boat

stowaway: a person who hides aboard a ship

thrust: pushed; drove with force

vessels: ships

Viking: a trader, explorer, or warrior from Scandinavia (Norway, Sweden, and Denmark)

Vinland: what the Vikings called North America

wampum: beads of polished shells strung in strands, used as money by North American Indians

Comprehension Questions

1. Why was Biarni's journey to find his father so difficult?
2. Where did Biarni and the crew land? Whom did they meet there?
3. What news did Biarni give the Vikings? Why didn't the Vikings believe this news?
4. What did Leif Ericsson do in the year 1000?
5. Name three of the places in North America that Leif Ericsson landed and explored.
6. How do we know about Leif Ericsson and the other Vikings?

Extension Activity: Understanding Sequence

Some stories, such as "Biarni and Leif the Lucky," are filled with many events. It is important to keep the story events in order as read so that you understand the story. Put the following story events in the correct sequence.

- _____ Leif Ericsson listens carefully to Biarni's tale of his adventure on the sea.
- _____ Biarni finds his father and the other Vikings on the island of Greenland.
- _____ Leif Ericsson travels back home to Iceland.
- _____ Leif Ericsson sets out to find the land Biarni told about.
- _____ Biarni takes a journey to find his father, Herjulf the Viking.
- _____ Leif Ericsson and his crew find America.

The Girl Who Sailed a Dragon Ship

Gudrid Ericsson

Carolyn Sherwin Bailey

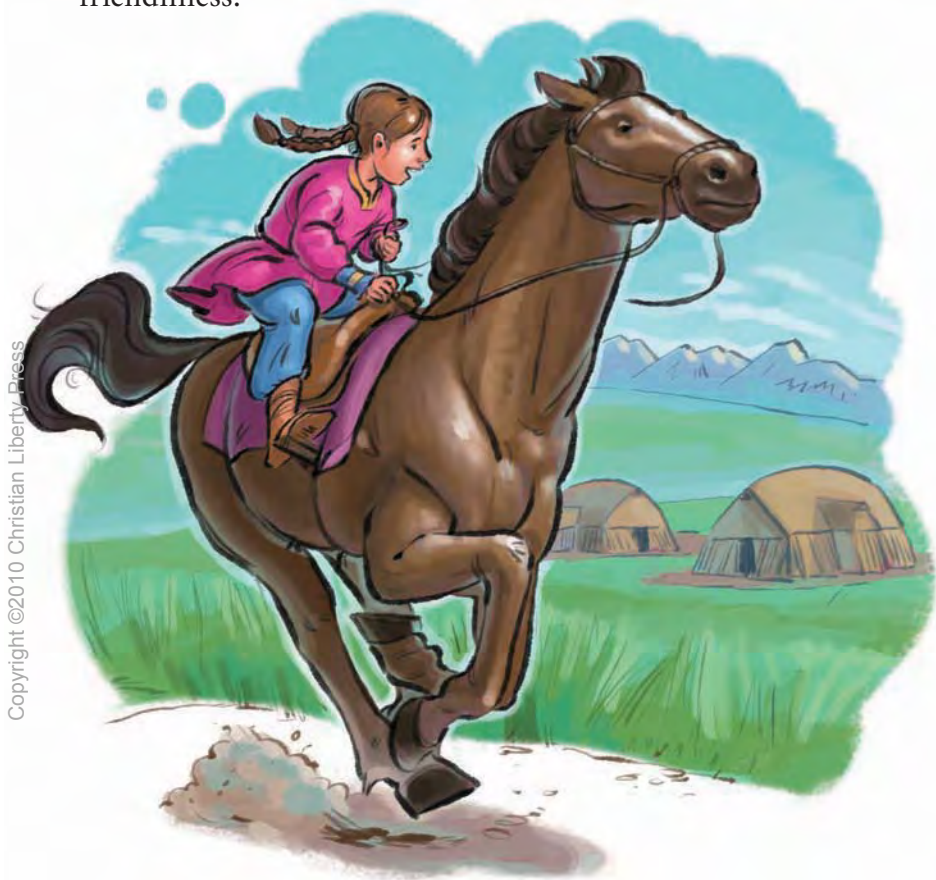
Some might think that Gudrid, daughter of a Viking, should have been born a boy. While other Viking girls were learning to spin and weave, she longed for the adventure that came with sailing and exploring.

Gudrid lived in the settlement that the **adventuresome** Vikings under Eric the Red had made in Greenland. At the time when this story begins, Greenland had several thousand settlers from the colder countries of Norway and Iceland.

Green plains made good feeding ground for the sheep and cattle that Gudrid's father raised. His hay crops were so heavy that the animals lived well through the long winter. He carried on trade in fish, oil, butter, skins, and wool that were exchanged for **meal** and **malt**. Gudrid was looked upon as one of the richest little girls of the town of Brattahlid.

Hers was an odd town when we compare it with our American towns of today. There were about seventeen houses on the smooth, grassy plain, built far apart. Gudrid's house was just like the one in which the three boys lived, Leif, Thorvald, and Thorstein, with whom this little Viking maid played. It was built of great blocks of rough sandstone, and the cracks were plastered with a mixture of clay

and gravel. Large barns surrounded it so that the family and the farm animals lived together in a kind of **quaint** friendliness.



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When Gudrid wanted to go over to Leif's house for supper and the **saga-telling** in front of the boy's great fireplace, she jumped on one of the farm horses and rode with her golden braids flying in the wind and her blue eyes shining. When she came to the home of the three brothers, Leif would stretch out his strong hand for Gudrid to set her **embroidered** slipper in as she jumped to the ground. All these boys liked spending time with Gudrid. In spite of the

embroidered woolen **frocks** her mother spun and wove for her and her beautiful silver necklace, Gudrid could beat small Thorstein in a race.

Supper with Leif, Thorvald, and Thorstein was eaten at a long, common table served by their father's servants. Great platters of beef and mutton and hard bread, and silver **flagons** of home-brewed **ale** were placed on the board by these rough-looking men, dressed in the skins of beasts. At the head of the table sat the boys' mother, fair-haired, and dressed in a white wool dress. Their father looked a good deal like his servants except that he wore a silver helmet that he sometimes forgot to remove at meals. All the Vikings, young and old, ate with their fingers, and everybody talked at once. There was a great deal of talk of the strange new land at the west, which was later called Vinland; and the boys listened eagerly.

The saga-telling was Gudrid's favorite time. When supper was over, the family, the servants, and the children sat around the great fireplace on skins spread upon the stone floor. Huge logs flamed and painted bright lights on the faces of these Norsemen. Then Leif's father began one of the stirring tales of Viking bravery which his father had told him. It had come from his grandfather. Leif and his brothers would learn it and tell it to their children.

Gudrid's fair face grew rosy with interest when she heard stories of the voyages of the Vikings. They were mighty builders, and many of their voyages in their dragon ships led them to far shores.

Then Leif's father began a new tale, telling the recent adventure of the discovery of Vinland on the coast of what is now known as North America. A calm harbor, a green shore, great timber forests, and a wealth of sweet purple grapes had been found. Leif moved nearer to Gudrid as the story of the finding of Vinland came to an end.

“I shall go to that beautiful land some day,” he told her.

“So shall I,” the Viking maid answered.

Leif laughed. This was absurd. No daughter of the Vikings had ever made such a voyage as this. “You are only a girl,” Leif told Gudrid. “A girl can’t go on a voyage of discovery. All you will ever do will be spinning and weaving and waiting here in the village for us, who are great fishermen and boat builders, to come home. Soon, Gudrid, we boys will grow up and take to the sea, but you will remain here all the rest of your days.”

Gudrid’s eyes filled with tears, although she turned away so the boys couldn’t see that she was crying. After she had gone home, she thought of what Leif had said, and she wondered if he had been right. In a way, he had, for no Viking girl had ever taken a voyage in a dragon ship. Only in the sagas of the North did things like that happen. The typical Viking girl took care of the home kitchen and learned how to weave wool from her father’s sheep into beautiful colored cloth. She sat on the banks of the **fjord** in the sunshine and waited for the boys to bring in their great haul of **herrings**, singing as they came. Perhaps Leif had been right. But no, he should not be, Gudrid decided. She was going to have an adventure! She would be a good cook, a good needlewoman, *and* a sailor, too. She would make her life a saga.

Gudrid did not say this aloud, though. If she had, even little Thorstein Ericsson would have laughed at her.

Soon Gudrid grew to be a young lady, and the Ericsson boys became young Vikings. A great new ship was built in the village of Brattahlid in the year 1000 for Leif Ericsson, who was about to make a voyage to Vinland in America. She was eighty feet long and was clinker built.

This means that there were plates on her sides that overlapped, as the shingles of a house overlap, to make it strong.

The **keel** was deep and made of thick oak beams. There were many seats for the rowers. She was made in the shape of a dragon, long and low, with the **gilded** head of this strange creature at the bow. The oars, which were twenty feet long, were cut in the shape of the dragon's legs. Over the sides of the vessel hung great shields that looked like a dragon's scales, and the sails, which were painted in stripes of red and blue, were cut in the shape of wings.

Gudrid watched the launching of the ship and saw Leif with his crew of hardy young men sail away toward the shore of America. He did not wave back to her in response to her farewell. Gudrid was still only a girl, he thought, and not worth the notice of the captain of a ship. We know of the success of Leif Ericsson's trip to Vinland. In the year following, he returned with a fine cargo of lumber and mighty tales of the fertile land he had reached. It thrilled Leif's brother, Thorvald. Thorvald borrowed the dragon ship, and he also made the voyage to Vinland. Gudrid saw Thorvald set sail too. In the thrill of his sailing, he also forgot to say good-bye to the playmate of his little-boy days.

Now Thorstein and Gudrid were left of the four friends, and like the young brother in a fairy tale who marries the princess, Thorstein saw how beautiful, desirable, and brave Gudrid was. There was a beautiful wedding in the banquet hall of Gudrid's home soon after Thorvald sailed away. The first thought of Thorstein and his young wife Gudrid was that they would go together to Vinland. Thorstein wanted to see the mighty forest trees his brothers had told him about. Gudrid thought it would be such fun to do her spinning and sewing in the sunshine of her own grape **arbor**. She also thought that she would show Leif and Thorvald that a girl may have an adventure as well as a boy.

An old Norse saga tells us Gudrid's brave story. Young Thorstein Ericsson and his bride Gudrid set out for America

in the spring of the year 1004 in the same dragon ship which Leif had built. Imagine the trip for Gudrid Ericsson, still so young that she wore her blonde hair in braids! There was no shelter except for the sail of the ship. They came into a storm almost at once. All the way they had such foul weather that many of the crew were drowned or died of **exposure**. Suddenly, Gudrid's beloved husband Thorstein died too, leaving Gudrid captain of the dragon ship. With a sad heart, she decided to turn around and return to Greenland without having touched the shore of Vinland.

Almost any woman would have given up at this point, but not Gudrid. The next summer there arrived a stranger in the village, Thorlfinn Karlsefni, who was a descendant of kings in the North. He came to Brattahlid in the largest Viking ship ever seen off the coast of Greenland. He brought great wealth in silver and gold.

He thought he had never seen so sweet a daughter of the Northmen as Gudrid, and he quickly asked her to be his bride.

So that is the reason there was a second wedding party, and Gudrid was married to Thorlfinn. Thorlfinn loved Gudrid so dearly that he did just what she asked of him. They set sail at once in his own mighty ship for Vinland.

This was a much different trip than Gudrid's first journey. Thorlfinn Karlsefni set sail with three other ships besides his own. The sagas tell us that his crew numbered 160 men and the women servants of Gudrid. They carried a herd of cattle and a flock of sheep, spinning wheels, looms, and tools for building. When the ships lifted sail, the entire village came down to the shore to bid the adventurers farewell. Wearing his shining silver helmet, Thorlfinn stood at the bow of the first ship with the slender, golden-haired Viking girl at his side. Until nothing could be seen except the

red of the sails against the blue water, the villagers shouted and waved their good wishes to the two.

With no compass and no chart except the stars, these adventurers sailed westward in the year of 1007, Thorlfinn's dragon ship in the lead. Gudrid stood patiently at the bow, her blue eyes straining to see the new land she hoped to reach. When she saw the rocks and green woods of what may have been **Cape Cod**, her dream came true. A Viking woman had come on a voyage of discovery and would be the first of her race to set foot in Vinland. The hardships she had endured were forgotten in the joy of her adventure.

This area the Vikings called Vinland may have been on the southern coast of Nova Scotia. Perhaps also it was a part of Massachusetts. When the Northmen returned home, they wrote about wonderful, wild grapes and salmon larger than any the Vikings had ever speared before. The southern coast of Nova Scotia and Massachusetts both have wild grapes and areas of plentiful salmon.

It was necessary to cut down trees and build huts. A few of the huts left by Leif Ericsson's party were there, but they needed to be rebuilt. Grain was found, and Gudrid called it "self-sown wheat." She ground it into flour from which she made bread. It must have been our corn. There came a harvest day in Vinland when the stern of one of the dragon ships was filled until it was overflowing with bunches of ripe grapes. Soon Gudrid and Thorlfinn had a son and named him Snorro. Handsome little Snorro had the fair hair and skin of his parents and eyes as blue as the sky. When he was three years old, he was helping his mother and father carry the bunches of grapes down to the ship. They planned to celebrate a kind of thanksgiving aboard her that day, singing some of the old sagas which Snorro had never heard.

Nearby, Indians spied upon the Vikings, who they thought were strange creatures from another earth. Gudrid

had given the Indians strips of scarlet cloth in payment for the furs in which she dressed her little boy, but even red cloth had not made peace of late with the Indians. Thorlfinn's cattle frightened them. They had never seen a cow until Gudrid's wandered into the woods near their hut and scared the Indians with her gentle mooing. The Indians had run away in terror, and when they came this time to the small Vinland settlement, they brought their bows and stone-tipped arrows. Of course, little Snorro did not understand this, and he had run to greet them as his friends.

There might have been a Viking Thanksgiving Day 600 years before that of the Pilgrims, but something unexpected happened. As little Snorro trudged to the shore with his arms full of fruit, a swift arrow flew from the forest behind him and buried itself in the sand beside him. The Indians had decided that this small **tow-headed** boy and his mother's mooing cow were spirits of evil who should be destroyed. Gudrid ran to her son. She picked him up and held him to her breast. In that second, she felt that her adventure was over.

"Take us home to our own land," she begged Thorlfinn. "My boy must live to sing the sagas of the North. I have no further wish to stay in Vinland."

This ended the attempt of Thorlfinn and Gudrid to build a town in Vinland. They sailed home with a large amount of timber and furs, and with little Snorro, the first American boy, who was the greatest wealth they could have brought. The village came down the fjord to welcome them home as it had told them good-bye. Snorro was passed from one Viking's arms to another's, and then carried to his grandfather's home, where a feast was held in his honor. They held him above their heads, seated on a shield, and shouted a boating song in honor of his homecoming. His mother Gudrid stood at one side beside her noble husband,

watching the little Viking's triumph. Of all the daughters of the North, she was most proud. She had lived a saga and now her son would sing it: the saga of a girl who had sailed in a dragon ship to the shore of her dreams.

Vocabulary

adventuresome: ready to take risks or deal with the unknown

ale: a beverage similar to beer

arbor: a shelter of vines

Cape Cod: a peninsula in eastern Massachusetts

embroidered: designed with needlework

exposure: the condition of being exposed to cold

fjord: a narrow strip of sea between cliffs

flagons: containers for liquids, each having a handle, spout, and lid

frocks: dresses

gilded: covered with gold

herrings: a type of fish

keel: the bottom of a boat

malt: grain and barley used in making beer

meal: ground seeds of cereal grass; cornmeal

quaint: unusual or different

saga-telling: storytelling

tow-headed: having blonde hair

Comprehension Questions

1. As a girl, what was Gudrid's special wish?
2. What happened on Gudrid's first trip to Vinland?
3. What happened on Gudrid's second trip to Vinland?
4. What happened to Gudrid and Thorlfinn's son while in Vinland?
5. How did Gudrid react to what happened to her son?
6. Why was Gudrid proud of herself?

Extension Activity: Understanding Character Motive

In life, people act for specific reasons. These reasons are called motives. Fill in this chart about Gudrid and her motives.

Gudrid's Actions (What Gudrid did)	Gudrid's Motives (Why she did what she did)
1. Gudrid went to Leif's house for saga-telling.	1.
2. Gudrid and Thorlfinn sailed to Vinland.	2.
3. Gudrid returned home after the first journey.	3.
4. Gudrid returned home after the second journey.	4.

The Leak in the Dike

Phoebe Cary

Because of its location, Holland has always struggled against floods. The Dutch people dealt with this problem by building dikes out of stone and mud to keep the water from coming onto the land. The following poem recalls the well-known legend of a Dutch boy who saves the country of Holland by plugging a hole in a dike with his thumb.

The good dame looked from her cottage
At the close of the pleasant day,
And cheerily called to her little son
Outside the door at play:
“Come, Peter! Come! I want you to go,
While there is still light to see,
To the hut of the blind old man who lives
Across the dike, for me;
And take these cakes I made for him—
They are hot and smoking yet;
You have time enough to go and come
Before the sun has set.”

Then the good wife turned to her labor,
Humming a simple song,
And thought of her husband working hard
At the **sluices** all day long;
And set the fire a-blazing,

And brought the coarse black bread:
That he might find a fire at night,
And find the table spread.

And Peter left the brother,
With whom all day he had played,
And the sister who had watched their sports
In the willow's tender shade;
And told them they'd see him back before
They saw a star in sight,
Though he wouldn't be afraid to go
In the very darkest night!
For he was a brave, bright fellow,
With eye and conscience clear;
He could do whatever a boy might do,
And he had not learned to fear.
Why, he wouldn't have robbed a bird's nest,
Nor brought a stork to harm,
Though never a law in Holland
Had stood to stay his arm!

And now with his face all glowing,
And eyes as bright as the day
With the thoughts of his pleasant errand,
He trudged along the way;
And soon his joyous **prattle**
Made glad a lonesome place—
Alas! if only the blind old man
Could have seen that happy face!
Yet he somehow caught the brightness
Which his voice and presence lent
And he felt the sunshine come and go
As Peter came and went.

And now, as the day was sinking,
And the winds began to rise,
The mother looked from her door again,
Shading her anxious eyes,
And saw the shadows deepen
And birds to their home come back,
But never a sign of Peter
Along the level track.
But she said: "He will come at morning.
So I need not fret or grieve—
Though it isn't like my boy at all
To stay without my leave."

But where was the child delaying?
On the homeward way was he,
And across the dike while the sun was up
An hour above the sea.
He was stopping now to gather flowers,
Now listening to the sound,
As the angry waters dashed themselves
Against their narrow bound.
"Ah! well for us," said Peter,
"That the gates are good and strong.
And my father tends them carefully,
Or they would not hold you long!
You're a wicked sea," said Peter,
"I know why you fret and **chafe**;
You would like to spoil our lands and homes;
But our sluices keep you safe."

But hark! Through the noise of waters
Comes a low, clear, trickling sound;
And the child's face pales with terror,
And his blossoms drop to the ground.

He is up the bank in a moment,
And, stealing through the sand,
He sees a stream not yet so large
As his slender, childish hand.

‘Tis a leak in the dike!—He is but a boy,
Unused to fearful scenes;
But, young as he is, he has learned to know
The dreadful thing that means.
A leak in the dike! The **stoutest** heart
Grows faint that cry to hear,
And the bravest man in all the land
Turns white with mortal fear.
For he knows the smallest leak may grow
To flood in a single night;
And he knows the strength of the cruel sea
When loosed in its angry might.

And the boy, he has seen the danger
And, shouting a wild alarm,
He forces back the weight of the sea
With the strength of his single arm!
He listens for the joyful sound
Of a footstep passing nigh;
And he lays his ear to the ground, to catch
The answers to his cry.
And he hears the rough winds blowing,
And the waters rise and fall,
But never an answer comes to him
Save the echo of his call.
He sees no hope, no **succor**,
His feeble voice is lost;
Yet what shall he do but watch and wait
Though he perish at his post!



So faintly calling and crying
Till the sun is under the sea;
Crying and moaning till the stars
Come out for company;
He thinks of his brother and sister,

Asleep in their safe warm bed;
He thinks of his father and mother,
Of himself as dying—and dead;
And of how, when the night is over,
They must come and find him at last;
But he never thinks he can leave the place
Where duty holds him fast.

The good dame in the cottage
Is up and **astir** with the light,
For the thought of her little Peter
Has been with her all night.
And now she watches the pathway,
As yesterday she had done;
But what does she see so strange and black
Against the rising sun?
Her neighbors are bearing between them
Something straight to her door;
Her child is coming home, but not
As he ever came before!

“He is dead!” she cries, “my darling!”
And the startled father hears,
And comes and looks the way she looks,
And fears the thing she fears;
Till a glad shout from the bearers
Thrills the stricken man and wife—
“Give thanks, for your son has saved our land,
And God has saved his life!”
So, there in the morning sunshine
They knelt about the boy;
And every head was bared and bent
In tearful, reverent joy.

'Tis many a year since then; but still,
When the sea roars like a flood,
The boys are taught what a boy can do
Who is brave and true and good;
For every man in that country
Takes his son by the hand
And tells him of little Peter,
Whose courage saved the land.

They have many a **valiant** hero,
Remembered through the years;
But never one whose name so oft
Is named with loving tears.
And his deed shall be sung by the cradle,
And told to the child on the knee,
So long as the dikes of Holland
Divide the land from the sea!

Vocabulary

astir: being out of bed

chafe: to feel impatient

prattle: babble; chatter

sluices: floodgates used to control the flow of water

stoutest: bravest; boldest

succor: relief

valiant: done with courage; heroic

Comprehension Questions

1. What errand did Peter run for his mother?
2. If the leak in the dike was small, why was Peter so worried?
3. When Peter is brought home, what do his parents fear?
4. In the poem, what do the people of Holland think of Peter?

Extension Activity

Understanding Story in Poetry:

A poem can tell a story. Like other stories, a story in a poem has characters, a setting, and a plot.

Fill out the chart below for the poem "The Leak in the Dike."

Characters:

Main Character: _____

Other Characters: _____

Setting:

Time: _____

Place: _____

Plot:

Event 1: _____

Event 2: _____

Event 3: _____

Further Reading:

If you enjoyed this poem, you may enjoy the book *Hans Brinker*, also known as *The Silver Skates*, by Mary Mapes Dodge. It contains more tales of the life of the mythical boy who saved Holland from flooding.

A Daughter of Plymouth

Edward Winslow's Adopted Daughter, Ellen More

Carolyn Sherwin Bailey

Like many Pilgrims, little Ellen More and her adoptive family, the Winslows, stayed in Holland for a while before traveling to the New World. In this story, Ellen and the Winslows prepare for the long journey ahead, and Ellen learns about the importance of personal sacrifice.

Ellen More was the only little English girl among the young children of Holland who were waiting impatiently on the shore of the Leyden Canal for **Kriss Kringle**. Ellen was the adopted daughter of Edward Winslow, printer of Leyden, and his beautiful young wife, Elizabeth. There were rumors that Ellen was of noble birth in England. Here in Holland, though, she swallowed her pride and helped Mistress Elizabeth Winslow with the housework in their tiny brick house near **Choir Alley**.



Edward Winslow worked at a secret printing plant in an attic of Choir Alley. His rank and wealth put aside, he helped print the notices the little group of English folk were printing and leaving on each other's doorsteps by lantern light. These printed sheets brought news about the ships that were being prepared for the Pilgrims at Southampton, England. They told of the New World across the Atlantic to which they hoped to sail as a "hopeful place with running brooks and flowers and orchards." Men, women, and children were eagerly looking forward to the summer of the year 1620.

Ellen opened the door to pick up the news sheet that lay outside and saw the notice hung on the street lamp. It read: "All children of Leyden: **Assemble** on the shore of the canal at sunrise when the fog bell rings to watch for the ship of Kriss Kringle which will lie off shore full of gifts." Ellen's big blue eyes opened very wide as she read this. Then she thought of how the children of the small Dutch town were not very friendly toward her. Ellen and Mistress Winslow wore dark woolen gowns and aprons every day, but it was their habit to put on their English finery for Sunday. The children of Leyden thought her long gold braids, silk frock, and lace cap were strange. Ellen decided to be up by starlight on Christmas morning and wear as plain a frock and cape as did the Holland girls, for she must see the Christmas ship come in.

The fog lay thick over the town that December morning of the year 1619. The fog bell was usually not a cheerful sound, but today it sang a holiday song as the doors opened along one street and then another to let out the eager little Dutch boys and girls. Candles in the windows of the odd little brick houses twinkled like laughing eyes. Curtains were raised like sleepy eyes opening. Clop, clop, came the sound of wooden shoes along the stones. The shore of

the canal was crowded as Ellen, with her long gray cape wrapped closely around her, joined the other children.

The sun was trying to show its face—round, red, and cheerful—above the rim of the water. Right in the path the sun made on the water, the children saw a ship. What did it matter that it looked very much like Jacob Winkleman’s fishing boat, and that the plump Kriss Kringle in a red cap and cloak who landed from it was the image of Jacob himself! He had a long white beard and carried a great bag of toys on his back. Such a shout of joy went up from over a hundred excited child voices! As the children ran after Kriss Kringle on his way to the Leyden Inn, their wooden shoes screamed with joy. The innkeeper had a roaring fire built and coffee and mugs of milk ready for the Christmas company, and here Kriss Kringle opened his bag of gifts.

He gave Jan a fine red scarf and Katrina a string of jingle bells for the dog who drew her milk cart. One child received a rare tulip bulb, another some pewter dishes with which to play house. Ellen More stood apart from the other children. She had followed them at a distance, wishing only to watch the excitement. But Kriss Kringle had seen her. He looked deep into his bag, smiled, and slowly brought out the most special gift of all. It was an English doll with a china head and a satin **petticoat** and short gown. It wore a black silk cape and a lace cap. Tiny slippers were fitted to its feet. Kriss Kringle held out the doll to Ellen More, **beckoning** for her to come and take it.

The children of Leyden made a path for the little English stranger to receive her gift. And as Ellen made a low curtsy to thank Kriss Kringle and held the doll close to her breast, the small Hollanders were suddenly glad also. They accepted Ellen, and were happy that Kriss Kringle had been so kind to her.

The Christmas doll went home to the Winslows' house in Leyden and was at once one of the family. It was a busy household. Mistress Elizabeth Winslow was not used to work, and Ellen had much to do for the delicate English lady. She washed and ironed Master Winslow's ruffles that he wore with his best black velvet coat and mended the worn spots in Mistress Elizabeth's lace collars. She knew how to polish pewter plates until they shone like silver, and she could make a whole meal as well as if she were grown up. When supper was eaten and Master Winslow sat beside his desk studying maps by candlelight, Ellen More would curl up on the **settle** by the fire and rock the English doll to sleep.

The Pilgrims' days were full in Leyden that year. There were long secret meetings after which the men looked more serious, and often the women's eyes held tears. Ellen knew what was being talked about. Ships were now being filled with **provisions** at Southampton. Secretly the Pilgrims at Leyden were sorting out and packing their belongings for the great adventure of sailing to keep a new faith in a new land. Each family was ready to give up all it owned in the cause, but each also had precious things which it was hard to leave behind. The ships were very small. There was little shelter for the Pilgrims and their needed food and goods in the space between decks. One of the leaders, Master Brewster, had decided that he must take an ancient carved chest with him on the voyage, and his old family mirror. Seeing this, Ellen became nervous that there would be no room for her belongings. She had told her doll that never, never should she be left behind for some little Dutch girl to break her beautiful china head.

The plans were so well thought out that the day of sailing seemed no different from the rest, only more hopeful. The Pilgrims of Leyden had sold nearly all their household

goods and were gathered at the edge of the canal that lay between Leyden and Delft; but each had a small bundle of their favorite items, which they longed to bring with them to their new home.

Master Brewster's chest and mirror were already on board one of the small boats that would take the Pilgrims to Southampton. There was also a stuffed chair marked "Cheapside, 1614." It had come with the Winslow family from England to Holland because it exactly suited Master Winslow's back. It was a very stylish chair, as well as comfortable, and had graced the humble living room of their Leyden home.

Edward Winslow had given up great wealth for his faith. He had brought beautiful Mistress Elizabeth and his little adopted daughter, Ellen More, from an English estate to the small brick house on a Holland canal. This chair that had been bought on London's street of fine shops, Cheapside, was all that they had kept of their beautiful furniture. Here it was ready to go on the voyage, but there were also Mistress Winslow's items—her silk laced dresses, her quilted coats and petticoats, her lace collars, and her **russet** colored and purple capes. The Winslows had more than their share of luggage.

"We must take the chair, my dearest Elizabeth," Master Winslow insisted. "Undo your bundle and give some of your belongings to these Hollanders who have shared their town with us so very kindly."

"But I must have all these gowns and shoes, my dearest Edward," said Mistress Winslow. "Who can tell when I shall be able to shop in London again?"

Ellen More carefully opened the bundle of clothing she had helped Mistress Winslow pack. It could scarcely be smaller for so lovely a lady. She set a gown and a pair of



tiny satin dancing slippers on the grass of the canal bank; beside them she set her china doll from Kriss Kringle's pack. Without the gown, slippers, or the doll the bundle would be a little smaller. Ellen looked at Mistress Winslow's sad face and the droop of her shoulders. She was still so young a lady, so delicate and fragile like the doll. Although she had never

worn them in Leyden, the dancing slippers made her happy just to look at them. Keeping back her tears, Ellen wrapped up the slippers again and gave the china doll a last hug and kiss as she left her sitting on the green shore of the canal.

There was now a great deal of **bustle**. All the precious things, the chair, the mirror, Mistress Winslow's finery, pewter dishes, tables, beds, chairs, and the Pilgrims themselves went on board. The Pilgrim children, boys and girls, big and little, stood beside their fathers and mothers as they slowly sailed away. They went down the Leyden Canal toward Delft, and waved good-bye to the **Old Kirk** where the summer sun lighted the quaint windows. Then they passed through the water gate at Delft, and from there sailed toward a wider canal and a fine city called The Hague. Early in August the *Mayflower*, carrying Edward Winslow and his family and the other Pilgrims, sailed out of the harbor at Southampton toward the unknown land of their hopes.

Summer changed to fall. Storms rocked the frail boat with its crowded people and cargo. Strong winds swept the sea, and food and water gave out. Weeks dragged into months, and still the *Mayflower* had not sighted land. The Pilgrims had not lost courage, but many of the women had never experienced such hardships, and Mistress Winslow was ill from the cold and lack of food. Ellen tried to care for her as a mother would. If her hands felt empty because of the doll she had left behind in Holland, there were plenty of things for them to do. Ellen More was the youngest of the girls on board the *Mayflower*, but she had the courage of the older ones. Remember and Mary Allerton, Constance and Damaris Hopkins, and Elizabeth Tilley knew and loved her. Bartholomew Allerton, who had brought his drum and was learning to play it, learned bravery from Ellen More. She alone could stop little Resolved White's crying when the wind roared in the *Mayflower's* sails. And when a baby,

Oceanus, was born on the ship, Ellen felt as if her precious doll had been given back to her.

No one thought now of those things that had seemed to him so important when they had sailed from Holland. The question was whether they would live to set their feet on land. The women were brave indeed, and the children as well, trying to quiet the fear that went to sleep with them at night and awoke them in the morning. So the *Mayflower* struggled on until the late fall when, in November of the year 1620, the Pilgrims found our shores.

We can see Ellen More standing in the fog of Christmas morning on the shore of a Holland canal waiting for Kriss Kringle. We see her the next year a young daughter of America bravely helping to wash and bake and keep the Winslows' log house at Plymouth as bright and cheerful as the house at Leyden. All the other Pilgrim boys and girls were trying to do their share, too. They would not see Kriss Kringle again, but they had discovered something the Spanish and other early explorers on America's shores had failed to find. Although there was not a nugget of gold anywhere near Cape Cod, they had found a chance to work and reap the rich benefits of their labor.

Mistress Winslow's dancing slippers never wore out. We may see them today together with Elder Brewster's mirror in a museum. We do not know much else about Ellen More, except that her unselfish service and the sunshine of her smiles helped the Pilgrims in cheerfully establishing their new community. The Pilgrims' great adventure came in the form of planting, building, reaping and harvesting, founding a faith, and feeling thankful for small blessings. The brave children of Plymouth, including Ellen More, have a special place in this story of the discoverers.

Vocabulary

assemble: gather

beckoning: signaling; waving

bustle: noisy activity

Choir Alley: a street in Leyden, Holland, on which many English lived

curtsey: a bow made by women and girls by bending their knees

Kriss Kringle: another name for Santa Claus

Old Kirk: a church

petticoat: skirt

provisions: a stock of food and supplies

russet: reddish-brown

settle: wooden bench

Comprehension Questions

1. Who was dressed up as Kriss Kringle? What clues in the story helped you to draw this conclusion?
2. Describe the special gift that Kriss Kringle gave Ellen.
3. How does Ellen show her humility and generosity right before they leave Holland? How does she show it on the ship? How does she show it in Plymouth?
4. Read Philippians 2:3. Explain how this verse relates to the story.

Extension Activity

Understanding Personification:

Personification is when an author gives an object the qualities or actions of a human being. Authors use personification to make their writing more interesting. Here is an example of how the author used personification in the story to make a sunrise more interesting:

The *sun* was **trying to show its face**—round, red, and cheerful—above the rim of the water.

The sun is an object. The author gives it a human quality when she says it tries to show its face. Therefore, this is an example of personification. Here are some others from the story:

The **fog bell** was usually not a cheerful sound, but today it **sang** a holiday song as the doors opened along one street and then another to let out the eager little Dutch boys and girls.

As the children ran after Kriss Kringle on his way to the Leyden Inn, their **wooden shoes screamed** with joy.

Now it is your turn to write sentences that include personification. Write a sentence for each pair of words.

Example:

wooden floor, complained: The wooden floor complained loudly as the big dog walked across it.

rain, kissed: _____

daisies, nodded: _____

car engine, coughed: _____
