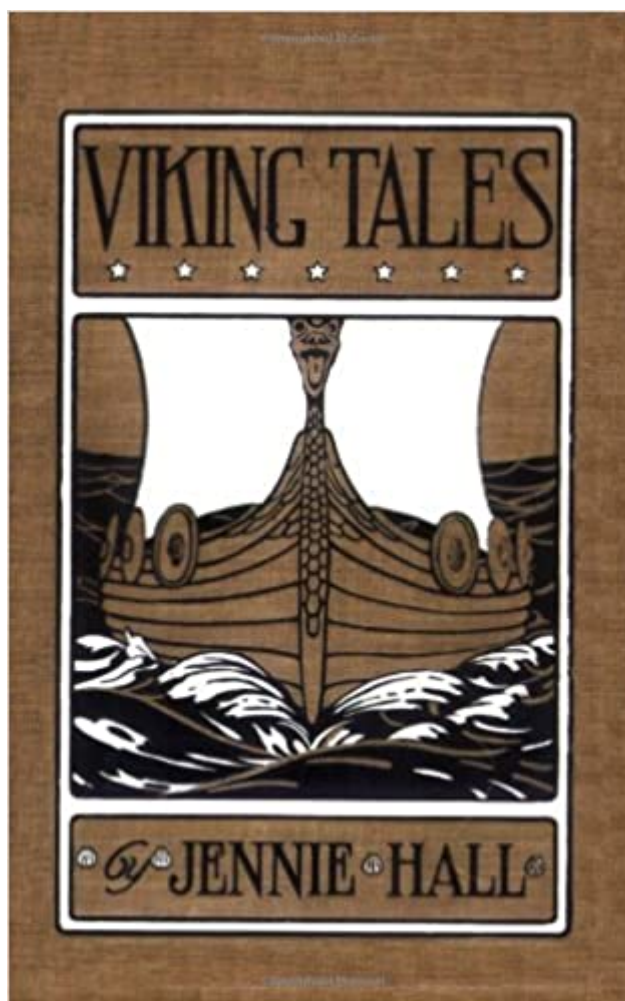


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# Viking Tales (Yesterday's Classics)



## Synopsis

Nights were long in Iceland winters of long ago. A whole family sat for hours around the fire in the middle of the room. That fire gave the only light. Shadows flitted in the dark corners. Smoke curled along the high beams of the ceiling. The children sat on the dirt floor close by the fire. The grown people were on a long narrow bench that they had pulled up to the light and warmth. Everybody's hands were busy with wool. As the family worked in the red fire-light, the father told of the kings of Norway, of long voyages to strange lands, of good fights. And in farmhouses all through Iceland these old tales were told over and over until everybody knew them and loved them. Men who could sing and play the harp were called "skalds," and they called their songs "sagas." Eventually these stories were written down on sheepskin or vellum so that we can enjoy them today. We follow the fortunes of Harald from the time he is acknowledged by his father as a baby and given his own thrall at the cutting of his first tooth, through his exploits as a viking adventurer, to his crowning as King of Norway. It is when Harald is King of Norway that population pressures at home and eagerness for adventure and booty from other lands combine to drive some of the bolder Vikings to set forth from their native land. Sailing ever westward across the Atlantic, they hop along the chain of islands that loosely connects Norway with America-Orkneys and Shetlands, Faeroes, Iceland, and Greenland. It is from link to link of this chain that the characters in our story sail in search of home and adventure. Discoveries are made by accident. Ships are driven by the wind into unknown ports, resulting in landings and settlements in Iceland, Greenland, and America. The crude courage of these men and strangeness of their adventures appeal strongly to children, while their love of truth, hardy endurance, and faithfulness to the promised word make them characters to emulate. Suitable for children ages 9 and up to read to themselves and for children as young as 6 as a read-aloud.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A teacher in Chicago at the beginning of the last century, Jennie Hall wrote a number of engaging history books for children. In addition to *Viking Tales*, she authored *Buried Cities*, *Four Old Greeks*, *Men of Old Greece*, *The Story of Chicago*, and *Our Ancestors in Europe*, *An Introduction to American History*.

For someone like myself, unaware of many of the Viking stories and traditions, this book is a quick and easy introduction. As it was written for young children it, of course, highlights the courage and love of adventure of the Vikings while downplaying their (to the modern mind) blood lust. I found it telling that characters called attacking and pillaging neighbors and strangers having a frolic. I encourage those who read this book to read the footnotes given in the story for they give additional information about the Viking culture that couldn't be fit in the story without taking it into tangents that would mire the plot in details kids would find boring. Also, read the final piece where the author gives suggestions for integrating the stories in this book into a school curriculum. Things have changed since the early part of the 20th century and yet you can see, even then, how teachers were struggling to engage students' interest in the history and geography of the world around them. Then go watch the television series, *THE VIKINGS* and see how our interpretation of their lives has changed.

This book is very well written to make the stories ready to relate to and understand. I will be using this to teach my students.

A relatively brief recounting of the stories behind the settling of Iceland and of Greenland and the visit to Vineland (the North American coast). What I found most interesting was the way the tales start with the expansion of Harald's rule to become king over all Norway, setting the political climate which led to the western travels of exploration. A good source for a portion of history that a lot of us do not know much about.

Fantastic bit of work. As a history buff, I loved the individual tales. It frequently references the Eddas and other Sagas, which I've been able to cross reference for research purposes.

Very informative and an interesting look behind the scenes of life as a viking and the times in which they lived, fought and died.

I enjoyed this book... well written. It provides insight into Viking culture. I found the tales to be very informative

Being a huge fan of Norse Mythology in general, I picked this up (for free, thank you ) and although it was very short, it was a pretty fun little read, and helped to see how the real Norse people lived, not just their gods. The book basically is the legends of 4 Major "vikings" that impacted their culture in one way or another: King Harald (the first to unite Norway under one rule), Ingolf (the first to colonize Iceland), Eric the Red (the first to colonize Greenland), and Leif Ericson (probably the first viking to land in America, which they called 'Wineland' because grapes grew naturally). These tales about viking migration west from Norway are really fascinating, I don't know if a single word of it is true, but that's not really the point when you are reading mythology anyway. The only reason I give it 4 instead of 5 stars is because it's lacking in detail that would make you actually care about these people, and their lifestyle is so violent that you wonder if you should really like them or not. Unfortunately, the Norse people seemed to confuse "freedom" with "expansionism"

I downloaded this novel because I was curious about old viking tales. While I SHOULD have realised this was a children's novel when I sent it to my Kindle I didn't really pick up on it until a few stories in. It's not that the writing was mature (appropriate for a 8 year old and up), or that the stories were violent (they weren't at all), I just got caught up and whisked off to another land. I really appreciated reading about the discovery of Iceland and Greenland, and reading the story of Lief Ericsson from another perspective. This novel however, lost a star because toward the end I was getting a little tired of how everything needed a lot of explanation and the near constant links to notes in the back of the novel. The links would be awesome for anyone who wants to learn about the viking culture, but if you're just into it for the joy, then best skip over them. In short, well written, enjoyable for all. Liked it very much. :)

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