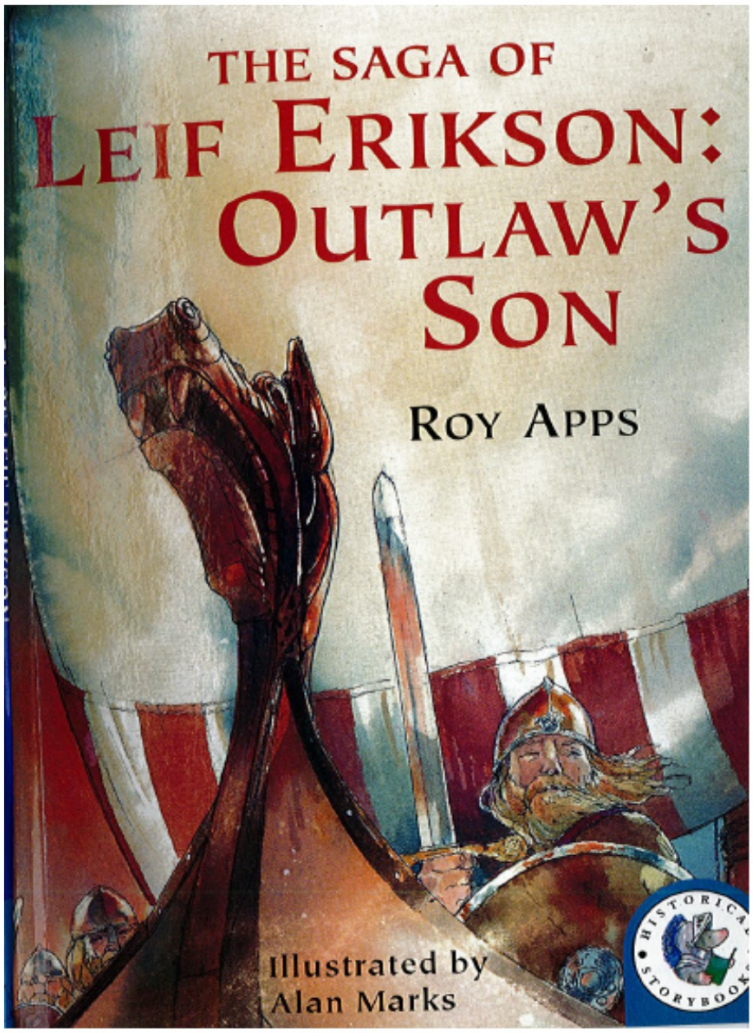

THE SAGA OF
LEIF ERIKSON:
OUTLAW'S
SON
ROY APPS
Illustrated by
Alan Marks

Week 5

4 The Year 986 Erik's Cruel Trick

"How will you persuade people here to sail to the Island at the Edge of the World?" asked Leif, as they finally hauled the longship up onto the Icelandic shore.

"You'll see," said Erik, laughing.

That afternoon, he addressed a large gathering. Leif the Lucky One was at his side.

"I Erik the Red, my family and oath-friends have sailed far. We have discovered a new land."

How do you think Erik will persuade people to sail with him?

Predicting

- I predict…..because…..
- I think……..because….
- I wonder…..because….
- I imagine…..because…

Week 5

Leif waited for his father to say, "I have called this new land the Island at the Edge of the World."

Instead, he heard him say, "I have called this new land *Green*land, for it is a green, warm and pleasant land. Who amongst you wishes to sail back there with us?"

He makes the Island at the Edge of the World sound like the Land of No-Frost, thought Leif.

An excited murmur ran through the crowd. Erik looked pleased with himself.

But Leif felt uncomfortable and embarrassed by his father's cruel trick.

He left his father talking to the crowd and went in search of news of his friend Thorvald Thorgeirson.

He found Thorvald's sister Freya weaving cloth. Three winters and two summers had turned her into a handsome and self-possessed young woman.

Can we add any more evidence to our character check about Erik?

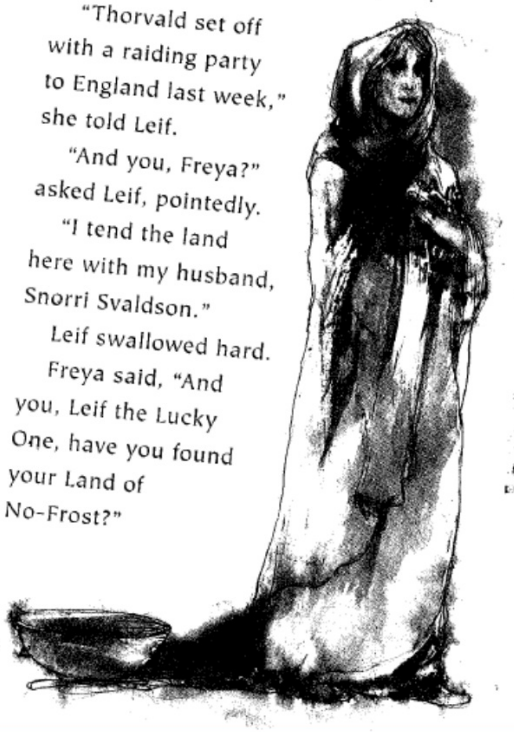
How are Erik and his son, Leif, different?

"Thorvald set off with a raiding party to England last week," she told Leif.

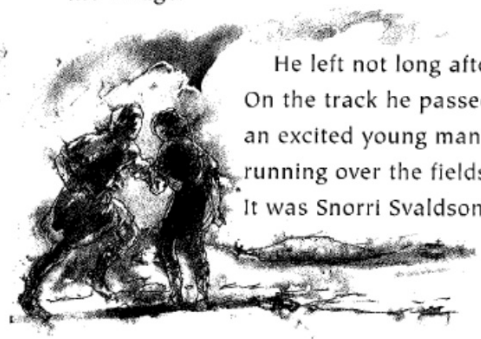
"And you, Freya?" asked Leif, pointedly.

"I tend the land here with my husband, Snorri Svaldson."

Leif swallowed hard. Freya said, "And you, Leif the Lucky One, have you found your Land of No-Frost?"



Leif told Freya about the Island at the Edge of the World and of the cruel trick his father was playing on the people of the village.



He left not long after. On the track he passed an excited young man running over the fields. It was Snorri Svaldson.

"Freya," he cried at the top of his voice, "gather up your wool and round up our pigs! For tomorrow we sail to the warm and lush pastures of Greenland with Erik the Red!"

Week 5

Of the twenty-five ships that sailed from Iceland, only fourteen completed the journey to Greenland.

Erik, the chief, his wife Gudrid and Leif Erikson, the Lucky One, were safe.

Also safe were Snorri Svaldson and his wife, Freya, who was expecting their child. Safe too was the old sailor and raider, Bjarni Sea-Tamer; it was said he knew almost as much of this world as the gods themselves.

The winter was hard. Those who had sailed with Erik had known hard winters back in Iceland, but nothing like this.

The icy air made you weep and then the wind froze the tears on your cheeks.

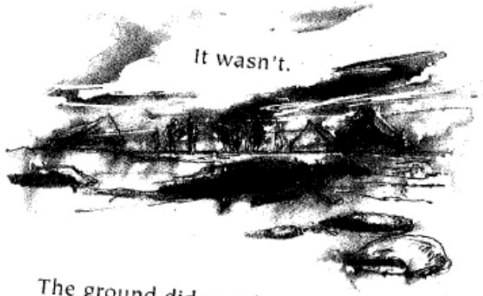
When people looked Erik the Red in the face, there was anger in their eyes.

So, two slaves were sacrificed to win the help of Freyr, the harvest god.

As is the Viking custom.

"Spring will be better,"
said Erik, uneasily.

Week 5



It wasn't.

The ground did not thaw. Seed could not be planted. The winter feed was finished and the animals starved.

The people ate fish.

One bitterly cold night as they sat round the fire, Bjarni Sea-Tamer told Leif of a land he had once spotted, when his ship had been blown westward.

"The Land of No-Frost!" murmured Leif, excitedly. "Bjarni Sea-Tamer, you saw the Land of No-Frost!"

Old Bjarni Sea-Tamer said nothing, but sat quite still looking into the glowing embers of the fire.

Leif told his friend Snorri Svaldson who said, "We must sail west. We must find the Land of No-Frost!"

SHEFFIELD METROPOLI
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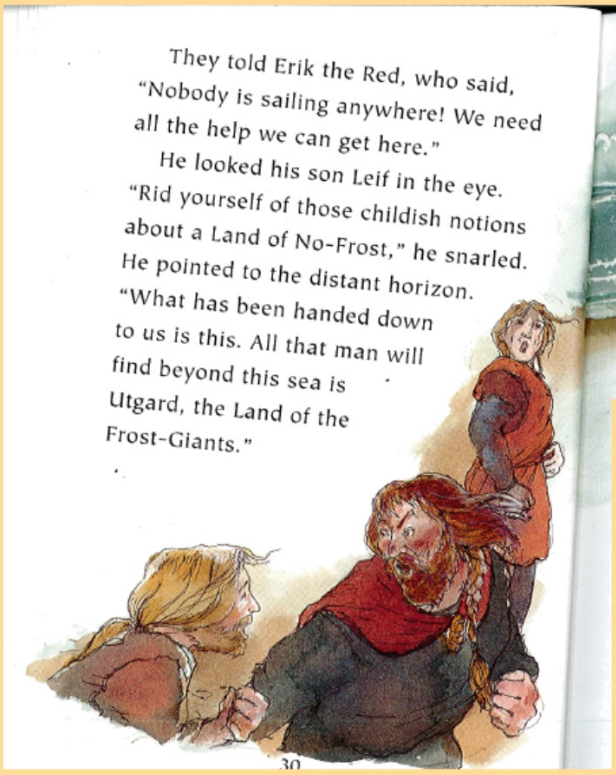
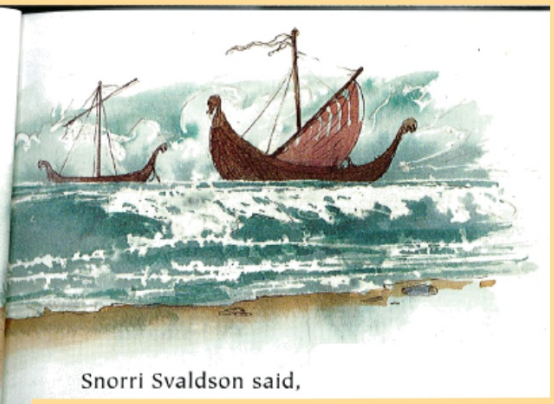
Week 5


They told Erik the Red, who said,
"Nobody is sailing anywhere! We need
all the help we can get here."
He looked his son Leif in the eye.
"Rid yourself of those childish notions
about a Land of No-Frost," he snarled.
He pointed to the distant horizon.
"What has been handed down
to us is this. All that man will
find beyond this sea is
Utgard, the Land of the
Frost-Giants."

30



Snorri Svaldson said,

Now let's hot-seat Snorri Svaldson. What do you think he would want to say to Erik, on behalf of the people?

Week 5

Snorri Svaldson said, "If you stay here more than a week longer, Erik, the only journey you'll ever make is to the Other World. There are many who seek to spill your blood for tricking us so."

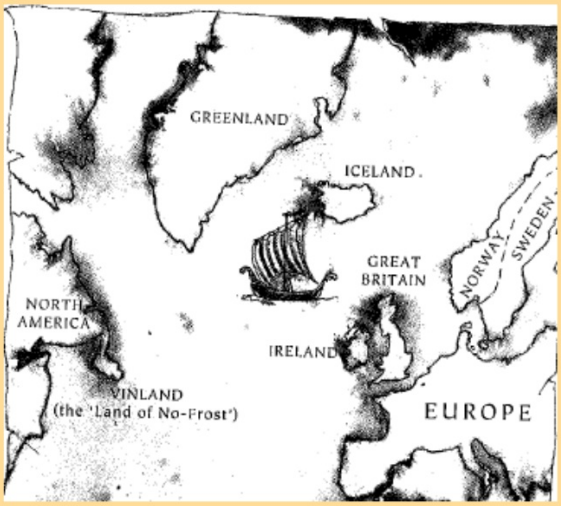
Erik the Red had seen enough of the people's faces to know that Snorri Svaldson's warning was a timely one. With little enthusiasm, he prepared to sail west with his son, Leif, the Lucky One.

It was while he was checking the timbers on his *knorr** that the mast fell, smashing his leg.

Some said it was a deliberate act by an avenging neighbour. Others said it was simply the work of the gods.

* Small Viking boat

What do you think about Erik's 'accident'?
Give reasons for your opinion.

Week 5

Let's annotate our map to show what happens - and where - in chapter 4.