

Olaf and Snorri

Leif Ericson did not care to make his home in this Vineland he had found.

"It is warm and very beautiful there," he said. "But I love the ice and snow of the North. Let others dwell in Vineland if they will. I will stay in Greenland, where the ice sparkles and where the sky is bright with red and purple and gold."

Greenland

One day as Leif Ericson sat in the doorway of his Northern hut, two gilded dragon ships came sailing toward his shores.

gilded

"They are from Iceland!" he cried.

Then Leif's good friend Biorne (*Be-ern*) ran down to the shore to look.

"One is the ship of Karlsefni," Biorne said. "I remember the stripes of blue and white with which he used to paint his ship."

Yes, it was the ship of Karlsefni. He had sailed for days and days across the waters to find his old friends, Leif and Biorne.

1. To whom does the approaching ship belong?

- a. Biorne
- b. Karlsefni
- c. Leif Ericson
- d. Olaf

"Tell me," he said to Leif. "About this wonderful Vineland that you found in the west. Do its shores stretch north and south for miles and miles? Is the air soft and warm? Tell me about the trees that lost their leaves in the

winter and found them again in the summer. Are there grapes and fruits of many kinds?"

"It is as you have said," Leif answered. He then told Karlsefni the long story of his voyage and of the land that he had found.

"Would not this new country make a good home for our people?" asked Karlsefni.

"It is indeed a beautiful country," said Leif.

Soon Karlsefni set out with his two ships to find the land that Leif had discovered so many months before – North America.

Now because Karlsefni went to make a home for his people, he took with him his beautiful fair-haired wife, Gudrid (*Goo-drid*), and Leif's brave little son, Olaf. The other men, too, took their families, and their household furniture, and their cows. They were as happy a band of colonists as ever crossed the seas.

colonists

2. Karlsefni traveled to North America alone.

a. True

b. False

By and by they reached the shore of North America, and landed not far from the place where Leif first found the grapes and the warm sunshine.

The men set to work with good will and soon built a village. They traded with the Skrellings for the warm, furry skins of the animals which they had killed. Everything went well with the newcomers and the natives.

Before long a little baby was born in the colony. Its father, Karlsefni, and its mother, Gudrid, were the proudest father and mother in all the world.

"The baby is a true little Norseman," said Gudrid. "See how blue his eyes are, and how yellow his hair is!"

"He is beautiful like his mother, and strong like his father," said the people.

From the very day the baby was born, Olaf (Leif's son) loved him. He made a little hammock for him, such as

those the Skrellings rocked their babies in; and he liked nothing better than to play with him the whole day long.

3. Olaf adored Snorri.

- a. True
- b. False

By and by Snorri — that was the baby's name — was big enough to walk. Then Olaf would take him down to the waterside to play in the sand.

Now, one reason Karlsefni came to this new land was to find mazer wood; for Leif Ericson had said, "There is much mazer wood in this country; enough for all the people in Europe."

4. What type of wood do the Norsemen want?

"But what is mazer wood?" Olaf asked; for he was quite too young to know. So Leif explained to Olaf that mazer wood was the wood of those warts or burrs so often to be seen upon the trunks of trees. The people of Europe wanted mazer wood because it

was hard and tough and firm. It would neither break nor warp nor crack. People could carve upon it and it would endure for centuries as if it were rock.

centuries

Still Olaf wondered. Why did the people of Europe want this wood, even if it were so tough and firm?

But one day Karlsefni brought a fine large bowl from his ship and gave it to Olaf. "It is from our old home in Norseland," he said. "And it is made of mazer wood."



"This is what the people use mazer wood for, my boy," said Leif. If the bowl had been lined with diamonds, Olaf could not have been more pleased with it.

So when at last Karlsefni and the people had built their village, the men set to work to find mazer wood.

village

"We will carry whole shiploads of it to Europe," Karlsefni said. "And it will make us as rich as kings."

5. The Norsemen planned to export the mazer wood to ____.

- a. Africa
- b. Asia
- c. Europe
- d. South America

The men set gladly to work felling the trees and cutting out the great burrs of mazer wood.

But first dams must be built on the rivers that led to the ocean; for the Norsemen had no horses or carts, and so must float the burrs down the river.

This was great fun for Olaf and Snorri. They liked to watch the ponds that were made by the dams, and they

liked to see the great blocks of mazer wood floating down to the mouth of the river. Often the children made tiny dams in the brooks, and made believe to float their own mazer-wood blocks; for, like all little folks, they tried to do what the grown-up people did.

Now it happened that the Skrellings did not like to have their rivers and trees put to this use, so more than once they fought the little colony. One day, Gudrid saw an old Skrelling woman looking through the bushes at the baby Snorri as he lay asleep in his hammock.

6. Do you believe that it was right for the Norsemen to take mazer wood without first discussing it with the Skrellings? Why or why not?

"Never take Snorri out of sight of the village," Karlsefni had said to Olaf many a time.

But one day Olaf went into the woods to set a trap. Snorri watched him as he went away. Then it came into his little head that he would follow Olaf. Like a true Norseman, off he set in search of adventure. He soon reached the woods, but where was Olaf? Snorri looked all around, but no Olaf was to be seen.

"Olaf! Olaf!" he shouted in his little baby voice. Still no Olaf. Then Snorri trudged on into the forest, down the little footpath toward the lake.

"Olaf! Olaf!" he shouted again. There was no answer. The forest was very, very still. Just then it came into Snorri's head to be afraid. He looked around him; there were trees, trees everywhere. He could see no houses, no Olaf; he could see nothing but trees. Then Snorri sat down in the path and screamed and cried, and cried and screamed, "Olaf! Olaf! Oh! Oh! Oh!" So loudly did Snorri scream that Olaf heard him and came running out from the forest.

"Olaf! Olaf!" wailed Snorri. And he cuddled his little yellow head down

on Olaf's shoulder, and sobbed as if his heart would break.

7. sobbed :

- a. cried
- b. laughed
- c. said
- d. yelled

"Don't cry, Snorri. Don't cry," said Olaf. "Climb up on my back and away we'll go!"

Now, nothing pleased Snorri so well as to ride upon Olaf's back, so up he climbed, and away ran Olaf down the forest path. There was one hill beyond which Olaf was not allowed to go. But this morning he forgot, and up the hill he ran, Snorri still upon his back.

There was a beautiful plain with fields of corn beyond the hill. There was a little pond, too, and Olaf thought it would be great fun for Snorri to sail ships upon its still waters. So on toward the pond Olaf went, talking to Snorri of the ships they would sail.

But soon Olaf heard a sound. It frightened him, and he tried to go back toward the edge of the wood. It was very strange, but he could not find the

footpath anywhere. On and on and round and round he wandered; but the farther he wandered, the farther he was from the footpath. It was beginning to grow dark. Poor Olaf! Poor Snorri! They were lost in the woods.

8. frightened :

- a. angry
- b. fearless
- c. scared
- d. weak

It grew darker and darker, and Olaf's heart grew heavier and heavier.

"I'm so tired!" said Snorri.

Then Olaf made a bed of leaves, spread his own cloak over them, and laid Snorri upon the soft bed.

9. Snorri is ____.

- a. energetic
- b. hungry
- c. tired
- d. understanding

"So tired!" Snorri said again; and then he fell fast asleep. All night long Snorri slept, and all night long little Olaf lay by his side wondering what he

should do. Would Karlsefni come and find them? Would the Skrellings steal them and carry them away to their wigwams? Would they starve to death in the forest?

wigwams

Just then Olaf heard a crackling sound. Was it a Skrelling? Alas, it was; and in a minute the Skrelling sprang out from the bushes and seized Olaf by the shoulder. "Ugh! Ugh!" he said; and Snorri screamed and clung to Olaf.

"Ugh! Ugh!" said the Skrelling again. And away he marched, dragging Olaf and Snorri along as fast as their little legs could run.

10. Olaf and Snorri are taken by a ____.

- a. Norseman
- b. Skrelling

It was a long, cruel journey. Olaf thought it would never end. But at last they came to the Skrelling village, and

the Skrelling took the children to the wigwam of the chief.

"Ugh! Ugh!" said the chief. He stared at the little children until Snorri trembled with fear.

11. trembled :

- a. cried**
- b. shook**
- c. talked**
- d. whispered**

"Take Snorri home," sobbed Snorri. But Olaf could not take Snorri home; he could only hold him close in his arms and try to comfort him.

Then all the men and women of the tribe came and looked at Olaf and Snorri; and one good old woman gave Snorri some milk.

tribe

Then some Skrelling children came and invited Olaf to play with them. But Olaf could not understand.

And if he had understood, he would not have cared for play.

But the little Skrelling children liked their young visitors. So they stuck feathers in Olaf's hair and tried to daub his face with paints. They had feathers in their own hair and paint on their own faces, and they thought that Olaf should have some, too.

Snorri thought this was very funny, and when a little Skrelling put some red paint on Olaf's nose, Snorri laughed aloud. This made Olaf laugh, too. Soon the children were at play together, running races and throwing stones at a target.

12. Imagine that you are Olaf. How would you like your visit at the Skrelling village? Explain your answer.

But all this time, there was great excitement in the home of Olaf and Snorri. Where were the children? Had the Skrellings stolen them?

Poor mother Gudrid's sweet face was pale with terror. Karlsefni's blue eyes flashed. "Ready, ready, my men!" said he. "Search every corner in the forest!"

forest

Then the men set out together into the forest. "Here are footsteps," said they as they reached the footpath. "And small ones – surely the children have been here."

Then the men hurried on to the pond but there they lost the trail. "They started toward the pond," said Karlsefni. "But there are no footsteps on the shore."

footsteps

By and by the men found the little bed where Snorri had slept. There lay Olaf's little cloak, just as he had spread it over the leaves.

"See! See!" cried Karlsefni, and he pointed to the torn and broken branches where the Skrelling had broken through.

"A Skrelling has stolen them!" Karlsefni cried. Without another word, the men hurried on.

"Yes, here are footsteps!" said the men. "See, large steps where the Skrelling walked. And on either side, little footsteps — Olaf and Snorri's!"

"We must go to the Skrelling village," said Karlsefni. The children are there."

So the men went back to their own village, put their fort in order, and left half their force of men to guard it. Then the other half set forth up the river to rescue the children.

At midnight the fort was roused. "Whoop! Whoop! Whoop!"

"The Skrellings! The Skrellings!" whispered the guard. In a twinkling, every Norseman was ready with his spear. Then there was a terrible fight. The Skrellings burned the fort, and the Norse warriors hurried the women

and children down to the ship, glad enough to escape. There on the ship the men waited for Karlsefni and his men to come back.

warriors

At last they came, and with them the two lost children, Olaf and Snorri.

"What is this?" cried Karlsefni, as he came over the hill and down into the village he had left.

"Hail! Hail! Hail!" shouted the Norsemen from the ship when they saw Karlsefni on the hilltop. But at the same time the Skrellings shouted, "Whoop! Whoop! Whoop!" from the forests round about.

"They have burned our village! They have driven our people to the ship!" said Karlsefni. Without another

word, he and his men rushed upon the Skrellings.

There was another fierce fight, and the Skrellings were driven back into the forests.

"It is a very sorry-looking home," said Biorne, looking around upon the smoking village.

"Let us go back to our own home in the North," said one of the men. "Why stay here in the midst of Skrellings?"

"Yes, let us go," said Karlsefni. "The place for Northmen is upon the sea."

So the men turned their ships toward the ocean. Again the dragons' heads rose and fell upon the waves, and away the Norsemen sped, back to their homes. As they sailed they sang :

I am the god Thor!

I am the god of war!

I am the god Thor!

I am the god of war!

13. The Norsemen were famous for their bravery. Does this story make the Norsemen appear brave? Explain your answer. _____



Color the picture above, illustrating the battle between the Norsemen and the Skrellings.

Directions: Rewrite each sentence, capitalizing where needed.

olaf was leif's son.

the norsemen came to north america.

they traveled from iceland.

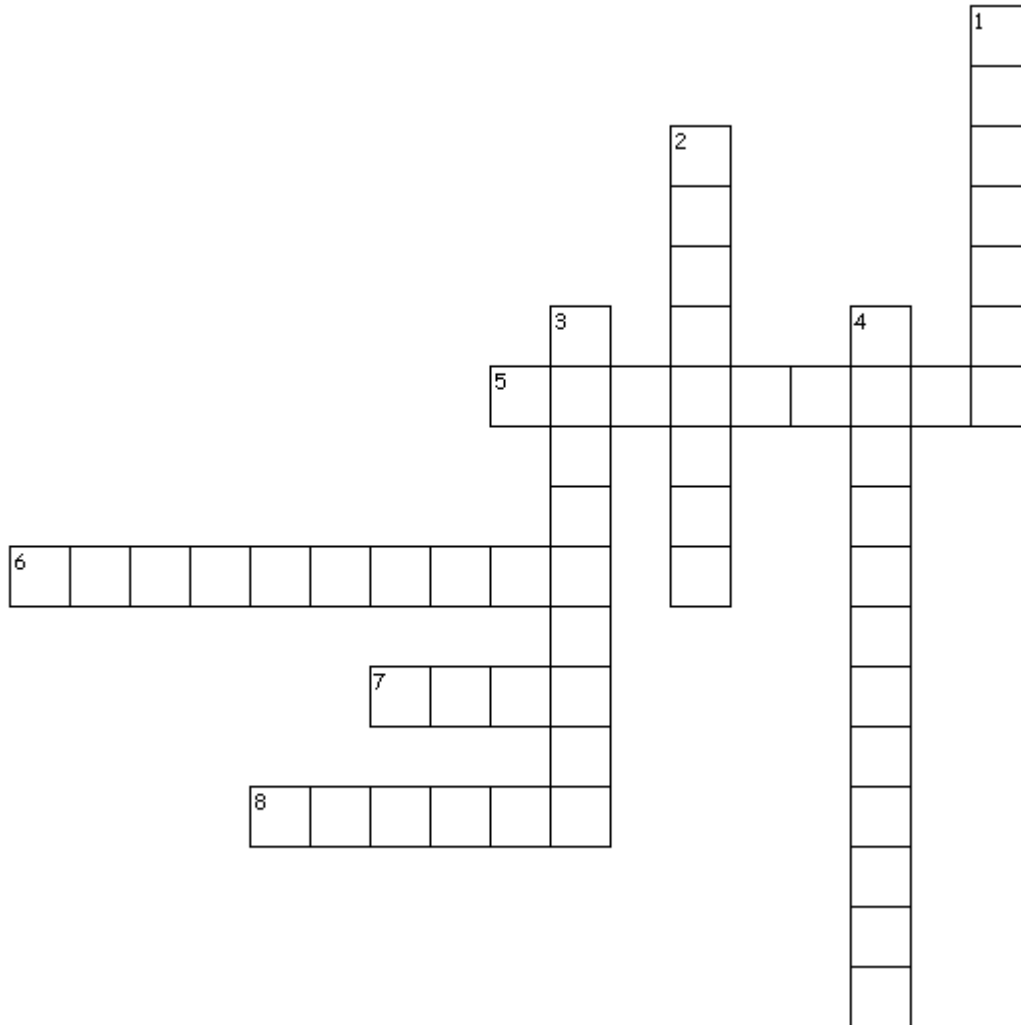
snorri and olaf were friends.

i am the god thor! i am the god of war!

the skrellings lived in a village.

they wanted to trade with europe.

Directions: Decipher each clue and put the term or name in the correct space on the crossword puzzle.



Across

- 5. The Norsemen wanted to export this to Europe
- 6. What the Norsemen called the Native Americans
- 7. Leif's son
- 8. The baby

Down

- 1. Where the Norsemen traveled from
- 2. Another name for the Northmen, or Vikings
- 3. Norseman who led the colonists to North America
- 4. Continent where Snorri was born

Click here for the workbook answer key: <http://bit.ly/1n359RP>