

**VIKING TALES.  
ILLUSTRATED BY  
VICTOR R. LAMBDIN**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649729562

Viking Tales. Illustrated by Victor R. Lambdin by Jennie Hall

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**JENNIE HALL**

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## VIKING TALES



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# VIKING TALES

*by*

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ILLUSTRATED

*by*

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RAND M'NALLY & CO

*Chicago New York*

*London*

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## What *the* Sagas Were

ICELAND is a little country far north in the cold sea. Men found it and went there to live more than a thousand years ago. During the warm season they used to fish and make fish-oil and hunt sea-birds and gather feathers and tend their sheep and make hay. But the winters were long and dark and cold. Men and women and children stayed in the house and carded and spun and wove and knit. 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 in 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. The work left their minds free to think and their lips to talk. What was there to talk about? The summer's fishing, the killing of a fox, a voyage to Norway. But

the people grew tired of this little gossip. Fathers looked at their children and thought:

“They are not learning much. What will make them brave and wise? What will teach them to love their country and old Norway? Will not the stories of battles, of brave deeds, of mighty men, do this?”

So, 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. Some men could sing and play the harp. This made the stories all the more interesting. People called such men “skalds,” and they called their songs “sagas.”

Every midsummer there was a great meeting. Men from all over Iceland came to it and made laws. During the day there were rest times, when no business was going on. Then some skald would take his harp and walk to a large stone or a knoll and stand on it and begin a song of some brave deed of an old