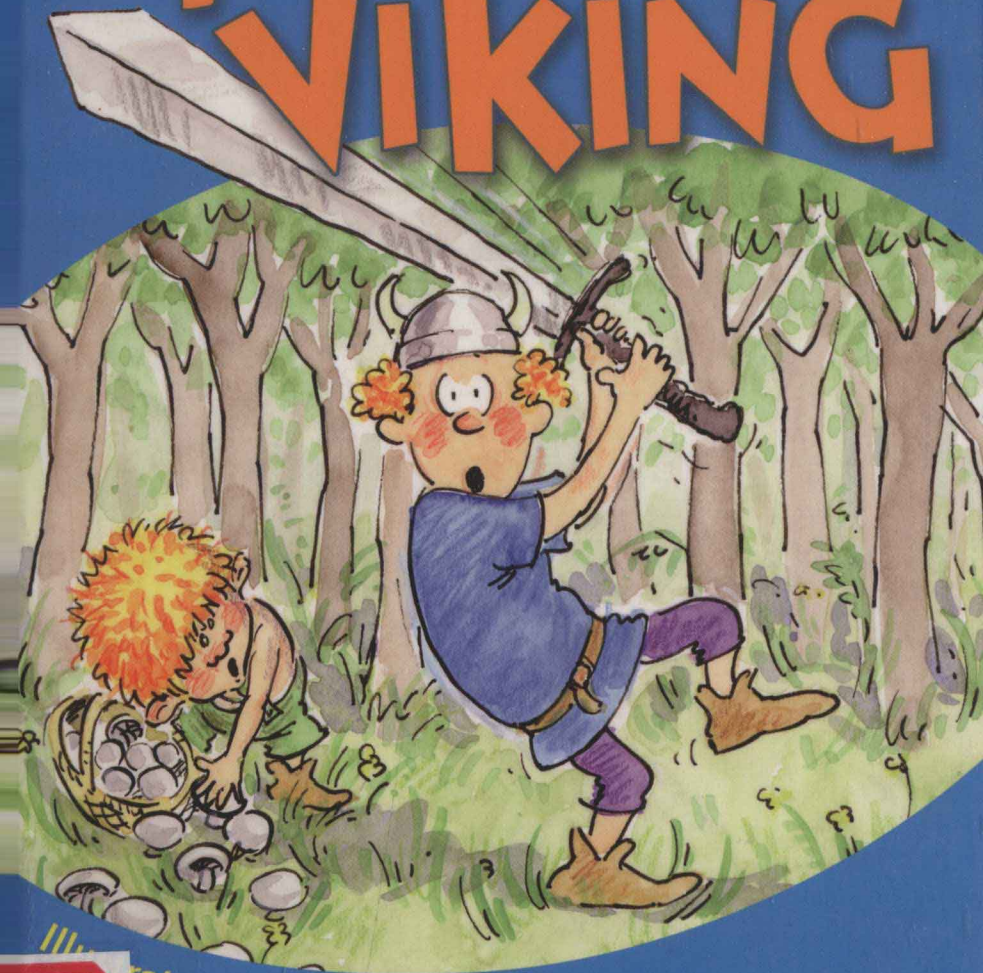




Aussie Bites

Plot the VIKING



Illustrated by Cathy Wilcox

Philip Neilsen

Aussie Bites
Spot the
VIKING

江苏工业学院图书馆
藏书章



Philip Neilsen
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Puffin Books

**For Mhairead. P.N.
For Oscar and Felix, two unconventional Vikings. C.W.**

PUFFIN BOOKS

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PUFFIN BOOKS

AUSSIE BITES

Splot the VIKING

Splot isn't like the other boys in Warrior School. He's clumsy, he looks different, and, worst of all, his best friend is a troll. But Splot is determined to show that he is a Viking warrior as good as any other!



Chapter One

The Naming of Splot

Everyone in the world has heard of the Vikings, except perhaps those people who live in caves in far-off mountains, or in deep holes in the desert. They only know about caves or holes – that’s what *they* are interested in.

But *you* know that the Vikings were warriors from Norway, Sweden and Denmark, and that they made long sea voyages to raid and terrify people in other countries – which, it has to be admitted, wasn’t very nice.


It didn't worry the Vikings one little bit that no one thought they were nice. 'Nice?!' they would say, in amazement. Their faces would go red and they would throw things on the ground, or spit in a disgusting way. 'Who wants to



be *nice*?!!' they would bellow, and they would stamp on the foot of the Viking standing next to them, just to prove their point.

In winter, when it was too cold to sail the ice-filled seas in search of people to terrify, the Vikings fought and frightened each other instead, just for practice. They got a lot of black eyes and bumps on their heads and sore shins, but at least they were happy.

However, there is one special Viking almost no one knows about. This is strange, because in some ways he was the most remarkable Viking of all. He lived in Norway, and his name



was Splot. And that is a remarkable name, too.

Splot's father, Harald, was a very clumsy Viking. He was always tripping over his battle-axe or his sword or his helmet. When his son was born and it was time to sign the birth register, Harald pressed the quill pen down too hard and made a big inky splotch on the parchment.

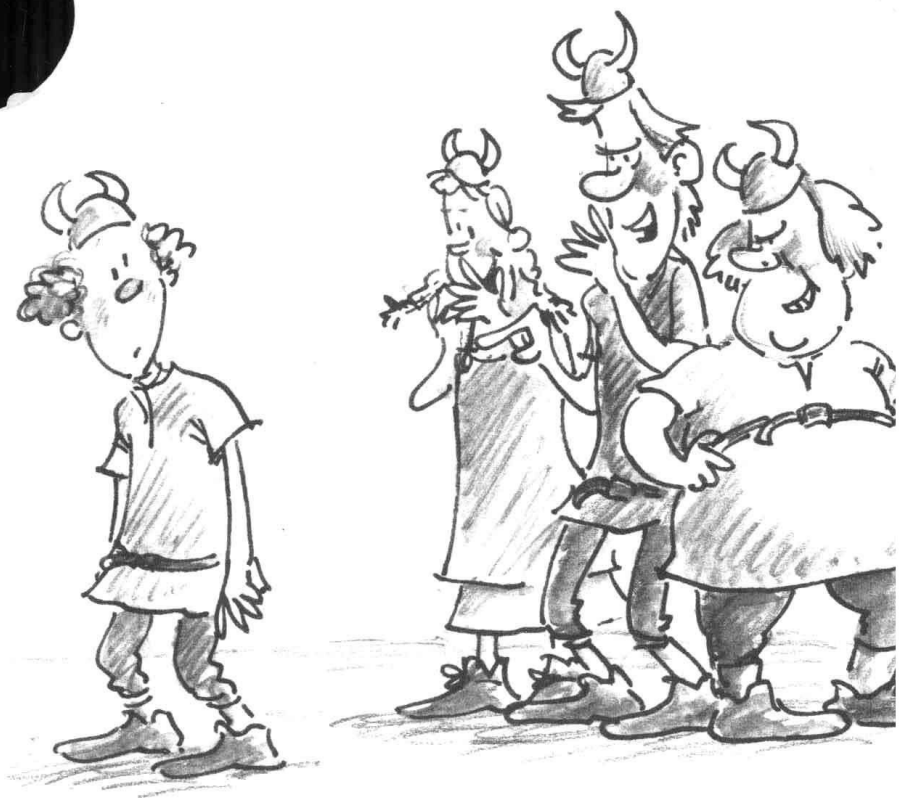
The Viking in Charge of Names (the VICON), who was a particularly impatient official, said, 'Although it breaks our tradition, I hereby rule that, because we have run out of parchments this week, the son of Harald will not be called Haraldson.'

He will for the rest of his life be called Splotch.'

The other Viking children called him Splotto, or Splot, for short. This was a bit mean, because a splotto was a black sea slug. Splottos were just about the only thing that Vikings refused to eat, because they were so slimy and tasted so foul.

This was not a good start in life for Splot. All the other Viking boys had super cool names like Thor or Odin. These were the names of gods – gods of thunder, or lightning, or war. Of course there was no god of sea slugs.

Splot had another problem. While most of the boys and girls were tall,



he was short – and he had a mess of orange hair that looked like a clown’s wig.


This was why the rumours started.

‘Did you hear about Splot?’ children whispered to each other. ‘He was adopted. The trolls left him in a basket

on his parents' doorstep!'

There are two important things to know about trolls. They are large and they are vicious. At night they leave their caves in the mountains and roll boulders onto people's roofs. They are ugly, often have orange hair, and are always in a bad mood. You wouldn't want to meet one on a lonely road at night. They have been rumoured to eat children.

All trolls have flat noses and small green eyes and are able to see in the dark. But they are slow-witted. They have trouble counting to three, or remembering where their caves are. This causes lots of fights, as they are



always tramping into the wrong cave and sitting on another troll's best chair. The chair usually has the owner of the cave already sitting in it. When he gets sat on, he worries that *he* may be in the wrong cave. This confusion leads to a lot of roaring and thumping, with angry conversations like this:


First troll: 'This is my chair, you big lump of smelly mud!'

Second troll: 'No it isn't, it's my chair, you huge pile of bird droppings!'

First troll: 'No it isn't, it's my chair!'

They go on like this for hours, in a tedious and silly way.

So you can understand that it hurt Splot's feelings when other children



accused him of being a troll instead of a proper Viking. He badly wanted to be accepted as a Viking – a Viking warrior as good as any other.



Chapter Two

Splot and the Troll


One fine morning Splot was eating his usual breakfast of herring-flavoured porridge. Lunch would be fried herrings, and dinner would be herring omelette and herring soup. Vikings didn't have a lot more to eat than herrings. This was the real reason they raided other countries – so they could find more interesting food.

Splot wondered how to spend the morning. From outside he could hear the sound of swords and shields

crashing together, and lots of grunting and angry yelling as Vikings practised their battle skills by hitting each other. Now and then there was a loud shout of 'Hey – that hurts!' or 'Ha ha – got you again!' or 'No you didn't, you big liar! I didn't feel a thing!'

When he'd finished his porridge, Splot sighed and slowly dragged his father's huge sword to the edge of the forest. Maybe if he practised with it enough he would get the hang of it. He tried to lift and twirl it above his head in the approved Viking manner, but fell over backwards.

A shout of anger came from behind him.



‘What do you think you are doing, you stupid, clumsy Viking oaf! You’ve squashed my mushrooms!’

Splot leaped up quickly and turned around. There in front of him was a creature with a flat nose, green eyes and orange hair. But it was much smaller than a troll.

‘Are you a troll?’ Splot asked.

A squeak of terror came from the odd creature. ‘Don’t say that word!’

‘What word? You mean *troll*?’ said Splot uncertainly.

‘I said, don’t *say* it!’

‘I’ve never seen a tro . . . I mean, one of *them* – as small as you,’ said Splot.



‘You’re not *supposed* to see us,’ said the creature. ‘I am a *forest* one-of-them, not a *mountain* one-of-them. Do I look like I could roll boulders onto people’s roofs?’

‘No,’ admitted Splot.