



Dear Readers,

How to Train Your Dragon is a true story, and it is a story about growing up.

For as I say myself, at the beginning of *How to Steal a Dragon's Sword*:

‘... sometimes we do not realise it at the time, but the story we are all a part of is not just a story about Vikings and islands and dragons. It is a story about growing up. And one of the things about growing up, one of the inescapable, inevitable laws, is that one day... One day... One day... It is going to happen. I am sorry, but it's true.’

And look!


It has happened.

Unbelievable, inconceivable.

The first book of *How to Train Your Dragon* was published *twenty years* ago now.

And I drew the very first pictures of Hiccup (who is really me) and his father Stoick the Vast (who is really my own father) *twenty-five* years ago when I had just had a baby, my eldest child, Maisie.

I drew those pictures because there is a moment after you've just had a baby that every parent will recognise, when you think to yourself: ‘They're going to let me out of hospital with a *baby*? But I know nothing about babies!’



So you start finding out about babies and looking back to your own childhood, and thinking about how *you* were brought up, and what kind of parent you would ideally want to be.

It could have been *How to Train Your Baby*, really.

This is why every line, every setting, every character, however extraordinary and fantastical and unlikely they may seem, *everything* in *How to Train Your Dragon* has a strange kind of truth to it.

The Isle of Berk is a real place, a wild little island in Scotland. An uninhabited isle so small that when you stand on the top of it you can see sea all around you. An island where I grew up and my children grew up and I first set my foot on that island over *fifty* years ago now.

See how we're going back in time even further!

So the writing in the books is a complicated mixture of memories of my childhood, and the here-and-now of bringing up my own children.

The dragons are sometimes dragons that I created myself on rainy August days back on that Scottish island when I was nine years old. And other times they are dragons that made my son Xanny laugh when he got much older and enjoyed me reading the books to him. And when Hiccup sets out in his





little boat, *The Hopeful Puffin*, it is sometimes Hiccup, and it is sometimes *me* setting out into those unpredictable Hebridean seas in a rubber dinghy with my siblings, untroubled by adults and with absolutely no life jackets, in the long-ago 1970s, when wild childhoods were a normal part of growing up.

When Hiccup talks to Toothless it is sometimes Hiccup talking, but sometimes it is *me* talking to my own children who grew up over the fifteen-year process of the writing of the books.

It was always my hope for these books to be enjoyed by adult and child together. The books are written to be read aloud, because books read to you live with you all your life. Every book starts and ends with the voice of Hiccup as an old man looking back on his childhood because I am trying to get the person reading aloud to go back to a long-ago lost time when they themselves believed in dragons, and heroes, and witches, just as strongly and innocently as the child sitting listening there beside them.

So when, in honour of the 20th anniversary edition, I am writing a story set in the *How to Train Your Dragon* world for the first time in eight long years, revisiting this place is a deeply haunting, joyous, but bittersweet experience.

For this precious world is a world that has *gone*...



And here is the thing about stories.

The crucible of the story will change those who read it, the characters within it, and the person who is telling it, all at the same time.

I have returned, in the writing of this short story, to a time three-quarters of the way through the *How to Train Your Dragon* story arc, before the Dragon Rebellion happens, and I have tried to recapture the innocence of that time, when Hiccup was still learning to be a dragon trainer, and I was still learning to be a writer and an illustrator, and neither of us yet knew what a Hero Hiccup was going to have to be.

In this new story, I have tried to introduce more of the world-building illustrations that I have learnt how to do on the way of my own journey, and to capture some of the joy and the splendour of flying on the back of a dragon that the movies brought to the world.

And I have finished on a note that is not intended to be a tease, exactly, more of an opening to myself, if I ever wanted to tell stories set in that world in the future.

In the meantime...

Thank you.

Thank you to everyone who has loved *How to Train Your Dragon*, and made it part of their own childhoods,



and their own family narratives.


Thank you to the many adults over the past twenty years who have put on wonderful performances of Gobber the Belch and Stoick the Vast, and Toothless, bringing alive the joy of books and the astonishing benefits of reading to the children in their lives. Those children being read to twenty years ago have grown up, too, and are reading and recommending the books to children today. (There is no greater joy, as an author.)

Thank you to my publishers at Hachette, in particular Anne McNeil, Becky Logan, Ruth Alltimes and Naomi Greenwood, and my agents Caroline Walsh and Nicky Lund. Thank you to the incomparable David Tennant for his magnificent readings of the books, and the film-makers, in particular Dean DeBlois, and Chris Sanders and Bonnie Arnold and Chris Kuser, and the incredible music of John Powell – but really to everyone at DreamWorks, who put their hearts and their imaginations into bringing this world to the screen.

And ultimately, I want to say thank you, always and forever, to my own family.

To my father, the giant who brought the dragons into my life, and who died five years ago.

To my husband Simon, my anchor and my star.



And to my three children, Maisie, Clemmie, and Xanny.
That baby in the car seat, Maisie, just turned twenty-five years old. A quarter of a century passed in the blink of an eye.

Clemmie is twenty-two.

And Xan is nineteen.

Here is what I learnt in the writing of these stories.

It wasn't *How to Train Your Baby* after all.

It was *How to Train Your Parent*.

Bringing up children, and writing for children, is just as much about what you learn from *them*, as what you are trying to teach.

Listen to your children.

I have learnt so much from my own children's imagination, their creativity, their positivity, their intelligence and their lack of prejudice.

I am so proud of these three young adults.

And in my head, if I close my eyes, I can still see them playing, still hear them talking, chatting to each other endlessly, never still, never quiet, oh my *goodness* those children were lively. One-year-old Maisie. Two-year-old Clemmie. Three-year-old Xanny.

Growing and changing in time. And yet...

... forever young.

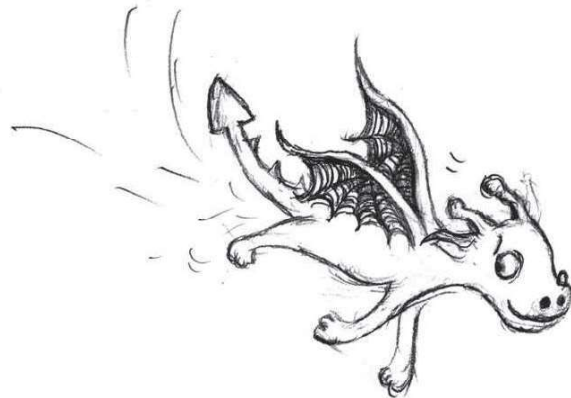
Thank you.



Cressida Cancell

20TH
ANNIVERSARY EDITION

HOW TO TRAIN YOUR
DRAGON



written and illustrated by
CRESSIDA COWELL

h
HODDER

HODDER CHILDREN'S BOOKS

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How to Train Your Hogfly first published in 2023

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How to Train Your Hogfly

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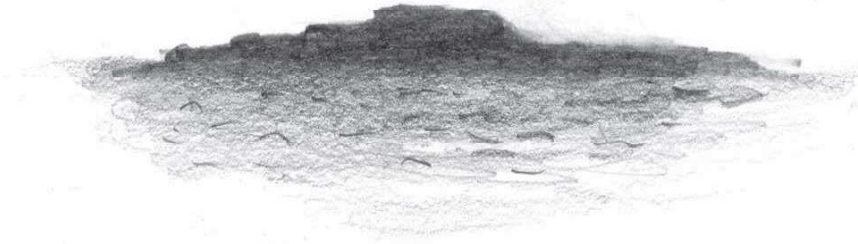


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to my father





JOIN HICCUP ON HIS QUEST

(although he doesn't quite realise he is on one yet...)

THE PROPHECY OF THE KING'S LOST THINGS

*'The Dragontime
is coming*

And only a King can save you now.

*The King shall be the
Champion of Champions.*

*You shall know the King
By the King's Lost Things.*

*A fang-free dragon, my second-best sword,
My Roman shield,*

*An arrow-from-the-land-that-does-not-exist,
The heart's stone, the key-that-opens-all-locks,
The ticking-thing, the Throne, the Crown.*

*And last and best of all the ten,
The Dragon Jewel shall save all men.'*



Hiccup



Speedifist



DOGSBREATH THE
DUHRAIN



Tuffnut Junior



WART, HOG

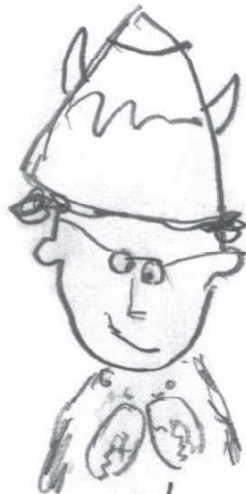
~Novices of the Hairy Hooligan tribe~



↖
clueless



STICK THE VAST



Fishlegs



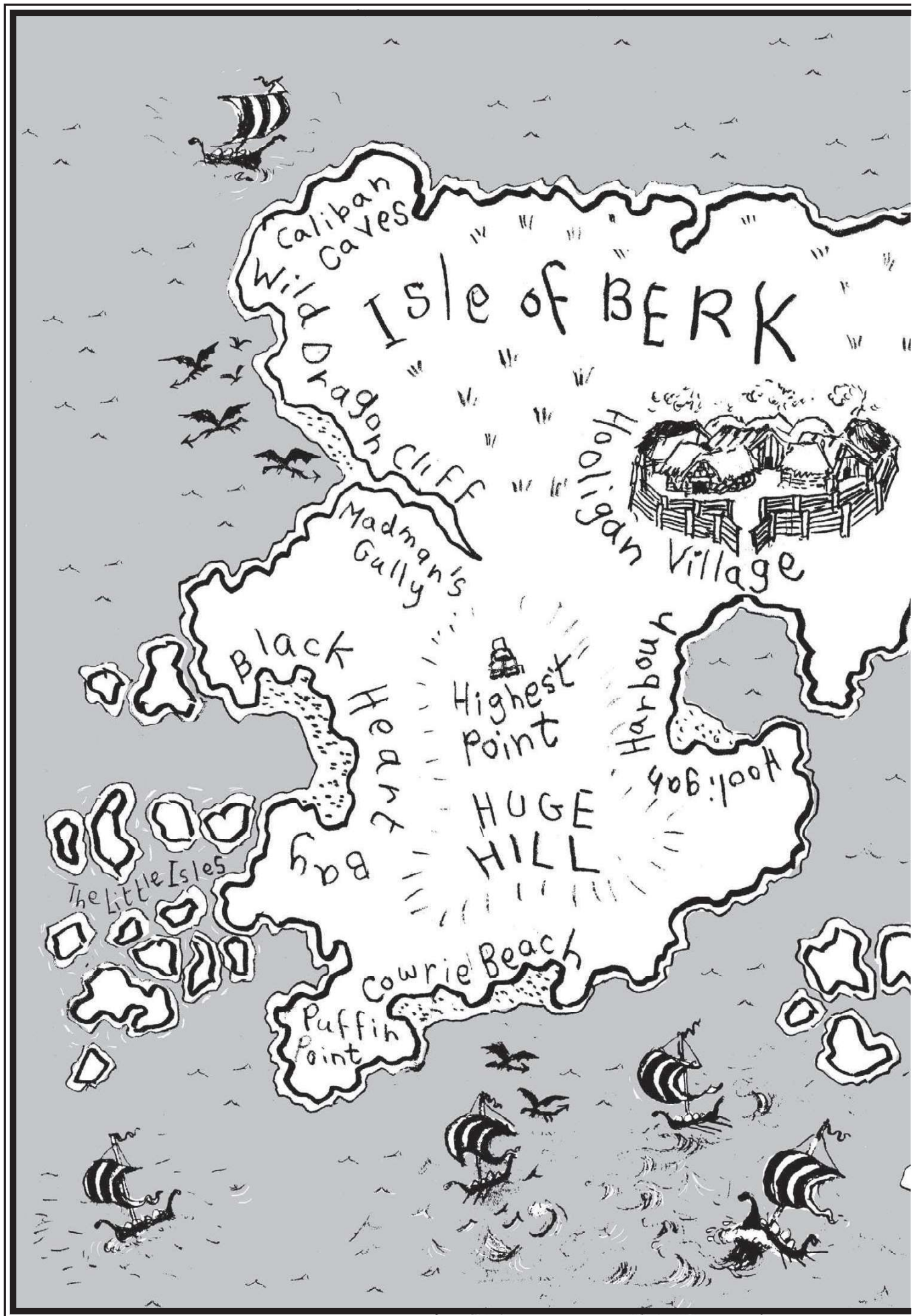
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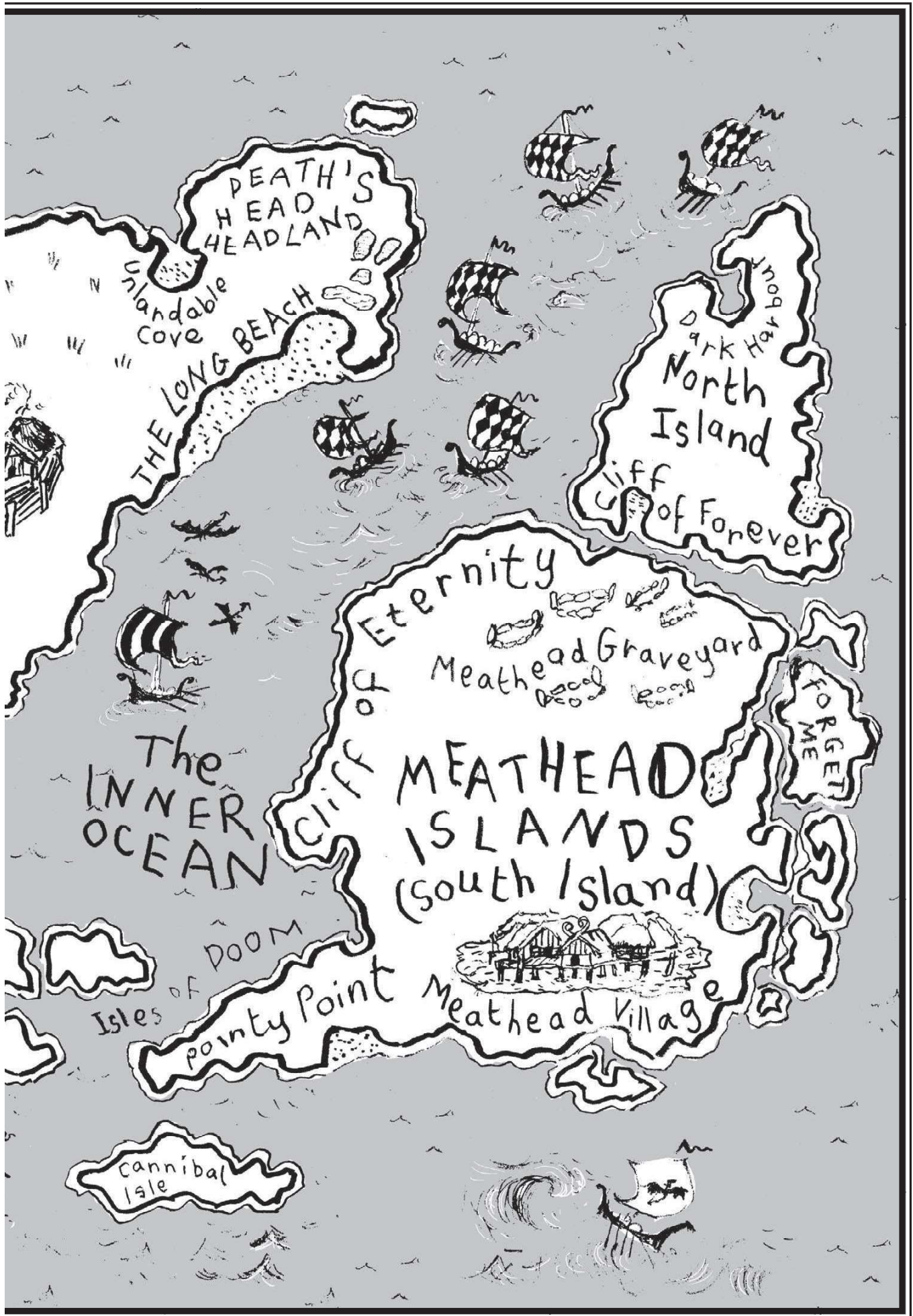


↖
GOBBER
THE BELCH

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←
Hiccup
Horrendous
Haddock
the
Third

A Note from Hiccup

There were dragons when I was a boy.

There were great, grim, sky dragons that nested on the cliff tops like gigantic scary birds. Little, brown, scuttly dragons that hunted down the mice and rats in well-organised packs. Preposterously huge Sea Dragons that were twenty times as big as the Big Blue Whale and who killed for the fun of it.

You will have to take my word for it, for the dragons are disappearing so fast they may soon become extinct.

Nobody knows what is happening. They are crawling back into the sea from whence they came, leaving not a bone, not a fang, in the earth for the men of the future to remember them by.

So, in order that these amazing creatures should not be forgotten, I will tell this true story from my childhood.

I was not the sort of boy who could train a dragon with the mere lifting of an eyebrow. I was not a natural at the Heroism business. I had to work at it. This is the story of becoming a Hero the Hard Way.

1. FIRST CATCH YOUR DRAGON

Long ago, on the wild and windy isle of Berk, a smallish Viking with a longish name stood up to his ankles in snow.

Hiccup Horrendous Haddock the Third, the Hope and Heir to the Tribe of the Hairy Hooligans, had been feeling slightly sick ever since he woke up that morning.

Ten boys, including Hiccup, were hoping to become full members of the Tribe by passing the Dragon Initiation Programme. They were standing on a bleak little beach at the bleakest spot on the whole bleak island. A heavy snow was falling.

‘PAY ATTENTION!’ screamed Gobber the Belch, the soldier in charge of teaching Initiation. ‘This will be your first military operation, and Hiccup will be commanding the team.’

‘Oh, not Hic-cup,’ groaned Dogsbreath the Duhbrain and most of the other boys. ‘You can’t put Hiccup in charge, sir, he’s **USELESS.**’

Hiccup Horrendous Haddock the Third, the



GOBBER the Belch
Idiot in charge of
Initiation

Hope and Heir to the Tribe of the Hairy Hooligans, wiped his nose miserably on his sleeve. He sank a little deeper into the snow.

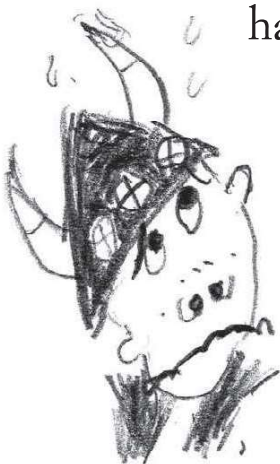
‘ANYBODY would be better than Hiccup,’ sneered Snotface Snotlout. ‘Even Fishlegs would be better than Hiccup.’

Fishlegs had a squint that made him as blind as a jellyfish, and an allergy to reptiles.

‘SILENCE!’ roared Gobber the Belch. ‘The next boy to speak has limpets for lunch for the next **THREE WEEKS!**’

There was absolute silence immediately. Limpets are a bit like worms and a bit like snot and a lot less tasty than either.

‘Hiccup will be in charge and that is an order!’ screamed Gobber, who didn’t do noises quieter than screaming. He was a six-and-a-half-foot giant with a mad glint in his one working eye and a beard like exploding fireworks. Despite the freezing cold he was wearing hairy shorts and a teeny weeny deerskin vest that showed off his lobster-red skin and bulging muscles. He was holding a flaming torch in one gigantic fist.



‘Hiccup will be leading you, although he is, admittedly, completely useless, because Hiccup is the son of the CHIEF, and that’s the way things go with us Vikings. Where do you think you are, the REPUBLIC OF ROME? Anyway, that is the least of your problems today. You are here to prove yourself as a Viking Hero. And it is an ancient tradition of the Hooligan Tribe that you should’ – Gobber paused dramatically –

‘FIRST CATCH YOUR DRAGON!’

Ohhhhhh suffering scallops,
thought Hiccup.

‘Our dragons are what set us apart!’ bellowed Gobber. ‘Lesser humans train hawks to hunt for them, horses to carry them. It is only the VIKING HEROES who dare to tame the wildest, most dangerous creatures on earth.’

Gobber spat solemnly into the snow. ‘There are three parts to the Dragon Initiation Test. The first and most dangerous part is a test of your courage and skill at burglary. If you wish to enter the Hairy Hooligan Tribe, you must first catch your dragon. And that is WHY,’ continued Gobber, at full volume, ‘I have



brought you to this scenic spot. Take a look at Wild Dragon Cliff itself.'

The ten boys tipped their heads backwards.

The cliff loomed dizzyingly high above them, black and sinister. In summer you could barely even see the cliff as dragons of all shapes and sizes swarmed over it, snapping and biting and sending up a cacophony of noise that could be heard all over Berk.

But in winter the dragons were hibernating and the cliff fell silent, except for the ominous, low rumble of their snores. Hiccup could feel the vibrations through his sandals.

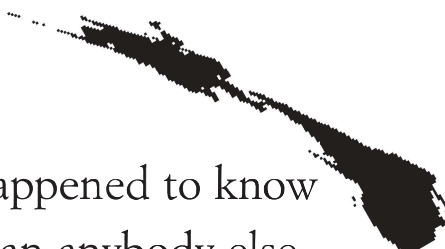
'Now,' said Gobber, 'do you notice those four caves about halfway up the cliff, grouped roughly in the shape of a skull?'



The boys nodded.

'Inside the cave that would be the right eye of the skull is the Dragon Nursery, where there are, **AT THIS VERY MOMENT**, three thousand young dragons having their last few weeks of winter sleep.'

'OOOOOOOH,' muttered the boys excitedly.



Hiccup swallowed hard. He happened to know considerably more about dragons than anybody else there. Ever since he was a small boy, he'd been fascinated by the creatures. He'd spent hour after long hour dragon-watching in secret. (Dragon-spotters were thought to be geeks and nerds, hence the need for secrecy.) And what Hiccup had learnt about dragons told him that walking into a cave with three thousand dragons in it was an act of madness.

No one else seemed too concerned, however.

'In a few minutes I want you to take one of these baskets and start climbing the cliff,' commanded Gobber the Belch. 'Once you are at the cave entrance, you are on your own. I am too large to squeeze my way into the tunnels that lead to the Dragon Nursery. You will enter the cave QUIETLY— and that means you too, Wartihog, unless you want to become the first spring meal for three thousand hungry dragons, HA HA HA HA!'

Gobber laughed heartily at his little joke, then continued. 'Dragons this size are normally fairly harmless to man, but in these numbers they will set upon you like piranhas. There'd be nothing left of even a fatso like you, Wartihog — just a pile of bones



and your helmet. HA HA HA HA! So... you will walk QUIETLY through the cave and each boy will steal ONE sleeping dragon. Lift the dragon GENTLY from the rock and place it in your basket. Any questions so far?’

Nobody had any questions.

‘In the unlikely event that you DO wake the dragons – and you would have to be IDIOTICALLY STUPID to do so – run like thunder for the entrance to the cave. Dragons do not like cold weather and the snow will probably stop them in their tracks.’

Probably? thought Hiccup. *Oh, well, that's reassuring.*

'I suggest that you spend a little time choosing your dragon. It is important to get one the correct size. This will be the dragon that hunts fish for you, and pulls down deer for you. You will catch the dragon that will carry you into battle later on, when you are much older and a Warrior of the Tribe. But, nonetheless, you want an impressive animal, so a rough guide would be, choose the biggest creature that will fit into your basket. Don't linger for **TOO** long in there—'

Linger??? thought Hiccup. *In a cave full of three thousand sleeping **DRAGONS?***

'I need not tell you,' Gobber continued cheerfully, 'that if you return to this spot *without* a dragon, it is hardly worth coming back at all. Anybody who **FAILS** this task will be put into immediate exile. The Hairy Hooligan Tribe has no use for **FAILURES**. Only the strong can belong.'

Unhappily, Hiccup looked round at the distant horizon. Nothing but snow and sea as far as the eye could see. Exile didn't look too promising, either.

'**RIGHT,**' said Gobber briskly. 'Each boy take a

basket to put their dragon in and we'll get going.'

The boys rushed to get their baskets, chattering happily and excitedly.

'I'm going to get one of those Monstrous Nightmare ones with the extra-extendable claws, they're really scary,' boasted Snotlout.

'Oh shut up, Snotlout, you can't,' said Speedifist. 'Only Hiccup can have a Monstrous Nightmare, you have to be the son of a chief.' Hiccup's father was Stoick the Vast, the fearsome chief of the Hairy Hooligan tribe.

'HIC-CUP?!' sneered Snotlout. 'If he's as useless at this as he is at Bashyball, we'll be lucky if he even gets one of the Basic Browns.'

The Basic Brown was the most common type of dragon, a serviceable beast but without much glamour.

'SHUDDUP AND GET INTO LINE YOU MISERABLE TADPOLES!' yelled Gobber the Belch.

The boys scrambled into their places, baskets on their backs, and stood to attention. Gobber walked along the line, lighting the torch that each boy held in front of him from the great flare in his hand.

'IN HALF AN HOUR'S TIME YOU WILL BE A VIKING WARRIOR, WITH YOUR FAITHFUL

~VIKING DRAGONS AND THEIR EGGS~

**THE COMMON OR
GARDEN and THE
BASIC BROWN**

The Common or Garden and the Basic Brown are so similar that they can be dealt with together. These are the most familiar breeds - the ones we instantly think of when we say 'dragons'. They are poor hunters, but they are easy to train. These dragons are the best kind for family pets, although, as with a lion or a tiger, they should never be left unsupervised with very young children.



~ STATISTICS ~

COLOURS: Green and yellow, all shades of brown.

ARMED WITH: Basic teeth and claws.

FEAR FACTOR:..... 3

ATTACK:..... 3

SPEED:..... 4

SIZE:..... 4

DISOBEDIENCE: 1

SERPENT AT YOUR SIDE... OR
BREAKFASTING WITH WODEN IN VALHALLA
WITH DRAGON'S TEETH IN YOUR BOTTOM!

screamed Gobber with horrible enthusiasm.

‘DEATH OR GLORY!’ yelled Gobber.

‘DEATH OR GLORY!’ yelled eight boys back at
him fanatically.

Death, thought Hiccup and Fishlegs, sadly.

Gobber paused
dramatically, with the horn
to his lips.

*I think this could
possibly be the worst
moment of my life SO
FAR*, thought Hiccup
to himself, as he waited
for the blast of the horn.
*And if they shout much
louder we’re going to wake
up those dragons before we
even START.*

‘PARRRRRRRRRP!’

Gobber blew the horn.



