

AXE OF IRON—THE SETTLERS

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION

1. The Northmen emigrated from a known land to an unknown one. Compare the trials and tribulations of today's émigrés with those of the Northmen.
2. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of communal living in a time of exploration. How does communal living reduce the dangers of exploring a new world?
3. Sex and death are integral parts of the colonists' lives. Discuss how these facets of life affect the colony's successes and/or failures.
4. Discuss the concept of honor as it relates to the Northmen's culture. Besides the *Einvigi*, what other rituals and actions show how important honor is to the colonists?
5. What effect did the newly converted Christians have on the culture of the Norse society? Discuss the problems and/or benefits inherent in having a multi-religious community.
6. Unlike most early societies, Norse women enjoyed many of the same privileges as the men. What do you think accounts for this equality?
7. Why do you think Deskaheh was so readily accepted by the Northmen? Why would Thora be drawn to a war chief who had led a raid against her friends? And why does Gudbjartur allow Halfdan to give the prisoner weapons and release him without further discussion/argument?
8. Compare the customs and living arrangements of the settlers and the Thalmiut. Which seems more efficient? Is efficiency in a culture important? Why or why not?
9. Sexuality is a natural part of the colonists' lives. Why, then, can Frida cause so much turmoil with her promiscuity?
10. Rape is more about power than sex. With that perspective, discuss the actions of the men who rape the Native women. Do you think Halfdan made the right decision with respect to the rapists?