

Confrontation
by J.A. Hunsinger
Vinland Publishing

Reviewed by Karolina Blaha-Black

"I want to know how to use this axe. And I want to know how to fight like him."

The words above describe the awe felt by the Naskapi Indians of Vinland (North America) when they discovered that there are new people, the Norse, inhabiting their land, with their strange customs and ways. Confrontation is book two in the Axe of Iron series, about the migration of the Norse people to Vinland, the coexistence with the native Indians, and the slow assimilation of the two nations.

The book is a gripping read and a rip-roaring adventure, starting with a bang of a beginning when the chieftain of the Norse settlement, Halfdan, and his lieutenant, Gudbjartur, take three of the young boys from the settlement moose hunting. One of the boys is killed in the hunt by an enraged bull moose and thus starts the meticulously-researched journey that takes the reader into the midst of Halfdanskjard, the Norse village of which Halfdan is a chieftain. The reader also bears witness to the many encounters with the Haudenosaunee and Naskapi Indians, predecessors of the Iroquois and the Cree, respectively.

The adventure peaks when Ivar, son of Gudbjartur, gets captured by Haudenosaunee warriors when he goes out with several men on a peaceful mission of exploration. Later on, on a similar mission, Gudbjartur himself gets captured by a different Naskapi band, but they give him a chance to live and learn their ways and customs. Gudbjartur makes a name for himself when he defends the Naskapi village of his captors from the Haudenosaunee, their enemies. For this courageous act he receives an honorable name among the Naskapi people--Nipishish, the Axeman.

The book ends with the village of Halfdanskjard successfully defending an attack on the settlement from the Anishinabeg Indians, who remain hostile and do not want the pale skins in their land. Whether the Norsemen prevail remains to be seen in the next book, Assimilation.

The author included a glossary of Indian as well as Norse terms which help not only with the pronunciation, but also with some of the customs that the Indians and the Norse follow. The author's unique voice and viewpoint enhances this rollicking historical adventure novel, which is bound to please young and old alike. Highly recommended.

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