

Reading Revision- Fiction

The Ulfberth

Gudmund stared at his sword. It glistened in the early dawn light and a shiver ran down his spine. Soon it would be time. He looked down at the others. The warriors looked peaceful as they lay around the camp, the sun's rays slicing their sleeping bodies between long, tree-lined shadows.

"Not long now," a voice rumbled from behind Gudmund's shoulder.

Gudmund gripped his sword and spun round. A huge warrior stood over him. He had deep, shadowed eyes, a matted beard, and wild, yellow hair. Gudmund loosened his grip, it was Bjalki, his friend and comrade. The huge man tore at a piece of meat with his teeth and sat down beside Gudmund. "Today you will have peace, my old friend," he growled, chewing at some gristle. "As Odin is my witness."

Gudmund tried to smile. "Do you know how long it has been, Bjalki?" he asked, staring at the strange markings that ran along the sword's blade. "I was just seven seasons old." A light breeze eased through Gudmund's hair and the sky darkened. "I remember Valgard attacking the village. I remember him fighting my father..." His eyes misted over and he ran his fingers over the handle of his sword. "And I remember the ship burial when my father was laid to rest."

Bjalki reached over and slapped Gudmund's shoulder with a giant hand. "Then today you will have your revenge," he smiled; his eyes wide and wild. "And if not, then you shall meet your father again in Valhalla!" The sun crept out from behind the clouds, and the blade glistened once again. "That is an Ulfberth sword," Bjalki exclaimed, the sun reflecting into his eyes.

"Indeed it is," Gudmund smiled knowingly, rising to his feet. "It was my father's, and his father's before him."

"Then Odin really is with you!" Bjalki laughed. He jumped up and began kicking at the sleeping men's feet. "Wake up!" he roared. "We are Vikings! Today we battle! Today we taste victory!"

"For Odin!" the men cheered.

"For our king!" Bjalki bellowed, raising Gudmund's arm into the air.

'For my father', Gudmund thought, as the Ulfberth glistened in the early dawn light.



1. When Bjalki first speaks, his 'voice rumbled from behind Gudmund's shoulder'. Why do you think the writer used this verb to describe the way Bjalki speaks?



2. What is an 'Ulfberth'?



3. How do you think Gudmund was feeling when Bjalki crept up on him? Give two reasons why you think this.



4. Explain what you think happened when Valgard attacked Gudmund's village:

Reading Revision- Non Fiction

Viking Sword



Quick Sword Facts

- Width: 4 – 6 cm
- Weight: 1 – 2 kg
- Length: 60 – 90 cm

Leg-Biter!
A sword might be the most expensive item that a Viking owned. They were often given names, like 'Leg-biter' and 'Gold-hilt', and passed down through the generations from father to son.

Ulfberth
The finest Viking swords came from central Europe and were made from high-quality steel. One of these was the Ulfberth, a sword of status and prestige.

Did you know?
Because they cost so much to make, not every Viking owned a sword. Spears were the most common weapon for warriors, but they were also quite fond of battle-axes!

Blades
The blade of a Viking sword was double-edged, which means it was sharp on both sides.

Viking Law
Viking law stated that all free men should own weapons. Decent weapons weren't used just for battles; they showed a person's status and wealth as well – none more so than a Viking sword!



1. Viking swords weren't just used in battle. What other use did they have?



2. Vikings sometimes gave names to their swords. Find one from the text and explain why that might be a good name for a Viking sword.



3. Imagine you were given a Viking sword, and you had to give it a Viking name. What would you call it? Give a reason for your answer.



4. Name the three parts of a Viking sword that make up the hilt:
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Reading Revision- Poetry

The Godless

I pray they did not see me,
through the flames and through the smoke
and I pray, Lord, for forgiveness
for the Godless Norsemen folk.

For they worship Thor and Odin,
and they slaughter and they kill;
they do not know of mercy,
and know nothing of God's will.

I pray you will forgive me
as I ran into this church
away from those who need me
in hope they'll stop their search.

Their swords and spears were flying;
red rain had filled the air,

they burnt down all the houses
and all the people there.

Hush! I hear them coming!
Their laughter scares me more.
As I kneel down praying to you, Lord,
they're smashing down the door.

I smell their ale and blood, Lord,
as I crouch and now I lie,
their footsteps'r edging near, Lord,
but I do not fear to die.

They've got me, Lord, it's over,
they've stabbed me – Lord, I'm broke!
Forgive them, Lord, I beg you:
the Godless, Norsemen folk.



1. Who are 'they'?



2. 'red rain had filled the air'

What sort of image does this create in your mind?



Look at the verse beginning 'Hush! I hear them coming!...'

Read the lines carefully and try to visualise what is happening. Now write a few sentences below summarising what you think is happening in this verse.



Read the third verse and think about the person narrating the poem. Why do you think he asks for forgiveness?
