



YOUNG CITY READS 2014
READING GUIDE

ONE CITY.
ONE BOOK.

A THOUSAND
CONVERSATIONS.



THE SLEEPING ARMY

FRANCESCA SIMON

JOIN THE ADVENTURE!

'A terrific journey through the world of the Norse myths,
a harsh northern landscape sparkling with magic ... plenty of humour ...
I take my horned helmet off to her'. *The Guardian*



WHAT IS YOUNG CITY READS?

Imagine sharing a book with your best friend, your teacher, your family or your bus driver. Reading a book together is a fun experience. Everyone should try it!

Children's author Francesca Simon (creator of the fantastically fiendish Horrid Henry series) invites you to join us in a citywide read of her book *The Sleeping Army* from 6 March to 22 May 2014.



Who is it for?

Young City Reads is for everyone: whether you're an avid adventurer, budding bookworm or a simply terrific teacher... even Mums and Dads can join in. It doesn't matter who you are, Young City Reads is about opening up the world of words and ideas to everyone.

How does it work?

It couldn't be simpler. The idea is to get young readers (and grown-ups) everywhere reading *The Sleeping Army* between now and the end of May 2014. All you need to do to get involved is pick up a copy from your local library or bookshop and start reading! If you're a teacher you can sign up your whole class to receive class emails and free resources, then read the book together in school.

SPECIAL OFFER:

Award winning independent children's bookshop, **The Book Nook** in Hove are offering participating schools **20% off** the selected title and **FREE DELIVERY** straight to your school.

To order please contact them on **01273 911988**

vanessathebooknook@gmail.com

The Guide

This guide provides you with everything you need to know about Young City Reads. It will take you on a whistle-stop tour of *The Sleeping Army*, provide background information, reading hints, biographical facts and ideas for further reading.

Young City Reads is a Collected Works CIC project.

Collected Works CIC

Collected Works is a Brighton & Hove based social enterprise, devoted to reader development through the shared act of reading fiction in the community. The organisation is led by Artistic Director Sarah Hutchings.

For more up-to-the-minute information visit cityreads.co.uk

ABOUT THE BOOK

Freya is an ordinary girl living in modern Britain, but with a twist: people still worship the Viking gods. One evening, stuck with her dad on his night shift at the British Museum, she is drawn to the Lewis Chessmen and Heimdall's Horn. Unable to resist, she blows the horn, waking three chess pieces from their enchantment; the slaves Roskva and Alfi, and Snot the Berserker. They are all summoned to Asgard, land of the Viking gods, and told they must go on a perilous journey to restore the gods to youth. If Freya refuses she will be turned into an ivory chess piece but, if she accepts her destiny and fails, the same terrible fate awaits her.

Parallel Universe

Imagine a world in which Christianity just didn't happen. In Francesca Simon's parallel portrait of Britain, the population still worship the Norse gods of the Vikings. The author helps us enter this alternate world effortlessly with little details like days of the week called 'Wodensday' and 'Thorsday' and people exclaiming "oh my gods" all the time. It's a fabulously imaginative and well-crafted conceit that leaves plenty of room for class discussion.



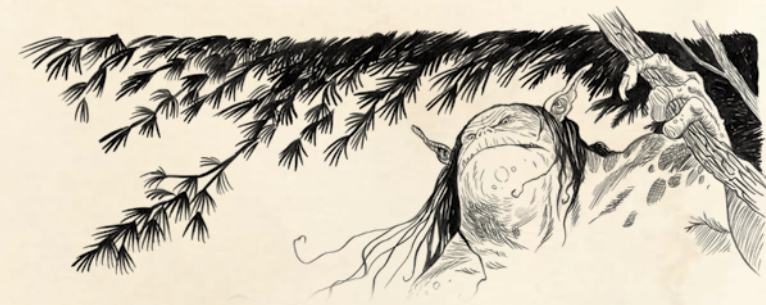
A Reluctant Quest

Freya is not a happy heroine... by her own admission her idea of adventure is trying a new vegetable. She throws up when she arrives on Bifrost (the rainbow bridge to Asgard) and protests wildly when Snot throws her over his shoulder on the way to the giant's mountain home. However, like all true heroines, despite experiencing great fear, she also shows tremendous courage and determination.



The Lewis Chessmen

The Lewis Chessmen featured in the book aren't made up. They are a collection of medieval chess pieces carved from walrus and whale teeth that were discovered on the Isle of Lewis (west of Scotland) in 1831. Most of them are now kept in the British Museum in London. Most historians believe that they were made in Norway but nobody really knows how they arrived in Scotland.



Spotlight on Francesca Simon

Francesca Simon spent her childhood on the beach in California, and started writing stories from the age of eight. She then went to Yale and Oxford Universities to study medieval history and literature. She threw away a lucrative career as a medievalist and worked as a freelance journalist, writing for the *Sunday Times*, *Guardian*, *Mail on Sunday*, *Telegraph*, and *Vogue* (US).

It was reading so many stories to her son Joshua that encouraged her to start writing children's books and many of Francesca's stories have been inspired by real life situations. One of Francesca's most successful and irrepressible creations has been the famous (or should that be infamous) Horrid Henry, who first appeared in 1994.

'Simon blends historical detail with contemporary, funny dialogue and creates in Freya a genuinely believable heroine who yearns for excitement and security in equal measure.'
Daily Mail

Spotlight on Adam Stower (Illustrator)

The person responsible for the brilliant depictions of your favourite characters from *The Sleeping Army* is Brighton-based illustrator and author Adam Stower. Adam achieved a first class honours degree in Illustration from Norwich School of Art then followed this by completing a Masters in Narrative Illustration at the University of Brighton and he has been illustrating professionally ever since.

Adam illustrates work by a great variety of authors as well as several books he has written himself, the most recent being *Troll and the Oliver* (Templar). Adam works with publishers in the UK and the US and his picture books have been translated into many languages around the world.

EVENTS PROGRAMME

FRANCESCA SIMON LIVE

Thurs 22 May, 1.30 – 2.30 pm

Brighton Dome Concert Hall

Tickets £3

On sale at the end of February

01273 709709 or brightonfestival.org

.....

WORLD BOOK DAY

ILLUSTRATION WORKSHOPS WITH ADAM STOWER

Thurs 06 March

Jubilee Library, Brighton

Selected schools only

.....

LIBRARY VISITS FOR YOUR CLASS

All schools participating in YCR can book a FREE class visit to one of Brighton & Hove's City Libraries

Please contact Lucy Castle on 01273 296977
lucy.castle@brighton-hove.gov.uk

.....

VIKING ADVENTURES – YCR FAMILY FILM SCREENINGS

Every Sunday in April, 11.15 am

Jubilee Library, Brighton

FREE drop in

.....

Also look out for . . .

I BELIEVE IN UNICORNS BY WIZARD PRESENTS

‘Breathtakingly beautiful and utterly charming... a must see.’

Primary Times Edinburgh

This intimate one-woman show is set in a library full of books that hold more than stories within their pages. It is a tale of the power of books, and the bravery of a young boy called Tomas. Add your own piece of magic by bringing a children's book to become part of the set, and swap it for another at the end.

Sunday 25 May, 10.30am and 1.30pm

Dome Studio Theatre

Tickets £7

.....

FURTHER READING

More Viking stories & Norse Myths



The Lost Gods by Francesca Simon

The Hand of the Viking Warrior by Terry Deary

Norse Myths and Legends by Anita Ganeri

Odd and the Frost Giants by Neil Gaiman

The Orchard Book of Viking Stories
by Robert Swindells

Thor and the Master of Magic
by Kevin Crossley-Holland

Viking Longship by Mick Manning and Brigitta Granstrom

Tom Trueheart and the Land of Myths and Legends by Ian Beck

Traditional Tales from Norse Lands by Vic Parker

More fantasy titles

The Wee Free Men by Terry Pratchett

Skellig by David Almond

How to Train your Dragon by Cressida Cowell

The Tale of Despereaux by Kate DiCamillo

Scream Street Series by Tommy Donbavand

The London Eye Mystery by Siobhan Dowd

The Travelling Restaurant by Barbara Else

Stone Heart by Charlie Fletcher

The Eyeball Collector by F E Higgins

The Lunatic's Curse by F E Higgins

Skulduggery Pleasant by Derek Landy

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe by C S Lewis

Pirates by Celia Rees

Muddle Earth by Paul Stewart & Chris Riddell

The Edge Chronicles by Paul Stewart & Chris Riddell

Fergus Crane by Paul Stewart & Chris Riddell

George and the Dragon by Chris Wormell



THEMES FOR DISCUSSION

Courage or foolishness?

A true heroine or hero needs to show courage and strength of character.

Questions for Class Discussion: Do you think Freya is a good heroine? Do you think she was brave or foolish to blow the horn at the beginning of the story? Can you think of a time when you had to be brave or show courage? Can you share that experience?

Working Together

Freya couldn't have rescued the goddess Idunn alone. She was helped by her travelling companions.

Question for Class Discussion: How important was it for Freya, Snot, Alfi and Roskva to work together? If they hadn't do you think Freya would still have rescued Idunn and stopped herself and her friends from turning into chess pieces forever?

Rites of Passage

Freya's confidence and courage builds as the story unfolds and she learns some valuable lessons about life.

Question for Class Discussion: Do you think Freya has changed at the end of the book? And if so, how?

Difference and tolerance

Snot, Alfi and Roskva are very different to Freya. The brother and sister bicker constantly, and Snot the Berserker wants to kill everything that moves (oh and he writes awful poetry!)

Question for Class Discussion: Can you remember a time when you didn't agree with someone's point of view? What did you do? Do you think you have to agree with someone's views to get on with them?

Transformation

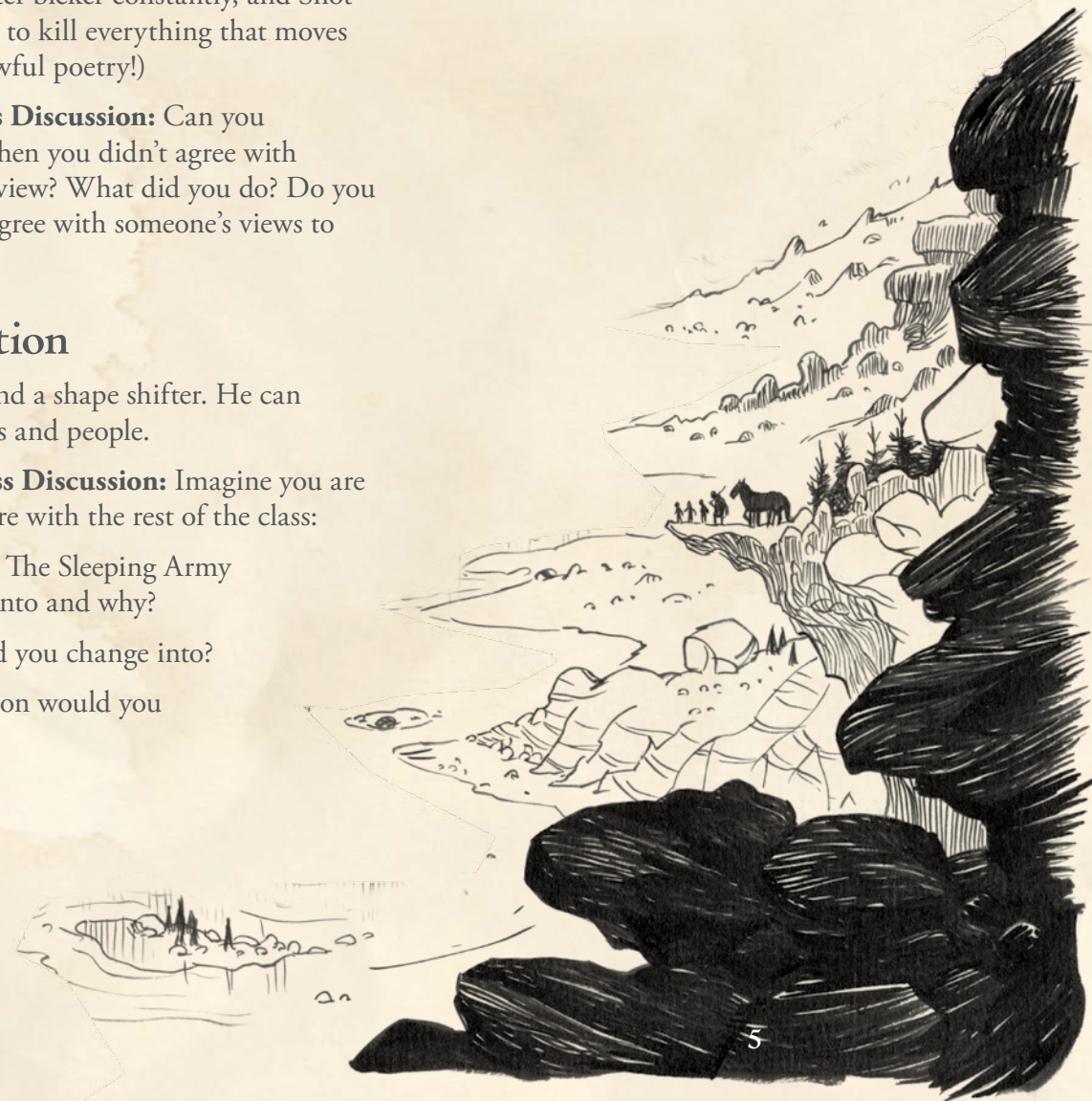
Loki is a trickster and a shape shifter. He can change into animals and people.

Questions for Class Discussion: Imagine you are a shape-shifter. Share with the rest of the class:

Which character in *The Sleeping Army* you would change into and why?

What animal would you change into?

Which famous person would you become and why?

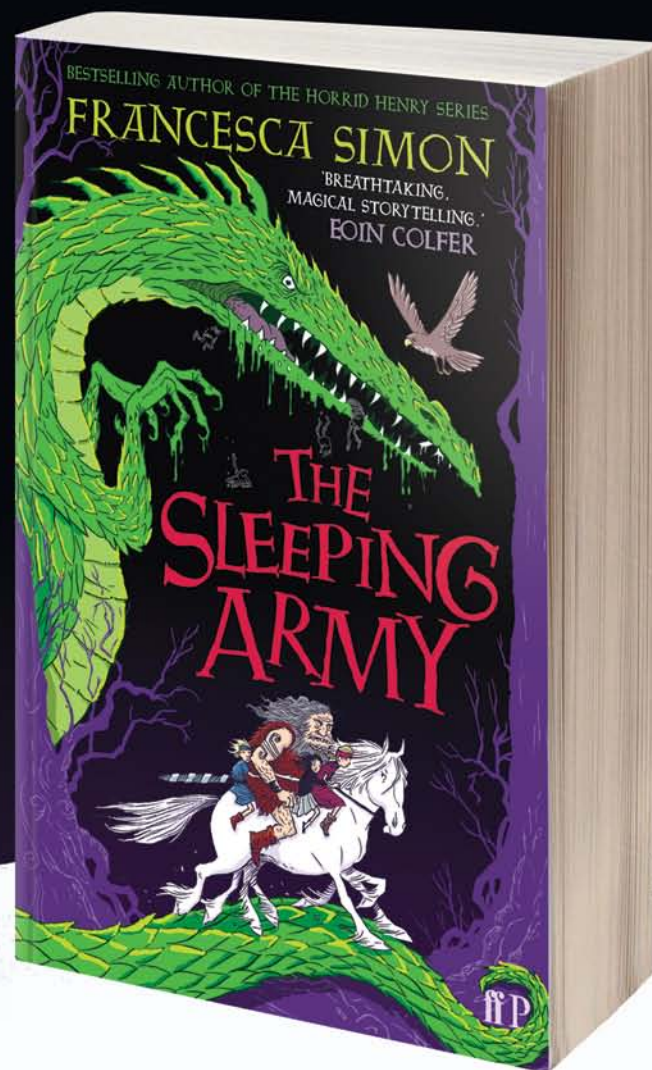


ONE CITY. ONE BOOK. A THOUSAND CONVERSATIONS.



'A WILDLY ORIGINAL,
ROLICKING TWIST ON
NORSE MYTHOLOGY'

Jacqueline Wilson



'IT'S FANTASTIC ...
A SNAPPY, ENGAGING
STORY WITH GOOD
LAUGHS ALONG
THE WAY.'

Independent on Sunday

