

UNDOORN

Martina Noble | Werner Diefenthal
Sandra Limberg

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STORY

Martina Noble and Werner Diefenthal

PHOTOGRAPHY

Sandra Limberg

Words of Greeting

Welcome, dear reader, in the mystical world of the Vikings who go on a journey between life and death in “Undorn”.

Dive into the exciting story of the authors Martina and Werner, who create wonderful characters and entangle them in fantastic, epic and supernatural tales.

Experience the impressive shots of photographer Sandra, who makes scenes look so lively and real as if they were stills from a movie.

Meet the over fifty actors who are not only playing their roles, but embody the characters in such an authentic way as if they were telling you about themselves.

Enjoy the combination of pictures and words which make everything what happens to Yrsa and her warriors in their fight for love and against death palpable and tangible.

I am grateful to be part of this wonderful project myself – as Estrid, as graphic artist and as friend. It’s an honor and a pleasure at the same time to see a project like this develop.

Cora

The wonderful thing about „UNDORN“ is not only the story that you can read here, but also the history behind this project. Behind every single character in this book there is a real person with their own character, past and dreams. Together they dreamt about a world that existed a long time back. In a time when myths were more than just fantasy stories and Gods were tangible.

All of them made an important contribution to this project with their creativity and their hearts and souls. They created this Viking world even before the actual story was completed. They gave the characters a face and chose clothing and weapons for the individual protagonists.

They took long journeys upon themselves and brought a small village to life. Step by step, their ideas turned into reality. There were friends, enemies and families who laughed and fought together. But they were especially looking forward to discover what is all possible in this great realm.

„Undorn“ is a joint voyage of discovery into a world between reality and fiction.

Cecilia



The fortified village near the coast had fascinated the bearded observer for quite some time. Like a fortress, it resisted every attack by enemy tribes. Its inhabitants stood steadfastly together under the leadership of their jarl Eldor and his wife Yrsa.

On this day in autumn, the curiosity of the bearded man took over and he set out to get to know its inhabitants.

However, he could not do this in his true form - he would have been recognized immediately. With every step he took, his appearance changed and when he finally asked for entry and a bed for the night at the gates of the village, he was a young, handsome man, carrying nothing but a flute made of whale bones.



As he had expected, he was welcomed by Yrsa. The Jarl and his warriors were on a raid and had left only the old, injured and sick men with the women. And even these were not needed by the proud shieldmaidens for their protection. Before the visitor could even introduce himself, Yrsa's most faithful companions had surrounded him and did not let him out of their sight.

Yrsa scrutinized him from top to bottom. »Who are you? Who is to tell me you mean no harm?«

The stranger bowed slightly.

»My name is Agnar. Agnar the piper. There is no evil in my mind. On the contrary, I wish only to bring joy to mankind.«

She approached the man, registered every little thing about him. »Tell me, Agnar, how come I've never seen you before? And how is it that a man of such sturdy build is not on the prowl? Were you cast out by your Jarl? Have you committed crimes? Or are you even a coward?«

After these words she walked away a bit. The other inhabitants of the village had approached, closed a circle around the stranger, ready to kill him immediately if Yrsa ordered it.

Agnar smiled gently.

»I understand your suspicion.« He took a few steps towards Yrsa, who noticed his limp. »But as you can easily see, I am not fit to go into battle. As a boy I was caught under the hooves of my Jarl's horses. Since then I am no longer fit to fight, but my other skills have been recognized. I am adept at handling any tool and play the most beautiful tunes on the flute. All I ask is shelter for the night and some food. Tomorrow morning, I shall be moving on.«

Yrsa nodded.

»Well, Agnar, you say you are a good flute player. Music makes every meal a feast. If you play for us, you can dine with us and have a bed for the night.«





A sumptuous feast awaited Agnar. When it ended, the villagers gathered around the fire, and Yrsa reminded the visitor of his promise to make music for them.

Softly the sounds flew up to the sky, apparently thrown back by it, seeming to dance in the air. The last conversations fell silent, everyone listened to Agnar's flute playing. They had never heard anything like it before. The music seemed like magic, touching the hearts of the women and making them soft and accessible for the wooing of a man. The music ended. It was almost painful for Yrsa, as if something had been stolen from her. Then Agnar began to sing with a full-sounding voice, and a new wave of longing swept over her. She could barely follow the lyrics, which were about love and passion. When Agnar finally fell silent, applause broke out. People stood around him, clapping their hands loudly until Yrsa raised her arms.

»Well, Agnar, you certainly didn't lie. Thank you for this performance. But it is late, dawn will break soon. Let me show you to your camp.«

Agnar looked deep into her eyes and realization hit Yrsa like lightning. He hoped to share her bed that night. Perhaps she would have done so had she not had any obligations - he was a handsome man. But she was the Jarl's wife. And she loved Eldor. She would never put herself in another man's arms as long as he lived. And yet, the temptation was present, she realized that. Was it a test of the gods, perhaps?

»I bid you good night, Agnar. You'll be leaving in the morning.« She smiled. »I think you know why.«

Agnar looked deep into her eyes again when she took him to the communal home. »Explain it to me,« he replied softly.

»You are stirring up trouble in the hearts of women,« she replied calmly. »And you know it, more than that, you even intend to. But let me tell you something: I love Eldor, my husband. I've sworn to be faithful to

him. No other man will touch me, much less own me. If you dare come to me during the night, be warned. I know how to handle a sword and a knife, and we will not leave this house unguarded.«

She turned and left a smiling Agnar.

Gudney, the village seer, woke up with a gasp. Ever since Eldor and his warriors had gone on a raid, she had intense dreams almost every night, which frightened her, but she could not hold on to them after waking up. Worried, she stood up and concentrated, but none of the visions she had had since childhood would come to her. Hoping to clear her mind, Gudney left her hut and strolled through the village. She was surprised to discover that the guards were no longer standing at the entrance to the hut where Agnar slept. Instinctively, she retreated into the shade, and a few moments later, a man left the hut. Gudney had to control herself not to cry out in shock. It was not the young, beautiful flute player who had come to the village the night before. Though still tall and handsome, there stood a completely different man, years older than Agnar, with a bald head and an impressive grey beard. Stunned, she stared after the man as he left the village without being stopped. The visionary had no doubt who had visited them - Odin, the father of the gods. But what could he have wanted here?

The sun had not yet risen completely, when finally Yrsa also entered the guesthouse. Slowly she walked to the place where Agnar had been given a camp, but it was empty, seemingly untouched. »Did I only dream this,« she asked herself quietly and shook her head, returning to her hut. She wanted to go back to her bed, perhaps to find some sleep after all, but her gaze remained fixed on the table. On it lay a raven feather and an amulet. Curious, she took the jewel in her hand, looked at it and, following a sudden impulse, she put it on. Heat flowed through her and her tiredness was blown away. And in her ear, she once again heard the flute play of this mysterious man.







On a distant shore, Onem, Eldor's older brother, had pretended to be tired so he didn't have to sit by the fire with the others. But he was not tired. He was angry. Eldor had led them to a deserted village during their raid, and yet no one doubted his abilities as Jarl. A position that actually belonged to him! As the best warrior in the village, the hand of the former Jarl's only daughter would have been Onem's due. Yrsa's hand. But her father, the old fool, had granted her the freedom to choose her husband and thus the future Jarl herself. Her choice had fallen on Eldor. Eldor revered Yrsa and gave much to her advice and opinion. Way too much, as Onem thought. He was willing to bet that she had determined the route for the caper. He was convinced that his brother and his wife would drive their tribe into destruction or, worse, into slavery.

A mocking voice made Onem turn around.

»Unpleasant when everyone blindly follows the wrong leader, isn't it?«

A strange couple had appeared behind him. Onem jumped up as if something had stung him and staggered backwards, his hand snapped to the belt where he carried his sword with him even in his sleep. It had disappeared!

»Looking for this?« The man held Onem's sword in his hand and seemed clearly amused. The warrior cast a curse and hastily backed away. How had this rogue managed to get his weapon without him even noticing his presence?

The stranger raised his hands, spread them to the side. »Easy, friend! If I wanted you dead, you would have never known I'm here!«

The two settled down on the earth near Onem, and the woman pointed to the ground in front of her, smiled invitingly at him. »Sit down. Let's have a little chat.«

Slowly the warrior came closer, scrutinized the two strangers in a mixture of mistrust and curiosity before he sat down with them. He had never seen them before, and yet they seemed to know what was on his mind. Did they possess secret powers, even stronger than the seer at home in the village?

»No weapon can adorn a warrior like a beautiful woman, can it, Onem?« The curly-haired man laughed amusedly, but fell silent when he saw Onem's narrowed eyes.

»How did you know my name?«

»Oh, there is much I know. Your name. Your brother's name. The fact that he will wipe out your tribe if he remains Jarl. «

»Who are you? Where are you from? Did the gods send you?«

»Does it matter?« The stranger leaned back smugly »All that should matter to you is that I can make you Jarl of your tribe. If you do as I tell you!«