

BLEIKI THE VIKING MOUSE
and the conquest of Highlands



Fabio Pozzoni

**Bleiki The Viking Mouse And
The Conquest Of Highlands**

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Bleiki is the Viking white mouse with real horns that, left behind by his family, is raised by Trolls. He left his adoptive parents to go to find friends, he is being ostracized, and he begins his adventure with Vikings until colonize Scottish Highlands. It's a fairy tale with Viking original names, and invented names for Trolls. The book is full of images, all of it blazes with actions, and it has historical and geographic references. It's a perfect combination and co-ordination between fantasy and reality. It's indicated for children 6 through 10 years of age.

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Dedicated to my Champion

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It was a dark night in the village of Guðvangir, today Gudvangen, in the fjord of Sognefjord, in the western part of Norway. Mama Ingileif had a long birth, but finally six babies were born. They were bright-eyes and bushy-tailed, with a little pink queue.



The Viking village of Guðvangir.

Papa Egill was there for the birth; he looked at his sons and he was surprised when he saw the last one completely white. Perplexed and pensive, he went out the den and he looked at stars confiding in a positive omen of this event. The den was under Knudsen family's kitchen; the head of that family was the strong Viking Gunnulfr, the head of the village. Only a piece of the moon and some stars were visible that night, when, suddenly, the sky turned completely black. It became cloudy. After a few minutes it started snowing. The year was 972 A.D. Egill interpreted this like a bad omen. Resolute and sorry, he went back into the den. There, sad but determinate, he told his wife: "We can't keep the white baby!" His wife looked at him white and she started crying. Papa Egill took him by the scruff of the neck, and he brought him into the wood.



Egill walks into the wood with his white baby.

He hardly walked: the night was dark and he couldn't see clearly. The snow doubled the strain of the road. Tired, he stopped under a big pine tree and, he saw a hollow tree not so far. He went into the tree, and he put the baby inside. "A covered place" he thought to ease the remorse for that abandonment. Then, sad, he went back home.



Egill brings his baby in the hollow tree.

You should know that in Viking folk, if a baby was born deformed, he didn't grow up with his family, but he was abandoned into the wood. Life was hard and survival wasn't easy for nobody. Family couldn't look after who wasn't in perfect health.

Viking mice learned this use from Vikings men. Moreover, Viking mice had horns that grew out when they were adolescents, as you can see from the picture. Vikings men used to wear an elm with horns, but Viking mice had already real horns on their heads.

The little white mouse started crying because of the cold and from hunger. Screams increased, but the wood was uninhabited. Who could hear him? Instead, shortly after, Grugr the Troll, that was skiing over there, far away from his village, heard these screams. He tried to listen better and came up to the tree. He heard something, but he couldn't see anybody. So, he smelled with his long nose to understand who was there. Finally, he took off his skis and he saw a little white baby in semi-obscure; so he put his four fingers hand inside the tree and gently, he grabbed and observed him. He was very astonished when he saw that it was a little white mouse. He put him under his robe, on his chest in order to keep him warm, and he decided to bring him to his village.



Grugr is moving to his village with the little white mouse.

Trolls are creatures that stay up at night and sleep during the day, in order to protect themselves from sunshine. Males aren't taller than three feet; they have long hair, big noses, and alternated teeth, one yes and one no. They are a bit grotesque. Females are beautiful: they have long blond or dark hair and bright eyes, and they are tall and thin. Some of them have pointed ears. Trolls live in caves, natural or carved into the rocky. They don't like humans, and they live for thousands years. They rear some animals for milk (they love it), for example goats, reindeer, moose, donkeys, and deer. They don't eat meat, but they produce very good cheese. As ancient custom, they also eat river stones that they add to milk for breakfast.



Grugr the Troll arrives to his village and he meets other Trolls: (from the left) Buk, Moogh (the old Troll with the stick), Ogogr (the one at the window), Hols (the Troll with a red cap), Louat (the smiling one), Zhugh (rogue trader), Ghoumb (the fool of the village).

A heavy and greatly appreciated dish is pine needles with turnip.

After several hours of walking, Grugr arrived home before dawn and explained the situation about the white mouse to the head of the village. He called wise Trolls to deal with the situation: in the Trolls' village, men weren't allowed. Only animals able to eat like a Troll could enter. Troll Nuokk, the head of the village, turned the white mouse in his hands, and said: "Our rules go back over millennia. We can't keep animals other than those allowed by our laws." The others nodded. One of the wise Trolls told the group: "In my 1856 years of life I have never seen break a law." Troll Grugr, which carried the mouse and that took care of him, interfered and said: "I think this decision has to be taken after having consulted our females."



Wise Trolls observe the white mouse. From the left, Naolk, Nuokk (the head of the village), Nauat (the sorcerer), and Ghomb.

(Image: John Bauer's "Trolls and Princess")

The head of the village was surprised by this intervention into the discussion between the wise Trolls and the sorcerer. He was still keeping the white mouse that screamed from hunger, and he was touched. Then, he said: "Call females."



Bleiki with female Trolls; from the left: Birna, Okhru, Zetiukraa, Zaelesa (Grugr's wife), Khelalae (the one sat carrying Bleiki), Zotiajera, and Javamja.

They entered in the cavern, and the wise Trolls informed them about the situation. They took the mouse, one by one, and they caressed and cuddled him. Zaelesa, Grugr's wife, said: "I can raise him." The wise Trolls looked at each other, and made an extravagant gesture to remove negative influences for that decision that was against their ancient rules. So, everybody approved. The sorcerer did a magic dance; everything was free from evil.

After that, the head of the village said: "We have to give a name to this little mouse. I propose Bleiki." Everybody agreed. The daylight was coming and Trolls had to repair themselves from sunshine, so they went back to their homes. Bleiki was given goat's milk; he calmed down and felt asleep in Grugr and Zaelesa's cavern.

Bleiki grew up day by day. He slept during the day and he played with the animals of the village at night: he rode on the back of the donkey, he jumped to a branch from another of deer's horns, he pulled goats' tails, and he climbed cows' noses. He became the mascot of the village. They looked for him, but Bleiki enjoyed playing tricks on everybody.

Mice grow up fast and so, after six weeks, Beiki was a young mouse, so much that Viking horns started showing up. A day he looked at himself in the mirror and he was amazed. So Grugr told him that it was normal for a Viking mouse to have beautiful horns.

However, not everything was perfect for Bleiki. Everybody loved him: female and male Trolls of the village, Grugr, Zaelesa, and even the animals, but there weren't little mice to play, to talk, and to make jokes. Now Bleiki was an adolescent and he started feeling alone. In addition, he wanted to get his independence like every teenager. So, an evening, he told Grugr: "I want to leave." Grugr's wife, Zaelesa said: "But where do you want to go?" Bleiki answered: "I am an adult now and here there aren't mice. I want to go around the world and find other mice to live with. You have been very generous with me, but this is not my world." Grugr said: "I understand, Bleiki. It was a pleasure for

us having you here. We are sorry you want to leave, but we know you have to live your life. We are very sad for your departure, but this is life.” That night, Bleiki said goodbye to Trolls and he left the village going towards the coast.

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