

FABER has published children's books since 1929. T. S. Eliot's *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* and Ted Hughes' *The Iron Man* were amongst the first. Our catalogue at the time said that 'it is by reading such books that children learn the difference between the shoddy and the genuine'. We still believe in the power of reading to transform children's lives. All our books are chosen with the express intention of growing a love of reading, a thirst for knowledge and to cultivate empathy. We pride ourselves on responsible editing. Last but not least, we believe in kind and inclusive books in which all children feel represented and important.

About the Author

Francesca Simon is universally known for the staggeringly popular Horrid Henry series. She is also the author of Costa-shortlisted *The Monstrous Child,* which she turned into an opera with composer Gavin Higgins for the Royal Opera House, and two picture books: *Hack and Whack* and *The Goat Café*. She lives in North London with her family.

About the Illustrator

Steve May is an animation director and illustrator. Steve has illustrated books by Jeremy Strong, Philip Reeve, Harry Hill and Phil Earle, as well as the Dennis the Menace series. He lives in North London.

For Timothy Sheader and Paul Wills,
creators of stage magic.
F. S.

To Mum, Jackie and Andy – thanks for all
the absurdity!
S. M.

First published in 2021
by Faber & Faber Limited
Bloomsbury House,
74–77 Great Russell Street,
London WC1B 3DA
faberchildrens.co.uk
and
Profile Books
3 Holford Yard, Bevin Way,
London WC1X 9HD
www.profilebooks.com

Typeset in Sweater School by Faber
This font has been specially chosen to support reading

Printed by CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon CR0 4YY
All rights reserved

Text © Francesca Simon, 2021
Illustrations © Steve May, 2021

The right of Francesca Simon and Steve May to be identified as author and illustrator of this work respectively has been asserted in accordance with Section 77 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser

A CIP record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978–0–571–34949–4

FSC
www.fsc.org
MIX
Paper from responsible sources
FSC® C020471

2 4 6 8 10 9 7 5 3 1



FRANCESCA SIMON
Illustrated by Steve May

faber

PROFILE BOOKS

Characters



Contents



Elsa Gold-Hair's Birthday Party 1



Two Terrible Vikings Track a Troll 50



Hack and Whack Raid Bad Island 97



ELSA GOLD-HAIR'S BIRTHDAY PARTY

'AAAARRRRRRGGGHHHH!'

'AAAARRRRRRGGGHHHH!'

'AAAARRRRRRGGGHHHH!'

Terrible screams came from the longhouse at the far end of the village.

Hack stopped swinging her sword.

Whack stopped swinging his axe.

Bitey-Bitey, their wolf cub, stopped chewing Dad's new leather boot.



'That sounds like Dirty Ulf,' said Whack.

'AAAAARRRRRRRGGGHHH AARRRGHHH! HELP! HELP! Save me!'

'That **is** Dirty Ulf,' said Hack. She waved her sword. 'We have to rescue her.'

Whack waved his axe. 'It must be an ogre,' he yelled, running.

'Or a troll,' shouted Hack.

'We're Hack and Whack, on the attack!' they bellowed as

they raced across the turf towards the screams, leaping over chickens and crashing into goats. Bitey-Bitey ran after them, howling and yowling.

The blood-curdling shrieks seemed to be coming from a tub on the porch outside Dirty Ulf's longhouse. There was something gurgling and spluttering and squealing and splashing inside the black water.

Dirty Ulf's mother stood there,

clutching a bar of soap.

'Dirty Ulf is having a bath,' she said.

'I don't need a bath,' gasped Dirty Ulf, poking her head above the tub. 'I had one last year.'

Dirty Ulf's mum shoved her under the steaming water again.

'Why is she having a bath?' said Whack. Poor Dirty Ulf. No one hated water as much as she did.

‘Because she is going to Elsa Gold-Hair’s birthday party,’ said her mum. ‘And you know how fussy those parents are.’



‘Oh,’ said Hack.

‘Oh,’ said Whack.

This was the first they had heard about a party.

‘Now go away,’ said Dirty Ulf’s mother. ‘Nothing to see here. Stop screaming, Dirty Ulf!’ she screamed, attacking Ulf’s ears with a spoon.

‘NOOOOOOOOOOOO,’ howled Dirty Ulf.

Hack and Whack headed home.

‘What’s a birthday party?’ said Hack.

‘I don’t know,’ said Whack.

‘Birth-day. Birth-day. The day you’re born? Why would you have a party for that?’

Whack shrugged. ‘Elsa is weird.’

Elsa liked sharing. Elsa liked playing quietly. Elsa liked telling everyone how naughty they were. Elsa thought she was a grown-up.

‘Well, I don’t want to go,’ said Hack.

‘Me neither,’ said Whack. ‘It would probably be really boring.’

‘Really, really boring,’ said Hack. ‘Lucky we weren’t invited.’

‘Yeah,’ said Whack. ‘Lucky.’

Hack and Whack were just about to enter their longhouse when they heard loud voices coming from within.

Hack put a finger to her lips.

‘Mum and Dad are talking about us,’ she hissed.

Hack and Whack crept close to the wattled wall next to the woodpile and cupped their ears.

‘Hack and Whack are the worst Vikings in the village,’ said Mum.

‘The very worst,’ said Dad.

Hack and Whack beamed.

‘But at least they’re not like Elsa Gold-Hair.’

‘Thank Thor,’ said Dad. ‘I would die of shame to have such a goody-goody butter-face, hoity-toity salmon-flapper as **my** daughter.’

‘Gods forbid,’ said Mum.

‘Did you hear, they caught her **sharing** last week?’ said Dad.



‘**Sharing?** No! Her poor parents.’

‘Yes, sharing. Bragi Bread-Nose saw her. That girl will come to a bad end,’ said Dad.

‘Glad she’s not our daughter,’ said Mum. ‘I blame the parents.’

‘Not like us – firm but fair,’ said Dad.

‘Elsa’s a terrible example. Thank Thor Hack and Whack weren’t invited to her birthday party,’ said Mum.

‘I wouldn’t let them go even if they **had** been invited. Elsa Gold-Hair might influence them, and the next thing we’d know, they’d stop fighting and quarrelling and playing with their swords.’

Hack and Whack had heard enough. Mum and Dad **didn’t** want them to go?

‘We want to go to Elsa’s birthday party!’ they yelled, bursting through the door.