



Confrontation, An Axe of Iron Novel

Excerpt, Chapter 1:

They sailed up a wide river until the wind off the bay became too variable from the dampening effect of the forest to be of any further use. The three boys had taken turns at the steering oar as the hunting party progressed inland. Now, Ivar had the helm.

Gudbjartur pointed ahead to the mouth of a tributary stream that issued from a small lake partially hidden back in the forest. “Steer for that stream, Ivar. Beach the boat anywhere along the left bank. Lothar, you, and Yola, lower the sail just before the boat reaches the shore.”

The two boys craned forward to watch the shoreline, the tag end of the halyard clenched in their hands, ready to jerk it loose from the cleat and lower the sail. Lothar glanced anxiously at Halfdan, who watched them from his seat on the bow thwart. He smiled and nodded at him, but said nothing.

Ivar put the helm over and the boat headed into the shore.

“Now Yola,” Lothar hollered, as he jerked the halyard loose. The small sail plummeted down the mast as the boys lost their grip on the halyard, covering them as they lost their footing and fell in a heap when the boat ground to a halt on the stones of the stream bank.

“See, there is nothing to it.” Halfdan said, as he and Gudbjartur pulled the sail off the two struggling boys. “You dropped the sail at just the right time.”

Ivar, hands on hips and a smile on his face, stood at his place in the stern as he watched his brother and Yola regain their feet.

“What are you grinning at?” Lothar asked.

“I saw the whole thing,” Ivar said, his superior attitude coming to the fore. “That was a pretty funny way to lower the sail. You are supposed to lower it hand-over-hand, not just turn loose of the halyard.”

“We know that. It was heavier than we thought and the halyard slipped through our hands.”

The grinning Gudbjartur caught a wink from Halfdan as the two men, barely able to keep from laughing aloud, enjoyed the moment with their young charges.

“All right, boys. You all did well. Roll the sail up on the boom, as we showed you, and secure the boat to a tree. Then we will go find a good place to hunt around yon lake,” Gudbjartur ordered, gesturing inland.

They walked in single file, with Halfdan and Gudbjartur in the lead, around the shoreline to the north shore of the closest of the several small lakes in the area. Moose tracks seemed to be everywhere. Well-used game trails naturally funneled animals to the shoreline of the lake the men selected for the hunt.

Gudbjartur briefed the boys on his plan. “There is no wind so the moose will not smell you. You all saw the deep game trails winding down here from the forest. The moose use these trails every evening when they leave their bed grounds to water and feed on bulrushes on the lake bottom. Halfdan and I will find hiding places for you that will allow us to drive the animals to you. If we spring the trap at the right moment the moose will come right by your positions when they run away from Halfdan and me.”

“How will we know when to shoot?” Lothar asked.

Ivar snorted at the question.

“That is a good question, Lothar.” Halfdan entered the conversation to show Ivar that questions were a part of learning. “Each of you knows your range limit for accurate shots. Your quarry is a big moose.

Even the calves are big, as you all know. The target you are shooting at is an area in the chest that is as big around as your mother's stew pot. About like so." He held both hands out in a circle to demonstrate a diameter equal to the length of a man's forearm. "The arrow must hit that target to kill him. If you hit him anywhere else, he may die, but he will run away and be lost to us because we probably will never find his carcass."

"Try to wait until your target is quartering and head away from where you are." Gudbjartur demonstrated the proper angle with his hands. "If you get that angle, aim for the paunch, just back of the short ribs. There is no heavy bone there and all his vital organs are lying low in his chest cavity when he is on his feet. Your arrow will slice forward into his chest cavity, hitting a tub full of guts, the liver, at least one lung, and maybe the heart. It will be a killing shot."

"Aye, that is the best shooting angle on any game we kill with an arrow. Another important thing to remember when you get an arrow into him and he runs away: let him go. Wait for Gudbj and me." Halfdan looked at each of the boys. "Yola, why should you wait?"

Yola looked at his two friends and then back to Halfdan. "Because we should give him time to bleed to death."

"That is right!" Halfdan exclaimed enthusiastically. "If the animal has not seen you he will not know what happened. Maybe the wound will only burn. He will feel secure because you have not scared him. As he weakens, he will lie down. Why do we want him to lie down, Ivar?"

"So he will bleed to death quietly rather than run away in a panic until he finally drops dead. We would probably lose him then. And the meat would not be as good if he was all heated up when he died."

Halfdan smiled and nodded. He winked at Gudbjartur and stepped aside.

"Good, Ivar," Gudbjartur said, looking from boy to boy. "Remember, we will all be focused only on animals coming to the lake from this game trail. There may be others but ignore them unless they are about to step on you." The boys laughed. "You will see the moose before they get to the lake. They will be nervous. Their senses will be on full alert. Stay still and do not take a shot, no matter how tempting it is. Wait until they relax and Halfdan and I decide the time is right to drive them to you. You may get only one shot so take your

time. Make your shots count. All it takes is one well-placed arrow and the moose is meat on the board.” He grinned at them. “All right, I think you all know what to do. Now, check your arrows and knives. Make certain they are sharp. You will have need of them, I think. Are there any questions before we lay our trap?”

The boys shook their heads. They busied themselves giving each arrowhead a final swipe or two with their whetstones. All were understandably nervous.

A short time later, all three boys lay concealed in the underbrush well back from the game trail. The trap lay ready for the quarry.

The men separated and each walked to a position across the lake from each other and with the targeted game trail roughly centered. When they sprang the trap, each man would cover half the shoreline as they converged on the quarry, thereby ensuring the flushed animals would have to make their bid to escape right by the three hidden boys.

While he waited in concealment Gudbjartur cut a short piece of green willow shoot, chewed the end until it frayed and softened, and used it to scrub his teeth. For him it was a daily ritual. He watched the scene unfold much as he and Halfdan had told the boys it would.

As the shadows lengthened toward day’s end, a trio of moose stepped from the dense forest surrounding the lake. The lead animal, an old cow, paused and carefully surveyed the lake environs. Her sensitive nose tested the still air while the huge ears turned this way and that, listening to the cries of birds and the buzz of insects. Her senses told her that all was well. She continued down into the willow scrub along the lake shoreline. She and her calves nibbled at the tender tips of willow before stepping into the shallow waters of the lake. Their kind did this same thing, just before sundown every day, when hunger and thirst drove them from their bedding grounds to begin another night of foraging.

Gudbjartur watched the cow moose and two large calves walk with caution from the cover of the forest. The quarry grazed slowly through the thick willows along the shoreline before wading into the lake.

The animals began to relax as they grazed along the lake bottom on an abundance of bulrushes and other underwater forage plants, oblivious to the threat lurking nearby.

Gudbjartur waved to Halfdan and the two men began closing in from both sides of the boys' position. They walked along the shoreline making no attempt at stealth. Gudbjartur figured that he and Halfdan would be almost up to the animals before they became alarmed. If everything worked as planned, the three moose should pass the boys' hiding place as they ran from the lake.

Cold Coffee/Book Marketing Global Network 5 Star Review

This character driven, action packed historical fiction saga continues from 'The Settlers: An Axe Of Iron Novel' where 163 Greenlanders and 152 Icelanders (including men, women and children) set sail with horses, cows, pigs, chickens, dogs, cats, equipment (tents and parts to horse drawn carts) and supplies to explore areas of what they call Vinland (North America).

Confrontation - An Axe Of Iron Novel cover with the Viking battle axe reflecting warriors gives us the first clue regarding the brutal facts of survival and desperate measures taken by men to protect their women, children and settlement with blood sweat and tears. Author J. A. Hunsinger has provided an in-depth 'Glossary of Norse Terms' and 'Native Terms' to help readers understand the people and culture.

Settling into a new land will prove challenging when the indigenous tribes who have a distaste for any fair skinned men due to those who cheated them in trade, abused them and killed their tribesmen in the past. Apart from expected interaction with the variety of native cultures, life in the new settlement is forced into daily and seasonal routines out of necessity.

Halfdan Ingolfsson and Gudbjartur Einarsson (his second in command) walk the settlement commons overseeing the duties pertaining to survival like the grueling process of filling the Kiln (furnace) with dry birch wood, burning the wood until only charcoal is left and then storing this precious commodity under the shed roof to be used for heat and cooking during the harsh winter months.

Children in the settlement (especially the boys) had to earn their place in their family and settlement by moving from boyhood into manhood by demonstrating skills taught and mirrored to them by their fathers, brothers, cousins and other men around them. Skills like hunting which was the core of survival. Unfortunately, dangers exist when dealing with wild animals like a Bull Moose protecting his territory, cow and calf. Death can be mercifully quick and brutal. The burial ceremony, reverence for even the youngest hunter/warrior, tradition and spirituality (Gods Will) play a role for the dead and those who remain.

Seasons marked by the moon predict work, trade, play, marriage and birth. I quote Bjorn "as a pleasant smile curved his lips". "Yes, it is time I thought of a mate. Another long winter comes and company in my bed would be welcome. Perhaps this is the one (as he recalls the tall blonde woman)".

Confrontation is inevitable, warriors' attack, prisoners taken, injuries sustained, spoils of battles and questions about their ability to live in peace brings us to the anticipation of the third book in An Axe Of Iron Series titled "Assimilation".

J. A. Hunsinger's series 'An Axe Of Iron' has been exhaustively researched and parallel the actual events as close as a historical fiction can. I recommend this series to both men and women and suggest that the series be placed on a high school/college reading list.

This reviewer is looking forward to 'Assimilation – An Axe Of Iron Novel' which is the third book in the series.

I endorse Confrontation: An Axe of Iron Novel by J.A. Hunsinger's book two in the fictional historical accounting of exploration and settlement of Vinland (North America). Reviewed by Cold Coffee/Book Marketing Global Network.

About The Author

J. A. Hunsinger is an Author, Publisher, Amateur Archaeologist and Historian. His [Axe of Iron Series](#) Details The Settlement Of A Large Group Of Norsemen On The North American Continent Beginning In 1008 AD.

J. A. Hunsinger's Books Include Axe Of Iron: [The Settlers](#), [Confrontation](#) and [Assimilation](#).

J. A. Hunsinger lives in Colorado, USA, with his wife Phyllis. He writes and promotes full-time. His three-book trilogy Axe of Iron Series can be purchased at [Vinland Publishing](#). His books are also available from [Amazon](#).

Although he has long been a writer, much of his adult life has been associated with commercial aviation, both in and out of the cockpit. As an Engineering Technical Writer for Honeywell Commercial Flight Systems Group, Phoenix, AZ, he authored two comprehensive pilots' manuals on aircraft computer guidance systems and several supplemental aircraft radar manuals. His manuals have been published and distributed worldwide to airline operators by Honeywell Engineering, Phoenix, AZ. His first published work for the general public, Flight Into Danger, appeared in Flying Magazine, (August 2002). Many of his articles have been featured in other periodicals and websites or are featured on his blog.

After his flying career ended on his 60th birthday, he found himself with time to continue his writing; this first novel was actually begun more than twenty years ago. He attended many writing classes and seminars, but couldn't sustain a head of steam as a writer. All of that changed abruptly in 2004, when he remarried. Phyllis provided the necessary push and as a result he treated writing as work, which it most certainly is.

Writing is a learned craft. In order to learn to write, you must write. Eventually the classes must be set aside; set a daily work schedule and stick to it. That is not to say you should stop taking classes altogether; learning is a lifetime experience. Sooner or later though, you must take the plunge and go at it on your own.

Have a story to tell, one that you like. Then sit down and get busy. Have your work professionally edited: rewrite, edit, rewrite, until you've gotten it as good as it can be.

That's all there is to being a writer.

J. A. Hunsinger's Websites:

<http://www.vinlandpublishing.com/>

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