



FOREWORD

by Matt Finch

Some longish time ago, I was talking with Doug Cole via Google Hangout. As the conversation went on, it started to dawn on me that he was sitting in the middle of what looked like a small armory of blades, axes, and shields—all of them made of wood. So after a while, of course, I had to ask about this clutter of weaponry piled up all around him. Now, anyone who knows Doug already knows that “enthusiastic” only vaguely succeeds in capturing the essence of Doug. Seconds later, I was looking through my computer screen at a sword-wielding, shield-bearing warrior in fighting stance, delivering an energetic lecture on the proper way to use a Viking-type shield. As the lecture evolved into methods of using the sword in concert with the shield, I started to realize why there’s no furniture anywhere near his computer. Or, at least, what happened to it if there once was. As I’ve said, “enthusiastic” doesn’t quite capture it.

Doug manages to infuse his writing with the same effervescent energy, making for a wild ride through his game world and the adventures to be found in it. Since I’m no expert on Vikings or Norse mythology I can’t speak to how much of

Doug’s exploration into the wyrd, wild world of Viking adventure is based on history and how much of it is just a sheer, fantastic Norseplosion of adventure. It doesn’t really matter, of course—this book is a mix of pure mystery and adrenaline for RPG gaming, and that’s what counts in the long run.

One is always tempted to write a long foreword to a good book, sprinkling spoilers here and there in an effort to tell the reader how to enjoy what they’re about to encounter in it. But I don’t think that’s the purpose of a foreword. A foreword is for setting the mood: giving the reader that last deep breath before the plunge into strange worlds and vivid imagery. I can assure you, even though the world of Norse adventuring might seem familiar on the surface, what lies beneath that surface is strange and mythic indeed. And so, consider that last, deep breath to have now been drawn—it’s time to turn the page and let yourself go a-Viking in the rich sea of ideas you’ll find beyond!

*Matt Finch
December 21, 2018*

