

The Diary of Princess Geirhildr

16th June 870

Dear Diary,

Father asked me to write a diary, because we are going on a voyage to Iceland. He wants me to create a memory and it will give me something to do as we travel.

Geirhildr

17th June 870

Dear Diary,

The long ship's head is a scaly, golden dragon head, with a pink tongue. The shields on the side of the ship are red with a white cross in the middle, our family crest. It is a grand ship, and I couldn't wait to get on it but, the moment I stepped onto the long ship I felt sick!

My father stood up on the tail of the dragon, and ordered our crew to keep me safe. My father is 'Flokki of the Ravens,' he's the village chief.

My mother is staying in Norway, but father has taken me to learn about exploring the sea. Mother said that I had to look after father, she had a worried face.

The boat set sail and in a few minutes I felt dizzy and sick. I was sick over the side of the ship. Father said I should go inside the tent and get some rest, because it was going to be a long journey.

Geirhildr

18th June 870

Dear Diary,

In the morning, I was still feeling a bit queasy and dizzy. Father said it had to always be some type of fish dish for meals, because there was little else. Thankfully he had saved one loaf, so I ate some of that instead. I thought it was delicious and I felt better.

The journey was rough. The tent was damp and the rugs were tattered, the sheep skins were torn and the cloth for the walls was flapping in the cold, northern wind. Still, I snuggled up in a sheep skin.

Geirhildr

19th June 870

Dear Diary,

I woke up and I could hear father's snores, he was still asleep. It was sunrise. I asked one of the crew, Olaf, if we were near land. He said that we were going to release a raven to check for land.

The raven will not come back to us if it reaches land. The birds lived in a wooden cage; the ravens were black, with smooth and shiny feathers. Olaf said that I was too young to release the ravens, so he had to do it. I watched them set off towards the horizon.

By evening, the ravens had not come back, so father announced that we were close to land. So we followed the direction that the ravens went in. We were heading west, which meant we would reach Shetland soon.

Geirhildr

20th June 870

Dear Diary,

We reached land, I was very glad to see solid ground! I went for a walk, while father and the crew set traps for more ravens for the next part of our journey. I came across a lake, it was rather large. I threw a pebble in. Some way or other, I fell in. It was deep. I couldn't swim...

Geirhildr

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21st June 870

I've just read the diary of my elegant daughter, as I write here, I am crying. As I set up raven traps, I saw Geirhildr walking along the side of the lake, and I saw her stumble. She fell in.

I ran to the lake, I nearly fell in too, I waded in but I couldn't reach in time. I managed to grab her hand, but it was too late. She was gone.

I saw a little settlement nearby and I hurried over, and I shouted "my daughter has gone!"

All of the villagers helped, they took Geirhildr's body across the lake, in one of their little boats. They kindly took myself and the crew across too. They buried her on the small island in the middle of the water.

I looked around at where she rested, I knew she wouldn't be disturbed and she wouldn't be lonely as I, and our family would be in her heart for ever.

One of the local men took me aside and spoke to me. I found it hard to understand him, but I thought he was asking what to name Geirhildr's resting place.

I replied 'Geirhildrvatn.'

The man hesitated, then said, 'Wis Shetlan' fok'll caa hit da Girlsta Loch,' I smiled despite my grief.

We need to set sail for home to tell my wife and family about our tragedy.

Flokki