Gather round, said the ancient crab, and hear the tale of

HOW TO BE A VIKING

by Cressida Cowell

A division of Hachette Children’s Books
Hiccup's father was Stoick the Vast.

Long ago, in a fierce and frosty land, there lived a small, lonely Viking, and his name was Hiccup.
Dear Readers and Heroes-in-training,

This was where it all began.

Sixteen-years ago, I drew a picture of a little Viking called Hiccup in my sketchbook. On the opposite side of the page, I drew a picture of Hiccup's father, Chief Stoick the Vast. The story was easy to write because it was all about me, and my relationship with my own father.

I was a small, imaginative, anxious child. My father was a dashing, adventurous, ever-so-slightly pleased-with-himself hero. He never seemed to be afraid of anything.

Who would have thought that this little picture book would have been the beginning of the twelve-book *How to Train Your Dragon* fiction series? That there would be a movie made by DreamWorks, a television series, a live arena show, all based on this one little idea?

But this was where it all began, with just me and my father. Because to a child, their father is always a hero.

Happy reading, and good luck with the hero work.

Love,

[Cressida Cowell]
Long ago, in a fierce and frosty land, there lived a small and lonely Viking, and his name was Hiccup.
Vikings were enormous roaring burglars with bristling moustaches, who sailed all over the world and took whatever they wanted. Hiccup was tiny and thoughtful and polite. The other Viking children wouldn’t let him join in their rough Viking games. Hiccup was frightened of spiders. He was frightened of thunder. He was frightened of sudden loud noises.
But, most of all, he was frightened of going to sea for the very first time. . . next Tuesday.
Hiccup wasn’t sure he was a Viking at all.
Hiccup’s father was Stoick the Vast.

Wherever Stoick walked the ground trembled, flowers wilted and bunnies fainted. He hadn’t brushed his beard in thirty years.
boomed Stoick the Vast.

‘Girlies don’t have beards,’ Hiccup pointed out, but no one listened to him.

And when Hiccup told his father he was frightened of going to sea, Stoick laughed his enormous Viking laugh until the salty tears ran down to his enormous hairy feet.

‘You can’t be frightened, little Hiccup.

Vikings don’t get frightened.’

And he sang the Viking Song: