

Inside The Jelling Dynasty: Author Insights, Historical Background, and Book Synopses

This is the opening of the book series by the German author Andrea Storm and her trilogy *The Jelling Dynasty*. The trilogy focuses on Thyra Danebod, the future first Queen of the Danes and Gorm Grymme (Gorm the Grim), also known as Gorm the Old, the first King of the Danes. The pair are the founders of the Danish Royal House.

Everyone—really everyone—who uses a smartphone today carries his symbol:

the rune of a great king, Harald Bluetooth! As the son of Thyra and Gorm, who founded the first Danish kingdom and the Jelling Dynasty, Harald played a pivotal role in uniting countless smaller kingdoms across Denmark and parts of Norway into one powerful empire. His name now stands for worldwide connection, as Bluetooth technology links people across the globe. The logo itself features a monogram of the Old Norse runes * (H for Hagalaz) and ð (B for Berkano), symbolizing Harald's initials.

The story centers on the life, character, and fate of Thyra. Storm tells the story with authenticity, creating a rich atmosphere of Viking customs and battles in her historical novel about the lives of Viking women. Unlike most other works with a comparable setting, in Storm's books, a woman takes center stage—one who stands up to the Viking men and earns respect, esteem, and honor through her actions. Storm has succeeded in creating an immersive Viking-era atmosphere that is maintained throughout the entire story.

Having grown up in northern Germany, near the Danish border and close to the Viking village of Hedeby near Schleswig, Storm was introduced to the legend of Thyra Danebod and Gorm the Old at an early age.

With her books *Viking Enemy, Warrior, and Queen*, Storm tells the captivating stories of Viking women, weaving in Old Norse expressions to offer deeper insight into Viking society. Through her vivid literary style and the crafting of a legendary tale, Storm brings to life not only Thyra Danebod but also a host of distinctive characters.

In addition, readers will always find a comprehensive glossary and references for further reading in Storm's books.

For more information, visit the German Wikipedia page: [Andrea Storm](#).

Development of Book 1

I was looking for a story for a novel set where I lived, in Schleswig and its surrounding areas. During my research, I came across the Vikings in Hedeby and the lives of Viking women, which ultimately brought me to Thyra.

I frequently visited the reconstructed Viking village near the Viking Museum, where the curator at the time, Ute Drews, provided me with valuable information. I also visited traces of the Danewall and received generous insights from the group Opín Skjold and the experimental archaeologist Harm Paulsen.

Background on Thyra and Gorm

Thyra Danebod was born around 870 and died around 935. There is some disagreement among researchers about the exact dates, so I have adopted 870 as the year of her birth. Thyra is the youngest daughter of the Anglo-Saxon King Ethelred of Wessex (837–871) and his wife Wulftyrith. She is the niece of King Alfred the Great of England. In 892, Thyra Danebod was captured by the Vikings from Oxfordshire. She married Gorm the Old, a Danish chieftain who later became king, in 899. Thyra built the Danework near Hedeby to protect her people from hostile attacks. Hedeby is now a UNESCO World Heritage site and, in 2022, a bike path named Thyraweg was established along the Danewall in her honor. Gorm and Thyra had five children: Connor, Gunnhild, Harald Bluetooth, Knut Daast, and Torke.

Gorm Grymme, also known as Gorm Gormsen and Gorm the Old, was born in 860 and died in either 958 or 964. Around 892, he was a Danish chieftain and ship's captain of the Dreki, a Viking warship. Gorm ascended the Danish throne around 934. At this time, the King of Denmark was the most powerful ruler in Jutland. He was a pagan Ascomanni who ruled his people for 30 years.

Together, Thyra and Gorm founded the Danish Jelling Dynasty. In Jelling, two rune stones commemorate them.

The Viking town **Hedeby** (Old Norse: Heidbyr) was home to around 1,000 to 1,500 people at the time and was inhabited by craftsmen, fishermen, farmers, warriors, and slaves. It was located a few kilometers west of the Ochsenweg, which was the main north-south route between Hamburg and Viborg in Jutland for centuries. Additionally, the Viking sea trade route provided an east-west connection between the North and Baltic Seas, following the rivers Eider, Treene, Rheidter Au, and the Schlei.

About Me

With a passion for telling captivating stories, I'd like to take the opportunity to introduce myself and share my current project with you.

My writing career began in 2017 in Hamburg under the name Andrea Storm. My Low German (Plattdeutsch) short crime story *So fölt sik dat also an (So That's What It Feels Like)* was published in the book *Löppt?! (It Works?!)* by Wachholz-Verlag as part of the series *Vertell doch mal (Tell Me a Story)* and received awards from NDR, Welle Nord, NDR 1 Niedersachsen, and Radio Bremen. This was followed by the publication of short crime stories in anthologies and a thriller with Redrum-Verlag. My horror comedy *Nur ein Stich (Just One Prick)* topped the Amazon bestseller list in its genre for 18 weeks.

I would especially like to highlight my trilogy, which brings the Old Norse language of the Vikings to life through gripping and exciting narratives. The first volume, *Viking Enemy* (German: *Feindin der Wikinger*), was published by Acabus-Verlag in 2021. The second volume, *Viking Warrior* (German: *Kriegerin der Wikinger*) followed in August 2022, and the final installment, *Viking Queen* (German: *Königin der Wikinger*) was introduced to readers in 2023.

I have built a devoted readership in the literary world through my detailed and authentic works. The protagonists are characterized by bravery, intelligence, and charm, skillfully combining action, power, and love with historical accuracy.

In the vast market of Viking-era novels, my work stands out with a unique feature: *The Jelling Dynasty* centers on a female protagonist, Thyra, and maintains a consistent focus on her throughout. The historical backdrop is brought to life vividly, showcasing the origins of the Danish Kingdom in the 9th century. By closely adhering to well-known historical facts while keeping the heroine at the forefront, the narrative achieves a compelling balance. The use of Old Norse language adds a

distinctive allure and authentic touch, drawing readers in both rationally and emotionally as they engage with the cultural distance the heroine is forced to navigate.

In my new novel, *Die Schamanin und ich (The Shaman and I)*, I explore the life of the first historically verified shaman from Bad Dürrenberg during the Mesolithic era. The story features Tilda, an elegant and extraordinary art thief whose heists are based on real events. This unique premise led to a scholarship initiative from the Mitteldeutscher Kulturrat. Even before its release, I received an outstanding review from the renowned German historian Dr. Steffen Raßloff.

The Jelling Dynasty Trilogy: Brief Synopses

The Rise of the Jelling Dynasty

Volume 1: Viking Enemy (German: Feindin der Wikinger)

Headstrong and proud, Thyra, the niece of King Alfred the Great of England, lives in Wessex around the year 900. When the Vikings raid her village and take her as a hostage on their dragon ships, she encounters the Viking chieftain Gorm and begins to experience Viking life. Gorm plans to ransom her for a high price from King Alfred, but the brave woman captivates him.

The book centers on Thyra Danebod, who would become the Queen of Denmark. Her life, character, and destiny are vividly portrayed with authenticity and rich atmosphere, set against the backdrop of Viking customs and battles.

The first part of The Jelling Dynasty, Viking Enemy, was published by Acabus Verlag (ISBN 9783862828067).

Volume 2: Background

Even today, the pilot whale is hunted on the Faroe Islands. In the 9th and 10th centuries, and likely for many centuries thereafter, the meat bones, blubber, and blood of these animals were vital for survival.

What seems cruel to us today—given that we now delegate the killing of animals, processing of meat and bones, tanning of hides and furs, and preservation methods like drying, salting, or canning to others, or because some of us may have become vegetarians or prefer chemically manufactured products—was a matter of life and death back then. Today, research by historians, scientists, archaeologists, and paleontologists continues to uncover new artifacts and utilize genetic analysis and DNA to provide precise data. This ongoing research sometimes leads to revisions or updates in our understanding of history, and occasionally, unexpected discoveries shed new light on the past.

Volume 2 continues this thrilling historical trilogy with a narrative rich in dialogue, allowing Storm to distinctly and clearly portray contrasting characters.

The Rise of the Viking Warrior

Volume 2: Viking Warrior (German: Kriegerin der Wikinger)

The Vikings—sailors, craftsmen, fishermen, and traders—may seem different in their roles, but their shared qualities become evident during the wintering of Gorm's fleet. It is here that readers truly discover the full range of their skills. The story is set, among other places, in the Faroe Islands in the 9th century. The Viking chieftain Gorm and his beloved Thyra narrowly escape the first winter storms and arrive at the archipelago settled by the first inhabitants. Thyra's freedom is near, and the Nordic goddesses prophesy a powerful future for her.

On the Faroe Islands, she trains to become a warrior under the Irish Viking Lochlanach Ruadhan, fighting hard and disciplined. However, intrigues driven by jealousy, ambition, and brutality threaten

to destroy her goal. Rivals, both male and female, among the 400 Danish Ascomanni on the nine warships, who must winter in the Faroe Islands during a major storm, have their own plans.

The novel offers rich insights into Viking life through seamlessly woven narratives about their crafts and gods, from Valhalla to the Valkyries. The use of Old Norse vocabulary further enhances the atmosphere, bringing the era to life.

On that note...

Firmly rooted in historical events, the novel is set in the North Sea region, particularly Hedeby in present-day Schleswig-Holstein, an area the author has researched in depth. This is evident in the appendix, which includes a glossary of historically documented figures.

In this captivating second installment of her Jelling Dynasty trilogy, Storm highlights the often overlooked Viking warrior women. Gorm and Thyra were the first couple to lay the groundwork for the rise of the Danish Kingdom.

Volume 3: Background

Thyra, also known as Thorwi or Thyre, later Queen of Denmark, founded the ruling Jelling Dynasty with Gorm, which governed the country until around 1378.

The first account of the expansion of the Danewall by Queen Thyra Danebod in the 10th century comes from Sven Aggesen around 1185, followed by Saxo. Archaeological evidence has now confirmed that the so-called Thyraburg was expanded during Thyra's lifetime, around 940, and that the connecting wall was extended during her son Harald's reign after 964.

Note: When I wrote my story, scientific consensus held that it was Thyra who raised the Danewall, protecting the city of Hedeby and its people from destruction, raids, death, and enslavement.

The Rise of the Viking Queen

Volume 3: Viking Queen (German: Königin der Wikinger)

In the final part of the trilogy, the question arises: Prophecy or deceptive foresight?

Hedeby, the largest and wealthiest trade center in the North, 9th century:

A message warns Chieftain Gorm Grymme and Thyra Danebod that a massive army of Swedes, Anglo-Saxons, and Germanic tribes is marching toward Hedeby. The city promises treasures, abundant slaves, and the death of their rivals.

Thyra is no longer a slave or an enemy but a well-trained warrior. Yet the locals still eye her with suspicion. A foreigner, trying to tell the women what to do? But the prophecy of the goddess Freyja stirs hope:

"Thyra will lead the Viking women in battle against the enemies and expand the Danewall. She is chosen by us gods."

However, enemies come not only from the sea and land—powerful rivals lurk within their own ranks. Will she survive the battles and finally reunite with her great love? Follow Thyra as she confronts her destiny!

Volume 3 of *The Jelling Dynasty* meets all expectations, offering a fitting and thrilling literary tribute to Thyra Danebod. As in the previous volumes, the historical context is seamless and well-researched. Both the book series and the movie undoubtedly deserve a spot in the Nordic, English, and American book markets!

Written by:

Andrea Storm

German author

LinkedIn: Andrea Storm

Mail: andrea.storm001@gmail.com

Translated by:

Pauline Kennedy

German-to-English Translator

E-mail: pauline@pkennedycontent.com

Telephone: +49 175 3804545

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/pauline-kennedy-content