



# Tara's Song

*Barbara Ferry Johnson*

**Tara's Song** Barbara Ferry Johnson

Beautiful, devout, young Tara, a novice in a country abbey, finds her cloistered life suddenly destroyed when Viking invaders burn the convent and take her prisoner. Wedded against her will to the pagan chieftain, Rorik, Tara slowly overcomes her fear as Rorick introduces her to the joy of passionate love.

## Tara's Song Details

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Author : Barbara Ferry Johnson

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## From Reader Review Tara's Song for online ebook

### Nicole says

My second attempt at reading this book worked out better than the first. I skipped through the opening scene and was rewarded with an interesting description of the Viking's lives. There are several reasons, however, that it is only a three stars book for me. First, there was not enough interaction between H and h. Both were captured and led several lives for most part of the book. Secondly, a large part of the book was set in Constantinople where the h lived as guest in a harem. I would have liked it much better to read about Vikings in a self-declared Viking romance instead if the live in a harem. The third reason is that the story did not capture me. I think that this was caused by the author's writing style that was much too clinical for my liking. E.g. the actual Hero in the book was not Rorik but Olav, an Eunuch who saves our h and spends most of the time with her. At the end of the book, his dying is worth a couple of sentences, nothing more. That is only one of many examples, where the dramaturgy of the story died a painful death.

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### Negin Omin says

Amazing!! I was so sad for it to end!!! :(((

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### Shasta says

I love this story! Go ahead and judge me, I really don't care!

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### Alucard says

I like this shot. Catherine and Richimer? Hmmm. I'd totally re-draw this.

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### Naksed says

There are a lot of similarities in style between Barbara Ferry Johnson's *Tara's Song* and the historical romances of Bertrice Small but unfortunately, this book did not captivate me as the best of Small always manages to so, and it ended up being a DNF.

I have to admire the author's painstaking recreation of Viking customs and culture. It was truly beautifully rendered and the most enjoyable aspect of the book for me. It is obvious she has a deep love and passion for her subject matter and perhaps she should have written a straight historical fiction in this setting. Overall, the setting felt very realistically rendered, from the Viking raid of the heroine's convent, to the Viking village where she is taken, and even the capture by pirates and near brush with slave trading. There is even a flirtation with a harem though there is no actual joining of a harem by the heroine, at least not until the part I read.

What made me DNF was the lack of emotional connection with either of the main characters. Every time I wanted to sympathize with the heroine, she went off and committed one more spiteful, stupid choice putting herself and those around her in danger. There was nothing redeemable about her. She started off as a vain, spoiled, entitled and weak girl and that is where I left her off. The so-called hero had little to commend him either. A fail on the romance for me, an interesting read from the historical pov.

*Review initially posted in 2015, edited in 2016.*

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### **Rosemarie Arnaiz says**

nabasa ko na po ito nun highschool days ko pa..now im 39 yrs of age...para na miss ko at gusto ko i freshen up ko pa ulit yun mga pangyayari sa story book na ito..ang ganda talaga

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### **Wendy, Lady Evelyn Quince says**

“Tara’s Song” by Barbara Ferry Johnson is yet another middling Viking romance that disappoints. Written in the late 70’s at the height of the bodice ripper era, you’d expect this Viking Romance to be rapacious and fun, but I found it rather ho-hum.

Having been betrayed by love (the h is not a virgin), stunning blonde Tara enters into a convent. Despite what the book burb claims, Tara is actually not a novice, but a full-fledged nun who has taken all her religious vows. For some mysterious reason, some of her fellow nuns ensure that Tara study the pagan Nordic runes. Obviously the elder sisters knew their convent would be overtaken by a horde of ravenous Vikings and runic readings would come in handy for protection later on.

Tara’s new life begins when she is captured by Rorik. He, of the long, curly reddish-blond hair and two long mustaches that reach past his chin, but no beard. I imagine him as a young metal god like a cross between Dave Mustaine & James Hetfield, only with lots of muscles. But alas, even though Rorik is a marauder, he’s BORING. As in so many Viking books I’ve read, the hero is a bad ass warrior who kills and slays hundreds... But we rarely see Rorik do any of this (as it’s told in constrictive first person perspective.)

The first person POV is really a hindrance here. Tara tells rather than shows and there’s a lot of info dumping and information overload, some so very inaccurate, like eating potatoes in Norway in the 900’s. (Reminded me of the chocolate-colored eyes of the OW in Johanna Lindsey’s “Hearts of Fire.” Research people. It’s a basic thing.) The Vikings were also portrayed as dirty and unkempt, never bathed, with un-groomed beards and wore clichéd two-horned helmets in battle.

Anyway, Rorik doesn’t force himself on Tara like a pillaging Viking would; at first he romantically seduces her into his bed. Meh. Give me a Viking who’s a pillager FIRST, then learns to be romantic and civilized later on (to a certain extent). Where’s the fun in the fantasy if the hunky Viking doesn’t take me--er, I mean, the heroine--over his shoulder and have his wickedly erotic way with her on sight? Why does he have to *charm* her into bed? That’s for Regency rakes, not Vikings.

At least there is a naughty twist: Rorik is a polygamist and he takes Tara home to his harem of wives. That’s right, Rorik has not one but two wives and Tara is number three. As a pious Christian former nun, she resents

this. So she prays for the day that Rorik will cast off his other wives, divorce them and be with only her, because that that would be the honorable thing. *For her*. When Tara won't give into Rorik's lust, he just goes to the other wives to satisfy him. But it's Tara he loves!

Eventually, one of Rorik's wives plots against them, and Rorik and Tara are kidnapped and separately sold into slavery into the east.

When the hero is boring, and the h/H are parted for a long time in the book, I don't mind as long as the heroine is up to fun adventures. Regrettably, Tara's adventures fall a bit flat.

At least with lesser-known bodice ripper authors like Melissa Hepburn or Janette Seymour there were some amusing exploits... Here Tara's escapades consist of getting the flu during the worst winter ever, or getting her first taste of eating oranges... There's Tara in Norway shopping; now there's Tara in Constantinople shopping!

The most interesting character in the book is Olav, an older Viking who has also been captured, as well as castrated, and is Tara's faithful companion. He could have been a complex character, but alas, Ferry takes his personality, heart and emotions away with his balls, and his sole devotion to Tara is that of a slavish, dog-like protector, not a man who can ever physically or even emotionally love. It would have been intriguing to see, just for the WTF factor (like Bertrice Small's "Enchantress Mine") but no, nothing special in this book.

Actually, that's not 100% true, as there is one mildly engaging scenario when Tara gets kidnapped, and then is willingly seduced by a handsome and haughty overbearing lord. Although she enjoys his lovemaking, she finds him so arrogant; how dare he lust for her body so! Just days later, she is dismayed to see a sexy young male slave dance his way into her lover's bed. Guess Tara's not as hot as she thinks! (Again, a faintly similar situation was portrayed in "Enchantress Mine," although in a much more shocking and entertaining fashion--and I wasn't crazy about "EM" because I hated the heroine--so to me, "Tara's Song" is the lesser book.)

O, ancient gods of the Norse! At times this book was as dry as the turkey from "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation."

*However...* It does get good in the last few pages where Rorik once and for all displays his brutal warrior skills, instead of us just being told about it. He cruelly dispatches his enemies in a slaughter, demonstrating his true awesome Nordic might. Too bad; too late. Where was *that* Rorik 400 pages ago?

**2 stars/ D-**

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### **Leanne says**

This book took me to a time so well described that I felt like I was there. The raid on the convent in the beginning was so convincing.

A beautiful, innocent woman captured and taken so far away from everything she knows must learn to find a place in her new home. Her love and understanding of her captor is rewarded with the protection and

softening of the heart from the strong man who has taken her.

I have read this book at least 4 times. The love story breaks your heart and makes you weep at times. It is one of my favorite books of all time.

This story should be read by anyone interested in vikings capturing young maidens.

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### **Fre06 Begum says**

Waited for this book for so long on open library and it was so bland. I felt no chemistry between the main characters and considering he was a Viking he had none of the alpha traits just a penchant for sleeping around and hitting one of his wives whom he raped. What a let down!

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### **Rebecca says**

This book captured my attention immediately. There is no lull while we get to know the characters - the very first page begins with the Viking raid upon the convent in Britain where the heroine, Tara, lives as a novice nun. The background information is filled in here and there throughout the book, though, so the reader still gets to know about the characters, particularly Tara as the book is in first person as told by the heroine. Although the book's blurb describes her as having to get over her fear of the hero, Rorik, she never came across as being overly fearful of him (some fear, yes, but not nearly as much as I would expect of an average woman - in any century). She seemed more afraid for her soul due to her religion and his than of the man himself.

Normally I do not care for books where the hero and heroine are separated from each other against their will - for any length of time - but in this book there was so much going on during that separation (rather than her sitting around missing him) that it was not the unpleasant reading I come to expect from the periods of separation.

The plot ran along smoothly and never felt forced to me. Sometimes it feels as though an author has tried to add scenes or situations just to add length to a book, but everything seemed to flow fairly naturally (there were one or two times where I felt Tara seemed to change from anger to love, behave out of character, or do an about-face with her beliefs a bit too quickly, but who can say how a woman of that time and with that upbringing - and one who admits she needs a man's strength - would do given the same circumstances?). For me, the only real draw-back for the story was the level of steam...there was not really much there. The intimate scenes were rather brief and with almost no details. But, on the other hand, there weren't a bunch of ridiculously flowery phrases used to describe these scenes either (something I absolutely detest in romance novels by some authors). I would have also liked to have had a bit more information at the end of the book (I won't say what I would have wanted answered because I don't want to give anything away), but I didn't want the story to end anyway (always a sign of a good book for me!).

As to the characters, I liked both the hero and the heroine quite a lot. Because the story was first person from Tara's point of view, there was not as much of Rorik as I would have liked to have seen. I felt he was a nice balance of the "civilized" male modern readers tend to demand in a hero with what would be more realistic for a 10th century Viking warrior (he was neither completely civilized nor totally barbaric). It was also endearing to see his interaction and love for his children (and his father's with his grandchildren). Tara also was an interesting blend. Modern readers often like to see a strong female lead, but women in the 10th century simply were not usually overly independent. She showed both strength of self and a dependence on a

strong man, depending on the situation.

There were many interesting supporting characters as well. Some I loved and some I loathed, but they all came together to make the book one I had a hard time putting down (I read it in two days).

Although it is rare for me to give a book a 5 star rating, I gave one to this book because I couldn't give it 4 1/2. I would have taken off a half star for the low steam and the things left unanswered at the conclusion (they could have easily been answered with a page or two epilogue). Since I immediately felt the urge to flip back to the beginning and reread the book, though, I felt it deserved more than the 4 stars I normally give a book I enjoyed. Because I am on disability and not interested in watching the television, I read books all the time. It has been a while since I have discovered a book I've enjoyed as much as this one. I was fortunate enough to stumble upon this on [openlibrary.org](http://openlibrary.org) and am so grateful I borrowed it! It is certainly one I will revisit in the future!!!

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## **Regan Walker says**

For those of you who love a good Viking romance, but have trouble finding one, this may be the book for you. It's available used in paper very reasonably priced. The story of an unlikely, but true, love between two people from different cultures will hold your attention and your heart.

Told from the first person, our heroine, Tara, this is a sweeping saga that covers many years in the life of a young woman you will come to love. You will experience the time period (the 10th century), and how the Vikings lived, including what they wore, what they ate, what they believed, their governing bodies, the ships they sailed in and their marriage and family customs. You also get a feeling for the extent of their raiding and travels in the world at the time, and the use of slaves by the various countries. It was fascinating.

Tara is the beautiful flaxen-haired, younger daughter of an earl living in the south of Britain in the 900s. At 15, she falls in love with Ian, the son of a neighboring lord and they become lovers. He tells her he loves her, but that is something she doubts when Tara's father betroths her older sister to Ian with Ian's full consent. Tara is so distraught she runs away to the nearest abbey where she takes vows and lives for the next 7 years. While she would not have chosen the cloistered life, she finds peace and meaning there.

The story begins when she is 21, and Vikings raid the south of England. The abbey is in their path and all of the nuns are raped and/or killed and the abbey burned. Tara escapes rape only to be taken captive, saved as a prize for the Viking leader who was not at the abbey.

The leader, Rorik, is the eldest son of a Viking jarl. Once Rorik takes Tara onto his ship, he tells her she will become his wife. He ostensibly gives her time to consider this, but then tricks her into a quick marriage. From a nun to a pagan's wife is a giant leap, but Tara is willing to accept her lot and begins to have feelings for Rorik...that is, until they reach his home, Hordaland, where she learns some hard truths. And that is just the beginning of this extraordinary tale.

The story kept me turning pages until late at night. You had to feel for Tara, who is betrayed on so many levels by almost all the men in her life and faces challenges most of us will never know. Of course, at that time women were merely possessions, there for the pleasure of men and their political gain; but it was possible to find love in all of that. And Tara does, amazingly.

If you're looking for a different romance, one that is well written and gives you a real feeling for the time period, I can recommend it. It's a believable Viking romance with lots of action (including storms at sea,

adventures on land and on ship, captives, slave trading, wolf attacks, etc.), as well as heartbreaking and heartwarming episodes.

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## **Tina says**

### **SPOILERS -**

I really wasn't going to bother writing a review for this but I thought I should mention a couple of things here so you don't waste your money unnecessarily. It sure would've helped me hell of a lot, since I purchased this blindly without ANY spoilers.

I didn't finish this bodice ripper because:

1) The hero already had 2 wives when he marries the heroine. Moreover, he sleeps with them all! The hero acquires the heroine at a raid and he forces her to marry him. All goes well while they're traveling back to his home. They get to know each other, and are intimate. However, when they land, all hell breaks loose, because the heroine discovers his wives and refuses to share his bed. So he turns to his other wives and his female slaves. This goes on for about a year and all that time, the heroine is preggers.

2) He raped his 2nd wife for refusing him, and this wife looks like a child, which just made it that much worse for me, I literally thought I would vomit. His beating and raping of her leaves bruises so the heroine had to take care of her in the morning.

3) He cheats on the wives with female slaves.

4) Writing was unappealing and boring. I felt my mind wonder.

I don't quite remember more than this since I've been trying to forget this God awful book from my memory. Read this at your risk! :)

I do love the cover.

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## **Sally says**

I just read this book after it being recommended very highly by a friend. The characters are well written and sympathetic, the story arc exciting and complex and the writing style is necessarily descriptive but not overly so. Furthermore there is epic romance, tragedy and adventure to be had.

Tara's Song took me on a wonderful adventure, capturing me very early on and holding me firmly until the very last page. I recommend it strongly anyone who enjoys historical romance.



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## **Char says**

The book had it's moments but over all I didn't care for it. Also, there was a good deal of the book (maybe a third or more--or it could have been less & just seemed that long) where H/h were apart. Reading about Tara and her eunuch slave (Olav) hanging out in the Middle East didn't really hold my interest although I did like his character & felt sorry for him as he had a miserable life after being made a slave. And in defense of Tara she did not think of him as a slave but as a friend & treated him that way. And there was something about Rorik that just didn't hit it with me. At times he seemed whimpy to be a viking (until near the end). Oh well, just my take...

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## **Erica says**

I read this when I was seven and was convinced for far too long afterwards that adult sexuality involved nuns-in-training being "taken" on a pile of animal skins by marauding Vikings. Not that there's anything wrong with that.

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