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AUTOBIOGRAPHY & MEMOIR

The Missing Son: A Faroe Island Saga
Jennifer Henke
CreateSpace
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Three Stars (out of Five)

There are 49,000 people and 80,000 sheep that call the Faroe Islands home. They populate this small group of jagged rocks located in the North Atlantic Ocean about half way between Iceland and Scotland. People have lived in the Faroe Islands since the time of the Vikings.

Jennifer Henke, a California native, discovered the Faroes after her father, Hans Jacobsen, died in 1979. Hans had been born in the Faroe Islands in 1896, and his daughter returned there first in 1997 to search for her father's family. *The Missing Son: A Faroe Island Saga* is both the story of Hans Jacobsen and his family and of Jennifer Henke and her discovery of her family.

Hans Jacobsen left the Faroes in about 1917 for a sailing life, which was not unusual for a young man growing up on the islands. The Faroe Island natives have been sailors for centuries. After Hans died, his daughter discovered letters and photos that her father had received from family and friends during the first seven years he was at sea. These letters, although in a language she did not understand, served as the basis of Jennifer Henke's search for her father's family. *The Missing Son* is an exacting account of a daughter's discovery of her father's past and of an extended warm and accepting family still living in the Faroe Islands.

Henke has also produced an armchair traveler's guide to the Faroe Islands. The book is generously illustrated with black and white photographs and rich descriptions of the islands and the people. The author and her American family have visited the Faroe Islands on several occasions. Each time her knowledge and observations of the place and its people deepened and expanded. Henke is well-qualified in guiding the reader on these affectionate tours of these Islands that are so difficult to reach and explore.

Unfortunately, the author is unable to fully answer the question of why her father never returned to the Faroe Islands. She conjectured it may have been economics or simply the randomness of life where intervening events often take people in directions they do not plan. Ultimately, Hans Jacobsen settled in San Francisco, married and raised a family, which included

the author. Perhaps, if Hans had come from some place not so interesting as the Faroe Islands this memoir would have had less appeal. However, *The Missing Son* will surely attract folks who trace their ancestry to Norway or Denmark. The story was originally written in the Faroese language; this is the first English edition.

John Michael Senger