

The Letters and Diaries of Queen Chipsa:
Planet Earth Edition

Chipsa's documents,
in eight parts, are edited by
Alan Eddy

Volume One:
Three Adventures
(Parts One through Five)

Queen Chipsa lives in the Land of Nye:
a flat world held up by a giant oak tree

First PDF Edition: **20 October 2019**

This narrative by author Queen Chipsa and editor Alan Eddy is hereby placed in the public domain forever. To download this book as a free PDF, go to www.chipsaletters.com (see page viii for more information). The softcover printed book is the "Gift Edition."

The editor recommends the book *The Public Domain: Enclosing the commons of the mind* by James Boyle, Yale University Press, 2008.

Alan Eddy, July 2019



Dedication

To all students of the Peace Academy:
past, present, and future.

—Queen Chipsa

[This compilation of Chipsa's *Letters and Diaries*
is required reading for all first-year students.
Editor's Note]

The Letters and Diaries of Queen Chipsa: Planet Earth Edition

General Preface by Chipsa (Chipsa is the author)

The following work has been a delight to refine and tinker with in my old age. Since my husband King Taspel died three years ago I have been in a reflective mood.

My friend Alan Eddy has kindly agreed to be Editor for the Planet Earth Edition. The Land of Nye has achieved peace, or at least an extended truce, after six hundred years of conflict — Alan thinks that Earthlings can learn from our experience.

“But won’t that require a lot of tedious explanations?” I asked.

Alan laughed and said, “I will give them the Cliff’s Notes version of the background — it will move right along. This is what Albert Einstein would call a *thought experiment*. We will tell our story about the Land of Nye and it might help people achieve peace.”

“At least,” I reflected, “it will provide some relief from the news of the day and perhaps courage to face the world the next morning.”

Alan took a deep breath and said, “The peace aspect is good, but people have limited time for reading.”

I laughed and said, “That’s okay, it doesn’t have to be a best-seller!”

Queen Chipsa, age 86.

Year 675 APC (2065 AD or CE)

Written at Castra Sarah, beside the lake, on a lovely sunny day (the tenth of August).

Editor's Preface (by Alan Eddy)

Chipsa and I do not mind if you sympathize with the villains — some of our most loyal readers do just that. Many of the trouble-makers are members of a group called “The Anatomy Club,” but that does not mean that Chipsa and I are opposed to the science of anatomy. Far from it (see page 168 if you are interested). Chipsa's father, the White Magician Chistar, is an advocate for anatomy and restores it to its proper place in the curriculum of the Bearsgard Academy.

Here is a brief excerpt from Part One — part of a letter written by Chipsa to her father when she was sixteen years old (12 Sept 605 APC):

“Dear Papa,

Since your letter arrived a few days ago I have been terrified. Your account of your conversation with the Grey Wizard was most unsettling and now something has definitely gone wrong.

When I walk down the street, the villagers do not look me in the eye. The younger children at school double-dare each other to run up and touch my left hand. When I tried to buy some maple syrup in the market, no-one would take my coins....

Love, Chipsa”

These are strange words for an inhabitant of an idyllic agrarian utopia. What went wrong? What, indeed! Read on...

Alan Eddy, the Editor

Date: 12 October 2016 AD or CE

Location: A small New England town with tree-lined streets, USA, Planet Earth

Note on Sources and Dates

The items included in this collection come from five sources:

Chipsa's diaries

Shortly before her sixtieth birthday, Chipsa starts a diary that she continues for the rest of her life.

Chipsa's letters

At the time of her sixtieth birthday, Chipsa begins keeping copies of all her outgoing correspondence.

Chipsa's incoming correspondence

Queen Chipsa has a cabinet in which she keeps certain favorite letters that she has received. To avoid confusion, these are well-labeled so they are obviously incoming correspondence.

Chipsa's letters to her father

Chipsa's father Chistar was banished to the North Country for thirteen years (when Chipsa was age 3 to age 16). When she was old enough, she would write letters to him every week. Chistar saved all the letters, put them in a small chest of oak and brass, and gave them to Chipsa on her sixtieth birthday.

Commentary from the Editor

Items written by the Editor — Background, Notes, Commentaries, Epilogues, and the "Interlude for Earthlings" that makes up Part Three.

Each item is labeled with its source and date (if necessary).

The story of how humans arrived in the Land of Nye is told in a letter from Polara to Chipsa. This event is generally called "The Plague Cusp" and humans in Nye begin their chronologies with "zero APC" (After Plague Cusp). This date corresponds with 1390 AD or CE on Planet Earth.

Throughout the book and the website you will see notes in the chronologies that say "A. D. or C. E." when referring to dates on Planet Earth. "A. D." is the old "Anno Domini" which is Latin for "Year of Our Lord" — the Christian numbering system used in the Western world (these are the dates we are familiar with such as "1969" and "2019"). "C. E." is "Common Era," which is a non-religious name for the same numbering system. Dates prior to zero C. E. are "B. C. E." = Before Common Era.

End of Note

Recommended Reading

Come back to this page when you finish the book

Readers who like this work might also enjoy *Always Coming Home* by Ursula K. LeGuin and *The Beacon at Alexandria* by Gillian Bradshaw.

If you are curious as to why the farmers of Nye grow chestnuts and hazelnuts, you can read: *Restoration Agriculture: Real-world permaculture for farmers* by Mark Shepard, Acres USA, 2013.

To learn more about the homeland of the Count of the Western Marches, read these two books: *Iroquois Culture & Commentary* by Doug George-Kanentiio and *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer.

If these reading suggestions interest you, see page viii about the website that accompanies this book. The website has more reading recommendations.

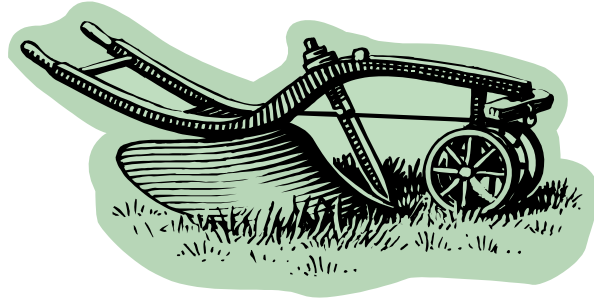
If you would like to make our world more akin to the Land of Nye, see “The Three Charities” at the end of *Part Three: Interlude for Earthlings* (page 185).

Alan Eddy, the Editor

Acknowledgements

Land of Nye team: Chipsa thanks her many friends whose names appear in the narrative.

Planet Earth team: Alan thanks the friends and family members who commented on the manuscript. He also thanks five-star book production expert Margaret Anderson for unflagging efforts in all aspects of this work. Her contributions include designing the cover and the website.



www.chipsaletters.com

Visit this website to download PDFs of this entire work and share as you like.

The Land of Nye does not have the World Wide Web, but Planet Earth does. The above website accompanies *The Letters and Diaries of Queen Chipsa*. It was difficult for Chipsa to comprehend the World Wide Web because her world does not even have electricity. It took some explaining. Most importantly, why would we need such an outlandish thing?

First, we hope that the website will act as an introduction for those not yet familiar with the Land of Nye, and an easy way for you to share your interest with others. The printed copies are labeled “Gift Edition” because the same work is available for free on the website.

Second, the website is a place for you to explore features such as photos that show terrain similar to locations in Nye. You will also find links to related subjects on the web, especially concerning Brother Bede’s era of history. The content of this site can expand on demand, so let us know what interests you (sirpatrickofnye@gmail.com).

We hope that all of us working together can make Planet Earth more like the Land of Nye. We need to roll up our sleeves, no?

Notes on the downloadable PDFs:

There are five PDF files, one for each part, that contain all of Volume One and can be viewed on a screen or printed out as desired. At the website you will find instructions for printing and binding a 2-sided copy. The work is not copyrighted and the PDF files can be distributed to friends if you wish. As of November 2019, Volumes Two, Three, and Four are not yet available.

The Letters and Diaries of Queen Chipsa

General Contents

Volume One: Three Adventures (Parts One through Five)

Part One: *Sir Patrick and the Blue Wizard*

The first adventure **Page 1**

Part Two: *The Quest of the Ten Coins* (which includes “The Journey of Testing” and “The Third Wolf”)

The second adventure **Page 75**

Note: Part One and Part Two were published in the Land of Nye as *A History of the Second Magic War* in the year 658 APC (when Chipsa was 69 years old).

Part Three: *Interlude for Earthlings* (written by the Editor)

Details and trivia for those who like them..... **Page 141**

Editor’s Commentary

Map Central

Chronology Central

Miscellany Central

Nonfiction Central (items relating to Planet Earth)

Part Four: *Polara’s Peace*

Historical flashbacks **Page 187**

Part Five: *The Zaisa Stratagem*

The third adventure..... **Page 215**

Volume Two: Two Plays (Part Six). Scripts for a group reading (17-28 people). This document includes discussion questions. The two plays are *Sir Patrick and the Blue Wizard* and *The Quest of the Ten Coins* (group reading versions).

Volume Three: Six Songs (Part Seven). Arrangements by Jeanette Gross DMA. Sheet music for the six songs (three songs in *Sir Patrick and the Blue Wizard* and three songs in *The Quest of the Ten Coins*).

Volume Four: Stories by Young Folks (Part Eight).

Stories written by Chipsa’s four grandchildren (Sir Alpheus, Betula, Robilee, and Adriana): spin-off tales that fill in gaps in the narrative and provide more detail of specific adventures.

Hound & Muskrat

*This is a quick preview of a fragment of: Volume 4 (Part Eight):
Stories by Young Folks.*

*The Land of Nye is a flat world held up by a giant oak tree. Here is
one of the creation myths common in that world.*

Before the world began, Hound (male) and Muskrat (female) had the following conversation:

Hound: Here we are in Nowhere, sitting on a cloud.

Muskrat: Yes, it is cool and dark. You need a place to run.

Hound: You need a place to swim. What kind of Universe is this?

Muskrat: This is a Universe of Up and Down.

Hound: What is above Up?

Muskrat: Further Up.

Hound: What is below Down?

Muskrat: Further Down.

Hound: These thoughts make my head hurt.

Muskrat, laughing: Me, too.

Hound: We need a World.

Muskrat: Where can we put it?

Hound: Here, in Nowhere.

Muskrat: Then it would no longer be Nowhere.

Hound: That's true. If we make a World, we are taking a Chance.

Muskrat: A Big Chance. Worlds are almost certain to go Wrong. It is their Nature.

Hound: Is it worth the Risk?

Muskrat: We won't know that until the World comes to its End.

Hound: Would it be better if the World had no Beginning?

Muskrat: I don't know, what do you think?

Hound, laughing: I don't know either.

Muskrat: Let's ask Tree.

Hound: Yes, Tree is very wise, but he cannot talk.

Muskrat: I have an idea. Tree, if you think we should make a World, drop an acorn.

Hound: I saw an acorn fall.

Muskrat: So did I. Tree, if you are willing to hold up the World with your branches, drop two acorns.

Hound: I saw them fall.

Muskrat: On the count of three we will make a World. Ready?

Hound: Ready.

Hound & Muskrat together: One, Two...

The End

The Letters and Diaries of Queen Chipsa

Part One: Sir Patrick and the Blue Wizard

Contents

SB0	Chipsa's Intro to Part One and Lists of Characters.....	2
SB1	Map: The four original sentient peoples of Nye (before the coming of humans)	5
SCa0	Letter from Polara to Chipsa: The Plague Cusp	6
SCa1	Map: The Dark Ages	11
SCb	Chronology of the History of Nye.....	12
SDa0	From the Editor: <i>The Dark Ages</i> (297 APC - 342 APC).....	13
SDa1 and SDb1	Two maps: Patrick's lifetime	28 & 29
<u>Three letters from Chipsa to her father Chistar:</u>		
	SG With friends after school.....	30
	SH Chipsa & Roswitha.....	32
	SJ Chipsa's letter of September 12, year 605	34
<u>The events of September 13:</u>		
	SL Patrick and the hermit go to Arnoldsdorf	35
	SM Chipsa and friends in the kitchen of her cottage.....	38
<u>The events of September 14:</u>		
	SN Patrick and Taspel go to Bearsgard	45
	SO Freya Finn's questions about Aelfric's coin	49
<u>The events of September 22-23 (a week later):</u>		
	SP An evening at Koshter's farm in Arnoldsdorf.....	54
	SQ The friends meet again on the Far Waste (by magic).....	58
SW	From the Editor: <i>Orontius the Alchemist</i> (559 APC to 592 APC, background for <i>The Quest of the Ten Coins</i>)	67

End of Part One

Introduction to Part One

by Chipsa

When word got around that I was writing *A History of the Second Magic War*, people began to write letters to me. The Brown Wizard has a spell that allows one to recall events and conversations exactly as they occurred. Since the spell is harmless and has no side effects, we passed it around to each other.

My diary began to fill up with my own recollections, and the letters from old friends accumulated. Then it occurred to me that I did not need to write a history at all — I could simply assemble the letters and diary entries in the correct order. Occasionally the Editor or I will insert notes of explanation.

The tale often goes off on tangents or flashbacks, but the main thread follows these five individuals:

Five Key Characters

Patrick, later **Sir Patrick**, age 16: He is the son of Darian, who is the Chief Cudgelwielder and Head of the Council of Finns and Friends, two key institutions of White Magic. His mother Elena died when he was born. Patrick, Taspel, Roswitha, and Chipsa are all classmates in school in Arnoldsdorf (they are sophomores in secondary school). During the school term, Patrick lives with Taspel and his family, and when the school is on holiday he goes home to his father's cottage in Derbyville. On days off from school, he earns some money as an Apprentice Messenger.

The Lindenwood hermit, later **The Blue Wizard**, age 19: He was an orphan who was adopted by Darian at the age of six and grew up as foster-brother to Patrick (they both call Darian "Dad"). He is an herbalist and student of White Magic who lives in the Lindenwood Forest. The forest stretches between Derbyville and Arnoldsdorf on one side and Bearsgard, the capital, on the other.

Taspel, later **King Taspel**, age 16: He and his father Alpheus, Mayor of Arnoldsdorf, are members of the Anatomy Club, which is not friendly to White Magic. Taspel's Mom does not come into the story.

Roswitha, age 16: She is the daughter of Maia and Damrod. Maia is a member of the guild of midwives called "The Sisters of the Green Leaf," the oldest institution of White Magic. Damrod is a Cudgelwielder and a paper-maker by trade. Roswitha is named for Roswitha Marsh, one of the three original midwives that came from Cheddar, England six hundred years ago.

Chipsa, later **Queen Chipsa**, age 16: I am the daughter of Linnea and Chistar. My father Chistar was banished to the North Country when I was three years old.

Other Main Characters

For quick reference for my readers, I list below some main characters that are mentioned in more than one chapter. For the sake of simplicity, I include only people who lived during my lifetime — no historical characters are listed here. The Introduction to Part Two has more characters that come into the tale later on. You don't need to read this now — it is just for looking up names if needed.

Koshter, age 52: a farmer of Arnoldsdorf, cousin to Sir Graham, and a member of the Anatomy Club.

The Grey Witch, age 66: An herbalist, midwife, wise-woman, and healer (not connected with the Grey Wizard, although they are both followers of White Magic).

Sir Graham, age 55: Chief Knight of the Realm and cousin to Koshter of Arnoldsdorf.

Freya Finn: a Talking Muskrat, Chief Spy for the Council of Finns and Friends. She has a twin sister named Freda (also a spy). "Muskrat" and "Talking Muskrat" mean the same thing. The Muskrats are four feet tall and walk upright.

Erika Finn: the elderly matriarch of the Finn clan of Talking Muskrats and founder of the Council of Finns and Friends. She is a leading White Magician.

The Good Raven Lisa: she is a young raven who works closely with the Muskrat spy Freya Finn. She is skilled in White Magic. Both good ravens and evil ravens can talk.

Thea: President of the Bearsgard Academy and President of the Sisters of the Green Leaf (the guild of midwives). Over time, the midwives became physicians, nurses, and apothecaries as well and serve all the health needs of the humans in Nye. Thea is a leading White Magician.

The Brown Wizard: Chief Wizard and the leader of White Magic. The office of Brown Wizard goes all the way back to Brother Bede — the positions of the other three wizards began at the end of the Dark Ages. Since that time, there are a total of four wizards in each generation. At the time of the Treaty of Olaf's Bridge and the founding of the Peace Academy, more wizards are added.

The Blue Wizard: The position of Blue Wizard is vacant at the beginning of this tale. The Blue Wizard traditionally teaches botany, chemistry, and geology at the Bearsgard Academy. The post of Blue Wizard is later taken over by the Sapphire Wizard.

The Green Wizard: a special faculty member at the Bearsgard Academy.

The Grey Wizard: a resident of Albantown, traditionally a peacemaker with Black Magic. When I was a child, I remembered this by thinking “grey is between white and black.”

Escalus: a faculty member of the Bearsgard Academy and an expert on the history of Black Magic.

Robert Roy: formerly the Green Wizard — he resigned his post to devote his life to studying the history of Black Magic. On this topic, he collaborates with Escalus, Chistar, and the Grey Wizard. When he resigned, Damrod’s brother took over as Green Wizard.

Damrod and Maia: the parents of Roswitha, residents of Arnoldsdorf. Maia is a Sister of the Green Leaf (a member of the guild of midwives). Damrod is a brother of the current Green Wizard.

Darian and Elena: the parents of Patrick (Elena died when Patrick was born). Darian lives in Derbyville (a one-hour walk away from Arnoldsdorf).

Chistar and Linnea: the parents of Chipsa. Linnea and Chipsa live in Arnoldsdorf. Chistar was banished to the North Country when Chipsa was three. Damrod, Maia, Darian, Elena, Chistar, and Linnea grew up together in Derbyville and became lifelong friends.

The Bad Guys

Kalko, age 44: a harvester from Albantown (he hates White Magic, and he was a childhood friend of Elhanon).

Orontius the Alchemist (pronounced ore-awn-chee-us): he grows up in Bearsgard and becomes a Mine Engineer employed by the Iron Mines in the North Country. There is a story about how he learned alchemy.

Zaisa, later **Queen Zaisa** (pronounced zye-sah): a woman from Albantown who marries Orontius.

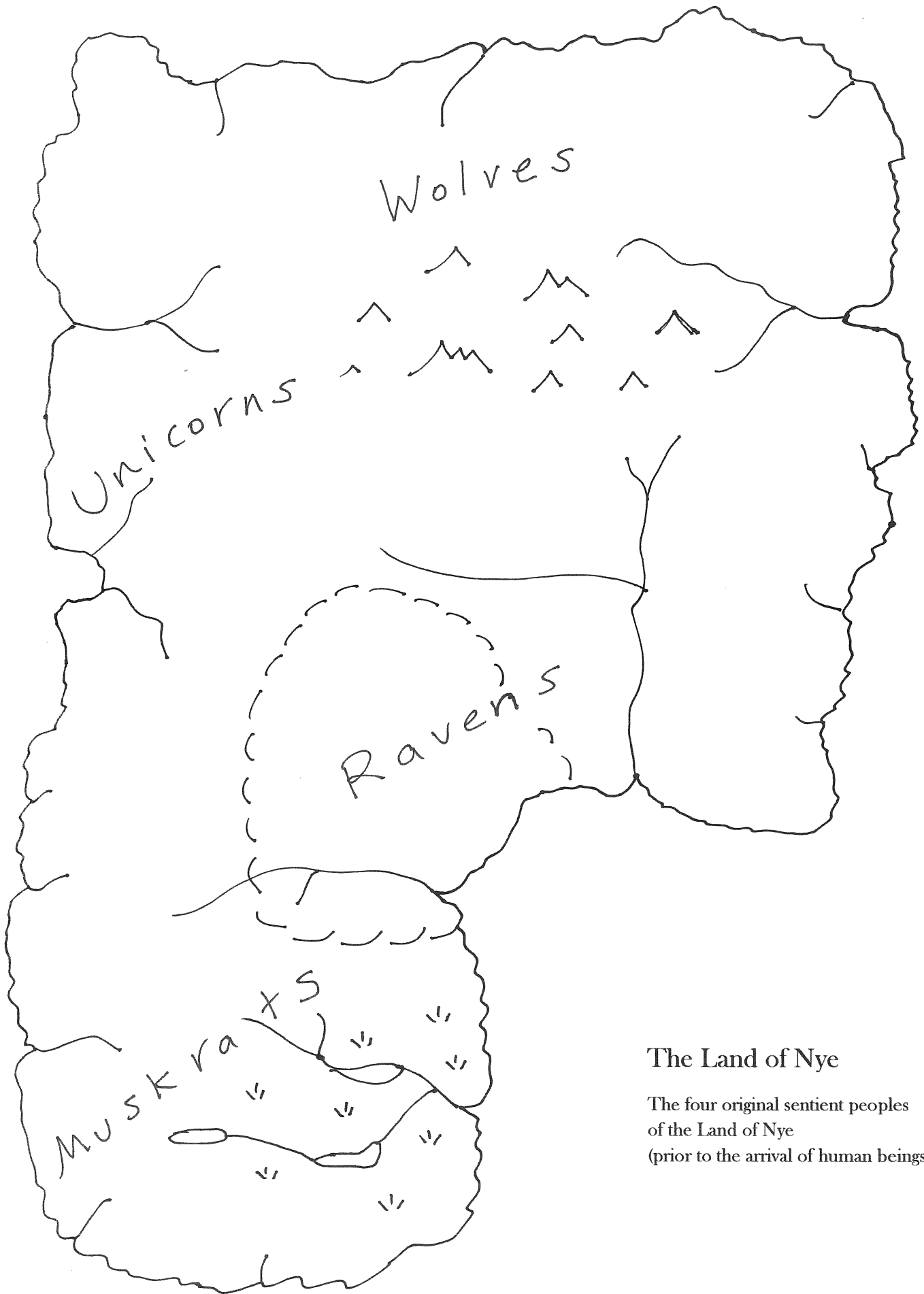
Pikorro: the elder son of Orontius and Zaisa.

Zorso: the younger son of Orontius and Zaisa (about four years younger than Pikorro).

Elhanon (pronounced ell-hay-nun): younger brother of Orontius. He becomes a Professor of Anatomy at the Bearsgard Academy and does not marry. He is one of the founders of The Anatomy Club.

Krizzen, later **King Krizzen:** the innkeeper of *The Happy Wolf* in Albantown. He is an old friend of Orontius and Elhanon. His hobby is breeding boarhounds.

End



The Land of Nye

The four original sentient peoples
of the Land of Nye
(prior to the arrival of human beings)

SCa0 5pages. Letter from Polara to Chipsa. 648 APC.

Dear Chipsa,

I have instructed my Executor to deliver this letter to you after my passing. By now you know enough about the Other World to understand this key narrative in the history of the Land of Nye. You already know a lot about Brother Bede, and this tale will fill in some gaps in your knowledge. As your children and grandchildren learn about the Other World, you can share this tale with them.

I refer to myself as “Polara” rather than “I” to make the story easier to read.

I have entitled it:

The Plague Cusp

This is the story of how human beings came to the Land of Nye, and how the Ancient Unicorns left the Land of Nye.

The story begins: Village of Cheddar in southwest England.

Date: November of the year 1390 A. D.

Background: Three barons and their hunting parties are camped on the outskirts of the village – they are on a hunting expedition to lay in a supply of meat for a visit from the King (Richard II) and his entourage expected in a couple of days. Brother Bede, a learned Benedictine monk from an abbey in Wales, is staying at the village inn after visiting his wealthy uncle William Fitzroy in the village. He is taking two chests full of manuscripts, one from his father and one from his uncle, to the library at Oxford. The new Librarian is the son of a farmer and determined to balance the theological works with books on practical subjects. Brother Bede is traveling with a cart and two donkeys. His Uncle William has been a patron of his academic career and a donor to his abbey. The Black Death is present in England at this time.

It is now midnight on a November night, and Brother Bede awakens to the sound of someone pounding on the door of his room.

“Brother Bede, come help us,” says the innkeeper.

“What is the matter?” replies Brother Bede.

“Three huntsmen staying at the inn have fallen ill with the Black Death,” says the innkeeper.

Brother Bede spends the rest of the night nursing the three men, but there is not much he can do for them. He does not have any of the resources that his abbey could have provided. When morning comes, he sends for an apothecary, but the apothecary refuses to come near the sick men.

When Brother Bede goes outdoors to the stable to tend to the two donkeys that he brought from his abbey, he finds a crowd of people gathered around the inn.

“Give us a Prayer of Supplication,” the crowd calls out to him. They all start yelling at him and waving their arms.

After tending to his donkeys, Brother Bede takes up parchment, pen, and ink and begins to write. He composes a prayer in Greek, written to the god Apollo. His private opinion is that the Church’s approach to the Black Death is not working, so he wants to try something different. He makes an eloquent appeal to Apollo without saying anything specific about what he expects Apollo to do. The prayer is open-ended.

When the prayer is finished, he takes it out to the crowd, which by now includes most of the villagers.

Brother Bede gives a short speech to the crowd without telling them what the prayer says or to whom it is addressed. He stands up on top of a water-trough where everyone can see him. He tells the innkeeper to take a pair of tongs and bring him a burning coal from the hearth, and then he sets fire to the parchment.

The crowd is delighted with this prayer being sent up to Heaven by the means they consider to be the most reliable. The crowd cheers and goes home.

Brother Bede goes into the inn for his noon meal and then spends the rest of the day nursing the three ill huntsmen. In the afternoon, three courageous midwives come to help him. Their names are Rowena, Roswitha, and Rachel (Rowena is the daughter of William Fitzroy and a cousin of Brother Bede). Brother Bede is planning to leave for Oxford the next day.

That night is a still moonless night and the morning brings surprise to the entire village.

The villagers, the three hunting parties, and Brother Bede wake up to find themselves in the Land of Nye. They are in an empty land of fields, forests, and rivers. There are some wild animals present, but no sign of human or non-human habitation.

The villagers find that their animals, their tools, their seeds, and their food stores are scattered in the fields nearby. The only thing missing is the horses – no horses, mules, or donkeys have come with them. In addition, they find that barrels of flour, oats, and apples have miraculously appeared among them. It appears to be also the month of November in this strange land to which they have come – the leaves have fallen from the trees and the air is chill. There was a boatmaker and his apprentices in the village and three sloops have come along, almost finished. Brother Bede finds that all of his father’s books and his uncle’s books have also come.

Brother Bede goes among the people and encourages them to build fences to pasture the animals and to start building homes. This work begins right away and progresses well. Good fortune blesses the transplanted people, and the three huntsmen who had been ill are suddenly cured.

Brother Bede soon notices that no-one has any memory of English politics or religion except him. "At last," he thinks, "we have a chance to start over."

People see his Benedictine habit and call him "the Brown Wizard." The name sticks, and Brother Bede chooses an apprentice who will be the Brown Wizard after him.

The people who came from England numbered nine hundred, including seven hundred villagers and two hundred in the three hunting parties.

The people have to learn new trades in this new world, so some of them learn lime-burning, quarrying, and mining. Some of the men had worked at these trades in their youth, and Brother Bede has books on these subjects.

During his first night in the Land of Nye, Brother Bede is awakened by a raven tapping on his hand, and he finds that the bird is speaking in language he can understand. The raven tells him to follow, and leads him through a moonlit landscape to a valley. Ninety Unicorns are gathered there – the last ones in Nye. The Queen of the Unicorns, Polara, takes Brother Bede aside and they walk by the riverbank and talk for two hours. After the first hour goes by, they are joined by Myrica Ondatra, the Queen of the Talking Muskrats, and the three of them talk together for another hour.

Three hours before daybreak, Polara and Brother Bede gather the Unicorns together. The Unicorns bow farewell to Brother Bede and gallop into the river. They vanish in a cloud of mist that rises from the water. Brother Bede goes back to where the villagers are sleeping on the ground and goes back to sleep. The next morning, he sketches twelve Unicorn heads and hides the sketches.

He tells everything to his apprentice who will be Brown Wizard after him, and they often repeat the words of Polara and Myrica from the long talk by the river.

The three hunting parties did not include any women, so the womenfolk in this new world find they have the upper hand in choosing husbands, hiring servants, and ruling households. The villagers build a settlement that is later called Hayport, and the barons and the huntsmen go to the opposite coast to build a castle that they call Camulodunum. The settlement of Camulodunum eventually becomes a group of twelve castles. Hayport becomes a thriving and prosperous town, surrounded by fields, meadows, pastures, and orchards. At the first meeting of the council of elders of the new town, before it had a name, Brother Bede stands up and says, "Since this town is to the west of Camulodunum, it should be called Aquae Sulis." Then a farmer stands up and says, "This is the

port where we load the hay. Let's call it Hayport." The name stuck, and everyone called it Hayport even though it never came to a vote.

The citizens of Hayport and Camulodunum often come to the Brown Wizard with questions. They do not understand why some of them arrived with gold coins in their pockets and others did not. The Brown Wizard seizes this opportunity to teach them that each person is free to choose his or her own station in life.

The three midwives start a guild called "The Sisters of the Green Leaf." Brother Bede gives them herbals from England and Europe, including works by Pliny the Elder, Dioscorides, and Albertus Magnus. The story of how the three midwives learned Latin comes into another tale. In Nye, some plants are the same and others are different, so the midwives start writing their own herbals. Brother Bede also gives the three midwives some Latin texts on medicine and anatomy, but the midwives return them politely saying that "common sense is better." The midwives later expand their duties to include serving as physicians and apothecaries. The menfolk help the guild by gathering wild herbs and manning the ambulance corps and fire brigade in each town. The women of Nye come to love the three midwives and their apprentices, and even an illiterate woman will write the letter "R" on a scrap of cloth and send a messenger boy to find Roswitha, Rowena, or Rachel.

In later years, in the Kingdom of Men, schoolchildren are required to learn the "Nine Hundred Names" of the original settlers who came from Cheddar, England.

As the years pass, each Brown Wizard takes an apprentice and teaches him all the lore that came from Brother Bede.

Brother Bede makes part of the talk with Polara public to all the humans in Hayport and Camulodunum. The words of Polara include the following: "There are four types of sentient beings in the Land of Nye – the Muskrats, who are good, the Wolves, who are evil, the Unicorns, who are good, and the Ravens, who are half and half." Upon hearing these words, Brother Bede asks if there is any way to tell a good Raven from a bad Raven. The answer from Polara is simply, "No."

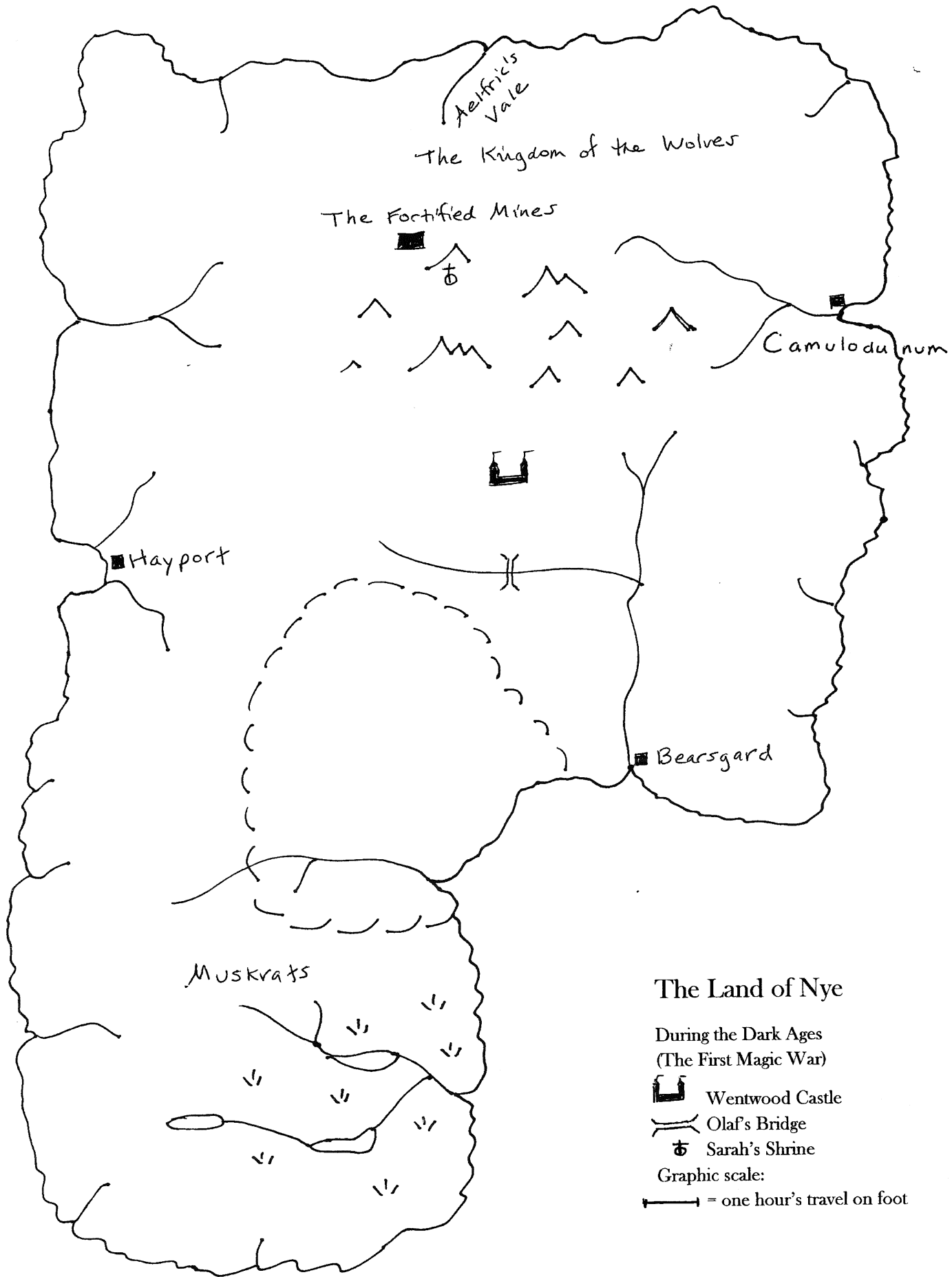
Polara says that this world is very small, and that is why no horses, mules, or donkeys came here with the transplanting of people from England. "It is a flat world, held up by a giant oak tree, with a ring of mountains around the edge to keep the water from flowing over. From the tops of the mountains one can see the twigs and leaves of the oak tree Thor's Oak reaching up. There is only one continent in the middle of the ocean, although Brother Bede would call it an island (and a small one at that)."

One of the many secrets passed down from master to apprentice is this: when Brother Bede had the long talk with the Unicorn Polara, he asked her about the

prayer to Apollo. He wanted to know if it was the prayer to Apollo that had worked this miracle. Polara replied: “The magic that brought you here was set in motion before you wrote the prayer. It was my magic that worked that miracle, because our world needs humans. The nature of my magic is that it benefits everyone, and the need to escape the Black Death was taken into account. Apollo mentioned your prayer to me, and I assured him that I had already responded.”

The End

With love from, Polara



Aelfric's Vale

The Kingdom of the Wolves

The Fortified Mines

Camulodunum




Hayport


Bearsgard

Muskvats

The Land of Nye

During the Dark Ages
(The First Magic War)

-  Wentwood Castle
-  Olaf's Bridge
-  Sarah's Shrine

Graphic scale:
 = one hour's travel on foot

Chronology of the History of Nye

APC = After Plague Cusp

CE = Common Era or Anno Domini (in the Other World, Planet Earth)

0 APC or 1390 CE: The Plague Cusp: the coming of humans to the Land of Nye and the founding of the Sisters of the Green Leaf.

1-297 APC: The building of the twelve castles of Camulodunum and the development of the town of Hayport with its farms, meadows, and orchards.

235 APC or 1625 CE: The coming of the Count of the Western Marches to Nye.

297 APC: The birth of Olaf, followed two years later by the birth of his brother Ingmar.

301 APC: The death of King Aelfric, the Lost King.

321 APC: The beginning of the Dark Ages (the First Magic War). The founding of Bearsgard.

339 APC: The Fall of Camulodunum, followed by the death of Rhus the Necromancer and the death of Queen Sarah (340 APC).

341 APC: The Fall of Hayport, the death of Ingmar, the founding of the Kingdom of Men, the founding of the Order of Wizards, the founding of the Knights of the Realm, the founding of the Cudgelwielders, the death of Olaf, the recapture of the Mines, the end of the First Magic War (and the end of the Dark Ages). Derbyville, Arnoldsdorf, and Albantown are founded at this time.

342 APC: The Special Meeting of the Sisters of the Green Leaf, and the founding of the Bearsgard Academy with its Almshouse and Scriptorium.

342-605 APC: The time of peace, called "Sarah's Peace."

539 APC or 1929 CE: The birth of the Grey Witch.

559 APC: The birth of Orontius, followed two years later by the birth of his brother Elhanon.

582 APC: The completion of the High Dam and the birth of Pikorro.

589 APC: The birth of Chipsa, Patrick, Taspel, and Roswitha.

592 APC: The death of Philomena Finn, the death of Orontius, and the founding of the Council of Finns and Friends. The orphan boy, age unknown, is adopted by Darian.

605 APC: The action begins! The beginning of *Sir Patrick and the Blue Wizard* followed immediately by *The Quest of the Ten Coins*.

End

From the Editor: This is my narrative that sets the stage of the world into which Chipsa, Roswitha, Patrick, and Taspel are born. This tale is only a synopsis of the various annals and chronicles of the Land of Nye. Readers may skip to the action scenes (p. 35) and return for the background later if they wish.

The Dark Ages

This is the story of King Aelfric (The Lost King), Queen Sarah, their two sons Olaf and Ingmar, and the beginning and end of the Dark Ages. The story includes the fall of Camulodunum, the fall of Hayport, and the founding of the Kingdom of Men (Bearsgard, Derbyville, Arnoldsdorf, and Albantown). It also tells of the founding of the Knights of the Realm, the Order of Wizards, the Cudgelwielders, and the Bearsgard Academy.

The story begins in the castles of Camulodunum, about three hundred years after the coming of humans to the Land of Nye. Camulodunum is not a town but a group of twelve castles. Three of the castles are on the harbor: one has docks for the cargo boats, one has docks for the fishing boats, and the third has docks for the Royal Sloops-of-War. Each castle has its own wells for water and its own gardens for fruits, vegetables, and beehives (within the walls). There is always danger from the Wolves -- men go out in armed companies to journey to the Fortified Mines in the mountains, to hunt for game, and to gather medicinal herbs. The people of Camulodunum eat more venison and wild boar than beef and pork. The boats from Hayport bring grain for bread and porridge and lots of hay and grain for the livestock. The sea has plenty of fish.

Background: King Aelfric and Queen Sarah are the rulers of Camulodunum (Hayport is ruled by its Mayor and council of elders, not the King and Queen). Their son Olaf is now four years old and their son Ingmar is two years old. The chief advisor to the King and Queen is the Brown Wizard, who is now about eighty years old (he has two apprentices – one age about fifty and one age about twenty). The Brown Wizard is also an advisor to the Mayor of Hayport and the guild of midwives (which is called “The Sisters of the Green Leaf” and headquartered in Hayport). Queen Sarah has composed a song for her two sons that everyone calls *Sarah’s Lullaby*. There has been war between the Wolves and Camulodunum for twelve years. The Wolves have never journeyed far enough south to attack Hayport, but the farmers’ militia of Hayport is prepared if that should ever happen. During the summer, the warriors of Camulodunum sail north in the Royal Sloops-of-War and attack the Wolves from the rear. It is now early winter, shortly after Olaf’s fourth birthday.

King Aelfric is in conference with the barons of Camulodunum when he is interrupted by a raven flying into the royal chamber.

The raven perches on the back of the Brown Wizard’s chair, empty at this moment, and speaks to the King and the barons. “I bring you greeting from your

adversary Baron Kritz of the Wolves and his overlord King Fenrir, King of the Wolves. The Wolves have commissioned me to make this offer. In order to prevent further bloodshed and expense to our Armies, King Fenrir of the Wolves offers to meet King Aelfric in single combat to the death. The outcome of the combat will decide the outcome of this war. I will carry King Aelfric's reply to the Wolves and then we will take two weeks to negotiate the details of the single combat and the terms of victory and defeat. I will return in three days' time to receive King Aelfric's answer." Thereupon the raven flies out of a window and is quickly out of sight.

The barons shake their fists at the departing raven and all start talking at once. The King sinks into his chair deep in thought.

When the hubbub dies down, the Kings says, "We must summon the Brown Wizard."

Queen Sarah comes running into the royal chamber and says, "I heard the words of the raven. I foresee great sorrow, great joy, and great treachery."

Sarah's words are followed by a profound silence.

Aelfric says, "Sarah, I agree completely. Where is the Brown Wizard?"

Sarah replies, "The Brown Wizard is in Hayport giving lessons in herb-lore. If we summoned him now, he would be here in about a week."

Aelfric says to the barons, "The Queen and I know what the Brown Wizard would say, and we know what must be done. Is that not so, Sarah?"

Sarah replies, "Yes. We accept the single combat and begin the negotiations. We prepare for treachery and remain on full alert for further warfare."

The barons exclaim and protest, but Aelfric silences them with a gesture. "We must prepare for the raven's return. We will form a team of three to conduct the negotiations. I believe that the Brown Wizard's First Apprentice is nearby and he will serve on the team. Sarah and I will be the other two. We must now disperse to our appointed duties, but first I have something to show you."

Aelfric leaves the chamber and returns with a leather bag – he unfastens the bag and dumps twelve gold coins on the table. "These are coins that the Brown Wizard, Sarah and I have designed and minted here in the Royal Treasury. Look at them carefully. These coins will go with me to the single combat, for this is the occasion for which they were prepared. During the three days that we await the raven's return, the coins will be here on display. Study them carefully when leisure permits. Now we must be about our duties. Dismissed."

After the return of the raven, the negotiations begin. Every day, after the evening meal, the King, the Queen, and the Brown Wizard's First Apprentice discuss the

day's events with the barons. The barons are not happy with the terms, but Aelfric and Sarah insist that they are correct. The Brown Wizard's First Apprentice persuades the barons that Aelfric and Sarah are right.

At last the negotiations are completed and the time has come for King Aelfric to depart for the single combat. He sails north in a small fishing boat used for winter fishing. The raven meets him at the coast and guides him inland to where the King of the Wolves is waiting. As agreed, the two kings are alone, with six ravens to serve as witnesses.

The two kings fight for four hours and begin to stagger with weariness. In accordance with the terms of the combat, King Aelfric is using a short sword. King Fenrir knocks the sword out of his hand. Then Aelfric picks up a large rock and holds it high over his head with both hands.

Fenrir sees that Aelfric has foolishly left his chest and throat unguarded. He puts on a burst of speed and is about to make a great leap when he stumbles and lands on his stomach. His chin hits the ground, hard.

Aelfric brings the rock crashing down and kills the Wolf.

Three ravens fly to inform the Wolves, and three ravens fly to Camulodunum, as agreed.

Aelfric is overcome with fatigue and sleeps the night in the lee of some large boulders. He has no food or drink with him, and there are no trees or shrubs for shelter. At dawn he begins to limp toward his boat.

When his boat is in sight drawn up on the sand, he suddenly finds himself surrounded by forty Wolves. The chief raven speaks on behalf of Baron Kritz, second-in-command to the slain King Fenrir.

"Camulodunum must pay tribute to the Wolves," says the raven, "a rock is not a legitimate weapon. When Fenrir stumbled, you should have let him get up. He would have allowed you to retrieve your sword. You did not follow the rules. We demand one hundred sheep per year or we will resume the war."

Aelfric replies, "You are angry at the loss of your King. The fight was fair and there was no ban on picking up weapons from the barren countryside. I refuse your terms. Stand aside and let me pass or face certain defeat in the war to come."

Baron Kritz and five other Wolves attack Aelfric and kill him instantly. The only raven present is in the employ of Baron Kritz, and there is no-one to take the news of Aelfric's death to Camulodunum. Baron Kritz orders the Wolf Army to prepare an attack on the twelve castles. After two months of fighting, the Wolves are defeated and retreat to the north.

In the meantime, the Brown Wizard has returned from Hayport and summoned both of his Apprentices to the Royal Castle. Queen Sarah is now the ruler of Camulodunum, and they have all guessed what must have happened to King Aelfric. The Wolves have suffered heavy casualties and there is a period of peace for twenty years. One of the ravens who witnessed the combat on behalf of King Aelfric flies to the Royal Castle with one of the Twelve Coins in his beak. Queen Sarah treasures the coin and gives it to her eldest son Olaf on his twenty-first birthday. At the end of the Wolf War, Sarah composes a song called *Sarah's Lament*.

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Olaf is now twenty-four years old and Ingmar is twenty-two. Queen Sarah is loved by the people of Camulodunum and the people of Hayport. The bards sing ballads of "Queen Sarah and the Lost King." Everyone admires her courage, wisdom, and kindness. Everyone, that is, except her son Ingmar.

At this time, Ingmar begins to take long journeys alone, and he does not participate in the royal court or the Privy Council. Queen Sarah and others notice that candlelight can be seen in his chamber long into the night.

One day in early spring, Ingmar cannot be found anywhere. People begin to notice that things are missing – fine books, arms, armor, parchment and ink.

Several years after the Wolf War, the Brown Wizard dies and the First Apprentice becomes Brown Wizard after him. The new Brown Wizard and his Apprentice meet with Queen Sarah to discuss the situation. Olaf is summoned to join the conversation. While they are talking, a raven comes with a message from Ingmar – "I have founded the science of Black Magic and seek to kill a Muskrat and destroy Camulodunum." That is all.

Olaf says to his mother and the others, "Let me go and find out more. I will take a cloak, a staff, two ravens, and nothing else. I will find out what Ingmar is up to. When I return, I will learn from the Muskrats the craft of White Magic."

Olaf returns after two months and says to his mother, "Ingmar thinks that he will become immortal if he kills a Talking Muskrat and eats its flesh. He is building a stronghold in the wilderness that he calls Wentwood Castle. He has gathered men and women to his cause and the castle is progressing rapidly. They have forges for making weapons. He is brewing poisons to use with arrows. He will soon be a formidable enemy to Camulodunum and Hayport."

Olaf, Sarah, the Brown Wizard, and the First Apprentice work on founding the principles of White Magic, which they have learned from the Muskrats.

Queen Sarah and the Mayor of Hayport send an army to stop the construction of Wentwood Castle, but the army is repulsed by poison arrows and burning arrows. This is the beginning of the Magic War and the Dark Ages. Sarah warns

the Muskrats that they are in danger. A Black Magician by the name of Rhus the Necromancer becomes Ingmar's second-in-command.

At this time, Olaf recruits volunteers from Camulodunum and Hayport to start a new colony at the mouth of the Bear River. Olaf calls the town Bearsgard and begins to lay out streets for a capital city. Bearsgard, Hayport, and Camulodunum work together in the war against Ingmar and the Black Magicians, but the two sides are in stalemate for seventeen years.

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In the eighteenth year of the Magic War, misfortune begins to strike the forces of White Magic. Ingmar's first major victory is to capture the Fortified Mines in the mountains of the North Country – this cuts off the supply of iron, copper, silver, and gold to Camulodunum, Bearsgard, and Hayport.

Ingmar's second major victory is to form an alliance with the Wolves, who have recovered from the defeat by Camulodunum and are now a fighting force once again.

One overcast day at the beginning of winter, the people of Camulodunum are cutting trees for the Winter Solstice Bonfire. They are also hunting game for the feast and laying in a supply of medicinal herbs for the coming winter. In the midst of all this, the Black Magicians and the Wolf Army descend out of the mountains and attack the twelve castles.

The alarm is sounded by the Royal Trumpeters and orders go out from Queen Sarah and the Brown Wizard to flee to the harbors and take all the boats to Bearsgard. Queen Sarah seems to be everywhere at once – commanding the foot-soldiers fighting the attack, organizing groups of women and children to embark on the boats, and trying to preserve the morale of the forces of White Magic. She is never seen again after that day.

When night falls, the heavily-loaded boats are on their way to Bearsgard and the twelve castles are in flames. The Black Magicians return to Wentwood Castle with their spoils and the Wolves go back to their kingdom in the north. This is one of the darkest days of the Dark Ages.

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Several months after the fall of Camulodunum, a census is taken of all of the refugees who escaped. The census comes up with the remarkable result that of all the population of Camulodunum, only two people are missing – Baron Kannol and Queen Sarah. Several soldiers can remember Baron Kannol being struck by a spear and perishing in the battle. Many people were wounded in the fall of Camulodunum, but by some miracle only two were lost.

A month before the second anniversary of the fall of Camulodunum, the same alliance of Black Magicians and Wolves attacks Hayport from the north along the coast. The Black Magicians who are normally detailed to work in the mines, hunt

for venison, and perform a myriad of other tasks are temporarily re-assigned to the Black Magic Army. Wentwood Castle has a plentiful supply of weapons created by Black Magic.

This time, the defenses are ready, and the onslaught finds the farmers' militia and the soldiers of Bearsgard waiting for them. Being ready, however, is not enough. The forces of White Magic are beaten back by the ferocious attack. Remember that the White Magicians have no source of iron for making weapons since Ingmar captured the mines two years earlier.

The forces of White Magic are able to hold off the attack just long enough for Hayport to be evacuated. The people flee with their lives but are unable to take anything with them. They take shelter in the Lindenwood Forest to the east of Hayport and start makeshift camps there.

Two weeks prior to the attack, the children of Hayport, the dairy cattle, the oxen, the small livestock, the dogs, and the cats had all been evacuated to Bearsgard under the cover of darkness. The story of how superspy Artemisia Finn engineered this feat comes into another tale.

The farmers' militia and the soldiers of Bearsgard retreat to the Lindenwood Forest just a few hours after the civilians arrive there.

The Black Magicians enter the empty town of Hayport – the first place they seek out is the headquarters of the Sisters of the Green Leaf, the famous guild of midwives. Ingmar hates the guild and personally breaks down the door to their building. The Black Magicians burst into the headquarters and find it empty – everything has been removed some time ago. The Library, the Herbarium, the apothecary supplies – it is all gone. Ingmar is furious and orders his men to set fire to the entire town of Hayport. The fire rages and one of the Wolves is killed in the rapidly spreading flames. Baron Kritz, who is in charge of the Wolf Army in this attack, sends a raven to complain to Ingmar, but Ingmar kills the raven after he hears what it has to say.

The Black Magicians start to advance toward the Lindenwood Forest the next day, but they encounter heavy rain and wind. The Black Magic Army is loaded down with booty taken from Hayport and the warriors start to quarrel over the finest spoils.

Baron Kritz starts to get complaints from the Wolf Soldiers and orders a retreat to the North. He sends a raven to Ingmar to tell him about this, but Ingmar kills the raven immediately, thinking it is another complaint about the burned Wolf.

Ingmar orders his men to drop their spoils and advance toward the Lindenwood Forest. The men complain and insist that the advance be delayed till the next day. Ingmar gives in to this and the Black Magic Army camps in muddy hay fields.

The next day the weather is even worse – rain is coming down in torrents and the wind is whipping the rain.

Ingmar's captains call for a council of war. Because of the rain and wind they can barely hear each other speak. One captain speaks up and says that if they hadn't burned all of Hayport, they would have a nice dry place for their council.

Another captain says that the Wolf Army should advance on the Lindenwood Forest first, and the human warriors behind them. This idea meets with universal approval and three captains and three ravens are sent to speak with Baron Kritz and the Wolf Army.

Several hours later, the emissaries return with word that the Wolf Army is nowhere to be found. One of the captains is brought back dead, pierced by an arrow from a scout of the farmers' militia now stationed in the Lindenwood Forest.

One captain accuses the ravens of treachery, since the only way the humans can communicate with the Wolves is through the ravens. Two of the ravens are killed, and the third one escapes to warn other ravens not to work for Ingmar and not to serve as go-between with the Wolves.

The Black Magicians now have no Wolf Army and no way to communicate with it.

Ingmar's captains vote for a retreat to Wentwood Castle, and Ingmar is forced to agree. The rain is still pouring down.

Ingmar orders five captains to take a detachment of warriors to the ruins of Hayport to get wagons to transport spoils to Wentwood Castle. The captains remember the emissary to the Wolves who was shot by a White Magic scout.

One captain steps forward close to Ingmar and shouts over the rain, "Who is going to pull the wagons?"

Ingmar draws his sword and kills the captain. This leads to outright mutiny and Ingmar is killed on the spot. The captains rush to the piles of booty and start fighting over them.

A few hours later, the Black Magic Army has ceased to be a fighting force. Dozens of men lie slain next to the booty. There is no-one to tend the wounded and many more bleed to death or die of exposure in the rain and mud.

Many of the survivors march north to take revenge on the ravens and the Wolves and subsequently perish in the wilderness. Others become brigands in the North Country. Not one of them returns to Wentwood Castle. The warriors have promised lavish gifts to the women and children at Wentwood and do not want to return empty-handed. They can't face their comrades guarding the Castle to say that their tremendous victory was botched by sheer incompetence.

The next day, a messenger comes from Wentwood Castle and finds Ingmar and the Black Magic Army all dead. He rushes back to Wentwood Castle and collects the soldiers that remain there, plus the ones guarding the Fortified Mines, and they all join the brigands in the mountains, about sixty in all.

Two days after this, the farmers' militia comes to the Black Magic Army and buries all the bodies. They also retrieve the food, tools, and weapons that the Black Magicians took from Hayport. At Wentwood Castle, only women and children are left, and they send a message to Olaf. They send the message with a ten-year-old boy, not with a raven (no raven will speak to them). Olaf accepts the messenger and offers the women and children a place to live on the Bear River that later becomes Albantown. When the women and children leave Wentwood Castle, the White Magicians release the prisoners from the dungeons and take away the spoils that were stolen from Camulodunum. They send a message to the Brown Wizard that there are Black Magic spells on the armories where the Black Magic Army weapons are stored under the castle.

When the Brown Wizard receives the message about the armories, he sends this reply: "A few days ago the evil raven Ida came to me and said she repented of the alliance with Ingmar, who turned out to be a false friend. She brought me a small manuscript that she had taken from the body of Ingmar right after he was killed. It is the master spell-book that he carried with him at all times. The spells of Black Magic are generally written in the tongue of the deep powers, but the master book has each spell in Latin as well. The book is damaged by sword-cuts and blood stains. The spells that were put on the Fortified Mines are legible and can be undone by my own magic. The spells on the armories are not legible and we cannot undo them. We will have to rely on keeping peace in our world so that Black Magicians do not once again arise to make use of the armories of Wentwood Castle."

Wentwood Castle is abandoned and starts to fall into ruin. This is the end of the Dark Ages.

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The Sisters of the Green Leaf had suspected that an attack would be coming on Hayport, and that was why the soldiers of Hayport and Bearsgard were on alert. A year prior to the attack, they had moved their Library and Herbarium to Bearsgard.

Bearsgard has now taken on the appearance of a true capital city. Olaf is called "The White Magician" and a cousin of his who escaped from Camulodunum is now King. The people who came from Camulodunum and Hayport, plus the refugees from Wentwood Castle, call themselves simply "The Kingdom of Men."

The camps on the edge of the Lindenwood Forest later become the villages of Derbyville and Arnoldsdorf. There is no attempt to rebuild Hayport or

Camulodunum – the memories are too sad. Many of the families that escaped from Hayport settle in the thriving city of Bearsgard.

Olaf, the King, the Queen, and the Brown Wizard establish the Knights of the Realm, who are White Magicians sworn to protect the public and patrol the Muskrat border. Since there are no horses or mules in the Land of Nye, the knights travel on foot. They are lightly armed but trained in martial arts, first aid, the basics of herb-lore, and the laws of the land.

Olaf suggests to the Brown Wizard that other wizards be recruited and trained to serve as an Order of Wizards. The Brown Wizard recruits apprentices who will become the Blue Wizard, the Green Wizard, and the Grey Wizard. The Grey Wizard is delegated to settle in Albantown and persuade the refugees from Wentwood Castle to be loyal to the Kingdom of Men.

The Sisters of the Green Leaf prosper in their new headquarters in Bearsgard and are still much loved by the people.

The villagers of Derbyville and Arnoldsdorf build a stone wall around the graves of the Black Magic Army and do not go near that spot. Surrounding that spot, however, are the wonderful hayfields, tilled fields, chestnut groves, hazelnut farms, and fruit orchards that were used by the farmers of Hayport. These fields are still used by the people of Derbyville and Arnoldsdorf and are called “The West Meadows.” There are two dozen farmsteads scattered throughout the West Meadows, but the occupants come back to Derbyville and Arnoldsdorf in the winter. The roads make wide loops to avoid “Ingmar’s Dell” where lie the remains of the Black Magic Army.

About this time, a good raven comes to Bearsgard with news of the brigands. They attempted to return to Wentwood Castle to get fresh supplies of food, arrows, and weapons. Upon arriving they found that the gates were locked, and concluded that the women and children had given the keys to the White Magicians upon their surrender. Then followed arguments and fist-fights, after which a new chief brigand was elected.

“Let’s make ladders or ropes to go over the walls,” said the new chief.

“Can’t be done,” said another brigand, “Ingmar puts spells on the walls to repel attackers.”

“Well, whose idea was that?” asked the chief.

“Ingmar’s,” came the reply.

Then one of the brigands spoke up and said, “Ingmar had spells for making synthetic food, and mighty tasty it was. Let’s make some of that.”

“Can’t be done,” replied the chief, “Ingmar and Rhus are both dead.”

“Well, whose idea was it to kill Ingmar?” said another brigand, “We had a good thing going. We never went hungry when Ingmar was alive!”

This exchange was followed by more fist-fights and the election of yet another new chief.

“Why didn’t we keep Wentwood Castle when we still had it?” asked one of the brigands.

“Right,” replied the new chief, “and be surrounded by White Magicians like rats in a trap? No way!”

“Less talk and more food!” someone called out.

“Well,” said the new chief, “there’s only one thing to be done. Let’s go raid *The Wandering Bullfrog*. If we leave now we can be there before sundown. Anyone coming with me?”

“Yes” they all yelled and off they went. *The Wandering Bullfrog* is an inn and general store in the North Country at the headwaters of the Bear River. In peacetime it was used by hunters and travelers who passed through the North Country. It had been shuttered and locked since the beginning of the Magic War, but was easy to break into compared with Wentwood Castle. The brigands succeeded in breaking in and took a large supply of arrows and some steel traps for trapping game for food. They also took some hunting knives, fish hooks, iron skillets, and tinder-boxes for starting campfires.

Two months after the fall of Hayport, the Kingdom of Men decides it is time to take back the Fortified Mines, which were abandoned by Ingmar’s men and now sit idle. In order to do so, they must subdue the brigands in the North Country -- the only remnant of Ingmar’s great fighting force. They must also break the Black Magic spells that were put on the mines.

A farmer by the name of Ike Masterson, from Derbyville, comes forward with an offer. He appears before an augmented meeting of the Privy Council to outline his plan – Olaf, the Brown Wizard, the Queen, and Chief Knight are in attendance. The raven and Muskrat spies inform Olaf that the brigands are hungry and dressed in rags – but they are still armed with their Black Magic Army weapons. Ike says that there has been enough bloodshed – he thinks that the brigands should be arrested and brought to trial. The Queen speaks up and says, “How can you arrest a company armed with swords and spears?” Ike replies that a special contingent of the farmers’ militia, eighty volunteers, has been training to do just that. They arm themselves with long staves of wood cut from the Lindenwood Forest. Then the King says, “How will you protect yourselves from arrows?” Ike replies that they have been training to deal with that, too – they are also armed with slings and lead slugs to throw with the slings. Ike says he got this idea from a fragment of a Latin document (in Brother Bede’s

collection) about the Roman legions. He further explains that the range of the slings exceeds the range of longbows by a quarter of a furlong (fifty-five yards). The eighty farmers from Derbyville have been training with the staves and the slings. Forty of them can stand back and send a hail of lead slugs while the other forty charge forward with the staves of wood. The enemy archers would be forced to duck for cover while the farmer's militia is still out of arrow range. The Privy Council accepts Ike's offer and the force sets out northward. As Ike and his farmers march north the people call them "Cudgelwielders" and the name sticks.

The Cudgelwielders come to a bridge over the Westwater on the old road to Wentwood Castle. A good raven warns them that the brigands have set an ambush at the far end of the bridge. The brigands have been joined by a score of women and boys from Albantown who decided to reject the pardon of Olaf and make one last attempt to restore Black Magic. One of the women has preserved the recipe for arrow poison and is now attempting to brew some.

Ike and the Cudgelwielders decide to attack right away at dawn before the poison can be brewed. They take heavy casualties from arrows and are forced to retreat. The two forces are stalemated on opposite sides of the river. That night, in the Cudgelwielders' camp, it becomes evident that the poison has already been completed, and three men die of arrow wounds. The next day, there is no fighting – neither side is strong enough to launch a full attack. The stalemate continues.

On the day after that, Olaf, the King, the Brown Wizard, and the Grey Wizard arrive at the Cudgelwielders' camp. The four of them hold a council with Ike and the Cudgelwielders.

The Grey Wizard says, "The women and boys from Albantown have brought fresh supplies of food that will last about a week."

Then Ike says, "The brigands are pleased with the success of the arrow poison and that has made them overconfident. They are amused by our attempt to take them alive. Once they see any sign of soldiers from Bearsgard approaching, they will scatter into the wilderness. It would take about three months to hunt them down, so we don't want that to happen."

"The soldiers from Bearsgard are already on their way," says the King, "we sent one hundred of them up the Bear River by boat early this morning. They have to row against the current, but in about a week they will sneak up behind the brigands and trap them. Since the brigands have no raven spies, they will have no warning."

Then Olaf speaks up for the first time and says, "I think this standoff can be resolved in less than a week. I will go tomorrow to parley with them. For the sake of the peace of our Kingdom it is a risk I am willing to take."

In the morning of the next day, Olaf ties a white rag on a cudgel and walks across the bridge to parley.

The chief brigand tells Olaf to halt in the middle of the bridge.

Olaf says, "My brother Ingmar is dead. Can you tell me who killed him? Was it White Magicians who killed him?"

"We don't know who killed him," says the chief brigand.

"Have you tried asking the ravens or the Wolves?" asks Olaf.

"The ravens don't speak to us anymore and we have no way to communicate with the Wolves," replies the chief brigand.

"Some of you were present that day and remember it well," continues Olaf.

At that moment, several arrows fly from among the brigands and strike Olaf in the chest. Olaf falls on the bridge, mortally wounded.

Three brigands rush forward to grab Olaf's body. As soon as the three of them touch the body, the entire bridge vanishes in a huge cloud of smoke. When the smoke clears, the bridge, Olaf, and the three brigands are gone.

The Brown Wizard steps forward and shouts across the river, "You were once powerful in Black Magic. Have you forgotten that we also have magic?"

The brigands confer for a while and then shout back across the river "We surrender. Without Ingmar and Rhus we have no magic to use in fighting back."

Ike and several Cudgelwielders go upriver half a mile and find two large rowboats tied to a small dock. The boats are used to ferry the prisoners across the river two at a time, under guard.

The Grey Wizard crosses the river and leads the women and boys back to Albantown on the north side of the Westwater. The King sends for a couple of larger boats to take the brigands' weapons and supplies to Bearsgard, plus the brigands who are wounded or sick. The soldiers who were rowing up the Bear River return to Bearsgard (they were still only partway to Albantown). The wounded Cudgelwielders go to Bearsgard in a separate boat. The King is able to request boats by sending a raven to some Bearsgard merchants who had recently moved to the new town of Albantown.

The Brown Wizard burns the recipe for arrow poison and gives the ashes to the King in a clay flask. Half of the Cudgelwielders take the prisoners south to Bearsgard on foot.

The rest of the Cudgelwielders then march north as escort to a group of miners to take the Fortified Mines which are now vacant and undefended. The Brown Wizard goes with them to break the Black Magic spells on the mines.

As the Cudgelwielders approach the mines, they see a large group of men coming down the road toward them. The men wave in a friendly manner and greet the advance scouts of the Cudgelwielders.

The men turn out to be three score miners and two dozen soldiers from the Fortified Mines who were thought to have perished when the Black Magicians captured the mines.

The two groups of men greet each other warmly and make a camp in the wilderness. The miners from the north have brought fresh venison and bread for a feast around a bonfire. The miners who were marching south and the other miners who came north with the Cudgelwielders are old friends. There is a moment of joyful frenzy as brothers and cousins rush to greet each other with exclamations of disbelief.

The Brown Wizard and Ike Masterson do not eat any of the venison – they are vegetarians. They have some of the bread, plus their own dried fruit and some tea made from the root of the sassafras tree.

After the feast, the chief of the miners who came from the north, the Brown Wizard, and Ike Masterson sit and talk. The rest of the travelers have all gone to sleep in the large makeshift camp.

The Brown Wizard says, “We thought that the miners and the soldiers guarding the mines had all perished when the Black Magicians took the mines.”

The chief miner replies, “Years ago, about the time that Olaf was born, Queen Sarah told us to construct a secret tunnel from the back of the mines to a group of hunting lodges high in the mountains. She said to keep the hunting lodges stocked with nutritious nuts, barrels of flour and oats, and equipment for hunting and fishing. We did as she directed, and it turned out to be a fortunate arrangement. When Ingmar and his men attacked the mines with magic fire, it was evident that we could not defend the mines. We escaped through the tunnel and lived in secret in the mountains. A good raven brought us news of the fall of Camulodunum. He also told us that the evil ravens knew about the hunting lodges, but they did not tell Ingmar because they were not happy with the way that Ingmar treated them. Thus we lived in peace in our hiding place.”

“Why didn’t you send a raven to Bearsgard to say that you were safe?” asks Ike.

“I am coming to that part of the story,” replies the chief miner. “About two months after the fall of Camulodunum, I am sitting in the main lodge and hear men shouting and clapping. I go out to look and see that two Muskrats are helping an

injured woman to come to the main lodge. The injured woman turns out to be none other than Queen Sarah herself. Her clothes are torn and her arms are scratched from the wild forest, and she is mortally wounded. The Muskrats say that there is no way to save her life, but we must keep her comfortable to the end. They say that Sarah met Ingmar's chief lieutenant, Rhus the Necromancer, and his arms-bearer in the wilderness searching for magic herbs. Rhus challenged Sarah to single combat to the death and used his magic to summon the Count of the Western Marches to be second for Sarah. Sarah won the fight but was wounded – the Count of the Western Marches tended her wounds and sent for two Muskrats to help her. The only words that Queen Sarah says during this time are *thank you*, and three days later she dies. The Muskrats, named Alba Salix and Halesia Finn, tell us to build a stone shrine over Sarah's grave, and then they depart for their own land to the south. The Muskrats tell us not to send a message to Bearsgard -- they say that a time of peace is coming, and Queen Sarah wants the survival of the miners to be a surprise. At the time that Olaf died and the last of the Black Magicians surrendered, a good raven came to us and said that the time for the surprise had come at last. Then we started our journey south, and met you here."

A year after the fall of Hayport, the Sisters of the Green Leaf call for a Special Meeting. King Escalus, Queen Lavinia, the Privy Council, the Order of Wizards, the four Mayors, and the Knights of the Realm are all invited to attend.

The King hands the gavel to Achillea, the President of the Sisters of the Green Leaf and a renowned midwife and healer, and asks her to open the meeting.

Achillea recounts the history of the Sisters of the Green Leaf, starting with Rowena, Roswitha, and Rachel in the time of Brother Bede and continuing down to the evacuation of Hayport and the founding of the Kingdom of Men. She makes an eloquent plea for the founding of a new institution called "The Bearsgard Academy," built around the Library and Herbarium that had been rescued from Hayport. Achillea points out that the King maintains the Royal Treasury, the Royal Armory, the Royal Lock-Up and the Royal Granaries, but there are other functions missing that the academy could provide. The only way for books to be reproduced in the Land of Nye is copying manuscripts by hand, and the academy would have a large Scriptorium for this purpose. The Scriptorium would meet the needs of the schools, farms, and industries in the Kingdom of Men. There is also a critical need for an Almshouse for the poor and the sick and an Apothecary Service for needs throughout the Kingdom. The academy would be a center of knowledge for apprentices and journeymen near and far.

Achillea further proposes that all citizens perform voluntary service from age eighteen to age twenty-one. This service could be provided in a number of public

functions, according to the young person's preference. Those who like outdoor work can report to the King's bailiffs and the Clerk of the Works for duty repairing roads and bridges. Others can work in the Scriptorium or the Almshouse. There would be many opportunities for all.

When Achillea finishes speaking, Queen Lavinia requests to have the floor. She expresses her support for everything that Achillea has proposed, and says that she has a special presentation to make. She gives Achillea a poem written by Olaf about the three original midwives – Rowena, Roswitha, and Rachel. The Queen says that the poem can be used to open ceremonies at the academy.

The Special Meeting votes in favor of Achillea's ideas and breaks up into committees to put the ideas into action.

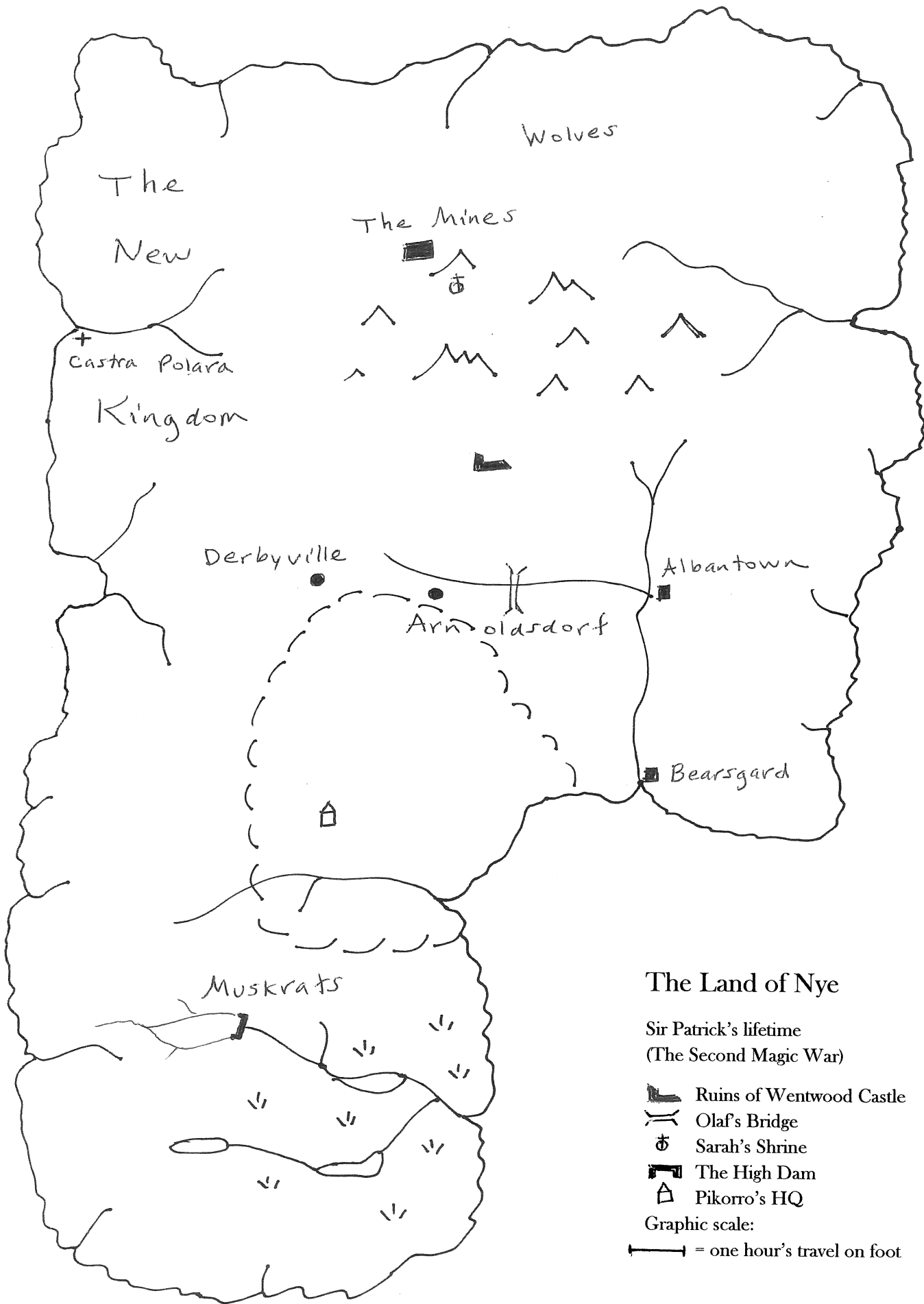
The End



The Land of Nye

Sir Patrick's lifetime
(The Second Magic War)

Names of rivers, forests,
and plains



SG 2 pages. Year 605 APC.

Note from Chipsa: This is a letter I wrote to my father at age 16.

Dear Papa,

Patrick, Taspel, and I walked home from school today as usual. We stopped by the banks of the Amelanchier Brook — at that ravine that I have described as “the Wonderful Place” (WP for short).

It was a lovely May afternoon and tomorrow is a day off from school. Taspel and Patrick were postponing their afternoon chores and I was thinking about my next letter to you.

We are approaching the end of our sophomore year and I can’t believe that in September I will be a junior!

Taspel sat down on a large log and said, “The whole system is rigged. All the teachers are followers of White Magic.”

He had in his hand a copy of his essay *White Magic Impedes Progress*, which a teacher had just returned to him. He flipped through the pages and scowled.

“Did you get a good grade on it?” asked Patrick.

“The teacher gave me 100%,” replied Taspel, “but that doesn’t mean that anyone will listen to it.”

“Maybe people like White Magic,” continued Patrick.

I started to pick some wildflowers for Mom while Taspel continued scowling.

“Maybe someday,” I said to Taspel, “you can teach at the Bearsgard Academy. People might listen to you then.”

“No,” replied Taspel, “I am going to be a lawyer. A famous lawyer.”

“How about a riddle?” I asked. I always change the subject when he starts to talk about his law career.

“Do you have a new one?” asked Taspel.

“Not a new one,” I said, laughing, “but it is new to you.

What flies straighter than a bee,
Gives color to the goldenrod,
Make possible the growing tree,
Gives shadow to the swimming cod?”

“Good heavens, how easy,” said Taspel, “if Patrick can’t guess it by the time I count to 29 he will have to do my chores as well as his.”

Patrick, who was tossing pebbles into the brook, suddenly whirled around and said, “No fair. You know I’m no good at riddles. I’ve done your chores enough as it is.”

Taspel laughed and said, “That’s why lawyers have servants. We have better things to do with our time.”

“Yes, like annoying your friends,” I said while dumping a handful of dry leaves over his head.

Then we all burst out laughing and walked home for chore time.

The spring rains have been generous and it looks like a good hay season coming this summer.

Can’t wait for your next letter.

With love from your daughter, Chipsa

SH 2 pages. Year 605 APC.

Note from Chipsa: This is a letter I wrote to my father when I was 16 years old.

Dear Papa,

Today was a fine summer day during the school holidays. Roswitha and I had set out on an expedition to take some honeycakes and elderberry jam to Darian and Patrick in Derbyville. We had been working in the kitchen all morning and were ready for a long walk.

We were on a path between two barley fields with wooded hills to the left and right. Suddenly we heard someone howling in pain in the woods off to the left. We put down the basket of gifts, ran to the next cross-path, and pelted toward the woods as fast as we could.

We found a twelve-year-old neighbor boy, Tim, clutching his bleeding foot. He had been cutting kindling and his axe was on the ground next to him.

“A yellowjacket stung my elbow,” he said, “just as I was swinging the axe. The axe bounced off a rock and hit my left foot.”

Tim took off his shirt of homespun linen and I started tearing it in strips to bandage his foot.

“Are you okay?” a voice called to us from the woods. The Lindenwood hermit ran up and knelt beside us.

When we had bandaged the foot as well as we could, the hermit said, “I will take the axe and cut two branches that he can use as crutches.” He headed back into the woods.

“Prop your foot up on this stump,” said Roswitha, “until the crutches arrive. We can take you to my house,” she continued, “my Mom can make an antiseptic poultice and give you something for the pain.”

“No,” said Tim, “my family doesn’t believe in all that. I want to be treated by a member of the Anatomy Club.”

“We can take you to Mayor Alpheus,” I said.

“Yes,” said Tim, “let’s do that.”

“Mayor Alpheus can make sure the bones heal in the right position,” said Roswitha, “but I don’t think he has anything for pain.”

“I don’t mind the pain,” said Tim, “I just don’t want to be a cripple. It wasn’t a direct blow from the axe — it glanced off a rock and hit my foot sideways.”

We sent the hermit ahead to find the Mayor and tell him that Tim was on the way. Roswitha took Tim to see Mayor Alpheus.

We were disappointed to miss our visit with Patrick and Darian, but glad that we were able to help Tim. I put the axe in the wheelbarrow full of kindling and took it to Tim's house. On the way, I picked up the honeycakes and jam and put them in the wheelbarrow. When I arrived at Tim's house, his mother hurried off to find Tim and the Mayor. I took the jam and honeycakes and headed home. That was the end of my part in this adventure.

With love from Chipsa

SJ. Year 605 APC

Note from Chipsa: This is a letter I wrote to my father the evening before I was attacked by a mob of villagers. I was age 16 at the time.

12 September

Dear Papa,

Since your last letter arrived a few days ago I have been terrified. Your account of your conversation with the Grey Wizard was most unsettling and now something has definitely gone wrong.

When I walk down the street, the villagers do not look me in the eye. The younger children at school double-dare each other to run up and touch my left hand. When I tried to buy some maple syrup in the market, no-one would take my coins.

I don't know what it is, but I think you and I are the targets. Mom understands that you and I are connected to magical currents and she is just as concerned as we are. She has magical powers of her own and has given me some tips on how to stay safe in the midst of all this. We just don't know what we are up against!

Did the Grey Wizard relay his concerns to Escalus and Robert Roy? It is crucial that we keep everyone informed.

Taspel has been a great help. Everyone knows he is the son of the Mayor and the young folks look to him as an arbitrator due to his bias against White Magic. He tries to protect me but is careful to maintain his reputation for impartiality. The kids are not suspicious about that.

Patrick is loyal and valiant but no-one listens to him. His magic differs from Taspel's and mine, but is powerful in its own way. I think our Destiny is around the corner.

I don't know what I would do without Roswitha! We have been buddies since our infancy and she has an uncanny gift for reading my mind. After several hours with Taspel and Patrick it is always great to have some female company. Roswitha's Mom does not let the slightest cold or headache go by without a thoughtful and loving remedy.

We are blessed to have such friends and I think we are going to need every one of them!

I wish I could come to *The Wandering Bullfrog* and give you a big hug.

Write as soon as you can!

Much love from Chipsa

SL 3 pages. Letter from Sir Patrick to Chipsa, Year 655 APC.

[Editor's note: Patrick's father Darian is Head of the Council of Finns and Friends and also Chief Cudgelwielder. Darian is a widower who adopted the Lindenwood hermit when he was six years old (Patrick was three at the time). The Lindenwood hermit is an orphan whose name is unknown — Patrick and the hermit both call Darian "Dad." The hermit's cabin is on the edge of the Lindenwood Forest, which stretches between Derbyville and Arnoldsdorf on one side and Bearsgard (the capital) on the other side.

The people of this world are a gentle people more concerned with farming than anything else — with the exception of the Anatomy Club.

This letter was written fifty years after the events described. End of Editor's note.]

Dear Chipsa,

Greetings from Bearsgard. A few days ago your daughter Ostrya showed me one of her school texts. It referred to the Second Magic War as beginning on the thirteenth of September in the year 605. "Oh no," I thought, "not THAT day again!"

You have requested my recollections, so here goes.

In the late afternoon I ran up to my brother's cabin and pounded on the door. "Hermit, come quickly or all is lost!" I was gasping for breath and had a stitch in my side.

"Patrick," he said, opening the door, "what is the matter?"

"Chipsa. Arnoldsdorf. We must go at once," I said between breaths.

"You can explain as we walk," said the hermit, "do you have any food?"

"No, grab whatever you can. Let's go," I said.

The hermit picked up a satchel of food and a long walking stick. He closed the door of his cabin and we set out.

"We might need the rest of the Cudgelwielders," I continued.

"The Cudgelwielders haven't been called out for thirteen years," he replied. "You see I have my cudgel with me — I use it as a walking stick. You mentioned Chipsa and Arnoldsdorf — explain what is going on. Are you aware that father and I have a special mission to protect her?"

"Yes," I said, "I have been running for an hour — do you have any bread?"

“Yes, some of the simple bread I make myself,” he replied. “Let’s stop by this spring for a minute, and then we can both run. Here is some bread, and we can share the cup for water. What’s up?”

I had finally caught my breath and replied, “The villagers of Arnoldsdorf are going to stone Chipsa. They blame her for the tuberculosis epidemic among the cows.”

The hermit frowned and asked, “Is Mayor Alpheus there?”

“Yes, but the mob has gone wild,” I continued. “All the teachings of Olaf the White Magician have been called into question.”

The hermit was alarmed. “Have you told Dad about this?”

“Yes, he said for the two of us to go as quickly as possible,” I explained. “He will follow with ten Cudgelwielders. He was working in the fields to the west of Derbyville, but fortunately the hay workers with him are all Cudgelwielders.”

“My turn with the cup,” he said. “Are you able to run further? I am well-rested.”

Without further ado we ran along the edge of the forest and came to the road to Arnoldsdorf. Earlier in my journey I had tripped on a root and bruised my kneecap. What a day I was having!

We passed several ox carts, vaulted over piles of dung, and vanished into the lengthening shadows of the afternoon.

I was wearing my uniform of “Apprentice Messenger” that day — I was using my day off from school to earn some money carrying a message from Albantown to Derbyville. I was on the way to Derbyville when the raven Lisa found me and gave me the urgent news from Taspel. I sent the raven on to Dad, delivered my message in Derbyville, and then raced to the hermit’s cabin. Lisa found me halfway to the cabin, gave me instructions from Dad, and then made a beeline for Arnoldsdorf.

By the time we got halfway to Arnoldsdorf, the pain in my side and knee became unbearable. We alternated running and walking, but we were terrified of arriving too late.

“Mayor Alpheus will think of something,” said the hermit.

“Yes,” I replied, and we hurried on without speaking further.

When we came to the outskirts of Arnoldsdorf, we met Taspel coming towards us on the road.

“I got your message with the raven,” I called out, “what has happened now?”

“My father was able to disperse the crowd,” replied Taspel. “Chipsa was allowed to go home with her mother. It looks like White Magic is pretty well washed up now. From now on, the chief science will be anatomy. In three years’ time we can graduate our first class of surgeons. Just watch our smoke once we get started. White Magic is dead.”

“How is Chipsa?” I asked.

“Come speak with Chipsa herself and get the whole story,” continued Taspel. He turned around and the three of us walked together toward your house.

“Dad and his Cudgelwielders will be here by evening,” said the hermit.

“The Matchstick Boys — what a waste!” said Taspel. “My father delegated two men to guard Chipsa’s house. Temporarily.”

The hermit said, “We will be going past the inn down the road there — *The Three Birches*. It looks very crowded.”

“Yes,” said Taspel, “everyone is talking about Chipsa the witch and her father Chistar the Immortal One.”

I was alarmed by this statement and asked, “What do you mean?”

Taspel explained: “A hunter came from the wild North Country saying that he saw a boulder the size of a bushel basket fall on Chistar without injuring him. Chistar is immortal. The beliefs of White Magic are shown to be false — the Bans of Olaf will be rescinded and the Anatomy Club will usher in a new age of scientific discovery.”

When the three of us arrived at your house, we found that it was guarded by the Notary and the King’s Bailiff.

“Halt,” they challenged us, “who goes there?”

“These are friends who have come to visit Chipsa,” said Taspel, “it’s okay.”

“Oh, it’s you Taspel and Patrick,” said the Notary, “proceed.”

Taspel said, “I must be off home for dinner. Don’t blame me for all the trouble about Chipsa. I like her a lot. I wish she would join the Anatomy Club — we could use her help with the Parasite Theory.”

Taspel headed on his way and we knocked on the door of your cottage.

You know the rest of the story.

From your friend, Patrick

SM 7 pages. Diary entry by Queen Chipsa Year 655 APC.

Dear Diary,

Well! After reading Patrick's letter, September 13 came flooding back to me.

Here are my memories of that day.

I was afraid of what the future would bring, but the day started well enough. I harvested and dried some herbs, and then began to prepare for school the next day. About noontime, a crowd started to gather around the house. Men and women were armed with pitchforks and scythes. My mother had gone to the market to sell herbs and honey. The crowd began to yell my name, and they grabbed me and dragged me to the village green.

There was a hitching post next to a water trough – they tied me to the post and started to gather stones.

My friend Taspel and his father Mayor Alpheus arrived and quieted the crowd. The Mayor demanded to know what was going on.

A harvester from Albantown stepped forward and spoke for the crowd. His name was Kalko.

He said, "Mayor Alpheus, have you heard the news? A hunter from the North Country came to *The Three Birches* and we all heard what he said.

"Even as far away as Albantown, we know the story of Chistar of Arnoldsdorf who was banished to the North Country thirteen years ago for eating Forbidden Meat. The hunter said that he saw a boulder the size of a bushel basket fall on Chistar without injuring him."

At that point Mayor Alpheus pointed to me and said, "What does that have to do with his daughter Chipsa?"

A farmer from Arnoldsdorf spoke up and said "Our cows are sick. Chipsa has given them the Evil Eye."

Another farmer spoke up and said "Olaf taught that there is no such thing as the Evil Eye."

Kalko, the harvester from Albantown, replied "Olaf also said that Forbidden Meat did not give immortality. He was wrong. It is fitting that Chipsa should die on the thirteenth of September. Our deed will exorcize this unchancy day and bring good luck to the whole kingdom."

"Hear, hear!" yelled the crowd.

Mayor Alpheus said, "We must find Chistar and track down this rumor. Whom shall we send? Whom do you trust?"

Several people shouted out the name "Koshter" and the rest agreed.

Mayor Alpheus said "Koshter will go on behalf of Arnoldsdorf and his cousin Sir Graham can be witness and represent the King. Agreed?"

The crowd agreed and went home. Mayor Alpheus and Taspel untied me from the hitching post, and at that moment my mother came at a run.

The Mayor found two men to escort us home and stand guard over our house – the Notary and the King's Bailiff.

For the remainder of the afternoon, I sat at the kitchen table with my head on my arms, trembling from head to toe. The solid oak table rocked like a boat for an hour before it finally settled down. The window was open and a sparrow sang to me from the chestnut tree. "Madge, Madge, Madge, please-put-the-kettle-on" came the song. I was glad to be alive.

About supptime mother said, "I have to go out, will you be okay? I will give some instructions to the Notary and the King's Bailiff."

"Yes," I said, "I will be fine. We can trust Mayor Alpheus and Taspel to protect us."

I made myself a batch of chamomile tea and then I heard a knock on the door. It was Patrick and the hermit, and golly, was I glad to see them!

The hermit said that Darian was on the way with ten Cudgelwielders.

The three of us sat at the kitchen table and I told them the events of the day. From the look of Patrick's uniform, I could tell that he had also had a rough day. His face was blotchy and his hair was wet from hours of exertion.

Patrick said, "Taspel sent a Raven to tell me that you were in trouble and needed help. I was carrying a message from Albantown to Derbyville when the Raven found me. The Raven then went on to find my father who was working in fields to the west. The Raven came back to me with instructions from my father. We met Taspel on the road on our way here."

"That was a close call," said the hermit. "Patrick, Dad and the Cudgelwielders will be approaching soon. I will go to meet them."

The hermit went out and Patrick and I sat at the table to talk. I poured some tea for Patrick and then he launched on a topic close to his heart.

"There is something strange going on with Taspel," said Patrick.

“In what way?” I queried.

“He always asks you to the Harvest Dance and you always accept him,” he replied.

I sighed and said, “He says he wants to become a great lawyer so he can protect me when we are married.” I held out my hand and said quietly, “because of this.”

“Oh, yes,” said Patrick, “your hand.”

“He thinks I need protection from superstitious people because I have six fingers on my left hand,” I continued.

“He tried to protect you today,” said Patrick. “He makes no secret of disliking White Magic in general and the Cudgelwielders in particular. He calls them the Matchstick Boys. Why do you go to the Harvest Dance with him?”

I paused a moment and laughed. “It’s just a hunch, but I think Taspel will change his mind about White Magic.”

“And he thinks you will change your mind about the Anatomy Club,” he continued. “People certainly turned against White Magic today – you were the one who heard the crowd. A few days ago we lived in a peaceful, civilized kingdom.”

I said quietly, “Peace and civilization have powerful allies that you don’t know about.”

Patrick took a deep breath. “I certainly hope so. Did Taspel talk to you about the Anatomy Club and the Parasite Theory?”

“Yes...” I started to reply and a knock came at the door. I opened the door and the King’s Bailiff said, “There is a visitor for you, shall I let her in?”

“Let her in,” I said to the King’s Bailiff, “and send the Notary to escort my mother home from the market. She has probably been delayed by the villagers with endless questions.”

I welcomed the Grey Witch into the house and said to her “You will have to introduce yourself to my friend Patrick son of Darian.”

“They call me the Grey Witch, in a kindly way,” she said. “I am a wise-woman, midwife, herbalist and healer. I am a friend of your father’s, Patrick. I bring a letter to Chipsa from her father in the North Country.”

The three of us sat at the kitchen table and I said “We should keep our voices down. You have news of my father? Tell me, quickly.”

“Yes,” said the Grey Witch, “I have a letter from him, and the two bags of coins that he sends every month – this one for your mother and the lighter one for your school supplies.”

“Is my father okay?” I said. “When did you leave him?”

“I left him two days ago and hurried south, right behind the hunter who came to *The Three Birches* today,” came the reply.

“You know about the hunter?” said Patrick.

“Yes, but first I must give proof that you can trust me. Patrick, do you know the passwords of the Council of Finns and Friends and the Cudgelwielders?” asked the Grey Witch.

“Yes,” he replied.

The Grey Witch whispered the passwords to Patrick and he said, “Yes, those are correct.”

“Quick, what is your news?” I said, “Should I read the letter first?”

“The letter can wait,” replied the Grey Witch, “the hunter’s story is false – he was paid to come to Arnoldsdorf with that story.”

“Paid!” I exclaimed.

Patrick: “By whom?”

“We don’t know,” said the Grey Witch, “but I suspect Elhanon.”

“We should find this hunter,” said Patrick.

The Grey Witch: “No, the attack on Chipsa is a red herring. It is a decoy for another attack.”

“Against what?” asked Patrick.

The Grey Witch: “We don’t know. We need to gather what clues we can.”

“Should the Powers be revealed?” I asked the Grey Witch.

She smiled and said, “Not yet, but soon.”

“What are you talking about?” asked Patrick.

“Oh, nothing,” I said. “Here, I will read my father’s letter aloud.”

Dear daughter Chipisa,

My letters are usually about the New Kingdom and the Journey of Testing, but today I have a sadder and more serious topic.

I must tell you the story of how I came to eat Forbidden Meat and suffer banishment to the North. The King was merciful because he believed my story and my witnesses.

Thirteen years ago, when you were three years old, there was a famine in the Kingdom of Men. The Cudgelwielders and the Knights of the Realm were concerned about hungry humans staging raids against the Muskrats, so we took turns patrolling the banks of the Lindenwater which serves as the border between the two lands. You have heard the story of how Sir Graham and I arrested Elhanon and took him before the King and Queen. I returned to Arnoldsdorf late the next day. After a full day of rest, I set out in the early morning to return to the border. I was walking on the old road from Hayport to Bearsgard, and I was approaching the southernmost end of the West Meadows and the edge of the Lindenwood Forest.

A woman stopped me on the road and said that her ten-year-old son was sick with hunger and asked if I could help. She said her husband had gone to Bearsgard to earn some money working in the harbor - their crops were parched to nothing.

I sent word to the Cudgelwielders that I would be delayed, and set out toward Bearsgard to find help for the woman and her son.

After an hour on the road, which paralleled the Lindenwater, I met a ragged peddler with a pack, tin pots, and a grinding wheel.

I told the peddler that I was desperate for food. He had some food that a farmer's wife had given him in payment, or so he said. He gave me three pork pies and I gave him three copper coins.

As I returned to the woman and her son, I thought it strange that a peddler would have three pork pies in the midst of a land of famine.

I brought the pies to the woman and her son, but I said, "Let me taste them first, to be sure they are not poisoned."

The pies were worse than poison - the meat was Talking Muskrat. We built a large fire on the hearth and burned the three pies while reciting poems fitting for a Muskrat funeral.

I said to the woman, “We must go to Bearsgard at once. I will send a Cudgelwielder to tell my wife what has happened and another will tend your farm. I will carry your son on my back. You and your son can go to the Almshouse at the Bearsgard Academy and they will send a message to your husband at the harbor. Then Sir Graham can take me in chains to the King.”

You know the rest of the story. Tell your mother that you know the whole story now. In my next letter, I will continue our discussion of the New Kingdom and the Journey of Testing.

With love, from your father Chistar.

I put the letter down slowly.

A knock came on the door and I opened it for the Lindenwood hermit.

“Come, Patrick,” he said, “Dad and I will take you to Taspel’s house. The ten Cudgelwielders have joined the King’s Bailiff in guarding Chipsa. Dad wants to speak with the Mayor before he goes home. Dad has already spoken with Linnea – they met in the marketplace while the Cudgelwielders were taking their positions around this house. Chipsa, your Mom will be home soon. The Cudgelwielders are commanded by your own Uncle Damrod, so you can rest easy tonight. Damrod has with him the Raven Lisa who can be sent for help on a moment’s notice.”

The Grey Witch said, “Greetings, Lindenwood hermit.”

“Greetings, lady,” he replied. “I am still planning to be at my herb lesson again next month, in the North Country.”

Patrick said, “Good night, Chipsa. Good night, good lady. May the passwords of White Magic bring you luck.”

The Grey Witch: “Speaking of passwords, young man, I have a question for you. How was Taspel able to send a message with a Raven? Did you tell him the password and the bird-call signal of the Council of Finns and Friends?”

Patrick replied, “Yes, but I made him promise to use it only if Chipsa were in danger.”

The Grey Witch: “Your generous heart and the luck of Olaf were with you, but do you promise to be more careful with passwords in the future?”

“I promise,” said Patrick.

The Grey Witch and I said good night to the two and they left the cottage.

As they walked out the door, I heard Patrick say to his brother “She knows everything.”

He laughed and replied “Just about.”

When the Grey Witch and I were alone, I gave her a big hug and said to her “There is so much to say.”

“Only a little longer,” she said quietly. “Is Taspel okay?”

“He will be fine,” I replied, “his memory will come back in time.”

“How about a song?” queried the Grey Witch.

“Yes,” I said, “*Sarah’s Lullaby*. Let me tune my guitar.”

I tuned my guitar and we sang this song:

Hush little baby, sleep baby sleep;
Father’s a-sailing the ocean deep ~
He’s gone away, but he will return,
Sleep, baby, sleep without concern.

Why must he wander, why must he go
And leave his baby lonely so...
No rhyme nor reason in the world of men,
Who travel wide through field and fen.

The Grey Witch said, “I must be going. I have pitched my tent in the forest nearby.”

We said good night and she went on her way.

I started to make another batch of tea and then my mother came in. I gave her a big hug and said, “Mother. I was so worried. So much has happened!”

The End

SN 4 pages. Diary entry by Chipsa, Year 655 APC

[Editor's note: Patrick's father Darian is the head of the Council of Finns and Friends, whose members include the Grey Witch, the Lindenwood hermit, the Brown Wizard, the Green Wizard, Damrod, Maia, Sir Graham, Thea, and half-a-dozen Muskrats of the Finn clan. The Talking Muskrats are about four feet tall, have an average life-span of 120 years, and live in matriarchal clans. The Finn clan is especially skilled in White Magic and uses Ravens for long-distance communication.

The Dark Ages were two hundred years ago, but another three hundred years before that there was another struggle. There were no humans then, and only one hundred Talking Muskrats. In the far North, beyond the iron mines and the camps of the hunters, lies the Kingdom of the Wolves. Adjacent to the Kingdom of the Wolves was the Land of the Ancient Unicorns. The Wolves wanted to kill and eat a Talking Muskrat and thus become immortal, and the Unicorns defended them. The Unicorns disappeared at the time that humans came to this world, and the humans took over the task of defending the Muskrats.

In the present day, the Anatomy Club is the main opponent to White Magic – it has about six dozen members, including Mayor Alpheus, Taspel, and Koshter (a farmer of Arnoldsdorf and cousin of Sir Graham, Chief Knight of the Realm). The elder statesman of the Anatomy Club is Elhanon, who is distinguished or notorious depending on your point of view. He resigned his membership in the Anatomy Club several years ago, preferring to spend his time in the Bearsgard Academy Museum. Thirteen years ago, the King forced him to resign as Professor of Anatomy and take the position of Professor of History. The events surrounding his brother Orontius the Alchemist, also thirteen years ago, are noble or dark, depending on your sympathies in this matter. End of Editor's note.]

This evening, Taspel and I reviewed Patrick's letter and my recollections of September 13. "Now the time has come," I said, "for September fourteenth."

Taspel told me this tale as I wrote it in my diary. The "I" is Taspel. He takes up the story the next day after the mob scene in Arnoldsdorf. I was in school that day. Taspel was excused from school to attend a meeting of the Anatomy Club in Bearsgard. His father was already on his way to the meeting, traveling with two merchants with oxcarts. Patrick was excused from school to carry a message to Bearsgard, and the two boys were walking together for safety on the road.

Taspel's narration begins:

Patrick and I had been on the road to Bearsgard for about two hours when we took a footpath into the forest. This footpath is a shortcut — the oxcart road makes a wide loop to the south. Walking on the footpath was a lot more fun.

“We can have our lunch by this stream,” I said. “We should be in Bearsgard in four hours.”

We sat on the bank of the stream and got some bread and cheese out of our satchels. The autumnal equinox was only a week away and some leaves in the forest had turned yellow. As I munched and chatted with Patrick, I stared at some yellow leaves in the stream and placed bets on which would get to the rapids first.

“I wish we didn’t have to miss school today,” said Patrick. “I am worried about Chipsa going to class without us.”

“Now that White Magic has been discredited,” I said, “the Anatomy Club will come into full prominence. Koshter will become Sir Koshter, Chief Knight of the Realm, replacing his cousin Sir Graham.”

“Tell me more about the Parasite Theory,” said Patrick.

“This is really brilliant,” I continued. “We think that a parasite entered muskrat brains, and that is how they acquired the ability to speak.”

“I thought the Muskrats were given the gift of speech by the Queen of the Ancient Unicorns,” put in Patrick.

At the time, I considered Patrick a bit of a dunce, and I replied, “All those White Magic myths are washed up now. You know what happened yesterday in Arnoldsdorf. Don’t pretend that White Magic is still alive.”

Patrick: “How can you hate White Magic and still like Chipsa?”

“Someday,” I said, “Chipsa will be President of the Anatomy Club – she is very smart. Her best subjects in school are biology and chemistry.”

Patrick: “Herbalists like the Lindenwood hermit and the Grey Witch know more science than the Anatomy Club ever dreamed of.”

I saw a green beech leaf fall into the stream, zoom ahead of the yellow birch leaves, and win the race.

I took a piece of paper out of my pocket and began to read to Patrick:

I recommend planting peaches in the orchard – they are a luxury we have never been able to afford here in the Kingdom of Men. Peaches are difficult to grow, but the flavor is far superior to our usual orchard crops of apples, pears, and medlars.

Don't plant evergreens on the south side of the palace because they will block the sunlight during the winter.

Then I said, "Here is a riddle, see if you can guess it." I read further:

What dances like a fairy king,
And gives the hearth a cheery glow –
When wild it is an awesome thing,
When tame, a friend a child can know.

Patrick: "Let me think. A waterfall? No. Wind? No."

I said, "I think the answer is fire."

Patrick: "Oh, of course, fire, that must be it."

I asked Patrick, "Have you ever noticed how Chipsa can make up riddles without a pencil and paper? The metre and rhyme are always perfect and she doesn't even stop to think. It's strange."

We heard a voice call to us, "Hoy there boys! May I join your lunch?"

We saw Sir Graham coming towards us on the footpath.

Sir Graham: "Hello Patrick, hello Taspel."

Patrick stood up and said, "Sir Graham, welcome. Would you like some of the Lindenwood hermit's spelt bread? It's very good."

Sir Graham said, "Yes, he often brings it to meetings of the Council. You don't by any chance have some of his honeycomb to go with it?"

Patrick said, "No, we have been dealing with emergencies and left in a hurry."

Sir Graham explained, "I was with the King when the message from Taspel's father arrived about the events in Arnoldsdorf. I must hurry to meet Koshter so we can start our journey north. I also bring urgent orders from the King on several other matters. Bearsgard is in crisis.

"I was with the King because I had just returned from a sad errand. I was summoned south to hear the last words of Erika Finn, matriarch of her clan and founder of the Council of Finns and Friends."

"I am sorry to hear of her passing;" said Patrick, "I will tell my father the next time I see him."

Sir Graham said, "Erika gave me this, take a look." He handed Patrick a gold coin. Patrick looked at it and then handed it to me.

“A gold coin with the head of a Unicorn,” said Patrick.

Sir Graham: “Erika wants me to give this to the Grey Witch – she said the Grey Witch would understand its meaning.”

While looking at the coin, I said, “I often visit Elhanon at the Bearsgard Academy Museum, and there is a coin just like this in the White Magic collection. A dozen of these were minted by the Lost King before he went north. The other eleven have been missing all these years.”

Sir Graham: “I promised the King that I would go north with Koshter right away. I do not have time to find the Grey Witch – she has no home. Where are you boys headed?”

Patrick replied, “We are going to Bearsgard. I am an Apprentice Messenger and I have a delivery in Bearsgard. Taspel is going to attend a meeting of the Anatomy Club.”

Sir Graham said, “You cannot go to Bearsgard – you must come with me to Arnoldsdorf and then go home immediately. Patrick, your father will need you to tend the cottage. The full force of Cudgelwielders has been called up – all eighty of them. I bring orders from the King.”

Patrick: “What has happened?”

“What about the meeting of the Anatomy Club?” I asked.

Sir Graham: “The twenty Muskrat Spears that were kept in the Black Magic Collection of the Bearsgard Academy Museum have been stolen. It is far too dangerous for two boys to travel alone to Bearsgard. In fact, now that we have finished lunch, we must be off. All three of us must quick-march to Arnoldsdorf.”

Patrick and I tried to protest but he dismissed our concerns and hurried us off back to Arnoldsdorf.

The End

SO 5 pages. Letter from Patrick to Chipsa, Year 655 APC.

Dear Chipsa,

Greetings. Taspel tells me that you are continuing the account of September fourteenth, year 605. He requested that I write to you about this sequence of events that afternoon — he said it would be painful and embarrassing to tell you this story himself. You will see why. Upon reading this letter, I am sure that you and Taspel will have a good laugh!

[Editor's note: These events take place in the Lindenwood Forest, not far from the village of Derbyville and the hermit's cabin. The "Shrine of Philomena Finn" is a few yards away. It is now one hour since Sir Graham met up with the two boys on the footpath. The Lindenwood hermit approaches the Shrine, crouching and walking softly. He whistles some bird calls, and a bird call responds. The Talking Muskrat named Freya Finn comes out of the undergrowth.

Freya says, "I heard your signal."

The Lindenwood hermit replies, "I received the message you sent with the Raven. I await your orders."

Freya: "Sir Graham was on his way to Arnoldsdorf, but my twin sister Freda intercepted him and told him to come here. Here he comes now."

End of Editor's note.]

Patrick's letter continues:

The three of us had cut cross-country, bushwhacking through the forest. We arrived at the Shrine of Philomena Finn and found the Lindenwood hermit and Freya Finn waiting for us. We were glad that Freda had directed us correctly — we were in no mood to hunt for Freya through the whole expanse of the forest. We were already feeling rather harassed and put-upon. Taspel and I had been commandeered off of our course TWICE in one day, and we were rather hoping that the stock of emergencies had been depleted by now. We were fed up!

Freya: "Welcome, Sir Graham."

Sir Graham: "Wait -- do not speak yet. Taspel does not know the passwords — he is a member of the Anatomy Club."

Freya: "That does not matter now."

Taspel was annoyed and asked, "What is going on here?"

Freya turned to Taspel and asked him, "Have you ever spoken with a Muskrat before?"

“No,” he replied, “when Freda spoke with Sir Graham an hour ago, it was the first time I ever heard one speak.”

Freya: “What do you think of the Parasite Theory now?”

Taspel was exasperated, “We are trying to usher in the age of science, the age of reason. White Magic has been discredited and it was all we could do to keep Chipsa from being stoned.”

Sir Graham was impatient with all this palaver. “We must hurry,” he said.

Lindenwood hermit agreed. “Yes, we must go at once. We should send a Raven to the Brown Wizard and one to the King. Immediately.”

Freya: “No, there is no hurry. It is time for the Powers to be revealed.”

I spoke up at this point, “That is what the Grey Witch and Chipsa were talking about. I did not understand. What is this all about?”

Sir Graham was not satisfied. “We must be off at once,” he urged.

Freya: “No, the Cudgelwielders are not needed this time. The Muskrat Spears are safe. Chipsa is safe. The Muskrats are safe.”

Sir Graham was puzzled: “What do you mean?”

Freya was unperturbed. “The answer is right here with us. Taspel has the answer.”

Taspel was also puzzled, “I what?”

Freya launched on a new line of inquiry. “Taspel,” she said, “think for a moment. When Patrick handed you the coin that Erika Finn gave to Sir Graham – what was on the coin?”

Taspel: “The head of a Unicorn.”

Freya: “And what was on the other side?”

Taspel: “The other side of the coin?”

Freya: “Yes.”

Taspel: “I don’t remember.”

Freya: “Think.”

Taspel: “I’m trying but I can’t remember.”

Freya: "There must have been something on the other side – did you turn it over?"

Taspel: "I must have."

Freya: "When you saw the one just like it in the Museum at the Bearsgard Academy – did you see both sides?"

Taspel: "No, it was in a display case – the Unicorn head was facing up."

Freya: "Sir Graham has the coin right here – ask to see it again."

Taspel: "Is this a trick?"

Freya: "Chipsa would want you to look at it again."

Taspel: "Chipsa! Is she okay?"

Freya: "Hermit, is Chipsa okay?"

The Lindenwood hermit replied, "Yes, Chipsa is fine. She is in Arnoldsdorf with her mother. The Grey Witch decided to stay near the village for a few days. Damrod and the other nine Cudgelwielders take turns guarding the house."

Freya: "Sir Graham, give Taspel the coin again."

Sir Graham handed Taspel the coin and Taspel closed his hand around it without looking at it.

Taspel: "Are you sure that Chipsa would want me to look at the coin?"

Freya: "Yes – both sides."

Taspel: "Can I trust you?"

Freya: "You love Chipsa, don't you?"

Taspel: "Yes – I want her to be President of the Anatomy Club."

Freya: "Chipsa loves you, too."

This statement was more than I could take. I interrupted this interrogation and blurted out, "But that can't be! Chipsa loves White Magic and Taspel hates White Magic!"

Freya turned to me and said, "Patrick – are you in love with Chipsa yourself?"

Uh-oh, now I was on the spot. I stammered, "Well, sort of. I know the passwords of the Cudgelwielders and the Council of Finns and Friends."

Freya: "Patrick – who is it that asks Chipsa to the Harvest Dance every year?"

I replied, "Taspel."

Freya: "Does she accept?"

"Yes," I said.

Freya: "Do they enjoy the dance?"

"It seems so," I replied.

Freya: "Do they ever flirt with other people at the dance?"

"Never," I said.

Freya: "Taspel – the coin is in your hand, look at it."

Taspel opened his hand and looked at the coin, turning it over several times.

Freya: "What is on the other side?"

Taspel: "The other side is the head of a boy – my head."

Freya: "How do you know it is your head? There are no mirrors in Arnoldsdorf."

Taspel: "In *The Three Birches* there is a polished metal plate over the casks of ale. I have often gone there to practice making speeches about the Parasite Theory."

Freya paused her questioning and Sir Graham commented, "There is a tradition handed down to us that all twelve coins had a Unicorn head on one side, but the verso of each coin was different."

Freya: "That is true. This is Taspel's coin. You may keep it for now, Taspel -- you will need it on the Journey of Testing. Taspel, what is that piece of paper in your pocket? You were reading it to Patrick earlier today."

Taspel was a little taken aback, but eventually replied, "It is a letter to Chipsa from her father. She gets letters from him every week and I steal them out of her schoolbooks."

Freya: "Did you understand the letters?"

Taspel: "No, they are all about the New Kingdom and the Journey of Testing. There are also lots of riddles."

Freya: "Do you like riddles?"

Taspel: "Yes, I love them, but I am not as good as Chipsa. Patrick is pathetic and always loses the game."

There was a pause as this line of inquiry came to an end and Taspel put the gold coin in his pocket.

The Lindenwood hermit returned to the urgent matter at hand and asked, "Freya, do you know what happened to the twenty Muskrat Spears?"

Freya: "Yes, Freda and I saw them being stolen by Elhanon's nephew Pikorro. He did not take them out of Bearsgard right away, but concealed them on his sloop *The Bane of Ignorance* in the Bearsgard harbor. We tipped off the Harbormaster who recruited half-a-dozen Knights of the Realm to raid the sloop. The Spears were recovered but Pikorro himself is nowhere to be found."

"We will have to find him soon," said Sir Graham.

Freya: "It is time to go. We will say some poems here at the Shrine of Philomena Finn and then we will go to see Chipsa and Linnea and the Grey Witch. The Lindenwood hermit can guide us through the forest to Arnoldsdorf, and we will meet my sister Freda on the way. We will visit Chipsa and the Grey Witch and then you will learn the answers to all the questions you now have in your thoughts. After that, Freda and I must return to our own land. The Harvest Festival in Bearsgard begins in two days' time. The King and the Queen and the Brown Wizard will be expecting all of you. Chistar and Linnea will be there as well. Many joyful surprises await you there, especially for Taspel. Come and gather around the Shrine. Hermit, you can say the first poem, followed by Sir Graham and myself. Then we will be on our way."

That concludes the significant events of September fourteenth.

From your friend, Patrick

The End

SP 4 pages. Letter from Koshter to Chipsa. Year 655 APC

[Editor's note: It is now a week later. The Harvest Festival has just ended. The scene is Koshter's farm in Arnoldsdorf, and he is seated at a campfire in the evening with a group of five itinerant laborers and four local womenfolk. They are discussing the Harvest Festival in Bearsgard. Koshter attended all the events of the Festival and he is telling the laborers what happened there. End of Editor's note.]

Dear Chipsa,

Greetings. You have requested my recollections of that fateful day in the year 605: the twenty-second of September (the day after the autumnal equinox on the twenty-first, which was the conclusion of the Harvest Festival in Bearsgard).

I will begin with the last song of the evening (the harvesters and the womenfolk alternated verses):

Women:

Not an hour for Nancy of Albantown?
Why must you play the buffoon and clown?
I think it's a hearth and home you need ~
But don't expect me to beg and to plead!

Men:

But you see I've many a field to mow,
A day and a night and away I go ~
A turtle may take his home along,
But I take naught but a jolly old song.

Women:

A rolling stone will gather no moss,
An absent lover I count but loss ~
To win my heart you must say the word,
And try for once to do nothing absurd!

Men:

I've a crackling campfire to warm my toes,
A tankard of bitter to drown my woes ~
But ever to you my thoughts will stray,
As crickets sing me to sleep on the hay.

Women:

You must sweep the barleycorns from your heart
That blunt all the power of cupid's dart ~
And also the hayseeds from your brain
That make you wander and drive me insane.

I said to the group, "Now the time has come for the last verse. Roswitha, it's your turn this time. Give us a rousing conclusion to the song, and then we'll have another drink."

Solo by the youngest woman:

You're a worthless bum and a cad to boot,
Go harvest your barley and drink your loot ~
My mother could use a helping hand,
And papa needs me to work on his land.

Laughter and applause from everyone.

Roswitha: "Come, ladies, it's time to turn in. We won't get anything sensible out of this bunch."

The womenfolk said good-night and went home.

I said, "Well, that's our last song of the evening – it's a corny old song but I like it anyway. Help yourselves to another mug of ale. Who wants to hear about the Harvest Festival?"

Harvester from Derbyville: "We all do!"

Kalko (a harvester from Albantown): "Yes, tell us about all the dandies and the dignitaries."

"The first day of the Festival was games and contests -- does anyone want to hear about that?" I asked the group.

A young Harvester: "No, tell us about the grand feast."

"Ah, yes -- the grand outdoor feast," I said. "That always comes on the last day of the Festival, the autumnal equinox, and there is never any meat served at the feast."

Kalko: "Typical White Magic poppycock. Go on."

I started my tale: "At the end of the feast there were a series of awards and a royal proclamation. The Queen gave Mayor Alpheus and Taspel honorary

membership in the Royal Household for their efforts to save Chipsa from the mob. Chipsa, Taspel, Linnea, Chistar, and the Grey Witch were given seats of honor at the high table with the King and Queen. In the concluding ceremony, Sir Graham called up Patrick of Derbyville and the King dubbed him Sir Patrick, Knight of the Realm. The Brown Wizard called up the Lindenwood hermit and gave him the mantle of the Blue Wizard. Thea, the President of the Bearsgard Academy and chief of the midwives guild, welcomed the Blue Wizard as a new faculty member.”

Kalko: “Enough of all that garbage. Tell us about the Anatomy Club.”

I continued my narration, “The Anatomy Club always has its Annual Meeting on the second day of the Festival. Mayor Alpheus was chair of the meeting and I was vice-chair. Elhanon was there to receive a distinguished service award. Toward the end of the meeting, the Grey Witch came into the room and asked to speak. She offered to do a lecture about Unicorn anatomy as one of the programs for the coming year. Mayor Alpheus, Taspel, and I voted in favor of the proposal, but Elhanon and the rest of the club stormed out of the room and slammed the door.”

A young Harvester: “What about the Royal Proclamation?”

“Oh yes,” I replied, “I forgot about that. The King declared that in two days’ time the twenty Muskrat Spears from the Black Magic Collection at the Bearsgard Academy Museum will be melted down.”

Kalko: “That’s it, I’ve heard enough. I am going to find Elhanon and join his cause. Who is coming with me?”

The two older harvesters said “I will come,” and “Me too.”

“Wait, you don’t have your week’s wages yet,” I said.

Kalko: “Keep it. Let’s get going fellows. It’s time to rebuild Ingmar’s kingdom.”

Kalko and two harvesters left and the remaining two continued the conversation.

“Let them go,” I said. “I don’t like White Magic, but I don’t like Black Magic either.”

Harvester from Derbyville: “What’s wrong with Black Magic?”

A young Harvester: “Yeah, why not go for it?”

“Are you nuts?” I replied. “Black Magic is mean and nasty. Black Magicians double-cross each other more often than they fight the enemy.”

Harvester from Derbyville: “What about the quest for immortality?”

A young Harvester: "Think of the utopia we could create with wise immortal masters!"

I observed, "I have heard that argument a million times. In the Anatomy Club we are trying to create a new world without any magic or superstition. We don't want to go back to the Bad Old Days."

Harvester from Derbyville: "Maybe they weren't so bad after all."

A young Harvester: "Let's go join the others."

They departed and I was left alone to finish my mug of ale and extinguish the fire.

With warmest regards, Koshter

The End

SQ 9 pages. Diary entry by Chipsa. Year 655 APC

Dear Diary,

Now we come to September 23, 605 APC — a day of momentous fortune both good and bad. We encountered blessings and curses in rapid succession. Help! On September 13 the Second Magic War was set in motion, and on September 23 the catastrophe unfolded.

Taspel, Patrick, the Lindenwood hermit and I were transported from the square in Bearsgard to The Far Waste by The Grey Witch's magic — the Harvest Festival had ended two days before. Patrick was now Sir Patrick, Knight of the Realm, and the Lindenwood hermit was now the Blue Wizard. Taspel and I were holding hands.

We were standing on a treeless plain covered with knee-high wispy grass in its autumn colors of grey, green, maroon, straw, and bronze. The plain also had ancient granite boulders of all sizes, with weathered grey surfaces and patches of lichen. Scattered over the plain were the bleached bones of Unicorns and Wolves (preserved by magic from six hundred years ago). It was now late morning with clouds gathering for a rainy afternoon. A breeze from the west rippled through the mature grasses heavy with seed.

The rapid transportation of the magic spell took our breath away. Taspel said, "Look at this desolate plain. The Grey Witch has powerful magic — I wonder why she sent us here."

The time had come to re-connect Taspel with his former self. "You don't have to call her the Grey Witch," I said, "her name is Polara."

The Blue Wizard commented, "The Brown Wizard started to tell me about the Polara Cusp, but I have not yet had time to absorb all of its meaning."

"The Land of Nye has changed — it is new to all of us," I observed.

Patrick: "I recognize this place from the maps in my father's house — this is called *The Far Waste*. To the North and East is the Kingdom of the Wolves and to the South and West is the Land of the Ancient Unicorns."

The Blue Wizard: "Look, here is a Unicorn horn that pierced the heart of a Wolf. The skeletons are intertwined. The bones have been preserved by magic."

Patrick: "By good magic or bad magic?"

Taspel stepped forward and stooped to the ground. "This horn looks familiar," he said, as if to himself. "I have been here before. The air and the light of the far north have been working a spell on me. Why is this horn familiar?"

“That was my horn,” I said quietly. “You were King of the Ancient Unicorns, and I was the Queen. We were re-born into human form.”

The Blue Wizard: “You three were all born in the same year – the very beginning of the Polara Cusp.”

Taspel: “I remember now. I remember it all. We would fight battles with the Wolves by day, and by night we would recite poems and make up riddles. We would tell the tales of our ancestors, and send Ravens to our friends the Muskrats with the latest news.”

Patrick: “That is why you and Chipsa are so good at riddles! Chipsa didn’t even have to stop and think!”

I walked several paces through the tall grass and said, “Look, here is another skeleton. I recognize your horn, Taspel – you pierced the heart of a Wolf baron. You were defending your mother, Polara. She was also a Unicorn.”

Taspel: “Yes, what a day that was! The King and the Queen of the Unicorns both lost in the same day. What happened after that battle? What happened to Polara?”

“The Wolves retreated to lick their wounds,” I replied. “Polara lived to a ripe old age, until the Unicorns vanished to a parallel universe.”

Patrick: “Are Unicorns often reincarnated in human form?”

I explained as far as I could. “Polara, Taspel, and I are the only three that I know of. We were born in human form as part of the magical upheaval called the Polara Cusp. It is the greatest change to our world since the Plague Cusp.”

Taspel: “In the Anatomy Club, what we wanted was the Science Cusp. We wanted to usher in the age of research and precise knowledge. We were weary of superstition and magic -- the new age that we wanted will never come.”

I laughed at that and said, “You should be the creator of a world, not just an inhabitant. I can tell you for sure that there are other worlds that are governed by science. There are worlds where people work hard to bring new knowledge to light, and their efforts are rewarded with peace and prosperity. Our world is different – we are a world of magic.”

Taspel: “It was magic that preserved your horn, so I could see it and be reminded of our love so many ages ago.”

“Yes,” I said quietly, “our love was true, and we served our subjects well.”

Patrick: “What about the Wolves? Were any of them reincarnated?”

I was able to explain further. “Yes, there were also three wolves that were born in human form. Orontius the Alchemist and his brother Elhanon were two of them. There is a third one out there who will try to block everything you do. I do not know his name.”

We explored the old battlefield for a while and then Taspel said, “That reminds me, we need to think about the Journey of Testing. Is everything in your father’s letters now going to come true?”

“Yes,” I replied, “we will soon leave on the Journey of Testing. The Journey will last one year, and at the end we will found *The New Kingdom*. Our capital city will be called *Castra Polara*.”

Patrick: “The map in my father’s house had a blank area called *The New Kingdom*. It is on the coast to the West of here.”

“Yes,” I said, “there are White Magic maps that show its location. That is where we will be headed on our Journey. Queen Sarah had some visions about the Polara Cusp to come in later times, and that is the source used by the White Magic maps. The New Kingdom will be a place of peace and beauty. When Taspel and I have finished the Journey of Testing, we will come back to the Kingdom of Men to invite families to come and people our Kingdom.”

Taspel: “Yes, I remember your father’s letters about the castles of alabaster and the gardens with herbs and flowers. Why can’t the Kingdom of Men be like that as well?”

“The Kingdom of Men is close to the earth and wise in the ways of the soil,” I replied. “The Kingdom of Men will still be going strong long after the New Kingdom has fallen to dust.”

I glanced over my right shoulder and saw Sir Graham walking towards us with an arrow in his hand.

Sir Graham: “Greetings and salutations.”

Patrick: “Greetings, Sir Graham. How did you get here?”

Sir Graham: “Polara sent me to you by magic. I have just come from an urgent meeting of the King’s Privy Council. It was an augmented council with the Queen, Polara, Chistar, Linnea, the Brown Wizard, the Grey Wizard, the Green Wizard, Damrod, Maia, Darian, Thea, and Freya Finn in attendance. Bearsgard is in crisis.”

The Blue Wizard: “What has happened?”

Sir Graham: “As you may recall, at the end of the Harvest Festival the King gave an order for the twenty Muskrat Spears to be melted down. Today, when the

Spears were on their way to the forge, there was an ambush and the Spears were stolen.”

Patrick: “Oh, no.”

Sir Graham: “Wait, it gets even worse than that. Elhanon, Pikorro, and Kalko have marched northward with a hundred families to rebuild the ruins of Wentwood Castle. They have found Ingmar’s recipe for arrow poison and they do not fear the Cudgelwielders. They have six boarhounds that can communicate with the Wolves. Ingmar’s Black Magic Kingdom has been born anew.”

The Blue Wizard turned to me and said, “Chipsa, did you know about this?”

“No,” I said, “but I knew it was possible. The Polara Cusp has given us great powers for good, but it has also given great powers for evil.”

Patrick: “Does this mean the Dark Ages will come back?”

Sir Graham: “Ingmar’s kingdom has fallen once and it will fall again.”

The Blue Wizard: “I was hoping to practice my herb-lore in peace.”

Sir Graham: “Speaking of herb-lore, we will need an antidote to the arrow poison. Polara and the Brown Wizard are working on that now.”

I turned to Sir Graham and said, “*The New Kingdom* will be your ally against Elhanon and the Black Magicians.”

Sir Graham: “That is the reason I was sent to you. I brought you the best arrow in all our realm, made by a deer-hunter in the North Country. Your fletchers can copy it. We will need help from your archers in our battles with the Black Magicians.”

Taspel shook his head and said slowly, “Here I am -- bringing sorrow into a palace even before the cornerstone is laid.”

I echoed Taspel’s sentiments and said, “My father gave specific instructions about the children’s garden, and now our children will have to ruin their garden by learning the arts of war.” Then I shook off my dreary mood and said more briskly, “But shame on us, Taspel! Remember that these are good friends who are requesting our aid. And remember also that Baron Kritz is OUR enemy, and THEY are doing the heavy lifting.”

Patrick was puzzled, “Baron Kritz?”

I explained my remark by saying, “Yes, Elhanon is the reincarnation of Baron Kritz, our chief enemy among the Wolves. His human brother Orontius the Alchemist was also his Wolf brother, King Fenrir, King of the Wolves. In each

generation, one wolf would learn how to speak with the Ravens in order to parley with Men and Muskrats. Most of what Kritz told the Ravens was lies, and he often broke treaties to satisfy his blood-lust. It was Baron Kritz who killed Aelfric, the Lost King.”

Patrick was still lost. “How can that be? Aelfric lived three hundred years after the disappearance of the Unicorns. How long do these Wolves live?”

“A Wolf can live for four hundred years,” I replied, “barring disease or death in battle.”

The Blue Wizard: “And how long can a Unicorn live?”

I said, “About six hundred years.”

The Blue Wizard: “I guess that is why Polara knows so much about plants – you can learn a lot of herb-lore in six hundred years.”

Taspel: “Sir Graham, I will take the arrow, and pledge that our archers will not be late to arrive.”

Sir Graham: “Thank you. I also bring you this.” He handed me a gold coin and continued, “The Brown Wizard and the King and the Queen sent this to you – Polara said you would need it on the Journey of Testing. It is the Unicorn coin from the White Magic Collection of the Bearsgard Academy Museum.”

I showed the coin to Taspel and said, “Look at this – I recognize this Unicorn. It is your mother.”

Taspel: “What is on the verso?”

I turned the coin over and exclaimed, “A Wolf’s head, and not just any Wolf! This is Grendel the Great, one of the grandsires of Baron Kritz and King Fenrir. I recognize his face, because it was I who pierced his cruel heart with my horn.”

Sir Graham went down on one knee before us and said, “Polara told me of your lineage, and I am honored to have met you in my lifetime. Now I must return to the King and many urgent duties.”

Patrick: “I will be joining you shortly.”

“No, Patrick,” I corrected him, “you will stay here with us. You and the Blue Wizard will be undertaking a special mission. Is that not so, Sir Graham?”

Sir Graham: “Yes, that is true. The King and the Queen and the Brown Wizard have commissioned the two of you to a special mission. You will receive your instructions from Chipsa and Taspel. Polara’s magic will take you back to Derbyville to make your preparations, and you will depart from there in two days’ time.”

The Blue Wizard: "And the nature of this mission?"

Sir Graham: "Polara has confided the matter to Chipsa, who will give you the instructions now before she leaves on the Journey of Testing. I must now return to the King."

The Blue Wizard: "Patrick, we should kneel before Sir Graham as he takes his leave."

Patrick: "Yes, he is my chief and mentor."

Sir Patrick and the Blue Wizard knelt before Sir Graham as Polara's magic whisked him away back to Bearsgard.

"Farewell and Olaf guide you," I called after him.

Taspel: "Now it's just the four of us left. As long as the four of us remain true, there is hope."

Patrick: "I am not used to your new personality. Every time I hear your voice I brace myself for another lecture on the Parasite Theory."

I laughed and said, "Welcome to the Polara Cusp. Everything is different now."

The Blue Wizard: "What about this mission?"

"Your mission is to find the ten lost coins of King Aelfric," I replied. "We will need them to defeat the Black Magicians."

Patrick: "We have two of the coins here, don't we?"

"Yes," I said, "Taspel has the one that came from Erika Finn, and I have the one that Sir Graham brought from Bearsgard. Here, take them and look at them while we talk."

We passed around the two coins during the remainder of the conversation.

The Blue Wizard: "*The Quest of the Ten Coins*. They can put that on our tombstones."

Patrick: "Many years hence, I hope. I was raised in a time of peace and I am dreading this war to come. Isn't there some way to make a permanent truce between White Magic and Black Magic?"

"We could try but we would fail," I reflected quietly.

Patrick: "What if Polara's magic could simply obliterate Black Magic so that no-one could follow it?"

“The choice must always remain,” I said. “If we get rid of Black Magic in one form, it will come back in another.”

The Blue Wizard: “What about the two hundred years of peace between Ingmar’s death and now? Can’t we bring that back?”

“Yes, we can bring it back,” I replied, “but we must win the war first. Queen Sarah’s magic and Olaf’s magic were very strong and protected the Land of Nye for many years. Polara’s magic can do the same, but only if we persevere.”

Taspel: “The first two steps are the Journey of Testing and the Quest of the Ten Coins. We will meet again on this same spot a year from now at the autumnal equinox. That will be the opening ceremony of the founding of the New Kingdom, and a new revival of the battle against the Black Magicians. The King, the Queen, Thea, Sir Graham, Darian, Polara, and the Brown Wizard will have to do their best until then. Elhanon has not yet had a chance to develop his power or rebuild Wentwood Castle.”

Patrick was a bit taken aback, “How do you know all this all of a sudden?”

“Now that Taspel has fully connected with his Unicorn self,” I said, “he and I are both tuned in to Polara’s magic. Our knowledge of these matters is now the same. Also, there is another reason why the Kingdom of Men will not need our help until a year from now. Elhanon and Kalko are trying to form an alliance with the Wolves, but that will take time. There is a young Wolf who is a reincarnation of Grendel the Great, but now he is just a lance corporal in the Wolf Army. After a year has passed, his memory will come back and he will become a great general of the Wolves. Until then, the Kingdom of Men is safe.”

The Blue Wizard: “Don’t tell me, let me guess – without the ten coins we are lost. Nothing like a little pressure to spice up your day.”

Patrick: “So, when is our next meal? All this talk has made me hungry.”

I laughed and said, “Your next meal will be very soon. Polara’s magic will take you back to Derbyville shortly. Freya Finn will meet you there to give you instructions about your quest for the coins. The King and the Queen and the Brown Wizard will give you access to Olaf’s archives, where you will find clues to your quest. You will also meet with Thea at the Bearsgard Academy. Your travels will take you to the far north to the Kingdom of the Wolves, but do not trust to finding food on the way. Take with you a supply of spelt bread and oatcakes, plus the most nutritious dried herbs you can find. Take also a supply of dried fruit and nuts.”

Patrick: “Were you really King and Queen of the Unicorns?”

“Those words have different meanings among Unicorns,” I explained, “they are very intelligent and do not need rulers to tell them what to do. There were several families of Unicorns renowned for making the greatest sacrifices and having the best ideas. They were acknowledged with the titles of King and Queen, several of each. Polara was the greatest Queen of all (it was she who gave speech to the Muskrats many ages ago).”

The Blue Wizard: “Patrick, think how fortunate we are to have known Taspel and Chipsa.”

Taspel: “Now the time has come for us to depart on the Journey of Testing.”

Patrick: “Don’t you need to prepare?”

Taspel: “We have been preparing ever since we were born into Unicorn bodies eight hundred years ago -- no further preparation is needed.”

Polara (the Grey Witch) suddenly appeared among us, and Taspel gave her a big hug.

Polara: “I have come to take Sir Patrick and the Blue Wizard back to Derbyville.”

I said, “But not before we have sung one of the White Magic songs.”

Polara: “Of course we will have a song. My magic will summon your guitar. Here it is. How about *Sarah’s Lament*?”

“Yes,” I said, “*Sarah’s Lament*.”

Polara and I sang this old White Magic song from the Dark Ages:

He’s gone a-sailing on the sea,
Into the jaws of death,
Oh grief, oh woe,
Why must he go –
And wherever you find brave men,
There you will find my love.

He’s gone a-fighting in the war,
And yesterday he was slain,
Oh grief, oh woe,
I miss him so ~
And wherever you find dead men,
There you will find my love.

Polara: “Now we must depart for our destinations. The time has come.”

I said, "Tell Mayor Alpheus and his wife that letters from Taspel will be delivered by magic."

The Blue Wizard: "We send you with our good wishes and the blessings of Olaf."

Patrick: "Farewell."

"We meet again in one year," I said.

Taspel: "You are starting to fade -- Polara's magic is working."

The Blue Wizard: "Farewell. Remember springtime in the Lindenwood Forest."

The End

SW 8 pages. From the Editor. This narrative sets the stage for “The Quest of the Ten Coins.” Note that Orontius is born thirty years before Chipsa, Patrick, Roswitha, and Taspel. His brother Elhanon is still alive through much of their adventures (Elhanon dies in 644 APC when Chipsa is 55). Orontius is pronounced “ore-awn-chee-us.” Elhanon = “ell-hay-nun.”

Orontius the Alchemist

Orontius the Alchemist, Elhanon, Philomena Finn, and the founding of the Council.

These events conclude when Chipsa, Patrick, Roswitha, and Taspel are three years old.

Background: Two brothers grow up in the city of Bearsgard, named Orontius (the elder) and Elhanon (the younger). Orontius wants to study Mine Engineering and Elhanon wants to study Anatomy. Elhanon has a childhood friend named Kalko.

About twelve years before Patrick is born, Orontius, at age eighteen, goes to the Blue Wizard and says that he wants to perform his voluntary service in the Scriptorium working on documents for him.

The Blue Wizard says to him, “What is your career objective?”

“I want to be a Mine Engineer” answers Orontius.

The Blue Wizard thinks for a moment and says, “I can give you documents relating to mineralogy, geology, metallurgy, and chemistry. Would you like to learn Latin?”

“What is Latin?” queries Orontius.

“It is a language that we Wizards know,” comes the reply. “The first Brown Wizard, Brother Bede, brought Latin here from another world. No doubt you learned in school about the Plague Cusp and the Nine Hundred Names. Latin comes from that other world. In that world, there are hundreds of languages, and the entire Land of Nye would be only a tiny province.”

Orontius does not understand all of this at first, but he says, “Yes, I want to learn Latin.”

He progresses rapidly in his studies and soon becomes an indispensable assistant to the Blue Wizard. The Blue Wizard does not give Orontius any documents about botany to copy – Orontius hates botany. Orontius is particularly strong in chemistry and metallurgy, and can read Latin well in the second year of his voluntary service.

Orontius is accepted into the Mine Engineering department at the Bearsgard Academy. A few days before the end of his voluntary service and the beginning of his formal studies, the Blue Wizard sends him with a message to the Brown Wizard. Orontius is greeted by the Brown Wizard's Apprentice and he gives the password to the Apprentice. The Apprentice leaves him alone in the Brown Wizard's study while he goes to look for the Brown Wizard. Orontius sees in a corner of the study a very old chest made of oak and iron that says "Wm Fitzroy." Orontius notices that the lock has rusted – he breaks the lock and opens the chest. He sees that it is full of ancient manuscripts. He grabs the first one he sees, a small one bound in leather and brass, tucks it under his tunic, and then puts the lock back so it looks intact. Then the Brown Wizard comes in and listens to the message from the Blue Wizard, and Orontius departs with the stolen manuscript.

Young people in the Kingdom of Men are not allowed to marry until they have completed their three years of voluntary service. At the end of his voluntary service and the beginning of his studies at the Academy, Orontius marries a woman from Albantown and they settle in Bearsgard.

Elhanon spends his three years of voluntary service working on the final stages of a project sponsored by the people of Derbyville. He works on the construction of the High Dam, located in the Land of the Talking Muskrats upstream from the rivers and lakes that house their towns and villages. Darian of Derbyville and his father have been working on this project for twelve years, but progress has been slow due to a shortage of volunteers. During Elhanon's time on the project, it is finally completed and he attends the dedication ceremony with leading citizens from the Kingdom of Men and the Land of the Talking Muskrats.

Everyone hopes that the High Dam will prevent the disastrous floods that strike the Muskrats from time to time and cause damage and loss of life. Everyone, that is, except Elhanon. His dream is to dissect some Muskrats and figure out how they can speak. He is delighted at the prospect of a plentiful supply of dead Muskrats, and at the end of his voluntary service he is already scheming about how to destroy the dam.

When Orontius graduates from the Academy, he gets a job as Assistant Master at the Iron Mines and moves north with his wife and son. The years pass and Orontius and his wife have two sons – Pikorro (the elder) and Zorso (the younger). Elhanon becomes a Professor of Anatomy at the Bearsgard Academy and does not marry.

All during this time, Orontius has been studying the manuscript that he stole from the Brown Wizard. The document is a Latin text about alchemy, and Orontius starts to call himself "Orontius the Alchemist." His wife and sons share this interest. Based on his knowledge of alchemy, Orontius invents a new blasting powder and is promoted to Master of the Iron Mines.

One day when Pikorro is nine years old, Elhanon goes north to visit his brother and his family. Orontius says to Elhanon, “What is the best way to kill Muskrats?”

Elhanon replies, “They are very good swimmers, but they must breathe air. The entrances to their houses are under water – if the house floods while they are asleep, they will drown.”

Orontius says, “What about fire?”

Elhanon replies, “It is easy to escape from fire by swimming, their land is full of lakes and marshes.”

“Is it possible to flood the houses of Muskrats?” asks Orontius.

“There are three small villages in the lake immediately below the dam,” says Elhanon, “If we blow up the dam, then a wall of water will destroy half the homes and flood the remainder. Remember that we only need three dead Muskrats for the anatomical study.”

“We could blow up the dam with blasting powder,” says Orontius, “I have just thought of a plan.”

Orontius and Elhanon hatch a plot to fill an oxcart with blasting powder, transport it to the High Dam, and destroy the dam. It is now summer and there is a drought and famine in the Kingdom of Men and the Land of the Muskrats. A dozen Cudgelwielders from Derbyville decide to take advantage of the drought to line the spillway of the High Dam with granite blocks – the water level behind the dam is low right now. The best mortar for the granite would be hydraulic lime and sand – hydraulic lime is made by burning argillaceous limestone in a lime-kiln. There is a small limestone quarry and several lime-kilns near the Iron Mines, and Orontius writes to the King claiming to have a supply of hydraulic lime. He offers to transport the lime to the High Dam. The King agrees and Orontius loads the oxcart with blasting powder rather than lime. Elhanon takes his dissecting instruments and hides near the Muskrat border. The lake behind the High Dam is low because of the drought, but there is still plenty of water to flood the three villages immediately below the dam. A wall of water from a burst dam would be more disastrous and more fatal than a natural flood and Elhanon is counting on that. Orontius takes his two sons and five miners and starts to journey south with the oxcart of blasting powder.

Darian of Derbyville, the chief Cudgelwielder, gets a warning from a Muskrat spy about the plot of the two brothers. Darian now has a three-year-old son Patrick. His wife Elena died in childbirth, which is rare in this kingdom renowned for its midwives.

The Cudgelwielders are currently patrolling the Muskrat border (to protect the Muskrats). Darian persuades the King and the Queen to divert them to the Orontius emergency now taking place. Darian's friend Chistar takes forty Cudgelwielders to guard the High Dam and Darian takes the other forty north to intercept Orontius.

At this time, Orontius is camped in the forest a few miles from Albantown. During the night, the five miners sneak away from the camp and head north back to the mines. They have become suspicious about Orontius' intentions and do not want to be connected with his plot.

In the afternoon, Orontius leaves his two sons in the camp and walks to Albantown. He stops by the *The Happy Wolf* (the main inn in Albantown). The innkeeper Krizzen, an old friend of his, hands him a letter delivered by a Messenger the evening before. The letter is from Elhanon, warning Orontius that the Cudgelwielders are on the move. Orontius decides to abandon the original plan and improvise a new plan. As he leaves the inn, he notices one of Krizzen's boarhounds dozing by the hearth. The boarhound comes over to him and licks his hand. An elderly farmer sitting near the hearth says, "I've never seen him do that before. He's a smart dog, but not friendly." "I'm a pretty smart dog myself," says Orontius and he leaves the inn.

Orontius goes to the main square of Albantown and starts ringing the fire bell. Soon a large crowd has gathered, and Orontius conducts a dialogue with the crowd as follows:

"I am Orontius the Alchemist. I am going to bring progress and enlightenment to the Kingdom of Men. I have a proposal. Who wants to come with me to the ruins of Wentwood Castle and re-build it into Wentwood University?"

Crowd: "Why would we do that?"

Orontius: "We can train people in progressive skills like surgery."

Crowd: "We already have those skills. The Sisters of the Green Leaf can perform a Caesarean section or set a broken leg."

Orontius: "No, I mean radical surgery. If your heart is weak, we can give you a new heart."

Crowd: "My aunt died of a broken heart." (*laughter from the crowd*).

Orontius: "No, seriously. A new heart could save your life."

Crowd: "It would have to be a living heart, right?"

Orontius: “A heart that had been dead for a few hours would do just as well. Let’s say that a miner has been killed in a mine collapse – his heart could be given to someone else.”

Crowd: “How would we get the heart from there to here?”

Orontius: “We could build a dirigible.”

Crowd: “A what?”

Orontius: “Oh, never mind. Once we learn the science of surgery, the possibilities are endless.”

Crowd: “How do we learn surgery?”

Orontius: “The first step is to cut up cadavers. Wentwood Castle has a supply of spears and swords that have been preserved by magic. We can declare war on the King and have an endless supply of cadavers.”

Crowd: “Kalko and his friends would like that idea.”

Orontius: “Kalko? He is a friend of my brother -- where is he?”

Crowd: “Kalko and his crew of harvesters are in the West Meadows working on the Third Cutting of alfalfa and timothy.”

Orontius: “Do you want to be farmers forever? Don’t you want progress? Your ancestors were captains for Ingmar and boldly took what they wanted.”

Crowd: “Our ancestors were double-crossed by the Wolves and the ravens.”

Orontius: “Maybe we can be friends with the Wolves again.”

The crowd begins to throw pebbles and dirt clods at Orontius, who flees the square and goes back to his campsite.

He decides to take revenge on the town of Albantown. The next day, he leaves his two sons at the campsite again and takes the oxcart into town. He pulls up the oxcart with the blasting powder next to the Royal Granary in Albantown and sets a long fuse. He knows that because of the famine the Granary is probably three-quarters empty, but he doesn’t care – he is in a foul mood. He unhitches the ox from the cart and sends it wandering away. He lights the fuse and runs back to his camp in the forest. The oxcart blows up and the explosion destroys the Granary. A cloud of dust and smoke floats high in the air.

When Orontius returns to his campsite, his two sons are gone and he begins to search for them frantically.

Immediately after the explosion at the Granary, the fire brigade and ambulance corps arrive. The Granary is a total loss – the brigade puts out the remaining flames in less than an hour. The ambulance corps volunteers (two men and one boy) discover that near the Granary there is a young boy lying unconscious. They take him to the Infirmary and two Sisters of the Green Leaf attend to him. The boy recovers in a few days, but has no memory of who he is or where he came from. The Sisters of the Green Leaf look at his teeth and guess that he is about six years old.

In the meantime, Sir Graham and Chistar have arrested Elhanon and brought him before the King and the Queen. Then Chistar returns to Arnoldsdorf.

At this time, Darian and the Cudgelwielders arrive in Albantown. They start to search the surrounding countryside, looking for Orontius. Darian meets the strange boy at the Infirmary and decides to adopt him. Darian gets a message from the Land of the Muskrats that the Muskrat spy Philomena Finn is missing.

The King instructs all the Cudgelwielders to patrol the Muskrat border, and the search for Orontius is turned over to Muskrats and ravens. On their way back to Albantown, two Cudgelwielders find the remains of Philomena Finn. The skin and bones are in a pile at the foot of a tree, and the flesh is nowhere to be found. Darian is summoned to the spot and he immediately sends a raven to Erika Finn, the elderly matriarch of the Finn clan. Erika sends the raven back to say that she will come north and care for Philomena's remains herself. Darian is concerned that someone dressed the Muskrat and took the flesh for the purpose of eating it. All the forces of White Magic are put on high alert. The Muskrat spies, the good ravens, the Grey Wizard, and the Knights of the Realm conduct an all-out search for Orontius.

Two days later, Darian and the adopted boy return home to his cottage to rest for a couple of days and take care of things at home. His son Patrick is staying with Linnea and Chipsa while he is away. He takes the orphan boy from Albantown to join Patrick at Linnea's house. Linnea agrees to take care of both boys until Darian returns.

A good raven comes to Darian and gives the following report:

"I have news of Orontius and I can tell you what happened to Philomena Finn. After the explosion in Albantown, Orontius returned to his campsite and found that the Muskrat spy Philomena Finn had fallen out of a tree and hit her head on a rock. He skinned the dead Muskrat and made twelve meat pies from the flesh. He did not eat any of the flesh himself."

Then the good raven tells the story of how Orontius disguised himself as a peddler and sold three of the meat pies to Chistar when the two of them met on the road near the Lindenwater.

The raven continues: “It was yesterday that Chistar went to Bearsgard to turn himself in. Now Orontius is on his way to Arnoldsdorf to try to poison Linnea and Chipsa with the meat pies. If you are swift, you can intercept him in the Lindenwood Forest.”

Then Darian says, “Do you know where the Grey Witch is?”

“Yes, she is near Arnoldsdorf,” replies the raven.

Darian says, “Tell her to meet me in the Lindenwood Forest as soon as possible, at the headwaters of the Linder Brook.”

Darian and the Grey Witch rendezvous in the forest and meet Orontius heading north, still dressed as a peddler.

Darian challenges Orontius to single combat to the death, and he cuts himself a cudgel of wood from the forest. Orontius accepts the single combat and draws a sword from under his rags. The Grey Witch will witness the single combat on behalf of Darian and Orontius summons an evil raven to be his second. Darian kills Orontius but is badly wounded. The Grey Witch takes Darian back to his cottage and tends his wounds. The evil raven flies away. The Grey Witch recruits six good ravens to stand guard over the body of Orontius and the meat pies.

The Grey Witch sends a message to Linnea, who brings Patrick and the orphan boy back to Darian’s cottage. Linnea brings with her an old friend named Maia who is a Sister of the Green Leaf and a childhood friend of both herself and Darian. Maia helps the Grey Witch take care of Darian and the two boys, and in the meantime Linnea takes charge of Maia’s daughter Roswitha, who is the same age as Chipsa and Patrick.

Two weeks after the fight, Darian is well enough to go back to the forest to bury the body of Orontius. He burns the remaining pies made of Muskrat meat, with poems fitting for a Muskrat funeral.

Erika Finn comes north to the Kingdom of Men. After caring for the remains of her granddaughter Philomena, she speaks to Sir Graham and Darian about her idea. Erika, Sir Graham and eight Cudgelwielders build three shrines at the sites of the remains of Philomena Finn. One is built in the forest north of Albantown where the skin and bones were found, one is built at the farm where Chistar burned the three pies, and one is built in the Lindenwood Forest where Darian burned the remaining pies. Two of these three shrines can still be seen to this day. In later years the orphan boy is called “the Lindenwood hermit” and he builds his cabin near the Shrine of Philomena Finn in the Lindenwood Forest.

Orontius never found his sons Pikorro and Zorso – the story of what happened to them comes into another tale. Orontius’ widow Zaisa moves from the Iron Mines

to Albantown and becomes a recluse. She has lost her husband and both of her sons. Elhanon is convicted of plotting against the Muskrats. The King is not harsh with Elhanon because he does not want enmity with the Anatomy Club or the people of Albantown. Elhanon is forced to resign from the Anatomy Department and take a post in the History Department. He later becomes Curator of the Bearsgard Academy Museum.

Erika Finn, Darian, the Grey Witch, the Brown Wizard, the Green Wizard, Damrod, Maia, Thea, and Sir Graham found the "Council of Finns and Friends" to prevent any further deaths of Muskrats. Erika's great-granddaughters Freya Finn and Freda Finn are made the chief spies of the Council (they are nieces of the late Philomena). Good ravens are recruited to serve as messengers and a system of passwords, bird-call signals and secret handshakes is set up.

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The End