

The Letters and Diaries of Queen Chipsa

Part Four: Polara's Peace

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Editor's Introduction to Part Four

"We covered *The History of the Second Magic War* in Parts One and Two and the miscellany in Part Three," said Chipsa, "what else would Earthlings like to know about me?"

"Well," I replied, "there are three basic items we need to cover. One, we need to tell them more about Brother Bede — he is a fellow Earth resident and they will be interested in his story. Two, we need to describe your confrontation with Pikorro. Three, we should fill in the background about Baron Kannol."

"That's easy," she said, "those documents are already written. I will dig them out for you."

"Also," I went on, "include some details of your everyday life."

"Sure," she said, "I can think of some items that are suitable. What about my disastrous visit to Castra Zaisa?"

I laughed and said, "We're saving that for Part Five."

We were sitting in wooden deck chairs in the Peace Academy Gazebo at Castra Sarah. The August sunset was putting on a light show of orange and blue in the western sky.

The sky was reflected in the lake. For several centuries, there was an ongoing debate about what name to give the lake at Castra Sarah. Recently, the decision was reached to call it *Lake Sacandaga*, honoring the pigeon who assisted in the escape from Pikorro's headquarters.

The Count of the Western Marches says that there is a river in his homeland called "the Sacandaga." In his language, the name comes from *Sa-chen-da'-ga* which means "overflowed lands." I will ask him for further details the next time we meet.

The End

PC 2 Pages. Chipsa, Queen of the New Kingdom

Diary Entry #1 (at the Royal Palace, Castra Polara)

6 January, year 43 of the New Kingdom, year 35 of my marriage to Taspel (and as Queen)

Year 649 APC and Year 2039 AD or CE

Among the last words of Polara were instructions to me to start a diary and a record of all my letters. Tomorrow is my sixtieth birthday, so I have decided to start on that project today. I said to Polara “I can’t possibly have more adventures at my age.” “Oh, yes,” she replied, “there are more adventures to come.”

My mother spent many hours teaching me handwriting, and now that skill is handy as I have to write each letter twice. If additional copies are needed for the Hall of Records, Marcus is willing to do that for me.

It was several weeks ago on the winter solstice that Polara breathed her last at the age of one hundred ten. “Death is no great obstacle to me,” she said, “it is just like stepping over a threshold.” I asked her, “What happened when you and the ninety other Unicorns galloped into the river and vanished in the mist? You always said that the Unicorns vanished to a parallel universe, but what does that mean?” She laughed and said, “We are surrounded by parallel universes at every moment. In each split second our reality is divided again and again. You will understand some day — keep up your studies with Roswitha and Tilia.”

Roswitha and Tilia were present in the room, of course. At the end, there were the two fellow Unicorns, Taspel and I, and the two fellow High Magicians, Roswitha and Tilia. The other friends and attendants had been sent away for these final words. The windows were wide open in spite of the December cold, or perhaps because of it. With Polara, it is hard to tell.

“You have probably noticed,” she said, “that I am BOTH a former Unicorn and a High Magician. In the same manner, Darian was the Chief Cudgelwielder and Head of the Council of Finns and Friends, and Thea was President of both the Sisters of the Green Leaf and the Bearsgard Academy. That is how Magic works. It is like a spider web with strong points where two lines meet. These individuals are not particularly powerful or mighty, but they do guide the flow of the magic from one group to another. They are not permitted to hold those positions unless they guide the magic properly. They do not wield authority in the same sense as a Mayor or a King or a Queen.”

We wrapped ourselves in woolen scarves and listened to every word.

In the weeks since that last evening together, I have heard Polara's thoughts in my mind from time to time. There are bonds between us that cannot be broken by death.

Taspel was the only male present on that occasion, and I was proud of how he carried himself. Sometimes there will be a certain facial expression or gesture that will take me back to our youth and our endless arguments about the Anatomy Club and White Magic. Patrick would make valiant attempts to defend White Magic, and Taspel would run circles around him.

Sometimes Roswitha would join in these discussions, but we never suspected that she was a High Magician who could have answered all our questions and ten times more. My children and grandchildren all call her "Aunt Roswitha."

It was wonderful that Tilia Finn could be with us that evening, in spite of the long journey from her village. We were gathered in Polara's home on the remote outskirts of our new city Castra Polara -- it was a small herb-gatherer's cottage as always. Her garden was full of rare plants and there was a modest guest-house where one or two Sisters of the Green Leaf could come and study with her for several months at a time. She had a path leading from her door to the wild countryside. It was this path that the Count of the Western Marches took when he said his last farewells a few hours before sunset. The four of us sat with her from the time of the Count's departure until she died at midnight. We sat in silence as the Sisters of the Green Leaf prepared Polara for burial, and then at the first light of dawn we all walked home to the Royal Palace together and arrived in time for breakfast. We felt no need for sleep.

As we walked in the early daylight, I turned to Tilia and Roswitha and said, "Why is it that Polara has to die and the Count does not?"

"There is no profound answer to that question," replied Tilia. "Why does one frog hop to the left and another hop to the right? Why does one man give thanks and another curse his fate? Why is one child born with five fingers on her left hand and another with six?"

I buried my left hand deeper under my scarf and said, "Oh." My poor hand! I can still remember Taspel and Mayor Alpheus risking their lives with that awful mob! We walked the rest of the way in thoughtful silence.

When we arrived at the Royal Palace, Tilia stood on the bottom step and gave me a big hug. Then we all exchanged hugs and went in to wash up before breakfast.

Good night, dear diary, good night. Love, Chipsa.

PD. Dear son Alnus,

Yesterday I had a most interesting visit with the Count of the Western Marches. I will quote part of what he said to me in our conversation:

“This is one of my prize possessions, *The Badianus Manuscript*, an Aztec herbal from the year 1552. It is not an original, but a modern copy that Polara allowed me to purchase when I made my journey back to the Other World. It is made with something called a printing press, which Polara was kind enough to explain to me. I am not eager to see printing presses come to The Land of Nye – they seemed to cause nothing but wars and riots among the French, the English, and the Dutch. It was a printed poster that led to my father’s death by offering a reward of ten shillings. That is not a happy memory.”

The Count also told me that an ancestor of Brother Bede by the name of Roger de Vere was a physician on one of the Crusades. Roger lived in Jerusalem for twenty years and visited Damascus and Alexandria. He learned a language called Arabic, whatever that is. The Count said that there are Latin documents about this written by Brother Bede himself – they are kept at the Bearsgard Academy. There are only a handful of people who know enough about the Other World to make any sense of them. I am curious to see the documents myself. In the last six years of her life, Polara taught us a lot about the Other World – both your father and me. We will teach the same to you some day, and don’t forget that Aunt Roswitha knows about the Other World because of the High Magic.

Give my greetings to Sir Patrick and Sir Lionel the next time you see them, and come to Castra Polara as soon as your students have finished their exams. Your brother Carpinus and sister Ostrya will be arriving here at the end of June for a visit. We look forward to being together again.

Love, Mom

[Queen Chipisa of the New Kingdom]

PE 3 pages. To the Bearsgard Academy from Chipsa: **Brother Bede's father goes to Wales.** *The following text is something I found in Brother Bede's archives – I translated it from Latin. It is told in the first person.*

To posterity in the Land of Nye: Since I seem to be the only one who is a bit homesick for the Other World, I thought I would record some of my recollections. Most of my new compatriots in Nye do not know enough about the Other World to understand this narrative, but perhaps with magical powers some individuals can comprehend it.

This is the story of my parents and how they first met in a remote valley in Wales. My father, Adam Fitzroy, was full-blooded Norman but not wealthy because his elder brother William was due to inherit the family fortune. When he read Classics at Oxford, he chose to focus on Roman agriculture and read all of Cato, Varro, and Columella. He was also fluent in Greek and French. His objective was to obtain work as a bailiff on the manor of one of his many cousins. During the summer, he visited estates throughout England that were attempting to improve crops and livestock. When he graduated from Oxford he received an offer of a position from a cousin in Wales who wanted to improve his herds of dairy cows. Since the offer included a salary, he accepted it and set off for Wales with his library of practical books.

Adam's elder brother William was even more learned and shared Adam's passion for practical subjects. About the time of Adam's graduation, William sold the family estate and hired several scribes. He settled in the village of Cheddar and earned his living translating and copying books that he deemed to be worthwhile and productive. Adam and William were pious souls but had no use for the theology of their day – they felt that the four Gospels were sufficient instruction to last a lifetime. They were favorably impressed by the scholastic theologian and Bible translator Wyclif, but did not take sides in the controversies generated by his work. They were very much in favor of social reform, and dismayed and heartbroken that Wat Tyler, John Ball, and Litster could not come up with anything better than arson, plunder, and murder.

Adam's cousin in Wales was pleased with the new ideas for dairy herd improvement and started to put them into action right away. Adam spent a fair amount of time traveling to livestock auctions looking for the bulls he wanted. Adam also turned out to be an authority on hay and grain, much to his cousin's delight.

After several years had passed, the dairy yields were much improved. One spring day, Adam rode to a distant farm that owed token fealty to his cousin but managed its own affairs and kept its own profits. It was the first time that he had visited this remote valley. The farmer, Huw of Powys Fadog, was a freeholder who held title to his land going back to the times of the Romans. He had four

sons and one daughter. Adam knew of Huw's reputation for milk production and wanted to pick his brains.

The farmer was suspicious of my father and the two found that they had no language in common. Huw spoke only Welsh – one of the few languages that Adam did not know. Adam had learned several hundred words of Welsh, but not enough for an in-depth interview. The farmer called in his daughter Glenys to translate. The daughter could not read or write, but had spent six years in a convent school and had learned English and some Latin.

Glenys was rather plain until she smiled. She was known for her singing of Welsh folk tunes and her ability to compose and recite poetry. Adam liked her instantly and prolonged the interview with the farmer in order to enjoy her company. The Welsh girl was a little taken aback by the Norman grandee with such erudite learning. She could not puzzle out why a man who could be in the Church or at Court would take an interest in dairy cows or bother to visit their simple farm.

As the conversation progressed, Huw realized that he was speaking with an equal when it came to knowledge and love of dairy cows. Adam felt that his book-learning and this farmer's generations of experience could be combined into a valuable body of knowledge. He decided on the spot to write a treatise on dairy farming. As he returned to his cousin's estate, his mind kept drifting back to the magical farm in the verdant narrow valley.

In the following two years, he found many pretexts to return to the farm, and he finally persuaded Glenys to sing for him. That did it. The daughter was pleased that such a polite gentleman and accomplished agriculturist should take an interest in her. She came to look forward to his visits very much.

Huw was worried about the future of his farm. His four sons were hard workers, and the eldest was now married, but they loved to drink and had no head for figures.

The farmer invited Adam to the baptism of his first grandchild, and during the celebration Adam asked him for his daughter's hand in marriage. The offer did not stop there. Adam was going to resign his salaried position, use his savings to buy some adjoining land to expand the farm, and become a partner and co-owner of the farm.

When Huw heard this offer, he was delighted. He had always dreamed of purchasing the meadows and fallow land to the east of his farm, and now it was handed to him on a platter. By this time, Adam spoke Welsh fluently.

Huw cautioned Adam that they would need approval from his elderly uncle, the leader of the clan, and he arranged for the uncle to come and meet Adam a few weeks later. The uncle was a crusty old character with battle scars and partial

deafness. The uncle started off by describing the twelve years he spent as a prisoner in the dungeons of the Norman castle Beaumaris in northwest Wales. He wanted to know where Adam's loyalties lay.

"I am loyal to my adopted homeland of Wales," said Adam, "and I will provide proof in two ways. Here is my signet ring of the Fitzroys, which you can give to your kinswoman Ellen ferch Thomas ap Llywelyn and her overlord Owain Lawgoch as my pledge of fealty. Also, I have written a letter to my cousin Henry De Vere at the Royal Court, pleading for just treatment for the people of Wales. The letter is written in French, but I will translate into Welsh as I read it aloud." The uncle was satisfied and welcomed Adam into the clan.

When the engagement party was held, Adam's brother William came with his fiancée and brought a bag of coins and some books on farming as gifts. Grandpa often told me about this when we sat by the fire in the evening, and when he reached this part of the story he would slap his knee and say "I thought I had died and gone to Heaven." The simple wedding was held in due course and the farm settled into a new routine.

When I was born a couple of years later, my father was very nervous. He spent a whole bag of silver on three midwives and vowed to have only one child. My mother laughed and assented – by that time there were nephews and nieces in the household and more on the way.

So that is how I was born and how I came to join a Benedictine abbey in Wales. That is also how it happened that I visited Uncle William in Cheddar on my way to the library at Oxford.

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Postscript by Chipsa: That is the end of Brother Bede's document. I asked Polara about what happened to these people and she was able to explain. Brother Bede's father Adam died fighting for Owain Glyn Dŵr (son of Ellen ferch Thomas ap Llywelyn and Gruffydd Fychan II, the latter being Prince of Powys Fadog) in the year 1408 when the Welsh were defeated by the forces of King Henry IV under the command of his son Prince Henry. The other Brother Bede, the one who remained in the Other World, was excommunicated in that same year for supporting the Welsh cause. He and some Welsh friends went into exile in the regions of Ireland beyond the reach of Anglo-Norman rule. About twice a year, Brother Bede would exchange secret letters with a friend in Rome who was an excommunicated Franciscan friar named Silenus. Friar Silenus was a follower of Juliana of Norwich and Hildegard of Bingen. In reading the works of his fellow Franciscans William of Ockham and Roger Bacon, he came across the Arab scientist Alhazen and started searching for manuscripts of his works. He was also a determined opponent of the Holy Office and a warm-hearted soul. They corresponded in a special mix of Greek and Latin that only they could understand.

PF 3 pages. To the Bearsgard Academy from Chipsa:

Brother Bede's cousin Rowena the midwife. *The following item I translated from Brother Bede's archive of his own writings in Latin. These reminiscences of life in the Other World are difficult for us to understand, but those with magical powers or special instruction can make some sense of them. Brother Bede is speaking in the first person.*

I want to set down some record of the life of my cousin Rowena Fitzroy. Her contributions to the Land of Nye have been nothing short of miraculous, and I want to leave a record of her previous life in the Other World. Some magicians of the higher order may be able to comprehend these remarks. At the time we arrived in Nye from England, I was 24 years old and Rowena was 25.

I have noted previously that of all the humans that came to Nye, I was the only one that had any recollection of the politics and religion of the Other World (the Earth). The one exception to this general amnesia is my Uncle William Fitzroy. With him, the amnesia is not 100%. Occasionally when we are talking he will gaze off into the distance and say, "Poor King Richard, I wonder what he is doing now." When William came from the Other World he brought with him a special herb that he obtained from a Syrian merchant friend in London. The herb goes by the name of "tea" and it makes a delightful beverage. William also remembered the game of chess, so we would sit and drink tea and play chess. This did not make me wish that I was back in the Other World – whenever I became seriously homesick the memory of poverty, brutality, and intolerance would make me snap out of it.

My Uncle William was married about the same time that my parents were. His wife was a fellow scholar who shared William's linguistic and literary interests. She died, however, when their only child, a daughter Rowena, was born. Rowena, of course, needed a wet nurse and was sent immediately to live with William's cousin Katharine in Bristol. Katharine was the wife of the Harbormaster of Bristol, an important Norman official. She had a daughter Phebe just two years older than Rowena, and a household of servants and retainers.

When Rowena was six years old, she returned to live with her father. William had not re-married and his household, consisting of himself and three unmarried scribes, was a bachelor establishment. Rowena loved being the only female. In the afternoon each day, there was a woman who came for several hours as cook and maid-of-all-work. The cook had children and grandchildren of her own and was able to answer Rowena's little-girl questions.

The scribes amused themselves by teaching Rowena how to read and write in several languages. Rowena learned quickly and spent countless hours practicing her lessons. She was soon conversing in the languages as well, and the cook was amazed that such a small child could learn so many languages

without getting them mixed up. Rowena had a remarkable talent for copying drawings and sketches, and William and the scribes soon had her working on paid projects as well as her own little lessons.

When Rowena was nine years old, she saw a copy of *Materia Medica* by Dioscorides for the first time. She insisted on making a copy for herself, and it is fortunate that she did because her copy is the best one we have here in the Land of Nye. About this time she got to know two other girls in the village – Rachel Arnold and Roswitha Marsh. She showed them the drawings in *Materia Medica* and the three girls would roam the countryside hunting for medicinal herbs. Uncle William encouraged this interest and gave them tips on where the different plants would grow. He also told them which ones do not grow in England, and how to look for identifying traits. He showed them some dried imported herbs that came from the land of the Crusades.

It was also about this time that the cook told Rowena the story of how her mother had died. Rowena insisted on hearing the whole story three times over, and at the conclusion announced that she would become a midwife. When Rowena told Rachel and Roswitha, they said that they wanted to be midwives, too.

Uncle William said that he would pay for all three girls to be apprenticed to a midwife, and he pointed out which herbs would help a woman in pain. He also gave them some tips on scurvy and anemia, as far as his limited knowledge would go.

William, the other scribes, and the three girls would spend an hour or two on the Sabbath reading the Gospels side-by-side in Greek, Latin, and English. They would discuss the meaning and significance of the passages. At other times, they would continue ongoing discussions of herb-lore or improvise parodies of works on astrology or alchemy and guffaw with laughter. Other topics ranged from quarrying and lime-burning to recipes for cheese. When Rachel's father was able to come over after work, those days were a special treat – he was a secret Talmudist. They were all big fans of Maimonides, Averroes, and Avicenna and would have lively discussions about the Torah, the Talmud, the Koran, Plato, Aristotle, astronomy, and medicine. Their favorite subject on these occasions was the source of good and evil in the world. These discussions were all held in Greek for fear of spies and informers – all the Jews in England had been expelled by King Edward the First.

When the girls began their apprenticeship several years later, they soon learned not to discuss herbs with the midwife who was their teacher. She “didn't want no sorcery” so they kept their herb-lore to themselves and continued to learn from Rowena's father.

That is the story of how the Land of Nye acquired three remarkable midwives and began its tradition of herbal medicine. They didn't remember anything about

King Richard or the Church, but their medical skills were preserved. Upon arrival in Nye the three women, age 25, set to work learning new herbs and inventing new cures.

Uncle William's amnesia did not include the languages he knew, so when we all arrived in the Land of Nye he played a key role in teaching Latin and botany to the Sisters of the Green Leaf. I have seen Rowena, Rachel, and Roswitha in action now for twenty years since our arrival here in Nye, and the progress has been remarkable.

I set down these words for posterity in the hope that this tale will not be lost.

Brother Bede, the first Brown Wizard

PG 2 pages. To the Bearsgard Academy from Chipisa:

The childhood of Brother Bede. *The following fragment is a new discovery in the Latin archives of Brother Bede – he is speaking in the first person.*

I was recently talking to my apprentice and started to think about the Other World. I will jot down these thoughts for me to read again in my old age.

When I was a boy I would sit by the fire with Grandpa in the evening and work on my lessons in the Welsh language. Once I reached the age of nine I was able to write letters for Grandpa. After I finished a letter, I would write out a second copy and keep it for him. When I would read him a copy of a letter written several months earlier, he would be amazed at how accurate it was. The first time I showed him writing in Welsh, he was crestfallen. “That looks like English or Latin,” he said, “doesn’t Welsh have its own alphabet?”

“I think there was a Welsh alphabet in ancient times,” I replied, “but it was forgotten.”

Grandpa slapped his knee and said, “That is just what I always say – the Welsh come last. All we have are steep hillsides and narrow valleys and yet they can’t leave us alone.”

“Don’t worry, Grandpa,” I said, “Dad and I will stick up for Wales. We know Greek and Latin better than those stupid old bishops.”

“Well,” said Grandpa, “teach our men how to fight like the Roman legions and then I’ll be happy.”

My Welsh mother christened me “Huw” and my Norman and English relatives spelled it “Hugh” so everyone was happy. As a boy around the farm, I was called “Roy” – short for “Fitzroy.” Someone told my Welsh family that “Roy” meant “King” and this amused them tremendously. I didn’t mind the teasing and laughed along with everyone else.

I was one year younger than my cousin Rowena in Cheddar, England, and we would exchange letters twice a year as soon as we were old enough to write.

At age eight, Rowena wrote that she was learning Greek, Latin, French, and English. I wrote back that I was learning Greek, Latin, French, English, and Welsh. Rowena would ask me polite questions about the Welsh language but did not try to learn it herself.

I wrote back that I was going to drop French – French was the language of the Royal Court and I did not approve of the monarchy that had mistreated the Welsh so badly. My Welsh family applauded this decision and doubled my lessons in

Welsh. Rowena said that she would also give up French – it was hard to learn French and Latin at the same time because of the similarities. Her new friend Rachel Arnold did not like the Royal Court either.

When bad news would come from London, Rowena's father would give a speech to the assembled household about the evils of our times. These speeches were always in Greek, which no-one else in the village could understand. If the Greek went too fast for Rowena, she would raise her hand and her Dad would whisper an explanation to her.

At age fourteen I became a postulant at a Benedictine abbey in Wales. At age eighteen I became a novice and the abbey sent me on a trip to Rome with some documents. At age twenty I took my vows and chose the name "Brother Bede."

Benedictine monks do not have possessions, but the books I was taking to Oxford included one that I have treasured here in the Land of Nye. It is a Bible that went on a crusade with an individual who later took vows under the name "Brother Cadfael." He was a Welsh monk who lived in an abbey in Shropshire in the twelfth century. The twelfth century was a very unhappy era. I wish he could be with me here in the Land of Nye. What a time we could have!

When I arrived in the Land of Nye, I was twenty-four years old and my cousin Rowena was twenty-five.

The End

PH 3 pages. Diary entry, Queen Chipisa of the New Kingdom

Brother Bede's trip to Rome at age 18. *This is a document fragment that I found in Brother Bede's archives. This translation I will keep in my diary and not send to the Bearsgard Academy. This fragment contains sensitive material. I do not want the scholars at the Academy to get bogged down in the politics and religion of the Other World. There is no need for that. The individuals who have access to my diary will understand the meaning of this fragment and the need to keep it under wraps. Brother Bede is recording recollections from his novitiate, when he was still called Huw Fitzroy. He did not take the name Brother Bede until he took his full vows.*

When I became a novice at age eighteen, after four years as a postulant, my Abbot sent me on a trip to Rome with some documents. I was selected for this task because of my language skills and book-learning. Also, I was young and vigorous enough to withstand a long journey on short rations.

This journey was only three years after the uprising of Wat Tyler and John Ball, so I avoided Kent and London and found a boat departing from the south coast.

Upon arriving in Rome, I delivered the documents to the Father Superior of a Benedictine monastery on the outskirts of the city and was told to wait one week for a reply for my Abbot. I was given lodgings in the guest-house.

A few days later, the monks sent me out at dusk to buy three loaves of bread at the local market. They always purchased bread at the end of the day when the price was reduced.

I purchased the bread and began to walk back to the monastery with the bread in a large basket.

Someone jumped me from behind and I blacked out.

When I woke up, someone was shaking my shoulder. Night had fallen and the cloudy sky was dark. I was naked and covered with offal and muck from the gutter of the street. My habit and the bread and basket were all gone.

A kind voice spoke to me out of the dark, in Italian. I answered in Latin and we continued the conversation in Latin.

The kind voice did not ask me what had happened – that was obvious. “Come with me,” said the man, “I can help you.”

I was stiff and sore and my head throbbed, but no bones were broken. The man put my arm around his shoulders and we hobbled up the street.

My rescuer took me to his simple one-room lodging. He woke the porter and gave him a few coins. He spoke to the porter in Italian and told me the porter would fetch some water and a towel.

When we entered the room, I was glad to see pens, parchment, ink, and several manuscripts. The kind man was a fellow scholar.

“We have no way to heat the water,” said the man, “cold water will have to do.”

“I am a Benedictine,” I replied, “I am used to cold water.”

“I am a Franciscan,” said the man “at least, I used to be. Now I earn my living as a Notary. One of my clients died last night, and his widow sent me to fetch his Will. On my way home, I found you in the street.”

“I am staying at the guest-house of the monastery,” I said, “we should send word that I am still alive.”

“True,” said the man, “when the porter comes back with the water, I will give him another coin and send him with a message.”

“My name is Huw Fitzroy,” I said, “a novice from an Abbey in far-away Wales.”

“I am Silenus,” said the man, “and the only person of that name you will ever meet who is cold sober every day.” We both laughed at that.

“When I send the message to the monastery,” he continued, “I will say that you will stay with me for a couple of days, okay? I would love to hear about Wales. We won’t tell the monastery my name — I will use my landlord’s name. I will say you are with Gaius the Jeweler and that will sound more respectable. They will recognize the porter as belonging to Gaius anyway, so that is okay.”

At that moment the porter arrived with water and a towel, and after a conversation in Italian with Silenus the porter departed again with the message to the monastery.

“The monastery may be able to pay you back some of your expenses,” I said, “you have spent a handful of coins on me already.”

“No,” said Silenus, “I am a Black Sheep of the church. I would rather just take the loss. You can repay me by being my friend. Can you wash yourself?”

“Yes,” I said, and began to do so.

“What was the trouble with the Church?” I asked in Greek. “Is that why you are no longer a Franciscan?”

“Yes,” replied Silenus in Greek, “I was ordered to serve the Holy Office and refused. I was excommunicated.”

“What is the Holy Office?” I asked.

“Ask your Father Abbot when you get home,” he said, “he can explain it to you. It is not safe to discuss it here, not even in Greek.”

I finished washing and Silenus handed me an old Franciscan habit. “Here, put this on,” he said, switching back to Latin, “I am not allowed to wear it anymore. This will serve until you get back to the monastery.”

At that time the porter returned and spoke to Silenus in Italian. He handed Silenus four coins, gave us a black look, and went back to bed.

When we were alone again, Silenus said, “The monastery sent some money for your care. The porter probably kept some of the coins for himself. That’s okay — what we have here will feed us for a couple of days. When the sun comes up we will go get some nourishing food. Would you like to sleep?”

“No,” I said, “let’s talk. The local Benedictines are a dull lot and I would love to hear about your life and your studies.”

Silenus and I had two days of companionship and shared many thoughts and dreams. After our midday meal, he showed me some poems in Italian. “These are something new out of Sicily,” he said, “they are called sonnets.” When I said I could not read Italian, he replied, “Why don’t you sleep for an hour or two and I will write you some sonnets in Latin.” In the years since then, I have written sonnets in English and Welsh.

We taught each other how to address letters one to the other, and we worked out a code in Greek and Latin that no-one else could understand.

When I left Silenus I went back to the guest-house, picked up the documents from the Father Superior, and headed back to the Abbey in Wales.

The End

PI 5 pages. Year 651 APC. Letter from Chipsa to her son Alnus (age 36).

[Editor's note: Every year the two royal families (of the New Kingdom and the Kingdom of Men) and the faculty of the Peace Academy gather at Castra Sarah for a summer retreat and vacation for the month of August. Castra Sarah was originally built by the miners and soldiers who had escaped from the Fortified Mines. They were instructed to build a stone shrine over Sarah's burial place, and when they finished the shrine they kept on building. They had plenty of food, plenty of time, and enough quarrying tools, so they built a stone wall around the three hunting lodges. In later years, the wall was extended several times and more lodges were added. The rustic style of architecture and the simple furnishings are maintained to this day. The summer population of Castra Sarah is about eighty people, and the winter population is about twenty. In the winter it is used by students and athletes, and the occasional faculty member on sabbatical. People who go into the mountains to gather herbs, study the forest, travel to the mines, or hunt are welcome to make use of Castra Sarah as a hostel. This letter was written when Chipsa had just arrived at Castra Sarah at the beginning of August. She is writing to her eldest son Alnus, who stayed at the family home (the royal palace) in Castra Polara in the New Kingdom. Chipsa's husband Taspel is visiting the Count of the Western Marches and will arrive at Castra Sarah in a few days. During two days in the middle of August, there is a special Court of Clemency when petitioners have the opportunity to speak to the four monarchs of both Kingdoms. These are happy times in the Land of Nye, and there are usually only a handful of petitioners.

As part of the Treaty of Olaf's Bridge, Elhanon, the six boarhounds, and the Raven Alf were permitted to go north and live with the Wolves. It was their task to make sure that no renegade White Magicians made illegal raids against the Wolves. They also handled the issues of hunting rights, border disputes, and the occasional poaching by either side. End of Note.]

Dear son Alnus,

I know your father is away visiting the Count of the Western Marches on his way to join me here. Have Marcus make copies of this letter for the Mayor and the Hall of Records.

In order to relate the events of the past three days, I must give you some background. Twenty-six years ago, on the twentieth anniversary of the Treaty of Olaf's Bridge, Pikorro and Kalko were convicted of plotting to kill Sir Patrick. They were also suspected of trying to trick the Blue Wizard into eating meat, but there was no way to prove it.

The two of them were given the sentence of "hard labor," which is rare in the two happy kingdoms of the Land of Nye. At the time of the trial, you were ten years old and we tried not to discuss it in front of you and the other children.

Kalko died twelve years ago, but Pikorro is still alive.

Three days ago, there were five of us journeying on foot along the road to Castra Sarah from Castra Polara – we had just taken a lunch break under some trees and were approaching the eaves of the great forest of the North Country. The mountains loomed ahead of us, the road to the mines had just split off to the left, and the Far Waste surrounded us on all sides.

We could see that there was a work area off to the right – stones were being quarried for a bridge repair that we could see under way in the forest ahead of us. Something did not seem right. The hammers were silent and we could hear the voices of earnest discussion. When the workers spotted our approach, they shouted and came towards us. There were six of them, and another five came down from the work site at the bridge.

I could see that there were three prisoners, two guards, and the remainder made up of free workmen. As the men approached and surrounded us, I recognized Pikorro at their head – his chains had been removed and he held a sword in his hand.

I cautioned my companions to remain silent as I stepped forward and faced Pikorro.

Pikorro spoke first: “You must pay toll to the Land of Freedom Turnpike Authority before you may pass.”

The two guards, empty-handed, were staring at the ground -- the remainder of the party surrounded us, armed with hammers and picks, and seemed to take their cues from Pikorro.

My mind was full of replies to make to Pikorro, but I did not want to betray the Treaty of Olaf’s Bridge. I wanted to extend the success of the Treaty into the future, and I suddenly thought of a way to do that.

“What do you want?” I said to him.

He smiled and said, “I already have what I want. I have my freedom and a small army that my honeyed tongue has brought to heel. But now that we two have met, my mind turns to another matter.” He reached into his vest and brought out a folded sheet of parchment. “This is the Last Will and Testament of my Uncle Elhanon.”

I replied, “It is now seven years since his death, and I do not recall his Will coming before any of the royal courts.”

Pikorro laughed and said, “His Will was probated in the royal court of the Wolves. Let me read you a passage from the Will, which runs as follows – *Since we have at tremendous price purchased peace between our brave forces and those of*

High Magic, we are entitled to make a request. Here In the Land of Nye, there is no prey worthy of a self-respecting Wolf. The roe deer and the wild boar are trifling sustenance for beasts as noble as we. Let us make petition to Polara for a herd of elk." Pikorro put the Will back in his vest.

"Elk," I said, "What are they?"

"Black Magic has given us visions of things far off," replied Pikorro, "and the Kingdom of the Wolves needs a herd of sixty elk – male, female, and young."

I shut my eyes for a few moments and then replied, "Polara has put images of elk into my head. They are very beautiful. Our artists will want to draw them."

"Tell your silly artists to keep an eye out for the Wolves," he said.

I stepped forward and took a ring from my finger. I handed the ring to Pikorro and said, "Take this ring as a guarantee of your safety. Present yourself and your army at the Court of Clemency at noon a fortnight from today. Bring with you the Raven Alf and four of the boarhounds. I believe that there are eighteen boarhounds now – bring the four most intelligent ones."

"What, come to the Court of Clemency and be led away in chains?" he queried.

"Polara agrees with you that the Land of Nye needs elk," I replied. "You will get your herd of sixty."

"And what about my army?" he asked, frowning.

"You can have quite a large army in a fortnight, Sir Tongue of Honey," I replied. "Even being in chains under guard is not sufficient to restrain you."

"My words carry weight because they are true and just," he said.

"Was it just to plot the death of Sir Patrick?" I snapped back.

Pikorro spat and said, "That filthy kid acted as though the Second Magic War ended in a victory, not a truce. He was cocky and full of back-sass."

"You are a curmudgeon full of old grievances," I said. "Come -- let us settle our differences the right way. At the conclusion of the Court of Clemency, you and I will meet in a contest of Albantown wrestling. You have a fortnight to refresh your memory of the rules, and you can practice on your comrades-in-arms."

Pikorro began to sneer and was about to spit again when he paused and said, "What happens if I win?"

"If you win, you receive safe passage to the colony that you and Kalko founded in the Ring Mountains," I assured him.

“And if I lose?” he asked, puzzled.

I smiled and said, “If you lose, then you have to apologize before taking ship for the colony.”

“What’s your game?” he said. “Why so generous all of a sudden?”

“You have done your hard labor,” I replied. “Sir Patrick is still alive. We live in a land of peace. The people of this world live in contentment. Polara says that the cause of strife is injustice. My powers of royal pardon are limited by our constitution, but in this case I will try to stretch them a bit. I have no doubt that the Council of Five Mayors will ratify my offer.”

“What about the elk?” he asked in a calmer voice.

“Polara has already agreed to the elk,” I said. “The Count of the Western Marches is an expert on elk and he will be invited to the Court of Clemency.”

“Now you’re talking,” said Pikorro. “The Count is a bona fide Magician. He has guts and I respect him.”

“What about the Albantown wrestling?” I said.

“Let’s make it two out of three,” he replied, “Albantown wrestling, knife toss, and archery at fifty paces.”

“Fine,” I said, “Let’s do it. Of course, I forgot that Albantown wrestling is not your favorite. It was invented by Sir Patrick and Sir Lionel.”

“He did that after I tried to kill him,” said Pikorro. “He wised up and found some productive uses for his snot-nosed impudence.”

“Would you like to also wrestle Sir Patrick?” I asked.

“Now you’re talking,” he said. “Yes, invite him to the Court of Clemency. Of course, Albantown wrestling has three judges. The Count can be the chief judge, the Raven Alf can be another, and you can choose the third one.”

“Done,” I said, “let’s shake on it.”

He shook my hand and said, “You’re not fibbing about the elk, are you?”

“By the time of the Court of Clemency,” I replied, “your rag-tag army will already have had an elk feast with the Wolves. I will send the Count over to teach you some recipes.”

His eyebrows went up, “So soon? Then what will be decided at the Court of Clemency?”

“There are several matters to decide,” I replied, “that bridge over there is still not built, two convicts have been released, two guards have turned coat, and free workmen have turned rebel.”

“A recitation of your crimes was sufficient to work that magic,” he sneered.

“Yes, high crimes against the darkness you love so much,” I said. “Our discussion is at an end. You have my ring, and with it the pledge on which I risk my life. If you betray me now, then we will be back at Olaf’s Bridge again with disaster for dinner and death for dessert. You know that Elhanon’s request for elk was just, but don’t push your luck. If you cross the line from justice to injustice, then Polara’s favor will turn to wrath. We are a people who love peace, but that is not the only thing we love. Remember that. Farewell until we meet again.”

That was the end of our conversation. Please put Marcus in charge of the household and leave Castra Polara now to come attend the Court of Clemency.

With love, from your mother, Chipsa

PJ 4 pages. Diary entry by Chipsa, Queen of the New Kingdom

Last night I had a long conversation with the Brown Wizard. He told me some of the verbal lore that has been passed down from Brown Wizard to Apprentice for generations. I have set this story in writing for the first time and given it the following title.

The Tale of Baron Kanno!

It is now the fourth year of the Magic War and the fourth year since the founding of Bearsgard. Queen Sarah and the Brown Wizard are sitting talking in the high tower chamber in the Royal Castle of Camulodunum. It is the second week of May and the window is open.

A good raven by the name of Jess flies in through the window and announces that she has important news to relate. Jess states that after several months of eavesdropping she learned the passwords of the evil ravens and was able to impersonate an evil raven for several hours.

She infiltrated a guard of twelve evil ravens surrounding a special conference of Ingmar the Black Magician and Rhus the Necromancer in the wilderness a few miles north of Wentwood Castle. The two Black Magicians were alone except for the guard of ravens. Jess was able to overhear what they said.

Ingmar and Rhus were huddled over a small fire that had burned low. They recited incantations and spells and then sat back to listen.

A voice came from the fire that said, "Be patient in your struggle because great victories await you. Your offerings have been accepted. As a reward, you will be granted the death of the greatest White Magician of all time. This will happen many generations in the future. The White Magician will be a woman and she will die in childbirth."

"Will the child also die?" asked Rhus.

"I do not know," replied the fire, "if there are powerful White Magicians present the child may live. I must now return to my realm. Our conversation is at an end."

Then Ingmar and Rhus extinguished the fire and returned to Wentwood Castle. Jess slipped away at the first opportunity so she would not be caught as an imposter.

Then Queen Sarah and the Brown Wizard give Jess something to eat and thank her for the work she has done on their behalf. Jess stays with them as they discuss the meaning of what has happened. After their conversation, they complete their duties for the day and retire for the night.

The next morning, the Brown Wizard summons the Queen and Jess to the same high chamber after breakfast.

“Last night I had a vision,” says the Brown Wizard. “It does not relate to the same future event reported by Jess, but it concerns other matters.”

The Brown Wizard goes on, “The vision gave me a prediction of the future, or rather two different futures. It is our decision to choose between them.”

The Queen and Jess listen in grave silence as the Brown Wizard continues.

“In the first future, it was revealed that Baron Kannol, the youngest of the Barons of Camulodunum, is destined to become a tyrant ten times worse than Ingmar. The mysterious death of Kannol’s father a few years ago was caused by Kannol himself by means of a poison elixir.”

Queen Sarah gasps and the Brown Wizard says, “Be brave, there is worse to come.”

The Brown Wizard continues. “Baron Kannol will pretend to be faithful to White Magic and he will never openly become a Black Magician. He will fight against Ingmar with the rest of the Barons of Camulodunum.”

“This is a strange tale,” says the Queen, “Go on.”

“The vision explained to me that the deep powers want a back-up plan in case Ingmar fails. The deep powers care nothing for Ingmar and Rhus and are only using them as tools that are disposable. The tyranny of Baron Kannol will be complete and last for generations to come.”

“What is the other future?” asks the Queen.

“The other future has some bright spots but is dreadful in its own way,” continues the Brown Wizard. “Ingmar will succeed in destroying Camulodunum and Baron Kannol will perish in the battle. This is the counterplan of the High Magic to foil the deep powers.”

“We live in critical times,” says Jess. “Tell us more.”

“The vision provided useful details on what will happen. Fourteen years from now, the Black Magicians and the Wolf Army will descend on the castles of Camulodunum. We must be brave and trust the High Magic. We cannot warn the citizens of Camulodunum or try to prevent the loss of the castles. The people will evacuate by boat to Bearsgard and they will heal their injuries and prosper.”

“And Baron Kannol will perish?” asks the Queen.

“There will be two people who perish,” replies the Brown Wizard. “One is Baron Kannol and the other is you: Queen Sarah the Brave.”

The Queen is silent for a moment and says, "The High Magic has given me a glimpse of understanding. I will die a few months later in the wilderness, but I will have opportunity to serve White Magic and the High Magic in the interim. That is sufficient for me. All my life I have been tuned to good magic and I have been able to follow my path step by step. I am deathly afraid, but only fools have no fear. I can follow where the magic leads me."

"We must hold firm," says the Brown Wizard. "We will see the twelve castles looted and burned. Just concentrate on these thoughts: the people will be saved and Baron Kannol will perish."

"And what of Ingmar?" asks Jess.

"The vision said that the High Magic will not rest until Ingmar is utterly defeated, but it provided no details."

"I can see how Bearsgard and Hayport could defeat Ingmar," says the Queen, "Black Magic is often plagued by treachery. Will the soldiers of Camulodunum be able to take their weapons with them to Bearsgard?"

"Yes," replies the Brown Wizard, "I saw that in the vision."

Then Jess observes, "It will be very painful that we can give no warning. We must trust the High Magic as we have often done before."

"The three of us must keep this secret," says the Brown Wizard, "I will tell my Apprentice but no-one else."

"You were First Apprentice yourself until last year," says the Queen, "I hope you will live to see us through this catastrophe."

"Yes," says the Brown Wizard, "The vision said that I would see it myself. It also said that your son Olaf would be known in Bearsgard as 'the White Magician' and that your nephew Escalus would become King."

"That is a great relief to know," replies Sarah, "Escalus is a fine choice. He is currently betrothed to Lavinia who is a brave soul and very resourceful. They will do well."

"We must be true to our plan and not waver," says Jess.

"Yes," says the Brown Wizard, "We must have courage. The vision I had did not say anything about what Ingmar and Rhus were doing with the fire, but I might have another vision. The prediction you overheard is way beyond our lifetimes, but I am sure that White Magic and the High Magic will not be caught napping. We will preserve your report in the lore that is passed from wizard to apprentice through the ages, and we will be ready. The prediction spoke of a death in childbirth, and the Sisters of the Green Leaf are always present when a child is

born. I will alert the Sisters of the Green Leaf and they will pass it down in their lore as well. If we can preserve the life of the baby it will be a great stroke for the forces of good. The High Magic would not be idle in the face of such a threat.”

“I must now go to the audience chamber,” says the Queen, “As Brother Bede would say: farewell and Godspeed.”

The End of the Tale of Baron Kannol

Postscript by Chipsa:

We now know that the White Magician predicted to die in childbirth is none other than Darian’s wife Elena, and we know that the baby, Patrick, was indeed saved by the Sisters of the Green Leaf. Elena’s friend Maia was present on that occasion as an apprentice in the Sisters of the Green Leaf, and Maia is a White Magician equal to Elena in many ways.

The deep powers promised the loss of one White Magician, and it is only by chance that the lot fell on Elena rather than Maia or my mother Linnea. All three of them are White Magicians of great skill, and fortunately two of them are still alive.

At family gatherings, I often sit by a fire with Maia and mother to talk about the old times. Sir Patrick has never married in all these years, but he has been dedicated to his work and has a long list of accomplishments. My children call him “Uncle Patrick” and tease him about not marrying Aunt Roswitha. “If a corporal married a princess,” he replies, “he would still be on duty every day and his wife would be lonely.” Roswitha has never married either, and enjoys teasing the children in return.

Aunt Roswitha used to chaff the three children about their botanical names. When she would arrive at the palace after a journey she would say, “I don’t know whether I’ve treed a skunk or skunked a tree.” Then the children would reply, in chorus, “No skunks allowed!”

The capstone of Sir Patrick’s career was when he and Sir Lionel invented the sport of “Albantown wrestling.” This craze has spawned contests in all age groups.

It is fortunate that we live in a small world and a world of peace. Polara has helped me to understand the Other World and the many heartbreaks and misunderstandings its people experience. Here in Nye we can see one friend for lunch and another for supper – we are never far away from our loved ones.

The End

PK. Diary entry by Chipsa, Queen of the New Kingdom. Year 655 APC.

I had a lovely chat with daughter Ostrya this afternoon. She made a batch of herb tea and we sat down to talk in the orchard. "Carpinus and Alnus are entertaining the children in the side garden," she said.

Then she launched into her big news: "I gave my speech to the Council of Five Mayors yesterday. I proposed that the name *Kingdom of Men* be changed to *Land of the Humans* and the name *The New Kingdom* be changed to *The New Realm*. Also, men will be permitted to join the *Sisters of the Green Leaf* under the name *Jourmeymen of Wizardry*. You have seen my essay about expanding opportunities for women -- I read that to the Council as well. They said that all of these items will be enacted as part of the Twelfth Reform. The next constitutional convention is four years away, about the time of your seventieth birthday. The Council was also dedicating a new gavel in memory of Grandpa Alpheus, so I was part of that ceremony as well."

We discussed this event from every angle and exchanged news about the current crop of Mayors. Then we went on to another topic close to my heart. "Let's go inside to the library," I said, "I have something to show you."

"Come look at these manuscripts," I said to Ostrya, "they were special gifts to Taspel and me from Polara."

"They are magical manuscripts," I told her as we looked them over. One of them was the *Consolation of Philosophy* by Boethius and the other the *Discourses* of the Stoic philosopher Epictetus. On Planet Earth, only the first four books of the *Discourses* have survived, but Polara used her magic to provide me with all eight.

"If you point to a word or name," I explained, "and close your eyes, you will see a vision all about it. If the word is the name of a myth or legend, you can see the whole story in your mind. The time has come to give these to our three children. I caution you, however, that the Other World is a very unhappy place. Once your daughters have started school we can begin to teach you about the Other World as Polara taught us. Just be thankful that we do not have to live in that world."

Good night, dear diary, good night. Queen Chipsa.

PL. Diary entry by Chipsa, Queen of the New Realm

A few days ago I went to visit the Grey Wizard in Albantown. I record here some fragments of our conversation.

“On my way here,” I said upon my arrival, “I walked past the inn *The Happy Wolf*. I notice that the motto on the sign is *Qui me amat, amat et canem meum.*”
(Translation = “Love me, love my dog”)

“That motto goes back to Innkeeper Grimm himself,” said the Grey Wizard.

“He did not invent that motto,” I said, “I am pretty sure of that.”

“Brother Bede was highly educated,” continued the Grey Wizard, “that saying came with him from his world, the Other World. It is a quotation from Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, whoever that was. Brother Bede used that saying about his little terrier. Innkeeper Grimm picked up the saying when he purchased his first breeding pair of boarhounds. He was making fun of Brother Bede.”

After discussing several other topics, I asked him another question. “The Black Magicians were famous for their potent grog. It was used both as a reward and to fire up the men for battle. What was the recipe?”

“The grog was something of their own invention,” replied the Grey Wizard, “whether or not they learned it from the deep powers I cannot say. They would take apple cider and ferment it into hard cider, what we would call spoiled cider. Then they would distill the hard cider to increase the alcohol content.”

“Polara said that distilled beverages are common in the Other World,” I observed.

“That is true,” he said, “Brother Bede destroyed a dozen manuscripts about distillation when he arrived in this world. The Chemistry Department of the Bearsgard Academy uses distillation all the time, but nobody in our world wants alcoholic beverages. The traditional beer and ale are as far as we go in that direction. Distilled vinegar is available in the markets of Bearsgard, and every once in a while an enterprising youth will invent some alcoholic beverages. They never catch on. I have read some of Brother Bede’s documents about wine made from grapes and I would love to try a taste of it. It sounds interesting.”

Good night, dear diary, good night.

