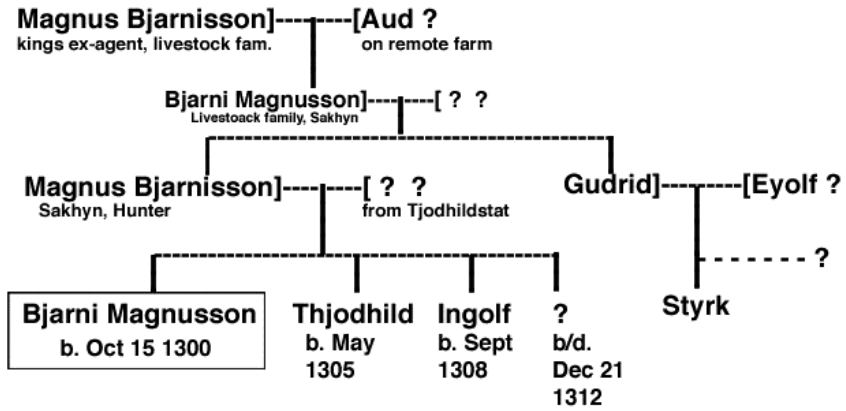


STORIES  
of  
MAALAN AARUM  
  
BRAVE, LITTLE BULL



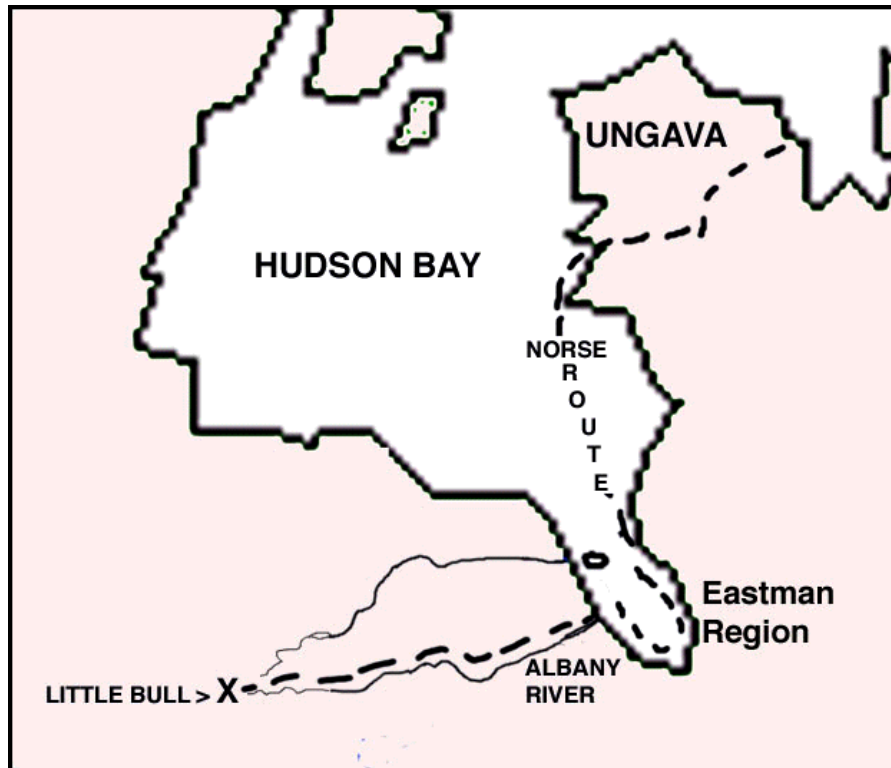
E. S. 3.,11

# GENEALOGY of BJARNI MAGNUSSON



## FAMILY AND RELATIVES DURING BJARNI'S YOUTH

## THE BISHOP'S TOUR, 1317



The route of the Big Raven Arme and his Norse companions, 1317.

## BRAVE LITTLE BULL

Bjarni Magnusson's birth in October 1300 was auspicious. For the rest of his life, his age at his birthday would match the last two digits of the yearly date. Bjarni was Magnus' first son and the great-grandson of Magnus, King Haakon's former agent.

Bjarni's father was a respected sakkyndig of Ranga and Agna Fjords, and his mother was a big blonde from Tjodhildstat.<sup>1</sup> ~ She often talked with pride about her royal ancestors. She was a tall woman who had broad shoulders, bigger hips, and large breasts. The breasts were a blessing for Bjarni because, after his birth, Greenland suffered two years of weather that was much colder than normal. Outside water froze every night of the year. There were only two months during Bjarni's second summer when ice in the shade turned to water during the day.

Just after Bjarni's second birthday, a scribe in northern Europe wrote that the Baltic Sea, located in lower latitudes than Greenland, had frozen. A scribe in Venetia, Italy recorded that the canals froze. When the Baltic Sea froze, Davis Strait surely froze to the southern tip of Greenland.

During Bjarni's first two years, food at the remote farm was irregular and inadequate. The butter reserve, saved for the very scarce times, was depleted.<sup>2</sup> ~ Bjarni was not weaned until he was nearly three years old. Before he was weaned, Bjarni stood to suckle his mother as she lay on a bench. He was healthy. She was gaunt.

When Bjarni was three years old, warmer weather came back to Greenland. There were four moons during the summer when outside water did not freeze at night. The wood thicket and the pastures had six months of green growth. Bjarni grew rapidly. His mother's health improved. Two years later she gave birth to his sister, Thjodhild. Then three years after Thjodhild's birth, Bjarni's mother gave birth to another son, Ingolf, just as the climate turned much colder again.

In the following years, the scribe in northern Europe wrote, twice, that the Baltic Sea froze again. When Bjarni was ten he helped his family scrape together every bit of forage they could find to feed the livestock. The climate had reverted to being cold. The ice in the shade melted only during two or three months of the year. Bjarni's task was to forage for leaves in the thicket where his ancestor had hidden from the Norse battle fleet. Because of Bjarni's efforts, the family was able to keep one more goat alive. The goat's milk kept Ingolf alive when his mother's milk dried up before spring.

---

<sup>1</sup> Court Farms

<sup>2</sup> Food

Bjarni was twelve when his mother became pregnant again. She was thin and pale even as the pregnancy started. There was very little food. There had been four years of cold weather. One of those years had been so cold that ice in the shade would only melt in the daytime during the summer's two warmest moons. The rest of the year the ice in the shade remained frozen. After this second very cold year, the people in the Northern Settlement called similar climatic episodes a "two-moon summer". The Northern Settlement was in the midst of another two-moon summer when Bjarni began to help Thjodhild with the cooking because his mother could not stand up long. The butter reserve was never fully restocked and was quickly eaten. Despite Bjarni's help collecting leaves and the efforts of all in the house to find food, only three cows and four sheep remained on the remote farm. Two of the cows gave little milk in the summer but were expected to give none as winter came. The twelve people in the house ate the cow that was not milking during the summer.

One gray afternoon during the second summer moon Bjarni came over the icy ridgeline carrying a very small bundle of leaves for the animals. He looked towards the small peninsula and saw a small boat approaching the remote farm. Even at a distance he could see that it was his uncle Eyolf and his older cousin Styrk. They had started in the dark and rowed until nearly midday to come for a visit. They had to push aside ice floes as they came. Bjarni had not seen his cousin in several moon's time. Both families had been so busy gathering food for their livestock during these cold summer days that they had no chance to visit. Food was scarce for Eyolf's family too, and now his wife Gudrid, Magnus's sister, was pregnant again.

Styrk was two years older than Bjarni. Both of them were first sons of the leading families in their houses. They both were aware that their roles would someday be to take over the leadership in their respective farmhouses.

Styrk was a loner. Even though he was young, he often went off by himself for hunts lasting several sleeps. Styrk had already been on a long whaling voyage. If he ever found a woman who could live with a rover, his future family would likely be the hunting family of the household.

Bjarni's future was not yet molded. He had competent hunting skills similar to his father, Magnus, and yet he enjoyed taking care of the animals. Magnus was often annoyed when Bjarni would not tell his brother or sister to do an obvious chore. Instead he asked them if they preferred doing that chore or another equal chore. Magnus would have said something about directing people to Bjarni, but somehow the chores always got done without a big fuss.

Bjarni enjoyed visiting with Styrk because of all the new adventures he talked about. Styrk, who rarely spoke to anyone else, would guide Bjarni to a quiet

corner of the great room and jabber away. Bjarni usually asked for the right details in the right places. Styrk would be launched onto telling story after story.

But that day Styrk fell silent because their fathers were raising their voices. Without wanting to, Styrk and Bjarni overheard a discussion of a topic that would be with them for the rest of their lives. Eyolf said:

I do not understand the weather. It is colder than five years ago. I thought the cold came from the icebergs, but there are fewer icebergs floating north than we saw then.<sup>3</sup> ~ Even though it is late in the season, I think we should go to Nordsetur and find food.

Bjarni saw his father was disturbed. Magnus adjusted the wick on the lamp under the cooking pot and said:

You will be lucky to find enough food for yourselves. Even if you kill a walrus, you have to get the meat back before your family suffers. It is better to hunt close to home. This is the time to have the best hunters near home.

The agitated discussion went on for hours. Later Bjarni reflected that the issue was a basic decision: should the best hunters go far away from home without knowing if the game is there, or should the best hunters stay close to home and hunt harder where game had been found in the past. One way the best hunters removed their mouths from the food needs at home. But they also removed their hunting skills thus reducing chances of getting meat nearby. If the remote hunters do kill a large animal, they must transport the animal many sleeps before the household can eat the meat. The other way the best hunters can make the best possible harvest of the nearby meat and get it to the household quickly. But during periods when there is nothing to kill nearby, the local hunters must eat from the household's meager food supply depleting it more quickly than if they were away.

The only agreement Magnus and Eyolf made was to agree to continue the unwritten Greenland tradition. The two households would try to manage their own food supplies, to prevent their households from being a burden on each other or the neighbors. Independence was a value to be kept in Norse Greenland. Survival was another value. Magnus offered to respond to Gudrid's requests for

---

<sup>3</sup> Ice Riddle

food. He encouraged Eyolf to tell Gudrid to ask for help before the situation was really desperate.



In the next half moon's time, Eyolf and Styrk joined a hunting party to Nordsetur. Magnus and Bjarni hunted all day every day close to home.

Magnus and Bjarni did not have good luck. There were few caribou for the same reason the farms were not able to support cows, goats, and sheep. The growing season could not support green things. The algae the caribou ate had even been affected. There was less annual growth. The caribou still migrated but in smaller herds. Then they spread out in search of food. The birds did not fly in to glean after the animals. The foxes were not able to find as many birds as they usually ate. The foxes hunkered down. Traps worked, but the number of foxes near the traps was reduced to the rare crafty animals. The little meat Magnus and Bjarni had to share went to twelve people in the remote house. In good times they used to eat a seal a sleep, but the store of seals from the last seal migration was being depleted fast.

As the date for Bjarni's mother to give birth approached, Magnus took Bjarni, Thjodhild, and Ingolf to Eyolf's farm to stay with their aunt Gudrid.

Meanwhile the hunting party that Eyolf and Styrk had joined was having its own difficulties. In the Nordsetur they had expected to find many icebergs where seals and birds would gather in the open sea to harvest something to eat. Instead they found pack ice.<sup>4</sup> ~ Eyolf's hunting group did not find enough open water. They had pulled the boat up on the ice near the last open water in the south, a great distance away. All of the hunters wore their "walking houses".<sup>5</sup> ~ Then the hunters walked a great distance on the nearly solid pack ice to search for open-water behind an iceberg. The water behind the few icebergs froze rapidly. The hunters stayed on the ice away from their boat for many sleeps.

Day after day the world had been cold, dreary, bleak, and unchanging for both Magnus and Eyolf. Then suddenly three important events happened on the first day of spring according to the sun.

First, Eyolf and his hunting companions were found by a white bear.<sup>6</sup> ~ Second, after hunting with no sign of game for two sleeps Magnus found caribou tracks. Third, Bjarni's mother went into labor.

---

<sup>4</sup> Icebergs

<sup>5</sup> Walking houses

<sup>6</sup> White bear

Eyolf and his friends had walked for four sleeps onto the pack ice. They had not yet found open water or seals. They built crude ice block windscreens. They laid caribou hides on the pack ice and lay down to sleep on them pulling half of the hide over their walking-houses. On the eventful day Eyolf awoke to see that a white bear was stalking them. By mid-morning the hunters killed the white bear.

On the same eventful day Magnus decided that the caribou that made the tracks were probably the advance animals for the coming migration. Later that same morning after a tense "wait and see" game, Magnus brought down two caribou.

On the same eventful day, Bjarni's mother entered into labor. Magnus returned home with the caribou meat that very evening, a half moon's time before Eyolf's hunting party returned. But the day after Magnus returned to the remote farmhouse, Bjarni's mother died in childbirth with out eating any caribou meat.

The traditional method for dealing with the dead during winter was to wrap the body, set it out to freeze, and then pull it up to the peak of the forage shed to wait until spring when the ground could be dug. The forage shed stayed colder than the farmhouse.

The livestock family helped Magnus through the ordeal by wrapping his wife and pulling her up. Moisture of tears around his eyes betrayed the stoic face trying to conceal the loss.

When the baby boy died two sleeps later, Magnus told the livestock family, "You know what to do." Then Magnus walked on the ice to Gudrid's house where he told his children the sad news. Bjarni was still nearly a child, so he let his tears flow. Magnus asked Gudrid to keep the children another half moon's time. He wanted time to grieve in his own way, and then he went hunting alone.

During the next moon Magnus' hair turned white. As moons went by Magnus transformed into an old recluse, similar to the one that had opened the door when his grandfather first came to the remote farm. As time went on Magnus' irrational words perplexed Bjarni. Magnus often said that he hated his sister Gudrid for having an easy birth in the spring. He hated her living in good health. He hated especially Eyolf whom, "always went off hunting, instead of staying home to tend to business."

Bjarni saw the events of the winter differently: both the caribou and the bear meat had been necessary for both houses to survive. The caribou meat arrived first, but even it was not soon enough. Hunting near home seemed to be the smart choice, but neither method supplied the needed food in time. Neither method supplied all of the food.

During the following summer after the seal harvest, a young man, Hallgrim, calculated correctly that the women and the livestock families had enough food to survive through the winter, if the fall seal harvest was normal and if the people ate all the non-producing livestock. But they might not have enough food to feed the hunters, if they stayed home. So twelve hunters decided to try another plan. They would go by boat to the open-water marvels in Merica, which used to be called "Marrike."<sup>7</sup>~

Captain Gunnbjørn thought his chances of the ship getting through the pack ice would be low because of the cold summer weather. To his surprise the Indrawing Seas and Ungava Bay were free of ice. In the north off Baffin Island, he could see the ice blink, the blinking whiteness above the horizon in the lower sky. But the jumble of icebergs and loose pack ice he expected near the Indrawing Seas was not in sight.



Eyolf, Styrk, and ten other men had planned to stay through the winter and return by boat in the next summer. Two of the younger men Hallgrim and Tjalve were about Styrk's age.

Hallgrim and Tjalve were both slightly older than Bjarni. They were along on the trip with their fathers. Hallgrim came from a respected family near the Sandnes Kirke. The men of that family had always been interested in history and scientific things. Hallgrim was more informative than Styrk. People often asked him questions, and they got brief, understandable answers. In the Sandnes Kirke Paafa Snorre used Hallgrim's help to calculate the value of gifts to the Kirke. In the Sandnes harbor Captain Gunnbjørn and other sailors sought out Hallgrim to adjust their kimals and to check on the number of notches to other ports. Women often came to visit with Hallgrim, especially if they expected that the ships from Norway would come. They wanted to know how much cloth, thread, and beads they would need for the dresses they wanted to make.

Tjalve came from a poor family on Bjørne-oen, the "Bear Island", in Ranga Fjord. When Tjalve's father was young, he was forced into exile because he killed an important man in a fight. When the father returned from beyond Nordsetur, he brought with him a wife and Tjalve's older brother. They settled on Bjørne-oen a few months before Tjalve was born.

---

<sup>7</sup> Word meaning



Many in the Northern Settlement suspected that Tjalve's mother was a meat-eater, but very few knew for sure.<sup>8</sup>~ She rarely was seen. Life was difficult for Tjalve's family on Bjorge-oen. Tjalve's half-caste image should have made it more difficult for him to join in with the young people in the Amitsau praying house, the same praying house where Styrk went. But Tjalve's half-caste image was only adult thinking.

Paafa Thorbjørn was the first man to notice. Whenever Tjalve was near the praying house, the children's games seemed to be more peaceful.

On one occasion two angry boys snarled and faced one another with hands in a fighting pose. The rest of the children made a circle to watch the fight. Someone ran for Paafa Thorbjørn. Then Tjalve stepped into the circle and went up to the boys. He asked the bigger boy, "Why are you going to fight?"

The bigger boy snapped back, "He stole my mitten. See!"

Tjalve saw the design on the mitten of the bigger boy was like the design on the mitten of the smaller boy. Tjalve turned toward the smaller boy with a questioning look.

The smaller boy said, "I found it in the snow near the ice. Someone lost it. I need a mitten. My hands are cold."

The bigger boy retorted, "Use your own mittens. Every boy has mittens."

The smaller boy said, "I do not. I gave one mitten to each of my two older sisters. They need them to tend the livestock."

Tjalve turned back to the bigger boy and said, "I think that is true. I have been carrying our extra food to his family for many moons. His mother is very ill. They do not have many clothes."

The smaller boy jerked his left hand from his jacket. He pulled the mitten off his right hand and held it out saying, "Here, if it yours, take it." He extended his left hand to give up the mitten.

"No!" said the older boy. The older boy pulled off his own mitten and extended it to the smaller boy. "Every boy must have mittens. I have a new pair at home. Take them."

Tjalve smiled and said to the smaller boy, "Think of the mittens as a gift."

The smaller boy said with a frown, "If I take his gift, I must give him a gift sometime."

Tjalve still smiling asked, "Is that so hard to do?"

The smaller boy took both mittens.

---

<sup>8</sup> Meat-eater

Paafa Thorbjørn who had just come out of the praying house observed the transaction. He began to take a special interest in Tjalve. Months later when Paafa Thorbjørn met the Greenland Bishop at the *Althing*, he said, "I think I have seen a young boy who will be the first bishop from Greenland."

In the years that followed, Thorbjørn worked carefully to develop Tjalve's natural skills in human relations. Unfortunately the cold years affected kirke business also. The old priest of the Anda Kirke was found frozen to death the same winter that Eyolf and his companions slew the white bear. The Bishop, after careful consideration, asked Paafa Thorbjørn to move to nearby Anda Kirke.

The Bishop assigned an impetuous young Paafa Ketil to the Amitsau praying house. After Paafa Ketil left for his assignment in the Northern Settlement, the Bishop knelt and prayed, "Lord, Thank you for answering my prayers. Paafa Ketil will earnestly serve you every moment of every day. Thank you for making it possible that he can serve you far from me. Amen."



When Eyolf, Styrk, Hallgrim, Tjalve, and the other hunters sailed to Merica, they thought they could harvest more meat at the open-water marvels than anywhere in the region. They seemed to be right. At the start of the winter they were very busy killing seals, walruses, bears, birds, and foxes. They turned all the meat they could into pemmican.<sup>9</sup> ~

Their cache of pemmican grew daily. They were pleased with themselves. There was enough pemmican for their families in Greenland to get through the next winter.

Then the weather grew so cold that some of the open-water marvels began to freeze over. After a day of poor hunting, six tired hunters were sitting silently around the seal oil lamp heating the cooking pot. They were sitting hunched under a caribou hide anchored by rocks on the low walls. Eyolf spoke up: "You remember the tall island with all the birds on it that we saw as we came here?"

Hallgrim answered, "Yes, the meat-eaters call it Akpatok Island. They say there are two small open-water marvels there. What about it?"

"I assume the open-water marvels may be freezing too, but do you think the birds are still there?"

"Well, we are seeing many birds here. They do seem to come from and go back east."

---

<sup>9</sup> Pemmican

"What do you say we go look?"

Another hunter said, "You are crazy? It is too far."

Hallgrim nodded and said, "It is at least two sleeps walking from here."

The hunter said, "I do not like sleeping on the pack ice here. It moves too much. It might open up and swallow me when I am asleep."

Young Styrk shifted to warm his other side by putting it toward the small cooking flame. He thought awhile and then said, "We would not have to sleep on the ice."

The hunter replied with a scoffing voice "Sure we would. We cannot walk two sleeps straight."

"You can sleep on the sled while others pull."

"What are you yapping about?"

Styrk said:

We take the sled we are using to drag the seals up to where we can cut them up. Put pemmican and robes in the bottom. Put one man in the sled to sleep. Have two men pull the sled. Rotate every one sixth of a day the way the sailors do. We can watch the stars to decide when to rotate. We can also count 10,000 steps if there is fog.

The hunter said, "You mean that one man is always in the sled sleeping while two are awake and pulling?"

"Yes, the men pulling the sled can keep it from being swallowed by open water."

Hallgrim chimed in, "With the sled always in motion we can make the trip out and back in two sleeps instead of four."

The scoffing hunter said, "I think we will not find any birds. I think it is a crazy thing to do."

Styrk said, "Just going there would give us something to do rather than sitting on our cold ass."

Eventually the trip was planned. Tjalve agreed to wait in Merica with the other hunters. In case something went wrong, he would be the best man to report to the families back in Greenland. Early one day shortly before the sun rose, Eyolf, Styrk, and Hallgrim left for Akpatok Island.

Three evenings later as the light was fading from the sky, the hunters on the Merica shore heard the returning Eyolf shouting out "We have birds for the pot. Birds for the pot!" The returning bird hunters pulled their sled up to the campsite beside the low walls and unloaded six birds.

While eating the tasty meal, the hunters talked about the trip. The walk over the ice went better than they thought it would. The flat ice floes grew wider as they walked away from the shore. The pressure ridges were not as high as they thought they would be. They had quickly learned the best technique to go over pressure ridges was to unload the sled, dividing the load. Then two men carried their loads to the top of the ridge, cutting footholds as needed and unrolling a rope of walrus hide. The two ropes were lashed to the sled. The two men at the top of the pressure ridge pulled the sled toward the ridge. They lifted it over ice jumbles. The third man carrying his load followed behind to move the sled or cut ice if there was a jam.

After the sled was at the top of the ridge, the following man became the leading man as he pulled the sled down the far side. The men at the top let out the ropes. When necessary they lifted the sled clear of jumbled ice.

Mostly they encountered rafting events<sup>10</sup> ~. They thought that the rafting was caused by the lift of the tide. They did find a series of pressure ridges as they came near to the island. The area of the open-water marvel on the south of the Island was jumbled with ice, but they were surprised to find fast ice a long way from the shore.

At the island they had to search for a way to climb the steep sides. Finally they found a steep ravine on the southwest side. They were surprised how high they had to climb to get to the top. On top they saw a multitude of birds setting with their bodies vertical. The birds had very short tails.<sup>11</sup> ~ They appeared to be the same birds that they had seen flying into the water to get food. They learned the best way to capture the birds was to move into a spot with a net and then lie still until a flock of birds settled close enough.

After they had eaten the birds in Merica, an old hunter who had been a sailor asked, "Could you see Markland from there?"

Styrk responded, "Once, I thought I could see it in the sky reflection, but the others said I was seeing things."

Eyolf said, "One thing we did see was solid pack ice over the Indrawing Seas."

"Pack ice is never solid."

"I mean pack ice solid enough to walk on safely."

Hallgrim said, "Let me figure. If we can do a one-way trip to Akpatok Island in one sleep instead of two, we should be able to get from Akpatok Island to Markland in two sleeps instead of four."

The old hunter said, "There will not be much to hunt there. No one, even the meat-eaters, has talked about open-water marvels there."

---

<sup>10</sup> Rafting

<sup>11</sup> Akpatok birds

Eyolf said:

Remember the island near there that is called "Bjarni" because of the white bears. Maybe the bears are still finding something to eat. I say we should take a look. One big white bear is worth more than a six days of hunting seal. Besides I would like to tell my grandkids I walked across the Indrawing Seas. What do you say? Let us take the bigger sled so two can sleep on it. Four can pull. Let us walk across the Indrawing Seas.

Eyolf told Tjalve and many of the other hunters that the big sled with six hunters would be gone for half a moon's time in the direction of Markland. Then the hunters started walking toward Akpatok Island in the darkness. They turned northeast to walk across the Indrawing Seas before they hit the pressure ridges at Akpatok Island.

While they were over the Indrawing Seas, they perfected the technique of crossing the pressure ridges with a six-man team. Four ropes stayed attached to the sled. They were coiled, ready for use. The bundles of pemmican were prepared with straps so they could be pulled from the sled and slung onto a back without great trouble. The first pressure ridge, which was low, took a full watch, one sixth of a day, to cross. As they approached Markland, a normal watch often included crossing two pressure ridges and walking a good distance between them. They reached Bjarni Island near Markland four sleeps after leaving Merica.

On Bjarni Island the six hunters stopped to think about further choices. The old sailor in the group said, "We are about as far north as we should go. If we go north by northeast, we can stay near the shore to the west and get a little closer to Greenland. But we would walk too far north for the little distance we would gain to the east. If the pack ice is stable we might as well walk straight home."

That night Hallgrim took a walk on the ice and looked at the North Star with his kimal. He returned to the small oil lamp fire and studied the notch where he had clamped the cross needle with his thumb.

Eyolf asked, "Are we at the notch of Ranga Fjord?"

"No, we are more than four notches south of it," said Hallgrim putting the kimal around his neck. "The flow of the pack ice is also to the south. I think we should start walking east by north. I can determine when we get to the notch of Ranga Fjord. Then we can go straight east. I see no need to waste steps walking north before going east."

That afternoon they found and killed a white bear. They laid out their robes, used the sled for a wall of the shelter, and built a crude tent with the bear hide. They had a feast. Then all lay out to sleep on the solid stone of Bjarni Island.

Before they drifted into sleep, Styk asked, "How many sleeps does it take to sail from here to home?"

The old sailor said, "You are looking at four sleeps while sailing, son, if there is no ice."

Hallgrim said, "We have covered in four sleeps the same distance the boat covered in two. That means we may be only eight sleeps from home."

"If the ice is good enough to walk upon."

Eyolf said, "I do not see many icebergs tearing it up, but they may be further east. The pressure ridges here have been low."

The old sailor replied, "Close to Greenland the flow is in the other direction."

Eyolf said, "I did not see many icebergs there last year. I wonder what happens to the ice where the flows change direction?"

The sailor said, "There is only one way to find out."

"Yes," said Eyolf as he slid into the folded robe to sleep. During the night Styk awoke to hear his father talking in his sleep. Styk thought he heard:

Gudrid. Gudrid. Eight sleeps from home. May have difficulty. Say, half a moon's time. We are coming. Gudrid, eat well. We are coming with more meat. Half a moon's time only.



Eyolf, Styk, Hallgrim, the old sailor, and the two other hunters left the remainder of the bear meat and half of their pemmican stashed on Bjarni Island. At Akpatok Island they cached the remainder of the pemmican. They hunted birds for a day and added them to the cache. They took several birds back to camp.

Once they reached the shores of Merica, Eyolf walked over to tell Tjalve and the adjacent hunting group about their trip. He explained that the men on his sled were intending to load as much pemmican as they could pull. The rest of the pemmican was available for the adjacent camp to use. Then he asked if three men would like to use one of the small sleds to return home before summer. The competition for the sled slots was fierce because many of the men had already harvested six months worth of pemmican and they desperately longed to be home with their families. Several chess games were played to settle on the three men who would pull the small sled.<sup>12</sup>~

---

<sup>12</sup> Chess

The two sleds left Ungava Peninsula on the second new moon of the new year. The sled pullers made better time than they thought they would. They had enough pemmican to by-pass Akpatok and Bjarni Islands, so they avoided the many pressure ridges around the islands. The ice floes over the Indrawing Seas moved slightly with the tides, but the pressure ridges a long way from land were not a challenge.

They walked out onto Davis Strait. The wide ice floes were moving south. The floes were grinding against each other, but the pressure ridges were very low. The men were able to walk at an eight-sleep pace without straining themselves. They were almost in a state of ecstasy. The men sleeping on the sleds always wanted to get up before their turn to pull. Hallgrim had to remind them of the importance of staying on schedule. He also had to remind the pullers twice to slow down because; "It is not wise to work up a sweat."

Near the end of the third darkness on the ice, Styrk said, "There is a big iceberg to our right. Also I think I see one on the left. It will be daylight when we get close enough. That will be good."

Later that morning Styrk, Hallgrim and the old sailor were standing on a chunk of ice pushed up by the passing Iceberg. He said, "This does not look good. Look at that jumble of ice ahead. It looks like we will have a very difficult crossing here. Shall we go north or south?"

The old sailor said, "Look either way and you see many icebergs, almost as if they are sailing in convoy."

Hallgrim replied, "They are sailing in convoy. The flow under the ice makes them move. But I wonder why they seem to be spaced out one after another?"

The old sailor said, "Maybe they spun off the cold breast of Hel."

Styrk asked, "What are you talking about?"

The sailor said:

Remember the warm flow pushing ice north near Greenland?  
Somewhere up north the warm flow has to change direction. It so happens that the flow goes west about where Greenland is nearest Merica.  
Remember the cold flow pushing ice south near Merica? The westward flow merges with the cold flow. Those flows are the reason we sailors prefer to sail up the Greenland coast, sail on the west flow to get to Merica, and then sail down the Merica coast on the cold flow.

Hallgrim said, "I thought the reason to go north before sailing from Greenland was because of the short time out of sight of land?"

The sailor hissed:

Sonny, we are talking about Norse sailors here. Men who can sail directly from Norway to Norumbege without seeing land. I never was on a boat where we, sailors, chose to row north from Merica so we could row against the flow all the way home. Sailing directly home in four sleeps was much preferred to seven sleeps of rowing just so we could see land most of the time.

Hallgrim replied, "Sorry, I thought that a person at sea must always want to see something hard. What is the breast of Hel?"

The old sailor said, "Out in the middle of the strait there is a giant slow eddy going around in a circle. On the south side of the eddy the flow goes east.

Hallgrim said, "The slow moving eddy must collect a lot of junk?"

The old sailor responded, "Yes, the eddy collects a lot of crap, especially pack ice. If you want to find the first pack ice of the year, sail directly into the breast of Hel."

Styrk said, "Make up your mind. Are you talking about eddies or breasts?"

"Son, sailors older than me named it," said the sailor:

When the pack ice and icebergs smash together in the center of the eddy, the mammoth pile of white looks like the cold breast of Hel. Hel's cold breast, picking up icebergs, keeps rotating with the flow. Snow blows in and piles onto the icebergs. When the thaw finally comes, most of the icebergs are dumped into the cold flow. The icebergs are spaced out because Hel's breast must rotate around to where the cold flow can carry away the icebergs.

Hallgrim asked, "Check me out. The icebergs here are lined up north and south like a convoy because the rotation of the cold breast of Hel feeds them into the cold flow flowing south. Is that right?"

The old sailor nodded and said, "There are a lot of sailors who think so"

Styrk asked, "Where does that much ice come from?"

The old sailor replied, "From icebergs floating in the warm flow going north. Those icebergs must come from the east side of Greenland. Also from the river of ice, Kangia."<sup>13</sup>~

---

<sup>13</sup> Ice River



Styrk said, "If we get across this mess than we will only face the icebergs which are flowing north near Greenland. I remember they were not moving fast last year. I would like to go north to see the cold breast of Hel."

Hallgrim replied, "We can go north for two notches, but then you must chose the best path through this mess. We have neither enough pemmican nor time for looking at cold breasts."

Four days later the men had worked the sleds over two large pressure ridges caused by icebergs and the jumbled pack ice frozen solid. The two sleepers were back on board and the four in the harness were stepping out. Hallgrim was in the harness between Styrk on his left and Eyolf on the right. The air was warm so ice was not forming on the small whiskers on his chin. He chose to take this opportunity to discuss something he had been figuring.

"This food will help some but not enough."

Eyolf snapped back, "What do you mean, they will be desperate for this food. I remember last time."

Hallgrim asked, "How many seals do you eat in your house every year?"

Styrk responded, "When the climate is normal, we try to kill enough seals so there is one per day."

Hallgrim replied, "So does our house. That means we need about 360 seals per year for each house. While we were in Merica, we pounded our seals into pemmican so we could haul more valuable meat, but we are hauling pemmican from only forty-eight seals. We will be lucky to make the trip in half a moon's time. My share of this sled load is the same as eight seals."

Styrk said, "In some lean years our house ate only one seal every three sleeps. So your pemmican will last, ah..."

Hallgrim completed the math, "Twenty-four sleeps. Less than a moon's time. Walking from Greenland to Merica and back takes a minimum of two moons per round trip. Our families in Greenland will eat all the food in half the time it takes to go get it."

Eyolf said, "So we will build a bigger sled."

Hallgrim said, "I have been thinking about that. There are a few things we might improve, but a sled this size is about right for a six-man team. I think the answer is in more sleds."

Styrk said, "That means more people. That would make a crowd around the open-water marvels. Most of them would not know how to hunt."

Hallgrim replied, "It would be smarter to let the good hunters hunt and others pull sleds. If all of the pemmican and blubber on this sled was just for your house

instead of five houses, your family could survive for slightly less than six moon's time. If a sled came from each house and made two trips to Merica and back without hunting then the families in the house might survive."

Eyolf said, "What you are talking about is a six-man sled coming from every house in our settlement. Many houses do not have six grown men in them. Many men like Magnus think it is foolish to leave home when people are starving."

Hallgrim replied:

I am not sure Magnus is correct. He would be if he had an endless supply of caribou. But the caribou suffers from lack of food the same as our livestock do. Only in Merica do we seem to have an endless supply of meat. We can get caribou in the brief summer and seals the rest of the year. Most of the houses in Greenland have six or more people who can pull sleds. The women would have to pull sleds too. A few of the women staying in Merica would do a better job of making the pemmican than the hunters do.

Eyolf eyed the pressure ridge coming up. Styrk was signaling to go left to a visible slot. Eyolf said, "You are telling me this whole effort will not be enough unless every house has a sled, and, if necessary, women pull the sleds?"

Hallgrim said, "I cannot figure any other way."



The moon was past the last quarter phase when the big sled slid to a stop outside Eyolf's house. No one met them either outside or at the door. Inside the house he and Styrk thought they were visiting the dead. Gudrid, thin with a fever, was in bed with the year-old child. The child's rib cage was visible. Throughout the house there was evidence of starvation.

Styrk prepared a seal stew at once while Eyolf searched the house. Styrk was spooning broth into his mother's mouth when Eyolf returned.

Eyolf said, "There are no bodies hanging in the forage shed. I counted the right number of breathing bodies."

Styrk lowered his mother's head to the pillow and said, "That is good."

Eyolf filled a bowl saying, "Only one child of the livestock family can stand on his own."

"That is bad."

"They would not have made it until the boat came in the summer. They should have asked Magnus for help sooner. Gudrid is just as stubborn as her brother."

Styrk took the remainder of the sled load to Magnus' house. He found a similar scene there. He refreshed the oil in the cooking lamp and started the pemmican stew. Meanwhile he listened to the quiet phrases uttered by Thjodhild coiled up under robes:

"Father got a thin caribou a moon's time ago. We ate it fast. Our twelve hungry mouths were greedy even knowing we should save some for the future. Bjarni got only a few birds and one fox. The butter is gone. There is only a little skyr left.

"We decided to eat the buck sheep three moon's time ago. Father and Bjarni are very thin. They have been away eight sleeps. Something may have happened to them."

For the first two sleeps, Eyolf at home and Styrk who stayed at Magnus' house were not sure everybody would live. Then color returned to cheeks and occasional smiles were seen in both houses.

Just before the third sleep after Eyolf's return, Magnus and Bjarni came back with caribou meat. Magnus refused to accept any more pemmican from Styrk. Bjarni was able to convince Magnus that the other people in the house needed all the food they could get. So Magnus accepted the seal blubber. They needed blubber for the lamps also.



The following summer only five moon's time after he returned home, Eyolf and more than thirty men sailed back to Merica. The fall caribou migration in Merica gave them a chance to get red meat. They cooperated with the Tunits to get a bigger harvest for both camps of hunters. Then as winter came the Greenland hunters concentrated on the early seal and walrus harvest.

As soon as the ice became firm across the Indrawing Seas, half of the men went back to Greenland hauling pemmican and blubber to supply thirty houses in the Northern Settlement.

During the same period on the Greenland side of the ice, Hallgrim worked long days helping willing people in each farmhouse build sleds. Some men with fewer mouths to feed chose other hunting options, but more than one third of the

farmhouses were willing to risk the walk to Merica. In most houses the man tending livestock picked his team. All of the able boys above fifteen were chosen. Then the women below thirty years of age but not nursing were selected. The young girls of twenty years or less stayed home to tend children and livestock. More suits of walking-houses were sewn. Styrk, Hallgrim, and two other men who had walked the ice from Merica and stayed home during the summer led thirty sleds onto the ice in four groups of seven or eight. The sleds from Greenland started west about the same time the men in Merica were starting east with a supply of pemmican for hungry families in Greenland.

So the routine to pull sleds full of pemmican from the open-water marvels in Merica to Greenland developed. The pemmican hauling continued for the next six years. Bjarni who hunted near home with Magnus heard of the events mostly from Styrk whenever he was home. Styrk told Bjarni that hunters usually arrived in Merica by ship in late summer. In early winter half of those hunters pulled the winter's pemmican supply to Greenland. Those hunters stayed at home in Greenland for only a moon's time and then walked back to Merica before the pack ice broke up.

The other half of the hunters hunted through the winter in Merica. Those hunters pulled their loads home at the end of winter. They stayed in Greenland until they could sail on the boats to Merica in late summer.

Also at the beginning of each winter, Bjarni saw groups of sleds leaving Ranga Fjord. They went to Merica and after quickly loading came back to Greenland.

So every year for six years, Greenland got four major supplies of pemmican from the open-water marvels. Three supplies came by sled and one by boat.

Although they did not plan to meet, the sleds pulled by hunters from Merica usually met the sleds coming from Greenland somewhere on the ice. When they met, the pulling of sleds in both directions was suspended for one sixth of a day for festive activities of families and friends meeting again.

The spring when Bjarni was fourteen, Styrk came over the ice to the remote farm to visit. They were glad to be together again. Bjarni listened to Styrk talk about walking to Merica and back to Greenland. Styrk talked about so many trips and climbing so many pressure ridges that Bjarni became confused. Bjarni asked, "Can it really be that easy? You said you walked to Merica and back as if we walked around the house for necessary things. Is it that easy?"

"Oh, no," answered Styrk. "A walk either way usually takes a whole moon's time. Hallgrim calculates that nearly one person dies during every two trips. But remember the number of sleds in a group can be thirty, forty, or more. So the loss of a person out of 200 or more people is sad for the family, but to Hallgrim it is

not too bad. Hallgrim has numbers for how many would be dying if we were not pulling pemmican from Merica. He says that when those numbers are compared with the number lost on the ice, the only logical answer is to build more sleds.

Bjarni shook his head and said, "That is what I am trying to say to you. You and the others who have been there keep saying, 'We walked to Merica. We went over seventeen pressure ridges. We climbed up and down eleven ice floes. A man fell in near an iceberg and froze to death.' You make it sound so routine. What happens to a sled with new men pulling it? Those things are not routine to them."

Styrk said, "Tjalve was the one who made sure we put two experienced men with four inexperienced men on each new sled. The experienced men taught the inexperienced men to pace themselves, to sleep when their turn came, to determine the notch on the Kimal, and to walk toward the lowest spot in the pressure ridges. Eighty of our experienced men were able to help about forty sleds from the Eastern Settlement go directly to Merica. According to Hallgrim they saved six sleeps of travel time compared to coming up here to the Northern Settlement and then going to Merica."

Bjarni asked, "Is the sea frozen all the way to the Eastern Settlement?"

Styrk said, "Bjarni, the people from the Eastern Settlement say the sea is frozen beyond the southern tip of Greenland. The people in the most southern fjords of the Eastern Settlement can travel to the edge of the ice to find seals, but the men who live north of Einarsfjord say that walk is the same as coming to Merica. Besides it is risky to be at the edge of the sea where the ice is breaking up. The hunting is safer in Merica."

When Magnus left the room for a few moments, Styrk asked Bjarni, "Many of the hunters want you to go to Merica with us this trip. Will you?"

Bjarni had been expecting the question. His answer was swift:

You know my father thinks hunting near home is wisest. I need to stay near home. When the cold seems to last all year it takes both of us hunting full time to get enough meat. My father goes after the caribou; I hunt them and the smaller animals closer to home. I could not leave the people in this house depending only on Father's hunting.

The year Bjarni turned fourteen was the second year in the long cold spell when water in shade froze during the day in summertime. The hunting in Greenland was very poor because the sealing season was reduced to two moon's time during the summer. Only Magnus's skill at dropping caribou in the "wait and see" game

and Bjarni's dogged efforts to kill every rabbit, fox, bird, caribou and an occasional seal enabled the Magnus household to live.

Despite the bitter cold, the people in the Northern Settlement returned to reasonably healthy living because of the pemmican from Merica. The next summer the Eastern Settlement ships joined the fleet ferrying hunters to Merica.

Two moon's time after Bjarni reached his fourteenth birthday, he and Magnus dragged home three caribou. For the first time in three years there was a sense of relief from hunger. The wife of the livestock man wanted to visit her parents, a full day's walk away, and celebrate Christmas mass at the Anavik Kirke which was another extra long day to walk.

Magnus suggested that the whole livestock family should go and take Bjarni, Thjodhild, and Ingolf with them. Magnus would do the livestock chores.

After a day of walking, the livestock family and the three Magnus siblings arrived at the parents of the livestock man's wife. They found that her parents had become a lame old man and a sick old woman.

The old grandparents were caring for five children younger than ten years old. All the other adults were at the time pulling a sled toward Merica. This trip was their third in two years.

Every one except the sick and lame grandparents made the walk to the Anavik Kirke for Christmas Mass. Paafa Thord was extremely pleased to see them. Besides the livestock families, the Magnus siblings, and the children, the attendance was only seven other old people and twelve young children from the near farmhouses.

When they had returned to the home of the lame and sick parents, Bjarni asked the old lame man, "The kirke was nearly empty today. Are all the women and youth sick?"

The old man laughed:

You and your father, Magnus, have been under the glacier too long. Most of the healthy adults and youth are pulling sleds to Merica and back. If we did not have the food from Merica, every hunter in the Northern Settlement would be fighting each other over every skinny caribou carcass. Then you and Magnus would not find any caribou for your family.

Confronted by this new viewpoint, Bjarni reviewed his father's belief in hunting close to home. But family pride was too strong. Bjarni decided the lame

old man was too opinionated. His father's hunting had worked for three years and nobody had starved. His mother died in childbirth, but many women did. Bjarni continued to believe as Magnus taught him that having the six or eight most important adults from each farmhouse gone for over a moon's time was much too risky. Bjarni decided to follow his father's lead without protest.



Bjarni was not yet fifteen, when the small Norse knarr sailed into Lyse Fjord. The small knarr was one of two ships per year promised by King Haakon the Old back in the days when Greenland voted to pay taxes to Norway. Both knarrs had to sail west and then north of the icebergs floating on the East Greenland Flow. Fortunately there was no loose pack ice in the Labrador Flow. The knarr captains found the lack of loose pack ice interesting, but they did not know why it was not there because the weather was still cold. As the supplies for the Northern Settlement were unloaded, the captain told the priests that the new Bishop was on the other ship, which was sailing on to Gardar.<sup>14</sup> ~

Immediately the priests of the three Kirkes and the one praying house in the Northern Settlement decided to go to the Eastern Settlement to see the new Bishop. They chose to take a six-man rowboat so they would have a way home. Paafa Thord of the Anavik Kirke asked Bjarni if he would be a rower. Bjarni asked his father and was pleasantly surprised to receive permission to go. The spring had been the warmest in five years. Magnus would use the opportunity to teach Ingolf some basic hunting skills. Also Magnus thought the trip with the priests would be a good learning experience for his oldest son.

Bjarni knew that Styrk was still at home because, this year, the hunters could not get back to Merica across the ice in the spring. So Styrk joined the priestly rowing crew.

The priests thought the reception of Bishop Arne would occur during the first part of the *Althing* because the ship had arrived just before the start of the *Althing*. The priests kept up the rowing pace for the six sleeps. Bjarni gained an appreciation of the priests as being resourceful men under trying circumstances.

Bjarni and Styrk went to the *Althing*. They witnessed from afar the reception of Bishop Arne. They sampled the food. They had no valuables to wager so they could only play the few games of entertainment.

---

<sup>14</sup> Bishop Arne

On their first day in the Eastern Settlement, Styk passed close to a girl and suddenly stopped. He looked back at her auburn hair fluttering in the slight breeze. He stood and watched her walk out of sight.

Whenever they saw the same auburn headed girl later in the week, Styk's head forgot where his feet were going. He tripped over people, boxes, and the few dogs lying around. In an attempt to get close to her, Styk tried to do the round dances that the auburn-headed girl joined.

The round dance was an old Odin tradition that the priests altered to "keep the youth busy with wholesome things and to honor God." To the beat of a drum, the dancers took one sedate side step to the left and slid the right foot up beside the left. Then the step repeated. The dancers stood in a circle shoulder to shoulder with the women and girls in front. The men and boys formed a circle behind them.

One afternoon during the second week at the *Althing*, Bjarni and Styk were lying on a robe on a grass knoll overlooking the activities. In the distance the round dance was starting up again. Bjarni pointed and asked, "What is on the post in the middle?"

Styk replied, "They say it is Jesus."

"Why paint it red?"

They said Jesus was the light of the world. Often our sun is red. Red paint may last longer than the yellow color."

Bjarni pointed to a girl seventh in line, "There she is. Today she is wearing a blue scarf. It makes her auburn hair stand out. Did you get close to her?"

Bjarni was asking about the tall young girl with auburn hair. They could see her swaying with the rest of the dancers. Styk said, "No, as soon as a dance ended two or three of the local men got beside her. Sometimes, I swear, I thought the men beside me were holding me back. I wonder if there is another way to meet her?"

A strong voice from behind said, "Come to the Gardar Kirke on Sunday. I will introduce you." Bjarni and Styk turned to see the black robe standing between them. They both tried to stand, turn, and bow all at the same time. Bjarni thought it was not very graceful.

Two hands extended toward them from beneath black sleeves.

Bishop Arne said, "Please rise. I told them I only wanted a few words with you boys. Please do not waste the words in praise."

Bjarni came to his feet quickly. He saw the retinue of priests standing a discreet distance away. Bjarni heard Bishop Arne asking, "Can you come to the Bishop's house tomorrow when the sundial shows one after the midday?"

The two young men answered together, "Yes, Bishop."



"Good," said the man in a swirl of black cloth as he strode down the knoll to the smiling faces of the waiting priests.

Styrk and Bjarni watched them go out of sight. Then Styrk asked, "Where is the Bishop's house?"

Bjarni replied with his own question, "What is a sundial?"



Bjarni and Styrk asked several people "Where is the sundial? How do you use it?" and, "Where is the Bishop's house?" People were willing to help, but at first the answers were not consistent. Slowly they developed a consensus.

At one after the midday when most of the people at the *Althing* were resting, the two young men stood in front of the Bishop's door. They knocked. They heard "Come in." They went in.

Bishop Arne had his arm up signaling his desire to speak first. "Men, I asked you here at this time because it is the only time of day I can be alone. They even sleep in the same room with me, but that will stop after the *Althing*. I was told you were from the Northern Settlement. I want to visit with you."

Bjarni replied, "Bishop, four priests from the Northern Settlement are here."

The Bishop smiled and said, "Please, you two, call me Arne. I am not much older than you, maybe ten years. I have no friends in Greenland yet. Other priests do not make the best of friends. Each one desires to make me believe they are better than other priests. But if we are friends, we can speak the truth, and accept each other, as we are right here. Good friends do not tell other souls what was said when we were together. Right, men?"

The word "men" caused a slight pause, but both "men" responded with "Yes, Arne."

Arne pointed to two benches one on each side of the head bench. "Good, please be seated. I want to hear about real life and death in the Northern Settlement."

Bjarni and Styrk talked about many happenings in the Northern Settlement. In response to Arne's guiding questions, Bjarni talked for the first time about his mother's death and the near starvation of others. Styrk talked about the failed hunting at Nordsetur, the hunting in Merica, and the walks across the pack ice.

Arne asked if they had heard anything about Bishop Gnupsson. Styrk and Bjarni said they had been told by the priests that Bishop Gnupsson had sailed to Merica from the Sandnes Kirke about two centuries earlier. The priests thought he never came back to Greenland.

The priests also said that Bishop Arnald came to Greenland about five years after Bishop Gnipsson went to Merica. Bishop Arnald started the Bishop residence in Gardar. Then after a few years he too went to Merica. The priests of the Northern Settlement had said that Bishop Arnald returned from Merica after twenty summers and retired from the Bishopric of Greenland.

Arne commented, "That fits what I know from the consecration records and Iceland records. I also know that Bishop Arnald was Bishop of Hamar for a few brief years after he returned from Greenland.

Styrk said some Norse men who had hunted caribou with the Tunit had asked them if they ever heard of men wearing a black robe. The Tunit told about the K'nistenaux people of Eastman Land and an area west of the salt water beyond Merica where blond people lived. Most of K'nistenaux and a few of the blond men wore crosses and talked about holy men in black clothes."

Arne nodded and asked, "Will you be going back across the ice?"

Styrk answered, "I have already missed this summer's boat. I will walk across in the fall and stay all next summer."

Bjarni said, "We need good hunters in Greenland. My father and I hunt in Greenland."

Arne said, "Men, I have a lot of things to do in the Eastern Settlement. When I became a priest, the church had an eternal representative of God on earth, the Popa, located in an eternal city, Rome. But twelve years ago, some mean men put the Popa in prison. Then eight years ago, a new Popa moved from the eternal city into France. Four years ago a group of church men met in Vienna and demanded a sweeping reform of the church. The rumors coming from everywhere makes me think the church is now a den of hungry wolves devouring their own children. Finally the Popa, in France, did appoint me to come here. It is good to be far away from the snarling, but I must now depend on the loyalty of the people here rather than the Popa, who is in the wolf pit a long, long way away.

I plan to visit the twelve churches in the Eastern Settlement for about two months each. I want to get to know the people well. So in about two years, I plan to visit the Northern Settlement. I will plan to stay over winter and maybe another whole summer. Would you men go with me across the ice and on to Eastman Land?"

Styrk shouted, "I will!"

Bjarni answered, "I will have to ask my father."

Arne said, "My friend, when you ask him, tell him a friend-- and Greenland's Bishop -- needs your assistance."

Bjarni smiled as he opened the door to leave, "Father would never allow me to refuse a friend."



The four priests had swung themselves into rowing position. Bjarni and Styrk pushed the boat down the ramp until it was floating enough to clear when their weight was added. Bjarni swung aboard. Then Styrk swung into the boat. They pulled on their boots. Styrk raised his oar vertically and lowered it toward the auburn-haired girl standing on the bank with her mother.

The afternoon before at the Kirke, Halldis and Styrk had a chance to walk together around behind the building. Styrk quickly asked for something that he could use to remember her. As she slipped him the blue scarf, Halldis said it would be wiser if her mother did not know she had a special boy in mind so soon. So when the lead rower commanded "Row," the blue scarf was lying under the coverlet on Styrk's shoulders where he could feel it with every stroke.

Six sleeps later six men soaked to the skin by a driving mist rowed to the ramp near Sandnes Kirke. The Sandnes Paafa Snorre went to ask two nearby Sandnes farmhouses to accept overnight guests. A family with a boy just slightly younger than Bjarni accepted them for the night.

The father was a storyteller. He also enjoyed Styrk's stories. They knew many of the same people. Several important people had stayed overnight at the house in the past. The father displayed an unusual arrowhead.<sup>15</sup> He said it came from Norumbege. Also he showed the boys a chunk of a very black rock. According to the father, the rock would actually burn. The rock was brought from a place called "Akonsee" by the Norse ships over a half century ago.

Bjarni played chess with the boy. Bjarni won two of three games. Every so often he would look up to see an arm in motion in the dim light. Someone was carding wool. The person stood and changed locations. The next time Bjarni looked up, his eyes met a set of young blue eyes framed by long blond hair. They both looked away immediately. After that nearly every time Bjarni stole a glance, he saw the girl stealing one also.

When the boy conceded, Bjarni nodded to the corner and asked, "Your cousin?"

The boy said, "No, my sister. She is very shy. Prefers to be alone."

"Is she a good weaver."

---

<sup>15</sup> Artifacts

"Better than our mother."

The boy stood up, turned to the corner, and said, "Arnora, show this boy some of your weavings."

Caught because everyone in the room had heard, Arnora did bring out some of her weavings. As she showed them her interest in weaving was obvious. Bjarni was not the least bit interested in weavings. He would have never asked to see them. But he began to be more interested in the weaver: her motions, her neat smile, and the flash in her eyes. He hoped his interest was not as obvious to everyone else as it felt to him.

Arnora with head down was rolling up her weavings when she spoke softly with a murmur, "Where do you live?"

Styrk and Bjarni both missed the question. The boy, who was used to his sister's soft voice answered, "Styrk lives near the mouth of Anda Fjord. Bjarni lives in a small farm at the end of Ranga Fjord."

Arnora's head came up. Her blue eyes flickered at Bjarni. She lowered her head and asked with a voice louder than before, "Around the small peninsula?"

Bjarni replied, "On the north side."

Arnora's head raised again. The blue eyes locked onto Bjarni's and stayed there.

She said, "I have been there. What a majestic view." A smile formed on her lips. "I think the people who live there are the luckiest people in the world."



Two summers had passed since Bishop had asked if Bjarni and Styrk would go with him to Merica. When Styrk returned from Merica, Bjarni and Styrk would dream about their opportunity to travel with the Bishop. They really thought it was just a dream.

The pemmican from Merica continued to get through by boat in the brief summers and by sleds over the ice during winters and springs. The wintertime hunting on Greenland became less critical which was good because there was less game.

Bjarni had not mentioned the invitation from Arne because he knew all the hunters in the house would be needed during the next cold winter. Bjarni was not willing to ask Magnus a question with an obvious negative answer.

Then warmer temperatures of summer allowed more green grass than there had been in the last five years. Cows, sheep, and goats gave birth and milk. In late summer Paafa Thord of the Anavik Kirke told his gathering that Bishop Arne

would be coming by the next moon. Bjarni, who had been almost asleep during Paafa Thord's long, boring lecture in a strange language came fully awake.

A few days later the moderate temperatures of early fall encouraged Bjarni to approach his father with the question he had been polishing ever since Styrk and he came back from the trip to the Eastern Settlement. Bjarni asked, "Father, the Bishop of Greenland has asked me to walk the ice to Merica with him. Can I go?"

Magnus looked into Bjarni's face. Magnus discerned resolve and desire. He said, "Bjarni, I assume you met the Bishop two years ago." Bjarni nodded.

"The Bishop saw good qualities in you?" Bjarni nodded again. Magnus said, "It is an honor to be selected and more of an honor to serve."

Bjarni asked, "Does that mean yes, Father?" Magnus nodded his head.

Styrk led the preparations. Bjarni did many of the messenger tasks. They refurbished one old sled and had a copy made of it. They traded for walrus ropes, caribou hides, bear robes, and two men's weight of pemmican.

Bishop Arne arrived in the North Settlement in late fall of the year Bjarni turned seventeen. Bishop Arne preached eight Sundays. He preached twice in every Kirke. He visited with fifty-one families. Fast ice began to form. Styrk and Bjarni assembled the supplies at the house beside the Sandnes Kirke. Bjarni did not think much about kirke matters especially when Arnora, with a smile, brought them food. He had not seen Arnora for two years. They lived two rowing sleeps or three walking sleeps apart. They went to different Kirkes. He had thought about visiting but he was always hunting. Besides he was younger when they met. He had not been sure of himself then.

But now when Arnora smiled, he still felt upsetting emotions. Maybe he still was not sure of himself.

In the middle of the second to last moon of the year, the twelve men gathered to eat the departing meal. For men departing from Merica the last feast was a time to eat all they could. Their motto in Merica was, "leave nothing behind." A man could walk to Greenland in a half a moon's time without eating. A few did. No hunter in Merica walked away from the last sure meal without feeling stuffed.

The people of Greenland, on the other hand, had just been through seven years of freezing hell without a promise of food for tomorrow. They had become accustomed to eating just enough to live through the night and to save all they could for tomorrow.

So even for the last night before the hunters went on the trail, the Greenland skimp-and-save thinking overwhelmed the "leave nothing behind" tradition. The meal was more like a mass than the feasts Styrk, Hallgrim, and Tjalve had eaten

in Merica. But the whole purpose of the journey was to provide as much food as possible for the Greenland families. Food left behind was food truly provided. Bishop Arne was going along for the ride.

Bjarni drew a sleeping slot. As he settled down before the sleds started, he looked around the assembled crowd. Arnora was holding a lamp. There were tears on her cheeks. He waved, sort of, to the crowd in general. She touched her lips and then extended her hand toward him. It was the first kiss he ever saw that was meant for him. He pulled the robes shut. He knew he would have to get used to the sway of the sled and noise of the trail before he could sleep. He did not expect to sleep anyway.

Some hunters said it was the Bishop's blessing. Others said it was the wisdom of the old sailor. Some said it was Styrk's path finding. Even others said it was the many young men in the harnesses. A few said smooth ice might have been a factor. Whichever reason you chose the westbound crossing went so swiftly that they used only half their ration.

By the middle of the last moon of the year, Bjarni aged seventeen, Styrk, and Bishop Arne sat with Hallgrim and Tjalve in Merica. They and an older hunter were camped with the Tunit in flimsy shelters on the stone floors at Payne Lake. Everyone was cozy inside his own walking-house. Styrk and the older hunter had been to Eastman Land during the winter before. That winter the Tunit had encouraged them to walk to Eastman on the Hudson Bay ice before the spring blizzards hit. The Tunit repeated the advice. This time the Tunit were so impressed with Bishop Arne and his black robes that they offered to guide them across the peninsula to the Hudson Bay ice.

A half moon's time later on the east side of James Bay opposite the North Twin, Bjarni, Hallgrim, Tjalve, and the older hunter were striding along easily pulling the two sleeping in the sled when Hallgrim said, "I see black spots moving on the ice. They look like men."

The older hunter said, "Keep walking as the friends we are." The two groups continued toward each other. The other men spread into a semi-circle. The hunter watched for a signal. Finally one of the bigger men right in front of the sled raised his hand. The older hunter said, "Stop." The sled stopped.

From beneath the sleeping robes, Bishop Arne asked, "What's happening?"

Bjarni said, "You might as well get up, Arni. We have visitors."

Bishop Arne threw the robes open. His feet straddled Styrk, so he rolled up and lunged to come to a standing position. His arms went up, spreading wide, before lowering to his side. Then the robe closed as if a big bird came to rest.

The reaction was as swift as alert hunters can make. Crossbows with arrows in place came up. Spears were poised. Then a man carrying no weapons dashed forward hollering, "Kicholen, K'nistenaux, Kicholen, K'nistenaux!"

The men in the semi-circle hesitated for a moment. Then the weapons came down and a shout came out.

"What is he saying?" asked Bishop Arne as the hollering man reached up to help him down.

By now Styk was on his knees in the sled. He answered, "He is saying 'Big Raven, Christians.' They are the Christians."

"Am I the Big Raven?" Bishop Arne asked as he surveyed the awe in the faces of the men crowding around the sled. He answered his own question. "One name is as good as another as long as people listen." He spread his "wings" and fluttered from the sled into the arms of the shaman who gave him a strong hug. Big Raven's hug was just as strong.



Bjarni was busy the rest of that winter. He learned the hunting language and snatches of the women talk. He traveled often with Arne who was welcomed as the Big Raven in every village.

One evening in the early half of the moon of the snow crust, Styk and Bjarni were nearly asleep when Arne returned. Arne stirred up the fire. He rustled something in the bag he was always carrying. Then he slipped into his sleeping robe. Bjarni wondered, "Why would Arne stir up a fire to go to sleep?" As he lay there he could hear Styk's light snore and a strange rustling sound from Arne's robes.

Bjarni's mind had nearly given in to sleep when he heard Arne say "Ah!"

Bjarni asked, "Did you find something?"

Arne said with excitement in his voice, "Yes, I did. You know why they call me the Big Raven? Because another Big Raven was here about six generations ago."

Bjarni said, "I listen to their stories."

Arne asked, "Do you know what they call the sun?"

"'Gee Hiz' or something like that."

Arne replied, "It is 'Jesus.'"

Bjarni scoffed, "Oh, come on. Why would they call the sun, 'Jesus'?"

"Because the first Big Raven taught them."

"What do you mean by that?"

Arne was on his knees now beside Bjarni's bench. He said:

When I was taking lessons to be a monk, I copied my personal text of the New Testament. I thought I remembered somewhere that Jesus said 'I am the light of the world.' Here it is John 8, verse 12, 'Again Jesus spoke to them saying. I am the light of the world...' The first Big Raven taught them that verse.<sup>16</sup> ~

"And they believe the verse says the sun is Jesus." Bjarni said, "The sun is really only the light of the world. You have your work cut out to change their belief."

"I am not even going to try," replied Arne. "How many times have you remembered Jesus is the light of the world?"

Bjarni snuggled down into his robe but still replied, "I see what you mean. From now on whenever I look at the sun, I will remember their word, 'Gee Hiz' and I will remember 'Jesus is the light of the world.'"



"It's cutting time," said the old hunter:

There is a gang of hunters going north in a few sleeps. I want to join them. If we go north we can still walk home with the last loads of pemmican this spring. I have family. This year is even colder than last year. They will need all the pemmican we can drag.

"I know Greenland is my charge," replied Big Raven:

But there are more Christians here than there. I keep hearing about the blond people to the west. I want to visit them. My priests can get along without me. They did before I came.

Big Raven paused to think. Then he continued:

---

<sup>16</sup> Light



I have been thinking. If we take canoes west along the shoreline when the tide is high, we will get to the blond people. We could spend the summer with them. Then we can canoe back next fall to visit these people one last time. Some of the Norse hunters in Eastman Land say they wait until the fast ice gets solid in the fall before they start north to Merica. We can go with them. Then we can walk back to Greenland with the last load of pemmican in the next spring.

Styrk, Bjarni, Hallgrim, and Tjalve glanced at one another. Styrk and Hallgrim nodded to Bjarni to be spokesman. Bjarni said:

The hunters here tell us there are other types of strange animals west of here. There is one with a massive head and big shoulders. Its hide makes a very good robe. There are brown, not white, bears and smaller caribou-like creatures. Their hide makes excellent clothes especially mittens and moccasins. If we go west by canoe and then up the Geysavann River on the other side of the bay, we might be able to get far enough west to see some of these animals. But we may not be able to get back to you, Arne, in time for the return to Eastman Land this fall.

Big Raven said:

I have had many offers for guides. I am comfortable that their guides can bring me back here to Eastman Land. I will have them bring me back here by canoe in the moon of wild rice. Then I can spend a few more moons' time with these people. I understand Norse hunters going north after the freezing moon sometimes meet people coming from the blond area on the ice. They meet on this shore opposite the North Twin Island. We could plan to meet there. If we miss we could wait for each other at the Tunit village or at the open-water marvels.

Hallgrim summed it up: "Two canoes, a guide plus four paddlers, the four of us paddling, and we are off."

To the old hunter Bjarni said, "Good luck on the walk home. We want to send messages to Greenland. We will carve runes into bark and give you a short saying to remember."



The summer sun beat down mercilessly. Bjarni had never felt heat like that under a buffalo robe with the August sun beating down. Sweat was dripping from his nose. He, Styrrk, and a local guide were sliding their buffalo hides forward. They crawled one at a time with minimum motion and less noise. They were nearly to the spot the guide said they should reach. When they reached the spot they would be one-fourth of an easy spear throw away from the large cow. The guide had said, "We will stand slowly. They do not see well, but they do see fast movement. Aim your spear for the base of the neck in front of the shoulders. If they start to move, aim for the middle of the body just behind the ribs. Throw very hard."

Bjarni heard a snuffle behind him. He had not heard it before. He raised the left side of his hide and looked back. He saw a small bull buffalo with his head lowered sniffing the matted grass where they had crawled.<sup>17</sup> The bull buffalo backed up snorting. The bull twisted his head side to side, stirring up turf with each horn. Then the bull turned toward them and walked faster. The bull began to trot. He was headed right at them!

Bjarni yelled, "Move away!"

He came to his hands and knees raising the buffalo robe. Trying to look like a small calf, he walked away from Styrrk and the guide. The bull changed direction and charged toward him. Bjarni poised to leap. He watched the bull cover the distance between them. When he dared not wait any longer, Bjarni leapt out of the buffalo's path. His forward foot tangled into a prickly vine. Bjarni hit the earth, stretched out, as the bull lumbered by. He felt a sharp pain in his right leg. The bull had stepped on the calf of his leg.

As he lay on the earth, Bjarni heard a thunderous sound begin. The thunder increased then slowly receded. When he again stood on his feet trying to mask the pain he felt in his right leg, all Bjarni could see was a hazy cloud of dust slowly drifting downwind.

The guide had said it was a small herd of only fifty or sixty head. But the Norse hunters had never seen so many animals, except caribou, eating so much grass. Now they were gone. Only the grass, so much grass, remained.

A baby bull buffalo had been trampled but was still kicking. Bjarni was first to catch sight of the movement. He was also closest to the only animal left behind.

---

<sup>17</sup> Buffalo

Bjarni, trying to walk without limping, went slowly over to the baby bull. The pain in the right leg was intense, but he stepped through it. He saw that the animal had a broken back. He used his big spear to quickly end the baby bull's life.

That night the men of the village crowded into the sakhim's wigwam to eat the buffalo meat. A chorus of men pointing at Bjarni and chanting in unison, "Big spear," greeted each new face through the door, "Little bull. Big spear. Little bull."

After the meat was gone and the hilarity reduced, the hunting guide waited for a period of relative silence. Then he stood. The crowd quieted. They expected more juicy comments. The guide spoke, "You could have been feasting tonight because of my death. I did not hear the bull behind us. Bjarni did. I did not rise to be a decoy. Bjarni did. Yes, Bjarni carried a big spear. He carried a bigger heart."

Three sleeps later the Norse and their guides walked out of camp. They were going to find the lakes emptying into rivers going northeast. Coming and going was the lifestyle of a hunting village. The men of the village had already gone hunting without saying goodbye. The women were watching the departing men from a discreet distance.

But the children, even the small girls, lined both sides of the path. They reached out to touch the Norse as they passed. Styrk was now wearing a wolf tail on his cap. The children called him "White wolf." Tjalve was wearing the tail of a beaver. They touched him and called his name "Black beaver." Hallgrim had two large feathers in his hair. He and a guide had netted the big bird making a dive for fish. The children touched him calling him "Blue-eyed eagle." They touched Bjarni as he passed along the path carrying the small buffalo robe. He heard, over and over, "Brave Little Bull."



## Vignette twelve

## The LEGGINGS

Maalan Aarum could hear the voices. They sounded as if they were coming through the woods from a long way off. He could not make out the words, but above the hiss of the wind he thought he could hear Azon, Pitolo, and another familiar voice.

He tried to open his eyes. A glimmer of light came through the slit. Then he slowly made out the image of his friend the medicine man smiling at him. The medicine man said, "Hello, Maalan. I trust you have had a good rest this morning."

Maalan Aarum whispered, "How late in the day is it?"

The medicine man said, "Gee Hiz has passed the high point and is starting to descend."

Maalan rolled his head to the right. He saw Azon kneeling and, behind him, Pitolo. Maalan Aarum whispered, "We have a story to talk about before the sun goes down."

Azon picked up his grandfather's right hand and replied, "We have more time. The Big House leader says Pitolo and I can come as late as the middle of the night."

The medicine man lifted Maalan Aarum's head toward a ladle and said, "Maalan, I suggest you drink a lot of bji as soon as you can. Wait a long while before you try to talk."

Maalan Aarum swallowed two sips of the bji. The medicine man lowered Maalan's head. Maalan asked, "What happened?"

Azon answered, "Grandfather, you fainted as you were coming back to the spot near us. We caught you and lowered you to the ground. Father carried you here on his back."

The medicine man continued, "I could tell that you were still alive so I told everyone to just let you rest until you woke naturally."

Maalan Aarum looked at Azon again. He whispered, "I thought the story was going well. Did I make it to the end?"

Azon answered, "Yes, grandfather. The buffalo robe you used at the end pleased everybody."

"The young hunters on their quest brought that for me just this summer."

Pitolo moved up beside Azon. He said, "Maalan Aarum, many people in my village had not heard that story before. They thought it was the best story telling they had ever heard."

Azon smiled and added, "Many of the people of our village who have heard the story several times told me that last night was the best version they had ever heard."

Maalan Aarum lay prone on his back with a satisfied smile on his face. The medicine man said, "Enough. I have a sick man on my hands. You boys please get out of here until past middle afternoon. If I know Maalan, he should be able to talk by then."

Azon and Pitolo left the tepee.



Pitolo led Azon to the grassy spot on the bank. There were no maidens in sight in any direction. They ate the dried venison they took from the drying racks. Then they, too, stretched out to nap.

Gee Hiz was more than half way down when Pitolo felt the small pinecone hit his side. He swung his arm defensively and rolled to meet an attack. He rolled onto a bundle of deer hide. He yelled, "Hey, what is going on?" He scanned the area and beyond. The young men in the visible area were engaged in their activities and ignoring him. There were no maidens in sight.

Azon sat upright and looked at Pitolo. Azon said, "I think the bundle is leggings rolled up."

Pitolo began to undo the bundle. He replied, "You are right. You have a bundle too. Why would anyone want to give us a set of leggings?"

Azon was also undoing his bundle. He said, "Maybe someone was tired of looking at your skin through the hole in the seat of your old leggings. There are no women around right now. Let us slip them on."

Pitolo slid out of his old leggings, and slipped on the new. Then he stood to admire the leggings. They were not the simple leggings his mother used to make for him. These new leggings had a design of lines, triangles, and circles. Pitolo ran his hands down his leg and noted the length of the leggings were just right. The left legging ended with a snug feel just below the stub of his leg. He asked, "Did your sister do this? If she did, why?"

"Maybe because grandfather told her that aarum-tids need to be well dressed," answered Azon.

Pitolo said:

I was thinking of that. She is more interested in how the aarum-tid looks than who he is. Since I lost my foot, maidens seem to only pity me. I would rather have a maiden proud of me, than to pity me because of my tattered buckskins. Did you see those proud maidens carry the feather to the young men who finished telling of their quest last night?

Pitolo was rolling up his old leggings as he continued:

I miss the chance to be similar to everybody else. I yearn to go on a quest, to have a special maiden, to have her be proud, to have her carry the feather to me, to think of marriage, and children. But here I am, a boy with a missing foot and I mess up on the first chance I get to be an aarum-tid.

Azon had tied up his bundle and was walking toward the path when he heard Pitolo's last utterance. He swung around saying, "What are you talking about?"

Pitolo said, "I could see it in Maalan Aarum's eyes. Something was troubling him when I finished my story."

Azon said with conviction:

I do not believe you. I thought you told a great story. I was able to tell my story only because you made talking in the Big House look so easy. We have been together for so many days that I thought, 'If Pitolo can tell a story that well, I should be able to tell a story somehow.' I will ask grandfather. I do not think you messed up.



Maalan Aarum was sitting cross-legged with his back against the backrest. Azon refilled the ladle with bji. He and Pitolo moved into position in front of Maalan Aarum.

Azon started to speak before he was completely seated. He said, "Grandfather, Pitolo said that last night your eyes were troubled when he finished his story. If you were troubled, please tell us how to fix the troublesome behavior?"

Grandfather's head snapped up to look Azon in the eyes. Grandfather blinked several times as if he were trying to recall the situation. Then he smiled and looked at Pitolo.

Maalan Aarum said:

“Pitolo you are a keen observer but smart men, similar to you, often make the wrong interpretations of their observations. What you saw was moistness in my eyes caused by an overwhelming relief.

“Ever since I fell down the bank, I have been worried that I could not finish the migration engravings. Even more worrisome has been my concern that I did not have time to develop a dynamic aarum-tid that can make people forget me. Azon, you will be a very good aarum-tid, but you think too much. Your many thoughts make it difficult for you to start a story correctly. You will be a better storyteller as you get experience.

“Last night I chose Pitolo to start the stories on a hope that he could be a dynamic story teller. He started the story like a great storyteller would. Because Pitolo started so well, you, Azon, could follow on in a relaxed mode, and I still had an audience eager to hear more stories when I started my story.

“Now I think that at the end of the Big House celebration the village people may forget me. That will be great. The moistness you, Pitolo, saw in my eyes was from joy of the overwhelming relief.

“So Pitolo keep observing, but do not act or think too much until you have asked the right questions.”

Azon and Pitolo exchanged glances. Pitolo nodded to Azon to confirm that Azon’s evaluation was correct.

Maalan Aarum picked up the stick and said, “I hope my fainting has not caused you to forget about the verse.”

Azon said, “Yes, in fact, I did not spend much time thinking about the engraving. But I thought the verse should be something similar to:

*Bishop Arne  
Bjarni and Styrk  
Left their cares behind  
And went to Eastman Land.*

Grandfather said, “There are three faces and you have used three important names. But the saying is not useful for aarum-tids serving other Leni Lenape villages. Pitolo what do you have?”

Pitolo said:



I noticed the three heads had no faces. They could be anybody. They could be everybody. I also thought the lines under the heads could mean the heads went in different directions. The going in different directions is similar to the end of the story last night. So I said:

*Those from the north  
Being free, without cares,  
Went forth from the land of snow  
In different directions.*

Maalan Aarum said:

“This time I will choose Pilolo’s verse. It fits well with the engraved stick, with the story of Bjarni as a young man and with the stories of many Leni Lenape.

“Now we must think about making engraved sticks for the rest of the rich land and migration stories. I want each of you to make an engraved stick for the next story. Then after I tell the story I want both of you to make a verse. I will choose the best engraved stick, and then later I will choose the best verse to go with the engraving.

“The story today will be about our ancestor, Talerman, again, but also about how all the Leni Lenape kept going to the open water marvels to get food. In the past I have tried to make engravings of an open-water marvel, but I threw all my attempts away. I would like you both to try to make an engraving of the open-water marvels.”

Pitolo asked, “Can you tell us more about how the open-water marvels looked?”

Maalan Aarum said:

The old sailor who drew the ‘many animals’ engraving told me that the ice was all jumbled up around the edges. They called it ‘pack ice’. Maybe it was packed together. The old sailor said unfrozen water would flow in and then was sucked out again twice in one sleep. The unfrozen water attracted fish, animals and birds.

Azon said, “All water attracts fish, animals and birds. Were there any special animals or birds attracted to the open water marvels?”

Maalan Aarum closed his eyes. He put his right fingers to his forehead. He appeared to be thinking. Finally he said, "The old sailor said the geese swarmed around the open water marvels in the spring and the fall because the sea was covered with ice longer than usual. He also said the white bears gathered around the open water marvels through the fall, winter, and spring because the rest of the sea was frozen."

Pitolo responded, "We see bears near water all the time."

"That is what I said, but the old sailor said the gathering of the bears looked similar to a gathering of caribou in a big herd. Normally the white bear prefers to hunt in small groups," replied Maalan Aarum.

Pitolo asked, "I assume the white bears are similar to brown bears but their coat is white?"

Maalan Aarum said:

You are correct. My understanding is that white bears are also bigger than brown bears. We do not have time to waste today. I am going to tell you how 'Brave Little Bull' changed his name to 'Bold Bjarni' and became a young wise one. Tonight you will have to tell that story in the Big House without me being there. I will speak softly or my voice may not last, so listen closely.



**Engraved Stick 3:11**

*Those from the north  
Being free, without cares,  
Went forth from the land of snow  
In different directions.*

## FACTUAL FICTION

## AKPATOK BIRDS

The modern European name for Akpatok birds is "guillemot." Variations of "Akpatok" word are still used among the Inuit. Most native peoples named most birds by imitating their call. A reasonable guess is that the Akpatok bird has a call similar to the name. The birds live in holes in cliffs, including those on Akpatok Island. They sit upright on their feet and short tail. They can float like ducks or fly directly into water and continue to "fly" to catch their prey.

Whole Akpatok birds fermented in a sealskin sack are a delicacy among Inuit. (Maurie, 1982) **(Return to Akpatok place)**

## ARTIFACTS

The Sandnes area in Greenland is the site of four historical objects from America. Those objects are 1) an arrowhead, 2) a piece of coal (Ingstad, 1966, p. 163–4), 3) hair from a brown bear, and 4) hair from a buffalo. (Fitzhugh/Ward, 2000)

The arrowhead is quartzite and has a shape unlike any found from any Greenland Norse or Inuit artifacts. It is considered to be a North American arrowhead.

The lump of coal was found at a low level under the floor of a house. The coal is anthracite. Greenland has nothing but lignite coal. The nearest anthracite coal site is in the place called Akonsee in the story, modern day Rhode Island.

Hairs from two American animals, the brown bear and the buffalo, were found in weaving remains. The recent excavation report postulates that the hairs came from Siberia. (Fitzhugh/Ward, 2000)

**(Return to Artifacts place)**

## BISHOP ARNE

Bishop (Big Raven) Arne is a historical man. He came to Greenland in 1315. By 1343 Archbishop Pal, in Norway, thought Bishop Arne was dead. So he named Bishop Jon Eriksson to replace Bishop Arne. Bishop Jon did not leave Norway.

Bishop Arne's final "death" was reported to have happened in 1348. Because Ivar Bardsson continued to serve as the Church's agent in Greenland until 1363, the location of Bishop Arni's "death" may have been beyond Greenland. (Ingstad, 1966, p. 200)

The personality, thoughts, and detailed actions of Bishop Arne in the story are fictional. **(Return to Bishop Arne place)**

## BUFFALO

O'Meara quoted Alexander Henry the Younger's journal (c. 1810), who wrote: "Sometimes the whole herd [of buffalo] would range along the route [of even a single person who had walked in the grass] until one of them would be hardy enough to jump over." (O'Meara, 1960)  
**(Return to Buffalo place)**

## CHESS

Norse men played chess to pass the time, to make decisions, or to choose people. They played other games also, but the evidence of chess pieces left throughout the Arctic implies chess was the mental contest of choice. (Ingstad, 1966) **(Return to Chess place)**

## COURT FARMS

At the time of Ivar Bardsson, from 1341 to 1363, there were two court farms in Greenland. The court farms were named Foss and Tjodhildstat. These court farms were for the use of the King of Norway and his agents during their stay in Greenland. (Ingstad, 1966)  
**(Return to Court Farms place)**

## FOOD

The diet of most Greenland farmhouses was over ninety percent fish, seal, and walrus. They ate two percent of their diet as caribou. The other eight-percent came from the domestic livestock. The more powerful landowners, who also owned the biggest boats, ate forty percent of their diet from fish, seal, and walrus. Caribou was forty percent of their diet. The powerful landowners may have received the larger share of the caribou as payment for shipping space on the boats.

Ingstad wrote about the milk products on a Greenland farm. (Ingstad, 1966)

Malaurie wrote in detail about processing seal (by Eskimos). (Malaurie, 1982) **(Return to Food place)**

## ICE RIDDLE

The ocean between Greenland and Ungava Bay often behaves inversely to the overall temperature. As the climatic temperature rises, more icebergs flow down the Labrador Current, causing the water to be cooler, prolonging the winter's pack ice. When the temperature lowers for many moons or up to years, fewer icebergs ride the Labrador Current. Without the icebergs, the melting of the pack ice occurs sooner. As the pack ice loosens, the dynamic flushing of Ungava Bay by the surging tide clears the surface water sooner in the year.

Arms details the Davis Strait climate inversion. The warmer the weather, the more icebergs move into Davis Strait. The more icebergs in Davis Strait, the colder the water is in Davis Strait. The colder the water, the slower the pack ice melts during the summer. So, warm weather in Davis Strait means the pack ice will linger longer into summer. (Arms, 1998) **(Return to Ice Riddle place)**

## ICE RIVER

Kangia, the Ice River, has a flow rate of the ice up to twenty meters per day, every day. Kangia is responsible for fifteen to twenty-five percent of the icebergs from west Greenland. A rock sill at the threshold of the ten-kilometer mouth of the Ice River interrupts the flow of ice into Davis Strait for periods up to two weeks. When the pressure builds up enough to force the ice into Davis Strait it moves with explosive energy at random times. (Arms, 1998 p. 139–44) **(Return to Ice River place)**

## ICEBERGS

Pack ice is ice that has frozen on the surface of the ocean for less than a year. Individual floes of pack ice are stronger and harder than freshwater ice. The greatest danger for men on thin pack ice is sinking rather than breaking. Pack ice is loose and moves with the wind. Large floes of pack ice are rarely solid for long distances, especially in a region where tides are active and icebergs plow through.

An iceberg, with ninety percent of the mass below the surface, moves with the current. An iceberg can smash through pack ice, leaving a trail of open water behind. When the pack ice is frozen solid enough to walk on, the sea animals often cluster at the open-water areas near an iceberg. (Arms, 1998)

Arm describes the interaction of icebergs and pack ice in Davis Strait. The interaction was extended to extreme cold temperatures far as the data permitted. (Arms, 1998, p. 34–8) **(Return to Iceberg place)**

## LIGHT

Jesuit Lalemont wrote "Thus they [Algonquins] ... believe in the immortality of our [their] souls and, in fact, assure you that after death they will go to Heaven. They call the sun 'Jesus.'" (*JRAD* Vol. 1629)

The Ojibwa, the Lenape, and the Algonquins use various pronunciations of "Jesus" for their sun. (Bail, 2000) **(Return to Light place)**

## MEAT-EATER

The Arctic area, including the Ungava Peninsula, was also the home of the Dorset Eskimo. The small, brown-skinned Dorset Eskimo had lived in the region for centuries before Christ. The Dorset name came from the first site archaeologists investigated.

When the Big People came to Ungava Peninsula, the Dorset Eskimo were living in caves or dugouts. They survived by hunting seals and fishing. The Dorset Eskimos wisely collaborated with the Big People, but each group maintained their own culture.

In the story, "meat-eater" refers to the Dorset Eskimos living in the North America Arctic before the present-day Inuit arrived on the scene. The Inuit are a later race of people we know as the Eskimo.

**(Return to Meat-eater place)**

## PEMMICAN

Pemmican is dried meat with fat and fruit, nuts, or even green leaves added. The dried meat is pounded into a powder called "beat meat." Then the beat meat is mixed with fat using a ratio of five parts by weight of meat and four parts by weight of fat. Buffalo hunters mixed hard fat, or grease, with the softer fat found along the backbones, using a ratio of one part hard fat to one part soft fat. (O'Meara, 1960)

The people of Northeast American and, probably, Norse Greenland made pemmican from various meats, probably mostly caribou, and various fats. Seal blubber was probably used for the soft fat. The people of Northeast America, and perhaps Norse Greenland, also knew which berries or green plants would prevent scurvy and the correct amount to mix into a batch of meat and fat. The fruits, nuts, or correct green leaves added the needed vitamin C to prevent scurvy. (Coulter, 1993)

The meat-to-fat ratio is important to prevent protein poisoning.  
(McKinlay, 1976)

A pemmican survival ration is one pound per man per day. This is a survival ration for a short interval. One sled with six men crossing the ice

in fifteen days would need ninety pounds of pemmican. Doubling the ration, in case of trouble, would require 180 pounds, or a man's weight.

The Albans may have developed pemmican. *Erik's Saga* refers to a meat mixture of the "savages" that could have been pemmican. At the time the saga was written, the Norse did not use the word "pemmican."  
(Magnusson, 1966)

But an indication that the later Norse knew about pemmican is contained in the very word itself. (See word meaning.).  
**(Return to Pemmican place)**

## RAFTING

Rafting occurs when one ice floe is lifted over the adjacent floe. Then the lifted ice floe rides the "raft" created by the bottom floe. The ice floes may be several feet thick, so travelers have to expend energy and time getting up on top of the upper ice floe. The downward pressure created where the rafting floe does not support the upper floe may cause an unexpected break. (Arms, 1998) **(Return to Rafting place)**

## WALKING HOUSES

The Norse hunters who first visited Ungava Peninsula were astounded at the flimsy shelters used by the Tunit. When the first Norse hunters stayed through the winter, they could never get warm until a Tunit woman sewed warm clothes for her Norse man. The clothes of caribou hide consisted of two suits worn at the same time, one suit over the other. The inner suit had the fur facing inside toward the man. The outer suit had the fur facing out to the environment. Each suit consisted of boots, leggings up to the hips, and a parka extending from a hood at the face to an opening around the knees. The two suits, skin to skin, moved independently of the other.

Cold air does not rise up through the outer parka. But, air heated by the body and carrying moisture moves upward through the fur of the inner parka and leaves via the hood surrounding the face. The condensation of moisture returns heat to the face area. The Tunit had found that using wolverine fur to line the face opening of the parka would prevent the condensation from adhering to the fur around the face.



Then the Norse man realized why the Tunit were not concerned with good shelters. The double suit of caribou hides was similar to having a "walking house." The person's body heat was the "fire". The double suits of caribou hide were the "walls" keeping the warmth near the man. In a modern age we know now that the "walking houses" protected the person inside from outside temperatures as low as minus sixty (60) degrees Centigrade. During cold weather, the Norse walked and slept in their "walking houses."

Farley Mowat describes the caribou clothes in the *People of the Deer*, 1952 **(Return to Walking Houses place)**

## WHITE BEAR

During the Little Ice Age period, the Polar Bear of today was called just a "White Bear" The white bear is left handed also.

**.(Return to White Bears place)**

## WORD MEANING

### NOTE:

[Words can be viewed via the BOOKMARKS Click on the triangle in front of WORD MEANING. If the definition of a word is too long, point at the word and hold . A definition should appear. Other comments related to the word can be viewed in the list below.]

"Agn Fjord:" "Agne" is a verb meaning, "to bait." Maybe "Agn" meant, "fishing fjord."

"Arne" means, "eagle."

"Arnora" is "Arn" meaning, "eagle" and "or" from "Thor." The final "a" turns a man's name into a female name.

"Bjarni" is a nickname for several names starting or ending with "Björn," which means, "bear."

"Eskimo" is an Indian name for "eater of raw meat."

"Eyolf" is "Ey" meaning, "good luck" and "olf" meaning, "wolf."

"Gudrid" is "Gud" meaning "God" and "Frix" meaning "beautiful woman."

"Gunnbjörn" is "Gunn" meaning, "fight" and "björn" meaning "bear."

"Halldis" is "Hall" meaning, "flat stone" and "dis," which is the name of a lower female god. The name is often used for female priests.

"Hallgrim" is "hall" meaning, "flat stone" and "grim" meaning, "helmet." Perhaps meaning, "Strong as a stone."

"Ingolf" is "Inge", who is Njord's (a Norse god) son and "wolf."

"Ketil" means, "kettle" or "helmet." The nickname was often given to a warrior.

"Merica" derived from "Marrike", where "Mar" meant "Sea" and "rike" meant "lands." A map attributed to Bartholomew Columbus in 1492 has the whole of North America labeled as "Serica." "S" is five vocal changes away from "m" via normal transformations. (**Return to Merica place**)

"Pemmican" is derived from "by mykinn" meaning, "be soft."

."Pemiké" is derived from "by myjka" meaning, "to melt fat." Skimmed fat was used to make pemmican.

"Ranga Fjord:" "Rank" means, "straight." The Fjord is relatively straight as it goes inland from the sea.

"Snorre" means. "The quick, the restless, or the bold."

"Styrk" means, "help, power, strength."

"Tjalve" means, "The one who keeps things together."

"Thord" means the thunder god "Thor" and "peace, protection."

"Thorbjørn" means, "Thundergod-bear."

"Thjodhild" is "Thjod" meaning, "folk" and "hild" meaning, "struggle."