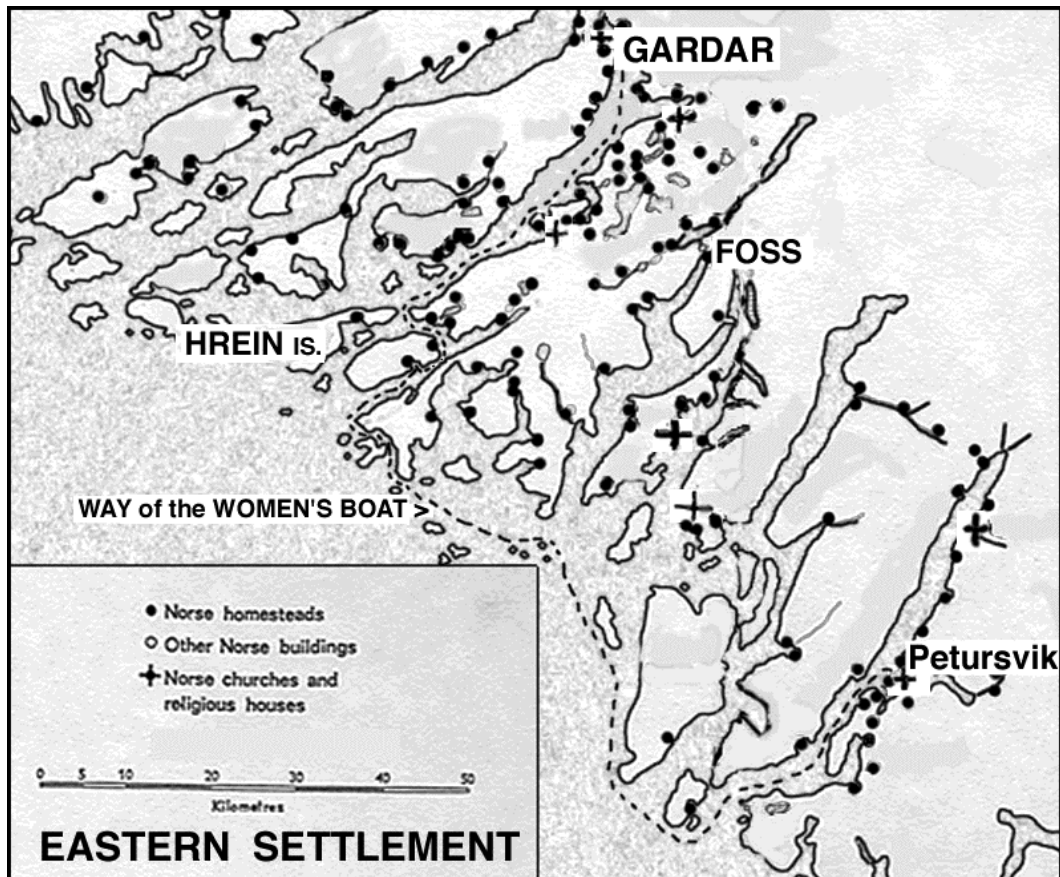


**STORIES**  
**of**  
**MAALAN AARUM**  
**c 1344, five or six days later**  
**THE BISHOP'S GAMBIT**



E. S. 3:17

## WAY of the WOMEN'S BOAT



The Women's boat carried Bishop Arne and Ketil from Gardar past Hrein Island to the kirkes in the southern section of the Eastern Settlement. Bishop Arne began to set up his gambit at the Petursvik kirke.

## THE BISHOP'S GAMBIT

Paafa Ketil swung his bare feet over the railing. He lowered himself gingerly onto the robes piled in the rear of the skin boat. He was seated facing forward. His bare feet found the first rib ahead of the robes. He hurried to pull on his fur boots. Then he looked up at the six fur-clad women with oars who turned to smile at him. He looked forward and shouted to ask Styk, "Will this thing really work?" Styk was sitting on robes at the other end of the boat facing backwards. Because Styk boarded first and took the less enjoyable seat, Ketil's respect of Styk increased.

Styk smiled and said, "The last one I rode did."

Paafa Ketil looked out at Iqquk, the meat-eater, and Bjørn in the one-man skinned boats and commented, "Those two men do not seem to think so."

Styk was still smiling. He said, "The women's boat's biggest trouble is high wind and waves. If they occur the men in the kayaks will lash to the front side of the boat where necessary to hold us into the water. Meanwhile they will be hunting and fishing to provide food."

Iqquk's wife in the left front rowing spot said a soft word. Then the women started to chant. They began pulling with rhythmic strokes. They straightened up with every pulling stroke. They steered as close to shore as possible to stay away from the opposing current pushing icebergs northward. They followed along the shores of bays, but cut across inlets of fjords.

Some old timers still insist the boat made the trip in four sleeps. Others insist the feat could not be possible. They say five, maybe, but not four sleeps. Still tales of the astonishing speed with which the Northern Settlement's decision became known in the Eastern Settlement was often repeated around boiling pots all over Greenland and Merica.

So four or five days after the Northern Settlement's decision, Bishop Arne looked out his open doorway into the morning light and saw Paafa Ketil racing up the path. Bishop Arne bowed his head with sadness because he thought Paafa Ketil was the spokesman for the people wanting to stay in Rangafjord. Paafa Ketil's excitement appeared to mean that the decision of the Northern Settlement was to stay in Rangafjord. Bishop Arne closed the door and sat down at the table with his head in his hands.

Paafa Ketil burst into the room with a shout, "We are going!" Bishop Arne had not expected those words. He sat numbed with blank eyes. Only when Paafa Ketil repeated "We are going!" did he leap to his feet and grab Paafa Ketil's arms. The two men grabbed each other's forearm and began to turn slowly in a circle laughing together.

"Who's going? Where?" Ivar Bardarsson's chilly voice cut through the air. Bishop Arne and Paafa Ketil backed away from each other.

"We are going, going..." Bishop Arne stammered.

Paafa Ketil caught the unspoken signals and said, "Falcon hunting. They have come to the rocks. They are only three days north by skin boat. Do you want to join us?"

Sir Ivar pointed at Paafa Ketil and snapped; "You address me as 'Your Eminence'. No! Men perish in those death traps. Bishop Arne should not go either."

As Bishop Arne bundled his clothes and nets together, he reminded His Eminence of the value the King and the Archbishop placed on white falcons.<sup>1</sup>~ Besides he had traveled in skin boats before. Perhaps the falcons were a blessing sent from God. His Eminence was uttering yet another argument when Bishop Arne pulled the outside door shut.

At the skin boat out of His Eminence's hearing they held a quick conference. Styrk would stay behind to round up the beaver-heads, the wood men and the stone masons from the eight kirkes in the Gardar region that had voted to walk the Frozen Trail. Bishop Arne would go with Paafa Ketil, to get a brief respite from His Eminence.

A little after midday the tide was running outbound. The boat leaving Einarsfjord seemed to be moving very rapidly along the shore. Ahead was Hrein Island at the southwestern end of the fjord. Bishop Arne shouted to Paafa Ketil, "Hrein Island is ahead."

Paafa Ketil twisted around to study the low blob of the island oozing out of the haze. He turned back to Bishop Arne and said in a loud voice, "We lived two fjords north of here. We were always skeptical of all the travelers that proudly said they 'Hrein-aa-byy'. Surely they did not mean they were proud to abide on that island even though its name means 'decent'?"

Bishop Arne shouted back,

"It is not the island. The whole fjord was named 'Hrein'. The Bishop's church is at the head of the fjord. The most powerful sakkyndig lives there. The *Althing* meets there. The ships from Norway trade along the shores of Hrein. So the major men of power in this region are in this fjord.

"Naturally everybody who can likes to say they 'Hrein-aa-byy'. The educated, like us, who must deal with Iceland or Norway use the name

---

<sup>1</sup> White falcons

'Greenland' in our writings to them, but the ordinary men who live in this fjord are proud to say they 'Hrein-aa-byy' to other people in Greenland and Akomen."

Paafa Ketil shouted back, "The fjord is called Einarsfjord."

Bishop Arne responded, "Over the years 'Hrein' changed into 'Einar'. I will explain later."

Just then Bjørn paddled along side the women's boat to shout "Which way?" A decision was needed. Bishop Arne shouted back, "Left, to the south. We are going to Petsurvik Kirke."

Paafa Ketil smiled because he already knew the answer, but he asked anyway, "What about – the falcons?"

Bishop Arne pointed to two nearly invisible specks flying north. "We found them, but we could not get close enough."

The families in the house near the sea on the island just south of Hrein Island were nearly overwhelmed to have Bishop Arne, Paafa Ketil and Bjørn as overnight guests. The six fur-clad women inverted their boat on the smooth earth of the boat pull-out area. They prepared fish from Iqquk's catch. They gladly accepted an offer of water from the farmhouse but, otherwise, they ate quietly and retired early.

In the earthen house Bishop Arne reassured the families that his haste to sleep and his desire to leave as the sky lightened was not a bad reflection on the cook's skill.

When the boat slid from the shore, as the dark sky grew paler, gift baskets of warm meat were stashed on the boat ribs between the rowers. That same night, a tired boat crew reached the Petsurvik Kirke as the chilling darkness fell.

During the next four days Bishop Arne visited all six southern kirkes, meeting with eleven groups. He met with the priests and as many of the people as they could get together in midweek. The kernel of his message was, "I know you decided to stay in Greenland. I will pray for your good fortune and good weather. I am here to ask your help for the people of the North and those of the Eastern Settlement who have chosen to leave.

"As you know His Eminence, Ivar Bardarsson, is at Gardar listing kirke property. He is supposed to list kirke property in the Western Settlement also. But he does not know where the Western Settlement is."

At that statement the groups usually snickered or laughed outright. Bishop Arne had to repeat many times that he was serious. His Eminence, Ivar Bardarsson, really did not know where the Western Settlement was. His

Eminence believed the Western Settlement could be reached by sailing along the Greenland coast.

Then Bishop Arne continued:

"All he has been told is that the Western settlement is six to eight days sailing to the west. I regret that we in the Eastern Settlement are afflicted with His Eminence. The Western Settlement in Akoman has done very little to aid us. Our western friends have been distant, but they have not been bad neighbors. Pirates may not have ravaged our shores because the richer lands are in the Western Settlement in Akoman.

"Also, many of our Northern Settlement people will soon be in Akoman. If His Eminence goes to the Western Settlement he will continue his thorough listing similar to his efforts here. His Eminence tells me that as soon as his registration is complete, he will ask for soldiers from Norway to enforce the collection of the Kings fees. Then the big kirke in Rome will also collect its tithe from our kirkes plus an additional levy for the crusades. These cold years may benefit us. The cold hampers the ships bringing demands from the leaders in Europe.

"Meanwhile, I do not want His Eminence to find out where the Western Settlement really is. Also I do not want him to know where the people leaving Greenland are really going."

At this point in the discussions, one of the leading men would usually ask, "Other than keeping our mouths closed, what do you want us to do?"

Bishop Arne would smile and say:

Keeping your mouths closed is a good first step. I know you all are good at that. I have been thinking. His Eminence knows only that the Western Settlement is six to eight days sailing days away. I, too, have been able to keep my mouth shut. So he does not know about the Northern Settlement. If all goes well, there will be no one in the Northern Settlement after fifteen moon's time from now. It takes six days to row to the Northern Settlement.

Many of the men in the audiences were good chess players. In every group, one or two faces showed immediate recognition of Bishop Arne's gambit. Someone usually asked, "You want us to keep quiet until the people in the Northern Settlement leave? Then you want His Eminence to visit the Northern

Settlement and find no one there. But you also want him to think he has seen the Western Settlement?"

The crowds murmured. Smiles flickered on faces. Heads nodded. Paafa Ketil insisted, later, that eyes sparkled with the same gleams of expectation seen in the eyes of cunning chess players.

Bishop Arne waited for a pause in the murmuring and then continued:

"The longer we keep His Eminence from returning to Norway, the longer we all avoid paying the penalty of having him here. If he thinks that he lost the people of the Western Settlement, he may find reasons, himself, to stay longer in Greenland.

"His Eminence has shown us other ways to slow his return. For one thing, he is very proud of his role to serve two of the most powerful men on earth, the Norway King and the Popa. He expects you to treat him as the third most powerful man on earth. If you say 'Mister, Ivar', he will scold you. If you do not immediately respond correctly, he will insist that your sakkyndig punish you. A sakkyndig can use up hours hearing both sides of the accusation. A creative sakkyndig can take days.

"His Eminence is persistent and finicky. Two farms shared rocky land between their pastures. His Eminence listed the rocky land for the first farm. He would not accept the tradition that the rocky land was used by all. The first farmer said 'No, none of the rocky land is mine'. The sakkyndig ruled in favor of the farmer. So His Eminence listed the rocky land for the second farm. Once more the sakkyndig had to hold a meeting. His Eminence insisted someone owned the rocky land, but neither farmer wanted to pay taxes for the rocks. Finally, after much haggling, each farmer was listed as owner of one half the rocky land. The time for His Eminence to list a pile of rocks stretched over four sleeps. The event is not finished. Not listing rocks will be an item at next year's *Althing*."

The sakkyndigs and the leading men nodded their heads. One old wise sakkyndig's words were repeated often in every kirke in the months to come. "We will treat His Eminence with respect. But we will politely disagree with details in his lists. The longer he takes to finish his lists, the less likely his lists will cause us to pay the Kings fee."

Then Bishop Arne always asked for a favor:

Now, I will suggest that His Eminence start listing property at the southern tip of Greenland. When he comes here, make him feel at home

for as long as you can stand him. If he asks, 'Where is the Western Settlement?' face out to sea but hold your right arm up, pointing along the shore. Nod your head and tell him the Western Settlement is six to eight days by boat in 'that' direction.

Then Bishop Arne said a parting prayer. As they left the meeting houses Paafa Ketil saw gleams in some eyes and a smile on many faces.

Eight days after he had left, Bishop Arne returned to His Eminence with several freshly killed geese but no falcons. For two days he listened to His Eminence rant about the foolish "waste of time". During those two days Bishop Arne let other verbal abuse go by without making a response.

On the evening of the third day, His Eminence and Bishop Arne sat before the boiling pot after they had eaten one of Bishop Arne's best soups. Both men felt the chill. His Eminence remarked "I feel as chilled as if a farmer was watching me count cattle."

Bishop Arne responded with, "I did not find the houses at the King's court farms at Foss to be better than mine, but they are located in the warmer region to the southeast."

His Eminence sat upright. "The King has a farm here? Why have you been keeping the secret from me?"

Bishop Arne replied, "I have not. I thought you were here for kirke business. I am not interested in the King's tax nor his property."

His Eminence shouted, "I am! You thick skull! I am the King's ombudsman. If I were located on a King's farm, I could employ a decent housekeeper and a good cook."

Bishop Arne was, by now, accustomed to repeated insults. He said with a smile, "If you went to Foss you would be closer to the tip of Greenland. Then you could list the kirkes from the tip of Greenland in the southeast all the way to the Western Settlement. You could do a very complete job."

His Eminence became aroused. He wanted to know how soon a seaworthy boat could be arranged. Bishop Arne said there was a boat just now going to the Northern Settlement, and that he would go down, right away, to arrange for it to carry His Eminence to Foss. If the Captain hurried the crew, the boat could be back before a moon's time to make the trip southeast before the final freeze up.

His Eminence's eyes sparkled with delight. He said, "Finally, we are getting somewhere."





The knarr was loaded with people. Besides eight stone workers and eight wood men, there were eight beaver-heads on board. Knarrs were used primarily for cargo hauling. They had a big sail. They had enclosed cabins fore and aft. Usually they had eight oars, four at each end, but other oars could be used if needed. This knarr was smaller than an ocean-crossing knarr. Its primary function was to haul cargo between the Eastern Settlement and the Northern Settlement. On this trip the passengers would take turns manning the extra oars.

While the crew was preparing to shove off, the beaver-heads in the rear of the knarr were watching with amusement as six fur-clad women carried the skin boat to the water's edge and loaded it. A meat-eater man was preparing two kayaks. Then at the top of the boat pull-out, Paafa Ketil, Styrk, and Bjørn said good byes to Bishop Arne. They walked toward the skin boat.

One of the beaver-heads shouted, "Styrk, are you out of your mind? We have enough room for all of you. Join us."

Styrk looked at Paafa Ketil. He detected a slight shake of the head and a smile. Styrk shouted back to the knarr, "I promised Paafa Ketil I would always be by his side on this trip."

Then Paafa Ketil cupped his hands to shout, "I made a solemn vow to these people so they would bring us here. If I leave them without a Norse spokesman, something bad could happen to them. I must go with them".

The crew of the knarr made the push to launch. The beaver-head shouted back, "Good luck Styrk. I hope your swim is short." More good-natured insults were hurled from the knarr and many in the crowded knarr enjoyed a good laugh.

The knarr crew swung the bow to head the boat down the fjord. The sail filled limply. All sixteen oars were out. The knarr began to move down the fjord.

With bare legs the women had finished loading their boat in the water. They climbed in, two at a time, on opposite sides of the boat. They slipped on boots. As the last two boarded, the others held the boat in position by the oars. The small sail was lowered. It hung limply. Paafa Ketil and Styrk, also with bare legs, walked quickly to the front and rear of the boat. They swung themselves in at the same time. Iqquk barked a command. The boat began to follow the knarr.

Paafa Ketil slipping on his boots asked, "What did he say?"

Styrk responded, "I think he said, 'slowly'. See. The women are not raising all the way straight."

The parade of knarr, skin boat, and kayaks angled toward the center of the fjord. The hooting and hallooing from the beaver-heads at the rear of the knarr continued without letup. A puff of air snapped both sails taut. The beaver-heads felt the surge forward and waved goodbye with jeering laughter.

Iqquk barked "Steady". The women's song increased in beat. They straightened up and pulled back with every stroke. As the skin boat pulled beside the knarr, Paafa Ketil said, "Ah, now let us wave goodbye to them."

Styrk replied, "I think it would be wiser if we did not. In a moon's time I will be on the ice with those men. Any extra resentment could be troublesome. You will get enough enjoyment retelling the story of this trip all winter."

The woman's boat pulled ahead and then, sooner than the beaver-heads on the knarr would ever admit, out of sight.



Halldis was thankful for the extra two days she and Styrk had together before the knarr with beaver-heads arrived at Lysefjord. The feast at the Sandnes kirke to welcome the beaver heads, the stone masons and wood men from the south was also enjoyed by many people of the Northern Settlement who rowed through icy waters for the festivities. Then began days of instruction about sled building, measuring rations, preparing warm fur robes, and hunting the water veins in the ice for seal.

All too soon the moon had completed one cycle. For over seven sleeps the ice along the shore had been firm enough for walking. The air was cold enough to make Styrk and Hallgrim believe that the sea ice would soon be frozen enough to walk upon.

Then the dawn of the day to go came clear and cold. At the first pale light the twenty-four men from the south shouldered their packs. They pulled four sleds onto the ice and down Ameragdla Fjord in the direction of Lysefjord. They would keep walking west to Merica.

The men from the four north kirkes, including Talerman, Styrk, Hallgrim, and Tjalve, stood next to their families until the pack of sleds ahead were small dots in the distance. Although these were tough men, who were used to hunger, blood, numbing cold and death, more than a few had moisture in their eyes as their own sleds pulled away.

Their walk on the ice to Merica was difficult. They climbed more pressure ridges than usual. The icebergs from the river of ice stalked them. They walked

for nearly two moons' time. As Styrk said, "We walked one day. Then we climbed over ice the next day." Later around the boiling pots inside the low stone walls in Merica, the hunters told each other stories of open water, long detours, long waits for the ice to freeze, and other harrowing adventures.

But even the new men had no problem seeing the tall stone beacons on the Ungava coast. When they approached the north open water marvel Hallgrim used his Kimal to determine that they were a half notch north of their target, so they turned left and walked south along the open water marvel until they found the beacons for Pamiok Island. They followed the solid ice inland to the cluster of low walls.

They had walked on the ice because it was much faster than struggling along on the land. But they did have to be alert for the blowholes and thin, jumbled ice.

The moon of the suckers, the time when fish move up river, was nearly over when the first of the thirty-six men reached Pamiok Island. When they arrived in Merica, the beaver-heads arriving from Greenland located Gard, the other beaver-heads, and other men who had over-wintered in Merica. These men were encamped in one of the smaller of the low walls on Pamiok Island. The encamped men had put up a caribou hide tent with center poles to hold the hide roof up and rocks stacked on the rock walls to hold the hide edges down.<sup>1</sup>~ During the summer the sailors working on a boat stationed to sail in Merica had made a trip to bring poles to them from the inlet on the Koksoak River.<sup>2</sup>~ Unfortunately the roof sagged and looked ragged. The roof had behaved even worse because rain or mist seeped through the seams nearly every other day until the freezing weather came

The men already staying in the low stone walls were delighted to see the stone masons and wood men coming off the ice. They were even more pleased to learn that the people of Greenland had committed themselves to walking the ice. But they behaved as if they were especially pleased to have nineteen new rookies to tease.

During the next couple of days, the workmen's camp was set up. The workmen scraped away the ice and snow from between the walls in the long set of low-walls. They followed the beaver-heads' advice about how to make an arched house.<sup>3</sup>~ After a few trials they set up crude arches and secured caribou robes onto purloins lashed between the arches. They were all pleasantly surprised at the

---

<sup>1</sup> Post holes

<sup>2</sup> Koksoak

<sup>3</sup> Second use

ease the arched house could be put up. The workmen from Greenland began to appreciate why the beaver-heads had kept telling them that making houses in Merica was women's work.

The Greenland men had discussed their roles, many times, around boiling pots. The wood men knew they were going to walk further south, cross over Lief's River, and turn southeast until they found the stone beacon guiding them up the timber river called Koksoak. Three of the beaver-heads would accompany them to hunt for food. One of the beaver-heads could talk with the local people.

Three of the beaver-heads, who were also the best fishermen, would stay with the stone masons. In some locations, similar to Pamiok, four stone masons could work on two low walls at the same time. The stone masons were to restore the scattered stones to the walls. Some of the stones weighed more than two men and took the combined effort of several men to move into place. Two of the beaver-heads would trade for food with the meat-eating people by using words and signs. They would also trade for blubber to mix with caribou meat to make pemmican.

Styrk and two of the best negotiators would go to Eastman Land before the ice melt occurred. Their assignment was to ask for food caches, house frames, canoes, and to arrange for winter hunters to come to the shore to meet the travelers next spring. There were enough Norse men in Eastman Land to guide hunting families to the sixteen sites that Hallgrim had calculated would be needed.

Talerman, Gard, and two of the best livestock men among the beaver-heads would accompany Styrk's group to Payne Lake. Talerman's group would stay at Payne Lake to arrange for the caribou hunts. Talerman knew that they had little time to spare.

The caribou would begin to come onto the ice during the moon of the snow crust. The caribou would be moving north in the moon for breaking snowshoes. If the caribou behaved as normal there would be four migrations. The first migration would be to the north in the spring. Then the caribou would return to the woods in the south in the middle of the summer. The caribou would again return north with a slower migration in the early fall. Finally in late fall the caribou would form large herds and move south to over winter in the timber.

Usually the Tunit did not struggle with massive caribou killing in the spring, because the meat had little fat and the shedding hides were in poor condition. The Tunit harvested what they needed for food and waited for the fall caribou migration. But the beaver-heads knew that there would be a thousand more mouths in the area in the coming winter. An extra hunting effort in the spring would help provide caribou hides for the shelters at the low walls and pemmican in the winter.

Talerman had planned to stay on the stone foundations he had seen before on the south side of Payne Lake. He was hoping to find some Tunit people in the area who would help the Norse prepare for the caribou migrations.

Two sleeps after the last group of men arrived, the work camp at Pamiok was reduced to a few stone masons and their beaver-head support. The wood men had walked onto the sea ice and turned south around the large open water marvel. A group of stone masons walked onto the ice and headed north. Talerman, Styrk, Hallgrim and the hunters with them walked west up Armaud River.

When Styrk's gang saw the stone beacons south of Payne Lake, they, including Hallgrim, angled southwest and walked on the ice of the Kogaluc River to the sea in the west. Then they turned south on the ice toward Eastman Land.



Talerman and his companions walked along the south shore of Payne Lake to the stone walls they remembered. When the walls came into sight, a slim wisp of smoke rose from a hide cover spanning a corner of the low stone walls. Someone was already occupying the site. Because the sun was low, the Talerman decided to test the friendliness of the people under the robes. He hollered a greeting.

Lifting the robe flap an old Tunit man with a sparse white beard and white hair eyed them silently. Talerman used his left hand to pull his small knife from his waist. He offered it handle first to the white haired man. He had intended only to show he was coming in peace. He was as surprised as his comrades to hear himself saying, "It is yours." The eyes under the white eyebrows sparkled as a hand with wrinkled skin grasped the knife handle. With a flip of the knife tip the man invited them to enter.

The man with the white hair was Naigu. Talerman recognized the name, as a meat-eater's name and asked about it. Naigu said he was a Norse-Tunit but he took the name when he lived with meat-eaters for many years. He had taken a wife, a big women, who lived among them. They accepted him, so he stayed. He and the big Eskimo women, who may have had a Tunit parent, raised several children. One set of children had grown when they had a second set of children. It was like having two families. He pointed to the big woman tending the lamp under the boiling pot. Nokla, he said, was the youngest child of the second family. His wife, an old woman, had died shortly after Nokla's birth.

Talerman was startled as he took a look at Nokla's face in profile in the lamplight. At a glance he thought she was Arnora. But when Nokla turned to

face him he saw the black eyes instead of blue, the straight black hair instead of the blond, and, most of all, her size. Nokla must have been, at least, a head taller than Arnora and bigger too. He thought to himself, "This wishful thinking cannot be happening yet. I left home less than three moons' time ago. What is happening to me?"

Naigu's father had been half Norse. The grandfather used to Hrein--aa--byy as a young man. Naigu's mother was mostly Tunit with just a little Norse blood. Naigu spoke with words Talerman thought were primitive Norse. By using very short sentences and speaking slowly with childish words, Talerman and his companions were able to speak to Naigu and get responses they understood.

Naigu did not say so directly, but Talerman and his friends came to understand that Naigu was the leader of a band of Tunit people. Talerman asked, "Why are the rest of your people camped in the willows beside the stone walls?"

Old Naigu cackled, and said " Most of the other families are afraid of the spirits walking about the stones. They are cranky old spirits--just like family."

Experience cautioned Talerman to wait to talk about the caribou needs of the people who would be coming from the Northern Settlement. If the Tunit were going to help the Norse, the Great Spirit would provide a good time to ask for help. If the Tunit heard the request at the right time, the idea would grow naturally.

The next day Talerman realized with surprise the right time had come already. Naigu mentioned that his scouts had told him of the many blond men who had just come to Merica and wondered if Talerman would tell him what the blond men were doing here. Talerman told Naigu about the desperation of the people in the Northern Settlement. Talerman explained that many Norse in Greenland were thinking of bringing their families to Merica instead of dragging food for months to feed the families in Greenland.

He explained that if the families could make it to Merica, they would be just passing through the Tunit area. They would try to cross over Ungava in the same winter when traveling was easier. There may be up to a thousand people, but they would come and go during the same winter. He had come to talk to the Tunit because the Norse would need caribou hides and caribou meat. Perhaps, Talerman suggested, the Tunit would help the Norse in exchange for useful things they needed. The Norse would be bringing axes, steel tipped arrows, iron tools, soapstone cooking pots, needles and beads. The Norse would trade those Items for caribou meat and hides. There were more than enough caribou to feed everybody. The Norse would remember forever any help they could get from the Tunit.

Then Naigu began to talk:

The Tunit people feel more closely related to the Norse than to the meat-eaters. Most Tunit can name at least one Norse man in their ancestry. The activity to prepare for a thousand guests would be a change in the yearly struggle. It is true there is plenty of meat. But the Norse need to learn much to survive here.

Naigu stopped and smiled. "Tunit are good teachers, we have taught you Norse people how to live here for three centuries. That, and a few other reasons, is why most of us have Norse ancestors."

The next day Naigu called a council. As the people assembled, Naigu sat beside Talerman. Naigu softly told Talerman of the lineage of many of the men. All of them one way or another had Norse ancestors. The council went as councils usually do. Talerman presented his case and asked for the help from Tunit people who had common ancestors with the Norse.

There were three men in strong vocal opposition to giving help to intruders. They began a harangue based more on their feelings than facts. Eventually the harangue subdued and intelligent questions were asked. Talerman gave honest concise answers. Finally late in the night, a man with sophisticated bearing asked "Of these thousand Norse, will there be any grown women without husbands?"

Talerman did a quick mental calculation. Thinking of two single women old enough to be a wife in nearly every farmhouse and ninety farmhouses in the Northern Settlement, he answered, "Nearly two hundred."

The man asked, "Are these castoffs, sick, ugly, mean, or idiots?"

Talerman said, "There are a few of those, but mostly these women are capable and willing. Most are wishing they could find a man. All would be grateful for a man that could bring home caribou meat."

The man kept his stoic face but said quietly "Enough." The word "Enough" was repeated both ways around the council circle.

Naigu waited patiently. No more loud comments were heard. Naigu turned to Talerman and said, "My friend, we will be waiting to help our Norse relatives when they walk off the ice next year. Right now we have not finished the caribou ribs for today."

As the weeks passed while they awaited the spring caribou migration, Talerman and his comrades used Naigu's house as a base camp. Gard had surveyed the nearly flat hide covering the corner of the stone walls. Without much thought he

called the house the Walls Hut. The name caught on. Within a week, even Naigu was calling his own house, the Walls Hut because he said, "Walls Hut gives the place a certain charm."

Most of the time the beaver-heads were in the field helping the Tunit prepares caribou traps. When the work allowed, Talerman, Gard, and the other two beaver-heads were always pleased to return to Naigu's story telling and Nokla's cooking



Before the ice in Ungava Bay broke apart, the wood men had walked on snowshoes past Lief's river. When they came to the Koksoak River, the stone beacon was in sight about 400 paces upriver. They walked to the beacon. There they were impressed with an area that would be a campsite and a nearby area that would be useful for working with the logs. The ice was still in the river, but the roughness and fall of the ice meant the logs would have to be floated to the mouth of the river. After setting up camp, the wood men went into the forests. They were seeking treetops that could be cut to lengths longer than four man spans. The wood men climbed up the pine trees until the fingers of their two hands could touch around the trunk. Then they cut off the top at that point.

When the moon of the snow crust arrived, two thousand pieces of timber had been lashed together in bundles of two to four logs. The bundles had been drug to the streambed.

When the moon of breaking snowshoes was half over, the timbers were fed into the roaring waters of the stream. Many times the wood men had to pry timber jams apart with poles. Sometimes they had to pull apart a jam one log at a time. Just as the floating task was becoming routine, it was over. Two thousand pieces of timber lay floating in the catch basin near the ocean.

Back at the low stone wall sites, the stone masons were finally able to start moving rock. They started first to restore the exterior stone walls to the original height, about chest high. From day to day, they had many little victories as rock after rock went back into the jigsaw puzzle of the walls.

Upon the plains of Ungava near the Indrawing Seas, the caribou harvest was going better than Talerman expected. He had gotten directly involved in the caribou harvest. With the increased length of sunlight, he was staying awake



longer and working harder. Talerman found himself enjoying the group dynamics needed to drive a caribou herd to a killing point.

At the killing point, where the caribou had to cross a waterway, the courage and skill of the Tunit spear men fascinated him. They would paddle their kayak close to a caribou, plunge their spear deep enough into the neck to kill it, pull out the spear, and paddle away before being swamped by the caribou behind. He shared the task of snagging the dead caribou in the flowing stream and hauling it to shore. He found it was a physical and mental challenge, leaving a man exhausted but satisfied.

When the main caribou herds moved north, Talerman followed with a band of Tunit. Gard and the other two beaver-heads followed other Tunit bands trailing other herds.

Two moon's time ago, the Walls Hut had become the place where leaders met. The Tunit, from Merica, the beaver-heads from the low walls, and the sakhims from the blond area came to talk about the plans for the Frozen Trail. Sometimes isolated groups of people would come to the Walls Hut to ask what they should do to help. Talerman had needed someone who could remember the plans and the last known intentions of the various people. Talerman had wanted the man to stay near the Walls Hut. But he had really wanted to go with the caribou groups himself. So he had asked Naigu to stay at the Walls Hut to serve as the contact man. Naigu did a good job of listening, remembering, and telling. He became a coordinator of the massive caribou harvesting that spring without walking away from the Walls Hut.

One day the herd of caribou in Talerman's region had moved on beyond good trapping sites. Then Talerman realized he had been out of touch with events for many, many sleeps. He began to wonder what the other beaver-heads were doing. Talerman asked a young Tunit to accompany him on the two-day hike back to Naigu at Walls Hut.

Talerman and the Tunit each packed sleeping robes and two handfuls of pemmican. They began to walk south when the southeast sky lightened. They noticed but ignored the clouds to the southwest. In the sky, the breaking snowshoes moon was waning. The sun was halfway to its height when the southwest clouds covered it. A misting rain began falling, wetting them, and freezing on the ground.

About midday they passed at a distance three hide tents with smoke rising from the highest end. The Tunit wanted to go to the tents to eat. Talerman did not want to take time visiting as was expected of guests. So standing with their back to the driven mist, they ate half the pemmican. Then they moved on.

When the sun should have been half down, the rain fell with larger drops. Occasionally an icy pellet hit them. After a heavy burst of rain, the Tunit stopped. By gestures and short sentences, the Tunit said he wanted to return to the hide camp. Talerman gestured that he wanted to go to the Walls Hut and, if need be, he could do it alone. The Tunit smiled, turned down wind, and walked away.

Bjarni continued to walk head down into the rain and icy pellets until darkness forced him to stop. He found a few rocks piled together, possibly a caribou diversion. Bjarni put his robe on the side away from the wind. He lay down and pulled the top of the robe, skin side out, over his walking house, including his head. He ate the rest of the pemmican.

The robe provided some comfort as Bjarni slept, but by morning the robe was drenched and heavy. He had to break ice off the skin side before he could roll it up. The rain had stopped. Now snow was falling. The wind was now hitting him on the right back. The chill drove into his body. The ice-laden robe grew heavy to carry. Bjarni carried the robe until he made it to the last stone beacon before the Walls Hut. He knew that he could make it to Walls Hut from the stone beacon without having to sleep. So to lighten his load, he lay the robe at the base of the stone beacon where he could recover it later.

The caribou hoofs had shattered the ice over the stream out of Payne Lake when they had passed a half moon ago. With sunlight fading Bjarni walked to the lakeshore and looked at the lake ice. The caribou had been there too. They had broken the shore ice loose. The solid lake ice had been blown to the other shore. So Bjarni thought his best chance was to wade the ford where the caribou crossed. He had seen that the water had come up to only the mid-body on the caribou. Half a caribou high is over a man's waist but not too risky. Bjarni decided to wade the stream. When the slow moving water was chest high, he thought everything would work out fine, but then his tired feet hit rocks. Three times he stumbled forward, only to catch himself with flailing arms.

Fortunately the clouds drifted away just as he reached solid ground, but the wind was frigid. Bjarni could see the ground well enough to walk to the Walls Hut long after the sun was gone. The clear air was even colder. He arrived at Walls Hut looking like a frozen muskrat.

As Naigu and Nokla stripped Bjarni's clothes off, his tremors started. The top robe from Nokla's bed was put on his shoulders. Nokla filled a cup and lifted it to his lips. Bjarni took a few sips. Then he tried to hold the cup himself, but his tremors caused the liquid to spill. Nokla took the cup back. Bjarni crawled onto Nokla's bed robe. He curled up holding his knees and shook. Nokla arranged the top robe tightly against his body. She added a robe from Naigu's bed. The shaking was still visible through the robes.

Naigu filled his own cup. Then he said to Nokla, "He needs warmth." Naigu turned his back and gazed at the small flame under the boiling pot while sipping his tea.

Nokla kicked off her boots, slid her britches down and swung her legs under the robes covering Bjarni. She peeled off her coverlet before disappearing under the robes. Her strong arm wrapped around Bjarni's chest as her large breasts flattened against his back. She tucked her legs up to meet the back of his thighs. Bjarni shuddered and sighed. The tremors continued.

Daylight was filtering through the smoke rising toward the hole in the Walls Hut roof when Bjarni opened his eyes. He was lying on his back. Bjarni's thoughts must have been something like:

Where am I? Oh, good. I am in the Walls Hut. I thought I made it. I remember, now. I got the shakes. I have never had them so bad that I could not move. What crazy dreams? I thought Arnora was here. I saw her blue eyes and blond hair. But, no, I must be in the Walls Hut. There is the hole in the roof. Or maybe I am still dreaming. I feel Arnora's legs wrapped around mine. I feel her breasts against my ribs. I feel her head on my shoulder.



Meanwhile the wood men had been busy too. As they had shed clothes in the spring air, they saw that flowers were peaking through the debris on the forest floor. The flower moon was raising when the first knarr arrived at the timber pond.

The knarr had sailed up to the ropes that held back the timber. Men in kayaks had put loops on the big end of a timber bundle. The crew had pulled the timbers into the knarr. After loading, the knarr crew had eaten and slept. They knew that if the winds were good, they could reach the low wall sites before the next Arctic day ended.

The ice sheet had been far enough north to allow the knarr to swing around northeast of Pamiok Island. When the captain of the boat sensed the tide rising, the crew had dropped down full sail. The northeast wind had driven the boat toward Pamiok, up a causeway cleared of rocks, and onto the sand at high tide.

Soon three wood men and three stone masons pulled the poles from the knarr. One of the crew, lifting the poles over the side said, "Why do they want to build a shelter here? This place is like being at the gates of Hel." At that moment another crewman looked up, pointed toward the rock formations above the low walls, and said "Oh—my—God!"

All eyes turned to the direction he pointed. Big men clad in caribou hides, fur side out, were filing past the big rock, along the rock wall, and like a slithering giant worm they came straight toward the ship. At first only their bodies, arms and legs were seen. Then the individual faces under the hoods became visible. The stone masons, wood men, and sailors stopped in their tracks. The sailors in the knarr reached for harpoons and knives.

Talerman, at the head of the human "worm", threw back his hood, and shouted, "Keep unloading. The Tunit just want to see what is going on." Unloading resumed amid greetings, questions, answers, and bantering.

The evening meal was a festive event for the Tunit caribou people, the beaver-heads, stone masons, wood men, and sailors. Tjalve summed up the event the next morning, "Most of the Tunits have a Norse ancestor. Our Norse forefathers really got around. The feast was just a big family gathering."

The next afternoon the knarr rose on the rising tide and was rowing outbound as the tide fell. The Tunit exchanged caribou hides and pemmican for shelter poles and wood for tools. They began to walk back to the tundra. Several younger Tunit eager for something new to do picked up packs of caribou hides and followed beaver-heads onto the tundra to walk to the low wall sites further north.

At Pamiok Island, the wood men selected two poles and cut off the slender tip one man-span from the small end. The poles were overlapped by one arm length at the narrow ends and the overlap was wrapped with wet walrus rope.

After the rope dried, the pole was placed across the stone walls. A gang of men drove small stakes in the ground near the center of the poles between the walls. They held the stakes in place as the rest of the men pushed the outside ends toward an end of the low walls. Other men tied ropes onto the pole ends. They stood outside the walls on the opposite sides from where the rope was tied.

The wooden poles were pushed, and then pulled into an "U" shape. The pulling men continued until the butt of the pole could be dropped inside the rock wall. When both ends were dropped inside the rock wall, the "U" was lifted, and then pulled upright to make an overhead arch. A second arch was made so that it was spaced about an arm's length away from the first arch.

The two arches were held in place while two pair of men moved to the arches. Each pair of men carried the small pole created when the longer poles were trimmed. Each pair of men raised the small pole about head high and lashed it to the two arches. They took a second pole and lashed it into place just above the rock wall. The men let go of the arches. They admired their handiwork for a few moments. Then they started on the next arch.



Meanwhile Styrk and his comrades had reached Eastman's village. They set up camp at a main place for summer gatherings in Eastman Land. They visited with the families near the shore to get the latest news and information. They went hunting on short trips to pass the time until the moon of flowers when summer encampments would come to life.

Then Styrk and his comrades began to visit the summer camps, patiently waiting for a time to speak up at the fireplace councils. During the day Styrk used the hunting language to talk in the sakhim's houses when he had the chance. The people of Eastman Land who had Norse ancestors were pleased to hear their relatives would be coming. The younger men and women were especially pleased to learn about more chances for blond companions. But the sakhims were fearful of a thousand new people at once and the thought of three thousand more to come in the following years.

Styrk explained that the beaver-heads had considered their friends in Eastman Land as they made plans. The beaver-heads thought it best for the people from Greenland to paddle past Eastman Land and go west up the Albany River.

As the flower moon passed, Styrk grew anxious. The people in the summer camps acted as if they were not the least interested in helping their Norse brothers. They ate, they danced, they told stories, they flirted, and sometimes they fought. When Styrk and the beaver-heads spoke before their council fires, the people sat politely, often appearing to be interested, some times looking at the earth, the forest or the sky, and usually nodding in the correct places. Styrk had sat around enough campfires in Akoman to know the polite listening was not commitment to his cause. He was also very careful to avoid saying "I want to know your answer now." He knew the answer would come in private where the personal trading talk also occurred.

Styrk expected no public talk of support, but one man spoke up. He was an old beaver-head, who had been so long in Eastman's Land that his friends forgot he was Norse. But he still remembered his Norse roots. He stood and offered to row two of his canoes to the furthest north camp next spring. The other men of the Eastman Land sat stone-faced.

Styrk and his two companion beaver heads had carried gifts. They had sixteen annealed copper knives and six metal axes. Hallgrim had informed Styrk about the decision making process within a wigwam. So Styrk and his comrades also carried twenty-four long strings of beads and they had 160 narrow red cloth bands an arm's length long. Each band had a cross stitched at the mid-point. Tjalve had told Styrk that the red cloth worked for the Vikings in the past. Styrk had had the pleasure of telling Tjalve, many times, that the Vikings who traded red cloth were driven away from Merica for seven grandfather's time. In a more serious tone of voice, Styrk pointed out that the people of Greenland could not afford to wait for seven grandfather's time. They needed acceptance now.

But Tjalve was correct. A day after the old Norse beaver-head spoke at the council fire, the people in the summer camp saw the old beaver-head's wife wearing the red cloth on her forehead with the cross located above her nose. Then the gossip groups passed the word that every man who offered to build a wigwam at the north shore of James Bay next spring would get a similar gift for his woman. Faster than he thought it would happen, Styrk was having private talks with some men of Eastman Land while other men, waiting their turn, sat outside.

The gist of the talks went something like this: The Eastman man would say, "I was thinking of hunting toward the north this winter. We are planning to send some men with our canoes up to where we think we will come out in the spring. Maybe we could help you by taking along an old canoe that still floats." Styrk would say, "if you could, I would accept your gift. Would your wife like to wear a cross?"

Later that evening when the man gave the red band to his wife, they both knew they were committed to deliver a canoe and help build an extra wigwam in the spring. They also expected the Norse would be bringing another gift, maybe a bag of beads.



Styrk had planned to visit the Blond Area but a wise old sakhim told him, "One of your beaver-heads and Hallgrim can talk to the Blond Area. They will want their Norse relatives to come. So you will have little resistance there. It is far more important that you talk to the gathering of the tribes at St. Jean's Lake. Many of the people at St. Jean's lake will not be able to help the Norse because they are too far east or south. On the other hand they could hinder the plan if they come out of the woods in the spring and find an unexpected Norse armada floating down the shoreline."

The overland journey to St. Jean's Lake was much more difficult in the summer than a hunt through the woods would have been in winter. But the sakhim was so passionate that Styrk eventually decided to go. He took one other beaver-head with him. They went up the Nemiskou River in a canoe paddled with four other men from the Eastman Land. Then they crossed through a region of lakes and streams. They portaged the canoe often. They came to a lake lying in the folds of the land. They paddled to the southern most point of the lake. After a long portage they were on the river to Lake St. Jeans. They began to meet and to join other canoes heading to Lake St. Jeans.

When the group of canoes, including Styrk's, paddled toward the beach of the plain chosen for the summer meeting, he was impressed. On the beach lay canoe beside canoe for as far as Styrk could see to the left and to the right. On the plain stood the tepees of seventeen tribes each with their own cluster of family clans. From left to right the tepees dominated the horizon. The guides were headed toward the one open stretch of beach in front of a big tepee with a mammoth roof. Styrk saw that the roof was lifted off the ground by a pole wall to about the height of a man. After they pulled the canoe ashore, he estimated the size of the big tepee to be at least three man-spans across at head height. A St Jean's host came running up. He said, "The sakhim wants you to stay in the mamateek.<sup>1</sup>~ It is the..."

Styrk who had already picked up his pack cut him off saying, "I know where it is." He had no trouble seeing the mammoth roof straight ahead.

The next morning Styrk met with the major sakhim who then invited Styrk to move into his own tepee. The next evening Styrk attended the big campfire and waited for his time to speak. The obviously important men sat around the big campfire in double rows and another circle of men stood behind the seated rows.

After four campfires and four sleeps, the sakhim gave Styrk a long introduction. Styrk stood and told of the difficulties their Norse brothers were having. The circle of men listened to Styrk politely. He could sense the lack of

---

<sup>1</sup> Mammoth Roof

interest especially when most of them realized they would have little to do with the coming of the Norse and it would not affect them much. Styrk finished his talk in a pleasant manner. He did not want or need a response. At least the people around Lake Saint Jean would be aware that a Norse armada would pass through Eastman Land going south and west. He sat down in silence.

Then a short, erect man stepped into the firelight. He was wearing black pants and a black jacket with gold stitches edging the cuffs, the bottom and the front of the jacket. Styrk thought the design looked as if it were made of crosses without tops alternating with crosses with tops. The man asked the sakhim for permission to speak. The sakhim nodded. The man turned toward Styrk. He said in a low, but commanding voice:

My name is Haki. My ancient ancestor was just starting to sew on this very jacket when your ancestors tried to invade this land a long, long time ago. Many grandfathers have come and gone since then. But we still tell the stories about how my ancestors drove your ancestors away. I am named after my great ancient ancestor. Today, I am troubled that I, too, must face the same enemy.

Bringing his left arm from behind his back, Haki held up a red band with a cross on it. Haki continued, "One of the tricks your ancestors pulled on mine long, long ago was to trade red ribbons like this for valuable furs. My ancestors desperately wanted these red ribbons."

Haki's voice increased in loudness and a tremor crept in as he continued:

It will not work today because our grandmothers have adapted your fashions. Long ago this gold trim was all red. But making good red dye was a custom lost when our ancestors came to this land. That is why they were so eager to get the red ribbons from your ancient ancestors. Then the Norsemen, like you, came to our villages wearing coats trimmed in double stripes of yellow with designs of flowers between the stripes. Yellow dye is abundant to find in this country. Our grandmothers replaced the red with the yellow design. They changed the designs too. The cross without a top is more precious than flowers. We do not need red anymore.

Then Haki threw the ribbon down and ground it into the earth with his heel. He continued with a much louder voice, "The red cloth did not work then. It will not work now."



Styrk felt the tenseness in his shoulders come with his rising anger. He could feel his heart beat grow stronger. He unfolded his legs, ready to stand up. Haki held out his hands, palms down, a signal for Styrk to stay seated.

Haki paused. The tension around the circle of men increased. Then Haki began again in his low voice:

I have listened to the words of the men who have heard you in Eastman Land. I understand the difficulty your people have finding food. I even understand that you hope to come to this land peacefully. I also understand that many of us have similar ancestor blood as yours. There are a couple of men with Norse ancestors in my own village. They are good men.

"But," said Haki with a louder voice as he jabbed a finger at Styrk:

We cannot allow four thousand Norse people into our lands! We have lived here since my grandfather's grandfather. You may think the forests from here to the Kanal Dal are empty, but they provide just enough meat for our people. We hunt the forests in winter when the wolfpacks do not hunt humans

Haki was gesturing with every sentence as he nearly shouted:

Even going west will not work. Those are lands of our brothers too. They have been there for many grandfathers. Some of our brothers have been out west as far as the high mountains. They are so far west that the earth they walk on is black. The people there walk with black feet, but they speak our language too. We cannot stand by and watch your people over run them!

Haki was shouting at the end of the talk. His arms flailed through the air to make a big "X" in front of Styrk. This time there was a vocal response of approval around the circle. Several men stood up with hands moving to their knives. Haki stepped back and stood with his hands on his hips. The sakhim waited. Haki nodded. The sakhim turned to Styrk, raised a hand palm up, and nodded.

Styrk understood the signal to rise and speak. He rose very slowly, fighting to subdue his anger, and thinking to himself:

Oh! How I need Tjalve now. What would Tjalve do now? I know. He would ask a question. He would just ask a question.

Styrk stood and faced Haki across the firelight. He paused as long as Haki had paused. The crowd went silent, listening for the answer to Haki. Raising his hand, palm up, Styrk asked, "Where can four thousand peaceful Christians who must leave their land--go?"

Haki blinked. He had not expected the question. He seemed to be hunting for the answer. He stayed silent. Styrk also stayed silent, his teeth clenched so he would not say anything more. He was trying hard to follow Tjalve's advice. "No threats, No apology. No explanation. No pleading."

The two powerful men faced each other in the circle. The crowd began to murmur, making a low jumbled noise. Then Styrk began to distinctly hear words as they were repeated around the circle. The jumbled words were "gumme", "mi", and "sjøe".

Haki inclined his head as though he were trying to understand the words too. He turned his head sideways to hear better. Then he looked straight into Styrk's eyes, raised his right hand, palm up, and said, "You can go to Michigamme. There is plenty of room in Michigamme."

Suspicious, Styrk asked, "Why is there plenty of room in Michigamme?"

Haki said:

"The wolfpacks ate the people or drove them away. The forests and fields are vacant. The only people there now are outcasts. They are hunters who have little. They run away from the wolfpacks. But the wolfpacks are not always there anymore. Still they are near by. The wolfpacks sometimes pass through Michigamme to attack our people.

"One thing you Norse can still do is fight if you have to. Besides I have heard that your people would make four villages next year. The four villages in the same area would have over two hundred fighting men. That number of warriors would be able to defeat the wolfpacks. The wolfpacks rarely attack a big village with many fighters. They are really cowards.

"If your people are between the wolfpacks and us, we can continue peaceful hunting and fishing. That blessing to us will make us, all of us, eager to help your people move."

Haki turned slowly with his right hand, palm up, extended toward the men in the circle. As he turned in a complete circle, Styrk saw heads nod, heard affirmative grunts, and watched the standing men return knives to the waist band

before raising a hand of friendship. Haki, to say the least, knew how to compel the crowd to his thinking.

When Haki faced Styrk again, he said, "If you would move your people to Michigamme in the coming years, we would consider it a gift."

Styrk glanced around the circle. The Sakhim's head and the heads of other leading men were nodding. Styrk said:

I will tell my leader we must move to Michigamme. But I have one problem. Our scouts have been south and they have been west. We know where to go to the south or the west. We have not scouted southwest to Michigamme and do not have time before our people come. I do not want to move wives and children into a land we have not scouted."

Haki said, "By next spring, we will gather, for you, a group of the scouts that know Michigamme best. I, myself, will go with you to prove our scouts can be trusted.

Styrk said, "I accept your promise as a gift."

There was a moment of silence. Then the murmur that arose from circle of men seemed to be one of relief. A little humor was heard. The Sakhim nodded to the drummer. The slow steady beat of the round dance began.

Haki stepped out of the circle and over to talk to the sakhim. Styrk stepped out of the circle to meet his companion beaver-head, who had watched the exchange from the outer row. Both men nodded with a sense of relief, but they did not speak because there were too many ears around.

Styrk was watching the dancers and feeling his repressed anger drain down when Haki stepped up beside him. Styrk swung around, ready to face the threat again. Haki said, "I invite you to stay the night in my tepee. The sakhim agrees to it. You have been to places that I have not seen. I would like to hear of them."



At the beginning of the moon of the wild rice, Talerman caught a ride on the knarr headed to the low walls located furthest north. As the knarr sailed north, he could see the activity at every low wall site. More than half the arches were in place in the low walls in the region near Pamiok. Further north most of the low walls sites had some arches up.

Captain Gunnbjørn told Talerman that the knarr cargo included enough poles for the rest of the low walls on the site furthest north. Gunnbjørn also said the three boat crews had recently met and exchanged sailors. All of the sailors wanting to return to Lysefjord and Einarsfjord for the winter were now on board his ship. They intended to unload the poles and the gift items for the last site. Then they were going to take on all the caribou hides they could carry. From the last site, the knarr had to sail less than a half day to catch the Indrawing Seas on an outgoing tide.

Talerman gave Captain Gunnbjørn three messages. Gunnbjørn repeated each message as he pointed to one of three fingers. At the landing site on the second day, Talerman checked the memory of the Captain Gunnbjørn. He found it to be good. Talerman took charge of the beads and knives to be used as gifts for the Tunit. Because the site was only about half completed, he gave the gifts to the beaver-head in charge of the site to be distributed later.

For two days, Talerman worked along side the wood men setting up the arches. Then the ship carrying small poles as gifts for the Tunit came into the landing site. Talerman went aboard. The ship was returning to the Koksoak River, but Talerman got off at a barren island located on the center eastern edge of the open-water marvel between the north low wall site and Pamiok Island. Already the stone masons had struggled to maneuver several huge stones to restore the small circle of big stones.<sup>1~</sup>

The wood men were laying out three of the biggest poles they had cut. The poles were eight man-spans long. At an arm-span from the small end of the three poles the woods men lashed the poles together.

The stone masons had selected the biggest rock in the ring. They had directed a gang of men to shift the rocks across the ring from the biggest rock until there was a gap between the rocks. Then the gang slid the three lashed timbers so that one slid through the rock gap and butted against the biggest rock. The other two timbers passed on the outside of the rock ring, one on each side.

Talerman helped the gang lift, block with wooden timbers, lift, and block again until the three timbers were raised enough to enable the men to take hold of the ropes tied to the upper end and pull. Finally the three poles were standing upright with men hanging onto leather ropes to hold the timbers in place. The two outside poles were then moved into the stone circle and the butt of the poles wedged against big rocks by smaller ones. Finally the leather ropes were relaxed. The tripod of timbers was in place.

---

<sup>1</sup> Fire Tower

The youngest wood man scampered up a timber. He cut small footholds as he went. He pulled up small poles and lashed them to make a platform at the very top end of the timbers. Within two days a lookout platform with provisions for a fire lamp were in place.

Talerman was pleased. Things were working out better than he had thought. There would be shelter for eighty-eight families. Pemmican for fifteen days for a thousand people was already in the ground. The winter caribou migration was coming. The Tunit promised to deliver more pemmican and more hides. Hopefully, Styk would return with favorable word from the Eastman Land.

"Well" thought Talerman, "We are in God's hands now. I hope they are cold. We need solid ice."



In the moon of the falling leaves, several clusters of canoes paddled north along the shore of James Bay. Styk and his companions had enlisted the best people into the adventure. The people of Akoman included several beaver heads and many local men from Eastman Land. Another group of beaver heads and several men came with Hallgrim from the Blond Area. Many young women, sisters or wives without children, joined the Akoman men in the adventure. The Akoman group rowed north until they found fast ice about two sleeps north of the North Twin Island.

The people of the canoe flotilla set up an encampment. The next dawn, one or two young men in each canoe paddled some of the canoes south. They were going south for only a sleep or two. There they would store the canoes and start the winter hunt. They planned to meet their main hunting camps and lead them back to the canoes.

When the fast ice had built far enough from shore, the Akoman people walked north. They arrived at Merica when the caribou started to migrate south. The Tunit men guided the Akoman men to the right spots so they could channel the caribou down the chutes into the water where the Tunit in their kayaks did the killing. The Tunit and the Akoman men worked long hours to harvest as many caribou as possible. The Tunit and Akoman women set up pemmican and hide processing camps. Working together on important activities for a half a moon's time increased the friendship bond between the Tunit and Akoman. When the caribou herd had walked on south, the women rolled up the caribou hides and

packed up the pemmican. Then the Akoman women went into the rushes near Payne Lake. They harvested the rushes and showed the Tunit women how to weave rush panels an arm's length wide and a man-span long. Then, carrying as much as they could, the women began the first of many treks to Pamiok Island and the other low-wall sites.

Upon arriving at Pamiok, the first women dropped their loads inside the longest low walls where the arches were set up. Then they began to roof the arches.

The women started by standing on the wall and lashing a cross purloin in place an arms length above the purloin already in place. Then they lashed other purloins in place an arms length higher. They repeated the lashing until they reached the top of the arch. Then they did the other side.

They lashed the rush panels into place. Working similar to laying shingles, they started at the low walls of rock and worked upward. They worked fast because they wanted the roof up for their own comfort. In the days to come, they would carefully lace caribou hides, fur down, to the rush panels to make the house warmer and more rain resistant.

Two man-spans along the walls on one side of the center fire pit would serve a family of seven. Another family would have the space on the other side of the fire. So, normally, a space two man-spans along the wall and three to four man-spans across the floor would provide shelter for two families. Big families with eight or more children and relatives would get two spots. Small families would have to share a spot.

Hallgrim had calculated that the sets of low walls in five locations could provide shelter for eighty-eight families. There were ninety farmhouses in the northern settlement with an average of two families per farmhouse. Those people went to four kirkes. So all of the sites in Merica would provide shelter for all the people of only two kirkes at a time.

Talerman, Hallgrim, Paafa Orm and Paafa Ketil had talked about the calculations many nights. They all agreed the people coming off the ice should not stop on the Merica coast for long. The reason the people should not stop long was because the low walls were only half way to the summer camps in James Bay. Every day wasted by sitting in at the low walls was one day closer to ice melting before the people reached the summer camps. The best plan for using the shelters was to eat well, repair clothes, re-organize sleds loads to back packs, make snowshoes, learn snow shoeing, get some good sleeps on solid ground, and then leave before getting too comfortable. Only the very sick might stay longer to get well.

So they agreed five nights of good food and sleep should restore the spirits of people coming off the ice and prepare them for the snowshoe walk. The first wave of people should be moving out of the low walls toward James Bay as the second wave came off the ice at Merica. They decided that departure from Rangafjord should be in two waves, with a five-sleep interval from the last people of the first wave to the first people of the second wave.







## Vignette nineteen

## THE INTERLUDE

Azon and Pitolo sat on the embankment besides the steps. Azon's sister and the quiet maiden had brought them a meal of venison and berries. The maidens had visited with them as they ate. Gee Hiz was well into his descent. When the maidens saw the other women of the villages walk toward the Big House, they too left to help prepare the food for the evening.

Pitolo said, "That was some of the best venison I have eaten. I could get used to being an aarum-tid."

Azon replied, "I have not gotten used to having food brought to me. I wonder if it wise to flaunt special treatment?"

Pitolo looked at Azon. Then he said:

"You may be right, but there is a difference between accepting the special treatment with grace and flaunting it. We will have to try to find the best arrangement. Gee Hiz is coming down rapidly. Maalan Aarum told us to come back when Gee Hiz is half way down.

Azon said:

Grandfather told us a long, complex story about building the original Big House. He said he wants to tell us about the migration next. We will have to tell both stories this evening. Our ancestors sure had a difficult task to get ready for the people to cross the ice. Yet grandfather did not have us make an engraved stick for it. The engraving we have is of people crossing the ice. I wonder why?

Pitolo sat silently for a moment. Then he replied, "Maalan Aarum stopped me to say something as you were leaving. I think it was, 'Big House, Big engraving.' Do you think he meant the Big House is the same as an engraving?"

Azon looked at the Big House in the distance. After some thought he answered, "It might be, and the Big House ceremony could be like a verse."

Azon took a second look at the big house. Then he said:

"I want to be the one telling the first part of the story tonight. I think I can prepare the people to accept the fact that the walls of the first Big House were made of stone.

"Ah, Gee Hiz has touched the branches of the tall tree near the palisade. That means he is halfway to the sky-boat. Let us go hear what grandfather has to say about the migration."



**Engraved Stick 3:17**

## FACTUAL FICTION

## FIRE TOWER

Lee took a photo of the ring of large stones described as a base for the fire tower in the story. The ring of stones is located at the north end of a small, flat island off the northeast coast of Ungava peninsula. The island is near the center of the eastern edge of the northern open-water marvel. The largest twelve, or more, stones in the ring weigh more than a man. They are placed tightly together in a ring, except for two gaps where there are no stones. Other stones are visible in the distant background, but the effort to select and move the big stones to the ring obviously required several men working for several days. (Lee, 1970/1971, Fig. 22A)

**(Return to Fire tower place.)**

## KOKSOAK

Koksoak is the first major river south of the River of Leaves. The location, 150 miles south of Pamiok, is south of the tree line. The site has one of the few stone beacons not located on a hilltop. (Lee, 1968)

**(Return to Koksoak place.)**

## MAMMOTH ROOF

A sketch of a mamateek (Mammoth Roof) is shown in the *HNAI*. (*HNAI*, Vol. 15, p. 102, Fig 2.) **(Return to Mammoth roof place.)**

## POST HOLES

Although the sites are all well north of the Arctic tree line, researchers have found evidence of wooden posts in all the low-wall sites investigated. The postholes in Longhouse 2 at Pamiok Island are adjacent to the interior sides of the rock walls. (Lee, 1971) (Plumet, 1982).

The holes have a position and spacing similar to the spacing of posts erected for arched Big Houses . **(Return to Post hole place.)**

## SECOND USE

The carbon 14 data indicate the longhouses on Ungava Peninsula were used for the second time during the Little Ice Age, 1300 to 1360. The data also indicate the sites were not used between the Dark Ages and the Little Ice Age, or since then to modern times. (Plumet, 1982)

**(Return to Second use place.)**

## WHITE FALCONS

White falcons were a rare gift often exchanged between powerful people in Europe. Many Europeans thought the white falcons came from Greenland. (Ingstad, 1966)

The most productive source of white falcons was Ungava Bay, especially Gyrfalcon Island near the River of Leaves.

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

## WORD MEANING

"KOKSOAK" may mean "Beaver house land" where "Kobi" for "beaver" has been shortened to "Ko" and "kso" was derived from "kasse" meaning, "box (house)." The "ak" was derived from "aki" meaning, "land" and also indicates that the word is Norse.

"MAMATEEK" is a "mammoth roof" where "mama" was derived from "mammut" meaning, "mammoth" and "teek" was derived from "tekke" meaning "roof."