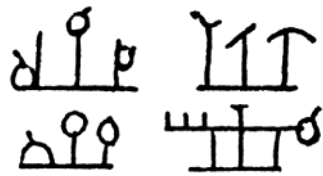


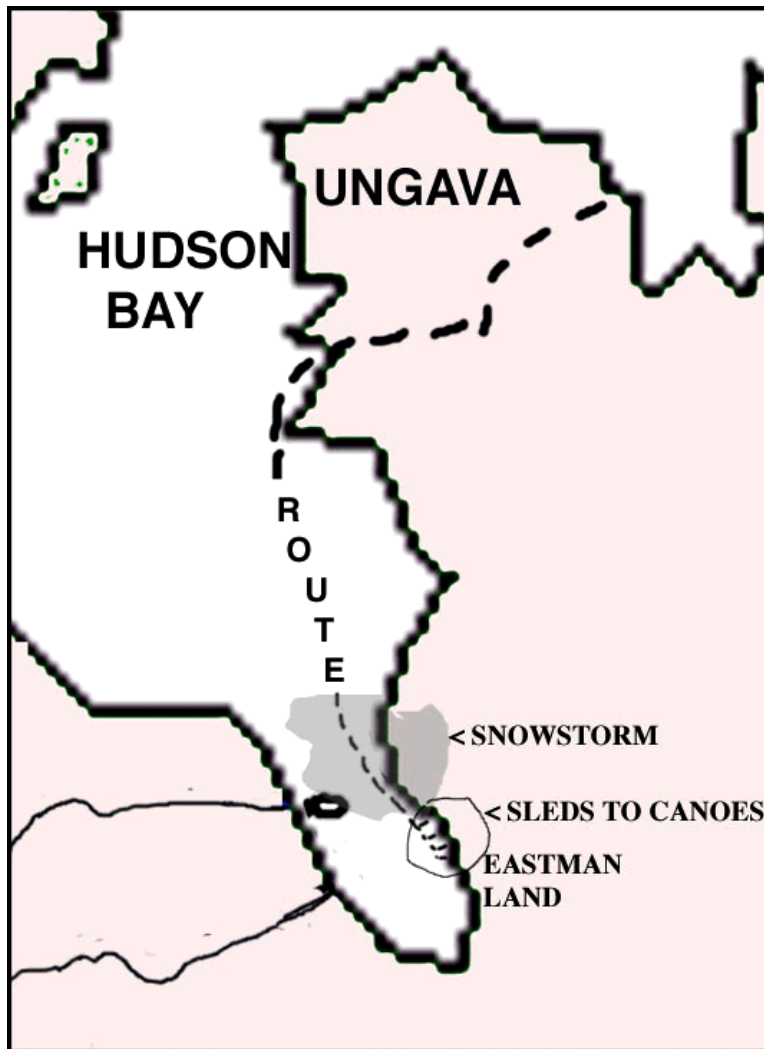
**STORIES**  
**of**  
**MAALAN AARUM**

**THE MEN**



**E.S. 3:19**

## THE MIGRATION CONTINUED.



The migration continued without serious mishaps until the snowstorm hit. Days later the people went to land.

## The MEN

One sleep later the snow-covered rocks became visible through the mist rising from the open-water marvel. The ice was cracking and rumbling. The tide was going out, so the ice floes were settling. Although it was his turn to sleep, Talerman was walking beside Arnora and Paafa Thord. He pointed to a path of smooth ice saying, "There is a safe path through the ice. Can you handle it? I see Hallgrim and Gard on shore and I want hurry to talk to them."

Paafa Thord said they could certainly walk a patch of smooth ice to a visible shore. Talerman left them with the utility sled and walked swiftly ahead. A little while later as they approached the smooth ice, dense fog rolled in from the open-water marvel to the south. Paafa Thord shouted to stop all sleds. They stopped in place and waited for the fog to clear.

As the sun rose higher in the sky the dim outlines of men standing on the rocky embankment began to appear through the fog. Arnora tried to see who they were. From their relative size she thought that Hallgrim, Gard, and Talerman were straight ahead of her, but a fourth person was there also. After a long interval the fog began to clear. The sleds started moving slowly forward. As she pulled on her harness, Arnora saw that the other person was standing very close to Talerman. Arnora felt a tinge of resentment. She rarely stood that close to Talerman in public.

Then the sun stabbed through the mist and shone on Talerman's group. The other person was carrying a bundle with both arms tucked under it as if the person was holding a baby. Then, the person turned and quickly walked away. Long black hair flowed over the hood that was thrown back. Arnora felt her resentment grow. She thought, "Men do have long hair. But men do not carry a bundle that could be a baby. Men do not stand that close to Talerman."

When the mist cleared Talerman walked out over the smooth ice to help guide the sleds to the Big House. Paafa Thord and Arnora pulled the sled with Thurid to the south entrance of the Big House. Thurid was placed to the right just inside of a low stone partition. Talerman waved a family with two grown sisters into the area beside Thurid. He told Valthjof and his two male companions to move into an area at the other end of the Big House. Robes of four other single men were already hanging in that area.

Talerman told Arnora that their family would take the area to the left of the center firepit near Thurid. Grimhild and Eyvind would be with them in their area

also. Bjørn, Yngvild and Kuptana came through the doorway with their robes and were directed to Arnora's area.

During the remainder of the daylight and through the first sleep, Arnora had no chance to ask Bjarni about the fourth person she had seen through the mist because other people were always around. When the dawning sky began to grow pale again, Bjarni rose from the robes and said he wanted to talk to Gard who would be outside at the other end of the house. After waiting a brief time Arnora, too, stepped outside to follow Bjarni. She could see Bjarni and Gard discussing things as they stood on the rock embankment near the other door of the Big House. She walked half the length of the house and then waited out of hearing range.

When Bjarni turned and walked toward her, Arnora stepped away from the stone wall and, before he could say anything, she asked, "Who was she?"

The startled look on Bjarni's face was not reassuring to Arnora. Bjarni said:

Huh? Oh, you must mean Nokla? She is the daughter of my friend Naigu. I have told you about how helpful Naigu has been to us. She just wanted to show me her baby. It was born a few moons' time ago. In fall I think.

Arnora did a quick mental calculation. She thought:

Born in fall. So go back to summer, to spring, and to winter. Probably conceived in winter. Last winter Bjarni was at home with me or on the ice to Merica. Why am I suspicious after twenty-seven years with Bjarni? Maybe the stress of Thurid's baby, the bear, and the long time on the ice is upsetting me. Be calm.

Arnora fell in beside Bjarni as they walked toward their end of the Big House. Then she suddenly asked, "Why is Gard here?"

Bjarni retorted with an irritated tone of voice:

"You sure ask a lot of questions. He came down from the northern shelter to tell me everything is under control up there. He is one of my better helpers. He is reliable and resourceful. I depend on him as much as Styrk, Hallgrim, or Tjalve, especially because they are now ahead of us on the trail.

"Gard is going to stay here while I make a personal survey of the situation in the shelters just north of here. We want the people there to

close the shelters so they can be used next winter without many repairs. Does his presence bother you?"

Arnora paused before she calmly answered, "No, You forgot that he is respectful too. I almost regret the... Maybe you should be the one who is bothered by his presence?"

Bjarni stopped, grabbed Arnora's arm, and swung her to face him. He studied her face. Then he said, "Ah, Arnora, it is good to see you smile, again."

During the second sleep in the Big House, Arnora was so blessed with her first good slumber in three moon's time that she gladly curled up in the comfort of Bjarni's arms. In the morning Bjarni was already gone when Arnora awoke, but she remembered he had told her that he was going to walk to the shelters just north of the Big House. So for the first time in three moons, Arnora had time to just lie in her robe and think dreamy thoughts.

After a few fleeting visions of earlier enjoyable times, her dreamlike thoughts returned to the four people standing in the sunlit spot in the swirling mist. She begin to think:

Bjarni said the other one was Nokla, a woman with a baby. Why was she showing the baby to him and not the other men? Gard probably had not seen the baby before. Then Nokla walked away carrying the baby on one arm. One arm! And not on her hip. A baby born in fall, five to eight moon's time ago, would have been riding a hip. Bjarni said ... Oh, what do men know about babies? The baby was younger than Bjarni said. That means it was started last spring when Bjarni was--here!

Arnora bolted up to a seated position, slipped on her inner caribou suit, and rolled from her robes with a determined face. She told Grimhild to prepare food for her family and to tend Thurid and her baby. Arnora found Yngvild and Kuptana already making snowshoes and encouraged them to continue. She asked Bjørn to go through the Big House and help others make their snowshoes. Then Arnora pulled on her caribou suit with the fur outside. She told Grimhild that she might be out until late. Arnora said she had a task to do that might take her well into the night. She told Grimhild not to alert the beaver-heads unless she was not back by tomorrow's daylight. Then she picked up her lance and walked out of the Big House.

Once outside of the Big house she looked for a beaver-head. There was one to the left and none to the right. At eye level on the embankment next to the Big House she saw legs. She looked up. There was Gard standing with a group of Tunit men. She struggled to climb the path up the embankment through the powdery snow. She finally reached the top of the embankment where she stood on a rocky spot and waited until the men parted to go separate ways.

Gard and another beaver-head turned to walk further north, away from her. Arnora hollered, "Gard!" The two men stopped and turned to look.

Gard recognized the lance and realized the voice came from Arnora. He told the other man to go ahead without him. Then he turned, walked toward Arnora. At a distance beyond the range of a held lance, Gard stopped and shouted, "Arnora, walking around without snowshoes will rapidly wear you out. Do you need something?"

Arnora blurted out, "Can you take me to Nokla, the daughter of Naigu?"

Gard instantly recognized the situation. He considered his options. Finally, he said, "I can remember the way better if I am carrying your lance."

Arnora retorted, "I do not intend to use it. I only want to tell Nokla to stay away from Bjarni."

Gard replied, "If you are not going to use the lance, then I can, at least, carry it to improve my memory."

Arnora and Gard locked eyes and silently waited for the other to give in. Finally Arnora realized she was the one who was being the more foolish. If she found Nokla's place she could always go back to it. If Gard did not get the lance, she would not find Nokla. Arnora laid the lance on the ground and stepped back. Gard came forward to pick up the lance.

Then Gard asked, "Are you carrying a knife or an axe?"

Arnora scowled at him, but she did raise the outer jacket hem to reveal nothing tucked into waistband of the inner suit.

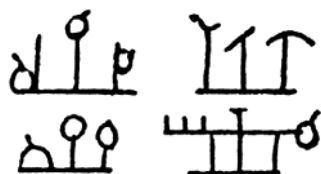
Gard said, "Stand where you are. You will need snowshoes. I will go tell another beaver-head where we are going and get good snowshoes for you. You stay here because we are going west from here across that rocky ridge.

When Gard returned, the tide was starting to rise so he hurried Arnora over the ridge of rocks from Pamiok to the main land. He told her, "The water raises higher than these rocks. We cannot return until the tide goes out again."

As the sun passed its height and began to descend, Gard led Arnora through soft snow for a thousand paces facing directly into the sun. They followed the path taken by the people of the first two kirkes who were already walking west across Ungava Peninsula. Then they walked out onto a ridgeline looking over a

small bay where water was surging upward. Gard pointed down and to the right of the ridgeline to a tepee. He said "Nokla is there with her father. The tent is away from the others because Naigu is sick. He may die soon. Do you want to go down?"

Arnora said, "Yes, but please let me go far enough ahead so you cannot hear what I may say. I do not want you telling my words around the campfire. It is time. A festering boil is best lanced soon "



Nokla was sitting on the sunny side of the tepee with her back to them. Arnora on snowshoes walked through the soft snow for fifty paces before Gard started to follow. Gard continued to watch Arnora closely. He held the lance ready. At a hundred paces more, Arnora stopped just up slope from Nokla. At that very moment, Nokla removed Awasos from her breast and held him up to admire. Arnora could see him too. The baby looked just like Bjørn when he was a baby. Nokla leaned forward to lay Awasos on a fur. She readjusted her own furs.

Then Arnora asked in a loud voice, "Is Bjarni the father of that baby?"

Nokla quickly scooped up Awasos again and turned to face the intruder. Arnora continued, "What a healthy baby. What is his name? Is Bjarni the father?"

Nokla smiled and looking down at Awasos, she said, "Awasos, means bear. His father is Talerman."

Arnora replied, "Awasos looks just like my son Bjørn when he was a baby. Bjørn means bear. Awasos's father is really named Bjarni. That means bear also."

Nokla's eyes snapped back to look directly into Arnora's. Nokla said softly, "Arnora. Oh, I am so glad to meet you. Talerman told me so much about you."

Nokla lay Awasos down again, and started to move toward Arnora. Arnora faltered. She signaled for Nokla to stop.

Things were not happening as she thought they would. Arnora thought:

"Nokla knew Talerman, but not Bjarni. That means that she does not know Bjarni well. Nokla said that she was glad to meet me. That means? Well, what did it mean?"

"It must mean that she wants to plead to live with Bjarni in our house. I hate her for bearing Bjarni's baby. But really, even if it is Bjarni's baby, we cannot possibly feed another mouth.

"What have I been thinking all day? Yes, a festering boil needs lancing fast. Do it now!"

Arnora said emphatically, "Nokla, you and Awasos cannot live with Talerman in our household, because we cannot feed any mo..."

In that instant Nokla realized the real reason for Arnora's visit. She cut Arnora short with one peal of laughter. Nokla said, "Ha, I never, never want to move into your household! But if you need food, I will give you caribou meat."

Arnora became flustered. She asked, "Wha, Why do you not want to move in with us?"

Nokla said:

My father taught me. He said, 'The best blessing a man can have is a woman who loves him. But a man creates his own blessings by desiring the woman above all others.' So it is wisest for me to live with a man who desires to be with only me. Talerman is already living with you and your children. He talked about you every day. Besides, now, he has a thousand people to guide. He thinks of them all day long. Can Talerman possibly desire to be with only Awasos and me? I do not think so. Besides he is-- a little, old man. I want a younger, bigger one.

Arnora was taken back by Nokla's unexpected perspective. She was also affronted by the reference to the "little, old man". She retorted, "You already have a baby from that 'little, old man'. How will you find a young, bigger man who desires to be with only you?"

Nokla turned and reached down to pick up Awasos because he had begun to whimper. As she brought Awasos up to her chest, Nokla faced Gard. Nokla appeared to be paying attention to Awasos. She rocked him gently, but she was looking at Gard as she replied to Arnora, "Two young Tunit men have already asked for me. They are now at the northern shelter showing people how to make snowshoes. I told them I would decide who I would live with after two moon's time passes.

Arnora said, "A wise mother lives with a hunter before the baby is born. Why are you waiting for two months more?"

Nokla continued to rock Awasos and to occasionally brush the fur around his face. She remained with her body turned toward Gard. She answered Arnora:



Because I have seen many beaver-heads, including Talerman, come and go through this land. But I have seen enough of a certain beaver-head to know that he would think of only me and I would like to live with only him.

"He does not now have a woman. Yet he keeps his distance from me. I cannot make him understand that I am interested to be his woman. Maybe he thinks I am only interested in Talerman. The big man only came to our shelter when Talerman was there. He is loyal to Talerman and Talerman was in my robes during all of the sleeps the man stayed in our shelter.

"I wanted to wait until your people passed out of our area. I have been hoping for a chance to be with him without Talerman around. If I fail to make him interested in me by then, I will chose a Tunit man to raise Talerman's son."

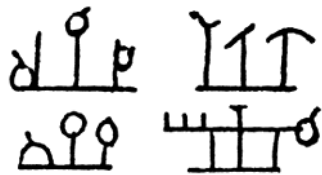
Arnora asked, "Do I know this beaver-head?"

Nokla nuzzled Awasos with her nose, brought her gaze up to Gard, then turned to answer Arnora, "I think so. He is reliable and resourceful."

Speechless, Arnora watched another cycle of nuzzle, glance at Gard, and look at Arnora. Then she guessed, "He must be respectful also."

Nokla made one more nuzzle, glance, and look cycle before she said, "And quiet, gentle, and kind. He would be a good father to Talerman's baby. He has blood similar to Talerman's."

At a lost for words, Arnora reached out, indicating she wanted to hold Awasos. Gard stiffened and took several steps closer. Nokla hesitated and then passed the baby to Arnora. Arnora held him close to her breasts, looking at the wide black eyes. She lifted him to her face and kissed him on the forehead. Awasos eyes drifted closed. Arnora held him a little longer then gently handed him back to Nokla. Nokla lay the baby back on his robe. Then both women looked each other in the eyes. One at a time with Arnora first, they both stole a glance at Gard. They smiled. Then they hugged.



After much talking Arnora asked to see Nokla's father. Nokla explained that before he got sick, her father had gone north looking for the caribou. But the weather was so cold, the herd had already moved west to the ice and then back south. Naigu had returned with swollen legs and stomachaches. He said many of the other caribou men had the same problems.

Arnora asked, "Were the men forced to survive on caribou meat only?"

Nokla said, "There were two moon's time when the men had to live only on caribou meat. But Naigusson and some others did not get sick. My father could not understand why, because Naigusson ate everything. He ate complete birds except for the feathers and the beak. He ate arctic hare. Naigusson even ate the droppings of arctic hare. He should have been sick for all the bad food he ate, but he was not. Naigusson is leading the caribou men now. They are going south to meet the spring caribou migration."

Arnora asked, "Are you still eating caribou meat?"

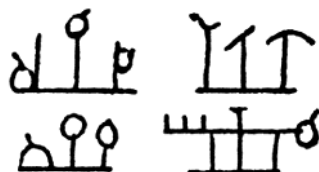
"Yes," replied Nokla, "All of the seals and fish were saved for your people coming off the ice. We have enough caribou meat to survive until Naigusson and the other caribou men return with fresh meat."

Arnora said, emphatically, "Nokla, you cannot survive on caribou meat alone. The caribou have very little fat now. You must have other food. You must have seal blubber to make the caribou meat work correctly."

Nokla said, "What can I do? The men bring the food. Even if I know what to do, they will not listen to me."

Arnora looked first at Nokla and then she signaled Gard to come closer as she said:

Let us go to make your father comfortable. I will ask Gard to give you the lance. He can get the boiling pot heating with our pemmican. It has fat in it. We will leave it for your father. Then we will go back to the Big House tonight. We are going to talk with a bear.



The sun had gone below the horizon but the wood fires in the Big House gave a warm glow. Talerman had returned to find both Arnora and Gard gone, "until later." Arnora was right, their absence together did bother him. He reflected on the situation and decided the wisest action was to continue to trust the two people

he trusted most. So without saying a word, he joined the men at the central campfire just in time for the hanging of the masks.

Tjalve had collected the mask from the Amitsau praying house and his own Sandnes Kirke. Those masks were already hanging on the sidewalls of the big house. Gard had brought the mask from the Anda Kirke people who were still resting in the northern shelters. Paafa Thord hung the Anda and the Anavik masks as the people in the big house quieted in solemn reverence. Paafa Thord gave a special blessing for the masks and then he repeated vespers for the evening.

Then the lighter part of the evening began. Talerman, Tjalve, and other beaver-heads began planning for the next day. Included around the main fire were Vifill, Runolf, Paafa Thord and several other beaver-heads.

Styrk, the pathfinder, was somewhere in front, walking fast to get to the front of the people from the lead two kirkes. Hallgrim, still up north, could be trusted to shut down the shelters no longer needed this year. In three sleeps the people in the Big House would walk the trail again.

Talerman had a few changes he wanted to make. He wanted Vifill to stay behind to help close the shelters. Also he wanted Tjalve to remain behind because he wanted Tjalve's talents during the last meetings with the local meat-eaters and the Tunits. Leaving as good friends would make the local people more helpful next year when the new migration came again. Talerman suggested Tjalve and Vifill join Valthjof's sled team. He wanted Paafa Thord to lead the last group of people onto the trail. That way Paafa Thord would make early contact with the Eastman Land people. His black robe would earn respect.

Paafa Thord questioned the wisdom of leaving Valthjof without the armor of god nearby. A beaver-head gave the opinion that Tjalve would have been a priest himself if the cold climate had not altered his life. Another beaver-head suggested that Valthjof really needed understanding compassion, and Tjalve was even better with people than Paafa Thord. The discussion went on until Paafa Thord decided that the Great Spirit was calling him to lead the Anavik people to the land they would possess.

Then there was little pressure to get more planning done. Everybody relaxed. Talerman was enjoying the laughter of a joke made by another beaver-head when he saw the startled look on Tjalve's face. Tjalve was looking toward the south end of the Big House. Talerman turned to see what was going on. He saw Nokla carrying Awasos and Arnora carrying her lance. She was not just carrying it, but was striking her left hand with the shaft in cadence to her steps. Talerman said, "Uh, uh. Trouble. Double trouble."

Then Talerman quickly rose to his feet saying, “Do you ladies want something?”

“Yes,” said Arnora:

We want you to do something. We want you to take seal blubber and fish to the grandfather of this baby, right now, in the darkness of night before the tide washes over the path. This baby is yours, Talerman. Are you willing to let his grandfather die?”

Talerman responded, “If I knew what to do, it would be done. But the man is sick and the Great Spirit...”

Arnora said emphatically.

The man is not sick, he feels bad because he has not eaten the right food. He and his people have saved the seals and fish for us. I tell you, he needs seal blubber. Now!

The point of the lance moved as she talked. The point stopped, aimed for Talerman’s nose.

Tjalve sprang to his feet. He said “Talerman, that will be no problem if someone can lead the way.”

Nokla said, “Gard knows the way.” She turned and walked swiftly to join Gard who was standing at the exit at the end of the house. Tjalve tapped two other beaver-heads. They scrambled to pick up a lamp, seal blubber, and fish and then they followed Gard and Nokla.

Arnora’s lance returned to rest in her crossed arms. With a nod she said,

Good. Now, Talerman, I request that you allow Nokla and Awasos, your son, to travel with me in another utility sled. Nokla needs more time for her future plans to develop. I request you have an extra sled take Naigu to his home at the Walled Hut. Also arrange to take many, many seal and fish for the caribou people there.

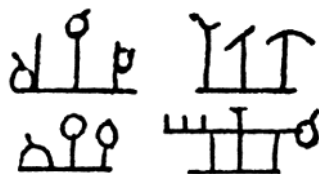
Talerman smiled and bowed, saying, “I was just going to make those suggestions myself. Will I be facing one hellion or two in the future?”

The direct personal question flustered Arnora. She hesitated, then recovered. "She has the baby. I have the lance."

Arnora, holding the point of the lance over her right shoulder, spun around and walked to her sleeping area.

For a few moments, Talerman was fearful he had been disgraced in front of everyone. Worse yet, would Arnora still live with him? Would either woman live with him? His thoughts raced, trying to find the right thing to say, as he turned back toward the fire. Then he heard Vifill say to Runolf with a voice loud enough to carry to both ends of the Big House, "I always said that a man who can live with the hellion is a man to follow to the ends of the ice."

There was a swelling of laughter mixed with comments throughout the Big House. A smiling serving woman gave Talerman a large dipper of bva. He relaxed and settled down to listen to the stories going around the fire. In the following days Talerman's position with the people grew with each repetition of stories ending with "I always said that a man who can live with the hellion..."



Hallgrim and Tjalve stood on the hill overlooking the column at the mouth of the Arnaud River. Hallgrim thought the column could be the Hammer of Thor. Tjalve kept insisting that it looked like a poorly made cross. In a friendly way they had argued about the column every time they had passed it. The only thing they agreed upon was that the pointer on top of column was definitely pointing upriver.

Hallgrim was keeping tally of the people passing by. The people of the Anda Kirke had already passed. According to Hallgrim's count two hundred of the Anavik people had gone by. The people in snowshoes were leaning forward into the forehead straps of their backpacks because the people had restocked with pemmican. They were walking single file up hill through deep fluffy snow. Unlike when they were on ice, if they made a new path through the snow over unknown ground, they often uncovered unwanted problems.

There was a small interval between the groups of people before the last group would pass the column. Tjalve commented to Hallgrim:

"We are watching all types of Greenland people pass by. Most of the people of the north have gone by. But we had two families that returned

to Sandnes from the Eastern Settlement so they could migrate with us. A family from the very south of Greenland walked with the Amitsau praying house. So we have had people from the north, from the east, and from the south. There will be more people from the east and the south in the next migrations in the years to come.

Hallgrim responded:

Where they came from is not as important as the family connection. Remember the people of Akoman called Styrk, "the white wolf." Well, his sons have led the wolf clan to the west. The wolf clan may be turning toward Akoman now. Then your clan, all those young kids, will be called the beaver clan in Akoman, because they called you "the blond beaver."

Tjalve smiled saying:

You may be right. I may have to find another beaver tail. But you are still wearing your feathers. You wife's relatives know they are part of the eagle clan and you are bringing home more people of the clan. So now we have changed from being Norse to being the eagle clan, the beaver clan, and the wolf clan.

Hallgrim nodded. He made a tally as five strong beaver-heads and their wives, wearing well-built snowshoes, walked past the column. He said, "There goes the best group of men in the whole migration. They are people we could always count on."

Tjalve pointed to the group behind the best men. Three large men and one man who was short and heavy were walking up. The heavy man who carried no backpack was struggling to lift his snowshoes. Tjalve said, "Here comes the richest man in the Northern Settlement. Now that he has abandoned his ships he will have to find another way to accumulate wealth. Perhaps he is already thinking about the way."

Hallgrim said,

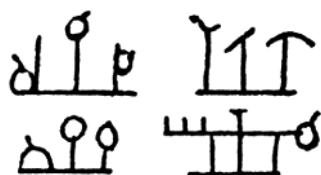
Best men and rich men are good. We need them to make a good life for all. But here comes the most important man, Talerman and his family. The headman, the most important man, is coming last as usual.

Tjalve responded, "He has always done it that way. He feels responsible for all the people. He comes last to be sure all the people have made the journey."

Hallgrim swung his head to the west to look at the people going over the ridgeline. He swept his arm along the line of people as he turned back to Tjalve. He said, "All of the people have made the journey. See all the men with wives."

Hallgrim pointed to Valthjof's sled saying, "Even those men who must sleep with daughters have made the journey. Everybody has come."

Tjalve smiled. He pointed to Runolf's sled and dogs just going to the top of the ridge. Tjalve replied, "Men who must sleep with daughters are near the bottom of the pot. But the real proof that everybody came is when men who can only live with dogs are also on the trail."



A moon and a half later, two utility sleds, one pulled by Arnora and Nokla, and the other pulled by Talerman and Gard, were sliding easily on smooth ice. They were heading south into a warm wind. They had passed the long island off to the east. They were past the point where the shore angled south by slightly east.

Gazing at the shore through the haze, Talerman and Gard felt like they were coming back to a familiar old neighborhood. Talerman asked, "I wonder how many paces it is from here to the shore?"

Gard on the outside of the four pullers quickly replied, "Five hundred."

Nokla on the shore side said, "I think it is seven hundred."

Gard said, "Well, we are not going to stop to walk it, so we will never know, will we?"

Talerman said: "Hallgrim would not be satisfied with that answer. We started the sleds three hundred paces apart. Now they are starting to slant to the east to follow the shoreline. But only four sleds are clearly visible."

Talerman went through his clumsy mental arithmetic of adding 300 to 300 and doubling that sum. Finally he asked, "Nokla, how far ahead is the furthest sled we can see?"

Nokla looked, hesitated, then said, "It is less than twelve hundred paces. I would say eleven hundred paces."

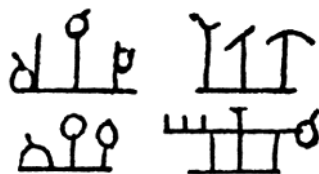
Talerman smiled and nodded to Gard, who preferred to walk on with his usual quiet demeanor.

Midday passed with very little conversation. Then Gard commented, "Now I can see only two sleds ahead. There is light snow in the air. The wind is much softer now. Maybe we should think of preparing for a blizzard."

Talerman concurred:

Maybe you are right. Those black clouds to the west look menacing, and those in the north have been moving closer against a south wind. Someone is coming toward us from up ahead. That must be Runolf and his dogs. Look how fast they are traveling.

Gard said, "Someone is running with Runolf and the sleds ahead are turning toward the shore to find protection in the snow."



Runolf and Aslakson came up to Tjalve's sled on the run. The pullers of Tjalve's sled stopped when Runolf held up his hand. Aslakson had barely shouted the words, "Stop and prepare for a blizzard! Go to the snow on the shore," when Valthjof took his knife and slashed his harness loose from the sled.

Without saying a word Valthjof walked to the side of the sled, reached under the robes, and yanked Eyvind onto the ice. Valthjof grabbed him by the collar and dragged him to the front of the sled, saying, "I say we keep moving. Start pulling or I will hurt this boy."

Runolf saw something bad was going to happen. He said, "I have to tell Talerman about the storm." His whip snapped. The dogs raced toward Talerman.

Grimhild rolled out of the sled as Tjalve tried to calm Valthjof. Tjalve calmly said, "Valthjof, Eyvind is your own child. Why would you want to hurt your own child? Can we do something for you?"

"It is better that he dies quickly than to freeze to death slowly just because a black-haired brown piece of ... Where are you going!" Valthjof shouted to Aslakson who was walking away from the sled, toward the shore.

Aslakson answered calmly, "I have to go into the woods. I cannot wait."

"Oh, you dumb, blacked-eyed, goat. There are no woods here." Replied Valthjof.



“You know what I mean,” said Aslakson, putting his hands on the seat of his leggings.

“Get out of my sight you black-eyed rabbit, and be sure you stay up wind too.” Valthjof turned back to Tjalve to renew his command. “Let’s move now!”

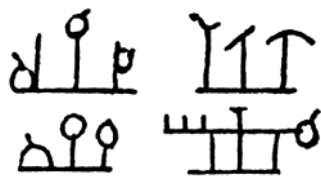
Tjalve tried to change the mood:

Valthjof, look the snow is falling faster. Already we can barely see the sled ahead of us. They are moving toward shore. We must too. The wind will rise soon. Do you think we can walk in a blizzard?

Eyvind screamed. Grimhild shouted, “No!” She ran to Eyvind who was holding his right cheek. Blood was flowing down from under his mitten. She turned to Tjalve at the sled and begged:

Please move. When he is like this he hurts us if we do not follow his orders. Please, there is not a blizzard yet. Do what he says. In time he will be nice to us. Just do not disturb him now.

A man who would hurt his own son puzzled Tjalve. He could not see the sled in front. He turned and saw that Talerman’s sled was coming from behind. Gaining time for the sled behind to catch up would be good. So Tjalve leaned into the harness and said, “We are moving.” Very softly into the ear of the pullers on each side of him he said, “Slowly.”



Moments earlier Runolf and his dogs came to a sliding stop beside Talerman and Gard. Runolf puffed loudly, “Talerman, hurry, Valthjof is doing crazy things up ahead.”

Talerman could barely make out the sled ahead because of the snowfall. Talerman turned and shouted at the sled, “Vifill!” but Vifill’s legs had already popped out from under the robes.

Snatching the third harness from the front sled peg, Vifill said, “I heard the dogs coming. Let’s go.” The three men lunged forward with the utility sled.

Runolf took a several breaths to catch his wind. Then he turned to catch up to the utility sled. When he came along side, Talerman said, "I can barely see Tjalve's sled. Stop and stand still just before you lose sight of Arnora" Runolf slowed the dogs and looked back. Arnora and Nokla were dim shadows in a field of swirling snow. Runolf had trouble stopping the dogs that were still eager to run with the sled in front of them. When they finally lay at his feet, he turned and looked again for Arnora and Nokla. All he saw was swirling white. He raised both arms high and held the whip with both hands. He wanted to be as visible as possible for Arnora and also signal Talerman's sled to stop.

Gard glanced back every other stride. Through the snow, he saw Runolf's raised arms. Gard said, "He has stopped already and he is getting hard to see. I will stay with the sled. You two go ahead." Talerman and Vifill slipped from the harness and raced on.

Vifill said between gasps, "The sled ahead does--not seem to be -- closer."

Talerman, also huffing, answered "It is—but it -- is moving."

Finally Talerman thought he was close enough that the pullers could hear him. He shouted, "Tjalve, stop!"

Valthjof heard the shout. He stopped and turned left as he pulled Eyvind in front of him. Tjalve and the pullers gladly stopped. Valthjof asked, "Who is that?" Talerman and Vifill came out of the swirling snow.

Talerman said, "I am Talerman. We must stop and prepare for a blizzard."

"We never stopped for a blizzard all the way from Greenland. Your words were always, 'Keep moving, do not freeze.' I am not going to stop when we are so close to a safe camp," answered Valthjof.

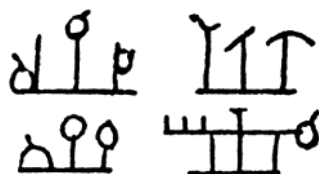
Talerman responded, "Valthjof, we were lucky on the Frozen Trail. Since we left the Big House we never had a snow fall where we could not see the people or sleds ahead, but this blizzard will be worse, much worse. Stop now!"

"My child will never freeze to death," shouted Valthjof as he raised the knife above his shoulder. He was ready to plunge it into Eyvind.

Grimhild grabbed her father's arm crying, "Please, father! These men are going to move." Turning toward Tjalve and Talerman, she pleaded, "Please, move."

Talerman nodded to Tjalve and the other pullers. They began to walk at a slow pace. When he was satisfied the sled was in motion, Valthjof turned around and began to walk. His left hand held Eyvind's right hand. Grimhild took Eyvind's left hand in her left hand and walked slightly behind him, holding her right mitten over the cut on Eyvind's right cheek. Valthjof led his family into the swirling snow, shouting loud enough for the other men to hear, "No filthy black-eyed goat will freeze my family to death."

The other pullers heard Tjalve ask very quietly, “Aslakson, what happened to Aslakson?”



Aslakson had faded into the snow. He counted his paces from leaving the sled. As he kept count, he also was thinking:

This will be like catching a moose that is backtracking to settle down.  
Go toward shore until out of sight, maybe two hundred paces. Turn. Two  
hundred fast paces to the right. Turn. Two hundred fast paces to the right.  
Turn. Be ready. This is a man, not a bear. Go left.

When he had counted two hundred paces, he was alone in a swirling white world. The men and the sled could not be seen or heard. He stopped and carefully aligned his feet. Then he turned his right foot until its toes were at a right angle to the left foot. He brought his left foot around and stood still, feeling the wind. He thought, “The wind is on the left cheek. It has started to turn.” Then he ran forward, fast, for two hundred paces.

He stopped once again in a swirl of snow. He did his deliberate turn to the right. Then he ran forward two hundred paces. He crossed sled tracks. They were just packed ridges of snow on the ice. The rest of the snow had blown away. He thought they were tracks from the sled ahead. He turned right again. He pulled out his knife and held it in his left hand, blade up. Then he started forward at a fast walk, counting the paces.

On the forty-third pace Aslakson saw shadows to his right front. He crouched and angled toward a spot in front of the ghost like figures. When he was aligned head on with the three figures, he began to run toward them.

A small adult was on his right. A child was in the middle, and a large adult on the left. “The big one is the one I want”, thought Aslakson. He aimed for the center of the looming hide jacket.

Grimhild saw him first. Her mitten snapped up to stifle a warning scream. Valthjof was startled by the hurtling shadow. Then he raised his knife.

Aslakson increased his speed and placed the right hand under the left. When he felt the point touch the jacket, he raised up, putting all his strength into both arms,

shoving them upward. He felt a tug on his left legging. He plunged over the child. The child fell backward, pulling Grimhild to the ground on her right side.

Aslakson spun rapidly to his hands and knees, ready for a counter attack. But he saw that Valthjof had fallen forward as most dying men do. A pool of blood was already spreading on the ice. Aslakson then saw Grimhild struggling to rise. He took her left hand and helped her up. He pulled her into him and held her facing away from the scene behind them. Eyvind took her right hand. Grimhild asked, "Is he...?"

"Dead," answered Aslakson. He felt her quiet sobs.

Tjalve, the other pullers, and Talerman had been far enough back in the swirling snow that it looked as if the action happened in a shadow box. They quickly came upon the final tableau. Talerman glanced at the scene and began to direct the action. He said, "Pull the sled up here by the body. Put the sled up wind. Aslakson, where will the wind come from?"

With his left hand, Aslakson pointed back along the trail and slightly to the right. The men quickly placed the sled crosswise to that direction. Then they pulled the body into position along the runner that would be away from the wind. They pounded bone stakes into the ice to hold down the up-wind runner down. The sled had two robes secured to the frame. They were left in place to block the wind. The men pulled the six sleeping robes out of the sled. Three of the robes were placed on the ice next to the body. Three were lashed to the sled for an extended covering down wind.

The snow was falling heavily and the wind was beginning to blow when the other pullers, Grimhild and Eyvind slid under the robes. Tjalve and Aslakson went with Talerman to find Arnora and Nokla.

At first they could not even see Vifill, but then the snowfall eased slightly. Talerman was able to pick him out. Leaving Tjalve to mark a return point, Talerman and Aslakson walked to Vifill. Vifill was shivering from the cold congealing the sweat on his body. Gard was not in sight but Vifill pointed in the direction where he was last seen. Aslakson suggested that Vifill should be moving, so he volunteered to stay in the spot. Talerman and Vifill did see Gard before Aslakson was lost to sight. Then, by the same method, Talerman and Vifill reached Runolf standing in a drift of snow covering his dogs.

Runolf was shivering with cold also. "I thought you were going to leave me. What happened up there?"

Talerman said. "Valthjof is dead. They are making blizzard camp. Where is Arnora?"

Runolf said, “She was right there.” He was pointing away from his left side. “I saw them, but dimly, just before I stopped, but when I looked up after getting my dogs down, there was only snow.”

Talerman had Vifill take Runolf’s spot. He and Runolf took the dogs in the direction where Arnora was last seen. When Vifill became a gray ghost in the swirling snow, Talerman stopped and asked Runolf and the dogs to go as far as they dared to look for Arnora.

The wind began to pick up, the snow was driving horizontally, and darkness reduced visibility by the time Runolf returned to Talerman. Runolf said, “They are not in sight. When I last saw her, we could not have been more than eighty paces apart. I have looked back along the path for a hundred paces. My dogs have not smelled anything. She has vanished.”

Talerman was distraught but he said calmly:

She has not vanished. When the first heavy snowfall hit they were not more than three hundred paces away from Valthjof’s sled. They must have tried to come ahead and missed us. It is getting dark. To try to find them at this time when we do not know where they are would risk too many lives. She is with Nokla. If anyone can think of a way to stay alive in a blizzard, Nokla can.

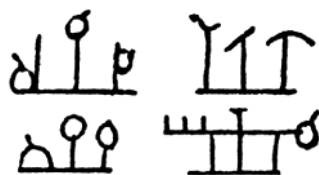
So, the men returned to the blizzard shelter by Valthjof’s sled. On the way they cut ice blocks and set them up right to mark the spots where each man had stood. In the darkness they added Talerman’s sled and robes to the shelter. Then they all lay side by side with their clothes on, feet against the Valthjof’s body, and their heads toward the flap serving as a doorway.

Aslakson lay behind Grimhild with his arm around her waist. He could feel her sob silently. He quietly asked, “You loved him?”

A murmured, “Mmm-Mmm” and faster sobbing was the reply.

Aslakson said, “I am truly sorry.”

Grimhild said through sobs, “It had to be.” Then Grimhild took a deep breath and let it out slowly. She fell asleep before Aslakson did.



Everyone in blizzard shelter slept soundly through the first night. The next day was fretful. Everybody, of course, had to go out for the necessary things, but they did not go far. They squatted next to the robes on the side having the least wind. They tried to pass around pemmican and eat. Mostly they just lay there listening to the strong wind roar and whip the loose ends of the robes. When more than one became uncomfortable on one side, they all turned to the other side. They all were chilled, but none felt that their hands or toes were freezing. They were thankful when darkness and sleep time returned, but they could not sleep. Nighttime was worse than the day. Only Aslakson's prediction kept their spirits up. At the end of the first sleep he had said, "This is a fast moving storm. It may be clear by tomorrow's dawn."

Slightly after dawn Talerman stuck his head from under the flap and said, "Let us go, it is clear. I can see the ice blocks behind us." All of the men scrambled to get out of the blizzard shelter and join the search for Arnora and Nokla.

Soon they all stood around the ice block marking the spot where Runolf had been when Arnora disappeared. To the southeast they could see seven, some said eight, groups of men strung out along the shoreline. The sled teams ahead were digging out of their snow shelters. To the north they saw nothing but low snow streaks on the ice. The west was the same. To their east the shoreline of the land was hard to define because it was covered in white.

Runolf commented, "They did vanish."

Aslakson asked, "How many paces did they have to make to catch Valthjof's sled when you went ahead, Talerman?"

Talerman answered, "They had about three hundred paces. We could see the Valthjof's sled was stopped. But it moved again."

Aslakson said:

So Nokla would have gone forward only six hundred paces and stopped.  
We can see at least five sleds along the shore beyond our blizzard shelter.  
We cannot see Arnora and Nokla's sled on either side of the trail. That is a good sign.

Talerman asked, "Why is that a good sign?"

Aslakson replied, "Because we can see they did not freeze to death out here on the ice. Did Nokla, by any chance, know how many paces it took to get to shore?"

Gard spoke up, "Yes, she thought it was seven hundred paces."

Aslakson said:

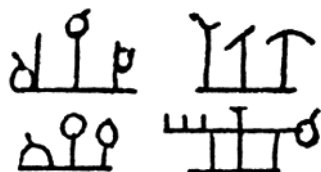
"They were pulling into a light wind when the heavy snow started. They thought they could pull into the wind and walk the correct line through the snow. But the wind was changing rapidly. So they missed Runolf and his dogs. They may have been close, but the snow was too thick. They also missed Valthjof's sled.

"Nokla would have stopped and stayed right there but they did not have enough robes to survive a blizzard in the open, especially one with the wind that strong. If Nokla knew the shore was seven hundred paces away, she would have turned to the left and walked for not more than eleven hundred paces before stopping. They are somewhere on the shore, right there."

Aslakson was pointing east to a spot just south of the point of the land. Gard asked, "How do you know what Nokla would do?"

Aslakson smiled and said:

She is Naigu's daughter. Naigu and my father always talked about weather. Naigusson and I also learned about weather from them. Nokla was always nearby."



Talerman assigned the men sectors to search in the area pointed out by Aslakson. Gard had seen Aslakson point directly at a clump of small trees. He offered to go there. Talerman agreed. The men spread out and walked toward shore. Gard counted the paces. After seven hundred and eleven paces, Gard was standing on the shore at an intersection with the bank of a small stream. Ahead of him was a clump of willows. His eyes searched the white snow banks to the north. At first he did not recognize the handles of the sled. But sensing something about the snow and trees was not correct he looked again. This time he picked out the unnatural carved wood of the sled handles.

With a few quick bounds, he was at the sled. He quickly scooped away the snow with his snowshoes. He found the sled stripped bare.

Gard thought to himself, "Aslakson would say this is a good sign. They did not freeze in the sled. They must be close by."

He shouted, "Nokla, Nokla". He listened and he looked. He saw only snow and nothing else. Nothing except the wind twitching the bare willows. Then he realized the wind was calm and only one willow branch was moving. He hurried along ice on the stream until he was standing opposite the twitching willow. Then he noticed the lance also moving in small circles from the side of the snow bank.

Gard removed the snow with his snowshoe. At the same time he shouted, "Nokla". The back of Arnora's jacket was uncovered first. She rolled half out and said, "It is me, Arnora."

Gard hardly stopped digging as he said "Good. Where is Nokla?"

Arnora answered, "She is at my feet and Thurid is at my head."

By now Gard was puffing very rapidly, but he shoveled the snow away in front of Nokla. Nokla reached out with both arms. Gard started to pull when Nokla said, "Wait, get Awasos first." As Arnora rolled completely out of the snow bank, Gard found Awasos and lifted him out. Then Gard returned to Nokla. He pulled her out and to her feet. Then he hugged her.

Right then Arnora knew her scheme with Nokla was going to work. Nokla hugged Gard for a brief while then she said, "We must get Thurid out. Please help Arnora do it." Gard and his snowshoe flew back into action. Arnora and Nokla stood back. Nokla had Awasos cradled in her right arm. Arnora took Thurid's baby when Gard handed it out of the snow. Finally Thurid was lifted out of the snow cave. Soon three women carrying robes and two babies walked on the ice of the small stream back to the sled. Gard followed with the rest of the robes.

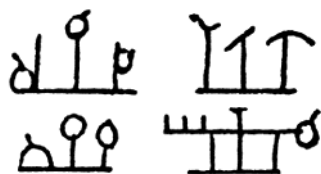
When they reached the sled they quickly cleared it of snow. They replaced the robes and pulled the sled over the low, pressure ridges between shore and the firm ice. Gard went ahead onto the ice, and by waving his arm in an overhead circle signaled the other searchers to come to him.

Aslakson, Talerma, and Tjalve converged on the sled almost at the same time. Gard was pulling the sled with Arnora on one side and Nokla on the other. Thurid, her baby and Awasos rode toward blizzard shelter. Gard waited until the right time, when the other searchers could hear, but before the questions started. Then he said loudly, "It is a good sign, they did not freeze in the snow bank either."



About midday the sleds were reloaded and ready to move. Valthjof's body was covered with snow, making a dignified mound. The men and women gathered around the mound. Tjalve said all of a prayer he could remember. "Our Father, who is in heaven. Hallowed be your name. Your Kingdom come."

The men backed away and moved to the sleds. The women touched the kneeling Grimhild's shoulder and also came to the sleds. Grimhild knelt for a few moments longer before she rose. The other sled pullers were tying themselves into the harnesses. They thought she would want a solitude place to cry, and they left a sleeping spot for her. But she walked directly to Tjalve, took the harness he was holding, and said, "It is my turn to be in the harness."



That afternoon one hundred and seventy-seven sleds moved south in a line on the ice of James Bay. Then the first sleds moved past a spot on the shoreline at dawn. The next dawn the last sleds of the line moved past the same spot. Alas, there were only two sleeps of cold weather. The morning after the blizzard, the ice began to melt, slowing the progress. On the third dawn, Styk, who had made it back to the first sleds of the column, saw water on the ice near the shore. Styk said, "I wish Aslakson were here. I think it is time to leave the ice."

Styk's eldest son looked back up the column and said, "Here he comes and he is waving toward shore." Styk turned all the sleds toward shore. Following their example, the entire column did a left flank movement.

When the sled pullers reached the shore they walked onto melting snow. Muddy earth poked through here and there. Most of the pullers thought they were in a brand new country. But, really, it was near the spot where the first Christian blue-eyes had met K'nistenaus black-eyes three centuries ago. During those centuries, at least six thousand young men from Greenland had already passed the spot on their way to find black haired wives.

Even though they had been told friends would meet them, the people on the ice did not know what to expect in the forest. Knives were positioned in waistbands. Bows and arrows were placed handy in the sleds. Lances were moved to the top of the pemmican. Arnora started to move her lance to a handier spot, but Talerman, with a smile on his face, told her to leave it alone.

The sixteen utility sleds each moved to a position in the center-rear of their own group of ten sleds. As the sixteen groups of eleven sleds came close to

shore, the pullers in each group saw hunters standing on the shore waiting for them. Some hunters were beaver-heads, some had black hair, and a few were blond. All carried only knives in their waistband and all were smiling broadly.

When the sleds came off the ice, there were many greetings of joy and much news was exchanged. Then the hunters on shore guided them to a pre-selected camp spot. From sixteen winter camps, the local people emerged to welcome the people of the nearest eleven sleds. The winter hunting camps of five to eight wigwams each were located about thirty hundred paces apart along the shore. Each hunting camp had prepared a special kill: a moose, a bear, caribou, or several deer, for the sled people.

The feasting and the conversation that night was forever in the memories of both the sled pullers and the awaiting villagers. In the dawn after the sleds reached shore, a beaming Aslakson led Talerman and Arnora to a white-haired, blue-eyed man sitting in a wigwam with his black haired wife. Aslak's first words were, "I have waited a long time for you to come home, young wise one."

With the dawn after the second sleep on land, settling in began. The villages had collected poles for ten or more wigwams in each village. The women of the villages showed the sled women how to set up and cover wigwams. The men were shown local hunting and, more importantly, fishing practices. The fish were starting to come upstream. By the end of the third sleep after coming ashore, one hundred and seventy-seven empty sleds were leaning against warm wigwams.

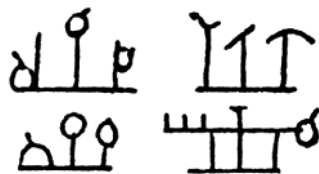
The people from each kirke began to blend into the hunting camps that had absorbed them. Four small tribes of four villages each were formed. After the flower moon came to the sixteen villages, the canoe building began. Usually building a canoe took the local people about a half a moon's time. But the sled people were learning a new skill. Because the new canoe builders were learning, one or more restarts were made. The flower moon passed rapidly. Slowly, as summer came, the sled people became floating people.

When the full strawberry moon shown, Talerman, Arnora, Yngvild and Bjørn were special guests at two wedding feasts. Paafa Ketil performed the marriage ceremony for Gard and Nokla. Gard carried Awasos during the visiting after the ceremony. Awasos, who laughed often and occasionally tugged on Gard's ear, was obviously pleased to be held by Gard. Arnora felt joy, without reservation, for both Gard and Nokla.

Then seven sleeps later Paafa Thord and the powwow from Aslak's village blessed the union of Aslakson and Grimhild. Little Eyvind was also happy. He looked stylish. Like the other young boys in the village, he had black painted stripes on both cheeks. The paint covered his scar.

In the time of the moon of wild rice, Talerman and Arnora traveled through the sixteen villages. They stayed two nights in each village. During the talks around the firepits, Talerman told the village leaders that his role and the role of the other beaver-heads on the trail was ended.

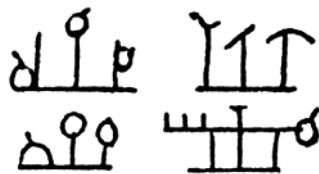
Talerman reminded the people that he and the other beaver-heads had promised the people of the Eastman Land that everyone would move south and west toward Michigamme. He explained that the best way to move would be to go as tribes of the people from the former kirkes. Each tribe would row south in forty canoes divided into smaller traveling bands of ten canoes each. Many of the men in the original hunting camps that took in the travelers were from Eastman Land. They would serve as guides to the new locations along the rivers flowing south and west of Eastman Land.

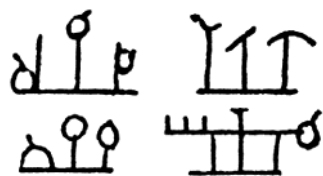


At the start of the moon of falling leaves, four fleets of forty canoes each moved south along James Bay's eastern shore. In the lead canoes Styrk's sons, performing as pathfinders, talked with Haki and his men, serving as guides to Michigamme. Shortly after the last fleet pushed away, a canoe carrying Styrk, Halldis, Gard, Nokla, Vifill, and Runolf with his dogs shoved off and headed north.

Arnora watched the canoe pull away with interest. The canoe carried two of her lifelong friends, one new friend, and three men who still gave her terrifying memories of being trapped alone in a cold, isolated room. But the three men worked well with Bjarni. Bjarni would be in the last canoe. So that must be why he put the men in the first canoe.

Besides the first canoe, Talerman, and Arnora twelve other beaver-heads and their families were going to paddle north. They were going to Merica to prepare the low-wall shelters for the migration of the people who "Hrein-aa-byy."





## Vignette twenty-two

## THOSE WITH DOGS

Azon and Pitolo entered the Big House in their expected positions in the parade. They both moved along the people standing along the side walls. They both visited with the people, but both were also sorting, in their minds, the details of the story they were going to tell later that night. They moved to their usual places to the side of the big house. Each was placed to find their favorite maiden, the quiet one for Azon and Azon's sister for Pitolo, sitting beside them. Then they mentally withdrew from the surrounding activity, and they began to visualize their stories, with gestures, in their heads

The leader of the Big House ceremony gave a few, brief remarks. The powwows called forth the blessings of the Great Spirit with a minimum of words. The drums began the low, slow ruffle. The leader of the Big House called out, "Pitolo and Azon, please go to your speaking spots."

The quiet maiden nudged Azon and told him to go to his speaking spot. He was surprised. Azon looked across at Pitolo. Pitolo was bent over to recover his walking stick from the ground. He must have been surprised too. They met at their speaking spots and turned to face the leader of the Big House. He signaled them to turn around. Then the leader of the Big House said:

We all know that even if the outside air is cold enough to freeze water, the air inside this Big House just gets warmer and warmer as the night goes on. Later when our aarum-tids talk to us, they will want to be cool. They will not want to wear the heavy jackets they will be wearing in the villages this winter. But we think you should see them in their jackets. So we want the aarum-tids to try on their jackets now.

The drums had slowly increased the loudness of the ruffle. The lead drum made a quick, "Thump, Thump" after the word "now". Both drums settled into a walking rhythm. Azon's sister and the quiet maiden held up the jackets for all to see. Then they carried the jackets to the aarum-tids and slipped them on.

The murmur of approval came from the people. Azon turned to look at Pitolo. He saw a competent, very well dressed man. He found it hard to believe the young man was the anxious boy who had entered their tepee about a half moon's time ago. Then Azon realized, "I must look similar to Pitolo."

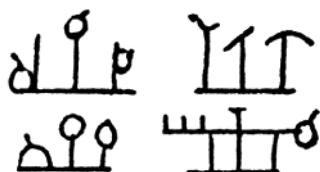
The leader of the Big House called for the parents of Azon and Pitolo. The parents knew what was going to happen. They were sitting near the front end of the Big House. They went forward with swiftness. The leader said:

"During ten nights in the Big House we have given feathers to the many young men who have finished their quest. We have before us two young men, who have taken on a task more difficult than a quest.

"We have seen them grow before our eyes from boys who could hardly speak to competent aarum-tids. We can hear the voice of Maalan Aarum behind their stories, but their growth into aarum-tids is because of the families who taught them about living through difficult situations. So, I present these feathers to the families and request that they present them with pride to their sons."

The two fathers took the feathers and raised them high for all to see. Then they carefully laid the feathers into the hands of their wives. The two wives turned around and placed the feathers into the hands of two maidens. Pitolo's mother passed the feather to Azon's sister. Azon's mother gave the feather to the quiet maiden.

In time with a light cadence, the two maidens walked side by side to Pitolo and Azon. Then they put the feathers into the hair of the young men. The quiet maiden placed her left hand on the lower back of Azon's neck while she reached to secure the feather. Azon's back shivered and his skin made pimples as if he were cold. Azon wondered, "Does she know the sensations her hand is causing?" The quiet maiden gave the hair at the base of the feather a pat with her right hand. The feather was in place. She gave a squeeze with her left hand before she took it away. She knew.



The next morning Azon sat on the ground near the top of the stairs. He was leaning back against a tree. Azon's sister and the quiet maiden approached him with warm meat in two bowls. They studied him. Then they set the food softly on the ground beside him. They smiled and darted down the earthen steps toward the waterway. Azon, bathed in the afternoon sun, was asleep.

Pitolo saw the maidens walking to the Big House as he crossed the stepping stones. He made his way slowly up the earthen steps. The "swoosh, swoosh" of

the leaves did not waken Azon. Pitolo found the meat in the bowls. He picked up one and settled onto a leaf-covered mound near Azon. He reached out with his waking stick and nudged Azon in the ribs.

Pitolo asked, "Should I eat your meat, too?"

Azon woke up looking into the branches of the trees above him. He said, "Uh, it looks like a fish net will catch us all." Pitolo nudged him again. Azon said, "Oh, hello Pitolo, I was finally catching some needed rest."

Pitolo tapped the second bowl with his stick, saying, "You should catch some food also. It will be a long time until the feast tomorrow morning. I hope the Great Spirit lets the women talk all the time, every day, so they will have few words left to say during their time to speak in the Big House."

Azon was fully awake now. He smiled and replied, "We now know why the women have been given the honor of speaking the night before the last dawn. There is no doubt they will find enough words to fill the night until dawn."

Azon picked up his bowl and began to eat the meat. They ate in silence.

Pitolo set down his bowl and said, "There are a few things I am beginning to like about being an aarum-tid. Eating is one of them. But we better pay attention to our roles. If we do not, Maalan Aarum may not reach the end of his story. What is the verse?"

Azon replied:

I am confused. The drums last night made it difficult to think. I guess the verse is something like:

"They all came off the ice.  
They walked over the land.  
They waited through a storm.  
They found friendly people in a new land."

Pitolo smiled and said, "You are a good listener but a poor observer. Your verse does not match the engraving."

Azon responded, "I was not able to make the story match the engraving. The words at the end were worthless."

Pitolo replied:

Old Maalan Aarum is still alert. Maybe he thought he could not make it to the end. He put the words up front, when Hallgrim and Tjalve were talking near the big stone column. The verse he wants us to remember is:

'The men from the north, the east, the south,  
The eagle clan, the beaver clan, the wolf clan,  
The best men, the rich men, the head men,  
Those with wives, those with daughters, those with dogs.'

Azon said, "Oh, I remember those words, but they made sense only in the story."

Pitolo replied:

"They do not seem to make sense for history, but they do. The people from the three directions mean the Frozen Trail went cross the sea to the last direction, west.

"The three clans are those who followed the bear clan. People of those four clans are found in most villages today. The clans help us determine who can marry whom."

"The three types of important men remind us to respect the important men in our villages: the powwow, the powerful trader, and the sachem.

"The three types of lessor men tell us that everyone came."

Azon shook his head and said, "I had most of that figured out, except the three phrases at the end, 'Those with wives, those with daughters, those with dogs'. I could not make sense of them."

Pitolo tilted his head and remained silent for a moment. Then he said:

I had trouble with those phrases too. I think the meaning is that the 'men with wives' tells us that all of the families came. The 'men with daughters' means that even the men having to use their daughters for wives brought their families too. There was probably a stigma around those families, but because they came too, we know that the whole village came.

Azon waited, but Pitolo seemed to be finished. So Azon asked, "What about the men with the dogs?"

Pitolo responded, "How many men do you know who prefer to live with only dogs?"



Azon thought about it, then he said:

Only two men. When our people were sure they wanted to live with only dogs, the village made them stay behind when we moved. Oh? Do you think that phrase means that everyone, really everybody, came?

Pitolo pulled Azon to his feet, saying, "That is what I thought it meant. " Pitolo reached into his medicine bag. He pulled out an engraving.



The engraving showed two rounded mounds on a flat horizon. A vertical stick held a cross stick on the mound on the left, the "From" mound. A bare head was mounted on the side away from the "To" mound. A single symbol of an evergreen tree stood on the right mound, the "To" mound.

Azon looked at the engraving for a long time. Then he said, "Interesting. Let me guess how much you tried to say with these simple symbols. The sticks on the 'From' mound represent the cross without a top, similar to the crosses the women sew into their designs?"

Pitolo nodded "yes" with a hint of a smile.

Azon replied, "And you put the head away from the "to" side to show the reluctance to come to Evergreen Land?"

Pitolo nodded confirmation.

Azon Continued, "And the single Evergreen means you think the people **in** the 'To' land are coming to the tree of lights or life that we have in our old myths?"

Pitolo's smile showed teeth, but he said, "Azon you pushed it a little too far. An evergreen tree is an evergreen tree. Two trees would have been more difficult to draw simply. Besides I just got tired."

Azon studied the engraving again. Then he looked Pitolo in the eyes and said, "Pitolo, I cannot improve on what you have. I will show grandfather my engraving because he wants to see it, but let us not waste time looking at mine now. He will choose yours."

Pitolo nodded and led the way, up the path with the slight grade, through the palisade entrance, along the worn path between the tepees to Maalan Aarum's tepee. Azon's mother, standing in the tepee doorway, saw them as they entered the palisade. She reached down to pick up the rectangular water basket. She turned away from them. When they came near enough to turn into the tepee, she

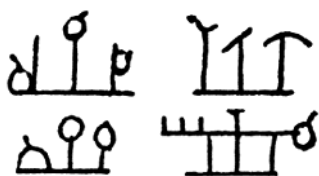
walked away to get water. Neither Azon nor Pitolo saw her tear-stained face with the darkened eye sockets.

Once again, grandfather was lying on his back. The left knee was raised, giving the illusion of more life than before. Azon shook the knee several times before grandfather's eyes opened. Slowly the right knee rose to match the left knee. Grandfather turned his head left and slowly right. When the head stopped on the right side, grandfather indicated by the fingers of the right hand for Pitolo to say his verse. Then Azon said his verse. The finger pointed to Pitolo.

The right hand rolled palm up. Grandfather's eyes looked at Pitolo. Pitolo placed his engraving in Maalan Aarum's hand. Maalan Aarum's head rolled face up and the hand moved the engraving close to his eyes. Then, the right hand placed the engraving on the pile beside Maalan Aarum's right side. Azon was relieved that he was not asked to show his engraving to grandfather.

Grandfather raised both arms. Azon put his head between those arms. He slid his hands under both of grandfather's shoulders and slowly raised him to a sitting position. Azon slid his grandfather backward to the backrest. Pitolo brought the water dipper. Grandfather took it and sipped slowly. Gradually his eyes began to move more. He wiped his lips with his tongue several times. Then he nodded and began to speak.

So, the people of the north had walked the Frozen Trail. But only four masks, of the four northern kirkes, hung on the walls. Eight masks were still hanging in the cold kirkes of the land across the sea. During that cold, cold winter, the people in those kirkes were praying for the beaver-heads to return to show the way to the land prepared for them.



**Engraved Stick 3:19**

The men from the north, the east, the south,  
The eagle clan, the beaver clan, the wolf clan,  
The best men, the rich men, the head men,  
Those with wives, those with daughters

## WORD MEANING

"Hrein-aa-byy" means, "to abide in Hrein" There was an Island and, perhaps, a fjord named "Hrein" in Greenland.

"Hrein" means, "decent" as in "a decent place."