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# *Crack in Time*

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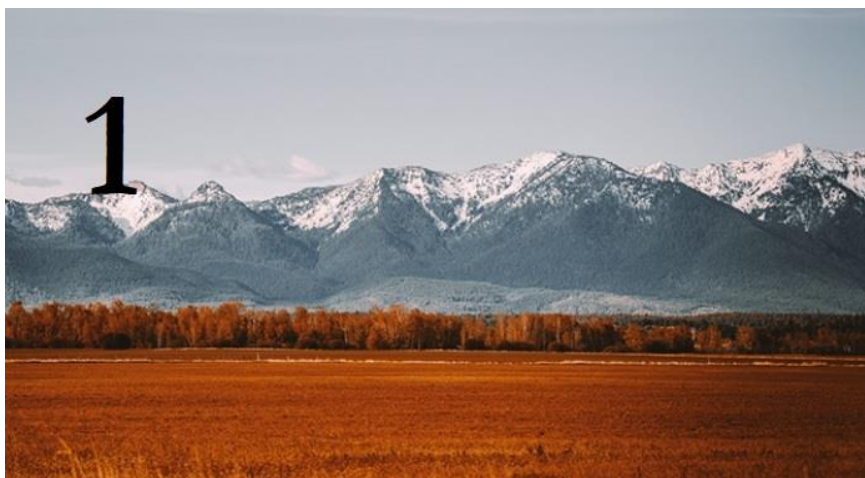
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**T**he stench of conflict and death hung over the meadow at the top of the great mountain pass. The wailing of families who lost loved ones in the violent Morganian attack filled the air as they called out their beloved's name in the traditional way. It seemed almost inappropriate that the day was so bright and sunny.

Off to one side, staying in the shadows of the forest, knelt a young man whispering “Kimi” in unison with the woman who stood shouting the name of the young maiden whose body lay on a nearby burial scaffold in a tree. Hughbo was tiny by comparison to the Pífkani men who, after the horrendous battle, now buried their dead.

Hughbo, was a Hogboon. He lived deep in the great mountains just southwest of the Pífkani village near the secret back entrance of the McAllistar Flaitheas Scáth. He and Kimi had met when they were both out exploring. They became friends and the friendship

turned to love. Perhaps Kimi's parents would never have allowed them to marry, but that was their dream; their dream until the Morganians viciously took her life without reason or remorse.

Kimi was a part of a trio of girls who were inseparable friends and all now dead. Sohkapíni, another Pífkani girl, was buried nearby, while Metarí, a dwarf from Clainn McAllistar, was being buried in a secret grave high above Badrock Canyon many miles away.

As he hung his head in grief, he became aware of his blood covered tunic. He was in the forest on the other side of the mountain from the entrance to McAllistar Flaitheas Scáth when Metarí slipped out of the secret back entrance and almost ran him down in her hurry. She was in a rage and told Hughbo about Sohkapíni and Kimi being murdered by the Morganians. Her father had refused to let her go with the warriors to destroy the Morganian army. She had made a magical dwarf sword, Nat'lunda, which she had hidden in Ruklidome, the ancient cave home of the McAllistars, because the sword master had wanted to destroy it. She was going to Ruklidome to get Nat'lunda and then follow the southern river to where it converged with the middle fork of the river along which the Morganian army was fleeing.

While Metarí went west, Hughbo ran as fast he could northeast to intersect the wild river. The Pífkani had joined forces with the McAllistars and were pursuing the Morganians along the wild river down the great mountain pass. The Pífkani and McAllistars had just passed when he arrived at the river and Hughbo had to hurry to catch up.

When he did, the mild Hogboon became as fierce, as relentless and as deadly as any warrior there. He thought about the Morganians he had killed without remorse. He treated them no worse than they

had treated Kimi and the others. At least he gave them a chance to defend themselves. But no amount of Morganian blood was going to take away the pain he felt.

Hughbo didn't know until much later that Metarí had become a hero. Arriving before the Morganians, she had warned a Salish village and gave her life to save a young Salish boy. She didn't know that it was the chief's son. As a tribute to her valor, the Salish asked Metarí's father to bury her in a special place above the canyon.

As the sun was beginning to drop behind the high mountains, Hughbo knew that it was time for him to start the long journey home. He wanted to stay near Kimi but he knew that he could not.

“Ég mun snúa aftur og bjarga þér,” he whispered as he turned to go. “We will be together again.”

# 2



**D**r. Turin Mar'sil and Bhean Manwathiel, Cathy to her friends and Dr. Mar'sil to her patients, were driving their blue Ford 250 pickup truck on US-2 just west of Browning, Montana. They were physicians at the tribal hospital in Browning, the capital of the Blackfeet nation, and made house calls on the home bound. It had been a hard day. Most of their days were hard yet the two were happier than they had ever been.

If you recall my telling the story of the *New Prince of Coillearnach*, you will remember that Cathy is the granddaughter of Brian Prionsa Ferguson, a silver wizard who just happened to be Prince Consort to Alainn Banrion, queen of Clainn Coillearnach. Her grandfather and the queen had created a foundation in honor of their deceased spouses; Bridget Ferguson and Prionsa Fionn. The foundation has two divisions; the BPF Hospital, which is a free

research hospital that serves both humani and draíochta and the Land Preservation division that buys land near parks and wilderness areas to keep mining and other destructive commercial businesses away from fragile ecosystems. In the book *'Tree of Life'* the North Fork area of Montana where Dr. Deming lives was about to be taken over by greedy developers who would not only destroy the environment but put lots of local people out of work. The North Fork is located between Canada on the north, Idaho on the west and Glacier National Park on the east. Polebridge – population 15 – was the community center for the North Fork. It is 25 miles from Apgar Village in Glacier National Park, and most of that is unpaved. When some rich people bought land in the area in 2014 and tried to get the road paved, the community banded together to stop any paving. They made their living from people coming to experience the wilderness. Their motto during the campaign was “no McDonalds” since they figured that, if they paved the road, a McDonalds or some other fast-food restaurant would soon be there. Of course, there still wasn't electricity. The families that live in the North Fork have diesel generators or solar, and a few have their own hydro power. One of the first places most staff members working on the west side of the park went when they arrived for work was the Polebridge Merchantile to enjoy their pastries.

The BPF Land Preservation team outbid the developers, put local people in charge of the land and designated much of it as wilderness, which protected it for the local people. In other situations, the BPF Foundation will help develop jobs related to the land they save often improving the economic health of the local people.



After the victory over Socusdus and his Ceann a dhualgas<sup>1</sup>, Cathy and Turin had returned to Coillearnach and the BPF hospital in Atlanta, only to realize that they had fallen in love with the northern Rocky Mountains. They didn't last long back in the city, even though they could easily escape to her grandfather's home in the forest of Coillearnach any time they wanted. They moved from Atlanta to a small ranch on the western edge of the Blackfeet reservation by US highway 2.

At Cathy and Turin's request, the BPF Foundation started supporting the tribal hospital. No one, except Napikyáiyó, the tribal Áípi'kssokinaki (shaman), knew that the two doctors had anything to do with the Foundation. Napikyáiyó, you will remember, became a very close friend of Clainn McAllistar and when they wanted to return to Montana he helped Cathy and Turin get permission to buy the ranch on reservation land.

The ranch was located on Heart Butte Cutoff about a mile and a half from US-2. It was mostly forest, which was fine with Turin and Cathy. They loved their view. To the west they could see Bear Head, Dancing Lady, Calf Robe, Red Crow and Grizzly mountains in the Lewis Range that ran basically north and south along the edge of the park and reservation.

They were quite happy living in their three-room log cabin. Immediately inside the front door was a sitting room with a large fireplace. Originally this had been for heat and cooking but now they had a kitchen with a propane fridge and cook stove. A cast

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<sup>1</sup> There are many difficult names in this story. It can't be helped. Your name would look strange and difficult if the book was written in another language. You will find explanations of terms and names in the indices at the end of the book.

iron Franklin insert had been put in the fireplace to make it more efficient. The third room was their bedroom. They did install a propane heater in there because Montana winter nights can get mighty cold.

The cabin had been old and dilapidated when they bought the ranch, but a lot of determination and TLC had restored it. The only things they added were a solar energy system, a large propane tank and a magical door leading to a spot near the McAllistar Flaitheas Scáth so they could quickly and easily go visit their family and friends there. They didn't have the time or interest to do any ranching, so they let their neighbor use their land.

As a thank you, the neighbor helped cut and cord wood for the winter. Like the old Pííkani they didn't really believe in owning land anyway. You were a part of the land; one with the land which you were permitted by nature to use to live. Turin and Cathy had come to understand the Blackfeet belief that everything in nature is alive.

Cresting a hill Turin brought the truck to a sudden stop. Standing in the middle of the road was a Bison cow with a calf at her side. Beyond her was a herd of bison so large that it was impossible to see it all at one time.

"That's women's rights for you," Turin laughed.

"What do you mean?" Cathy feigned insult.

"I know it sounds sexist, but don't the bulls usually pull road guard duty?" Turin laughed.

Even though the two were not Native Americans and were not registered members of the tribe, they were very proud of how their

new friends and neighbors; their new family; were dealing with the hardships of white domination. After many decades of crooked Indian agents that took their food, religious boarding schools and churches that attempted to destroy their culture, language and heritage and being treated like second-class citizens, the Blackfeet were making progress. One of their most successful community projects was spread out before the couple, i.e. two of the largest bison herds in North America.

As they sat watching the herd slowly cross the highway, they talked about their day. It had been rather typical. There had been lots of ranch injuries; cuts and bruises and broken bones. Most people don't realize that farming and ranching are dangerous occupations. COVID was still an issue even though the members of the tribe were extremely careful. Sadly, tourists, who gave little thought to carrying the deadly disease, were the source. During the pandemic the tribe had actually closed the reservation to visitors. Fortunately, since the vaccine became available, there were almost no deaths, but those who did get it were very sick.

Cathy had some relief from the usual pain and injury cases by sharing the joy of new life with two women. The local midwife, whom Cathy greatly admired, was in Great Falls, so Cathy helped out with two home deliveries.

Women in this part of the world are particularly tough. Sadly, their stories seldom make the white male-dominated history. People seldom seem to wonder about what it took to maintain a home and care for children in the wilderness.

The native women fared a very little bit better than their white counterparts, and that's only because the tribal members stayed close together in camps. The work was equally difficult for both.

The story is told of one native woman who saved her husband from certain death by becoming a decoy and leading the enemy away from her injured husband. Another story tells about a woman whose husband built a cabin far out in the wilderness down the pass from today's reservation. She went to town to have her baby while he was away hunting. She was taking the train up the mountain pass to go home with her newborn. There were no stops, so as the train got slower and slower as it struggled to climb the steep pass, she threw her newborn into a snowbank, jumped in after it, then walked the rest of the way home.

Rounding the bend into East Glacier the two decided that it was about time to talk about dinner. Neither being up for cooking, and a complete lack of leftovers, they concluded that they had two logical choices; viz. eat at the Two Medicine Grill or pick up a pizza at the Glacier Park Trading store. By the time the railroad depot came into sight they had decided to stop at the store. Cathy picked out a bottle of wine while Turin ordered the pizza.

This was living at its best, they thought as they turned down the mile and a half of gravel road leading to their cabin. No city traffic. No rush hour. No long drive-thru lines. Turin poked the coals in the old Franklin stove and threw in a log. Cathy put the pizza on the table and got out some plates and a couple of plastic glasses for their wine.

"Should we give it time to breathe," she joked.

"Naw," Turin laughed, "let be uncouth and just drink it."

"May I come in," a voice said. It was Isla's voice.

"Sure, but bring your own glass," replied Cathy.

A door that would have otherwise gone unnoticed opened and Isla Metarí entered.

“I didn’t mean to interrupt your dinner,” she sincerely apologized. Isla had not always been a dwarf princess and had had pizza and wine for many a meal.

“That’s okay,” said Turin. “At least you’re not telling me I’m needed in the ER STAT.”

They all laughed. Before coming to Montana, marrying Sorg and becoming a princess and mother, Isla had been a physician at the BPF Hospital in Atlanta as well.

“Join us,” Cathy offered.

“No thanks,” said Isla, “but it smells good. Did you get it at the Trading Post?” She laughed at the thought of how hard it was to get her husband to take her to the humani metropolis of two-hundred people to get a pizza. He had grown up in the McAllistar Flaitheas Scáth and going to East Glacier was equivalent to taking a space shuttle to Mars.

“I just wanted to let you know we’re expecting Minaku and your brother. Thought you might want to come see them.”

“Thanks, we’ll try to make it.”

Isla reached over, took the tip off one of the pieces of pizza and a sip of Cathy’s wine. “oh, my! I remember those days!” With that she disappeared through the door leaving Cathy and Turin sitting there laughing.



**M**inaku and Kevin loved life at Coillearnach Academy although they did find it difficult to go out in public without becoming the main attraction. Most of the young boys at the academy had a crush on Minaku. She would occasionally spend an evening in the student common room, sitting by the fireplace and telling them stories of the Pííkani people. The boys especially liked to hear more modern stories about the brotherhood dealing out well-deserved justice. Little did they know that Minaku and Mahx were members of the Brotherhood. Wonder Woman had nothing on Minaku.

Kevin, Cornelius and Valiard became known as the Triar Draoi, a heroic wizard troika. It got to the point that any time the three of them were in a public place together, especially some place like the

village pub or student commons, they were deluged by questions which almost inevitably began “did you really . . . ?” Interestingly enough, the answer was usually “yes”.

Kevin’s grandfather, Brian Prionsa Ferguson, and his wife, Alainn Máthair banríon, now the queen mother, had always found Kevin to be a source of excitement and entertainment. Yes, Kevin was a genius which was confirmed by his having already written a book on magic and quantum physics by his early twenties and being the youngest professor at Coillearnach Academy, but he always had a bit of mischief in him.

When he learned, at age twelve, that he was a fairly powerful wizard, he immediately thought of Harry Potter and Quidditch. He was horribly disappointed to learn that there really was no such game even at the real Hogwarts, but that didn’t stop him from secretly figuring out how to fly a broom. He and two friends had become relatively accomplished. When Apollyon broke through the flaitheas scáth during the Battle of Coillearnach, Kevin and his two friends took to the air on their broomsticks to help stem the onslaught of Manawydon. The Manawydon were fearless but they were not good fighters because they were mindless creatures created by a powerful wizard from debris and organic waste. The boys would fly over the Manawydon hordes and shot down plasma bolts. That did destroy some of the creatures, but mostly it distracted them so that the Coillearnach defenders could destroy even more.

All three of the boys had lived in the humani world until they were ten to twelve years old. When they were sixteen-year-old students at the Coillearnach Academy they sneaked out and went to visit a nearby town in an old car they found abandoned in the forest near

the humani highway. They ended up being pulled over by a State Trooper. Since there was no way to communicate with their parents they were forced to use magic, also against the rules, to get away. Years later Kevin encountered the same trooper who told him about three boys who somehow got away. He said he was so embarrassed that he never told anyone the truth.

Minaku started studying with her father, and students loved it when she would share his wisdom with them. Having themselves suffered the ‘slings and arrows’ of outlandish slander, the students could not get enough of this bigger-than-life indigenous humani. Listening to Minaku the students began to make the connection between magic, nature and science. They began to realize that magic wasn’t just something you do but was an integral part of nature. Kevin and his fellow faculty members would frequently tell Minaku how her influence on the students was impacting them in very positive ways and helping them in every subject. The girls at the academy were becoming stronger and more confident. They began to see themselves as valuable contributing members of the community, not as ‘girls’ or even ‘women’.

So that they could travel back and forth between the academy and the reservation, Kevin built perhaps the busiest port key in North America between a little cabin just outside the Coillearnach Flaitheas Scáth and a spot not far from her father’s home by Nínaistáki, the sacred mountain.

It was during one of Minaku’s trips home to study with her father that Kevin went along and Napikyáiyó planted the idea of a draiochta academy for Clainn McAllistar. Before they returned to Coillearnach the couple visited the McAllistar Flaitheas Scáth.



They loved to visit McAllistar Flaitheas Scáth. Gadin Ri was always the consummate host and they got to spend time with their boter, Demdiahilda. Demdiahilda is Isla and Sorg's twelve-year-old daughter. A boter is like a humani godchild. She had always been a precocious child. Now at an age where their magic education begins, she was even more advanced than originally thought.

Demi, as Kevin started calling her, was a female version of the young Kevin Beaulac. She was extremely intelligent and fiercely independent and adventuresome. It was the discussion of Demdiahilda's latest adventure that prompted Kevin to bring up the idea of a draiochta academy for Clainn McAllistar.

Kevin, Minaku, Isla, and Sorg were sitting with Ara and Gadin in their dayroom. As they were all laughing at Sorg's story of one of Demdiahilda's recent adventures, Kevin said, "what would you think of an academy for Demi and children like her?"

The room immediately became hushed and all eyes turned toward Gadin.

Gadin sat quietly thinking for a few minutes. For him this was not an off-hand question to be taken lightly. Finally he spoke.

"We have never had a formal education," he started. "I guess we never saw the need and, honestly, until I met you, Kevin, and your colleagues, I didn't have much use for academics. I guess I always thought you didn't live in the real world." Gadin laughed.

"That belief isn't totally without merit," Kevin interjected. The group all laughed. Kevin was sure they were all thinking of loveable Professor Penmaster. Well, Kevin too might occasionally fit that description.

“What I mean,” continued Gadin Ri, “is that whether or not you live your daily lives out of touch with everyday reality, your knowledge and skills are of real and daily value as you proved when you helped save Clainn McAllistar. I would not object to an academy for children like my granddaughter, but I would wonder how practical it would be.”

“Father,” said Sorg, “Isla and I have been talking about asking your blessing on sending Demdiahilda to Coillearnach. If we had our own academy, she would be able to be near home.”

“Good point,” Gadin Ri smiled. “but are there enough others to make it worth it?”

“Oċe,” Isla addressed her king and father-in-law as a grandfather. “Do you know why humani and draiochta teenagers will go off to school in another realm when they have a good school near home?”

“No, why? That doesn’t make sense.”

Everyone except Ara and Gadin laughed.

“They want to get away from home,” Isla smiled. “An academy here could have two benefits. First it would give our young people a way to get away without going very far. It would be different enough to fill the need for a new adventure. It would also be a place for other young people to come to get away from their everyday routine as a child and explore someplace new.”

“Really?” exclaimed Gadin.

“Yes, definitely. I grew up in Coillearnach. I went to a humani college because I wanted to get away and be my own boss.”

Everyone laughed. “Young draiochta from around the country will want to come here. It would be good for everyone.”

“And as an academic,” Kevin offered, “I would make sure that the McAllistar teenagers and their families would know that this is just an option, not something superior. Both home schooling and apprenticeship as well as academia have their advantages. In fact, I would like to try an experiment where people of any age could come to the academy and spend whatever time they wanted to either learn something new or advance their skills. I’m beginning to see that a school does not exist just to hand out diplomas.”

By the time Kevin and Minaku were heading home to Coillearnach it had been decided that Kevin should explore the possibility of an academy at McAllistar.



Within weeks Kevin had the basic plan for a McAllistar Academy and Cornelius Penmaster and Valiard Armgrom were eager to join the new faculty.

Recruiting faculty was going to be the biggest challenge. Kevin knew that there were quite a few world class Dwarf academics. The trick was going to be to get them to leave their current positions to teach in a brand-new school in the wilderness of the northern Rocky Mountains.

His first target was Dr. Adgrim Stormhorn. Dr. Stormhorn was a graduate of Coillearnach, so she knew Kevin’s grandparents even if she didn’t know him. She had earned her PhD in theoretical and

quantum physics at the humani Harvard University. Her dissertation was on instantaneous travel through quantum mechanics. Since she knew that such travel was possible since she had done it since she was a child, her interest was understanding the quantum physics of the process to see if it might lead to other types of travel, like time travel. She was currently teaching at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The mention of being the Science of Magic professor at Coillearnach got Kevin an appointment.

Dr. Stormhorn's office was mostly a private laboratory. There was a desk, piled high with books and papers, in one corner with a single chair, just in case someone might be courageous enough to enter. The walls were a line of large classroom chalkboards that slide up and down. Every one of them was filled with formulas and computations. Adgrim obviously had a pension toward doing things the old fashion way. After all, she started at Coillearnach which was far from a computer stronghold. Kevin hoped that that was a good sign.

"Dr. Stormhorn," Kevin greeted the physicist, "I'm Kevin Beaulac. Thank you for seeing me."

Adgrim looked up with a smile. "Truthfully, few people really want to see me. What can I do . . . ." Before she could finish her question the shock on her face told Kevin that he had been recognized. "You're *the* Professor Dr. Beaulac who actually flew a broom in the Battle of Coillearnach, wrote the book '*Magic as the practical application of quantum physics*', dang I wish I could reference your work in the humani world, and are the youngest faculty member in Coillearnach Academy history, among other

things.” She stood staring for a long moment and then added, “To what do I owe this honor!”

“In truth,” Kevin said very sincerely, “I’m the one who is honored. I read your dissertation on instantaneous travel through quantum mechanics. It was brilliant and a contributing factor in my decision to pursue quantum physics.”

Adgrim laughed. “I didn’t think anyone other than my committee read my dissertation, and they *had* to read it. So I guess this is the first meeting of the mutual admiration society.”

“I might as well come right to the point,” said Kevin. “I’m not very good at schmoozing. I’m here to try to recruit you for a new draiochta academy in Montana.”

“Montana!?”

“It is a magnificent place high in the Rocky Mountains among Clainn McAllistar.”

“I’ve heard of them,” said Adgrim. “Isn’t that where a young dwarf named Isla Metarí defeated a Ceann a dhualgas?”

“One and the same,” Kevin grinned. “Isla married Sorg Prionsa and I’m their daughter’s boter. We want to start an academy because there is a need there as well as in North America in general. It is a beautiful place and . . . .”

“What makes you think I’d leave a cushy job at MIT to teach in the woods?” Adgrim interrupted.

“I met Isla when she was a teenager in Coillearnach. She became best friends with my sister, Cathy . . . .”

“Bhean Manwathiel,” Adgrim again interrupted in an excited manner. “You’re one of Alainn Banrion and Brian Prionsa Ferguson’s grandchildren. You’re royalty!”

Kevin hadn’t expected this from a hardcore scientist. “Well, yes, but I’m more the science nerd who always got into trouble.”

Adgrim laughed. “So you knew Isla Metarí when she was a teenager.”

“Yes. She and Cathy were best friends, and when Cathy went to help Clainn McAllistar Isla insisted on going because she had never lived anywhere where she was the norm. The first reason that she went to Montana was to experience being in a community of Dwarves, to find and experience her roots.”

“And what has that to do with you recruiting me?”

“I’m recruiting you because I want to have the finest Dwarf physicist in the world teaching physics and the science of magic. I told you Isla’s story because I bet you find it lonely from time to time not only living in the humani world but being a dwarf in the humani world.”

“You’re not very subtle,” said Adgrim mulling over what Kevin had said.

“That’s never been my strong suit,” Kevin laughed. “But I’m telling the truth. You are a world class scientist in both the humani and draiochta worlds. If you were to join our faculty, you would not only be a marvelous teacher, but you would attract the brightest students from around the world.”

“Hmmm,” Adgrim was at least considering it.

“And I can promise you that I’ll get you anything you want to continue your research. No more applying and begging for research grants. You name it, we’ll get it for you.”

“You can do that?”

“Did my grandparents found the BPF Foundation?”

A grin came to Adgrim’s face. What would she be giving up? She’d be giving up a faculty position with one of the most prestigious humani universities. She’d also be giving up a life of loneliness in the humani world.



Kevin’s next target was Thomand Ashtone, currently Professor of Transfiguration at the famous Uagadou School of Magic in Africa. A graduate of Hogwarts, one of the premiere schools for transfiguration, he went on to study at Livermorny and Uagadou where he later joined the faculty. Thomand’s skills are legendary. Kevin’s concern was that, unlike Dr. Stormhorn, Thomand had no connections. However, Ashtone was a member of Clainn Snowheart, a clan that comes from the highest mountain peaks in Europe. Perhaps the idea of returning to the mountains might tempt the professor to join the McAllistar faculty.

Since neither Kevin nor Minaku had seen Africa, they decided to make it a mini-vacation. Besides, they never really had a honeymoon.

Uagadou, Kevin assured Minaku, has an excellent reputation. The school is about the same age as Hogwarts and has achieved an enviable international reputation. In fact, it was a Uagadou graduate, Babajide Akingbade, who succeeded Albus Dumbledore as Supreme Mugwump of the International Confederation of Wizards.

The school is located in the Mountains of the Moon region of western Uganda near the humani city of Fort Portal in the Ruwenzori Mountain Range. These mountains were thought to be the “Mountains of the Moon” described by the second century geographer, Claudius Ptolemaeus, known to most English speakers as Ptolomy.

To be the consummate tourists, Minaku and Kevin took a humani airplane to Cairo and then a tour boat to Aswan. There they rented a plane for the remainder of the trip, following the Nile south and stopping in Khartoum and Juba.

They ended their flight in Kampala. With a population of well over one and a half million people, Kampala is the capital of Uganda. Located on the famous Lake Victoria, Kevin and Minaku made an excursion to the lake. Not being particularly fond of large cities, they rented a car and headed west on highway A109 toward Fort Portal. Fort Portal is only about 180 miles from Kampala but the trip took a good seven hours.

Fort Portal is a tourist town of about forty-thousand people and much more to Minaku and Kevin’s liking. In the same Ruwenzori Mountain Range as Uagadou Academy, Fort Portal is built along the beautiful Mpanga River. It was here that they met Akiki Kizito, the Uagadou game keeper who was in Fort Portal to get supplies.





Kevin figured that Fort Portal was the Toyota capital of Uganda and maybe of Africa. The tourist drove Toyota Rav 4s while the local preference was the Toyota Hilux. Akiki led the two to his shinny black Hilux with the high clearance and above the cab air intake for when the engine ends up under water when fording a river.

He headed south along the A109 to the town of Hima where he turned toward the mountains weaving through a maze of roads and trails.

“This is why we always meet new students and visitors in Fort Portal,” Akiki laughed. “Once we get to the end of the road we will use the oldest form of travel known in Africa.”

“Wow,” said Kevin, taking the bait. “what’s that?”

Minaku almost folded over with laughter and Akiki was laughing so hard the truck started swerving back and forth down the dirt track.

“He said we’re going to walk,” Minaku said gasping for breath.

Kevin looked out the window and pouted for a few minutes but the magnificence of the mountains before them quickly overcame his bruised ego.

The road ended just past the Ruboni Community Camp. They could see tourist hotels along the river. They set out on foot, soon passing the Nyakalengija Ranger Station. From there on there was no trail. They made their way to the Mubuku River and followed it up the mountain.

The forest was dense and humid. The common trees looked exotic to Kevin and Minaku; Albizia, Dombeya, Olea, Podocarpus milanjanus, Prunus Africana and Symphonia globulifera. They admired everything around them as they made their way up the river. Akiki, in his normal jovial manner, laughed politely. He liked these Americans who were so appreciative of his home. Akiki was a member of the Bakoozo tribe and this was his home.

The three hikers followed the river for a bit over three miles to the Nyabitaba Hut, a resting place for trekkers. There were a few humans there who gave a friendly greeting. They were too busy preparing for their ascent to the John Matte Hut on the flank of Mount Baker to pay any attention to the newcomers.

Akiki headed off north straight toward an almost perpendicular wall that was Mount Gessi. Minaku and Kevin were wondering just how Akiki was going to get up this cliff when he stopped and looked around to be sure no one was in sight. Pointing his finger at the solid rock he spoke some words in Swahili. The wall opened exposing a tunnel.

“No wand,” said Kevin. “Impressive.”

“Wands are a European invention. We have always used our fingers.”

“Most draiochta I know couldn’t do that to save their lives.”

“Really?” Akiki seemed sincerely surprised. “It’s just how we were taught.”

The tunnel was a long s-shaped passageway which opened on the draiochta side with a magnificent view of the Mountains of the Moon with Uagadou perched on top.

The school, being about the same age as Hogwarts, looked to the European eye like a very square version of a medieval castle from a distance. However, when you got closer you could see the Kushite influence with much of the same architectural style and art as Jebel Barkal where both the Kush and Egyptians had temples. The Kush conquered Egypt in 727 BCE starting the line of “Black Pharaohs” and Jebel Barkal became a holy place to both kingdoms.

Arriving in a large entry with a long flight of stairs leading up into the main building, a student ran to tell Professor Ashtone that his visitors had arrived.

Uagadou is African elegance at its most spectacular. High walls and tall graceful towers blending into the magnificence of the mountain, the massive structure makes its Medieval European counterpart look positively primitive. The mosaics on the wall of the entry and up the stairs told the story of the people of the Kingdom of Kush. The Kush territory had extended to the foot of the mountains and the locals were rightfully proud of this heritage. European racial prejudice didn’t accept the prowess and advanced culture of the dark-skinned Kushite. Europeans had a hard enough time accepting the Egyptians who are a bit lighter skinned but still not ‘white’. Kevin always felt uncomfortable when someone referred to Uagadou as the Black Hogwarts.

Professor Ashton was a tall, slender man who preferred a tweed suit to a wizard's mantle. He was friendly, soft spoken and unassuming. He and Akiki showed Kevin and Minaku around the academy. Their academic program was as impressive as their building.

They concluded the tour outside the headmasters office. The school was unique in that it had a male and female headmaster. No one knew the origin, but it had served the school well for over a thousand years so there was no reason to change it.

Deidarabochi Pleiadian was the head mistress. Kevin had often found the term "black" inappropriate. He had met a boy years ago who, when called "black" said "I'm not black. I'm brown." And he was right. Deidarabochi was black. Very black. She was quite tall, around five foot ten inches. She wore a black brocade gown with gold and silver ornaments. Her hair was done in the traditional Ugandan braids. There was no way to guess her age. To say that she was stunning was an understatement. Kevin thought she was beautiful.

Minaku leaned over and whispered to Kevin. "That's a powerful woman and she knows it."

Kosy Vandrous was the headmaster. He was a bit of a contrast. He was almost as tall as Deidarabochi with dark skin but snow-white hair and beard. While the beard was cut close to his face, his hair was long and hung over the shoulders of his simple grey tunic. Kevin noticed a scarlet academic gown hanging over his desk chair. To Kevin this was the Uagadou Penmaster and he whispered that to Minaku who giggled at the thought.

Kevin was actually quite worried that one of these people were going to ask the purpose of their visit. Kevin's social skills, or perhaps lack thereof, would not be able to handle that and he'd probably blurt out that he had come to recruit Professor Ashtone to teach at McAllistar. Minaku was well aware of his dilemma but had no solution. She figured that she might interrupt in such a way as to change the subject.

"Did Professor Ashtone bring you here to help with our discovery?" Asked Kosy Vandrous.

"No," replied Kevin totally surprised. "What type of discovery do you need help with?"

"A couple of our students were exploring a cellar up against the mountain," Ashtone explained "and found a passageway. They found what appear to be humanoid remains."

"Of course," Deidarabochi added, "you can't tell the difference between draiochta and humani bones and what we can see doesn't give us any clue either."

"Because we don't have the archeological skills, we're not touching any more without professional guidance," said the headmaster. "If they are humani remains we'd like to let the humani archeologists study them, but then there's the problem of the passageway that leads right into the school."

"May we see it?" asked Minaku.

"Would you really like to?" replied Ashtone, "It's pretty dirty down there."

Minaku laughed. "I grew up playing in the dirt." She paused and pointed her thumb at Kevin. "Him. Not so much."

"That's not fair," Kevin protested as the others laughed.

Soon the six were squeezing through a small opening in a cellar wall. The wall was the side of the mountain upon which the school was built.

Picking up and lighting torches that were laying near the opening, the group started down the narrow, low passage which grew larger as they got farther into the mountain. It crossed a stream and then began to descend.

As they walked, Minaku and Kevin looked around in awe. This was the same crystalline formation they had passed through on their way to the school.

"This is awesome," Minaku exclaimed.

"The entire Ruwenzori Range is like this," Akiki smiled. "The range was uplifted as a block about three million years ago. They are the highest non-orogenic, non-volcanic mountains in the world."

"The highest non-oro-what?" asked Kevin.

"Non-orogenic is just a simple term to describe mountains that were not made by the collision of two tectonic plates."

"Are all non-orogenic mountains crystalline?"

"No, but from what I've read, a crystalline base layer will succumb to pressure and literally pop to the surface covered with a blanket of sedimentary rock. That's what we have here."

Akiki's geology lesson would have continued but the passage opened into a large crystalline room. Between beautiful crystalline

towers were graves. Some were partially open while others were covered with rock.

Well, here it is," said the headmistress. "We only examined those that were partially exposed."

"We were wondering if they were Reiki healers since each grave is surrounded by crystals," said Thomand. "Many witches and wizards use the power of crystals."

"Crystals are amazing," Kevin added. "Even humani scientists are amazed by them. With modern humani technology they have found how to store data. They can put 360 terabytes of data in a crystal about the size of your old shilling coin."

"But that's modern technology," said Minaku.

"True, but that's modern *humani* technology. "

"He's right," Thomand chimed in. "Draiochta have been using crystals for millennium. If these folks are draiochta, then there could be something in the crystals."

"That still leaves us with the problem that brought us here," said the headmaster.

They all stood looking around at the chamber of graves until Kevin finally spoke.

"Have there always been draiochta here?" he asked.

"As far as we know Draiochta were not indigenous to the mountains," Deidarabochi said. "The first arrived with the school about 950 CE."

Kevin promised to have the bones carbon dated by some humani friends who would not ask questions. If they pre-date the school, there is a better than average chance that they are locals – Bakoozo or Kush. Kevin wanders over to the cave opening as he spoke and looked out. Just beyond the ledge was a sheer drop of several hundred feet.

“Has anyone wondered how they got the bodies up here?”

The others looked over the ledge.

“Call me a skeptic, but I don’t see how anyone, draiochta or humani, came up that wall.”

“Scaffolding?”

“That would be one heck of a build even today.”

More silence as they looked down.

“It would lead me to believe that they most likely came in the same way we did,” Thomand finally spoke.

“And if that’s the case,” Akiki continued that train of thought, “it would mean that this pre-dates the academy and is humani.”

“Makes sense,” said Kevin, “but I’ll still have a bone or two carbon dated.”

Minaku and Deidarabochi had turned their attention to the crystals. Deidarabochi was explaining some of the draiochta uses when Minaku tapped one. There was a beautiful clear bell-like tone which was answered by countless other crystals in the room.

“I’d say she just might have shot our ancient humani theory down,” said Kosy looking around in wonder.



As Minaku tapped another crystal and the room was filled with the response, Kevin had a strange sensation. He doesn't usually react to the presence of magic. That was one of Valiard's skills, but he couldn't shake the feeling.

Moving around the room he was finally led to a grave that was capped with a massive stone. This was someone important. It took all six of them to move the stone. Inside were the remains of a woman holding a crystal scepter.

Words of exclamation came from all in the chamber.

"That had to be one powerful woman," Deidarabochi was the first to speak. Minaku gave her a look which told her to elaborate. "A scepter in the hands of a draiochta is an extremely powerful device. It can give the user the ability to fire lethal energy blasts, communicate by Astral projection and bend the will of others."

"I sure hope she was a good woman," Minaku quipped.

"I have never heard of anyone so powerful," said Akiki.

Thomand, being the closest, leaned over to pick up the scepter. It gave him a jolt that knocked him backwards.

"Does that remind you of someone we know well?" Minaku said to Kevin. He just shook his head as he continued to stare at the scepter.

"Would you mind sharing?" asked Kosy.

"Oh! Sorry," apologized Minaku. "We have a dwarf friend who was led to the grave of a famous and powerful dwarf princess. The princess, Metarí, had made a great sword which she was holding in her grave. The sword would not let anyone near except our friend

Isla. In the end Metarí and Isla joined becoming Isla Metarí who ...”

“Defeated the Ceann a dhualgas!” exclaimed Akiki. “You actually know her?”

“Actually we were there when she emerged from the grave as Isla Metarí.”

“My point is,” Minaku tried to regain control of the conversation, “it wasn’t that the sword didn’t want touched, but it would only allow one person to touch it.”

“You’re a genius,” Kevin exclaimed. “we’re all foreigners.” There was a long pause as Kevin slowly turned toward Akiki “except for you.”

All eyes were on Akiki.

“But I’m a leath draíochta,” Akiki sputtered.

“Doesn’t matter. That famous witch from Hogworts, can’t remember her name off-hand, but she was leath draíochta.”

“But I have no history ...”

“It may not be seeking a history,” said Kosy in a soft voice. “It might be looking for the touch of a true native.”

Akiki stepped up to the grave and reached out to touch the Scepter. It glowed but did not strike. Akiki picked it up. It glowed with a warm brilliance.

“Akiki, my boy,” Deidarabochi said, “there may not be any history of draiochta before the academy, but you are obviously the descendant of some pretty powerful draíochta.”



Akiki was on a super-steep learning curve. Kevin collected bone samples for carbon dating, and the headmasters were trying to figure out what to do about the crypt. Kevin gave them the names of several draíochta archeologists. He was sure that any one, or all, of them would jump at the chance to study it.

Professor Ashton agreed to join the McAllistar faculty. He had heard that the famous Professor Dr. Beaulac was out recruiting and was surprised that Kosy was unaware. He figured that Deidarabochi knew but was waiting to see what happened. His leaving would make room for Akiki who was destined for greatness. “We really need a good kick-ass black wizard,” he had said.

Kevin and Minaku were homesick and decided to hop a ley line home. Humani airlines were just too slow and uncomfortable.

Over the next few weeks Kevin would finish his recruiting. He was able to get Jynla Runehead, a female dwarf, to teach Potions and Chemistry. A graduate of the famous Carovniška Sola, in Germany, she also studied potions at Castelobruxo, which is known for being the alma mater of Libatius Borage, the author of the *Advanced Potion-Making*. She later did a Masters degree in Chemistry at the Technical University of Munich, Germany’s top chemistry university with a global ranking of 22. Kevin looked not only for outstanding teachers but for those who could relate their subject to the humani world.

His last recruit was Bonselle Cozzereln, a dwarf who would teach Language and Runes. A graduate of Koldovstoretz in Lake Ladoga, Russia, she was always precocious in languages, but became fascinated by runes after visiting Gaelic archeological digs and flaitheas scáth in Ireland, Scotland and Normandy. She studied archeology at the University of Wyoming and was now involved in research of cave drawings as language in the US southwest. Kevin had to promise her time to continue her southwest research.



Kevin had brought together one of the finest groups of draiochta academics ever assembled. He was the only one who didn't seem to understand that this marvelous faculty was gathered at the New McAllistar Academy because *he* asked them and *he* was the headmaster. Kevin knew that he was a genius and was aware that he was nearly as famous as Merlin. Being a genius didn't bother him. In fact, he found it fun. It was being famous, except for the raucous Triar Draoi, that made him very uncomfortable. His modesty was real and the silly little boy came out when he didn't know how to react to the fame and praise.

The faculty he had assembled was the envy of the draiochta academic world and each of the faculty members openly admitted that they joined the faculty because they wanted to go down in history as a colleague of the famous Kevin Beaulac.

Kevin had insisted that getting the right faculty was the most important task. Once accomplished, he and his colleagues turned their attention to curriculum and building.

Developing a curriculum was much the more difficult task than coming up with a building. They started by having each of the faculty designing what they'd like to do. Once they had each decided upon their subject's curriculum, they shared them and looked for links. How could they relate one subject to another? How would the curriculum meet the goal of the students?

They all agreed that a six year program for those wanting a diploma was best. There was a bit of debate, but they finally agreed that a student could declare a "major"; i.e. a subject on which they would like to focus the majority of their attention. The student who wished could pick a major at the beginning of their fifth year. That would give them two years of concentration.

Students who were not in the traditional program would be guided by the professor of the subject they came to study. If they were just really too old to be a student in the traditional program, one of the professors would mentor them and help them take a balance of subjects to achieve their goal. Sally and Wendell fell into this category. The group decided that students could start as young as twelve years old because humani psychologist had learned that a child starts to use abstract thinking by this age. The only problem was them being away from home at such a young age.

It was decided that they would have at least basic protocol - gowns, formal ways of behaving – so that those planning to do advanced studies at some large, old, traditional school, would not be overwhelmed. They also wanted to prepare those who would end up in a humani university.

Everyone knew that, with their faculty, they would quickly be overrun by outstanding students from around the world. Kevin wanted to be sure that McAllistar Academy firstly served the people of Clainn McAllistar.

As soon as the news got out that Kevin Beaulac was recruiting top academics for a new academy the owl post was clogged with requests. Kevin had to organize a group just to answer all of the mail. They replied that they were not sure when the new academy would be taking students from other clans because the physical academy was yet to be built so there was no housing for anyone. The student's name would be put on a list in the order received and when they had a building and knew how many openings would be available, they would consider each of the requests in turn.

In the meantime, the faculty lived in the flaitheas scáth. Some lived in the village while others opted for the cave. Gadin set aside several rooms off the great hall for classrooms. A few of the faculty decided to teach outside as long as the weather was good. All of the first students were First Year students.

Bjorg Agnarsson and Valiard Armgrom worked together with Magnus Hansen to make a special place where Magnus would go when there was to be a full moon. They pulled out all of the magical stops to try to keep Magnus from hurting himself during his change.

Gadin loved having the faculty living in the cave until the academy was finished because he so much enjoyed having them at dinner. They provided greatly varied and stimulating conversation.

# 4



Isla Metarí was hustling down the path toward the entrance to the McAllistar Flaitheas Scáth. She was looking for her daughter, Demi.

Demi was supposed to greet Lord Ryuhito, his wife, Lady Kaida, and their son, Sukoshi Aka who were visiting from Japan. No one had any doubt that this was the first of many such visits by parents wanting their children to attend the new academy. Isla didn't really have any more interest in such diplomatic protocol than her daughter, but it was important to Gadin and Ara. Since the McAllistar clan had fled to the western mountains they had been almost totally isolated. Now they were being pushed onto the stage of international draiochta society. Isla's only concern was that her father-in-law, Gadin, would change his most wonderful, open and egalitarian inclusion of all creatures who came to his great hall, but to this point that hadn't been a problem.

Finding Demi was a very common scenario. Between “Uncle” Kevin, “Uncle” Mahx and “Grandpa” Napikyáiyó, the child was always off somewhere getting into mischief. Although Isla would become exasperated trying to keep track of her daughter, she never became angry. As she hurried down the path past the village, returning waves and greetings, she thought about how this was the childhood she would have loved.

Isla had left Gadin Ri in the great hall laughing. He and his wife, Ara Banrion, had tried to protect the young princess, planning her time and always having guards nearby. They soon learned that that just wasn’t going to work. Demi was as fearless and independent as any child could be. Gadin’s laughter was neither mean nor mischievous. It was his expression of the joy he felt in what his family had become. When it came time for him to pass the reins of leadership he knew that Sorg, Isla and Demi would be the perfect leaders.

At the front gate to the Flaitheas Scáth four Dwarf guards snapped to attention as Isla approached. It was hard for them to not laugh. They couldn’t help but smirk. They had seen this scenario almost daily since Demi could walk.

Today Isla didn’t slow down. As she approached one of the guards saluted and said simply, “the creek.”

“Thank you!” Isla smiled and threw the guard a kiss. That may not be how a princess is supposed to act in public, but it was evidence that Demi came about her stubborn independence naturally.

Tunnel Creek was just across the trail from the large boulder that marked the secret entrance to McAllistar Flaitheas Scáth. The headwaters of the creek were at the top of Mt. Grant where it



started its journey in the permanent ice fields near Grant Glacier and flowed through their valley to the Middle Fork of the wild Flathead River. There was a trail next to the river that was hiked by many humani totally unaware of McAllistar Flaitheas Scáth.

Isla stood on the trail looking up and down the stream. It took some patience but Isla knew for what she was looking and had soon spotted Demi and Mahx.

Walking up behind the two figures lying on their stomachs with their noses but inches from the water, Isla said, “And what are you two children up to today?”

Mahx was so startled that he almost fell in. Demi started laughing not at Mahx’s close call but at her mother addressing them both as children. Mahx was her mother’s age. Isla tried to look serious. The emphasis being on the word ‘tried’.

“Mother, look!” Demi said excitedly pointing at the water. “Look at that fish.”

“What about it?”

“It’s prehistoric.”

“What?”

“Just what she said,” Mahx said having regained his balance and composure. “I’ve never seen anything like it and it looks like something you’d find in a museum.”

Isla couldn’t contain her curiosity and peered into the water.

“I wonder how it got here,” she said.

“Uncle Mahx said there must be a crack in time!”

“Did he now?” Isla looked at Mahx who appeared a bit sheepish.

“I might have said something like that,” he offered.

“That’s exactly what you said,” Demi exclaimed.

“Well, invite your new friend to the gala, because you need to go inside and prepare.”

“Ah, Mother,” Demi came extremely close to whining. “I know my part.” Demi stood up and took on a very regal posture. “Lord Ryuhito,” Demi curtsies, “and M’Lady Kaida,” again a curtsy, “my name is Demdiahilda. It is a great honor to meet you on this auspicious occasion ...”

“Okay. Okay,” you’ve got it.”

“Then Uncle Mahx and I can go hunting like we planned.” If one paid attention, as Isla always does, one would notice that it was a statement, not a question or request.

Isla stood looking at her daughter who had now retrieved her Blackfeet bow and quiver of arrows from under a nearby tree. The young girl stood erect with her feet slightly apart awaiting her mother’s response. Her long bright red hair hung in natural curls over her shoulders. She wore a leather brigandine over a linen frock which hung down a bit over her skirt with leather greaves to protect her legs. All that was missing from her being fully armored were pauldrons, arm braces and thigh armor.

Everything about the girl as she stood waiting told of a female warrior of great strength and determination. Isla couldn’t help but admire her daughter and wonder if she ever looked that good when she was younger.

The tip of Demi's bow rested near one foot. It was a beautiful Blackfeet bow Mahx had made for her. It was forty-eight inches long, which is a long bow even for an adult dwarf, and had a forty pound draw weight. Under the expert tutelage of her Uncle Mahx, Aunt Minaku and most of the Brotherhood, Demi had quickly become a superb archer. Now Mahx was teaching her to hunt.

This is what Isla had wanted all her life and what she wanted for her daughter. How could she say no?

“Okay,” Isla final said. “Just promise me one thing.”

Demi stood waiting for that one thing.

“Please stand like a princess when you meet the dragon prince and his wife.”

With that everyone laughed. Isla gave Demi a hug and headed back to the cavern. Mahx had picked up his bow. The two slung their rucksacks over their shoulders and headed up Tunnel Creek.



As they made their way through the forest gently ascending, Demi had been listening carefully to Mahx’s instructions about being aware of nearby animals and other tracking/hunting tips. She suddenly stopped. Mahx stopped and looked back at the girl. Demi pointed to some heavy brush about fifteen or twenty yards away.

By the time Mahx turned to face the brush a large Grizzly bear had stepped into the clearing. The three stood looking at each other.

When the bear stood up on his hind legs to get a better look, Mahx said, “that’s not an aggressive act.”

“I know, Uncle Mahx,” said Demi quietly without moving. “You taught me that.”

Mahx watched as Demi stood perfectly still. Generally people raise their arms to look big and talk to the bear as they back away, avoiding a conflict, but Demi continued to stand calmly and quietly. The bear returned to all four and focused her attention on Demi who looked as though she was holding a conversation with the bear. After a while the bear turned and ambled off. Demi put one knee on the ground and tears began running down her cheeks.

“She said she is searching for her cub,” the young girl said through her tears. “She had left the cub outside a cave while she investigated to be sure it was safe. When she came out she was here and the cub was gone. I told her we had not seen a cub. She said that the forest is different than when she went in. It was drawing near to time for hibernation and the snow was beginning to accumulate. That’s why she was checking out the cave.”

The bear had stopped at the top of the next ridge and was looking back at Demi. Demi waved and the bear moved on.

“What do you make of that?” Demi questioned.

“Other than you just had a very personal conversation with a bear?”

“Yes, other than that,” Demi was still looking at the place the bear disappeared. “That’s no big deal.”

“Really!” Mahx could hear the sarcasm in his own voice. Before Demi could react he said, “I’m sorry! Guess I’m just a wee bit jealous that talking to other species is no big deal to you. I have a hard time communicating with some of my own species.”

Mahx was not at all surprised that Demi could understand the bear. After all he had watched her mother become a powerful draiochta-warrior and had seen this child do so many surprising things.

“I wish I could talk to other animals,” Mahx continued.

“You can, Uncle Mahx,” Demi insisted. “You just need to be quiet, look and listen. Did you see how her eyes told that she was frightened and upset?”

“No, I missed that.”

“Start by standing very still. Look at their eyes, body posture and movement. Eyes speak. You will soon start understanding their emotions. After that you can listen carefully and begin to hear them speak to you.”

“But you two were ‘talking’ without a sound.”

“You’re right, and I can’t explain that. It just is,” said Demi. “Your ancestors talked to everything; the animals, the mountains; they talked with nature. You have that ability within you.”

“If you say so.”

“But back to my question,” Demi returned her gaze to the ridge where she had last seen the bear. “What do you make of that?”

“I don’t follow.”

“She said she entered the cave when it was about time to hibernate and came out here, in spring.”

“If she were a humani I’d say she was chewing on the wrong leaves,” Mahx ignored Demi’s look. “Could she have drifted off in there?”

“You know more about bears than me.”

“I really doubt she would go into hibernation with her cub outside, but it is the only thing that makes any sense.”

“I was thinking of a ley line. Could she have stumbled into a ley line?”

“Don’t you have to know what you’re doing to travel through a ley line?”

“It isn’t hard for a draiochta, but a humani can’t do it, so I would doubt that a bear could do it even by accident.”

“So we’re back to square one,” Mahx concluded.



As the two moved silently up the mountain side, Mahx thought about being instructed by a twelve-year-old. He watched the small figure walking ahead of him making no sound. That, he thought proudly, she had learned from him. She had the skills and wisdom of one much older. Despite her young age, Mahx felt that if she said he had the necessary skills to talk to other animals, then it

must be true. Mahx's thoughts went back to his adventure on Nínaistáki, the sacred Blackfeet mountain, when he first learned of the existence of draiochta. Now a young draiochta was teaching him to talk to other animals.

He had learned to think outside the box and be creative. The reality of draiochta, along with Kevin's insistence that magic is nothing more than the application of quantum physics, made anything seem possible. His experience had given him more self-confidence, a stronger belief in the future of his people and the courage to stand his ground.

At times that adventure seemed like a lifetime ago. At other times it was like yesterday. The experience and the new friendships had indeed changed his life. The image of Rotuva Caskmaul immediately filled his mind. Mahx had met Rotuva when he took part in rescuing her family from Socusdus. She still works for Gadin Ri so Mahx tries to see her whenever he visits the McAllistars.

"What about Rotuva?" Demi suddenly asked.

"I didn't say anything," Mahx snapped. "Are you dipping on my thoughts?"

The young girl turned to face Mahx with a big grin. "oh, it's that way," she began laughing. "Mahx has got . . ."

Mahx shushed the young girl and pointed behind her. The serious look on his face told her it was not a part of the game. She slowly turned.

A good fifty yards away stood a beautiful bull Elk. To be sure they got a clean kill and didn't just wound him so that he would run

away and die in the forest, they had to work as a team. With whispers and hand signals they made their plan. Each of them notched an arrow and were ready to move in when an enormous cat sprang from the trees onto the elk. Within moments the struggle was over.

The cat stood over its kill and suddenly looked directly at Mahx and Demi. The cat was at least twice the size of the biggest Mountain Lion Mahx had ever seen. Its thick heavily muscled body was at least six feet long and it stood almost three feet high when standing on all fours. When it growled at them the giant maxillary canine teeth sent chills of fear through the two onlookers.

“That’s a Sabretooth Tiger!” exclaimed Mahx.

“Aren’t they extinct?” asked Demi without moving.

“Last I knew they were.”

“Well, they’re back.”

For what seemed the longest time the three stood looking at each other. All three were undoubtedly thinking the same thing, viz. What do I do next?

“I have an idea,” Mahx whispered. “If you can put an arrow into its neck, it will hopefully rear up giving me a shot at its chest. If that doesn’t kill it, we’re in deep dodo.”

The Blackfeet bow is historically very powerful. After all, bison were a major food source for these plains dwellers, and bison are big, extremely strong animals. There is a correlation between a bow’s draw weight and its power. Of course, more power means a greater ability to bring down an animal with one shot. Demi’s bow



had a forty pound draw weight, quite sufficient for a deer but not a five hundred pound cat. Mahx's bow had a fifty pound draw.

The cat had evidently decided to disappear into the forest and flank his adversaries. That is a common big cat tactic. Before it could get to the trees all hell broke loose.

The lost Grizzly sprang out of the woods. Although the Smilodon struggled mightily it had no hope. The powerful swipe of a Grizzly's giant paw is enough to bring down a Moose with one blow. Besides the fact that the paw itself is often bigger than the average human's torso, their claws are up to four inches long. While these claws were designed for digging, they do come in handy in a fight.

In this fight the Grizzly had struck the cat so hard that it was air born for several feet. Through the rest of this life and death struggle the cat was dragging its rear end. The Grizzly had probably broken the cat's back with the first hit. Once the Grizzly was able to get behind the cat she was able to bite the cat's spine and it was soon over.

Standing over the cat, the Grizzly looked across the meadow at the two traumatized witnesses.

"Thank you so much," Demi said. "you saved our lives!"

"You're welcome."

"You're hurt. May I come over and tend to your wounds?"

"No. I'll be okay. But I would like the elk."

"Of course. Of course."

"And some help finding my way home to my cub."

“We’ll do our best. Show us the cave.”

The Grizzly led Demi and Mahx up the mountain toward the headwaters of Tunnel Creek to an opening in the side of a sheer cliff. As they drew near the Grizzly started to go in.

“Please don’t go in,” Demi called. The bear stopped and gave her a quizzical look. “I’m afraid that if you go in you will emerge somewhere else. We’ll lose you. I feel strong magic. We need to talk to my Uncle Kevin. He’s a great wizard scientist. Do you want to wait here or come with us?”

The great bear looked down the mountain toward the elk.

“Bon Appétit,” Demi smiled. “when you are ready, follow my scent down to where I cross the creek by the humani trail. Wait for me there.”

Mahx watched in amazement as the massive bear lumbered down the mountain toward the elk carcass.



Demi and Mahx stopped by the Flaitheas Scáth in which Kevin was building the McAllistar Academy. Sure enough he was there watching the master builders working on the main building. It was progressing well. The ground level stone was in place and the log building was beginning to take shape. Kevin had insisted that the academy have a unique building that reflects its history and

surroundings. The humani had some magnificent and enormous log buildings, but nothing would compare to this.

“Uncle Kevin, we’ve got a problem that needs your attention.”

“From the expression on your face, it must be serious.”

“That might be the biggest understatement of the decade,” replied Mahx.

The two proceeded to tell Kevin about what had happened.

“Even humani scientists like Einstein, Plank and Bohr felt that time travel was possible,” Kevin said when they had finished.

“Some believe that Merlin and Albert Dumbledore were chronomancers. Jeriah Chronos and Trevor Fitzroy are well known chronomancers. Oh, and we can’t forget that young girl at Hogwarts, but I don’t think she really practiced beyond trying to use it to take more classes. Well, the story goes that she used it to save an innocent man accused of murder, but . . . .”

“Yes. Yes,” Demi coaxed her Uncle, “BUT . . . ?”

“Yes!” Kevin exclaimed, bringing his brain back to focus on the problem at hand. “you were wise not to enter the cave. A student at Winterhold about five hundred years ago argued that there exists natural cracks in the space-time warp he called *opnun í tíma*.”

“Since I don’t think there have been sabretooth tigers around for a good ten-thousand years, I’d put my money on your crack,” said Mahx.

“That would explain our bear too,” Demi added.

“The most befuddling question is ‘what are we going to do about it?’” Kevin said. “Show me the cave.”

As they stepped from the academy flaitheas scáth Demi spotted the Grizzly heading toward the creek.

“There she is,” Demi exclaimed. “Let’s go talk to her.”

“I would like that,” Kevin replied, “but you have to remember that no matter how strongly you believe that all people should be able to talk to other animal species, only a few of you can really do it.”

“Oh,” Mahx gave Demi a startled look. “I thought,…”

Kevin laughed. “She had you talking to animals.”

“Yes!”

“That’s okay,” Kevin continued, “you never know. You might be one of those few. It isn’t strictly a draiochta skill.”

“How’s that?”

“Did Demi tell you why you can’t talk to other species now.”

“No, but we were a bit tight on time,” Mahx laughed thinking about their original encounter with the bear.

“Many of us believe,” Kevin continued as they walked toward the bear, “that long before recorded history, communicating with other species was common to all animals, including humans. About six thousand years ago humani society started changing. People who later became known as electi pauci created what would become class differences; the haves and have-nots. The electi pauci who created religion made nature and wilderness out to be evil and humani to be superior to all animals. Humani began to distance themselves from nature and give up many of their natural skills. Draiochta went our own way and we were soon included among those considered inferior and evil. Nevertheless, by the time we

realized the danger toward which human society was headed, we too had lost many of our natural skills. Demi has been able to communicate with other species since she was a toddler.”

Kevin started laughing at the memories. “Her mom and dad told me about a time right up here by the creek, that they found four-year-old Demi sitting on the stream bank with a wolf. They were terrified, but the two were just sitting there facing each other. Demi looked up and said ‘this is my new friend. He says he lives in the forest over there.’ That would be the first of many such encounters.”

The Grizzly stopped at the stream bank and was pawing at the water as the three approached.

“Fishing?” Demi asked the bear.

“Yes,” answered the bear, “there’s a really big fish there.”

Demi peered past the bear into the creek.

“Uncle Kevin, look here,” she said. “This looks like the fish Uncle Mahx and I saw this morning, just bigger.”

Kevin and Mahx stepped up next to the great Grizzly and looked into the water.

“Oh, my!” Kevin exclaimed.

“Our reaction too,” Mahx said still looking over Kevin’s shoulder.

“Opnun í tíma is the only thing I can think of to account for this.”

# 5

**H**ughbo looked over the pile of books and scrolls that surrounded him like the curtain wall of a medieval castle. The great room in which he sat was cavernous. Stacks of books on each side reaching almost to the ceiling thirteen meters above him and into the capacious reading room created two rows of cubicles. Circular metal stairs at the end of each stack gave access to the books high above.

There were only a handful of students in the great reading room of the famous library at the College of Winterhold in Skyrim. The setting sun coming through the tall narrow windows at the exterior wall of the cubicles was rapidly disappearing, leaving only the yellow light of the reading lamps that lined the long study tables to illuminate the documents before him.

It had taken Hughbo over a year to make his way to Winterhold and several more months to convince the Arc Mage to admit him.

Every day that went by Hughbo was aware of the time that had passed since the Morganian attack that had taken the life of his dear Kimi. That, of course was why he was here.

Hughbo, in his grief, had become a recluse sitting in his burrow just north of Ruklidome, the ancestral home of Clainn McAllistar. He only went outside when it was necessary. He had started dreaming of going back in time and saving Kimi. The dream soon turned into a quest.

His friends in Ruklidome had suggested that Coillearnach was probably the only place to learn about such magic. It was at Coillearnach that he learned about Winterhold.

Now here he sat in the great library of the famous college of magic. The Professor of Conjuration had felt sorry for him and was giving Hughbo as much guidance as he could. What Hughbo was wanting was a very rare and difficult type of magic practiced by a very few draiochta called chronomance. Chronomancers tap into the Temporal Prime, a collection of time streams, where one time stream represented a single reality. Besides the fact that the formula and spells were of such complexity that most draiochta could not understand them, they were also kept secret by chronomancers because they were usually used in military application.

In his studies Hughbo had come across two curious and very interesting concepts; opnun í tíma (crack in time), which modern humans call wormholes, and the science of quantum physics. Quantum physics would not be introduced to the draiochta world until several hundred years later when Professor Dr. Kevin Beaulac, himself a powerful wizard as well as an academic genius, and the grandson of the great silver wizard, Brian Prionsa

Ferguson, would demonstrate magic as an application of quantum physics. One of Dr. Beaulac's references would be a monograph written in 1634 by an undergraduate student at St. John's College, University of Oxford entitled "*the mathematics of time and matter*". The student's name was Hughbo Skyrim.

In his monograph the young Hughbo argued that  $G_{\mu\nu} = 8\pi G/c^4$  which, in a later monograph written at Winterhold, Hughbo expanded to spás cuartha, which is a curvature of time and space. Hughbo found that the mathematics of spás cuartha was related to all of the common travel spells but different in that it contained evidence that spás cuartha could, through the reality of quantum infinite possibilities, appear to bend or warp. This warping created what would, centuries later, be called a wormhole with the ability to connect different points in time.

What Hughbo wasn't expecting was the opnun í tíma, the crack in time. While attempting to create a time passage he stumbled onto the reality of a natural form. This presented him with the idea of using the natural crack to access time just prior to the Morganian attack. Again many years were spent before he arrived at the final formula

$$\rho_f = \frac{C\rho_i C^\dagger}{\text{Tr}[C\rho_i C^\dagger]}, \text{ where } C = \text{Tr}_{\text{CTC}}[U].$$

Returning to Clainn McAllistar, Hughbo began his search for an opnun í tíma. He knew that the statistical probability of finding one nearby was very low.

He had no choice but spend more time to determine how he would recognize the presence of an opnun í tíma. Since not all particles would pass through the opening, those that missed would collide



and scatter in what would appear as a random pattern. He didn't know how he was going to find these particles, but, after some effort, he devised a magic stone that would glow in the presence of these particles.

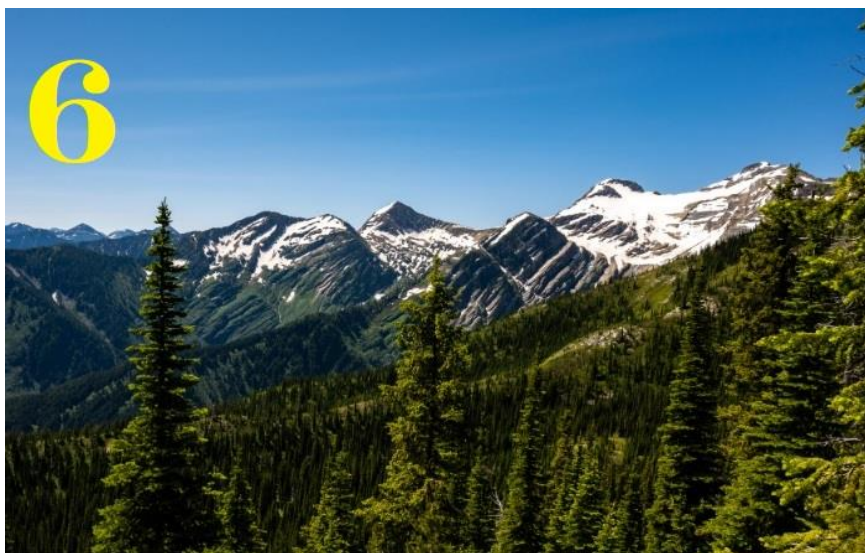
He began searching areas near his burrow on the north side of Grant Ridge. The next nearest area was the Tunnel Creek valley.

He had taken days to check the area right around the entrance to McAllistar Flaitheas Scáth. He was going up the southern fork of Tunnel Creek. This fork ran through three ice fields on its way to the Flathead River. Hughbo had crossed the first icefield and was check the surrounding area when his stone began to glow.

It led him to a cave in the side of the mountain. There was an opnun í tíma nearby.

Hughbo was thrilled. He decided that he would use the cave as a portal and build a burrow nearby.

# 6



**A**fter lots of words of comfort from her three new homo sapiens friends, Mama Bear headed back up the mountain. The guards at the Flaitheas Scáth entrance had stood watching in awe. Demi chattered almost nonstop from the creek to the king's dayroom where she related the days adventure, especially Mama Bear, to her grandparents while the adults tried to come up with a plan.

“Can you close a crack?” Ara had asked.

“I don't know,” Kevin admitted.

“How about a magic barricade?” Mahx suggested.

“Not a bad idea,” said Valiard Armgrom, professor of Defense Against the Dark Arts, as he, Cornelius Penmaster and Napikyáiyó

entered the chamber. They bowed deeply toward Gadin and Ara. “Actually, apart from trying to destroy the crack, it’s about your only choice.”

“Have you three been playing with the humani down at their pub?” Minaku teased her father and his two friends as she entered behind them.

“Absolutely not!” exclaimed Penmaster with a slight slur to his speech. “We never left the Flaitheas Scáth”. The normally stayed and proper professor looked sheepish as the room broke into laughter.

“He’s right,” Kevin picking up their conversation. “We don’t want to destroy it unless absolutely necessary, but we can’t put everyone in danger.”

“Will that be hard?” asked Mahx.

“Not particularly,” replied Valiard, “depending on what might be coming through.”

“How about a dinosaur?” With this all heads whipped around to look at the speaker. Sorg stood in the doorway. His armor was covered in blood. “At least that’s what it looked like.”

After the initial shock passed and a barrage of questions began, Sorg dropped into a nearby chair and proceeded to tell his story.

“Commander Longbeard and I were up in the cirque below Mt. Grant with a group of young warriors when we went around a corner and were confronted by a monster. It was like nothing I’ve ever seen. It was much taller than any of us, a good six feet or more, and was standing on its hind legs. It looked like a giant reptile except it had feathers. It had a very long neck with a long

head and upturned snout. Its front legs were much shorter with enormously long claws. With one swipe of those claws two of the young warriors fell. One was dead before he hit the ground and the other was mortally wounded. Golouth let fly an ax which hit the creature in the chest. At first the monster didn't seem to notice. Golouth started barking instructions at the young warriors. They regained their composure and followed his direction. We had to use throwing weapons because we couldn't safely get near the creature's claws. When the creature finally fell we had two dead and three badly injured."

"We need to barricade that cave before we get any more of these prehistoric visitors," Gadin exclaimed.

"Agreed," replied Kevin. "Valiard and I will go do that right now."

"I don't think anyone should go out of the Flaitheas Scáth without an armed guard until we're certain there are no more of these creatures hanging around," said Sorg. Everyone agreed.



At dinner it happened that Rotuva was tending the table where Mahx was sitting. Actually, it wasn't a coincidence. Despite all of the excitement of the day, Demi had not forgotten about Uncle Mahx having a crush on Rotuva. Well, in truth she had just caught him thinking about her and not denying any interest when confronted but, to Demi's young romantic mind, that was enough.

Demi had gone to the head server and asked her to assign Rotuva to the table where Mahx was sitting then asked if she could sit with Uncle Mahx.

Toward the end of the meal Demi motioned to Rotuva.

“My Uncle Mahx was just telling me that he would really like to walk you home when you’re finished work, but he’s too shy to ask you.”

Rotuva’s face went scarlet as she turned slowly toward Mahx. Mahx had started to take a sip of Jagerbeir and almost choked. He did drop his glass. All of the other conversations at the table came to an immediate halt and everyone turned to look.

“I, uh....” Mahx searched for words.

“That’s very sweet, sir, but I live in the cave when I’m working, and ....”

“Then why don’t you two walk down to the village and get something to drink.” Demi insisted.

“I, uh ....” Mahx still hadn’t found any words.

“I would enjoy that, if you would.” Now Rotuva was looking directly at Mahx with the sweetest smile. Out of sight of the two, Demi threw up her hands in victory with a quiet “Yes!!”

The smile was enough to do Mahx in, and he finally got words to come out of his mouth. “Yes. I would like that very much.”

Those at the table observing began to laugh and before the meal was ended everyone in the hall knew what had happened.



The moonlit night could not have been more romantic had Demi arranged it. Kevin, Penmaster, Armgrom and Napikyáiyó were sitting on the corner of the porch onto which the giant cave doors opened. This had pretty much become their place where they gathered, talked and enjoyed Jugarbeir on nice evenings. They were in deep, serious conversation when Rotuva and Mahx passed.

“Good evening,” the four men said in unison. Mahx was sure that they were teasing him. Rotuva simply smiled and returned the greeting.

One would have thought that one of the two had cooties. You could have marched a brigade between them. Walking away from the men they continued their polite conversation.

Standing on the bridge above the waterfalls Rotuva said, “I know Demdiahilda Banphrionsa set you up.” She giggled at the thought of those embarrassing few minutes. “If you would rather be doing something else like drinking Jugarbeir with your friends, I completely understand.”

“Actually, I am doing what I want. It just took a nosy twelve-year-old girl to make it happen.”

“Oh!” Rotuva dropped her eyes in true embarrassment.

“Since you too were a victim of her royal slyness’ plotting, I would understand if you would rather be elsewhere.”

“No. I’ve honestly been looking forward to this all evening.” She paused to decide whether to disclose any more. She laughed and said, “the others teased me from the time dinner ended until you arrived.”

“I’m sorry but I’m really glad you said ‘yes’



The village inn was the center piece of the village both physically and socially. Built in the style of their ancestral homeland in western Ireland, the structure was a two story field stone building. Being an inn, it did have rooms on the second floor for the rare guest, but mostly it was a pub with an excellent kitchen.

The ground floor was dominated by the room filled with long wooden tables. There were both chairs and benches around the tables. One wall was an enormous fireplace with a wooden bar across the room.

Behind the bar were five large kegs that had been tapped. There were no shelves lined with every type of liquor in the world. Your choices are simple; viz. Jugarbeir, wine, honey mead, beer, a distilled wine similar to brandy and a Dwarven version of rum. Oh, yes, tea is always a favorite.

Unlike an American humani bar where people might stand or sit on stools, this bar was for the barmaids who went there to get the food and drink. The bar in the McAllistar Inn was busy with barmaids flitting from tables to bar with arms filled with food and drink.

Some of these young women could handle six to eight steins or food for four. They were amazing.

As Mahx and Rotuva entered, Mahx noticed Mellia, one of the barmaids, standing at the bar giving him a cold stare. The woman behind the bar had to call her name three times before she responded. Rotuva also noticed.

“A friend of yours?” she said sarcastically.

“Just friends,” Mahx insisted. “honest! We’ve joked around and maybe even flirted, but that was it.”

Rotuva laughed. “I believe you. She could be giving me that look.”

“Oh?”

“She has a tendency to be jealous, and I got a job in the cave and she didn’t.”

The room was crowded, mostly with small groups sitting around drinking, talking and laughing. Rotuva and Mahx found a table a bit away from the crowd so they could hear what the other was saying.

Dava was their server.

“Hi, Rotuva,” she said with a sincere smile. “hiiii, Mahx.”

They both ordered a glass of wine and Mahx got them a sample plate of finger foods.

“You come here often?” Rotuva teased watching Dava scurry toward the bar with their order.

“I’m not exactly a regular,” said Mahx a bit befuddled.



“Not regular but memorable,” Rotuva was enjoying this. She hoped that Mahx could not tell what she was thinking. Mahx was a handsome man. He was big for a humani and gigantic to a dwarf. His dark skin and jet black hair hanging over his shoulders in braids just added to the already very desirable package. She had no problem understanding Mellia and Dava. If she were honest with herself she would admit that she was enjoying the envy in the eyes of the other girls.



The four friends sitting on the porch were in a serious discussion about the possible Opnun í tíma.

“If you stop to think about it,” Penmaster was saying, “time travel never really caught on big because about the only application was to change history by saving someone, changing the outcome of a battle or other event, or bringing someone back from the dead. We had already learned that bringing people back from death isn’t a really good idea, and there are a lot of things that can go very wrong when you change history.”

“So you’re thinking that this crack isn’t natural,” commented Napikyáiyo.

“I got no sense of dark arts when we put up the barricade,” added Valiard. “the creatures that have come through have been from a wide variety of times and areas which makes me think that the crack was used and then abandoned for some reason. The creatures

who have come through were just in the wrong place at the wrong time.”

“What happens to them with your barricade?” asked Napikyáiyo.  
“Do they just die in that cave?”

“Hopefully not,” Kevin answered. “If they find themselves unable to leave the cave they should start moving around. Moving around they should again step into the time stream and end up somewhere else.”

“They become someone else’s problem,” Napikyáiyo said sadly.

“We can’t do more than we’ve done,” Penmaster said. “Yes, they could emerge in a populated area and do great damage or they could emerge in another wilderness area and live a wonderful life. We’ve done everything possible to block them without hurting them. We can’t really take any more responsibility.”

“Before we get into a deep ethical discussion, which I do think would be enjoyable, I think it would behoove us to try to figure out if this could have been created, and, if so, by whom, and why did they abandon it,” said Kevin.

“Can *you* create a Opnun í tíma?” asked Valiard.

“No.”

“Do you know of anyone who has?”

“No.”

“That means whoever did this was brilliant,” Valiard concluded.

“And I thought it was silly,” Napikyáiyo said shaking his head.

“You thought what was silly?” asked Kevin.

“Mahx started cataloging Blackfeet stories and legends.”

“I would have thought that would have made you happy.”

“Indeed it did, but he went all out and put it on a computer so that it was ‘searchable’ and could be sorted by almost any time or word or name.”

“Sometimes humani are good for something,” Penmaster quipped. The group laughed and Napikyáiyó pretended to be insulted.

“That’s great,” agreed Valiard, “but we have no idea what to use to sort your stories. We don’t have a name. We don’t know how long this crack has been abandoned or why it was used.”

“Dang,” Kevin suddenly exclaimed causing all eyes to turn toward him. “One of the writings I use when teaching magic as science is a monograph written by a young student at St. John’s College in Oxford University almost five hundred years ago.”

“So what’s that mean?”

“How many humani do you know who could write a treatise on space and time right now, nevertheless in the sixteenth or seventeenth century?” Kevin asked.

“All humani works on the subject that I know of have been since the middle of the nineteenth century.” Answered Penmaster.

“Right,” said Kevin. “So what do you think the odds are of that student being draiochta?”

“Even then she would be way head of everyone else,” said Penmaster.

“Pretty sure this student is a ‘he’ since St. John’s was a boys school until the twentieth century,” Kevin interjected.

“As I was saying,” Penmaster continued unperturbed, “If a draiochta student attended an Oxford University in the seventeenth century it would seem reasonable to assume that they started at Hogworts.”

“That would be a logical starting point but Hogworts has no history of chronomancy until well into the twentieth century. The only school that has a long history of chronomancy is the College of Winterhold in Skyrim,” said Kevin.

“St. John’s Oxford was well known for its mathematics,” Penmaster continued the line of thought. “that would be the drawing card for a student seeking time travel.”

“I’m going to try to see if that monograph leads us back to a draiochta school,” concluded Kevin, “and contact some colleagues at Winterhold to see if they can help us.”

“I’ll ask Mahx to help me look at his collection of stories,” added Napikyáiyó.

“I’ll see if I can find any connection between any Dwarf and time travel and see if any lead here,” said Penmaster.

“What can I do?” asked Valiard.

“Would you be up to some serious hiking?” asked Kevin.

“Depends.”

“My opinion is that we need you to keep an eye on the cave to make sure it is holding against any further visitors and check out

the immediate area to see if there are any dangerous visitors left,” Kevin said.

“I think Sorg, Golouth Longbeard and some of their warriors would appreciate that and want to go along,” said Penmaster.



Valiard, Sorg and Commander Longbeard stood peering into the cave Valiard and Kevin had barricaded. Of course the barricade was a spell, so there was nothing physical to obscure their vision into the cave.

“So your spell keeps creatures from going in or out,” Commander Longbeard said looking at what appeared as a normal opening.

“That’s the idea,” Valiard smiled. “Want to try it?”

“No, thank you,” replied the Commander laughing, “I’ll take your word for it.”

The three men studied the opening and the surrounding area. They could not see any signs of life inside but there were several sets of tracks leading up to the cave and then away. A few of them were unfamiliar to Golouth and Sorg, both knowledgeable hunters.

“It seems obvious to me that the barricaded kept these animals out,” said Valiard, “so I’m going to assume that it worked to keep any new visitors in.”

“I agree,” Sorg still had a very serious look on his face. “My concern now is the creatures who go with these strange tracks.”

“There seems to be a couple of canine types, at least one ungulate, what could be a rodent and one with paws like a bear.”

“You know,” Golouth said looking out over the expansive of wilderness below them, “we have the ability to protect our people from any danger, but an equally big threat is that they take up permanent residency.”

“Why’s that?” asked Valiard.

“City boy,” Sorg Laughed. “A bit over a hundred years ago rich white humani came out here to build recreation areas for city people from back east. I don’t know if they were really so ignorant or just very greedy. After all it made them a lot of money, and you know how humani are about money. In any case, they would put fish in lakes for the rich city people to catch. Over the mountain at Lake McDonald they put lake trout in with the local bullhead trout. As they propagated they started killing the bullhead.”

“That doesn’t sound good,” Valiard’s gaze followed Golough’s to the breathtaking panorama before them. His expression was stressed and concerned.

“You’re right. It isn’t good. Trying to change nature is a prescription for disaster.”

“So, if we don’t get these visitors back in the cave, we’re looking at some bad things happening.”

“You got it.”

“I don’t know how to make the spell allow the foreign animals into the cave while keeping the locals here,” Valiard stood staring at the cave entrance with a very concerned and puzzled look.

“How about this?” Sorg offered. “We’ll hunt for the animals while you figure out how we’re going to get them back in the cave.”

“Sounds like a deal,” replied Valiard sitting down on a nearby boulder, pondering the dilemma before him.

While Golouth was checking out tracks and saying to Sorg, “These canine tracks seem to lead further up the mountain,”

“Great!” Sorg replied sarcastically.

Sorg and Golouth spent some time determining the basic direction of each of the unfamiliar tracks. The canine, indeed, headed up the mountain while the others headed back down into the valley.

The Commander picked up his ruck sack and started up the mountain.

“Wait,” called Sorg. “We need help. Since knowing where those southern tracks are going is also important, I suggest that you and Valiard follow the canine up while I go get three or four hunting parties and start checking downhill.”

It was a good plan but even so Valiard wasn’t really comfortable about Sorg going back down the mountain alone. It would have made more sense for Presidio to go, but Sorg and Golouth knew who to get for the hunting parties.

Sorg scampered down the mountain while Golouth headed up with his nose to the ground like a bloodhound. Valiard followed

Golouth staying erect and vigilant, frequently looking down the mountain until Sorg was out of sight.



The tracks lead the two southwest, first across an ice field and then following Tunnel Creek toward the glacial lake that was its headwaters. The lake was up against a wall of ice that capped the ridge a few hundred feet below Grant Glacier.

“What ever we’re following is quite large,” Golouth commented. “see the depth of its print? It is as deep as ours. This animal must weigh as much as us.”

“That’s big!” exclaimed Valiard.

“And look at the distance between steps.” Valiard looked where Golouth was pointing. “I’d bet it is at least two meters long.”

The animal had wandered around the shore of the lake before zigzagging down a rather steep slope toward an area of trees and small glacial ponds. Toward the edge of the wooded area was the hair and a few crushed bones of a snowshoe rabbit. Whatever it was must also be quick.

While the Commander was studying the animal’s tracks Valiard’s attention was caught by a small stand of trees on a rocky outcropping. He was no backwoodsman but there was something different. As he got closer there seemed to be a rock in front of a



cave. For reasons unknown to Valiard this didn't look natural. It looked to him like something someone did to protect the entrance.

Golouth looked up as Valiard pushed the boulder away from the opening.

"What did you find?" called Golouth.

"I don't know yet," Valiard called back as he disappeared into the opening.

While he had to crawl through the opening he was almost able to stand straight once inside. Just inside was a small room that had obviously been carved out by an intelligent creature. On one wall was a piece of wood with pegs. Valiard figured coats and hats.

The Commander had joined Valiard and was standing up with a fair clearance above.

"Dwarf?" asked Valiard.

"No," replied Golouth as he studied the room. "It isn't a dwarf style. It looks more like a burrower. Perhaps Hogboon."

Valiard lit a nearby torch and put out the light from his wand before crawling further into the burrow with Golouth right behind. The passage led into a rather large room. If it hadn't been for the dust, cob webs and other indicators that no one had been in here for a long time, it appeared that the occupant had just gone out for a walk.

Valiard's attention was immediately drawn to a desk piled with scrolls, notebooks and pieces of paper. The papers were covered with mathematical equations.

“Hogboon,” said Golouth matter-of-factly as he explored the room. “Definitely Hogboon.”

“A very academic Hogboon,” said Valiard pointing to the pile of paper and equations. “This, I think, calls for professor doctor Beaulac.” Valiard carefully folded one of the papers and put it in his tunic pocket.

As Valiard and Golouth came out of the burrow they could see a fire burning in the valley below them.

“Mojbog!” exclaimed the Commander, “those boys must have run to get this far so soon!”

It took a bit of time to get down from the ridge. Sorg and sixteen warriors were setting up shelters, fixing food and keeping the beacon fire ablaze.

After a hearty meal of venison meat pies and Jugarbeir the men went about finishing the shelters as Sorg, The Commander, and two of his lieutenants sat around the fire with Valiard talking about the day’s discoveries and their plans for the morrow. The plan was that Valiard should return to tell Kevin about the burrow and figure out how they can return any captured animals to the cave, while one group would pick up the canine tracks at the burrow and the other three teams would go to the cave and start tracking the other animals.



The camp was awakened just before sunrise the next morning by the guards. There in the meadow near the camp was a small animal that appeared somewhat like an overweight deer with hind legs longer than its front legs. It was grazing contentedly on the grasses and shrubs near the creek.

It didn't take much for a group of warriors to get a rope on it. It didn't struggle or fight as long as the rope was slack enough that she could graze.

"I have to admit that I don't really like the idea of shoving her back into the cave," said Sorg. "Who knows where she'll end up and what horrors might await her. She's so peaceful."

"I agree," said Valiard, "but she can't be turned loose here. As you taught me, the consequences could be serious."

"I know it isn't going to be easy to remove the barricade. I'm wondering about finding a place inside the Flaitheas Scáth where she could live out her life without causing any problems."

"You're not going to get any argument from me. Despite my past as Presidio I've always been a softy. Even killing it for food might be better than what it might face."

"Would you take it back to the Flaitheas Scáth for me and have someone quarantine it."

The group broke camp and Valiard took his new charge.

"Too bad you can't ride it," Golouth joked. "but no matter how much of a tough guy you may be, I really don't want you making the trip alone. I'm sending one of the warriors with you."

“Thank you,” said Valiard without an argument. A young warriors joined Valiard and the trio set off toward home.



Kevin had been busy going through his notes and papers from his magic as science lectures. There it was. “*The Mathematics of Time and Matter*” by Hughbo Skyrim, St. John’s College, University of Oxford, 1634.

“You have got to be kidding me,” he said out loud.

Minaku was sitting nearby. “what?”

“This monograph. There’s no doubt that the boy was draiochta, most likely Hogboon, and that he went to Winterhold.”

“How’s that?”

“Hughbo is a common Hogboon name and he used the surname ‘Skyrim’. Skyrim is where Winterhold is located.”

“I think I need to go there in person. If I try to communicate by mail it will take much longer and they might think I’m just trying to pull something over on them.”



**C**ollege Winterhold isn't your typical school of magic. Firstly, it is a very dark and forbidding place on top of some sharp mountain peaks connected by floating bridges. The weather is constantly cold and icy which makes the high, unadorned, dark stone buildings more harsh and disagreeable.

The expert, Nicholas Ng, writes that the college is quite ancient and had a very good relationship with the community around it until a magical accident called The Great Collapse destroyed most of the town. The Collapse was blamed on the college and relationships have never been good since then, but it had been a highly respected academy among it's peers. That only changed a short time ago when the school was taken over by the Dark Brotherhood. Learning this, Kevin asked Valiard to be his traveling companion.

The Dark Brotherhood is a band of draíochta who are cold-blooded killers greedy for power. Their history is chaotic and violent. The group was originally known as the Morag Tong, a guild of assassins that appeared around 433 BCE. What was to become the Dark Brotherhood split from the Morag Tong about three or four hundred years later. With a history filled with backstabbing and betrayal, along with the two groups killing each other, their numbers began to dwindle. Fearful of trusting each other, they are hiding out in Winterhold. The Night Mother, their dark Matron, provides them with their contracts of murder.

Like any animal that is trapped or cornered they are probably more dangerous than every.

Valiard tried to dissuade Kevin, but he was adamant about tracking down Hughbo.

“After all,” Kevin argued, “they are using Winterhold as a front for their hiding place. If I present as a simple academic, there is no reason for them to blow their cover by killing me.”

Valiard just shook his head. Sometimes his genius friend’s logic didn’t jive with common sense.



The two arrived at the front gate of the college and were met by a small man whose hooded cloak dragged the ground behind him. His hood completely covered his face.

“We don’t get many visitors at Winterhold,” their guide said leading the way across one of the bridges to the Hall of the Elements. This was the main building on campus. The office of Arch-Mage Savos Aren, the headmaster, was next to the Arcanaeum on the second floor. “Not since the Great Collapse.”

“What was the Great Collapse?” Valiard asked innocently.

“Oh, it was bad,” said their guide. “It was terrible bad. No one know what happened. It seemed like some sort of magical explosion but it destroyed most of Skyrim and the college was blamed.”

“When was that?”

“Oh, a good two hundred years ago or more.”

“That was after Hughbo was here,” Kevin said quietly to Valiard.

Arriving at the office of Arch-Mage Savos Aren the guide knocked and was admitted by a servant wearing a brown skjoldehamn hood; something like a cowl; over a white linen leather belted tunic. His brown linen trousers just showed below the tunic. They were in the land of the Norse.

“These be the visitors the Mage is expecting,” said our guide.

The man put his right hand forward with his palm down. The ancient Norse used this fascist salute to show that they were friendly and had no weapon.

“Heil og sæl,” said that man taking a step back and gesturing as he said, “please come in.”

The room was large and had little furniture or decoration. There was a large fireplace with a roaring fire burning in a vain attempt

to dissipate the cold and damp of the building. The walls were lined with large tapestries perhaps as decoration but more likely another attempt at making a comfortable environment. Four straight backed chairs faced the fireplace. In the far corner was a giant desk behind which were floor to ceiling bookshelves.

The mage stood up behind the desk as Kevin and Valiard entered. His face looked ancient and his long white hair hung down over the shoulder of his green velvet hooded robe with gold brocade trim. He moved slowly toward his two visitors.

“Thank you, Bjorn,” he said to the servant. “Please come sit by the fire,” he said to Kevin and Valiard.

After the three were seated by the warm fire the mage asked, “to what do I owe the honor of a visit by the famous grandson of Coillearnach’s Brian Prionsa Ferguson?”

“I am seeking information about a hogboon who attended College Winterhold in the seventeenth century named Hughbo,” Kevin replied.

“I don’t know the name,” said the mage, “please tell me more.”

“A young person wrote a monograph at St. John’s College, Oxford, in 1634,” Kevin explained. “He used the name Hughbo Skyrin.”

“That is indeed interesting,” said the mage.

“Indeed,” Kevin agreed. “Hughbo is a common Hogboon name and he obviously took your location as his surname which led me to believe that he attended your college.”



“That does make sense, but why the interest in this four hundred year old student?”

“We appear to have an Opnun í Tíma near our flaitheas scáth in Montana, United States and we have found a Hogboon burrow with vast amounts of calculations that led me to wonder if the inhabitant of that burrow might be Hughbo.”

“You have an Opnun í Tíma?” the mage’s eyes became alive with interest. “Have you seen it?”

“As much as one can say they’ve seen an Opnun í Tíma,” Kevin replied. “We have a cave where what goes in doesn’t come out and it has provided us with animals that have been extinct for sixty-five million years.”

“Oh, my!” exclaimed the mage. “a chronomancer would give anything to see that. We’ve been trying to make the connection for centuries.”

“That is probably why Hughbo came to your school. For whatever reason, he was determined to learn the secret of the Opnun í Tíma.”

“And how can we help?”

“We would like to look through your student archives to see if we can link Hughbo Skyrim to the Hogboon of McAllistar.” Kevin paused. “I know that most of chronomancy is a well-guarded secret, but, if I promise to share any information I find in Montana with you, would you share with me what Hughbo might have learned here that would give him the key to Opnun í Tíma?”

The mage sat quietly pondering Kevin’s offer. “Chronomancy is a very secretive field and trust is not a common thing but, in light of

who you are and your reputation, I will give it serious consideration. In the mean time you are free to talk to faculty and look through our library and archives. You will have a room in the Hall of Countenance, and I will ask our professor of chronomancy to assist you in your search.”

“That is quite generous of you,” said Kevin rising, aware that the audience was finished.

Valiard bowed to the arch-mage and smiled politely. Kevin knew the expression, or lack thereof, on Valiard’s face. When they had been politely deposited in a room that made a monastic cell look opulent Kevin scanned the room for signs of magic; viz. checked to see if they were bugged.

“Okay,” said Kevin turning to his friend, “out with it. Something back their set off your internal alarms.”

“It is a good thing I came with you. This place is filled with danger. The man who met us at the gate was carrying a deadly short sword. Behind the kindly old man façade, the Arch-mage is a powerful and dangerous man. He was being cautious when we arrived and became deadly when you mentioned the Opnun í Tíma. He’s a very skilled chronomancer and is willing to do anything to learn its secret.”

“How do you know all this?” Kevin ask not hiding his admiration of his friend’s skills.

“Presidio would never have survived without being able to read people.” Valiard smiled almost sheepishly at Kevin’s awe. “If the Arch-mage had learned who I am we’d have been fighting our way out instead of enjoying this luxurious room.” They both laughed.



As Valiard went on to tell Kevin about all of the members of the Dark Brotherhood he had had to track down during his life as Presidio, Arch-mage Savos Aren sent Bjorg to fetch Wendell Wurtz. Young Wurtz was a fifth year student who was very skilled at chronomancy.

For a student to be called to the Arch-mage's office was generally a terrifying experience. When Wendell Wurtz arrived the look on his face told Savos Aren that he was terrified. That was good, Savos thought. He liked people to be afraid of him.

"Come in, my boy," said the mage in a fake grandfatherly voice. "sit down."

To survive to be a fifth year student was quite an accomplishment. By this point most of the students with whom you started your academic career were gone – dead or fled. The faculty made great sport of sending their students on quests to get knowledge or artifacts. These quests were often dangerous.

"Wendell, my boy, I know that you are very skilled at chronomancy and I bet you would like the opportunity to not only advance your skills but expand to greater things like, maybe, time travel."

The boy's eyes grew large. He knew that if the arch-mage was offering him a quest that would help him learn time travel, it was

going to be a very dangerous quest and whatever the arch-mage had to gain was going to be much greater. Nevertheless, the idea of time travel made the young man forget all that. Caution be damned.

“I would like that very much,” said Wendell trying not to show the unbelievable excitement going on inside him.

“There are two visitors here looking for information about a student four hundred years ago named Hughbo. They seem to believe that this Hughbo can shine light on an Opnun í Tíma that has appeared near their home in America.” Savos Aren could tell that he had the boy hooked. “I want you to make friends, help, follow and eavesdrop on these two to learn what they know. Hopefully they will lead you to the Opnun í Tíma and you will learn how to use it. You will probably have to go to America, but there is a ley line near Stockholm that will take you to a place called Pennsylvania where you can go to Coillearnach and find a ley line to Montana. Are you up for it?”

Of course Wendell was up for it. There was nothing dangerous sounding unless Coillearnach or Montana had some sort of monsters guarding their Opnun í Tíma.



Professor Magnus Hansen looked more like the town derelict than a professor of transfiguration, even if it was at Winterhold. His drawn face and tired eyes looked out from behind a bushy head of

white hair and an enormous white beard. He wore a black cloak over a black tunic and trousers and had the hood up much of the time. He walked bent over and looked like he would have been more at home in a Monty Python movie than a college of magic.

After being introduced as their faculty contact Valiard seemed quite taken by Professor Hansen. Later, when Kevin would question this, Valiard would tell him that Magnus Hansen was a good and honorable man with a serious problem.

“Drinking?” Kevin would ask. “Far worse,” Valiard replied and dropped the subject.

As the three of them were looking through archives in the Arcanaeum, the library, Kevin picked up a conversation with Magnus.

“How did you become the professor of transfiguration here at Winterhold?” he asked.

“I was lucky,” Magnus replied quietly.

“I bet it took more than luck,” Kevin was being serious.

“I studied under Professor Thomand Ashstone and Remus Lupin is a friend of mine.”

“Wow,” exclaimed Kevin. “Professor Ashtone has accepted a position at our new McAllistar Academy and I know of Remus Lupin.”

“Remus and I share a problem,” Magnus said softly.

It took Kevin a moment to understand. Then it struck him. A common problem. They were both werewolves. That’s why this

poor man looked like something the cat dragged in. Kevin looked over at Valiard who gave him an ‘I told you’ look.

As he methodically went through archives Magus asked a lot of questions about McAllistar and America. You could see the longing for a new beginning in his eyes, but he knew that his problem would follow him to a new world.

They hadn’t been working very long when Wendell Wurtz approached.

“The Arch-mage asked me if I would assist you,” Wendell said after introducing himself. “I’m a fifth year chronomancy student.”

After brief pleasantries the four returned to searching archives for Hughbo Skyrim.

Later, in their room, Kevin asked Valiard his impressions of Magnus and Wendell.

“Magnus probably got this position because the Arch-mage or some other person in power here could make use of his condition. I can’t believe that it was out of compassion. That seems to be something sorely lacking around here. He does seem to be a good academic, but determining that is more your specialty.”

“What about the boy?”

“He’s a plant,” Valiard said. “I’ve heard that the faculty here love to send students out on what they call ‘quests’ to get knowledge and artifacts for the faculty member. My guess is that the Arch-mage has put him up to finding out what we know, what we want to know and whether or not we are successful.”

“Why do students come here?”

“I don’t know. Why do people do anything crazy and dangerous? There is some sort of reward.”

“But don’t their parents care?” exclaimed Kevin.

“My guess would be that they are aware of how powerful those who survive become. They probably believe that the bad stories are the sour grapes of those who could not cut it, and that their child has the ability to succeed. They want their child to be powerful.”

“Damn,” Kevin laughed, “I had to kick and scream and throw a fit and fly a broom in the middle of a battle to get to go to Coillearnach.”

Valiard just smiled and shook his head.

Suddenly he started talking about some silly event at Coillearnach as he held up his hand to Kevin to be quiet and follow him. He stepped outside the door, still talking about the nonsensical story, and stopped. With a movement that was so fast that it was hard to see, he reached out, pulled an invisibility cloak off Wendell Wurtz, put the boy into a neck lock and pushed him into their room.

“Close the door,” Valiard instructed Kevin. “Okay, young Mr. Wurtz, what are you doing?”

“Nothing!” the boy exclaimed.

“Oh, hanging around outside our room under an invisibility cloak is nothing?”

“I mean, . . .” Wendell couldn’t come up with a lie and began to blubber. Valiard wondered how he had survived all of the quests in order to become a Fifth Year.

“Boy, I can slice and dice you in more ways than you can count, so I want some honest answers right now. Did the Arch-mage put you up to this?”

“Yes,” the boy replied. “He wants to know what you know and how close you are to learning the secret of time travel. I was supposed to stay near, listen and even follow you to America if necessary.”

“Your master could have just asked,” said Kevin.

“And you would have told him?” Wendell looked totally amazed.

“We’re not trying to learn how to use time travel for some sort of mischief. We’re trying to solve a mystery, keep our home safe from dangerous beasts that might wander through the Opnun í Tíma, and learn the story of Hughbo Skyrim. That’s all. We’ll gladly share what we learn about time travel, if we learn anything.”

“He won’t believe me if I tell him that,” the boy said flatly. “He’s the leader of the Dark Brotherhood. He doesn’t trust anyone. The school has become a front for the Brotherhood since he became Arch-mage. When I started it was a really good school and I was proud to be here.”

“Why don’t you leave?” Kevin asked looking at the young man with true concern.

“I can’t,” Wendell answered. “I have no family. I have no where to go.”

Valiard and Kevin looked at each other.

“He’s going with us, isn’t he?” said Valiard with a smile.



“I think that’s a great idea,” Kevin smiled at the befuddled young man.

Kevin and Valiard explained to Wendell that he should continue to do his job as a spy. They would make sure that they gave him enough information to keep Savos Aren happy. When it was time to return to McAllistar, Wendell would go with them and become a student at the new McAllistar Academy.

“Why would you do this for me?” Wendell looked confused.

“Have you been under these guys thumb for so long that you don’t remember kindness and compassion?”

“Those are only words to me,” Wendell said honestly. “This is the first time I’ve ever experienced them.”

“Well, get used to it,” said Valiard, “and be prepared to try your hand at it. It is a wonderful skill.”

Wendell smiled broadly.



From that point on Wendell stayed close to Valiard and Kevin. He was a smart lad and Magnus said that he was a good student. Two or three times a day he would give the Arch-mage a progress report. To be sure that the Mage was happy, but not so happy that he didn’t need them any more, they would give him a technical

tidbit about time travel, Opnun í Tíma or Hughbo's history. It was like a Norse version of *101 Arabian Nights*.

It was the fourth day in the archives when Magnus called out "what was the name of your claimn in Montana? McAllistar?"

"Yes!" exclaimed Kevin. "Did you find something about McAllistar?"

"I found that a student here in 1632 wrote a monograph entitled '*spás cuartha: a curvature of time and space*'. The author's name was Hughbo but the surname is McAllistar."

"That's got to be our boy!" Kevin almost shouted. "He's like a bloodhound on the hunt. He figured out the fundamentals here and had to go to Oxford to learn the necessary math."

"If that burrow we found was his," said Valiard, "I wonder why he returned to McAllistar."

"I'm hoping that Napikyáiyó and Mahx are figuring that out," said Kevin. "Besides, that burrow had to be his. How many Hogboon do you know that can do such advanced math? For that matter, how many creatures of any species could do it?"

"You've got a point," Valiard laughed.

"Let's find that monograph and get home."

Valiard looked at Magnus. "Would you want to come with us?"

"That's a wonderful offer," the old professor smiled. "I can't tell you how much that means to me, but I must refuse. At least here I can do little harm when I have my problem. I couldn't bear imposing it on people who are being so kind to me."

“That’s very valiant,” said Kevin, “but we might find . . .”

“And then again you might not,” Magnus knew where Kevin’s statement was leading. “I’ve been searching all my life, and despite my appearance, I’m really a very good scientist.”

“Wendell, you tell the Arch-mage that we found Hughbo’s monograph and you heard us say we have to go back to America to connect the dots.”

“We haven’t found it yet,” Valiard pointed out.

“Oh, I’m sure we will soon.”

“I have a good idea where it might be,” exclaimed Magus.



Wendell had just made his progress report.

“Well,” the Arch-mage said to Bjorg with a crooked smile, “it seems about time to dispose of these Americans and get that formula.”

“Yes, master,” Bjorg spoke respectfully. “But didn’t the boy say that Dr. Beaulac said they still need to put the three formula parts together? That means they have to go back to finish the formula. If we take what they have, we’re still missing the last part.”

“Excellent point,” Savos Aren replied as he peered into the fire. “Excellent. That’s why I keep you around.”

The Arch-mage sat silently appearing to contemplate the fire. Bjorg knew that he wasn't contemplating the fire but hatching a plan. He had seen this behavior many times before. After a long silence Bjorg could hear the quiet snicker as his master had obviously decided what to do.

"We're going to send Professor Hansen on a quest," said the leader of the Dark Brotherhood. Bjorg just stood quietly and listened wondering who was going to die. "Wurtz will get the last part of the formula. He and Hansen will finish the computations and send them to me. When I'm sure the formula is correct, I will call them home."

Bjorg continued to stand quietly waiting to hear who was going to die.

"If, as I suspect, they decide they like Montana better and don't send me the formula, I'm going to have an assassin right behind them to kill them all and get me the formula parts."

There it was. At least four dead.



Magnus was right. The library had a section where they kept books that were deemed too dangerous for general reading; e.g. a stolen copy of Mogana Pendragon's codex. Magnus figured that if it wasn't in the general stacks or student section it must have been

put in the dangerous magic section until someone could figure out what it said.

The dangerous book section was in the far corner of the library inside a locked steel cage. Kevin could sense the magic as they approached the gate. The four of them were standing looking at the gate pondering how they might open it.

“Don’t go near,” a voice came from behind.

In the time it took for Bjorg to start speaking and Magnus, Kevin and Wendell to react, Valiard had moved behind Bjorg and had a dagger at his throat.

“That isn’t necessary,” Bjorg said calmly as he stood perfectly still. “I came to warn you, and I can help with the gate.”

Valiard relaxed his stance and patted Bjorg on the shoulder as he muttered an apology.

“That’s okay,” Bjorg gave Valiard a sincere smile. “I’m used to it. I get it all the time from Savos.”

“I take it that there’s a deadly spell on the gate,” said Kevin.

“Not deadly,” Bjorg laughed, “but I can guarantee you wouldn’t like it.”

“I take it you know how to open it?” asked Valiard.

“He should,” Magnus chimed in, “He was the one who put it on there.”

Kevin and Valiard quickly turned their attention to Bjorg ready for the magic to fly. They didn’t have to ask the question. Bjorg knew it.

“I was the Arch-mage here when Savos took over,” said Bjorg. “My name is Bjorg Agnarsson. I was originally the college’s professor of Defense Against the Dark Arts, and then I became headmaster. I was Arch-mage for so long that when Savos took over most people had forgotten, or didn’t know, that I had been professor of Defense Against the Dark Arts. That was my secret which has help to keep me alive. Savos has kept me around because he needs me to show him the secrets of the castle; like this cage; and actually run the academics of the college. He just takes the credit and sends my poor students on his deadly quests. I pleaded with the Cosantóirí for help. They tried twice, but both assassins were killed.”

Kevin glanced at Valiard at the mention of the Cosantóirí. Kevin knew the look on his face. He was feeling guilty over having given up being Presidio.

“It’s not your fault, and you can’t do a thing about it,” Kevin whispered under his breath.

“That’s the truth,” came a booming voice.

The startled group turned to see a giant man dressed in ancient Norse armor.

“And if you want to live,” said the giant, “you will open the gate and get that book for me.”

“Drop,” commanded Valiard.

Kevin was the only one to understand. He immediately dropped to the floor taking Bjorg and Wendell with him. Valiard pushed Magnus down and stood toe to toe with the giant with his sword drawn.

“And whom do I have the privilege of killing,” the giant laughed.

“Presidio,” came the reply.

The giant’s face went ashen.

“You’ve heard of me,” Presidio laughed.

The giant quickly regained his composure. “I’ll go down in history for this.”

Presidio started to raise his blade. The giant quickly took the appropriate defensive position. What the giant didn’t know was that Presidio had no intention of striking.

As the giant brought his sword up to high front, Presidio kicked the giant in the groin as hard as possible. Even though, with armor on, the kick did no damage, it did cause the giant to be distracted and bend forward. As he did, Presidio had spun around to get some momentum and kicked again. This time the blow landed in the giant’s face. The kick was of such force that the giant fell backwards with Presidio following closely. He wasn’t going to let the giant regain his balance. Again and again Presidio kicked. Again and again the giant fell back, now covering his face.

Pushing the giant back with each kick, he finally fell over the stair railing. Grabbing the iron railing, Presidio jumped over after him.

For what seemed an eternity to the other four, they could hear the struggle going on below. Kevin yelled to Bjorg to open the gate. Kevin, Bjorg, Magnus and Wendell took refuge inside. They stood listening and watching.

Kevin, assuming that Presidio would triumph, was caught totally off guard when the giant came racing down the isle toward the

gate. With his great strength the giant ripped the gate off its hinges and stood looking at the four men with a sadistic grin.

Suddenly the giant dropped the gate and bent double in pain. Presidio jumped on his back and grabbed him by the neck.

“Good night,” Presidio called.

As the giant started to succumb to Presidio’s hold a snout began to show on the giant. By the time he fell to the floor he had the form of a pig.

“That’s a lot of bacon,” Valiard laughed.

“No time for breakfast,” Kevin called. “You three find Hughbo’s monograph while Valiard and I tie this pig up.”



Within minutes the five men had gathered essentials and were headed out the front gate of College Winterhold. They had no idea how long it would take for the giant to get free and sound the alarm.

“Presidio decided not to kill,” Kevin said to Valiard.

“I don’t work for the Cosantóirí any more. Remember?” Valiard replied with a grin.

“You are the famous Presidio?” exclaimed Bjorg.

“Yes,” said Valiard, “but I would appreciate you not mentioning it. I’ve been retired for a long time and I’d like to stay that way.”



“No problem,” said Bjorg.

“No wonder you were crazy enough to come to Winterhold,” said Magnus addressing Kevin. “You definitely had the necessary protection.”

Kevin led the way to the Portkey in the forest just beyond the nearby village while Valiard hung back a bit to be sure they weren’t followed. Kevin ushered their three charges into the portkey and gave Valiard the sign to join him.

As Kevin and Valiard emerged on the McAllistar end, Bjorg, Magnus and Wendell were standing with Dwarf guards surrounding them.

“They’re good guys,” Kevin told the guards, “but watch the portkey until I make sure it’s dissolved. There could be some very nasty and angry people behind us.”



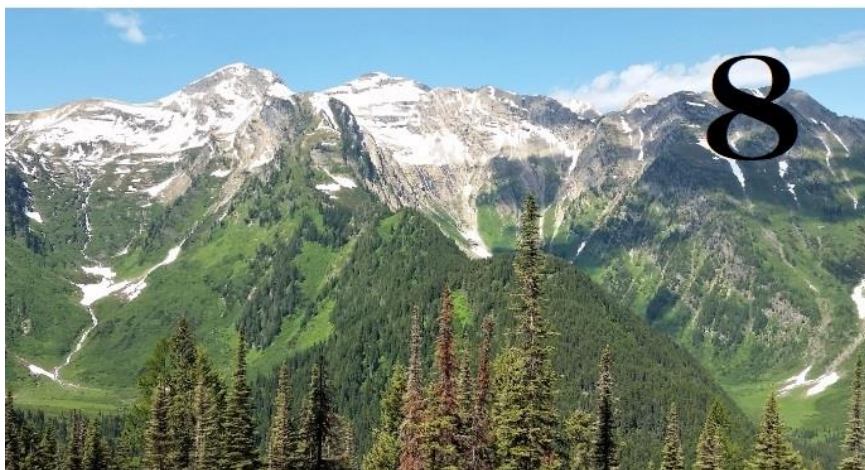
Between greeting the three newcomers and listening to Kevin and Valiard’s story, the great hall was like a festival that evening. Minaku did have a few stern words for Kevin when she learned that the two of them had knowingly gone into a stronghold of the Dark Brotherhood, but she was too happy to have him home to be angry.

The new McAllistar Academy faculty had its own table next to the dais. Bjorg and Magnus were seated with the faculty. Wendell

had already made some friends and, after being introduced and asked to tell about himself, he disappeared into the great hall to sit with his new friends.

Bjorg, it turned out, had quite an impressive history. He had attended College Winterhold when it was a respected school of magic. His best subject was Defense Against the Dark Arts, so he sought out Taylor Lankin, one of the most famous professors of Defense, who was retired and living quietly in a small Swiss village. The elder professor took Bjorg in and taught him. When Taylor's health started getting bad, Bjorg stayed with him and cared for him until he died. After that he took the position of Professor of Defense at Winterhold, still a reputable and respected school. When the Arch-mage retired about thirty years ago, Bjorg was unanimously declared Arch-mage by the faculty. Four years ago Savos Aren, the leader of the Dark Brotherhood, showed up and took the college by force. The only reason that Savos didn't kill Bjorg was that he needed Bjorg to maintain the academics of the college. He became Savos' servant.

Magnus resisted introductions but finally gave in. He had grown up in Skyrim. He wanted to get away and attended Uagadou where he was a student of Thomand Ashtone. Returning home because of health problems he was appointed Professor of Transfiguration by Arch-mage Savos Aren. He didn't know that Savos was not the true headmaster. His big love was libraries and research.



Everyone was excited about Kevin and Valiard's trip to Winterhold, and made Bjorg and Magnus feel welcome. The new faculty spent a lot of time together coordinating their classes and planning the move into the new facilities. When they weren't caring for academy business, they were exploring their new home, including visits to the nearby Glacier National Park, the Blackfeet reservation, Browning and famous bison herd, with a visit to Dr. Deming's home in the North Fork. They would spend their evenings with Jugarbeir in hand studying and debating Hughbo's monographs and formulas.

As long as the weather permitted, they would meet on the great porch which would have sunlight well into the night. The entrance guards would get tickled at how animated and even raucous the otherwise stayed and proper academics could get in the heat of debate. The debates could, and often did, get so animated that the guards would impose a quiet hour because their voices would echo down the valley. Gadin Ri would often join them just to be a part

of the fun. He confided in Isla that he would have never believed that a bunch of academics could be such fun.



Across the South Fork from the mill a lone figure sat on a large rock enjoying the beautiful early summer day. While those further south had been having warm summer weather for several weeks, summer doesn't come to the northern Rocky Mountains until well into June. It is as though the mountains insist upon waiting for the Summer Solstice. Great Northern and Mt Grant still had most of their winter snow. The cascade of rushing snow melt coming from the glacier above them was gorging the streams and rivers. Their sound could be heard throughout the Flaitheas Scáth. The clainn had built a retaining wall just upstream from the mill because the rushing spring water would otherwise overpower the mill wheel.

Saileighta Morngold had come to this peaceful secluded spot since she was a young girl. You will remember from the story of *The Tree of Life* that Saileighta was called Sally by those who didn't speak Dwarf and couldn't pronounce her name. This spot was Sally's happy place.

Indirectly Sally was responsible for much of her clainn's recent history. As a child she had battled cancer and gone to the BPF hospital in Atlanta where Turin Mar'sil had been her physician and agreed to make a house call in Montana. What followed is all documented in *The Tree of Life*. Sally was now in her twenties and still in remission.

To get to Sally's happy spot one had to go down to the South Fork Bridge and follow the river back north. There really wasn't a trail but Sally knew every tree and stone.

For all these years the only other people to ever come here were her parents when they were looking for her. Today, however, Wendell Wurtz was exploring and came ambling along the river bank.

"Hello," he called when he spotted Sally. Sally jumped. "Oh, I'm sorry! I didn't mean to frighten you."

Sally quickly regained her composure. "Oh, hi! I just wasn't expecting anyone."

"I can understand why," said Wendell looking around at the remoteness of Sally's happy place. "This is a beautiful spot."

"This has been my happy place since I was a little girl," Sally said. "I had cancer and would come here to escape."

"That's quite a big burden for a little girl." Wendell was immediately smitten by the young Dwarf, hypnotized by her large blue eyes. To Wendell, whose hormones were now raging, this was a goddess sitting before him.

Sally's curly flaxen hair hung loosely over her shoulders and moved in the gentle breeze. She wore a golden-brown earth colored knee-length tunic that was belted at her hips. The tunic had a hood and both half and full-length sleeves. The edges of the hood and sleeves were finished in a blue-grey brocade. Her traditional snub-toed, thigh-high boots lay on the ground by the rock. Wendell didn't think he had ever seen anything so beautiful.

At Wendell's encouragement Sally shared her story. Now it was Wendell's turn.

"Oh, I grew up in Skyrim. That's a place in northern Europe," he added responding to Sally's quizzical look. "Our mountains were quite high and we had snow most of the year, but when the snow would leave it was very much like here."

"I faced a lot of death when I was little, but it was never the possibility of my own death. My parent both died before I was eight years old. I went to live with an aunt and uncle. They were nice enough but much older than my parents. It must have been hard on them to care for a young boy. My aunt died a couple of years after I went to live with them. My uncle couldn't care for me by himself so he sent me to College of Winterhold. I was thirteen years old when I started there and I liked it very much. While I was a student there the leader of the Dark Brotherhood took over the college and made himself Arch-Mage. My uncle died the next year, so I had no where else to go when many of the students were going home and not returning. The Dark Brotherhood faculty would send us on dangerous quests to get knowledge or artifacts for them. Many of the students never returned. Some fled and some died. I was lucky because I became good a chronomancy. When Dr. Beaulac and Professor Armgrom came to learn about the Hogboon named Hughbo, the Arch-Mage told me I was to spy on them. They caught me and brought me here. I can't remember the last time I felt so happy and safe."

"Wow," exclaimed Sally, "that's quite a story. And quite a trial for one so young."

Wendell didn't take that right and standing tall as he could said, "I'll be twenty in a few months!"

Realizing that she had struck a sensitive nerve Sally smiled as sweetly as she could and said, “I’m sorry. I wasn’t calling you a child,” she could see Wendell relax. “That’s a lot of history even for a twenty-year-old.”

“Are you attending the academy?” asked Wendell. “I think I saw you helping to get things ready.”

“Yes,” Sally's face showed the excitement she felt every time someone mentioned the new School of Magic. “I’m a healer. I’m much too old to be a regular student, but I want to learn all of the other subjects I’ve missed by not going to an academy so I’m the school’s healer and can attend any of the classes I want.”

“Wow, you’re a healer?!”

“Yes. I wanted to repay all those who helped to heal me. Before they decided to start an academy here, I studied healing with Thebur Springlord, our healer here in the Flaitheas Scáth and Napikyáíyo, the Blackfeet shaman. Dr. Deming, the human physician, wanted me to go to a humani medical school, like Dr. Mar’sil and Bhean Manwathiel, but I don’t have the humani education requirements to get admitted. He’s taught me a lot of humani medicine.”

“I’m going to go to the academy to learn all the things I should have learned since the Dark Brotherhood took over Winterhold,” Wendell said.

“That’s quite admirable,” Sally said honestly. “Oh, you’re the floor counselor. That’s great.”

The two sat talking well into the afternoon when Sally realized that it was getting late. It is hard to keep track of time when it doesn't really get dark until almost midnight.

Grabbing her boots she said, "we need to be getting back. My parents still worry about me."

"May I walk you home?"

"I would enjoy that."



The two had just crossed the South Fork Bridge when they encountered Valiard headed to check on the cave. He was going to meet Sorg, Golouth and a small group of warriors at the entrance.

After a few words of greeting and a wee bit of subtle teasing by Valiard they parted ways.

A small figure stepped onto the path after Valiard had passed. His dark cloak dragged the ground behind him and he kept his hood pulled up over his face. He started moving a bit faster as he spotted Wendell and Sally ahead of him.

The couple were unaware of anyone behind them. Some of that might have been their amorous state of mind, but most was probably due to the fact that the figure was an assassin.

The assassin's hand reached inside his cloak and took hold of the hilt of his sword. They would be dead and he would be gone before anyone was the wiser.



This, the assassin thought to himself, had to be one of the easiest assignments he'd ever had. Almost silently approaching the young couple the assassin drew his sword.

“Halt!” came the command in a wizard voice so loud and forceful that Sorg and Golouth heard and started running back toward the village.

The assassin turned and raised his sword in defense.

“Yield or die,” instructed Valiard.

The assassin began to move into a strike position. Valiard knew before the assassin could swing. Bring his sword into position with an arch he executed a perfect mittelhaw strike – cutting across below the shoulders from the dominant side – that brought a terrible scream of pain and the assassin slumping to the ground.

Wendell grabbed and held the frightened Sally who was sobbing hysterically. He turned her face away from the dead assassin.

Valiard pushed back the hood with the tip of his sword.

“That’s Ivar,” exclaimed Wendell

“He was the one who met us at the gate in Winterhold,” said Valiard. “I recognized the cloak, the smell and the sense of danger when we passed.”

About that time Sorg, Golouth and one of the guards came running. They stopped and looked down at the assassin.

“An assassin from the Dark Brotherhood,” Valiard explained.

“Savos Aren wasn’t happy that our young man betrayed him.”

“That seems a bit much,” said Sorg, looking down at the assassin.

“The Dark Brotherhood has very strict rules about not following orders, but what concerns me most is that they have such a distrust of each other that a second assassin is often sent to confirm that the first did the job. If the first assassin fails or balks, the second steps in to finish the job.”

“You mean there might be another assassin here?” asked Golouth.

“Most definitely,” answered Valiard.

“How many visitors came through the gate?” Golouth asked the guard.

“Three,” replied the guard. “One came through with Latimer Orkney, and two with Karklyn Kindkin.”

“We must find the other two,” said Sorg.

“Oh,” said the guard. “Latimer and his friend have already left.”

“Let’s find Karklyn,” said Sorg.

“I just hope she’s still alive,” said Valiard. “In the mean time, young man,” he addressed Wendell, “your job is to find a safe place and stay there with Saileighta until we find the other assassin. Do you know how to use a sword?”

“I’m not very good with a sword, but I have a mean plasma bolt,” the young man replied.

Picking up the fallen assassins sword, “well, between the two you should be okay. Go up to the cave and tell the guards there what has happened. Stay near the guards until I come for you.”

“I’ll get a group of warriors together to help search,” said Golouth.

“I’ll stay with you unless there’s something else you need me to do,” said Sorg.

“I don’t know Karklyn,” said Valiard, “so your company would be appreciated.”

Wendell looked at the short sword Valiard had handed him. It was actually quite a beautiful piece of elven sword making. A short sword with a graceful leaf-shaped blade, winged hilt and leather wrapped handle. It was hard for Wendell to associate this fine piece of elven cutlery with the man who lay at his feet. He only saw Ivar as the ill-tempered gate keeper who was dirty and smelled of rum, not a deadly assassin.

Valiard had removed the sword’s belt and sheath and handed them to Wendell. “Never carry a blade out of its sheath unless you’re planning to use it.”

“Yes, sir,” said Wendell buckling the sword around his waist.

He took Sally by the hand and started toward the cave.

“Go with them,” Golouth said to the guard, “and return to your station when you’ve passed them to the door guards.”



Valiard and Sorg continued along the path toward the village. Reluctantly Valiard answered a deluge of questions about being Presidio and of the Dark Brotherhood.

“At one point we thought we had put an end to the Dark Brotherhood. The Morag Tong was gone because of fighting with the Dark Brotherhood. The last I knew of the Dark Brotherhood their leader, Knud Martensen, had been found hiding in one of those Greek monasteries on the top of mountains and the Cosantóirí were moving in. Savos Aren, in Winterhold, is evidently a new leader.”

It was Valiard who noticed the broken branches and trampled foliage along a rather secluded section of the path. The two men took a deep breath and entered.

There was what they were afraid they would find. There was the body of Karklyn Kindkin. The two men knelt by the body. Sorg took off his cape and placed it over the young woman.

“I want this killer,” he said in such anger than even Valiard was shaken.

Valiard reached over and put his hand on the young prince’s shoulder.

“I can tell you from personal experience, revenge can kill you.”

Sorg looked at Valiard.

“I ended up as Presidio because of revenge. It almost killed me,” said Valiard looking the young man in the eye. “If it hadn’t been for Kevin Beaulac, I would be dead.”

“But ...”

“I didn’t say we were going to let him get away with this,” Valiard interrupted. “We’re not going to do it for revenge. We are going to get justice for this young woman.”

“Where do you think he might hide?” asked Sorg.

“Often the best hiding place is in plain sight.”

“The inn!”

“Sounds good to me.”

The two hastily made a pile of rocks by the trail to mark where Karklyn’s body was, and hurried off to the inn.

“Remember,” cautioned Valiard, “this man is a highly trained killer. Don’t take any chances. If it comes to a fight, you let me fight and you get anyone around to safety.”

Sorg grudgingly agreed.

Valiard had played this game many time, both being the hunter and the hunted. The assassin would know to keep calm and try to blend in, avoiding any action which would show anxiousness or nervousness.

“This is the tricky part,” Valiard said as they were about to enter. “I want him to know we are looking for him, but we want to spot him before he panics and does something to hurt others. He knows you have a high regard for life and he figures that’s your weakness. And, truthfully, it is. He will kill someone just to distract you.”

The two men walked into the pub. Shouts of greeting met them.

“Smile and look happy,” Valiard instructed. “Let me know when you see someone you don’t recognize.”

“I already have,” Sorg laughed, waved at people, and tried to look casual. “In the corner by the fireplace.”

“We need to get as many people out as possible,” said Valiard.

Sorg jumped up on a chair. “Listen all,” he said holding up his arms, “Chepi Banrion sent us six casks of her wonderful Heather Ale, but I’m going to need a lot of help getting them off the cart.”

A cheer went up and a good portion of the room headed for the door.

“Go with them to explain, and keep them out there.”

The assassin sat for a short while and then decided that the only way out was to go along with the crowd.

Valiard kept moving so that the assassin had to walk closer to the wall to avoid him.

When he thought he could make his move without the assassin grabbing a hostage, Valiard leapt toward the assassin knocking him against the wall and clear of the crowd.

“Get them all out of here,” Valiard yelled.

It was pure chaos but Sorg had been able to alert enough people that the room was soon cleared.

The assassin stood looking at Valiard. The expression on his face was pure hatred. In fact, if looks could kill. Valiard stood calmly with his feet shoulder width apart and his arms hanging loosely. In his light grey gown, it was obvious he didn’t have a weapon, yet he smiled.

The assassin pulled out a long dagger and returned Valiard’s smile.

“Do you know who I am?”

“I don’t care who you are,” spat the assassin.

“Did you know Oman Wolf?” Valiard asked. He knew that every assassin would know Oman. “He begged me not to kill him.”

“Did you know Darren Dukes?” Valiard paused. This was another Dark Brotherhood leader. “I was the one who killed him.”

The assassin was beginning to get the picture.

“Did you know Klyn Grimm?”

“You’re Presidio !” the assassin almost screamed.

“Do you want to die?” asked Valiard. “I won’t kill you if you drop your weapon.”

By this time Sorg was standing on the far side of the room watching and listening. The assassin threw his weapon on the floor and dropped to his knees. With his head down he whimpered “please make it fast.”

“No such luck, charlie,” Valiard said with a snarl.



With the assassin locked safely away it came time for a decision as to his fate. Valiard spoke up.

“I propose that we truss him up and send him home.”

“Let him go?!” the room was aghast.

“If you execute him he will sneer at you to the end. He will feel that he is a martyr dying for a cause and will taunt you and haunt you,” Valiard explained. “It will be the worst experience of your lives and the memory will haunt you until you die.”

The room was silent.

“The Dark Brotherhood has very strict rules, is untrusting and totally without compassion. What do you think will happen to him if he gets sent home in shame? I guarantee you that if you tell him you are going to send him home alive, he will beg you to kill him.”

Guards brought the assassin before Gadin Ri. He, as Valiard had said, was arrogant and taunted the king. Gadin Ri kept his cool.

“You have violated everything we hold dear and taken the life of a young innocent woman. There is nothing we can do to you to make up for that. I have learned that the harshest justice you could receive would be to send you home.”

As Valiard had predicted, the assassin fell on his knees and asked to be executed. He would accept any punishment, just don’t send him home.

The assassin was trust up. His bindings were uncomfortable and he could not move. Valiard and four Warrior carried him through the port key and dropped him in front of the Winterhold gate. On him he had a note which read,

*“Savos Aren, Here is your trash. Ivar is dead and this one failed. I know who you are and where to find you. If you dare send anyone else, I will return for you personally. Presidio.”*





**H**ughbo's Formula; as the combined books, documents and formulas became known; was a constant source of conversation and debate. As other faculty members and observers joined in the porch soon became too small and the conversations were moved into the Great Hall. Gadin Ri absolutely loved this because he could sit and listen. He didn't understand

half of what he heard, but it was exciting trying to follow the logical battle.<sup>2</sup>

“I think we must assume that if Hughbo actually did end up traveling through time, it must have been into the past since the future hasn’t happened yet,” argued Penmaster.

“I would have to disagree with you, Professor,” Dr. Stormhorn said politely shaking her head. “Einstein’s theory of relativity predicts that if you can accelerate enough you can take a journey into space and return decades in the future.”

“But we’re not talking about space travel,” Penmaster counters. “We’re talking about time travel.”

“Einstein’s special and general theories of relativity tell us that when three-dimensional space is combined with time it forms four-dimensional space-time. Space consists of spatial points. Space-time consists of spatiotemporal points, or events, each of which represents a particular place at a particular time. More recent quantum physicists believe that there are passages that connect distant point in space-time. They call them wormholes,” Kevin takes a breath as the others lean forward to hear where this is all leading. “According to Einstein your life forms a kind of four-dimensional worm in space-time where one end is your birth and the other your death. An object or event observed in this worm is a

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<sup>2</sup> Most novels do not have footnotes, but I must make an exception. I am fascinated by quantum physics and read a lot to try to understand the various arguments about quantum physics and time travel. As an academic I feel compelled to give credit to David Deutsch and Michael Lockwood. (1994). *The quantum physics of time travel: common sense may rule out such excursions - but the laws of physics do not*. Scientific America: March 1994. There are portions which are almost quotes because there was just no different or better way to say it. Thank you, gentlemen.

three-dimensional cross section. The line along which the worm lies is called that object's worldline. However, the main difference between space and space-time is that your worldline cannot be arbitrary. Accepting that nothing can travel faster than light, and the worldline of a ray of light is typically a 45 degree angle, a flash of light spreading out in all directions forms a cone in space-time, called a lightcone. Nothing then can stray outside the lightcone emanating from any past event."

"Translation please," Valiard quips. "It sounds to me like Einstein is saying yes and no at the same time."

"Is that real time or space-time?" jokes Napikyáiyó.

Kevin slumps back in his chair. He realizes that much of the argument is really only understood by he and Adgrim Stormhorn.

"But we know that chronomancy works," says Thomand. "How does that relate to this humani science?"

"Yes," replies Adgrim, "we know that it works but we don't know why it works. That's the whole crux of Dr. Beaulac's book on quantum physics and magic."

"Call me Kevin, please," Kevin says a bit sheepish. "This is exciting for Adgrim and I because we would like to know why all these things work."

"So what does all of this have to do with Hughbo's formula?" asks Bjorg.

"Two guys, John Wheeler of Princeton and Kip Thorne of Cal Tech, among other, have shown how two ends of a wormhole could be moved so as to form what is known as a Closed Timelike Curve or CTC," Adgrim says.

“And according to calculations by Richard Gott of Princeton,” Kevin adds, “a cosmic string passing rapidly by another would generate one of these CTCs.”

“We think that that is the foundation of Hughbo’s formula. He was about four hundred years ahead of the others.”

“It’s rather humorous,” Kevin laughs. “The famous humani scientist, Steven Hawking, argued against time travel. He said ‘the best evidence that time travel never will be possible is that we have not been invaded by hordes of tourists from the future.’”

“I’m a big Hawkings fan, but you know that just doesn’t fly,” says Adgrim.

“Why is that?” asks Penmaster.

“Because a CTC reaches only as far back as the moment it was created,” Adgrim smiles. “If the first CTC is constructed in 2030, subsequent time travelers could use it to go back to 2030 but not before.”

“But you two just indicated that, from Hughbo’s formula, you are guessing that he created one of these CTC,” Napikyáiyó points out.

“True,” replies Kevin, “but we know that was after 1634. Whatever seemed to be driving him must have taken place at least before his first monograph in 1632.”

“Yet he’s gone and we’re getting visitors from millions of years ago,” Valiard is quick to point out.

“Touché!” exclaims Adgrim.

“So let’s bring some humanities to this scientific feast,” suggests Penmaster. “Let’s considered whether or not one should travel

through time. Even chronomancy would have to be included in this argument.”

“What do you have in mind?”

“There is a paradox story called the ‘grandfather paradox’. In the story the grandchild goes back in time when his grandfather was young and ends up killing his grandfather. How can that be? If his grandfather dies before he has children, then the grandchild never existed to go back in time to kill him.” Penmaster leans back and watches the reaction.

“You philosophers always did know how to kill a good idea,” Kevin teased.

“Oh, but the real question is, when the grandson goes back to his grandfather’s youth can he or can he not kill his grandfather. Either way you have a problem. If he can, then there’s a contradiction. If he cannot, that conflicts with common sense. Would some strange force grip him and prevent his action?”

“Okay, okay!” Napikyáiyó exclaims. “You guys have my head spinning so fast that I’m dizzy.” The others laughed and everyone except Kevin and Adgrim agreed. “We do want to solve the mystery of Hughbo. Solving it will be both interesting and beneficial in that we might be able to close the *opnun í tíma* and you two will know how something else works. But we must also consider whether or not such travel is safe and ethical. It doesn’t seem that, unless we stand in a corner and just observe, we can go to the past without adversely affecting our present. It doesn’t sound safe, wise or ethical to me.”

“Hear! Hear!” shouted Penmaster.

“Despite my burning desire to understand and know whether or not this is possible,” Kevin replied, “I must agree with you.”

“Me too,” said Adgrim. “Our quest for knowledge can sometimes seem like we don’t care about the consequences to others, but we do care.”



The quest to solve the mystery of Hughbo’s formula continued, and while they still had no idea why he was so driven – just the assumption that something in his life happened that he wanted to go back and change – everything about his formula pointed to it being the key to creating what modern quantum physicists call a CTC.

Actually the two draiochta scientists could not find a real conflict between the worm hole/CTC of the modern humani and the opnun í tíma of Hughbo’s theory. Besides the fact that Hughbo was living and writing a good four hundred years ahead of his humani counterparts, he was also speaking from the experience of a draiochta. When you know that chronomancy is a reality you are going to approach things differently than when you do not have that knowledge. Modern humani just haven’t experienced that reality yet.

Mangus Hansen realizes that this was an opportunity for him to leave his benefactors in peace. He knew that it was just a matter of time before something went wrong and he hurt someone he loved.

He had so enjoyed his time at McAllistar, but he knew that he had to go.

Making his decision Mangus writes a farewell note and promises that he will attempt to return, thereby testing the possibility of using the crack for real time travel. However, he knows that that is probably not going to happen. Hughbo never made it back and he was the genius who came up with the formula. He sat outside the cave for a long time looking down the mountain at the beautiful valley below. He tried to convince himself that he wasn't committing suicide. He was just going someplace else. But deep down inside he knew that he was hoping that this would be the end.



**M**any more long years passed as Hughbo attempted to use the opnun í tíma to get to Kimi. Something would always seem to go wrong which would send him back to his burrow to ponder and recalculate. One day he succeeded.

As he stepped from the cave he knew that he was in a different time. Things around the cave were totally different. He still had several hours of daylight so he hurried off toward the Piikani village.

When he reached the river he began to worry. There were the remains of Morganians. He had tried to get there before their attack. This wasn't good. The distress caused him to hasten his pace despite his age. As he reached the top of canyon he could look down into the meadow. It was filled with grave platforms.



Hughbo sat down and sobbed. He had spent his entire life trying to get back to rescue Kimi and he had missed by days. Near the tree that he knew was Kimi's there was a small figure sitting on the ground. As he drew near he realized that it was himself.

His brain raced and searched and calculated. He thought about trying to go back to his present and try again, but the young man sitting near his beloved's dead body told him the truth. He could not come back as he was then. Even though he was but an older Hughbo he was different and even if he was successful in saving Kimi, she loved the young man sitting down there. It would be cruel to take her away. While the *opnun í tíma* had allowed him to go back in time, it had not changed him. As much as he wanted, it could not recreate the day. It took him to the day as it was and he was an old man standing and looking at himself grieve.

Hughbo sat watching and thinking. He actually remembered that day. It was the day he went to say goodbye to Kimi while he went off to find the way to come back and save her. He knew that he would not return. Well, not until now as an old man from another time.

He had made Kimi a promise. He had promised that they would be together again, and this is the best he could do. He had given his entire life trying to keep that promise. Here he was. He was old and tired. Thinking about it, he wasn't sure that he could make the hike back to the cave even if he could get back to the right time. If he was successful he would be an old man trying to convince a young girl that he was there to save her. Likewise, if he got there ahead of the Morganians he might encounter his young self. That couldn't be good.

He sat down under Kimi's funeral platform to think. There only seemed to be one answer. The best he could do was climb the tree and lay down for eternity next to his beloved.

The Piikani were very superstitious about going near the dead. Once the grieving was over they would not go back to the place of the dead. The next morning Kimi's mother was not breaking tradition but like so many mothers who lost children in the massacre she wanted to look one last time toward her child. It was then that she saw what seemed to be a second body on Kimi's platform.



**M**ahx's Blackfeet story database was, indeed, a work of art in and of itself. He had enlisted the help of a cousin in Seattle who wrote programs for a living. With Mahx providing the design and making sure that it was easy to use and maintain, and his cousin providing top quality programming they produce a database program into which stories and information could quickly and easily be entered and searched in a wide variety of ways. Even the screens were interesting and enjoyable to look at.

To give some of the tribe's school students experience using a computer, Mahx had students entering data. He gave some of the students who enjoyed hearing and telling Pííkani stories notes which he had made after listening to Napikyáiyó or the elders. Those students would then put them in story form. He actually paid the students, which helped them and their family, but he did ask

that they take their time, actually read the story they were entering and think about it. What did the story tell them about their ancestors? What lesson did the story have for them?

“We still have lots of stories to enter,” Mahx told Napikyáiyó.

“From what Kevin has learned, his young Hogboon lived in the seventeenth century,” said Napikyáiyó.

“They aren’t being entered in any particular order but some of the students have mentioned the chasing an evil white army down the canyon and destroying them.”

“That would be the seventeenth century and same battle in which Metarí died,” Napikyáiyó was excited. “That’s probably the best lead we have.”

The two of them came up with every keyword they could imagine in an effort to find the mention of a Hogboon or Dwarf named ‘Hughbo’. They knew that names and titles were often wrong in stories. The song about the Queen who died for her people was actually Princess Metarí, and the song never mentioned her name. Most stories were passed down to teach lessons and tell about the people, not to record history in the white European way.

It was very frustrating and after many hours of searching, Mahx and Napikyáiyó concluded that they did not have a story that included Hughbo.

They had suspended their search while Kevin and Minaku were in Africa. Not only did it seem to be a futile effort, it would also give the students a chance to enter more stories. The students were asked to be on the lookout for stories from the seventeenth century

that had characters that might be little people or unusual characters.

It was just before the opening of the academy that one of the students told Mahx that while there was no mention of little people – actually no description of a person at all – but she had come across a story that took place just after the white army was destroyed. The village had buried their dead. Among them was a girl named Kimi. Traditionally family did not get near the burial scaffolds after the mourning, but one day Kimi’s mother looked at her daughter’s platform from a distance and there appeared to be two bodies. According to the story Kimi had a secret love who loved her so much that he could not live without her and killed himself on her burial platform so that he could be with her for eternity.

Mahx and Napikyáiyó were anxious to tell Kevin and the others.



The academy building was completed and only a few final touches remained. One of those finishing touches was to move a large boulder that didn’t want to move. It didn’t seem that anything was working.

One of the workmen called to the others, “we’d better ask Dr. Beaulac what he wants us to do?”

With that the giant stone began to rise. The workers stepped back. As it rose the stone split open revealing a crystal and a tablet. The tablet was engraved. “The man with the problem. Who am I?”

Kevin was tending to details inside the building when one of the workers came running.

“Dr. Beaulac, we found a crystal with a stone tablet. We figure that you’d better come and look at it.”

Arriving at the site Kevin took one look at the tablet and said, “he’s sent us a message.”

“Who, sir?”

“Run and get Professor Armgrom. Tell him that Magnus has sent us a message.”

Shortly Valiard and a couple of other faculty members arrived. Valiard, like Kevin, knew exactly what the message meant.

“You are our friend, Magnus Hansen.”

The crystal began to glow and then shine a beam of light on the ground in front of it. The figure of Magnus appeared. They knew it was Magnus but he looked good. Strong and healthy.

“Greetings from a really, really long time ago,” said the projected image of Magnus. “I am sending this crystal as a report of what happened when I entered the opnun í tíma”

“As I said in my note to you, you had all been so kind to me that entering the opnun í tíma just made sense. If I had stayed in your time it would not have been long before I got loose or something happened where I would have hurt someone or done something terrible to those whom I had grown to love. It just made sense that

I should sacrifice myself for the greater good and for your edification.”

“I didn’t really think I would survive, and if I did, I figured that I would die soon thereafter. That isn’t the way it happened. I can see why the bear Demi made friends with couldn’t figure out that something had happened to her. I had no sensations. I went into the cave. I can’t even tell you when I stepped into the opnun í tíma. At first I thought that nothing had happened but as I was walking out of the cave it was obvious that I wasn’t in the twenty-first century any more. The landscape looked younger, and the glacier was just outside the cave entrance.”

“At first I almost starved. I was surviving on berries and plants but there weren’t many and other animals would chase me off. I fashioned tools and weapons and was able to kill the occasional rabbit or marmot.”

“After a lot of work, I found that I could actually cause my transformation. I never went hungry, but it also taught me that I had more control over my condition than I thought. Going to sleep was my way of returning to my human form. I still transform at the full moon. That seems to be an uncontrollable curse, but I had more control than ever before.”

“I stayed by Tunnel Creek for some time. Finally, I ventured out of the valley and met some very early Piikani. They don’t have horses but that doesn’t stop them from hunting bison. They are strong and amazing. They are also kind and generous.”

“I have been living with them. When I see the full moon coming, I go back to Tunnel Creek. They know what I am and don’t shun or hate me. A Crow hunting party attacked when we were down

by the Yellowstone River. There really shouldn't have been a fight but they thought we were hogging all the game. We were outnumbered and they were extremely powerful. We were getting our butts whipped so I transformed. That alone scared the hell out of the Crow who fled. After the battle I went into the forest by myself and slept it off. When I explained it to my new friends they accepted it like I was giving them my age. The tribal shaman felt a bit threatened at first, but we worked it out and have a good relationship now."

"I have had a wonderful life, but you are right about the dangers of the opnun í tíma. I don't think there is a way back to your last point or where you started. We decided to bury it. I remember the piles of stone and dirt around the cave in your time. I can only assume that our Hogboon friend pulled all that away from the opening because my Blackfeet friends and I spent a long day covering the entrance with it."

"I want to thank you all for your kindness and compassion. Truthfully, I would not be here enjoying a new life were it not for you getting me away from Winterhold and trying so hard to help deal with my problem. If your kindness had not made me feel compelled to sacrifice my life, I would never have entered that cave and found new life."

"Please take my advise. Seal the cave and destroy the formula!"

Kevin, Valiard and the others stood speechless when the image disappeared. There was a bittersweet relief among those who had known Magnus. Kevin would replay the crystal message several time for others before it took its place of honor in the academy library.



Kevin and the faculty talked for a long time about destroying the formula. Sealing the cave was a no-brainer. That happened within hours, but they couldn't bring themselves to destroy all of Hughbo's work. They soon realized why most draíochta libraries have a locked section for works too dangerous to be available to the general public. Kevin argued that while Hughbo's formula was dangerous, his first two monographs have a wide range of application and should not be hidden away. He should be celebrated as the first draíochta to understand and write about quantum mechanics.

It was decided that the school would create a dangerous document vault and Hughbo's formula would be secured there. Copies of his "*Spás cuarthá: a curvature of time and space*" (1632) and "*The mathematics of time and matter*" (1634) would receive special recognition since they couldn't tell Oxford what they had and Winterhold wasn't going to do anything. Modern reproductions of the manuscripts which would be annotated by Kevin and Dr. Adgrim Stormhorn would be available to all students and readers.

"I know you're probably tired of hearing me say this," Dr. Stormhorn would frequently say to anyone who would listen, "but it bothers me to no end that I can't share these and Dr. Beaulac's books with the human world."



After receiving Magnus' message, Kevin sat down with Mahx, Napikyáíyo and the others to revisit the Piikani story they had found. It could have new meaning in light of Magnus' experience.

"For centuries hearers of the story heard a touching love story. Put in the context of Hughbo and his time travel formula, it could be interpreted as Hughbo being the secret love," Kevin kicked off the discussion.

"It would make sense that, if he had had the intelligence and skills, he might have spent his life trying to get back to save his true love," said Penmaster. "Many of us have done crazier things. How many have tried to bring loved ones back from the dead?"

"Let's assume, for the sake of discussion," offered Kevin, "that Hughbo and Kimi were lovers and she died in the Morganian attack. And that Hughbo, distraught at his loss, spent his life trying to travel back in time to save her."

"If that was him on the platform with her, it would mean that something went wrong and they both died," said Mahx.

"Magnus told us that he couldn't see anyway to return to his starting point. Magnus didn't say but he implied that he did not change and he looked to us like the Magnus we all knew except he was much healthier," said Adgrim.

"So we're saying that you don't change. If you were at a point you had visited before, you would be your current age and the other you would be whatever age was appropriate to that time," Napikyáíyo was confirming that he was understanding what he was hearing.

“Yes,” said Kevin, “that’s right. Assuming that we can only go back in time, since the future hasn’t, to our current knowledge, happened, then we would encounter our younger self.”

“I don’t think Hughbo thought about the him who witnessed her death still being there. I’m thinking that for some reason he expected that he would return to being the younger Hughbo, the Hughbo who failed to save her,” said Valiard.

“Well, he was definitely a pioneer in this area and the idea of meeting himself probably hadn’t crossed his mind,” replied Adgrim.

“Did he kill himself when he realized that he failed?” Mahx wondered.

“You have to remember that the Morganian attack was very early in the seventeenth century and Hughbo’s first monograph was written in 1632,” Penmaster pointed out. “By the time he figured out the formula, learned how to use it and found an *opnun í tíma* he was, by their standards, an old man.”

“So you’re guessing that he used the formula, missed the date so that Kimi had already died, and realized that he was an old man and they would never be able to regain those lost years,” said Napikyáiyó.

“Whether he killed himself or just laid down and died of old age next to her doesn’t really matter,” Valiard said softly.

“It is a classic tragedy either way,” said Cornelius.

“And I would suspect that he never had any idea of the tremendous knowledge he had acquired and how it would change the lives of so many hundreds of years later,” Kevin sighed.

“He didn’t care about that,” said Napikyáiyó. “He just wanted to be with his Kimi.”

The group sat in silence. They knew that their analysis could be totally wrong, but something told each of them that they were right.

# 12



**W**hen the academy structure was complete, the faculty and staff spent most of their time preparing it for the opening. The faculty took responsibility for preparing their rooms and their classrooms. The rest of the staff prepared the areas in which they would be working for a throng of visitors. It took more than a week, but the building was sparkling and ready to go.

The grand opening of the McAllistar Academy was a day of celebration. Draiochta from many different clainn around the world came to see the new building and meet its already famous

faculty. A great contingency came from Coillearnach including all of Kevin's family, Anastasia Banrion and her family, the faculty of the Coillearnach Academy and a number of Isla, Turin, Cathy and Kevin's friends. Chepi Banrion and Swan Clainn Tuatha Dé made their usual grand entrance. A proper place for their Unicorn mounts had to be fabricated at the last minute, but the McAllistar builders were up to the challenge providing the fairy queen's Unicorns a beautiful stable.

Napikyáiyo brought several members of the Brotherhood who had fought with Isla. Representatives from draíochta clainn and academies, some none of the McAllistars had ever heard of, wanted to take part in the celebration. Besides being the academy of the famous Kevin Beaulac, it was the first Academy to be opened in over two hundred years.

Fortunately, Gadin and Ara realized early on that there would not room for so many visitors. These two were being pushed onto a world wide social-political stage, and were doing a magnificent job. Alainn, Brian and Anatasia all had to take time to compliment the two on how they were dealing with such a large and diverse crowd. They had wasted no time setting up temporary housing for all the visitors including palatial suites, an amazing banquet hall, and quiet rooms. It was a separate flaitheas scáth built up against the academy's.

Ara and Gadin's temporary housing was so beautiful that, after everyone had gone home, the McAllistars couldn't bring themselves to take it down. It soon acquired the name 'the royal village' and was maintained as a place for family and others to stay when visiting the academy.

There were so many visitors that Sorg and Isla organized group visits to the McAllistar Flaitheas Scáth and royal cavern to avoid chaos. There was no way they were going to keep visitors from going out to see the mountains and Grant Glacier. All they could do was hope they avoided any humani. Tunnel Creek was not a major trail, but humani did hike it occasionally. A few of the Brotherhood stayed by the trailhead to discourage any humani hikers. Fortunately, there were none to discourage.

Mark Deming acquired a number of buses and the Brotherhood provided drivers so they could take visitors on driving tours of the area. The trip's to Polebridge, Two Medicine Lodge, the park's Many Glacier area and Nínaistáki were among the favorites. Some of the visitors who were more comfortable among humani would take one of the park's tour buses to see the famous Going-to-the-Sun Road.

When the gates were officially opened and Kevin had Ara and Gadin lift the veil which hid the new academy building, the air was filled with awes and cheers.

There before a world crowd of draíochta stood the most magnificent stone and log structure. No one had ever seen anything like it. A flagstone and gravel path wound through the mountain meadow to the foot of a wide flight of steps made of stone.

The foundation of the massive building was stone. On that massive foundation rose the multistoried log structure. The steps led up to the Grand Entry, a four story high room with giant trees holding up the arched ceiling. There were two great fireplaces that were so big that a large person could walk into them to clean them. The firebox and chimney were of field stone with massive wood mantels. Instead of the cold academic entries to most academies, this was

warm and comfortable with clusters of tables and chairs for relaxing and decorated with Dwarf and Blackfeet art. The doors at the far end opened into the Great Hall.

Again, this room was unique in its log structure with its high ceiling supported by massive trees. There was a low dais at the far end for faculty and rows of wooden tables and benches for the students. There were doors near the foot of the dais. The left door led into the student housing building while the right door led into the faculty rooms. The classrooms were in a three story building between the student housing and Great Hall. The faculty had a private garden in the corresponding area on their side of the Great Hall. The administration building sat between the Grand Entry and Faculty Rooms.

The Faculty Rooms were designed like medieval European faculty rooms; i.e. they are apartments with everything except a kitchen and room for an office if the occupant desired. Most of the McAllistar faculty had decided to keep their office in their classroom, but they all had an area in their rooms where they could do writing and research. Unlike the vast majority of their counterparts, these faculty rooms each had large balconies which were recessed for privacy while still affording the occupant a panoramic view of the mountains that surrounded them.

The student housing was three stories high. The ground floor had a large common room with fireplace and comfortable chairs. It also had study areas where small groups could meet. Wendell was given rooms on the first floor where he would be the floor counselor. The infirmary was on the second floor. Saileigha had rooms in the infirmary and was the counselor for that floor. The



third floor had rooms for a counselor but none had been assigned since it wasn't going to be used yet.

Within minutes the enormous building was filled with draiochta looking in every corner, trying out chairs and sofas, feeling the beds, and perusing the library which was on the third floor of the classroom building. Being the top floor, it had a high vaulted ceiling to accommodate the stacks for books. Faculty and staff had stationed themselves around the building to answer questions and keep track of things.

The official opening of the academy started in the Grand Entry where the visitors lined the walls as the first students, all from McAllistar at this point, wearing their new forest green gowns walked past the visitors and into the Great Hall. As soon as the students had passed, the visitors were invited to find seats in the Great Hall where there was an opening ceremony and light luncheon.

The last one to speak before Ara Banrion declared the school open, was Gadin Ri.

“This is a great day for Clainn McAllistar. Over four hundred years ago Clainn McAllistar left the east coast of this continent to avoid the influx of humani from Europe. We came to these mountains which reminded some of our elders of their homelands in the Old World. We made friends with the locals, the Salish and Blackfeet, and fought a Morganian army with them. The Blackfeet have become our close friends and their shaman, Napikyáiyó, and a group of Blackfeet called The Brotherhood, were instrumental in saving us from certain destruction. Napikyáiyó's daughter, Minaku, is the wife of founder and headmaster, Dr. Kevin Beaulac, and contributes greatly to the strength and wisdom of our Clainn.

Clainn Coillearnach has been our wonderful friend and benefactor and we could not be having this celebration without them. I am so honored that Anastasia Banrion of Coillearnach and her family chose to be with us today as well as the beloved and famous couple Alainn Máthair banríon and Brian Prionsa Ferguson. Our neighbors, led by Chepi Banrion of the Swan Clainn Tuatha Dé, stood by us in our darkest hour. And I can't stop without mentioning Dr. Mark Deming, a humani physician, who has given us such wonderful guidance and support."

"I cannot say enough about all those who have, in some way, made today a reality. And I thank all those from around the world who have taken the time and made the effort to be here with us. We, for four hundred years, lived in isolation. That is over. This is the first official day for the McAllistar academy and the end of our clainn's isolation. Because of you, dear friends and neighbors, we now take our place in the world." The audience applauded and cheered.

"But with all of this, I am pulled in mind and spirit back to fifteen years ago when a small group from Coillearnach representing the Bridget-Prince Fionn Foundation Hospital came to see one of our children who had been their patient. Among them was a young dwarf physician named Isla. Most of you know the story of how her determination and devotion led her to be united with the spirit of Metarí and how Isla Metarí would be our salvation by bringing down the feared Ceann a dhualgas that would have been our total destruction. This young woman is now our beloved daughter-in-law. Isla Metarí would you please join me."

Isla looked around. This hadn't been a part of the plan. What was Gadin Ri doing? Slowly she stood up and walked to her father-in-law to the thunderous applause of the audience.

Putting his arms around her shoulders, Gadin continued, “Many of you have probably met and talked to this young woman without knowing to whom you were speaking. This humble woman saved our Clainn and has been a guiding light and inspiration to all of us ever since.”

There was a long pause as Gadin’s eyes filled with tears. “There is no way,” he had trouble speaking, “no way that I can adequately express my love, admiration and gratitude.” Another long pause. The audience began feeling and sharing his emotions. “So on behalf of myself, my family and my Clainn I am going to ask that from this moment on this academy be known as the Isla Metarí School of Magic.”

As the crowd whistled and cheered and cried, not knowing that this had not been planned, those on the dais broke down in tears. Isla hugged her father-in-law and cried while the family enfolded the two in a giant hug.

Ara Banion, still wiping the tears from her eyes, stepped forward and in the most wonderful wizard’s voice said, “I was not expecting this, but I am overjoyed with Gadin Ri’s decision, and I hereby declare the Isla Metarí School of Magic official open.”



Isla had never realized how her standing up to and defeating the most feared evil in the draiochta world had become the inspiration and hope of all draiochta who lived in fear and had earned her the

admiration of every draiochta alive. Since that battle she had lived a simple and relatively secluded life in the McAllistar Flaitheas Scáth. Her life had been focused on her love for her family and the well-being of those around her. She didn't know that draiochta children played Isla Metarí like humani children play Superman or Wonder Woman. She was a full-time mother, healer, and when required, princess. She was oblivious to her own greatness.

Gadin Ri had a second school scepter made with Isla Metarí School of Magic engraved on it. The original plan was that Kevin was to bring out the school's scepter and lead the procession from the Great Hall. Gadin had already given the person in charge of the scepter the heads up. When Kevin went to the side of the dais to get the scepter, he was given the new one. He beamed. "Sly ole man," he said more to himself than anyone around.

With music playing and people cheering, Kevin walked to the front of the dais and faced the crowd. The sound rose to deafening level as he held the scepter above his head for all to see. He turned to Isla and said "follow me!"

As Kevin started down the center of the Great Hall ahead of Isla Metarí holding the school scepter as high as he could, the crowd nearest the dais started kneeling in respect as Isla Metarí passed. Like a wave, the act of love and respect passed through the crowd as she passed by.

Wendell and Sally stood up after Isla Metarí had passed.

"Wasn't that wonderful of Gadin Ri to have the school named after her?" said Sally.

"Yes it was," Wendell replied. "I had talked to her several times and, like Gadin Ri said, I had no idea to whom I was speaking.

She's so kind and gentle and down to earth. It's hard to see her as a champion warrior."

"Oh, yes!" exclaimed Sally. "I was a little girl but I remember that day as though it was yesterday. I was inside the Flaitheas Scáth when she passed through on the way to the battle. She was riding a giant white unicorn that pranced. She had on golden armor that Chepi Banrion had given her, and was wearing her scarlet cape. She held Nat'lunda, her famous sword, in front of her. I curtsied to her as she came near and she smiled at me. I knew that she was going to win. I just knew it. Those who were on the battlefield said that she turned to face Socusdus' camp and called him out in a wizard voice that shook the ground. Then she called out 'Ardaím' and levitated to the ground in front of her unicorn."

"She actually used Ardaím?" exclaimed Wendell. "I don't know of anyone who has ever successfully used Ardaím!"

"Hundreds of people saw her," Sally assured him. "It must have made Socusdus wet his pants." They both laughed.

"That's amazing."

"She is an amazing woman and I'm so happy that Gadin Ri had the school named after her."

"I definitely agree."

Leaning over to Minaku, her father said, "it is indeed quite rare that one is actually shown the love, respect and appreciation for such a deed in their own lifetime. It is wonderful. I am so happy for her."

Napikyáiyó had well expressed what everyone was feeling and thinking.

# 13



Daddy, tell me the story about Aunt Isla,” said the little boy lying in his bed looking up at Mahx.

“He does love that story,” Rotuva called from another room of their cottage.

When Mahx and Rotuva got married, Mahx became the forest keeper for the Clainn and built a cottage at the end of the path that led into the northern woods.

Mahx was trying to get their son, Bofur Achak; whose name is a combination of Dwarf and Blackfeet languages meaning strong, brave spirit; to go to sleep, so he was trying to cut the story short. Bofur would have nothing to do with that and would fill in the blanks his father attempted to leave. Rotuva couldn't help but watch from the other room, giggling and smiling at how this little child had the big Blackfeet man wrapped around his finger.

Isla Metarí School of Magic quickly became a world class institution still dedicated to local children. Most of the McAllistar children would attend for some period of time. Knowing that the vast majority of the McAllistar children were going to spend their lives in the quiet solitude of the northern Rocky Mountains, Kevin started adding subjects and classes that would help them not only make a connection between the more formal relationship between magic and nature, but get what one might call a classic education without losing or even postponing their connection to the wonderful world around them. They even got time and credit for doing apprenticeships with local artisans and trades. The child who was destined or desired to be a baker or innkeeper could receive both their training as well as an expanded education. Kevin added a draiochta version of natural sciences and classes on the care of animals, forests, and other natural habitats. It was so successful that other schools of magic followed his lead.

Isla's fear of Gadin Ri being changed by being catapulted into the chaos of draiochta society was never an issue. His Great Hall was always full of visitors; from the great to the unknown, from the

powerful to the simple nomad. What did change was that he and Ara would frequently be seen sitting by one of the fireplaces in the Grand Entry surrounded by students and faculty.

Wendell kept his position as floor counselor but started teaching chronomancy. The hardest thing he did was to encourage the love of his life, Saileighta, to go off to humani medical school. Between Mark Deming, Cathy and Turin, and some influential draiochta who lived in the humani world, they were able to get Sally into the schools she needed to get the educational requirements for a humani medical school. She was one of only thirty Montana students admitted to WWAMI medical school. WWAMI stands for Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana and Idaho and is a cooperative program with the University of Washington School of Medicine that provides students from these humani states access to high-quality, cost-effective medical education.

It had been a long and arduous journey, and Sally still had a few years to go, but Wendell was prepared to wait.

Demi was almost finished with her education at the academy named for her mother. Her best subject was the science of magic and she got top marks. Despite what she called her ‘nerdy’ calling, Demi still spent as much time as possible roaming the mountains. Since she no longer had Uncle Mahx as a regular playmate, she would often take students with her who had never experienced the wilderness. When she could, she would get one of the Brotherhood to come along to show the ‘city draiochta’, as she called them, what life in the wild was all about.

Minaku and Kevin were enjoying the view from the balcony of their faculty rooms. Minaku had been picking up the classes that would have normally been taught by Saileighta as well as her own



classes. Thebur Springlord filled in as school healer with routine visits by Mark Deming to assist and back him up.

“It’s been a wonderful life, hasn’t it?” she said to Kevin who was himself lost in memories of all the adventures he and his Pííkani bride had enjoyed. Of course, he was still known to get into a bit of mischief with the other members of the Triar Draoi. While the three were famous in the draíochta world they were still just those crazy three old men who showed up occasionally at the local pub in Pinnacle. The owners could never figure out why, but something strange and exciting always seemed to happen when those three were around.

Savos Aren was too arrogant to take Presidio’s advice. This time Valiard took a leave of absence. As much as he wanted Presidio to retire permanently it was not to be yet. He returned a short time later in a good mood. He had almost a conspiratorial air to him.

It wasn’t two weeks before Bjorg received a message. It read,

*Dear Professor Agnarsson,*

*The famous Presidio paid Winterhold a visit. He dispatched Savos Aren and several of his followers. What was left of the Dark Brotherhood fled. Those of us in Skyrim would like to see the college return to its former state of dignity, grace and respect. We would be most honored if you would resume your place as Arch-Mage and guide the school.*

*With humble respect,*

*The Winterhold restoration committee.*

The Isla-Metarí faculty were thrilled for their friend and colleague. After a wonderful farewell party hosted by Gadin Ri, Bjorg went

home. It was not long before reports came of the wonderful changes that had taken place at Winterhold and soon it had regained its place among draíochta educational institutions.

Cornelius Penmaster decided to retire. He was named the school's first Professor Emeritus and retained his rooms at the academy. He would give the occasional lecture on local McAllistar and Blackfeet history, but spent much of his time jumping ley lines and traveling the world since he wasn't yet a hundred years old and, thanks to his wacky friends, he had become quite self-sufficient. "I'll settle down and write a book when I'm one hundred," he would tell friends. Until then the closest he came to sedentary was sitting in the Grand Entry with a glass of sherry watching the coming and going of visitors or sipping tea in the student commons where he could dip on their conversations. He found that especially fun and amusing.

"Yes," Kevin agreed, "it has been wonderful, and there's still a lot ahead of us."

Minaku looked over at Kevin. He had that look. There would be mischief afoot.



# Index of Terms

**Áípi'kssokinak:** Shaman in the Blackfeet language.

**Ardchanaeum:** the library at College of Winterhold.

**Battle of Coillearnach:** In the first book, *New Prince of Coillearnach*, the conflict with the great-grandson of Morgana Pendragon culminated in a5 horrendous battle around the Coillearnach Flaitheas Scáth. During that battle Apollyon broke through the flaitheas scáth and was attacking the castle. Kevin and his two friends who had secretly learned how to fly a broom, took to the air and foiled the attack.

**Boter:** The Draíochta term that is similar to 'godchild'.

**Brotherhood:** In the book *Tree of Life* a secret Blackfeet group called the Brotherhood protects the people of the tribe. Mahx and Minaku are members. The Brotherhood helps Clainn McAllistar to defeat Socusdus and become good friends.

**Carovniška Sola:** a famous draiochta academy in Germany from which Professor Jynla Runehead graduated.

**Castelobruxo:** a draiochta academy which Jynla Runehead attended that is known for Professor Libatius Borage, the author of Advanced Potion Making.

**Ceann a dhualgas:** A super-powerful, pure evil creature created by Socusdus from Morgana Pendragon's Codex. The creature is so evil and so powerful that even Morgana never created one.

**Chronomancer:** Is a draiochta who practices "chronomancy", stemming from the Greek word *chronos* (meaning *time*), and the word *manteia* (meaning *divination*). In the draiochta world it refers to a school of magic related to moving through and manipulating time.

**Clainn:** the Draíochta word for the English word 'clan'.

**Clainn Snowheart:** a clan of mountain dwarf that reside in the high mountains of northern Europe.

**Coillearnach:** the name of a large kingdom and clan of draíochta. The kingdom covers much of east-central North America. Its capital is the Coillearnach Flaitheas Scáth in the Cumberland Plateau.

**Coillearnach Flaitheas Scáth:** The main shadow realm of the Coillearnach kingdom. See: Coillearnach. See: Flaitheas Scáth.

**Cosantóirí:** In the book *Tree of Life*, the Cosantóirí were called a super-SWAT team. There are a group of Draiochta who would protect people from wizards like the Dark Brotherhood. As a member of the Cosantóirí, Professor Valiard Armgrom was known as Presidio and feared around the world. He left the group when he realized that even good people were beginning to fear him.

**Draiochta:** from the ancient language meaning ‘magic folk’ or ‘magic creatures.’

**East Glacier:** is a village of about 200 people in Glacier County, Montana on the Blackfeet reservation. Highway US-2 goes through the village. It was a major railroad stop for visitors to Glacier National Park and was the original entrance to the park which was founded in 1916.

**Flaitheas Scáth:** The term means a shadow realm in the ancient Draiochta language. A shadow realm to the draiochta is not the same as the *humani* term which is not a nice place. To the draiochta it is simply a place created by magic where they can live without worrying about *humani* seeing and/or bothering them.

**Hogboon:** is a draiochta. Orkney's "hogboon" is a corruption of the Old Norse "haug-bui", or "haug-buinn", roughly translated as "mound-dweller" or "mound-farmer". Most are peaceful but don't cross them. They tend to be as small or smaller than a Dwarf and are known for their hairy feet. A Hogboon in *Tree of Life* made friends with the Pífkani and was given the Blackfeet name "hairy feet".

**Humani:** Humani are non-magical creatures. They tend to be rather self-centered and believe that they are the most powerful, most important and only intelligent creature on Earth. This is why Draíochta avoid humani or hide their true identity when they live among the humani. Dr. Beaulac's theory is that humani and draíochta lived together until about six thousand years ago when the humani started developing religion, government and economics which lead them away from, and made nature out to be bad or evil.

**Jugarbeir:** a Dwarf drink. It is fermented and evidently quite tasty, but when Penmaster asked what was in it, he was told not to ask.

**Kingdom of Kush:** was an ancient kingdom in Nubia, centered along the Nile Valley. The region of Nubia was an early cradle of civilization, producing several complex societies that engaged in trade and industry. The Kush conquered Egypt in 727 BCE and began a line of pharaohs known as the Black Pharaohs.

**Leath draíochta:** is a draíochta born of humani parents. The only explanation that can stand any scrutiny is that they acquired their powers from a previous generation in which a draíochta married a humani.

**Manawydon:** a mindless and therefore fearless magical creature that is created by a powerful wizard from debris and organic waste. They were a part of Apollyon's army when he attacked Coillearnach and mentioned here only in reference to Kevin and his two friends who rode broomsticks and attacked the Manawydon hoard that had broken into the Coillearnach Flaitheas Scáth.

**McAllistar:** Clainn McAllistar is a clan of dwarf who live in the Tunnel Creek drainage of the Great Bear Wilderness of Flathead National Forest in northwestern Montana. The clan originated in western Ireland and moved to the east coast of North America to escape the Morganian Wars. When humani started moving to North America and persecuting the draíochta they encountered, the clan moved to the mountains of Montana.

**Morgana Pendragon:** A medieval witch, Morgana was related to King Arthur. Her grandmother was the paternal half-sister of Arthur. It is said that she was originally a kind-hearted individual but became evil after being corrupted by Morgause, her half-sister, who convinced her that Uther and Arthur were the real evil. She turned against her family and friends and eventually helped cause the death of her own father. She was determined to take over Camelot and would allow nothing to stand in her way. She had a short alliance with Mordred,

who was the evil son and nephew of Arthur; the product of an affair Arthur had with his half-sister. He would eventually stab, but not kill, Morgana. Morgana was killed by Merlin.

**Morganian:** Morganians are the remaining followers of Morgana Pendragon. In the book *The New Prince of Coillearnach*, Morgana's grand-grandson, Morion – aka Apollyon – tried to destroy Coillearnach in revenge for that Clainn having sided again his great-grandmother in the Morganian Wars.

**Nínaistáki:** the sacred Blackfeet mountain. It is called “Chief Mountain” by white settlers. For some reason the US Government made the boundary between the Blackfeet reservation and Glacier National Park go right through the middle of the mountain. Whether intentional or not many find it a great insult to the Blackfeet people who never were defeated by the US Army. This was part of the price of making peace.

**Opnun í tíma:** Literally ‘crack in time’ in the ancient Draiochta language.

**Pííkani:** A band of the Blackfeet Confederation. The name Blackfeet is used in the United States while Blackfoot is used in Canada. They are the same tribe with numerous bands. At one time the territory of the Blackfeet/Blackfoot extended from north of Banff, Canada to the Yellowstone River.

**Rucklidome:** Rucklidome was the first cave home of the McAllistar's when then arrived in Montana. It was a natural cave that they expanded without a flaitheas scáth. They abandoned it when news came of an approaching Morganian army and built their current cave which was created magically. Metarí hid Nat'lunda, the famous magical sword she created, in Rucklidome.

**Salish:** The Salish are a northwestern indigenous people who still live in northwestern Montana. In the book *Tree of Life*, Metari, the dwarf Princess, saves a Salish village and the chief's son.

**Swan Clainn Tuatha Dé:** a Clainn of fairies that reside in what are now the Swan Mountains south of Clainn McAllistar. Chepi Banrion, their queen, is a very good. She and her people help Isla-Metarí in the battle against Socusdus' Ceann a dhualgas and gave her a unicorn to ride.

**Triar Draoi:** the heroic wizard troika comprised of Dr. Kevin Beaulac, Cornelius Penmaster and Valiard Armgrom. Napikyáiyó was actually a part of this group but is not draiochta.

**Tunnel Creek:** Tunnel Creek is actually a relatively modern name for the valley and stream in which the McAllistar Flaitheas Scáth is located. The trailhead is near an old railroad tunnel. Its headwaters are the Grant Glacier and it flows into the Middle Fork of the wild Flathead River.

**Uagadou Academy:** A premier school of magic located in the Mountains of the Moon region of western Uganda. Founded around 950 CE.





# List of Characters

**Agnarsson, Prof. Bjorg.** A professor of Defense Against the Dark Arts who became Arch-Mage at Winterhold before it was taken over by the Dark Brotherhood. He was kept as a servant. After his escape to McAllistar he became professor of Defense at Isla-Metari School of Magic.

**Alainn Banrion.** The second character introduced in the Coillearnach series of stories, Alainn, princess of Coillearnach, met Brian Ferguson and fell in love. She became queen and later passed the throne to her daughter, Anatasia. Banrion means ‘queen’ in the Draiochta language. The title is generally put after the name.

**Anastasia Banrion.** Alainn’s daughter.

**Ara Banrion.** Ara is the queen of the McAllistar Clainn, wife of Gadin Ri and the mother of Sorg who married Isla-Metarí.

**Aren, Arch-Mage Savos.** The leader of the Dark Brotherhood who took over College Winterhold and made himself the Arch-Mage (headmaster). A truly evil person he sent a student to follow Kevin to get the secret of the Opnun í tíma and then tried to kill them all. Bjorg Agnarsson foiled his plot.

**Armstrong, Prof. Valiard.** (see also Presidio) We first met Valiard in the book *Tree of Life*. He had been a part of the Cosantóirí. So distraught about what he had become, even though he was good, he almost killed himself. Kevin Beaulac helped him through this time and he played an integral part in helping to save Clainn McAllistar. He is professor of Defense Against the Dark Arts.

**Ashtone, Prof. Thomand** Professor of Transfiguration at the famous Uagadou School of Magic in Africa when Kevin recruited him to teach at Isla-Metará. A graduate of Hogworts, one of the premiere schools for transfiguration, he went on to study at Livermorny and Uagadou where he later joined the faculty. Thomand's skills are legendary. Ashtone was a member of Clainn Snowheart, a clan that comes from the highest mountain peaks in Europe.

**Banecap, Isla-Metará** see Isla-Metará

**Beaulac, Dr. Kevin** We first meet Kevin in *New Prince of Coillearnach* where he is the precocious grandson of Brian Prionsa Ferguson. He became famous for actually flying a broom during the Battle of Coillearnach, writing the book *Magic as the practical application of quantum physics* while in his twenties and becoming the youngest professor in Coillearnach Academy history. He plays a principal roll in *Tree of Life* as well as this account. He falls in love with and marries Napikyáyo's daughter, Minaku Píftaa.

**Beebe, Mahx** has been a major character in both *Tree of Life* and this story. He is a member of the Blackfeet Brotherhood, along with Minaku, and became an important part of the defeat of Socusdus. In that story he plays a dominant role in rescuing Rotuva Caskmaul's family from Socusdus. In this story he ends up marrying Rotuva with a bit of help from a romantic, nosey twelve year old princess, Demdiahilda. At the end of this account we learn that he and Rotuva have a son Bofur Achak.

**Beebe, Bofur Achak.** The son of Rotuva Caskmaul and Mahx Beebe. His name is a combination of Droichta and Blackfeet meaning strong, brave spirit.

**Caskmaul, Rotuva.** Rotuva's family had been held hostage by Socusdus in *Tree of Life*. Mahx was one of those who rescued her family. She and Mahx are married.

**Chepi, Banrion** is the queen of the Swan Clainn Tuatha Dé, the fairies of the Swan Valley. The Tuatha Dé had lived among the Salish tribes for many generations before the Dwarf arrived. We first met *Chepi in Tree of Life* where she helped defeat Socusdus.

**Cozzereln, Bonselle** the dwarf whom Kevin recruited teach Language and Runes. She was a graduate of Koldovstoretz in Lake Ladoga, Russia, studied archeology at the University of Wyoming and, when Kevin recruited her, was involved in research of cave drawings as language in the US southwest.

**Demdiahilda Banphrionsa** the daughter of Isla Metarí and Sorg Prionsa. She is twelve years old when this story opens. A princess by birth, scientist by aptitude and backwoods expert by love.

**Deming, Dr. Mark** We first meet the humani physician in *Tree of Life*. He plays an important role in the survival and development of Clainn McAllistar. His home is in the North Fork area.

**Ferguson, Brian Prionsa** Brian is the first character we meet in the Coillearnach series. He falls in love with Alainn Banrion, who was at that time a princess, and became the *New Prince of Coillearnach*. He is Cathy and Kevin's grandfather.

**Gadin Ri.** The king of Clainn McAllistar. Ri means king and, like other titles follows the person's name. He is Sorg's father and Ara Banrion's husband. He is a big hearted, egalitarian character who love to have guests from the great to the unknown at his table. He surprises everyone by changing the academy name to Isla-Metarí School of Magic, named after his daughter-in-law, Isla.

**Hansen, Prof. Magnus.** Magnus is a professor of Transfiguration and a werewolf. He was Kevin and Valiard's faculty contact at Winterhold and ended up having to flee from there with Kevin and Valiard. He joined the McAllistar faculty. To protect his friends, he goes into the Opnun Í Tíma and sends Kevin and the others a message from the distant past.

**Hughbo.** A central character in this story, Hughbo is a Hogboon who had fallen in love with a Pífkani girl, Kimi, who was murdered by Morganians. He

spent his life trying to go back in time to save her. Kevin and the others spend most of this account trying to learn his story and understand his formula.

**Isla Metarí** We first meet Isla as a teenage friend of Cathy's in *New Prince of Coillearnach*. She becomes the central figure in *The Tree of Life* where she joins with Metarí to become Isla Metarí. She marries Sorg, becoming a princess, and is the mother of Demdiahilda. The new school of magic is named after her. (see also Banecap.)

**Kimi.** The Piikani girl who falls in love with Hughbo and is killed by the Morganians.

**Lady Kaida.** Japanese clan princess. Wife of Lord Ryuhito. As soon as the draíochta community heard that Kevin was opening an academy, people came from around the world to try to get their children enrolled.

**Longbeard, Commander Golouth.** We first met Golouth in *Tree of Life*. He is the commander of the McAllistar warriors.

**Lord Ryuhito.** Japanese clan prince.

**Mar'sil, Dr. Turin** We first met Turin in *New Prince of Coillearnach* as the young man who mortified Cathy by asking her parents for permission to ask her on a date. They were married after the Battle of Coillearnach and became physicians. It was Turin agreeing to make a house-call in Montana that got them involved in the adventure of *Tree of Life*. At the opening of this book, Turin and Cathy have moved to a small ranch on the Blackfeet Reservation and are physicians at the Browning hospital.

**Mar'sil, Dr. Cathy** Cathy is the granddaughter of Brian Prionsa, the silver wizard in *New Prince of Coillearnach*. She and her husband, Turin, have been major characters in all three of the Coillearnach stories. Here the two of them have moved from Atlanta to be physicians at the hospital in Browning, Montana and purchased a small ranch on the Blackfeet reservation not far from Clainn McAllistar.

**Morngold, Saileighta** Saileighta, aka Sally, is the young McAllistar girl who was being treated for cancer by Turin Mar'sil at the Atlanta BPF hospital

and was the catalyst for the Coillearnach group to go to Montana in the account of the *Tree of Life*. She has grown up and, by the end of this story, off to medical school.

**Napikyáiyó** is the Blackfeet shaman. He plays a central role in both *Tree of Life* and this story. In *Tree of Life* he played a very important role in discovering the Iarrthóir's (seeker) home and defending McAllistar from Socusdus. Minaku is his daughter.

**Penmaster, Prof. Cornelius** We first meet Professor Penmaster in *Tree of Life*. He is a history professor. He becomes one of the Triar Draio, the magical wizard troika, who become known for their wacky antics.

**Píitaa, Minaku** Minaku is a major character in *Tree of Life*. She married Kevin Beaulac. They lived in Coillearnach where she taught at the academy and studied with her father, Napikyáiyó, the Blackfeet shaman.

**Pleiadian, Headmistress Deidarabochi** the Uagadou School of Magic has both a headmaster and headmistress. The reason is unknown, but the school has grown and prospered with the arrangement so it has not changed. Deidarabochi is a powerful witch who is the current headmistress.

**Presidio** (see also Armgrom, Valiard) Presidio is a very famous warlock who single-handedly took out some of the worst villains the draíochta world had ever seen. He was a member of a group called Cosantóirí. Cosantóirí might be compared to a humani SWAT team. It all started when Valiard witnessed his parents killed by a Morganian, named Marrok. To get revenge Valiard became the deadly wizard warrior known as Presidio. He was feared by Morganians and anyone who practiced the dark arts but the revenge almost killed him. As Presidio he took the form of a Fearleon, a magical creature that is part humanoid and part lion. Standing over seven feet tall, his head was that of a lion. Except for a lion's tail and feet like a lion, his body was that of an extremely strong, well-muscled, humanoid. He wore a leather chest harness with a large silver medallion in the middle of his chest, and a kilt of the ancient all-Ireland tartan. An enormous daggar hung at his side, but Presidio usually used magic. He wore a large silver ring on his right hand that looked like a skull.

**Sally.** - see Morngold, Saileigha.

**Socusdus** the main villain in *Tree of Life*. He was a part of a group of Morganian wizards bent on destroying Crann na Beatha (tree of life) around the world. To achieve these ends he helped Maefran, the jealous prionsa of McAllistar, who wanted to take over the Clainn. Socusdus had kidnapped the family of Rotuva Caskmaul, who marries Mahx Beebe in this story, to force her to spy on Gadin Ri.

**Sorg Prionsa** the son of Ara and Gadin, Sorg falls in love with Isla Banecap. They are married and have a daughter, Demdiahilda (aka Demi).

**Springlord, Thebur** Thebur is the healer of Clainn McAllistar. He played a much more prominent role in *Tree of Life* but, in this story, is still a force in Saileigha going to medical school.

**Stormhorn, Dr. Adgrim** Dr. Stormhorn graduated of Coillearnach Academy. She went to college down the road at University of Tennessee and went on to earn her PhD in theoretical and quantum physics at Harvard University. Her dissertation was on instantaneous travel through quantum mechanics. She was a professor at MIT before joining the McAllistar faculty.

**Sukoshi, Aka** the young son of Lord Ryuhito and Lady Kaida. His parents want to get him enrolled at the new academy. Not much is said of Aka or his parents. Their role in the story is really only to demonstrate how news of Kevin's academy drawing world attention.

**Vandous, Kosy** the Uagadou School of Magic has both a headmaster and headmistress. The reason is unknown, but the school has grown and prospered with the arrangement so it has not changed. Kosy is the headmaster.

**Wurtz, Wendell** a young wizard who was a student at Winterhold. His parents had died and his uncle, unable to care for him, sent him to Winterhold when it was a reputable school. When the school was controlled by the Dark Brotherhood, Wendell was stuck because his uncle had died and he had no where to flee. Kevin and Valiard take him to McAllistar where he ends up as a floor counselor at the new academy and falling in love with Saileigha Morngold (Sally).

# List of Pictures



The pictures used at the beginning or chapters or indices were all taken in Flathead or Glacier County, Montana where the story is set, the Blackfeet Nation is located and Glacier National Park.

**Table of Contents.** St Mary Lake looking west.

**Chapter 1.** Plains on which Blackfeet live looking west toward Lewis Range of Rocky Mountains in Glacier National Park.

**Chapter 2.** Bison, a part of Blackfeet herd, with the sacred Nínaistáki mountain in the background. The white man named the mountain Chief Mountain.

**Chapter 3.** Going to the Sun Mountain as seen from the hanging garden at Logan Pass.

**Chapter 4.** Tunnel Creek seen from Mt. Grant.

**Chapter 6.** Grant Ridge above McAllistar Flaitheas Scáth.

**Chapter 7.** Fantasy game rendition of Winterhold.

**Chapter 8.** Grant Mountain.

**Chapter 9.** Appistoki Creek looking south from the Continental Divide trail.

**Chapter 11.** Nínaistáki, known as Chief Mountain in English, is a sacred mountain to the Blackfeet. The mountain plays an important role in the book *Tree of Life* and Napikyáíyo's home is nearby.

**Chapter 12.** Looking north from Logan Pass, Glacier National Park.

**Chapter 13.** A log ranger cabin in Glacier National Park.

**Index of Terms.** Sinopah (Sinopáá in the Blackfeet language) Mountain rises above Two Medicine Lodge lake where author, Rusty, and his wife lived.

**List of Characters.** Blackfeet bison herd on the prairie with Lewis Range in the background.

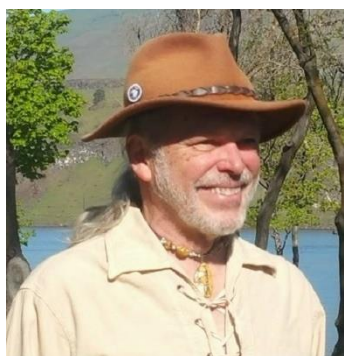
**List of Pictures.** Going to the Sun Mountain, Glacier National Park.

**About the Author.** Rusty and Pamela's home at Two Medicine (Two Medicine Lodge to Blackfeet) looking toward Running Wolf Mountain.





*Rusty & Pamela's home at Two Medicine below Running Wolf Mountain.*



**Russell E. (Rusty) Vance, III, PhD.** is a retired psychotherapist who, after retiring, has followed his passions and dreams. He and his wife, Pamela, spent the first ten years of retirement as nomadic RVer's spending over 90% of their life off-the-grid far out into the Sonoran Desert or in the dense cedar and hemlock forest of Glacier National Park in northwestern Montana where Rusty and Pamela served as volunteer campground hosts.

An unabashed tree-hugger and environmentalist, Rusty's post-retirement advocacy became wildlife management,

living among and helping keep deer, mountain goats, big horn sheep, bears and other creatures safe. Many of his stories carry a strong environmental message. `

Rusty enjoys spending his evenings writing stories. His novels include – *AGEH*, *New Prince of Coillearnach*, *Tree of Life*, *The Tillman Place*, and *Mountain of Gold* along with several novella and short stories.

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