Novel

…And they called it "Vinland"

By:

Gordon McAllister

A novel inspired by historical facts

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1. Midnight Sun in Reykjavik (Vikings in America).
2. Kurds (A moving story).
3. The memory of the lost years.
4. The violinist

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FOREWORD:

In the novel …AND THEY CALLED IT VINLAND, we find the protagonists, two researchers of the history of the Vikings, Bruce Merino and Tina Ólafurdóttir, carry out research where they discover the characteristics that frame this narrative. The story told in this book is based on hints of legend according to stories mentioned in the Icelandic Sagas, Greenlandic Sagas and Sagas of Erick the Red.

In the first chapters, reference is made to the Viking raids of the years 700 to 900 A.D./C in Great Britain to create reference to the environment lived at that time. The preliminary attack on the island of Vindili is presented as a preamble to the advent of the Viking Age. Then, follows the attacks on the monasteries of Lindisfarne, Jarrow and the Isle of Iona, and the presence of the legendary Viking family of Ragnar Lodbrok and his descendants and their struggles and vicissitudes. It then continues to go into the era of the discovery of Iceland as a starting point of this whole story, the discovery of Greenland by Erick the Red, father of Leif Eiricksson. He being the important explorer with whom the story reaches the climax of the discovery of the New

World and the subsequent legends happened in the land that would later be called America.

In order to create a realistic context and a narrative framework on which the story develops, the image of the Vikings is presented and how their iconic figure is shaped. This is according to the historical review described in their jousting, in the regions of Europe in particular in the lands of Britain, and the semblance of these strong men. These warriors of epic stories that became legendary for the almost supernatural force of their humanities and the supposed infinite cruelty of their actions.

However, we can understand that these were human men and women, flesh and blood, with feelings, emotions, successes and failures, as with any human being.

To make their quality of normal men more realistic, subject to the sway of contradictory destinies, where sometimes you win and sometimes you lose, in the second chapter, the story begins with a legendary battle in the monastery of Jarrow, in which the Vikings come out badly and in the end, they must flee to protect their own domains, in the distant North Sea.

Although, at the beginning, the Vikings were men of pagan beliefs with their Nordic gods, in hardened instances, where supposedly the success in the combat was protected by their gods. But as a result of the terrible mandates, where success in battle was almost always assured, little by little, and influenced by the mentality of

their own European enemies, the beliefs of the Viking warriors changed and they converted to Christianity to the point that by approximately 1000 A.D., we see Vikings with Christian belief systems. As is the case of the explorer of the lands of America, Leif Eiricksson, who was, in turn, a catechist by mandate of King Olaf Ii of Norway, and had a mission of apostolate in Greenland and his subsequent arrival in America, already carrying a Christian belief system.

In contrast, the history of the Vikings is intertwined with the contemporary era, with the events that also occurred in Icelandic lands, to the researchers Bruce Merino and his new friend Tinna Olafúrdottir, who come to develop the historical research that concerns this novel.

Gordon McAllister

Chapter 1

They Went Astray

Year 986 AD.
In some lost place, in the west of Greenland

“Man overboard! Man overboard!" someone shouted, but they could do nothing and in a matter of seconds, the man had already disappeared, swept off the deck by an immense homicidal wave.

Their pale faces, illuminated by the constant flashes of lightning, gave a glimpse of the fear of doom, and any fatal outcome could happen again. They had already lost one companion swallowed by the waves.

There was a strong squall, an unexpected storm quite early in the season, for winter had not yet begun. With deliberate malice, a blizzard was stirring up the waters, foaming from the crests of the waves, throwing needles of water against the terrified faces of the crew. Worst of all, they had no idea where they were at sea and

the ship was swaying to the roll of the waves that seemed to come from all sides.

No matter where they were going, they did not know where to go, nor what course to take, and the elements did not allow them to determine any destination, except perhaps that of dying in the midst of the fierce storm.

On the verge of capsizing, they lost their bearings, their sense of direction, and with the absence of safety and courage, in those conditions, fear was taking its toll on their hearts. And in the midst of almost total darkness that terrible episode lasted almost all night long, until well into the early hours of the morning.

At almost dawn, with the first half-light, but still gloomy, they managed to see the silhouette of a shadow against the distant horizon.

It was the veiled shadow of a coastline, but they had no idea where they were headed, since their sense of direction was broken.

They drew closer and with the first light of the new day, they realized that what they saw was a strange land, barren of wildlife and absent of human presence. Soon after, others would call it Helluland and today it is known as Baffin Island in Canada. There were multiform stones and flat slabs strewn everywhere. Further back, there were cliffs impossible to climb. It had a dark gray terrain, stained with snow everywhere, that did not look inviting to disembark. They did not and continued on, following the coastline route to the south.

Little by little they began to see forests, with different types of pines, and they thought of the wealth that those forests full of valuable wood meant. But then they saw people, strange looking people, people with dark skin, brandishing weapons that did not bode well. They preferred to go back the way they came.

Late in the morning, the sea was calmer and the brightness of the fog made it possible to determine where the east was and what course to take to return to Greenland.

Bjarni Herjólfsson, the captain, thought that it was not the time to confront those savages and it was better to return, seeking again the route to the world known to them, either in Greenland, Iceland or in their beloved Scandinavia. Besides, with the new day, and the sea calm, they could now consult the rudimentary instruments to find their way back.

It was not the time to start a battle with those strange men, for the crew were traders and were no longer in the age of strife and battle with which the Viking Age had begun some three hundred years before. That time had passed and now they were looking for trade as a banner to conquer new business and new advances in the development of their people.

Now they were Christian Vikings and, moreover, good merchants, and they did not wish to frighten their customers and correlated, to the detriment of their business.

However, in the memory of the Scandinavian legends, there still remain the memories of those years of fights, battles and conquests of European territories from the hands of their Viking ancestors.

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Seventeen years after that accidental excursion, a Viking, a man named Leif Erickson, would come to discover that land, which he would name "Vinland" and which one day, in the distant future, would be known by the name of America.

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Chapter 2
An Unexpected Tragedy

Present time
4:57 pm.
Manhattan N.Y.

The ambulance had already departed and was speeding down Madison Avenue, heading north towards Mount Sinai Hospital NY.

The deafening siren, pushing vehicles aside, was announcing an imminent tragedy if it did not arrive in time. The other drivers observed the distressed signals and moved out of the way, giving way to the cortege.

A while ago, being in Lower Manhattan at the intersection of Liberty St. and Williams St., having just left her office, on the second floor of the building where the Consulate was located, and waiting for the Uber she had requested, the young woman suddenly felt a cloud in her mind and a sense of disorientation coming on. Everything around her began to plunge into a fantasy

world. She felt the floor go away from her, and she was floating among cotton wool slowly towards the surface of the sidewalk. She didn't even feel the impact against the pavement; she was already in a coma.

Some bewildered neighbors present were able to observe how the unknown woman fell inert to the ground. Only one lady recognized her, she was one of the cleaning ladies of the building who raised the alarm in her office and immediately called the emergency line to ask for help. Several parishioners approached trying to help in some way. Nine minutes later the ambulance had arrived; the paramedics gave first aid, made a preliminary diagnosis, set up the instruments to monitor vital signs and then left for the north.

It took six days to perform the most complete set of tests, including a brain scan, ruling out all possible alternative diagnoses. Then, in the presence of a disturbing mass, they performed a biopsy of the brain tissue, which was sent to pathology to reach a conclusion.

Two doctors, one a neurosurgeon and the other an oncologist, met with her and her family and came back with discouraging results. She had a cancerous tumor in the occipital region of her brain the size of a golf ball, and classified as Multiform Glioblastoma (Level IV), which is one of the most aggressive among primary brain tumors. They did not understand how this cancer had managed to pass undetected and without having

presented more visible symptoms, given the degree of advancement and development of the tumor. The options were to operate immediately with a very low probability of success or to wait for a terminal result in the next three to six months. They decided on the former, at the risk of a disastrous outcome.

Stupefied, with a feeling of emptiness in his gut, he now perceived as never before, the feeling that filled his soul with anguish and resented the absence of a family member or friend to accompany him in those moments. He sat in the waiting room on the fourth floor where the operating rooms were located, in the neurology section where his wife was undergoing emergency surgery. He bore in mind that there was a 50% chance that the operation would not be successful, although he clung to the other 50% that everything would go well. He had never prayed in the past, but at that moment he was looking into his own consciousness doing something similar to a prayer, without it being a prayer, but addressed to his own Inner Universe, manifesting the necessary confidence to pull the strings of destiny towards one that was convenient for the best outcome.

A few hours later.

The pulsating beep of the heart monitor connected to her body suddenly changed tone and became an alarming scream of constant sound, which definitely announced her majestic passage to other dimensions,

perhaps celestial and perhaps more pleasant. She had departed into that realm unknown to humans, which lay behind the veil between life and death, and from which there was no more return.

The young woman did not pass the test. The neurosurgeon said that it was a cardiorespiratory arrest from which it was not possible to recover her no matter how hard they tried.

On the aluminum tray in the hospital morgue, a small label hung at her foot, tersely announcing her name: Amanda Krizman.

The burial took place in the midst of a heavy rain at the end of January, on a sadly opaque day, with a cloudy sky overhead, as if the natural elements had noticed the immense pain felt, and saddened, had also manifested their bitterness and grief.

In front of her grave, in front of all the mourners, Bruce Merino read an epitaph-like text he had written, dedicated to his wife, which read as follows:

PERHAPS YOU HAVE NEVER LEFT...

Today you have left
But maybe you have never gone
At least not so far away
Maybe you've always been there... close by

And maybe you will always be there
And maybe it always is and always will be

Now I can perceive with certainty
That time is not a real concept but a fictitious and emotional one
Time is a simple perception related only to the earthly dimension
Only with the earthly dimension
And it has nothing to do with what is a present moment
Yes, an instance of an eternal present in a constant now
Yes, an eternal present where maybe you are

And I know that the relationship with people we love is eternal
And even more so with the people we think we hate
It is also eternal because as complicated as we want to see it,
With our biased way of seeing reality
Those people are part of us
They are inside us and they are the same as we are
We belong to the same quantum soup
That is unified in an absolute and indissoluble totality

Yes, today you are gone
But what lies behind your beautiful eyes
That brand of fire that has incinerated my soul
Is never gone. It will never go away. It will last forever
And will always be within me
For it belongs to my eternal and infinite consciousness
And impossible to disappear

I want to believe that this is true
And that thought mitigates a little the pain of my soul
Yes, maybe you never left
Maybe

Days before the sad story had been consummated, being even more conclusive when the doctors told Bruce the results of the autopsy performed on the corpse of his beloved, nobody knew it, but she was three months pregnant with a new being in her womb, who had also died in surgery.

Bruce's last words at the funeral were:

Yes, perhaps you have never left,
you have simply departed for paradise
taking with you the best of my longings
our baby

but, I know that you are waiting for me there
Yes, maybe soon we will see each other again
in that higher dimension,
Maybe...

The following days and weeks were hard, with the cruel heaviness of an enormous burden on his back that did not allow him to breathe. With sensitive pain crouched in every corner of his memory, where it waited hidden, like an incognito malefactor who, when remembering her, hurt and hit at will, without the slightest contemplation.

And the tears came to an end, and there was nothing left but an arid and deserted emptiness in the place where the heart used to be. In his mind there was a kind of parenthesis of waiting. Yes, that expectancy for something that would serve to start, to restart, to feel again, that life continued; but for the moment, only a silent emptiness that only contained the insistent stillness of what was already dead, an inert emptiness, which by its own paralyzing immobility, was already desperate; as if time had stopped inside him and formed a nothingness composed of illusions absent of content and future.

The pain was worse for those who remained, those who could not leave towards the dimension of the eternal and infinite, those who had to remain in that chamber of solitary torment and perhaps only those who experienced

it understood it; those who at any given moment understood perfectly what it meant to consider the possibility of ending their days by their own hand, in the libertarian suicide, in the end of endings; but he resisted the torture with stoicism.

In those days, only work and professional occupations allowed Bruce to continue breathing with some difficulty; however, he felt that something inside him had also died, at least he thought so in those first months of mourning.

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Chapter 3.
Amanda Krizman.

Three years before - Present time
Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Her name was Amanda Krizman... She was an adorable young woman of no more than thirty-five years old, but with the sympathy and joy of a teenager, full of illusions for living and with a radiant smile that made her close and familiar to all those who knew her. She was loved. She was simply loved without intending to do so.

A Slovenian national, she had emigrated to the United States from the Slovenian capital of Ljubljana with her father and brother about five years ago. Although she spoke English fluently, with a rare Eastern European accent, her native language was Slovenian and arguably also Italian, which she spoke perfectly. This complex and disparate combination of a Slavic and a Latin language was a given, considering that Slovenia bordered the Italian province of Trieste in the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region. Amanda's family came from the region Craso, west of Slovenia, right on the border, a

small town called Sežana, a few kilometers from the Italian city of Trieste.

The family name Krizman was of Croatian origin where it was called Kristijan, a derivation of the Greek Cristian, or follower of Christ. Indeed, Amanda's family was very pious, something that Amanda respected, although for her this did not mean much since she was not a religious person at all, although she was very spiritual. Her father, Aleksej Krizman, like her, spiritual and not at all religious, was an educated man who excelled in the diplomatic field and had been appointed consul of Slovenia. He was based in New York. Aleksej had taken an active part in the so-called 10-Day War fighting for the independence of Slovenia, in secession from the former Republic of Yugoslavia, being one of the signatories of the Act of Independence of the new Republic of Slovenia.

Amanda had studied her undergraduate degree in Sociology and had a Master's degree in International Relations at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana. This allowed her to work as an international consultant at the consulate of her country in New York, just like her father.

It was there that she and Bruce met.

Manhattan, N.Y.

Something in her voice caught his attention as she ordered a Greek Gyro from a typical street food truck in front of the Museum of Modern Art in Manhattan, N.Y., on 90 W 53rd St, where Bruce was trying to eat lunch quickly seven blocks from his apartment.

That day Bruce had not had breakfast because he had left his parents' house very early, where he was visiting, to go to the airport in Manchester, New Hampshire to take a flight to New York. In the afternoon, he had a meeting with a financial entity, with whom he was advancing a consulting program, and he had to have something to eat before going to the meeting. It occurred to him to have lunch in the street in one of those famous and delicious Gyros Food Trucks in the city.

The girl, elegantly dressed in a fur coat and her strange, almost indefinable accent, had practically run him over, pushing him without intending to and raising her voice above his, had placed the order for a Gyro, then offering apologies to Bruce for the impertinence, with the excuse of having to leave urgently for an immediate meeting.

Feeling no discomfort at all, he was amused by the situation and enjoyed that the girl who was truly beautiful had to turn to him to excuse herself, which allowed him a small and minimal opportunity for communication. Besides, that thing he felt at that moment was love at first

sight; at least that's what he thought, and truth be told, it was.

The girl in the fur coat, barely looked him in the eyes to apologize fleetingly and left hastily, putting the gyro and a bottle of water in her bag to continue and disappear among the hundreds of passersby.

“Too bad," thought Bruce, "she's already out of sight and I'll never see her again.”

However, seventeen days later, Bruce was at the American Airlines counter at JFK checking in for a flight to Paris amidst a crowd of people angrily arguing with the airline employees about a considerable delay in the flight due to bad weather, as if the airline was handling the weather and was to blame.

At that moment someone awkwardly tripped tangling with a piece of luggage on the floor and simultaneously threw a briefcase, a purse and a briefcase of documents into Bruce's lap, and she fell flat on her face.

Automatically and without thinking, Bruce reached down to help lift the person up while others picked up the briefcases. It was a young girl.

Blushing, the girl looked him in the eyes to thank him for the gesture and again they were meeting; It was the same girl in the fur coat that had run over him in front of the gyros Food Truck in Manhattan. An unexpected

coincidence, meeting the same girl twice, in a city with several million inhabitants.

To her embarrassment, Bruce smirked inquisitively with an amused expression and gave her a short spiel:

“Hey, my dear, you are hell-bent on hitting me, throwing things at me and getting in my way in any way you can. A few days ago you pushed me and knocked a gyro out of my hand. And today, you're pushing me again and throwing your briefcases at me? I'd even think you were trying to win me over in the most forceful way? I'd better buy you a coffee since the flight is delayed, and let's try to solve the problem, lest we end up having a real accident before we even meet,” and he let out a loud laugh.

The girl had no less than a shy smile at the joke, and apologetically, she gently withdrew her hand, which Bruce was still holding.

She was also checked in for the flight to Paris and at Bruce's invitation and delay, they went chatting together to a nearby coffee shop. It was the Juan Valdez coffee shop in Terminal 8 of the American Airlines counter at JFK.

That was the first time they were able to talk.

“And so your name is Amanda Krizman," Bruce began.

“And how do you know that? Don't tell me now that you are a magician?”

“No, not a magician." Bruce answered with a half smile on his lips. “Actually I am a naturalist and a friend of the animals I talk to, and a little bird told me your name.”

“No way, don't joke. How can it be that we just met and you already know my name, even if I haven't told you?”

“No, seriously. I actually saw your name on the sticker attached to your hand luggage,” said Bruce smiling.

“And what do you do Amanda?”

“I work at the Slovenia embassy, where I am from, and I am in charge of a cultural exchange program as an international consultant. And what do you do? But first, what is your name? I don't have little birds that give me confidential information.”

Laughing, he answered, “My name is Bruce Merino, and I work in a consulting firm for financial institutions.”

“And what is your position, what does your job consist of?” Amanda asked.

“Well, I'm also an International Consultant like you. I'm actually a partner in the company. We are three

partners and we share the accounts of the company. I have been in charge of the companies in the financial sector."

"And is your trip to Paris for work or for tourism?" Amanda asked.

"No, I wish it was for tourism. I actually have a meeting for a matter related to a dispute between two multinational companies in a stock negotiation issue, and an American bank is also involved. It is a somewhat complex issue, but I hope we can resolve it tomorrow."

"And you, why are you traveling today?" Bruce asked.

"Well," Amanda answered, "I'm involved in the valuation of some works of art that we are buying from a collector, destined for a museum in my country."

"Ah, that's nice, I'm an art, museum and history lover," said Bruce.

So, they talked for a long time before they were called to board the flight. Bruce was enchanted with the girl. He loved her somewhat exotic features, her way of speaking, the curious foreign accent and her deep and clear gaze like a diaphanous early sun. She, for her part, was beginning to trust this attractive man who seemed very sincere, a man who was direct, who looked into her eyes with a clarity that allowed him to see to the bottom of her soul and who inspired in her a total confidence that made her feel very comfortable with him.

Later on the plane, they had been seated in close but separate seats; however, strangely enough, the universe conspired for them to be together. Amanda was seated next to a boy of about nine years of age, who apparently was traveling alone, but his mother had been seated in another chair one row behind, next to Bruce. It was the lady who timidly asked him the possibility of changing the chair with her son and Bruce, very pleasantly surprised by the favorable request, agreed willingly, sitting right next to Amanda, to continue the conversation started in the cafeteria.

By now, both Bruce and Amanda were strongly and pleasantly impressed with each other, and they continued the conversation in a total fraternization.

Thus, they met and talked for seven hours, telling each other important details as well as medium and insignificant details of their lives.

It could be said that Bruce had already managed to form a very favorable image of Amanda, both physically and emotionally.

This was how he perceived her: A woman in her forties; he later learned that, although she looked less than thirty; youthful, with an impeccable countenance, athletic build, with that beauty that makes you look twice because it is unusual. An expression full of life, that animates with her only attitude to the interlocutor; intelligent in her look and determined in her actions. A girl with medium-long

and well-groomed hair, light brown with shiny golden highlights; very white and soft skin, with the smoothness and delicacy of a rose petal. Her large eyes with long eyelashes of an indefinable greenish light gray, but more gray than green, definitely beautiful and with a laughing and cheerful expression, which invited you to smile at the first impression. On the other hand, in her demeanor she was calm and peaceful and when communicating she denoted a firm character and calm tone, with that serenity that gives total self-confidence. She was a person of few words, but with Bruce she left this characteristic aside and talked as never before, perhaps because of the immediate confidence that Bruce generated in her, which encouraged her to talk at length.

She learned that Bruce Merino was a businessman by profession, an Industrial Engineer, with a specialization in finance and an MBA, who was a partner in an important consulting firm that provided its services to companies in the financial and banking sector. However, she noticed something else, behind that obvious confidence of a successful businessman, she could perceive a sensitive, open being, with the clarity of someone who invited her into his life without reservations, with an immediate warmth that attracted her and made her feel that she was his friend forever. As the hours went by, she also noticed that Bruce's deep, manly voice revealed a strong and slightly dominant character,

although he was ready to settle any conflict with those close to him.

They told each other many things about their lives, their work activities, their university studies, their hobbies, their extracurricular activities, their tastes in gastronomy, their movies, their trips, and when it seemed that the subject was going to be exhausted, memories and anecdotes would come up again.

A very strong bond of friendship was born in those few hours of knowing each other and both were interested in extending the experience and each other's company. They stayed in different rooms in the same hotel, the InterContinental Paris Le Grand, a few meters from the Palais de l'Opera Garnier, which could be seen from the balconies of both rooms, as they were next to each other.

In the morning, each had a busy schedule of meetings to attend, and in the evening of the second day, they went to dinner at the Restaurant La Paillote, a terrace on the top of the very traditional Galeries La Fayette, very close to the hotel, with a spectacular view from where they could see the roofscape, the attics and the Parisian lofts.

Amanda commented to Bruce that it was precisely in those typical dwellings that many writers, poets, painters and artists lived, who throughout history had given free rein to their creativity, depending on the support of their muses; however, it seemed that Parisian

muses were quite affable and cordial and liked to support artists unreservedly, which is why Paris stood out as an important center for the development of culture and art.

In that idyllic atmosphere, they got into more private matters, Bruce told Amanda about his complex divorce five years ago; about his two children, now adults, one 22 and the other 24 years old; about his somewhat solitary life and his inclinations for reading, history and golf, and he also told her about his parents, and his family in Spain.

Amanda, now more confident, also told him about her separation with her boyfriend of three years, with whom she had not wanted to marry because he did not generate enough confidence to bet on living the rest of her days with him and the breakup occurred because she was not willing to put up with his infidelities and excessive liberties. She told him that her mother had died in childbirth and since then she had always been under the loving and jealous care of her father, and always together, they were now working at the Slovenian consulate; her father as Consul and she as a cultural consultant.

It was a full week in Paris where they got to know each other thoroughly because every night, after work, they met to go out to dinner and talk as a couple and thus a very fraternal relationship was developing, where trust became an essential part of their relationship.

Once they returned to New York, they continued to see each other frequently and continued an enthusiastic and close bond, and the simplest or most relevant details were demonstrated with the visible presence of love. A few weeks later they began a more formal relationship as sweethearts, and shortly thereafter were introduced to each other's families.

They set up a date at Carmine's, a typical and cozy Italian restaurant, located at 200 W and 44th St, in the Times Square area. Amanda introduced Bruce to her father Aleksej and her younger brother by the name of Branislav Krizman. They chatted at length telling stories of their lives. Bruce, who was very interested in the history of the Civil War in the former Yugoslavia, paid special attention to Aleksej's anecdotes. They really hit it off and from there, a long relationship began that even lasted long after Amanda's passing.

In those days they traveled to New Hampshire, to the city of Manchester, to visit Patricio and Marta, Bruce's parents, who warmly welcomed Amanda. From the first moment of her introduction, she immediately and unreservedly endeared herself to Bruce's parents.

Four months later, they got engaged and moved in together in a beautiful apartment east of Central Park in the exclusive Yorkville area, on East End Avenue between 86th and 87th Streets, on the third floor of an old and traditional building remodeled on the inside. It was

within a very typical New York and characteristic 19th century red brick façade, called Brownstone, right in front of Carl Shulz Park, a beautiful park where they sat to talk and meditate, when their multiple professional commitments allowed it. They liked to do it especially at the time of the year when the lush foliage was filled with multiple brushstrokes worthy of the most seasoned painter, inspired by the autumn tones, with its ochers, browns, fiery reds and bright oranges, like a nostalgic prelude that announced with frenzy, the coming advent of winter.

The following year they married and were very happy for the next three years, and were already making plans to have a baby the following spring.

And then tragedy struck; it was a cold Wednesday in late January when Amanda Krizman passed away.

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Chapter 4.
Midnight sun in Reykjavik.

Eight months later, present time.
Reykjavik, Iceland

It was a cool night, almost warm, but he only felt the icy sensation that loneliness left in his soul. He breathed with difficulty missing the absence of his wife while being in a very beautiful country, as Iceland was,

with the exoticism of landscapes that seemed to come out of worlds of illusion and fantasy. It is a country with steep rocky landscapes, views full of polar marine fauna, snowy peaks so high that touched without respect to the door of the house of the Nordic Gods; geysers and waterfalls of turbulent waters that caught the eye and hypnotized the mind, and gray and blue seas that slowly flowed through the Icebergs that broke away from the eternal glaciers. It was the view that could be seen in that country that was a little north of the end of the world, close to never-never land, and far away from everyone and everything.

At that moment he thought about how much he missed her presence, but it was impossible with that heartbreaking affliction that had accompanied him to the bottom of the abyss. There were not even tears to cry; he was already dry.

It was already eight months since she had passed away on that tragic morning, and it was necessary to let life flow again, even if that seemed tremendously insurmountable and complex. He still felt an immense emptiness in his soul. It was something like a painful feeling of paralysis and indifferent lightness, being immersed in limbo between existence and death; the feeling of insignificance towards life, and even disinterest and unconcern towards death.

He took a breathe and the perceived air was insufficient, for it was not enough to mitigate the suffocating sensation of emptiness in the soul, and even less, to attenuate the desolating sensation of her pale absence. What he tried to do was to go from day to day and hour to hour, obsessively immersing himself in his professional occupations: meditation and reading.

He had arrived that day in Reykjavik, and that evening, strolling through the center of the city, he had slowly walked along via Sæbraut to the shore next to the pier where the sculpture called “Sólfar” (Voyager of the Sun) of the artist Jon Gunnar Arnason was exhibited and which reverence was paid to the sun and the sea. It brought back memories of the Viking ancestors of the island's settlers, even if the author of the sculpture had not intended it, as he himself said.

It was the sculpture Sólfar, the remembrance of the ship of dreams, an image of honor to the sun, to life and to the most recondite longings with the light of hope as a reference point to find new territories to discover: The eternal dream of the Viking ancestors.

Bruce Merino had mixed feelings because despite the melancholy he felt, he was also pleasantly impressed by the beauty and uniqueness of the moment, watching the strange night sun, like many tourists who at that time came to the country. It was at that moment that he remembered Antoine de Saint Exupéry's Little Prince

when he said, "You know? When you are terribly sad, you love sunsets.”

That cool summer night, a glittering midnight sun was present, like a golden disc hanging in a firmament of illusion and lighting up everything around it with vivid colors, illuminating hearts with contradictory lights of hope and nostalgia. A landscape typical of the most extreme northern regions of the planet, such as the city of Reykjavik in Iceland.

The distant horizon was illuminated with a surprising palette with flashes of different shades of yellow, ocher, earthy and straw color. While at the zenith, the deep dark blue gloom contrasted mysteriously as if the night was trying to insist on covering the sky with shadows, without succeeding, before the disturbing and imposing presence of the night sun.

It was 11:45 pm, time when the souls in pain and the fairy godmothers came out. That fantasy sun gave a very rare feeling of euphoric disorientation to those who were not used to the midnight suns of the polar regions. As it happened with the imposing greenish flashes of the aurora borealis in those northern latitudes, it evoked fantastic sensations of delirious worlds in strange and vivid universes, like the imagined dreams, typical of a Steven Hawking.

Likewise, the very autumnal temperature was curious. In the middle of summer, between 9 and 12

degrees Celsius, it forced one to wear some kind of light coat and imposed the sensation of a strange autumnal spring. He thought of her with nostalgia. How he would have liked her to be there, right at this moment, to contemplate that night of a thousand wonders.

That amazing phenomenon of nature showed that the sun was never totally hidden, but that it traveled the horizon in a long undulating movement. Being visible the entire time, it elevated at its peak at noon and slowly descended in the course of the afternoon and evening until it reached its lowest point, but still visible, around midnight. Then, rising again to its maximum point at the end of the morning, but always there, a little far away, inclined and visible on the horizon. Definitely a curiously beautiful spectacle.

For an instant, a fleeting and absurd thought crossed Bruce's mind: I would say that only with the special permission of some of the great Norse Gods: Odin, Thor, Balder, and Loki was the presence of a spectacle of such magnitude permitted. For in those polar regions, icy and mysterious, anything was possible within the magic of the incomprehensible. He also reached to think that perhaps the Vikings had some reason to believe in their Gods, as the true Gods. He was beginning to feel his cold capacity for reasoning and his tendency to be logical fading little by little, despite his traditional pragmatic mentality, which opened his mind and his heart to new and rare possibilities.

On the Solfar pier's small square, Bruce had noticed a young woman who had caught his eye. She was with a group of friends also watching the sunset. She had a slender athletic body and was slightly tall with a fair complexion of fine, beautiful features, light brown hair with golden highlights and large light blue-gray eyes. She bore a distant resemblance to Amanda.

The young woman was wearing tight-fitting jeans and a pink cashmere pullover over a white lace blouse, which delicately emphasized her femininity. Almost without thinking about it, he knew that her silhouette was reminiscent of the perfection of a Greek statue exhibited in the Troy of antiquity, of someone for whom so many battles would have been fought. She could be a normal girl, simply beautiful like many in that city, but she had something that made her special, a kind of halo of tenderness and familiarity that he could not determine clearly. It was something he simply felt without even knowing her, which in itself was strange.

For some reason, he felt like thinking that from behind those beautiful eyes, emanated a flash of longing, perhaps tinged with nostalgia for some unfinished and hidden memory; it was a thought that somehow affected him instantly. But no. He didn't want to get confused. Not for now. He was not yet ready for love; *that* had happened very recently. Only eight short months had passed since then.

Without allowing himself anything more than a thought with an aesthetic connotation, Bruce found the girl beautiful and approachable but, realizing that she might have noticed he was looking at her, he quickly and shyly averted his gaze. He knew he was in no condition to get involved with anyone; at least not for now.

Looking away, Bruce kept thinking that this girl reminded him of someone he knew; some furtive memory that he didn't fully specify, but that left him with a pleasantly uneasy feeling. Who could she be? What would her name be?

Tinna Ólafurdóttir, present at the site, in the company of some friends, didn’t really notice that someone was watching her. She was also contemplating the beautiful midnight sun but her mind was far away, in a past era before our time, obsessed with a research project she was developing for the History Faculty and Philosophy of the Háskóli Íslands (University of Iceland) about her Viking ancestors in the plains and the Great Lakes region of North America and perhaps in the mountains of the South American Andes, five hundred years before the arrival of the Spaniards in America.

Looking towards the west, there on the luminous horizon, between fascinated and hallucinated, she seemed to see among the clouds lit by the radiant night sun, the vague image of a Tiahanacu Indian who watched her with a manifest sadness and almost supplication. This

motivated her even more to unravel the truth contained in those ancient and almost unknown Viking deeds.

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Chapter 5
First Viking Raid (Vindili Island)

Year 787 AD.
South Britannia - English Channel

It was the early morning of spring and the first rays of the sun were almost dawning on the horizon. In the semi-darkness of dawn, the flickering of torches appeared on three curious vessels, different from the known ones.

As long as could be remembered, no such ships had ever before arrived at the Isle of Vindili in Britain (so called from Roman times and later called the Isle of Portland, Great Britain) and even less was it remembered that such fierce-looking people had arrived.

Some time ago, a Norse navigator had lost his way, and had returned to his land with the news of the existence of these territories. He said that if traveling from Scandinavia towards the south for many days, and then finding oneself in front of Gaul (today France), then turning towards the south west, on the right side of the route, they would find land, the so-called Britannia.

The Scandinavians had returned with an exploratory expedition to learn the possibilities that these regions could offer in terms of wealth and trade, or perhaps incursions of conquest and plunder to snatch easy trophies.

The rough navigator, Brander Haraldsson, profusely bearded and exaggeratedly stocky, with a stature reminiscent of the legends of giants, who supposedly had populated those regions in ancient times, came in command of the first exploratory ship. He came from a region far to the north, called Hortaland (Land of the Kingdoms of Norway). He was of a murky, intelligent look, but without any vestige of conscience, and immersed in a world of blood and terror. Brander kept a

chronic hatred against anyone he considered an enemy, linking them to the murderers of his parents when he was still an infant of barely nine years of age. In a war in Scandinavia, against a rival faction, his village had been defeated and subdued by terrible forces that slaughtered all the villagers who had not been able to run into the icy woods nearby to shelter from the murderous fury of the attackers. He, while tucked under a wooden contraption, had witnessed the scene and from that tender age. He already had revengeful hatreds and developed killer instincts, in which mercy had run out of his soul and in its replacement a living instinct to unceremoniously kill anyone who considered the possibility of confronting him. And now, the strength of his body helped him enormously.

He watched the horizon, unknown to him, as he had never traveled to the southwest to such distant lands. He had been told that that territory was part of a very large island which they called Britannia, located on the other side of a wide water channel, north of Gaul; it was a channel between those two territories, Gaul and Britannia, which centuries later would be called the English Channel.

They entered the Bay of an island, which they would later learn was called Vindili, and disembarked.

As the sailors passed by, a party of Anglo-Saxon men, under the command of the Sheriff of Wessex named

Beaduheard, came out to recognize them and ordered them to present themselves at the royal palace in the town of Dorchester, thinking that they were merchants from whom they should demand the payment of a tax.

However, by now, Brander Haraldsson and his appeared warriors, had set foot on solid ground and were loaded with full armament, composed of axes sharpened to obsession, swords of different types, pointed javelins ready to pierce humanities, other shorter but equally deadly spears, heavy iron truncheons suitable for crushing skulls and clavicles, heavy and impenetrable cast iron helmets, wooden and metal shields with all kinds of intimidating allegorical inscriptions to their barbaric origins, and above all, an aggressive, violent attitude, more oriented towards murderous attack than simple defense. Men ready to fight to the death and without considerations of any kind. However, the most curious and intimidating aspect of the presence of the newcomers was their tall stature. In many cases, they were at least 15 centimeters taller than the inhabitants of Britain, reaching an average of between 1.79 and 1.82 meters, while the Britons at that time had an average height of between 1.64 and 1.67 meters. Even today, the average height of Scandinavian people is the tallest in the world.

From their tall stature, they looked down at the Britons as ones who looked at annoying cockroaches, looking more ridiculous than threatening, with their

clothes of fine looms, pants, sacks of thick, fine wool, colored and painted in a manner similar to the yakars used in tapestry. Their elegant cloaks of colorful velvets, with lace and arabesques, were certainly quite effeminate and very little disposed for hand-to-hand combat. All while carrying no weapons other than fragile swords that seemed to be made of aluminum foil, and worst of all, demanding the ridiculous payment of a tax.

For their part they, the Britons, met the strange newcomers and from the first moment felt intimidated with the ferocity of their countenances, of their terrible barbaric-looking garments, composed of animal skins, thick leather suits, sheepskins of foul-smelling musks, shining bronze bracelets on arms and forearms, and the aforementioned strange weapons of all kinds, with shields and helmets that reinforced the intimidating image. Moreover, with great care they carried their pestilent odors of many days at sea, without access to a well of clean water in a toilet room, full of rich scents of perfumed roses, like those accustomed by the British knights. Even their armor and chainmail had a dreadful stench, not so much because of a calculated intention, but because the only protection against the corrosion of sea saltpeter was to anoint their metals with animal and fish fats, which with the days reached rancid and putrid odors. These Nordic men did not know of nauseating odors because they were so accustomed to them that they did

not even perceive them in their nostrils. On the other hand, the refined Britons did resent the repugnant stench.

With a haughty gesture, showing impatience with the newcomers, and bearing in mind his hierarchical status on the island, the Sheriff insisted on taking them to the authorities.

“You must accompany me to the royal palace of Dorchester. By law of the King of Wessex, you are obliged to pay a tribute for the fact of agreeing to circulate in these lands, under penalty of a punishment consisting of ten lashes for each of you and double the tribute to cancel.”

The newcomers, more amused than surprised, upon hearing the translation from English to Norwegian, made by a man who knew both languages, commented among themselves with laughter in their Norwegian language:

“¿Hvem vil være denne marionetten og hvem tror?”

Who is this puppet and who does he think he is?

“Dette vil være en god mulighet til å gi dem en god leksjon.”

This will be a great opportunity to give them a good lesson.

The Sheriff insisted on his command and intended to enforce the order.

“I am the Sheriff of Wessex and in the name of King Brihtic, Sovereign of Wessex, I have been given the authority to lead you to Dorchester, and it is the King's command that you are to accompany me.”

Hearing the translation, the Northmen let out a loud laugh and drew their weapons.

“Heldigvis kom hans lykke til Mr. Sheriff of Wessex”

So much for your good fortune Mr. Sheriff of Wessex

“Angrep!” thundered the gigantic Brander Haraldsson.

Attack!

With a withering movement, in a split second the commander of the party had already drawn his axe and in one swift blow slashed the sheriff's throat, from which spasmodic spurts of hot blood began to flow. Other locals were pierced through the chest and back with spears and swords. The skull of the Sheriff's lieutenant was smashed with a huge war hammer that completely crushed his right side. In the end, the newly arrived men from the north did the same with the rest of the party, leaving the British men

bloody and dying, and returned to the ships, after the task was accomplished and departed.

This unfortunate first encounter had cost the lives of both Sheriff Beaduheard and the members of the party, becoming the first victims of the Scandinavian hordes, who were not accustomed to the idea of mercy. On the contrary, they had the terrible conviction that strangers had to be treated as enemies and had to be exterminated without the slightest mercy, either as a simple precaution or to set an example and a lesson through terror.

Then, the newcomers aboard their ships and without attacking any more, simply observed and took note of everything they saw. They skirted the coast, sailing northwest, without disembarking, traveling along the coastline. From the shore with the fields in sight, they observed villages, hamlets and communities, but without provoking skirmishes. Finally, they returned to their home territory in Scandinavia, having formed a good idea of what the populations of Britannia were, their wealth, crops, livestock, and the possibilities of obtaining juicy booty there, given the unwillingness of its people to defend their territories, or so they thought. What they did not know was that these Britons were descendants of Celts, Picts, and Bretons, who had made life very difficult for the ancient Roman invaders and also for the Saxons, several centuries ago. Later, they would cross and assimilate to the culture and customs of the Anglo-Saxon invaders coming from Germania, who had an equally

terrible war experience and were not going to make things easy for the newly appeared Vikings.

Probably due to to that first incursion, between the year 787 and 792 d/C, small groups of men were arriving from the north, who would be qualified as thieves, pirates and murderers, and whom the inhabitants of the island of Britannia had begun to call víkingr (men coming from the fjords or bays of the north). Although, later the name vikingr would be given a connotation of pirate, malefactor and robber; for they had made several raids of plunder, attacking some villages and sowing panic among its inhabitants. They were small skirmishes, but with bloody results.

It is worth mentioning that between 500 AD and 850 AD, the concept of Heptarchy existed in the Britannia of the time, since the joint mandate of seven rulers who governed the kingdoms of Essex, Estanglia, Kent, Mercia, Northumbria, Sussex and Wessex prevailed throughout the island. However, far from being united kingdoms, there were constant power struggles between these kingdoms.

King Offa of the kingdom of Mercia, around the year 792 BC, had promulgated an edict where the privileges for the Christian churches of Mercia and Kent, protected by the governments, were raised, and the need for defense against the pillaging of the pagan sailors, coming from the north (the Vikings) were mentioned.

But the first Viking raid, considered the most important and to be recorded by history, was a few months later.

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Chapter 6
An Information Technology Business

Reykjavik, Iceland.
Present day.

Bruce had arrived that day on a business trip from London on the 13:15 pm Scandinavian Airlines flight. He left Heathrow and landed three hours later in Keflavik. The rest of the afternoon had been spent preparing for the next day's meeting. He had to make a presentation about his company and the scope and concerns about the details of the negotiation raised by his client. In the evening, in spite of feeling nostalgia on his skin, he had gone for a walk to distract himself a little. On the pier he had

admired the sunny sunset, and then he was a bit entertained with the sight of a beautiful and unknown girl.

The reason for his stay in Reykjavik was to study the project of contracting the services of the firm Julius Global Inc. specialized in information technology, and to verify if it was feasible to transfer the entire technology database of an American bank, which he represented, to the servers of that firm located in Iceland.

Pressure began from NGOs, environmental and ecological groups to suppress the intense use of traditional energy based on carbon, oil and gas in the technology sector. Currently, the pollution generated by this sector was dangerously close to the levels of pollution caused by the automotive and aviation industry. With the aggravating factor that the information technology industry was growing exponentially, the need to use more and more servers suggested that solutions should be sought where clean energy could be used. Iceland, being a powerhouse in geothermal and hydroelectric energy, offered an unparalleled advantage over other countries.

Bruce Merino, a consultant to the Bank, had to decide the feasibility of the project or veto it according to his criteria. He also had to consider the details of the current negotiation.

Bruce was a man well into his 40s, distinguished and had refined manners of a cultured person without

being squeamish. Of American nationality, he was born in Manchester, New Hampshire. He was 6′4, ” had a fair complexion and athletic build, and hair once medium brown; but with the wear and tear of years well lived, is now streaked with gray. His honey-colored eyes, with the expression of one who seems to be smiling gently with his eyes, mouth, and his whole body, even though he was serious. He had a pleasant, harmonious face and a positive attitude, which generated complete trust, making you feel as if you had always known him. Without exaggerating, his first impression produced immediate empathy.

However, since the death of his wife, he had been seen to be reserved and impatient. He was quite uncomfortable when he had to wait. For example, he would be intensely attentive to point out the wrong doing during an errand or when someone arrived late to a meeting. He also showed a strong character in situations where he had to tell the truth to someone. He did so without the slightest sense of care, being direct, even with his own clients or business associates.

In one situation, while accompanied by his wife, someone sneaked into line at the entrance of a show. He had no compunction in showing his annoyance and in addressing the individual in question. In front of everyone present, he faced the individual almost aggressively and asked him to leave and respect his turn. He was not open to accept the apologies of this

individual, and this gave rise to a subsequent discussion with his wife, who did not accept this type of behavior.

Because of things like this, although he got over it quickly, those who knew him perceived that he had an impetuous character and was easily angered. He told himself that his impulsiveness bothered him, especially when he got out of hand and behaved aggressively, or in cases in which he rushed to take actions without reflecting on the convenience or not of his impulses. This brought him discomfort and displeasure.

Bruce was a descendant of Spanish immigrants from Castile, heirs of a family of very ancient lineage. They were the type of people who were manifestly aristocratic, being landowners with large properties that had belonged to their family for centuries. However, when the first student protests against the fascist regime prevailing in the peninsula took place in the early sixties, his parents, although right-wing, but young and rebellious in spirit, were against the fascist policies of the dictatorship of General Francisco Franco and actively participated in these protests. In 1968, this led to their persecution by the Francoist soldiers, and as a result, they were forced to emigrate to America and settle there.

In 1972, Bruce was born when his parents were already settled and adapted to their new home and homeland in the United States. Bruce had not had enough contact with Spain and as his education in the new

country developed, his habits were those of the typical modern American man without atavistic baggage, who liked American soccer, rugby, hamburgers, pizzas and Hollywood movies, as well as history. However, he was now behaving somewhat introverted, silent and cautious, and perhaps slightly introverted. When he did not wish to share his thoughts with others, he seemed to retreat, seeking a quiet moment for reflection and abstraction, necessary to achieve inner peace. And now, he has been affected by the recent death of his wife.

Arriving in Reykjavík, Bruce was staying at the Borg Hotel on 11 Pósthússtræti Street, an exclusive hotel with Art-Déco architecture. The windows of his room overlooked a beautiful park, the historic Austurvollur Square across the street. He had liked this very much since Bruce was a nature lover. In his spare time, he would often go to sit on the wooden benches with metal legs in this park to rest, read and meditate in silence. There, somehow, he sensed the solitary company of his absent wife.

The next morning, Monday, he went to the offices of Julius Global Inc. for the meeting. He was greeted with much friendliness from the various executives and employees of the company as he walked through the corridors of the offices. He was ushered into the boardroom where the president of the company and an entourage were already waiting for him.

As he entered, he immediately noticed with surprise the person standing next to the president. Yes. It was the same girl. She was about 35 years old and looked very beautiful.

She was looking at him with an affable and cordial expression, showing a beautiful white smile and a welcome that he could not quite make out, as he was struggling to hear his own thoughts.

At that instant Bruce took a few seconds to think, "This was the same girl from the night before who had been present in the small square of the Sólfar sculpture, on the pier, watching the midnight sun. Who was she? Where did he know her from?" Again she had looked familiar to him from long ago, but this was his first time in Iceland, and he could not know her from there, but from somewhere else, perhaps in another country, at another time, or perhaps in another supposed previous life. Anyway, he was sure that her image was familiar to him.

At that instant, he was brought out of his thoughts by the deep and sonorous voice of the president of the company.

“Good morning, Mr. Merino. I am Ólafur Einarsson, and this is my daughter.”

“Nice to meet you," said the girl, "I am Tinna Ólafurdóttir.

“Nice to meet you," answered Bruce, as he went forward to shake the hand that Ólafur offered him and then the girl's hand.

Bruce wondered, since the surnames of father and daughter did not match, could the girl be his adopted daughter or maybe his stepdaughter?

Observing her hesitant expression, Ólafur intervened again, breaking the ice.

“This curious surname thing will be another of the odd Icelandic things to get used to. The surnames do not match because they do not correspond to an old family tradition, but come from the father's name plus the suffix “son” for the male son or “dóttir” for the daughter.

“My last name Ólafurdóttir means “Ólafur's Daughter” and for added complexity, our alphabet has a number of expressions unknown to the Western European and American alphabet and language.”

“Very interesting and thank you for the clarifications," Bruce noted.

Then, one by one the other senior executives of the company introduced themselves and after the introductions they offered him coffee.

Bruce took advantage of this moment to make a brief presentation about himself, his experience, and the specific purpose of his visit.

This was the first of a series of four meetings to be held over the next three days. At the end of which it was concluded that the recommendation of the consulting firm for the American bank would be positive, but with some caveats to be taken into account as special recommendations.

Tinna, being very knowledgeable of her family's company, proved to be a first class executive. She demonstrated professionalism to the test by being practical and an expert in the issues, and presenting her positions with a balance and forceful equanimity. She had taken on the role of spokesperson for her group and presented the negotiation proposal with total clarity and confidence.

In the course of those days, a curious observation that intrigued Tinna was to have discovered Bruce looking at her more than usual in the meetings. When she realized he was watching her, he looked away with obvious shyness. This intrigued her and made her smile perceptively, without him realizing it.

She sensed something very hidden in him that showed a faint halo of subtle nostalgia, but she could see it. This intrigued and attracted her to this unknown man.

Her intuition told her that something had happened in his life, and this made her feel tender towards him without knowing why. It was evident that she found him attractive, but that was not the point. Something behind

his mask of a self-confident businessman, something beyond the appearance of strength; perhaps a deep sensitivity that he was trying to hide, perhaps a slight and fleeting fragility that welled up from the depths of his soul and that he hid from the great majority, but not from her.

“I like the American. He has a certain something that I really like," she commented days later confidentially to a coworker.

She also had the strange feeling that they had already been friends for a long time. Even though this was not logical since they had just met. In subsequent committees, Bruce and Tinna hit it off. However, he was not ready. It was very recent. It was only eight months since the terrible tragedy had occurred.

At one point in the activity, Bruce subtly and unintentionally mentioned that Tinna Olafurdóttir would talk to the fellows and make her leadership felt. She was a person of few words, but when she spoke about something, everyone kept respectful silence. Her opinion was highly appreciated, not because she was the daughter of the owner of the company, but because her intervention was always forceful, well-considered and far removed from rhetoric and verbiage. Tinna was measured in her words and forceful in her results.

Bruce could appreciate her confident and commanding manner as he listened to her interventions on company matters.

She had a deep blue-gray, peaceful and intense gaze, which she fixed on the interlocutor without any pretenses. This made it necessary to convince and ensure that he always told the truth with total certainty. Moreover, when speaking, she smiled cautiously with a certain faint charm that attracted attention without leaving room for distractions on the part of his interlocutors.

Tinna commented, “We are in a position to offer the best quality in information technology management service, such that no other company in the world can compare with us. And I am not saying that the other competing companies are bad. Not at all; what I am saying is that ours is the best of the companies that can offer this service worldwide.”

“Now," Tinna continued, "our prices are not the lowest, but in the cost/benefit ratio that you can calculate, our company's proposal is optimal.”

“And finally, our country is the one that offers the best advantage in the management of information technology, through the use of clean and renewable energy sources. Currently, this is a gigantic advantage not comparable, since there are few countries that can offer a service with 100% use of clean energy sources.”

And looking Bruce in the eye, she added, "I wish we could have the opportunity to show you our country and the magnificent power of our energy sources with

real physical demonstrations. I propose that we spend a couple of days touring the vicinity of Reykjavik to show you the non-polluting renewable energy production plants that our country has to offer."

Bruce agreed with her, as he had to gather as much first-hand information as possible to present together with the study and conclusions to the American Bank.

In the evening of that day, Bruce, walking through the streets of Reykjavik, had a pleasant feeling of lightness, observing the sunny afternoon and the simple but solid architecture of the city. Like out of a children´s story, its beautiful low buildings of soft colors were perfectly aligned on demarcated streets in an impeccable order that made it very welcoming. And its people in their daily business, looked happy and uncomplicated.

He walked for a long time, getting lost among the streets without worrying, and enjoying the view. When suddenly, he arrived in front of a monumental construction. It looked like a huge arrow directed to the firmament with a beautiful concrete stele that apparently supported it in its journey to infinity.

It was a Christian church, not Catholic but Lutheran. In the front was a statue of a figure from the Middle Ages; he deduced this from the clothing that looked like the chain mail of a warrior, and in his hand resting against the ground a sword.

He approached the base of the statue and read:

Hallgrímskirkja kirkja
af lútersku kristnum tilbeiðslu,
Styttan af Leif Eirickson,
Fyrsta landkönnuður Ameríku
Reykjavík Ísland.

Bruce did not understand the language as it was written in Icelandic, but the image of the statue stuck in his mind and without knowing why, he felt something inside him. The feeling that in the future he would have to deal again with this image and with the character represented there.

He took a picture of the image with his cell phone and pointed the camera at the plaque with the inscription to take another picture.

The next day, he asked Tinna about the meaning of that inscription, to learn that it meant the following:

Hallgrímskirkja Church
of Lutheran Christian worship,
Statue of Leif Eirickson,
First explorer of America
Reykjavík Iceland.

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Chapter 7

The Attack on Lindisfarne
(The Beginning of the Viking Age)

Year 793 AD. (June 8).
Island of Lindisfarne, Kingdom of Northumbria, Britannia

It was almost a deserted island. The frozen sea washed its desolate beaches and the bare prairies. The absence of trees and bushes were swept away by an icy wind that froze even the warmest intentions. They called it Lindisfarne, a tiny, desolate island in the county of Northumbria, a land called Norðimbraland (Land north of the Humber River) by the Vikings.

Lindisfarne, an island that was mercilessly battered by the wind and which, at low tide, could be reached on foot from the mainland, and when the tide rose, it was surrounded by water again, had in its southern part a promontory of just 30 meters high. At the top, the monks, who were the only inhabitants of the island, had placed a lookout with a watchman. At night, he would use a wax lantern to warn the fishermen's boats of the danger of the approaching invisible rocks and prevent them from being shattered by the sharp edges. The watchman, terrified of the cold, had a bell with which he

warned the rest of the community of the approach of ships or visitors.

On one occasion, the bell rang. Six ships were seen appearing one by one in the distance, in the mist of dawn, like hidden sinister shadows that hid the veiled ships and the dark intentions of those strangers.

They were returning again to Britannia, fiercely armed and with terrible intentions.

On the main ship, the first attack party consisted of twenty-five men with the Scandinavian warrior Ragnarr Loðbrók Sigurdsson in command. They came in their swift drakkars, hoisting aloft the heads of terrible monsters, carved in wood on the hull of their light ships as if reminiscent of sea dragons, and gradually unveiling themselves to the tall sight of their trembling victims.

Ragnarr Loðbrók Sigurdsson was an important warlord who, in his distant land of Scandinavia (Sweden, Denmark and Norway), was considered an important absolute leader and king. His blood belonged to the ancient clan of the Ynglings, a caste of rulers dating back to the 8th century. However, his skills as a warrior made him more of a leader than anyone else, due to experience in bloody battles and rightly earned through sweat and blood.

Ruthless in combat, with a strong arm and the agility of lightning, Ragnarr earned the respect of his men. He was of medium height, cropped hair, showing his scars and a bushy blond beard that hardened even

more his countenance. His features were tanned by the wind, with the temperance and strength of spirit, a product of his determined intentions of a bloodthirsty and ruthless leader. He had a fixed and direct look, totally absent of feelings of pity or mercy as if he had free permission from the Gods to attack, murder, and destroy whomever he pleased. In short, he was a dark and unscrupulous soul who invited terror, but with a curious way of relating. He was very friendly with his comrades, even willing to make the greatest sacrifice to defend his men, and yet simultaneously with a fierce hatred towards his enemies, where the concept of forgiveness had been lost long ago.

Ragnarr Loðbrók Sigurdsson, had several children:

Halfdan Ragnarsson,
Sigurd Ragnarsson nicknamed "Snake in the Eye",
Rognvald Ragnarsson,
Ivar Ragnarsson nicknamed "The Boneless One",
Björn Ragnarsson, nicknamed "Iron Arm";

And from other marriages he had:

Yngvar Ragnarsson,
Husto Ragnarsson,
Eric Ragnarsson,
Ubbe Ragnarsson
and Agnar Ragnarsson.

Erick Ragnarsson was a distant in-law of Ulfur Thorisson, born in 850 AD/C, father of Asvald Ulfsson who was born around 880.

Asvald Ulfsson, was the father of Thorvald Asvaldsson.

Thorvald Asvaldsson was the father of Erick Thorvaldson "The Red", who was born around 950 AD, and who was the first to colonize Greenland.

Erick Thorvaldosson was the father of Leif Eriksson, Freydís Eiríksdóttir, Thorvald Eriksson, Thorsteinn Eriksson.

Leif Ericksson nicknamed "The Lucky One", born around 970 AD, was the first explorer of America reaching the coasts of North America at Baffin Island around 1003 AD, then to the Labrador Peninsula, and finally to the Island of Newfoundland in Canada. He explored all this territory up to what is known today as the State of Minnesota in the United States, which we will deal with in later chapters.

But let us return to the raid on Lindisfarne Island.

In command of the next four ships came the sons of Ragnarr Loðbrók Sigurdsson, named: Björn Ragnarsson, Ivar Ragnarsson, Halfdan Ragnarsson and Ubbe Ragnarsson.

Commanding the sixth ship was once again the giant and strong warrior: Brander Haraldsson, who already had knowledge of these lands and had the experience from the attack on Vindili Island, and would be a key player in the subsequent attacks.

It was the advancement of the warrior party, more than the recognition than the attack. Although well prepared for anything, who with their murderous appearance, and their black intentions, landed on the barren and desolate island of Lindisfarne, near the borders with the region of Pictland, (land of the Peaks), later known as the Kingdom of Alba to the north of Britannia and today known as Scotland.

In the year 793 A.D./C., there was a monastery on the island dedicated to St. Cuthbert consisting of stone and wood buildings. It had been founded by St. Aidan as part of his apostolic mission to evangelize the northern lands of the region of Northumbria and was the place where a group of Christian monks lived and gathered. They were dedicated to contemplation, meditation, prayer, the care of a few valuable silver treasures, and some relics composed of bones of saints. They were sacred for them, and that meant valuable objects of religious worship in a tradition that came from the seventh century.

Knowing beforehand of the sporadic presence of the undesirable pirate visitors by the voices spread in the region, the monks went out to the step with brandishing sticks, brooms, clubs and wooden pikes, pretending to defend their scarce treasures. Others, the older and more fearful, gathered in the chapel to pray as a way of imploring the help of the divine hosts to prevent the attack.

But things didn't work out as they had hoped.

Before an accurate blow of the sharp ax wielded by the gigantic Brander Haraldsson, the first thing that flew through the air was the head of the old monk, the Prior of the community, falling three meters away, among a stream of blood that gushed from his severed neck. What happened next was a real butchery of armed men with full experience in melee battles. In the open field, against a miserable group of beatific monks, armed with prayers, scapulars, good intentions, large sticks, clubs and wooden picks, which rather served to placate the possible guilt and repentance of the Nordic warriors and justify their lust for blood and destruction.

The great majority of the monks were put to the sword and many others were thrown into the sea with heavy stones tied to their necks and tied by their hands and feet so that they drowned. Others, a few others, naked, tortured and with visible wounds, were sent to the mainland to tell of the terrible experience and to superlatively amplify the feeling of chastisement among the nearby inhabitants, terror that the warriors were accustomed to promote.

The stories say that a few monks who managed to flee before the terrible debacle left carrying and saving the coffin with the relics of St. Cuthbert's bones and the famous book: The Lindisfarne Gospels. (This was an illustrated manuscript in Latin containing the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, with a leather cover,

decorated with fine rhinestones, which was created in Lindisfarne, approximately 700 AD, in Celtic and Anglo-Saxon style, considered one of the best examples of British religious art), which is still preserved today in the British Library in London.

The Vikings used a type of attack similar to the current guerrilla combat, called Strandhögg, which consisted of a lightning and accurate attack, quickly mounting an organized and fortified beachhead and from there, directing a ruthless and bloody attack, taking the victims by surprise. Before they could react to set up a line of defense, they had already disappeared with the loot and slaves, killing as many as they could and spreading panic among the inhabitants of the area, denoting an extreme ferocity and a total absence of mercy with their victims.

They were tremendously cruel and bloodthirsty and did not spare the lives of anyone, except the strongest to turn into slaves and get some good profit in their trade because the healthier and stronger the slave was, the more they charged for him.

Beginning of the Viking Age:

Although there had previously been several minor attacks by Viking warriors on British populations, the attack on the monastery on the island of Lindisfarne has been considered the first and most important attack that began which was considered The Viking Age.

Ragnarr Loðbrók, Brander Haraldsson, Aren Baardsson and Adalsteinn Gromosson, another important lieutenant of Ragnarr, in command of his men, as well as Ragnarr's sons already mentioned, made up some of the various bands of Viking pirates, who continued their terrible raids in the various localities of eastern Britannia later in the other kingdoms that made up the Britannia of the time, as well as nearby regions adjoining Britannia, such as Ireland, Wales, Scotland and the rest of Europe.

They were ravaging populations and devoting themselves to pillage and piracy, and sometimes, making pacts of union with some British kings and leaders to attack other kings of the region considered common enemies. Within these customary pacts, it is worth mentioning the case of the cession of the domain of an important region east of France, to the Vikings. Under the leadership of Hrolf Ganger, better known as Rollon the Walker, by King Charles III of France, known as Charles the Simple, to avoid confrontation with the Vikings, swore loyalty to the king, and who in this way, ceded the region that would form the known Normandy or land of the Normans, or Northmen (The Vikings).

These generally used the region of Normandy, as well as the Northern Isles of Britannia, near Scandinavia, as bases for regrouping. After a long period of bloody raids, the Vikings returned to the North Sea region to take a break in the different islands such as the Faroe Islands, the Orkneys, and the Hebrides, or in the Hjaltland Islands. At that time, they were in the power and domain of the

Norwegian Vikings; and later they would be called Shetland Islands, when they were under the dominion of Scotland.

The attack on the monastery of Lindisfarne in Northumbria, which marked the beginning of the Viking era in Europe, would be remembered in history throughout the centuries as one of the most infamous episodes of indiscriminate barbarism carried out by the hand of man in that distant era.

Chapter 8
The Gate of Hell
Visiting the land of the Viking ancestors

The meetings at the Julius Global offices and the respective conclusions ended on Wednesday, and having no further program for the following days, Before traveling back to America, Bruce had decided to accept Tinna's proposal and spend the rest of the week in Iceland to get to know the country better and to learn a little more about the great geothermal energy potential of the island. This is what he told his business colleagues.

Tinna offered to serve as his technical and tour guide for the remaining days of his stay in Iceland, which he gladly accepted. She wanted to show him firsthand the country's physical advantages in terms of the generation of clean geothermal energy and some tourist attractions.

The next day, Tinna stopped by the Borg Hotel in her Toyota Fortuner pickup truck to pick Bruce up around nine in the morning. Once together, they traveled along a tourist route that runs through the island called the Gullni hringurinn (the Golden Circle) and where you could see a good part of the attractions and excursions available.

Along this route the first thing they visited was Thingvellir National Park, in the southeast of Iceland, 44 kilometers from Reykjavik.

It was a park full of streams, large rocks, and black basalt formations, studded with yellowish meadows, lamas and lichens, which had grown with difficulty in those once barren lands, stealing space to the strange rock formations. These rocks were a product of the melted and already cooled volcanic lava, because as they say, all

Iceland is the result of violent eruptions. A surly land, as it was the character of its ancestral Viking dwellers.

“Let me tell you," said Tinna, "the details of the importance of the site we are visiting. This is Thingvellir, a park also called Þingvellir (Þing for assembly and Vellir for esplanade) a denomination of political importance.”

Tinna was telling him all the details of the area. Tinna's face, voice and facial expressions captured the attention of Bruce, who looked at her with special and disguised reverence. He tried to look unnoticeably, but it was a goal that he did not manage to achieve completely. She was becoming aware of something special that was surreptitiously emerging although it was something indefinable and contradictory. On one hand, it was a pleasant closeness, and on the other hand, there seemed to be a strong, confused and ambiguous barrier that prevented any more romantic advancement. However, Tinna smiled inwardly at the sensitive situation.

“This park," Tinna commented, "stands out as an important bastion, given its historical ancestry. One of the first legislative institutions in the country and the world, called Alþing, was founded here. The legislative assembly in Iceland was called þing. It was the place where assemblies were held and laws were enacted, and it was also the place where an independent Republic was proclaimed on June 17, 1944.”

“In this assembly," Tinna continued, "all those present stood in front of a large boulder where the Chief "Representative of the Law" sat, and around him stood

the main speakers and most powerful leaders of the Icelandic community. From these speeches and discussions came the laws that were implemented for the good of the community."

Bruce enjoyed the curious landscape. It was a rocky place in the open air, where the sea wind evoked messages of seafaring fraternity, which nuanced the best ideas and the most thoughtful messages of wisdom to be transmitted to their fellows.

Bruce shared with Tinna everything they were observing on the desolate road, absent of people and human constructions. In the distance a range of rugged peaks, and many beautiful, snow-capped peaks on distant mountains. Closer, at the foot of the road, yellow, incipient grasslands grew on a flat, slightly undulating topography that allowed a view of a very distant horizon. In addition, the curious absence of trees, as if the volcanic subsoil of the island had not given the corresponding permission for trees to grow and had only allowed the emergence of a few small bushes and a trimmed meadow of yellowish color, which stretched for many kilometers.

A bit sparing in his speech, Bruce did not dare to touch on personal topics with Tinna as there was not yet enough trust, only topics related to the landscape and nature.

"Now," said Tinna, "we are going to visit the Nesjavellir Geothermal Power Plant of the Geysir geothermal complex, located in the volcanic area of Hengill, 25 minutes from here, where we can see part of

the gigantic magnitude of Iceland's energy autonomy and the reason for our immense capacity to generate clean energy. Look Bruce, this visit is key to understanding the concept of Iceland's energy strength, and its ability to respond to our commitment to save energy and conserve nature by using clean energy sources.

“By the way," said Bruce, "I reiterate that this is one of the conditions of being hiring by American banks; according to the bank's policy of preservation and care of the environment, the use of renewable and clean energy sources for the development of the plan to store information technology with the use of servers in Iceland. I must document in the best way my report in this regard.”

Bruce had the opportunity to take photographs of the Nesjavellir plant, the equipment, and ask for as many technical details from plant officials, jotting down everything he found interesting for his report.

Late in the evening, having returned to Reykjavik, Tinna left Bruce at the hotel to rest from the day's hustle and bustle. The next day, Tinna picked him up again at the Borg Hotel, and they drove west of Reykjavík to the southwestern part of the island.

Tinna told Bruce, "Today we are going to see other aspects of Icelandic topography in the high, volcanic part of the island to give you a more complete picture of Iceland.

They traveled further west of Reykjavik about 100 kilometers from the city and entered a high, dark volcanic

area, climbing for 45 minutes up a steep slope to reach an altitude of 1,100 meters.

The landscape changed completely; going from the beautiful and bright, though sparse, green Icelandic vegetation, rich in mosses, ferns, lichens and fungi, of the surroundings of Reykjavík and the surrounding valleys, to the sepia, gray and black tones of a desert landscape, veined with eternal snows, in that basaltic volcanic region, which always looked stormy, and where the strong wind whipped their faces and penetrated their protective clothes in the foothills of a rough mountain range.

Bruce had the feeling of being on a remote planet with a landscape totally unknown to him. A place that seemed overwhelming because it was desolate and withered. A melancholic geography, but also curiously beautiful and imposing. A cloudless azure blue sky, which brought back memories of a heavenly paradise, contrasted against a ground that presented the colors of death in an eternal purgatory, with its painful grays, jet blacks, burnt browns and dark ochers, where the soul was painted with sadness and desolation. A brutally lonely and hostile environment which made him feel like the only living being in the world. It was a majestic, beautiful and tragic desert landscape, which appeared languid, as if life had died in a strange way and only the withered remains of total destruction.

He thought of the heartfelt certainty that here had come the end of the possible and the impossible; perhaps

he felt in his soul a sensation of witnessing the possible reality of emptiness and nothingness, experienced in a sensory hallucination. The sensation in the heart was of immediate danger, of catastrophic imminence, of being close to living the experience of a gigantic and recent atomic devastation, where everything was destroyed, even the very sense of the indestructible.

In short, the closed and humid fog and the blackness of the basalt on the ground, gave a sensation of ghostly oppression and suffocating existential anguish, as if they were at the gates of the end of the world. And becoming aware of their location, they were indeed in a place where the known world practically ends and a cloudy and surreal world begins, unknown and hostile, a close neighbor of the icy polar region.

Arriving at this place, nearby they went to see the most active and famous volcano in Iceland, 110 kilometers from Reykjavik, in the southern part of the island; the Hekla volcano, the most dangerous and active volcano among the approximately 125 volcanoes that crisscross Iceland.

Bruce was a bit nervous as this volcano had erupted numerous times since the beginning of the 20th century and had erupted almost every 10 years. The last one was on February 26, 2000, so Bruce reckoned that this volcano would blow up at any moment, and they would be right there, which he didn’t like at all.

The majestic and imposing sight of the white volcano almost distracted him from his silent fears. He

didn't want Tinna to realize that he was perhaps unfoundedly frightened, when she seemed to enjoy the bizarre panoramas and the glistening perpetual snows.

Before traveling to Iceland, Bruce, with cautious curiosity, had been researching on the Internet everything he could about that country and its customs, traditions and usages. He came across a very curious legend, which he remembered at that moment being in that place, as it referred precisely to the Hekla volcano.

The ancient inhabitants of the island, in the Middle Ages, named the volcano Hekla, "Helvítishliðið" (the Gate of Hell). Legend has it that the devil himself sometimes dragged the souls of the damned to the icy snows to cool them and set them on fire again, and that the inhabitants of the island never dared to climb the volcano for fear of falling into the depths of hell. The few who had dared to do so and who had managed to return, had lost their minds and gone completely mad. Continuing the legend, it was mentioned that in the vicinity of the entrance to the volcano, some horrendous and gigantic demonic birds flew, which launched terrifying screams and pushed the unwary towards the entrance of the underworld, throwing them into the deep flames. Bruce, being an analytical and pragmatic person, and little given to speculation and fiction, wasn’t one to believe in superstitions and fables, but he felt a growing relief as they left the Hekla.

They set out from the foothills of the volcano, well after dark, and since Reykjavík was a little far away at

about 90 minutes travel time, they preferred to look for a place near there to spend the night. About seventeen kilometers away, they found accommodation in a comfortable Hotel named, Afternoon Cottages, a small hotel composed of pleasant cabins, decorated in colors of gray and black tones, which gave it a semblance of exclusive finesse. They were assigned one of the cabins, consisting of a single room with a double bed, a couple of chairs against a small table, two seats, a kitchen table with dishwasher, utensils, crockery, microwave, refrigerator and a private bathroom. They had to ask the administration to provide them with an extra bed for Bruce to sleep in, who would give the double bed to Tinna.

Late in the cozy protection of the chalet, Bruce and Tinna were chatting animatedly.

Bruce initiated the conversation.

“The scenery around here is really beautiful being barren and desolate, it is little like what one knows, Tinna, beside one tries to imagine the Viking dwellers in their natural environment and shudders to think that right in these valleys, mountains, marshes, and pastures, those men were walking, and in those beautiful fjords and bays they docked their drakars and settled their daily lives and daily affairs.”

“I don't remember if I have already told you," said Tinna, "but I am just doing some research on the Icelandic sagas and other sources, getting on the subject of the history of the Vikings. If you are interested, I can share

with you the details of the research I am doing. The objective is to unravel the theories about the presence of the Vikings in America before the arrival of Christopher Columbus.

“Of course I'm interested, Tinna!" Bruce replied, "My main hobby is historical research, and I have taken several courses in world history in New York. I’m very interested in it, and I might even think about checking out a way to get involved in your research somehow, if you consider it pertinent. I have a special interest in the subject of the Vikings, and later I will tell you all about the origin of this particular interest, due to a very concrete reason for something that happened to me.

Tinna answered, "I think it would be very interesting to have your background in our research. Let's review the subject with the University, and I'll let you know.

After their experiences that day, they were tired and at one point sleepy. Bruce's thought before falling asleep was about the strange beauty of an island like that with that desolate presence that invited the deepest of inwardness. It had been the archaic home of Viking ancestors and the very topography of the terrain, hard as bare rock, absent of weakness and frailty, had perhaps forced the tenacious Vikings to be rough of body and dour of spirit.

Tinna, laying her head on the pillow, barely managed to say goodnight to Bruce and fell sound asleep.

Bruce, amidst the total darkness of the room, thought of his deceased wife and then thought of Tinna, feeling her breathing a few meters away. A slight smile was drawn on his lips; however, he had mixed feelings. His heart fluctuated between the feelings he still professed for Amanda and the recent attraction he was beginning to feel for Tinna.

He lingered for a moment in reflection and then fell deep, dominated by fatigue.

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Chapter 9

The Attack on the Monastery on the Isle of Iona

Thirteen years after Lindisfarne

Year 806 AD.
Isle of Iona, Hebrides archipelago, (North-West Scotland).

On the evening of that day, seven ships appeared on the horizon. Their immense square sails were unfurled

and on the top of their bows appeared the carved heads of terrifying and chimerical figures, like ghosts that stood out among the rough waters of a wet day of stormy summer. Dense storm clouds darkened the horizon with forebodings of evil and festering hatreds, embedded in the minds of the apparitional visitors.

The thunder and lightning, sparkling and electric, announced the arrival of death with luminous warning. They proclaimed it with malice aforethought, showing the gloomy omens of an imminent tragedy and impossible to avoid. It was all a horrendous destiny of obligatory outcome, since there was no place to flee to.

Once again the Viking hordes, this time under the command of Aren Baardsson, raged on the lonely island of Iona in the archipelago of the Hebrides Islands to massacre its unprotected inhabitants. More specifically, to massacre the Carthusian monks of a forsaken abbey, as if forgotten by the hand of God, called Iona Monastery that was founded by the famous monk St. Columba several centuries ago.

This sacred site was of enormous importance for Christianity at that time, as it had been the most important stronghold for the spread of the Christian religion from Ireland to Scotland. In the year 563 AD, the monk St. Columba, follower and disciple of St. Patrick (patron saint of Ireland) had founded the abbey of the Isle of Iona, taking the responsibility of spreading Christianity in Scotland from the abbey mentioned above.

Aren Baardsson hadn't forgotten the death of his son in that unsuccessful battle at the monastery of Jarrow in the region of Northumbria, in the southeast of Scotland. Twelve years earlier, in the year 794 AD, they had been defeated by the locals and suffered enormous casualties in a surprise battle and had to flee in haste.

Now they came again, with a vengeful spirit, to collect the accounts of that disaster. However, since then, they had already collected that account and avenged that distant defeat several times, but they still justified their new attacks with the same bill.

Aren and his men did not understand cults, even less of a Christian religion, which seemed to make cowardice its highest proclamation. They did not understand how their almighty God continued hanging from a cross of torture, while his followers were without the protection required to defend themselves in the hard battles for life and freedom. They supposed, contrary to what their own Nordic Gods did, with Odin at the head, who protected their followers and armed their Viking warriors with courage, strength and skill, to attack and defend themselves with courage. Wrong or not, this was how they saw religious matters.

There were two of Ragnarr Loðbrók Sigurdsson's youngest sons, Husto Ragnarsson and Eric Ragnarsson, who were accumulating warrior experience alongside the more experienced fighters. Again the absence of feelings of mercy and consideration were far from that place and time. The Viking warriors, in their attack on the

monastery, unleashed an orgy of blood and terror, massacring almost all of the monks and appropriating their wealth.

A few monks, eleven in all, tried to get away from the terrible fate by running to the distance, which was not so far away, as the island was very small, approximately 8.5 square kilometers. However, hidden near the beach, they had a couple of flimsy boats with which they embarked into the rough sea, intending to flee, but where to?

They headed for the open sea. It was something akin to collective suicide in those conditions. Did they prefer death by nature to torture and death at the hands of the Viking warrior mobs? Actually these monks had other intentions; they were going to row for about 12 kilometers, to a nearby islet called Staffa Island. But what they didn't know was that the Vikings had already registered that islet and called it: Stafi-oy Island in their Norse language. When they saw the Monks leaving in their rickety boats, the warriors already knew where they were going and let them go. Later they would catch up with them and that would cost them dearly.

The monks arrived at Staffa Island. It was a curious island of volcanic formation whose topography was completely paved with black hexagonal-shaped rocks of basaltic origin and rose above the sea horizon about 19 meters high, forming a rocky cliff completely vertical.

In the middle of the rock wall, facing the sea, opening the way between the basaltic rocks, the entrance

to a gigantic cave that for many centuries had been pierced by the merciless crash of the raging waters against the rocks. It was now called Fingal Cave, in which one could find refuge and perhaps a protective hiding place by entering with some difficulty, passing through a floor of sharp ups and downs, formed by the rocky volcanic hexagons towards the interior of the cave.

They spent the night in complete darkness inside the Fingal cave, terrified as ice statues, without coats, due to the drop in temperature during the night. There was no time to protect themselves better because of the surprise attack of the previous day.

At the first light of dawn, a beardless monk managed to perceive the sinister shadows of armed men disembarking on the islet, just fifty meters away from the entrance of the cave. He was of a young age and no experience and carried the nightmare of a full day on his back without being able to sleep. Silently, he gave the alarm to his companions while stumbling, falling and scratching, went deeper into the darkness of the cave until he came across a sloping ledge. He climbed about nine meters between slipping and blindly groping, and then remained motionless as inert dead, clinging tightly to some sharp rocks that bled his hands. The terror was worse than the pain.

They didn't bring lights and measured their steps in the semi-darkness of the still black dawn. They arrived with a firm and sure step, straight towards the entrance of

the cave and suddenly entered it amidst terrifying war cries.

They caught them right there, tied them up and pushed them.

They were taken to the top of the cliff, tied with firm ropes, like a caravan of condemned men, bound together neck and neck, their bodies and spirits battered by the coming of certain death. Ten terrified screams of terror were heard for miles as they were pushed, one by one, to the solid rocks below. Their bodies were squashed by the height and their blood bathed by the waves crashing against the rocks.

Silently, the young monk watched them walk away. Now they could take whatever they wanted, but to him his life was worth more than all the riches of Britain, Ireland, the nearby islands and Scotland.

They had abandoned the two dilapidated boats, far from needing them. For the Viking warriors, those timbers were a mere nuisance.

A day and a half later, in a solitary and thoughtful manner, he rowed one of those boats to return to the Island of Iona. He went to find the frightening sight of the corpses of his once sanctified brothers, which now formed a terrible heap of broken bones, shattered skulls, bodies pierced by spears, limbs cut by murderous blades, and a spectacle that Dante himself, centuries later, would never dream of imagining.

His name was Damian. He had worked in the kitchen of the monastery and before such a spectacle, he

wept bitterly until he ran out of tears and sighs. Eight days later, the tragic story was known that would thus remain engraved for universal history. But there was something else, the sacred Island had been profaned, and that was unforgivable.

That was and had always been a sacred island, purified and consecrated to be venerated by all the religions in the Universe. Preserved by the ancestors of various cults, for all had always been a sacred island, even long before the very ancient Celtic Druids. But it had been desecrated. Not even the Norse Gods, patrons of the Viking warriors could overlook it. They couldn't nor could the ancient Druid priests, nor the legendary Hyperboreans, nor the Atlantean priests, nor the priests of Lemuria, nor the Roman Gods, nor the Greeks, nor even the God of the Christians, nor the Jesus of the Gnostic Christians, nor that of the future Protestants, nor any God of any religion, whichever it was, could overlook it.

The desecration of the Island of Iona was an unforgivable sacrilege, and this was no longer a matter of human pricks. They had messed with all the Gods of the religions and that was not acceptable.

The Island of Iona, in the most remote antiquity, was known in ancient Gaelic language, as "Innis na Druineach" which means Island of the Druids. It was said to be an important center of study for the Druid priests, as it was blessed by the Gods and considered to be a place that was elevated to a special category of supernatural

energy. It had been the sacred island of the very ancient Druids, and one could probably date the Celtic Druid world in the Iron Age to about the 12th century BC.

However, the legends about the Island of Iona were much older and bordered on the probable misunderstandings and hypotheses that only the imagination could accept. However, there were the legends emanating from the very ancient verbal traditions, in turn coming from the most atavistic myths and fantasies from ancestors that would have existed even before the beginning of known history.

The legends said that the Island of Iona in its origins was inhabited by priests of the race of the Hyperboreans, coming from a region north of the North Pole when it was still warm and tropical. They were special men of a race different from the present human race, of pure blood, called the race of the Ariyas, which means the "enlightened ones". They called the Island of Iona as Lume, which meant "Bright Land", most likely because of the spiritual ancestry of the Island.

But returning to the subject of the Druids, which is closer to our conception of reality, we must refer to the important historian Posidonius, who lived in the second century BC in the period 135 BC to 51 BC. He was a Greek philosopher, historian, astronomer, theologian, and geographer. Of his writings, only fragments remain. However, he was one of the first to refer to the Druids as some of the greatest philosophers of antiquity far from the popular conception that they were sorcerers,

soothsayers and magicians. Others referred to the Druids as "Those who see best and beyond".

Aware of the ancient legends and myths about the ancestral origins of spirituality on the Isle of Iona, the Irish patron saint, Saint Patrick, sent his disciple Saint Columba in the year 563 AD to inaugurate the important monastery on the Isle of Iona, to be the bastion of the Christian religion and from there spread Christianity throughout Scotland at the time, which was more than achieved.

Even today, the Isle of Iona is considered a sacred place, where the mortal remains of many Scottish monarchs have been deposited; among them are: Kenneth I, Donald II, Malcolm I, Duncan I, Macbeth and Donald III.

Shortly after the sacrilege to the Isle of Iona, a storm had formed in the Canary Islands in North Africa. On its passage through the Caribbean Sea, it took on enormous force, drawing destructive energy from the summer-warmed waters, confronted by the icy currents of the North Pole, and from there formed a gigantic category 5 hurricane. It raced along the front of the American coasts on its northward route, but was deflected. At the end, it took course for Britannia, and then continued deflected a little to the north and went to crash head-on into the Hebrides, well north of the Isle of Iona.

The Vikings came celebrating with loud singing and many jugs of mead, which clouded their sights and

lifted their hearts, but already intoxicated with treasures obtained through the recent plunder of the monastery on the Isle of Iona.

Aren Baardsson, in command of his seven ships, watched the jet black sea horizon with some concern of the terrible storm that was coming. They were in the middle of the high seas, far away from the protective coast and with no other tools than the muscular arms of their Viking warriors, which would be unsuccessful when fighting against the fierce nature It was not just any storm, this was the worst hurricane storm they had ever imagined to face.

Soon after, on the beach of the Isle of Lewis (the largest of the Hebrides Islands), washed ashore the sad remains of planks tenaciously torn from nails, pieces of broken masts like toothpicks, useless remains of rigging, ropes, slings, and other seafaring gear, shreds and pieces of canvas sails, esparto grass cables, broken oars, parts of rudders and finally putrefying corpses swollen with seawater and some horribly mutilated by the animals of the sea. All seven ships had been totally destroyed, and their entire crews killed. Some believers would say that the gods had reprimanded the sacrilege.

Some time later, Ragnarr Loðbrók Sigurdsson, having learned of the death of his two sons, Husto and Eric Ragnarsson, began to attack small British villages with terrible virulence, as if with each murder he committed, he could make up for his loss. Somehow he felt that he was avenging the death of his sons,

confronting the designs of nature and the inhabitants of those villages paid the consequences.

Four more times the island of Iona would be attacked, and four more times its attackers would be destroyed by terrible storms until they learned. Some pragmatists would also say that it had been pure coincidence. But a coincidence four times? Maybe.

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Chapter 10.
Embarrassing Moments

Near Hekla volcano, Iceland.

The next morning when they woke up and opened the blackout windows, they found the dazzling view of the Hekla volcano in the distance. The sunny perspective of the area, although deserted and frozen, was a deep and lonely beauty. Silence was one of the characteristics of the volcanic area due to the absence of wild animals, which produced a sensation in that remote place.

Tinna went into the bathroom first, as she wanted to wash her hair and then dry it. When she came out, she was wrapped in a small towel that barely covered her body and another towel on her head as a turban.

Then, Bruce went into the bathroom and spent no more than three minutes in the shower. When he opened the door to leave the bathroom, which was not a surprise, he found the surprising figure of Tinna, totally naked. A moment ago her towel had fallen. Rather than put it back on, she looked in her suitcase for underwear and the outfit

of the day. She assumed Bruce was still in the bathroom and was able to get dressed in time, but it was not enough.

Bruce, very pleasantly surprised, but disturbed by the magnificent sight, could only manage to apologize and turn his back with chivalry in an awkward moment like that. Tinna, more amused than surprised, also apologized to Bruce, and asked him to keep his back turned while she finished dressing.

They then prepared a frugal breakfast with some things they had brought from the day before, consisting of fruit, cereal and yogurt.

Bruce didn't even realize what they were having for breakfast. He couldn't take his mind off Tinna's totally naked body. He kept seeing her beautiful breasts, her hips, her perfect derriere, the contoured outline of her body, her flat and firm belly, her long and well-toned legs, the golden hair on her pubis. It was impossible for him to take his eyes off his mental picture, and he was starting to feel like a pervert, but he was enjoying it. Tinna, on the other hand, appeared completely natural, although she knew what Bruce was going through and smiled to herself.

Once ready, and being Friday, Tinna proposed to visit the geothermal power plant of Svartsengi, about 136 kilometers away and they headed towards that place.

Arriving at the site after a fairly long trip, Tinna introduced him to the chief engineer and manager of the complex, Johann Sigurdsson, a friend of hers, who gave

them a tour of the facilities, explaining in detail all the technical characteristics, capacity and energy potential. Bruce would later learn that Mr. Sigurdsson was Tinna's ex-husband, who she had divorced about two years ago, but with whom she maintained a cordial relationship.

After this tour, Tinna suggested relaxing for the rest of the day in the very famous geothermal spa called Bláa lónið (The Blue Lagoon), whose waters are supplied by the geothermal plant of Svartsengi, which they had just visited.

“Look Bruce," Tinna commented, "this site is of great importance not only for tourism but also for medicine. The Blue Lagoon is a must-see attraction in Iceland and its turquoise blue mineral waters, full of silica and sulfur, help to heal people's skin who have the opportunity to take a bath there. The waters containing blue-green algae and other mineral products are conducive to disinfecting the skin of bathers and highly recommended for the treatment of some skin diseases such as psoriasis.

It was a curiously attractive environment with the contrast between the black of the volcanic stones and sands of the terrain and the bright turquoise blue, luminous and almost phosphorescent and magical, of the medicinal waters of the lagoon.

Being in the thermal pool, Bruce had once again the opportunity to admire Tinna's beautiful profile. It was impossible for him to not notice her beautiful body, her firm breasts, her beautiful hips and the agility of her

athletic and confident movements. A dark blue bathing dress with oblique lines of a pale pink, highlighted Tinna's figure and created an uncomfortable problem for Bruce, who could not hold the urge to look at her closely. He felt the need to dissimulate at all costs and to prevent her from thinking what was still inconceivable. This was what he wanted the least and still felt that it was not the right time to start a relationship.

For Tinna, she had it all figured out. At one point when she, with her back turned, was drying herself with the towel, she suddenly turned her face and met Bruce's gaze very distracted with her ass and felt his embarrassment, immediately averting his gaze elsewhere. She was pretending not to notice. Amused and somewhat flirtatious, she was also trying to let the situation pass without further consequences. She realized that the circumstances were not yet sufficiently clear to approach new scopes.

At four o'clock in the afternoon, after the pool episode, changed and in the restaurant of the resort, the embarrassing moments for Bruce ended. In the middle of lunch, feeling more confident, they could address other issues and expand the familiarity that was emerging between them as they got to know each other more and more.

She told him about her studies, her career in Systems Engineering, and her additional interest in anthropology and in more detail her desire to expand the aforementioned research she was doing with the

University of Iceland about the Viking sagas and the subject of the exploration carried out by her Viking ancestors in America.

Bruce told her at length about his profession, his occupation in consulting with financial institutions, his musical tastes and expanded on the details of his hobby in history, brought up the night before.

Later, they went into more personal topics and Tinna told him about her divorce that had ended about two years ago in an amicable way. They had decided that it was better to end and not hurt each other with a relationship that had not worked well due to incompatibility of characters. They hadn't learned to give ground and reach agreements in the small daily disagreements and love had left the home and there were only ashes left in that worn out relationship.

In turn, Bruce told her of the recent death of his wife, about eight months ago, and of the deep sorrow that had overshadowed his life since that moment. Tinna was becoming aware that Bruce, having the appearance of a tough man, hardened in the business world, and with an impermeable halo of pragmatism, deep down had the sensitivity of a child and at times showed a vulnerability that made him very tender. She was getting emotionally closer to him, more and more, opening her heart little by little to whatever would come.

In the evening, at 6:50 pm, and having returned to Reykjavik, Tinna left Bruce at the hotel to change clothes

and get some rest, and she would do the same. They arranged to meet again around 9:00 pm to go to dinner.

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Chapter 11
Personal Issues
A Momentous Accident

In the evening, Tinna picked up Bruce and they headed to the Fiskfélagid Restaurant - fish Company with a rather unique and cute decor. There were mouse gray tables and chairs and the pink parasols matched the rustic, dark Icelandic basalt stone of the walls. They took a table outside and ordered dinner as soon as they arrived since they were both hungry from the trip.

Bruce ordered a dish called Lobster Malaysia which was composed of blackened Monkfish, fried prawns with lobster egg rolls, with lemongrass jelly and sambal chili, pineapple and Mussels in beer foam. It was an exotic and curiously delicious Icelandic dish.

Tinna preferred to order the so-called English Mint which was composed of Veal Filets with fresh mint, marinated in an herb paste, and fried kale with pickled mustard seeds.

Once dinner was finished and some house wines were served, they continued chatting. More comfortably, Bruce dared to talk again about his wife's passing, a subject Bruce usually avoided, but with Tinna, he felt he could unburden himself and catalyze a bit of that stone he

felt in his soul. It was necessary to develop this conversation to begin to cleanse that corner of his subconscious where the wounds were still fresh, as a form of healing.

At one point in the conversation, talking about the subject of death, Tinna told him about a near death experience she had had and coming back to life after an accident that left her in a coma for five days while debating between life and death.

“Tinna, could you tell me in detail about that experience of yours?" asked Bruce.

“Of course! It happened four years ago, and it was the strangest experience I´ve ever had. I don't really remember anything about the time of the accident, but I know what happened because I was told about it," Tinna commented. "I was driving with my ex-husband on an alternate route. Then, a 10 ton truck carrying supplies, coming in the opposite direction, lost control in the snow and crashed head on into our vehicle. I was in the passenger seat, and I had just unbuckled my seat belt because I was trying to get my cell phone that was ringing at that moment and was in my pants pocket. I could not take it out with the belt on. At that moment, the accident happened. I flew out of the car crashing against the icy pavement causing instant shock and then a deep coma for the five days ahead. I don't remember anything about it, but I was rushed to surgery because I had a big wound on my head, a fractured tibia and fibula, and other injuries in my right arm and left leg. Like I said, it was a very

strange experience because of the events I lived and experienced while I was in a coma.

Tinna continued her story. "I was in a deep coma, lying on the operating table in the operating room and suddenly I felt my consciousness return and I was able to open my eyes, but not the eyes of my body, the eyes of my subconscious. At that moment, I felt a tug and floated out of my body but without any effort and without any pain. I floated out across the room and stood on the ceiling of the operating room. Below, I could see the doctors in their typical blue surgical attire and their instruments. One doctor, who I assumed was the anesthesiologist, was at the head of the table and was supplying oxygen to my body while keeping an eye on the screen of a computer that showed the vital signs and produced a rhythmic and regular sound produced by my heartbeat. Several nurses next to the two doctors reached for instruments as each surgeon required them and received the ones they returned. At that moment, distracted, I saw the brightness of a beautiful ablaze light that lit up the whole room from afar. I turned to look, but only I saw that light because below the doctors did not seem to notice the light that came from the back of a narrow tunnel. I went or rather I was attracted to that light through the tunnel and suddenly I found myself in the presence of the most beautiful light that flashed rays of love, colors of love and a beautiful music of love. In some strange way, I understood that love, besides being a feeling as we perceive it in our earthly state, was

something solid and could be perceived with different senses and I understood in an instant that the light was the very representation of the eternal and infinite source from where all that exists, including us, has emanated. That consciousness is our origin and our divine ancestry and comes from that source because we carry that characteristic of divinity in us since it is our priority essence. It is worth mentioning that although my family is Anglican Christian, I have never had any approach or affiliation with any religion. Let me repeat, I understood something that is very difficult to explain. Love is not a concept or a sensation that is felt as something only emotional. Love could be felt, could be smelled, could be seen and could be heard. Love was something so real and so palpable that I could say it was something as solid as a stone. It is much more than the emotional sensation we feel in our dimension on earth. I also understood that that place was my true and unique home, my own home that has always and will always be waiting for me.

Tinna took a breath to take a sip from her cup and continued.

"In that higher dimension, I could observe a boundless garden where the colors of the meadow and the trees, the plants and the most beautiful flowers gave off a spectacular brightness and clarity and where the colors were much more vivid than the colors of our earthly dimension. The people in pastel colored robes were gorgeous. Some were very young and others more mature, some more inexperienced and others wiser,

although they were still very youthful and beautiful. Some seemed especially lit by a special glow that made them more beautiful and more profound. I understood that this brilliance was the product of their greater wisdom and their greater evolutionary development. There were many animals; many birds, many butterflies and mammals of different species and all very peaceful. Curiously, all manifested a degree of consciousness just as the plants. And I repeat, love was the common denominator in the existence of all species, in that dimension. I had once read about a Zen master who affirmed that we are the Light of Consciousness. Well, in this higher dimension, I perfectly understood that this was true in the most literal sense of the word. We are the Light of Consciousness. We are made of photons of brilliant light, and we are conscious by nature. Additionally, I could understand that all beings have a divine origin with no exception, and that all of us, no exception, at the moment of completing our experience on earth, we return to our home in the superior planes, in our body of consciousness, also divine and impeccable, totally leaving behind the experiences lived in this terrestrial plane. The duality that is lived on the earthly plane of opposites (good or evil), is only an inherent aspect of that plane of learning and experimentation, and is perfectly conceived as such, only for didactic purposes and as part of the programs of experimentation that are lived on that plane. Evil is not a condition that is lived in the higher planes, that is to say, there is no such connotation there."

“That was the curious experience I had." Tinna concluded, "something I keep in my mind because it is the best incentive to live with joy in this life knowing that something much better awaits us on the other side. Especially keeping in mind that this dimensional reality is simply a field of experimentation without the slightest consequence of punishment or reward, as they have tried to frighten us with the belief systems imposed in a biased way.

Now Tinna asked Bruce, “With an experience like the one I have told you about, I have two questions: One, are you afraid of death? And the other, do you think there is a continuity after this life?

At that moment, Bruce rested his gaze on the distant night landscape of the sea dock, with the fishing boats rocking gently with the movement of the waves and evoked the image of his absent wife. A fleeting feeling of sadness passed through his mind, wrinkling his heart, but he made an effort to recover immediately.

“Sorry. I got distracted," said Bruce, "What did you say?”

“That I have two questions,” said Tinna. “Are you afraid of death? And the other, do you believe that there is a continuity after this life? Do you believe in the existence of a higher Being, a God?

“I am going to answer you with the following," answered Bruce. "First of all, within my agnostic thinking, and to clarify, agnostic, not atheist, I am by principle, separated from any restrictive and limiting

religious belief system. I have no religious beliefs, and I consider myself a freethinker, honoring my status as a Mason. But I cannot assure with 100% certainty the non-existence of a God; however, the God invented by some men that punish, judge, tremendously egomaniacal, and who seeks to be worshiped and venerated. I definitely cannot believe in that kind of God."

"On the contrary, I could believe in a Divine Consciousness shared by all. I share your thought that there is a general Consciousness that belongs to everyone and everything and this Consciousness is of transcendent ascendancy, not to say divine, although it could be understood as a Consciousness of divine origin because in its total perfection, it transcends all spheres of existence. Likewise, I could consider the speculation that perhaps there could exist a Universal Source Consciousness from which all existing Consciousnesses would have emanated. That could be real, but I do not say it with 100% certainty. I also share the idea that there is a different dimensional plane where we go at the moment of departure, at the moment of death of our physical body. And finally, I consider that there are no rewards or punishments at the moment of transcending this earthly existence. I believe that our consciousness passes unscathed to this other dimensional plane, without earthly atavisms. And definitely, I believe that we are entities of transcendent origin, divine, living strong experiences in order to improve our wisdom for the purpose of evolution."

“Oh, and regarding your other question, I am not afraid of death.”

Now it was Bruce who asked. “And what do you think about it?”

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Chapter 12.
The Death of Ragnarr Loðbrók Sigurdsson

Year 865 AD.
Northumbria, Britain.

It was September 21, 865 AD and Ragnarr Loðbrók knew that this day was destined to be the end of his life.

He felt the painful fracture in both ankles caused when he fell badly nine and a half meters and was thrown into a snake pit. He could no longer stand up. His chest, back, hands and legs also burned tremendously from the wounds from the scourging,savage violence and torture several days in the dungeons of the castle. This was done by the hands of his British enemies, the henchmen of King Aelle, the tyrant who ruled Northumbria.

As he fell, he almost simultaneously felt the bite and terrible burning on the back of his right thigh, while another sharp bite and unbearable burning attacked his forearm, and then, another painful sting on the back of his neck. In the matter of twenty minutes, these were the first three of many more snake bites that extinguished his life. Convulsions choked him because of the paralysis of the muscles of his lungs and his central nervous system was attacked by the inclement venom injected into his body. He shook violently in the midst of the convulsions from the generalized poisoning, producing a dull sound as his body scraped against the icy limestone slabs of the floor until he became totally immobile. The glassy and

inexpressive eyes announced that life was escaping from his body, as if looking towards a horizon located in an unknown dimension outside this world.

Several days before, on the battlefield, he was taken prisoner by the soldiers of King Aelle of Northumbria, when he was simultaneously attacked by six men armed with spears who cornered him in a bend of the field. They immobilized him, and then tied a chain around his neck and led him to the king's castle.

There were eight days of torture with chains tied to his limbs and stretched to the maximum until his joints cracked. They crushed four fingers, two on each hand, until there were only bloody masses with pulverized bones. In addition, they burned his eyes with hot irons, leaving him totally blind. They cut his genitals and were served to him cooked, as they were the only food during the days that lasted his torture until he was thrown to the snakes.

“My children will take the most terrible revenge!” cried the great Ragnarr between screams of pain, “Curse Aelle and curse your vassals! My children will take ten for one of my tortures. Curse you! The Rísta bloðorn awaits you! The Rísta bloðorn! The Rísta bloðorn will be the most terrible revenge,” he repeated again and again in a loud voice by the dying man. “Yes,” accursed Aelle, “the Rísta bloðorn awaits you, and you will curse the day you were born and long to have died in battle long before. Not because of the Rísta bloðorn, but for the anticipation,

you will already die from an indescribable terror knowing what awaits you!”

With these words Ragnarr was threatening him to become the Rísta bloðorn, which meant to become the Blood Eagle, a terrifying and bloodthirsty Scandinavian method of torture.

A farmhand of one of the sons of the Viking warrior, warned them of the kidnapping as soon as he learned about the moment that Ragnarr was led to the fortified castle and thrown into the dungeon.

At the King's orders, a whole English army of more than five thousand men guarded the region. A rescue was practically an impossible task, because at that time, the number of Vikings available did not reach six hundred men, and their fighting technique was “attack and run,” guerrilla style, and not facing a large army in the battlefield.

Six weeks later, Ragnarr´s sons learned of his tragic death, who angrily swore that the revenge would be unforgettable. King Aelle would be given the ultimate punishment, the sentenced torture of the "Bloody Eagle". If King Aelle had known what awaited him, he would have committed suicide to avoid the terrible punishment.

The Rísta bloðorn was basically to skin one alive. While the condemned was awake and alive, it consisted of opening the skin, tissues and muscles on the back from top to bottom, uncovering the inside and sprinkling salt on it. Then, forcefully cutting the ribs open and moving them aside to pull the lungs out. They looked like the

bloody wings of an eagle, and left to die in the most dreadful pain.

But there was no hurry. They could wait. They had all the time in the world to wait for the most propitious moment to take the cruel revenge. For the time being, the Viking hordes had the order to save King Aelle's life. In order for the revenge to be carried out as planned, they needed him safe and sound. It would take a year and a half to prepare the right conditions to execute revenge.

In the meantime, they set about gathering a total of 120 warships and recruiting 6700 warriors who would not only facilitate the mission of avenging the great Ragnarr Loðbrók Sigurdsson, but would go to reinforce the Viking lines to execute a series of frontal attacks on the lands of Britannia. The attacks would begin on the kingdoms of Northumbria, Wessex, and then Mercia, Eastanglia and the Northern and Western Isles, the territories of the Hebrides and Ireland.

Ubbe Ragnarsson, and his brothers Ivar the Boneless and Halfdan, sons of Ragnarr, commanded a party of 1200 warriors. They were faced in the battle of Cynwit, the English army, commanded by King Alfred the Great of Wessex, who came out triumphant. In this battle and defeat, Ubbe Ragnarson died.

This was a Pyrrhic victory for the Saxons, for they knew that another large army of Danish Vikings was forming in the west, and the future was uncertain for both sides. The Danes and the Saxons of Wessex reached an agreement to sign an incipient peace, which would later

be betrayed by the Vikings. In this agreement, the Vikings managed to suspend and neutralize the skirmishes with the Saxons of Wessex, and took advantage of the ingenuity of the agreements to channel their incursions into the kingdom of Northumbria, the north of Britain.

On one battlefield, in Northumbria near the town of Eoferwic, the large army of Danish warriors took advantage of the goods of the terrain. They positioned themselves on top of a hill where they could hold strategic positions of the main body of the Saxon opponents' army below. Additionally, the great numbers of the Danes already intimidated the Saxon soldiers, who foresaw a disastrous end for their troops. The Danes surrounded the Saxons, preventing their escape and leaving only a small escape corridor for a few King Aelle and his lieutenants intended to take advantage of this, but it turned into a trap with no way out. A party of Danes were already waiting for him with strict orders to respect the king's life and capture him.

It is worth mentioning that once the triumph was achieved and the Saxons were defeated by the Danish Vikings, they took the city of Eoferwic of Northumbria and changed its name to Jórvic, of Danish origin, which later became the city of York until today.

There they managed to capture King Alle of Northumbria, which was their most important revenge mission.

Thus, the fate of the Saxon King Aelle was sealed and the dreadful torture began. Once captured, he was treated without the slightest consideration. Humiliated, tortured and mistreated, he was the center of the worst treatment. For several days, suffering the worst conditions imaginable, he was served the excrement of all the Viking warriors for dinner and their urine to drink. Finally, he was subjected to the aforementioned terrible immolation, the so-called Bloody Eagle or Rísta bloðorn, by which he was tied to two thick trunks, stretching out both arms. The executioner had his face painted in fiery red, naked trunk, was covered with terrifying marks and tattoos allegorical to his terrible job. He had a very sharp, steel dagger, so sharp that when dropping a plant against that sharp edge, it was cut and separated without the slightest effort. A sepulchral silence was felt at that moment. It was illuminated with some torches whose fire marked spectral shadows that were approaching a bloody night. Where one could hear the fluttering of night birds and the hissing of insects while the hosts of Danish Viking warriors, present at the immolation, kept the deepest silence that served as an impressive frame of stillness in that burning night. The absence of the moon made the spectacle more impressive. King Aelle stood there, totally naked, anticipating what he imagined would happen and terrified to the depths of his soul. He felt like an animal prisoner tied up, ready for the terrible sacrifice.

Suddenly, a terrifying scream of pain came from the depths of King Aelle's soul, tearing the night apart and

surprisingly frightening the nocturnal animals and all those present, even hardened men accustomed to the fiercest and most heartless scenes. It was just when the executioner applied the blade against King Alle's skin that he began to bleed copiously. Pale, astonished, with his eyes wild with panic, and on the verge of fainting more from terror than from his own wounds, he felt his skin being cut in two furrows along his back. Then, with force, the wounds were opened to reveal internal flesh, and he felt the agony of an immeasurable pain. Then, he felt the bone of the ribs being cut where they join the spine. But, the most excruciating pain was felt when they severed the nerves leading from the spine to the trunk and organs. At that moment he fainted, falling into a hazy stupor where his consciousness was disconnected from the dreadful reality he had experienced. After a while, not knowing for how long, he felt ice on his face, and the consciousness of the most infinite pain in his back returned. Salt was being sprinkled on the gigantic wound and the pain was unbearable. They had already separated his broken ribs and opened wide the cavity where the lungs were seen, which reddened and contracted and expanded as he inhaled and exhaled air in the midst of the most painful torment.

Then, they carefully removed the lungs and displayed them on the sides of the stride in such a way that they resembled the wings of a bird. When he seemed to be losing consciousness, they poured ice water on his face to awaken him again and prolong his agony. Thus,

they left him for two hours, agonizing and dying until he ceased to exist. It was March 21, 867 AD.

However, that was not the end of the Vikings' revenge. They had a great army and other new Viking warriors arriving in the English lands. Then began a long period of wars and plundering of the kingdoms of Britain where there were many fights, assassinations, and fleeting agreements between parties to achieve confrontations against other opponents. This was an era of great battles and wars everywhere.

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Chapter 13.
A hypnotic regression experience?

“What?” Tinna replied.

“Yes, what do you think about death?” said Bruce.

“I no longer fear death for I’m certain that death is not what we have believed it to be, a painful end, not at all. Death is a simple passage from one dimension of

existence to another higher dimension, less dense and more subtle. Regarding the continuity of life, I'm sure of it because my experience was so real that I was completely convinced of the existence of that special place in a higher dimension."

Tinna and Bruce were still at the restaurant. Bruce remained pensive for a moment, his gaze lost in the depths of his recondite memories, after which he resumed the conversation.

"Let me tell you something curious that happened to me some years ago and has marked my present interest in these momentous subjects. This is the first time I have told this to anyone other than a very close relative and the doctor who helped me. Also, it's the starting point of my interest in the subject of the Vikings. One night when I was very young, I had my first vivid dream about a beautiful island of icy and bucolic beauty. An island of special characteristics, very cold, very cloudy, very humid and very fishery. In the dream, I was a tanned and sinewy sailor who lived there and my main occupation was sea fishing. It was a very ancient time, perhaps early in the ninth century; I learned this after I had investigated the details of the mysterious dream. Subsequently, on three other occasions these dreams came back with the same marine life, fishing, the island, and a very ancient past; a very hard life of struggles, wars, hard work, enormous needs and difficult survival."

"On the last two occasions, the dreams presented themselves with a curious fact, the repetition of two

names: Leòdhas and Eilean Siar. I saw these names printed with fire on a piece of wood somewhere on the island."

Bruce continued his dissertation, "The second time, when I woke up and before discarding the dream, I sat up and took paper and pencil. I wrote down the names and continued sleeping."

"In the following days, I tried to clarify the subject, but I couldn't understand what language they were written in; they did not agree with any of the known languages. At first I supposed that it was some language of a Scandinavian and Nordic country, or some very old language, perhaps of Slavic origin, or of some country of the former Soviet Union and its surroundings, but I could not clarify it and I put aside this subject for a long time convinced that these dreams had nothing to do with reality."

"Later, the Internet era came along and everything became easier. After some years, one evening late at night, I was surfing the web and when I opened and rummaged through a drawer of my study desk, I noticed with surprise the almost forgotten paper where some years ago I had written the names: Leòdhas and Eilean Siar."

"Almost with euphoria," Bruce continued. "I typed the word Leòdhas into the computer, and a curious piece of information appeared. That word referred to the ancient Gaelic language and referred to an island in Great Britain, particularly in the northwesternmost part of

Scotland. It's translated as LEWIS (Lewis Island). I then typed into the computer the other words, Eilean Siar, and it turned out that they also belonged to the ancient Gaelic language and meant Hebridean Islands. They referred to the archipelago of the Scottish Hebrides. To complete my research on this subject, I set out to clarify the subject of the Old Gaelic language, and I came across more curiosities about this language."

"The Old Gaelic language was native to Ireland, the Isle of Man, as well as Scotland, and is still spoken by some 60,000 inhabitants in those places and in the islands of the far north region of Great Britain, a region formerly known as the Kingdom of Alba, also made up of all the islands in the north of Scotland, such as the Hebrides, Shetland, Orkney, and even the Faroe Islands, which today belong to Denmark. I had no more doubts; the Isle of Lewis was a very important and large island of the Hebrides archipelago, located in the extreme northwest of Great Britain in Scotland."

"But what did I have to do with this story of the Hebrides, Scotland and Great Britain, I wondered?"

"As far as I could remember, I didn't know those islands and I was simply an American born in the northeastern United States, in the State of New Hampshire, and nothing more. Although I knew several countries in Europe, I only knew half of London in Great Britain, but I had never visited Scotland or the Hebrides. At the time I didn't get any direct answers to my

questions, but from this experience a series of events connected with the Hebrides began to unfold."

"However," Bruce continued, "I curiously related this dream to a recurring sensation of some time before, an intuitively compelling feeling of deep and unknown origin. Something that a relative to whom I told about the dreams qualified as Dejà-vu. A sensation that made me feel that there was some kind of relationship between me and Scotland, with some islands, with fishing, with an ancient time and with a definitive and transcendent experience that I had already lived. Searching the Internet on Wikipedia, for the definition of Dejà-vu, I came across the following:

Déjà vu (/deʒa vy/: French for 'already seen before'), is a type of paramnesia of recognition (as opposed to paramnesias of recollection), of some experience that we feel as if it had been previously lived."

Bruce continued, "In those days I had been suffering from tonsillitis, almost permanently and repeatedly, despite having my immune system perfect, and there was no specific reason for this discomfort. A friend advised me to consult with Dr. Brian Weiss from Miami, as a specialist in Regressive Therapy (Hypnotic Regression Therapy), to find a possible cause of current illnesses related to a previous incarnation. Although Dr. Weiss couldn't see me because he was on tour abroad, someone referred me to another doctor, Dr. Magnus Clarke, to attend the respective consultation, also related to regressive therapy."

“The empathy with Dr. Magnus Clarke was immediate and, coincidentally, he was originally from Scotland and had lived in his childhood in the Orkney Islands (Orkney). These are important islands located very close to the Hebrides, in the far north of Scotland, just off the route to Iceland. Dr. Clarke had emigrated to the United States with his parents as a young teenager. This was very important to verify coincidences that would later become clear. In those sessions of Regressive Therapy answers to many concerns began to appear.”

Bruce continued his story. “Dr. Clarke, expert in hypnosis, in the first session induced me to a deep hypnotic sleep, where through his accurate questions, he was concretizing me to be able to assemble a puzzle of coherent information emanating from loose phrases and small details that I was supplying him. And I repeat, under hypnosis.”

The picture he was putting together was that of a very ancient time, in an icy and remote island, probably in the northwest of Scotland, most likely in the Hebrides Islands. Apparently, I had been a sailor fisherman and a warrior according to the compulsory recruitment that the Feudal Lord of the county imposed in times of conflict to raise an army of countrymen, lackeys, peasants and servants. They defended the Lord's interests and fought his battles out of pure loyalty, without pay, without honors, and without the slightest option to refuse our predetermined and tragic fate.”

“And our only benefit? To receive daily food and the necessary weapons to defend ourselves and attack the enemy, and to be able to make our families continue living as tenants, exploiting the agriculture of the fief, in the lands owned by the Lord, and of course, paying the taxes of rigor.”

Bruce continued his story. “In other sessions, Dr. Clarke continued to press me for more concrete data, such as customs and details of daily life of that time, and he was able to obtain curiously detailed information.

“My name,” I told him, “was Balgair, (which in old Gaelic means "fox"). I wore brown clothes, with many days of wear and grime since the women only washed once a month, as was the custom, and I had no more than three sets of clothes.”

Dr. Clarke inquired about some of the customs and usages of the time.

“On the island, we wore loose-fitting wool or animal skin pants, a loose-fitting shirt of lighter wool, and a vest that went from the shoulders to below the hips, almost to the knees. We sheared the sheep and the women wove the wool fibers into thin or thick threads. It was multi-colored clothing, because it was possible to make dyes of vegetable or animal origin, even of crushed insects, but they were brownish colors because they were always stained. In winter, we wore many pieces of clothing to protect us from the cold, in addition to layers that looked like thick blankets almost to the ground, either wool or tanned animal skins, such as bears, deer

and cattle. Around the neck, the most distinguished lords wore thick and fine skins of wild animals such as stoats, minks, rabbits or foxes. In times of war, we wore very thick belts to hang the knives and swords in their sheaths. There was usually a large strap diagonally across the chest to help support the belt. The footwear consisted of leather slippers with soles, and additional leather covering the shin and calf tied with an interlaced cord, but feudal lords of renown, warlords and knights, wore fine leather boots up to below the knee. Shields, helmets and weapons completed the combat attire. The nobles and lords wore chainmail for body protection, and sometimes iron armor."

Bruce continued his description. "Dr. Clarke told me that advancing in his investigation of the first hypnotic regression experience with me, he found a fact no less curious, and that was that I, in my halting revelations under hypnosis, mentioned with insistent dread some almost unintelligible words: Northmen, Lochlannaich, Vikingr. I would do so as if I were imitating an ancient Norse pronunciation. It was something that Dr. Clarke determined, produced fear in the incarnated Bruce of that ancient age: an ancestral fear. Then. I would finish off with other unknown words, also pronounced with terror: Uabhasach Murtairean."

Later Dr. Clarke and Bruce researched in the ancient languages and in the old Scottish Welsh found the meaning: the words Northmen Lochlannaich Viking

meant: Northmen - Raiders - Vikings and the words Uabhasach Murtairean: meant: Murderers - terrible.

“That was a hard life of hardships and challenges. That day of my death, we had not slept much as the deafening sound of the Viking warriors' war drums, pressing and terrifying like an imminent journey to the deepest hells, frightened us and prevented us from resting. It was a time of extreme tension and our leaders permanently made warlike harangues to keep our fighting spirit high. They generally made reference to our Celtic idiosyncrasy, to the defense of the land and the duty to defend our freedom and the honor of our families, since it was well known that those undesirable murderers were razing everything to the ground, burning our villages, raping our women, killing our descendants and taking our belongings as booty. There was no way to back down and the only way was to face the enemy, even if fear gripped our bodies.”

“I was a burly man of 1.80 meters tall, of prominent musculature because in the village I used to work, besides being a fisherman, as an assistant to the blacksmith, handling the forge, which as it happened with iron, tempered my body and developed my huge muscles. A sword stroke from my arm was almost always fatal to the opponent and so that day on the battlefield, it was easy for me to put about a dozen Viking warriors out of action before I fell with my throat slit from side to side. That's when an opposing warrior, whom I could recognize when he had already fallen, cut my throat. He was a man of

strange origin and countenance, in modern times they would call him an albino, white as the flower of a lily, and rather discolored in excess, with hair equally white and pale to the eyelashes. The fucker surprised me from behind and slit my throat, slashing my neck and severing the jugular artery. I bled to death, lying face up, in the thick mud, on top of the shield of another comrade also killed in that battle, both in a jumble of dirt, mud and profuse blood."

"That was the information that came out of my first session of regressive hypnosis. According to Dr. Clarke's opinion, that was perhaps the intrinsic reason for my current persistent and curious tonsillitis. I had been beheaded in battle; and as we later investigated, this had happened in the 9th century between 865 and 870 AD."

"Ours had been one of the most successful practical hypnosis sessions that Dr. Clarke could have had, in addition to all my interest because it was a good way to delve into the scarce and relevant data glimpsed through the dreams mentioned. Curiously, after that revelation, the allergic tonsillitis I had been suffering from until then disappeared as if by magic."

Bruce continued, "But that was not the end of the matter. This episode was the preamble to the subsequent beginning of another series of sessions with Dr. Magnus Clarke, no longer to inquire into medical matters, but to delve into the intricacies of an exciting era and history.

Tinna and Bruce were still at the restaurant. It was getting late and at that moment Tinna glanced at the clock

with a subtle expression of eagerness, and Bruce became aware of the situation.

Bruce interrupted his story to ask. “Hey Tinna, could it be that I am tiring you with this long story? It's very interesting for me to recall these facts, but I haven't realized that maybe this is too much for you and I'm overdoing it.”

“No, not at all,” answered Tinna. “On the contrary, I have been totally absorbed in your fascinating story. and I want to know all the details about it. However, I am worried about the time. It is already after 11 o'clock and tomorrow you have your return trip, and I believe you have not packed your suitcase. But, let's wrap it up so as not to leave it cut short. Let me make one more comment. I believe in reincarnation, and I know it as a certainty. However, I’m aware that many people, especially those who are affiliated to the Catholic religion, do not believe it or their religion doesn’t accept it and they blindly follow the guidelines dictated by the hierarchs of their religion. In spite of the above, there is now a growing group of people who besides believing in this postulate, have also had experiences of a special kind where the subjects of reincarnation and previous lives are involved.”

“Besides," Tinna continued, "there is a lot of information about it and I for one, am a follower of the books of the doctor you mentioned, Dr. Brian Weiss and also of his daughter, Amy E. Weiss. I’ve also read the books of Dr. Michael Newton, Life Between Lives and

The Destiny of Souls, where they touch upon the topic of life after death in a paradisiacal realm, like the one I perceived. They explain what eventually happens at the moment of death and the experience of having certain experiences in a dimensional state are different from the one we know."

Tinna continued, "There is also the experience of the neurosurgeon Dr. Eben Alexander mentioned in his book The Proof of Heaven where he talks about his near death experience where he was in a coma for a week. On the verge of death, he commented that being in that state, he made his journey in consciousness, to a higher dimension where he experienced a very special reality."

"Look Tinna," intervened Bruce, "Independent of the previous information, there are also many other videos on Youtube with testimonies related to the life after this life and the reincarnation processes when they occur."

"I'm certain of what this reality is like," said Tinna, "because I have experienced it in my life and not as a belief but as a certainty. However," continued Tinna, "let's leave the continuation of your story, which I find very interesting for next time."

Then they paid the bill and left the restaurant for the Hotel Boerg.

That night outside on the horizon, the faint Midnight Sun was shining again, illuminating a night of growing closeness and perhaps the beginning of a romance between Tinna and Bruce. Although their

desires were not yet manifested, the strong energy emanating from the great attraction that they began to profess to each other was floating in the atmosphere and could sustain the possible interest in the relationship despite the distance.

The next day at 11:45 am, Bruce flew back to New York with a stopover in London. Tinna drove him to the airport. As they said goodbye they held hands for a long time looking into each other's eyes and gave each other a big hug and a goodbye kiss on the cheek, but they didn't cross the line any further. Maybe it was the beginning of something.

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Chapter 14

The Details of the Investigation

New York, U.S.A.

Present time.

Days after his return to New York from Iceland, Bruce Merino was in the corporate office of his consulting firm meeting with his partners, Robert Pilkington and Andrew La Due, presenting the report on the findings of the trip to Iceland. The background study would come from that report which the office would prepare to present to the bank with recommendations on moving the IT division to Julius Global Inc. servers to Iceland. They recommended pilot testing for the first two months after the signing of the service contract and

making the necessary adjustments before the final project was launched and set up.

After two hours of presenting and discussing the report, Bruce commented to his partners, “This has been the professional part of my report” he concluded. “Now, I want to present the romantic part, which for me was much more interesting,” said Bruce, smiling.

The relationship between Bruce, Robert and Andrew was much more than professional; they were golf partners, lodge brothers belonging to the Masonic Grand Lodge of New York, and almost blood brothers, although they were not. They had complete affection and trust for each other. Bruce told his partners the details of his attraction for Tinna Olafurdóttir, although there was still no formal relationship, apart from the recently initiated bond of mutual professional interests, which his friends celebrated.

“Are you excited about someone again?”

“I was afraid that you would suddenly end up lonely and sad in your old age and suicidal or worse, falling in love with some fifteen year old girl, with the danger of getting smeared if you didn't quickly find a more suitable girl to love.”

They all laughed in chorus.

”Well," Bruce replied, smiling, "Take it easy, let's not get ahead of ourselves. That girl got my attention,

true, but we just met and we are just starting a friendship. We'll see what happens in the future. Besides, I don't think I'm ready to start a relationship yet. Amanda's death is still very recent and that memory still weighs heavily on me."

"Yes," Robert replied, "since your wife's death we have never seen you enthusiastic about anyone. Maybe a miracle has finally happened and you don't want to tell us?"

"Well, that's fine, as long as it's not sperm," said Andrew.

And they all burst out laughing.

"By the way," continued Bruce, "Tinna has told me about a research project on the Viking presence in pre-Columbian America, with the University of Iceland, which she is advancing, and I, who am interested in history, would like to participate in this project. The objective is to determine the existence of serious indications about the presence of white people, particularly Vikings, Scandinavians and Normans, in America and Mesoamerica in pre-Columbian times. That is, the presence of white men before the arrival of Spanish Europeans to American lands."

"I would like to finalize the negotiation between the Bank and Julius Global before thinking about getting

involved in a historical project. For the time being, I would just like to find out the details of the research."

Andrew La Due intervened, "Look, Bruce, we not only support you in your plans but we will support you in the months you have to be absent, looking after your interests. You can count on us."

"Right Bruce," Andrew continued, "You've worked very hard all these years and it's a good time to take a few months off for a change of scenery."

Robert interjected, "We wish you the best of luck."

Bruce thanked his valued associates and friends, and promised to settle the matter of the negotiation between the bank and the Icelandic company.

Bruce returned to Reykjavík two weeks later. Tinna was waiting for him at the Keflavík airport, feeling happy about his arrival. This time she was accompanied by a couple of officials from the American Bank to finalize the details of the service contract to be signed between the two parties. The following day, after agreeing on some points under discussion, and polishing and supplementing others, the contract was finally signed.

In the evening they went for a group dinner at the Grilliden Reykjavik restaurant. Present were the two officers of the American bank, from Julius Global Inc, Olaff and his daughter Tinna, and finally Bruce, as

representative of the bank's consulting firm. It was a wonderful dinner to celebrate the signing of the agreement and the beginning of a business development that was clearly beneficial to both parties.

Bruce stayed eight more days in Reykjavik, he wanted to learn the details of the investigation conducted by Tinna, under her supervision. He also wanted to enjoy her company. The preliminary research focused on the knowledge of the people who made up the race of the Scandinavians, known as Vikings, the exploration of the geographical characteristics, the surrounding people with whom they had conflicts and relationships, such as those located in many neighboring European regions, that suffered the Viking warrior onslaughts, especially people such as the Scottish, English, and Irish, and also multiple other European populaces from the south and east, who were dominated and conquered by the Scandinavian Vikings, and who were subsequently colonized. Regarding the nearby islands, these were territories very close to Scandinavia and the Vikings considered them their eventual allies and also their own race, as they eventually merged with the population of these places like with Ireland, Scotland and the region of Normandy in France, which became Viking territory with its population of Viking descent.

In short, Bruce's idea was to know a little of the historical background of the North Atlantic area, from the coasts of Scandinavia to the British coasts and northward

the region from the Hebrides, Shetland, Faroe and Orkney Islands. From there to know about Iceland and Greenland, as a starting point to have a small overview of the environment, from where the proposed research would originate. This was then directed towards a distant and strange objective: the search for information on the presence of Nordic people, of white race, in America and eventually Mesoamerica, in pre-Columbian times that is before the conquest by the Spanish and Portuguese.

Bruce showed an immediate and almost obsessive interest in the information he had to investigate, since he already considered it as part of his own personal history and the events that occurred in that distant era of the Middle Ages. From then on, Bruce learned the details of the research proposed by Tinna, about the subjects studied, with a brief summary of the historical events in northern Europe between the eighth and eleventh centuries and the probable outcome of the events, with the actual discovery of America by the first Viking travelers in the eleventh century.

Once they left the bank officials at the international airport in Keflavík, Tinna proposed to Bruce to stay in her apartment, as she had a second room available, since her roommate was traveling in Southeast Asia for those days and would not be back for two months. They could discuss the subject of the research, which Bruce gladly accepted.

Tinna had a beautiful white-walled apartment near the center of Reykjavík at the intersection of Sörlastjol and Faxaskjol avenues facing the sea, on the third floor of a building with equally white exterior walls and a typical Icelandic black roof. The apartment had two medium-sized bedrooms with very light pine wood floors and walls, where you could guess the knots in the wood. It gave a clean, warm and cozy feeling. It was decorated in a cheerful and modern way, with colorful bedspreads on the beds, and in the living room two large pastel beige sofas, with a window door leading to a small balcony on which sat a wide chair with puffed white cushions. In summer, when the weather permitted, she would sit and watch the sea passage with the birds fluttering around and dedicate herself to silent contemplation and reflection. It had a small kitchen, open to the living room, and it was lined with cabinets and drawers in light pine wood with all the necessary appliances.

Tinna commented to Bruce, “I can lend you some of the drafts of the texts about the research we have been doing at the University, so that you can read them.”

“These texts," Tinna continued, "are based, in part, on the famous Icelandic Sagas, based in turn on the so-called Sagas of Erik the Red, which are also known as the Sagas of Thorfinn Karlsefni and Snorri Thorbrandsson and also the Greenlandic Sagas. In the beginning, they were oral traditions that told the stories of epics and conquests of the Viking ancestors, and that are considered

to be of great fidelity. They were later elaborated in writing in the 13th century and are considered to be very old literary works of great value, of anonymous authorship, and relate events that took place between 970 AD and 1030 AD."

A short time later Bruce was sitting in the comfortable armchair on the balcony with a cup of coffee on a small table beside him and reading the report Tinna had supplied him with.

Report 1: HISTORY OF THE VIKINGS IN AMERICA

By: Tinna Olafurdóttir.

"The historic attack on the Isle of Lindisfarne was the first experience of successful plunder that marked the unhealthy habit of the Vikings to continue searching, raiding and plundering the Christian monasteries of the time. This was both in Scotland, Ireland and England and the islands around those regions in the North Sea, such as the Hebrides, the Isle of Man, the Orkney Islands, the Shetlands and the Faroes. These would become important strongholds as bases of operations from which to carry out their raids and untimely incursions into the coastal areas of the British region.

The monasteries possessed enormous riches that were very easy to plunder and without encountering

major resistance from their inhabitants. Other monastery raiding excursions were important in Scotland, particularly in the Hebrides, on the famous Isle of Iona, with the iconic monastery of St. Columba, perhaps the most famous of the time, in all of Britain and Ireland. After the arrival of the Viking raiders came the colonists, also Scandinavians, who were arming and establishing bases as landing ports with conditioned docks, called *longhuirt*, which in turn were serving as bases to continue implementing subsequent attack operations and advance the conquest.

One of these *longhuirt* bases of military type, perhaps the most important was that of Dublin on the banks of the mouth of the river Liffey, in the lowest ford to cross the river. Its name refers to Dubhlinn (Black Lagoon), given its proximity to the disappeared lagoon. It would later become the capital of modern Ireland, a city with clear Viking and Norman origins. With the more permanent establishment of bases, the original Viking policy of making lightning raids by sea and disappearing with the booty and slaves was modified. They began to mark territories that needed to be guarded, defended and sustained. With this, they were also more exposed to the counter-attacks of the English, Irish and Scottish armies that defended their territories. Likewise, it was inevitable that with the passage of time the new Scandinavian settlers would integrate and assimilate with the local population, especially in Ireland, Scotland and the

northern islands. Additionally, the socio-political, economic and warlike disorder of these regions were notorious, given the multiplicity of tiny kingdoms that made up especially Ireland and Scotland. There were permanent skirmishes and internecine wars among them all, and also notorious were the alliances that were reached between some of these kingdoms, even with the Viking warriors themselves, to attack their enemies. After this, the armies of the local kingdoms, both English, Irish and Scottish, were rejecting with greater success, dislodging the Vikings, recovering their lands, and defending their territories in a better way.

The Viking expansion in the North Sea had a different motivation than in the rest of Europe, where the main objectives were raiding and plundering. In the North Sea, in the islands of Faroe, Shetland, Orkney, Iceland and even the Hebrides Islands and later Greenland, the Vikings were looking for fertile lands to colonize and make human settlements with benefits for their inhabitants and with good conditions for a peaceful life.

Both the Faroe Islands and Iceland, before the arrival of the Vikings, were regions with settlements of Irish settlers and others coming from the Hebrides, particularly Catholic and celibate monks, who apparently arrived at the beginning of the 6th century and were not interested in colonizing and settling permanently, but rather, to visit and founded hermitages for religious retreats. The Irish monks had found in Iceland a remote

and unspoiled retreat where they could live as solitary ascetics and devote themselves to contemplation and religious meditation.

The Faroe Islands, whose name in Scandinavian (Føroyar) means island of sheep, were rich in pastures and had been used for sheep grazing by the Irish and would continue to be used in the same way by the Norwegian and Danish Vikings and other Vikings related to the Scots from the Hebrides.

In Iceland, in the 9th century, from the year 860 to 874 AD, the Viking conquerors arrived from Norway and colonized the island, settling permanently and definitively and evicting the Irish monks. The anchorite monks were called "Papar" by the Vikings. Archaeological finds of bowls, staff and books in the Irish language led to the conclusion that these monks originated from Ireland. Moreover, they apparently preferred to withdraw from Iceland so as not to have to live among pagan although they used the time while there. Before leaving, they tried to catechize the new Viking settlers and some of the Catholic religion and was planted in Viking minds and hearts, which then germinated and flourished in the centuries that followed.

Iceland was first visited by a Viking named Gardar Svavarsson, the Swede, in 860 A.D./C., who went on a voyage to the Hebrides Islands to reclaim some land from his wife. In a storm, he lost his route and the swell

diverted him far to the north, sailing uncontrolled until he reached a strange land, in front of a steep and hostile coast. He decided to circumnavigate the coastline until he completed a full turn around the island, which today is known as Iceland. He landed in a bay and built a house to spend the winter, which would later serve as a reference for the name of the place that would be called: Húsavík, (Bay of the house).

Other Scandinavian Vikings usually arrived to this distant land lost in their travels, who baptized it as Snaeland (Snowy land). One of them was the Viking called Floki Vilgerdarson, who after many hardships and failures to settle down with a cattle herding colony because of the cold winter, decided to call the island Iceland. However, some historians point out that the first settler to settle in Iceland was Ingolf Arnarson, who first landed on the cape which he named Ingólfshöfði. Today, this cape is a place of historical pilgrimage. On the land that this colonist chose as his own to establish his settlement, is where today has been established the capital of Iceland, Reykjavík.

On the other hand, other historians state with certainty that the first person to reach Iceland was the Norwegian and Faroese navigator Naddoddur Ásvaldsson, who, after leaving the Faroe Islands and having missed his course, arrived in the north of Iceland. Regarding the active participation of Iceland in Viking history. This was presented according to the need to find

new lands to colonize and expand the Viking hegemony in those regions. One of the reasons was that the Viking laws were very hard for its settlers and the most popular punishment for those guilty of murdering their fellows, especially when they were prominent people who did not wish to be taken to the scaffold as capital punishment, was to condemn them to exile and the payment of large sums of money in compensation to the affected family, which eventually left the culprit in ruin, losing even their land and property. For this reason, the conquest and colonization of new lands took place both to the east towards the Slavic countries, and to the west towards England, Ireland, Scotland and the islands of the North Sea, and even further, towards Iceland and Greenland. Likewise, the Vikings sailed deep into the North Sea, and even the Arctic Ocean, conquering and colonizing definitively Iceland and later Greenland and going farther to some very distant lands that they would later call Helluland (Land of flat stones), Markland (Land of Forests), and Vinland (land of vineyards), in today's North America.

At this point it is necessary to make reference to an important character of Norwegian origin, called Thorvald Asvaldsson, a warrior leader who was exiled for an accusation of murder. After trial, he obtained a condemnatory verdict for which he was punished with the penalty of exile and banishment from his country. Thorvald left Norway with his family, headed northwest,

settling in Iceland around 960 AD, where he met his death around 980 AD. His son's name was Erick Thorvaldsson, born in Sola Rogaland, Norway and known by the nickname Erick "the Red", apparently because of the color of his hair. While settled in Iceland, Erick the Red grew up and later, becoming a preeminent settler with definite leadership qualities, was accused of murder, just as his father had been in the past. After a trial for the murder of two people, he was also sentenced to banishment for three years and expelled from Iceland.

Erick traveled with his family westward reaching the shores of an island which he named Grûnnland or Greenland, where he settled. Although being a cold and inhospitable territory, in order to attract his companions on this voyage of exploration, he flaunted the greenness of its pastures in summer and only in summer.

History has designated Erick Thorvaldsson (the Red), as the person who discovered Greenland; however, the Icelandic sagas mention Gunnbjörn Ulfsson as the first to sight land and visit Greenland. However, history doesn’t recognize him as the discoverer, his visit being the product of an accidental voyage, dragged by the winds, and sailing without control towards that land that he called Gunnbjarnarsker Island. Officially, Erick the Red was left with the title of discoverer of Greenland.

Three years later, after serving his sentence in 988 AD, Erick the Red returned to Iceland to recruit settlers

who wanted to settle in Greenland. In the Viking Greenland of that time, land was taken possession of according to how far a person could walk in a day. The law mentioned the measure of land a man needed as: "As much land as he could walk in a day."According to this measure, several lands in Greenland were distributed. Together with Eirik the Red, several men set course for Greenland from Iceland and took possession of some of the Greenlandic lands according to the established laws. Erik the Red took possession of Eirícksfjörð. According to custom, this name was in honor of Erick, and was the land that Erick the Red had taken possession of and owned.

Other examples of land takeovers are:

- Hafgrim took possession of Hafgrimsfjord.
- Thorbrandsson took possession of Alptafjord.
- Arnlaug took possession of Arnlaugfjord.
- Einar took possession of Einarsfjord.
- Hafgrim took possession of Hafgrimsfjord and Vatnahverfi.
- Herjolf Bardarson, took possession of Herjolfsfjord.
- Ketil took possession of Ketilsfjord.
- Thorbjorn Glora, took possession of Siglufjord.
- Thorbjorn Glora, took possession of Siglufjord.
- Hrafn took possession of Siglufjord.
- Hrafn took possession of Hrafnsfjord.
- and Solvi, took possession of Solvadal.

Leif Eriksson, a young son of Erik the Red, lived with his father and relatives in the Greenland colony in the eastern settlement of the island in an area called Brattahlid, in Eiríksfjörð. At that time, something happened that would change the lives of all the relatives of Erik the Red and most of all that of his son Lief."

On occasion, when Bruce and Tinna were together, at any given moment, Tinna brushed against Bruce's hand, which they both noticed. Later, it was Bruce who brought his hand closer to Tinna's, having skin to skin contact and Tinna finally decided to take his hand, just a few seconds, to enhance a comment related to the subject they were discussing, and then she let go. But something was recorded in their memories.

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Chapter 15

From the Faroe Islands to Iceland - A Fortuitous Accident or a Curse?

Year 834 AD.

North Sea (Faroe Islands).

It was a terrible storm that had recently broken out, with hurricane gusts such as had seldom been seen in those far reaches of the North Sea. The raging sea with huge foamy mountains and thick fog totally enclosed the island, and only allowed a visibility of barely ten meters around the drakkar, and made it tilt dangerously. The heavy swell pounded brutally to port and starboard and the bow sometimes rose at impossible, almost vertical angles, only to fall into the deep sea holes of the stormy sea.

They had taken up the sails as a minimum precaution and were rowing obsessively, but without much success, since there was not much they could do in the face of nature's fury. They could only let time pass in an agonizing waiting, tinged with silent prayers muttered by the crew members, praying to the Gods that this would not be their last experience of life in those seas.

Although they were experienced and brave sailors that was no reason not to worry as the situation worsened with the passing of time and showed no signs of improvement. Many swore that this was precisely the curse of Kópakonan, which hovered over them.

According to legend, Kópakonan was a selkie, (seal woman), who at some point in the distant past had come out of the sea to sunbathe on a rock on the island of Kalsoy (of the Faroe Islands archipelago), and had taken off her seal skin, and became a beautiful naked woman. But a farmer, an inhabitant of the islands, in love, had hidden her sealskin, married her and had two children. However, in some moment of carelessness, the woman found her old sealskin and had managed to flee, turning back into a seal, and married an elephant seal, with whom she had also had children. The farmer, together with some companions, managed to locate the elephant seal and killed him. Since then, the curse of Kópakonan fell on all the male inhabitants of the island, who would die drowning in the sea. In addition, the curse included the decrease in the number of female inhabitants of the archipelago and the difficulty to achieve relationships with local women so much so that men who wanted a wife had to get one outside the area in other countries. Women, who were born on the island, would always want to emigrate to other distant regions. Only the very pious invocations to Brunhild, queen of the Valkyries, the

minor goddesses of the heavenly host of the Vikings, managed to partially conjure the cruel curse.

Naddoddur Ásvaldsson, an experienced navigator, tough as volcanic rock of Norwegian origin and Faroese by adoption, was in command of the battered flotilla composed of three drakars manned by twenty-seven strong Vikings. He was a navigator of the so-called *víkingr mikill*, which meant tall in stature and strong in build, who liked the solitude of those cold places, where there were not many people. He used to sail safely and skillfully through those distant seas, from the very Viking Ireland, passing through the Viking *Hebrides*, the *Shetlands* and the *Orkneys*, to his distant Scandinavia and back to his home in the *Faroes*.

The fury of the ruthless gale of wind did not subside with the passing of the days. They continued to lose course and orientation, and remained at the mercy of uncertain circumstances, at the command of the destiny marked by the whim of their Gods. In the meantime, two of the three drakars were lost with all their crew members, who surely went to sleep eternally at the bottom of the sea. Perhaps, they didn't achieve the necessary devotion in their puerile prayers to exorcize the curse that weighed on them. Several days of uncertainty passed, between hopes, prayers, and a seafaring struggle to preserve exhausted life with the effort of their weakened arms.

One day dawned with the news that the storm had subsided and the sea had calmed. It was morning when, without knowing it, the surviving drakar with its complete crew and under the command of the sailor *Naddoddur*, had erratically drifted the very long 750 kilometers from its point of departure in the Faroe Islands, to a spot of unknown land. A place that seemed beautiful to them, where suddenly the blue sky began to open up and a bright illumination came out of the hidden clouds, as a harbinger of new, less dramatic and kinder stories.

They traveled along the beautiful coastline, desolate from signs of humans, but full of paradisiacal images, with steep mountains crowned with majestic white peaks. There were lakes, waterfalls and rivers of intense various shades of blues, an abundant marine fauna innocent of human contact, as well as diverse birds of northern species, some known and others not. A physical environment composed of white eternal snows, black basaltic rocks of volcanic origin, beautiful fjords and protective bays where they could dock, with images that brought allegories to the Scandinavian regions. They only landed briefly on the eastern side of the island, which they called *Snæland* (Land of Snow). They were one of the first batches of explorer sailors who approached that island they believed to be located at the end of the world, and that later would be called **Iceland**. A place where the winter seasons were of eternal nights of dark days, where

a scarce luminosity for very few hours appeared then to plunge into darkness soon after. Summers where the daylight did not end at any time and where the famous Midnight Sun of the northern regions appeared.

According to the anecdotes that were told in eternal nocturnal days of stories, tales and legends of Ireland, some Irish anchorite monks, who were called *papar*, had temporarily inhabited that island in ancient times, around the year 550 AD. They sought the hermit solitude of remote places, away from any contact with human presence. They left a legacy of large flocks of sheep, now wild, surviving in those places.

Chapter 16

The Second Investigation

Present time
Reykjavik, Iceland

A few days later, Bruce was close to returning back to New York. He was staying at Tinna's apartment to spend more time together without the distance and time involved in staying in a hotel. They had hit it off very quickly, and there was already a relationship of extreme affection and trust starting. The relationship bordered on the limits of deep love, but they had not yet crossed the self-imposed boundaries between a close friendship and the love of a couple with sexual implications.

In those days living together, especially in the evenings, both Tinna and Bruce, in the darkness of their respective rooms, thought of each other and in the closeness felt the attraction that was developing in a relationship that was slowly maturing, but still needed to be allowed to breathe. However, it was impossible for them to let go of small physical contacts such as the touching of their hands and light embraces as they passed each other. Tinna, when passing behind Bruce, would touch his back with confidence and he, on several occasions, when approaching her from behind, would embrace her around the waist with tenderness, which did not go unnoticed and she felt very much at ease. But these

manifestations were not reflected in their conversations, which were marked by the simplicity of professional topics, and far from personal and emotional issues.

Tinna commented to Bruce, “You know, there is a lot more material available for the research and for you to form a good idea of the history of Iceland, Greenland and some hints of what happened in North America I want to show you. Including the arrival of the first Viking explorers, as well as the anecdotes of the families and the general panorama of the daily life lived at that time.”

“Yes," Bruce replied, "I am very interested in continuing to learn all the details of your research. If you lend me the other drafts of the reports, I can devote myself to studying them on my return to New York.”

“Of course, I'll be happy to make you some copies and give them to you tomorrow when I take you to the airport.”

For the time being, Bruce was traveling to New York because he had to dedicate himself to other more immediate matters related to the bank he represented, and the contracting of the services of the Icelandic company, which was the main reason for his presence in Iceland at that time. However, in the last few days, he had been busy learning about the investigation conducted by Tinna. Likewise, they had made very good use of the available time together, having gone out to dinner several times, strengthening the bonds of friendship that united them. In addition, a surreptitious and close relationship was emerging between them, creating a solid bond, which

manifested itself in the daily and small details of life as a couple that they experienced during those days. They would go out to the supermarket to buy groceries, walk in the evenings in the nearby streets, and in the mornings, they would work out at the gym and then would have breakfast together. Tinna would go to the office in the mornings and then return to spend the afternoon with Bruce. It was quite an experience living as a couple, but they had not yet taken the final step.

The day before Bruce's departure, being 8:30 in the evening, in the middle of summer, they were making the most of the hours to say goodbye. They were at the seafood restaurant Kaffivagninn, in front of the fishing port, a simple restaurant with an exquisite menu.

There was a sense of nostalgia in the air between them, and in their conversation the urgency to enjoy this last night together. Again, it would be several weeks before Bruce's next trip back to Reykjavik, and they were beginning to feel the absence and the need to spend more time together. They were already finishing a bottle of a renowned Italian Prosecco from Fiabesco Prosecco Treviso, but Bruce's demure and overt shyness were stronger than the Prosecco.

At last it was Tinna who made the first move. With a long look straight into his eyes and with determination. To Bruce´s delight, she took Bruce's hand with confidence and a certain cheekiness, and went straight to asking him, “I'd like to know what's wrong with you? It seems that you have a great sadness and nostalgia with

the memory of your wife, which may be understandable, but on the other hand, doesn't let you move forward in a new stage of your life to restart with new possibilities and undertakings that involve a new start in the emotional aspect. Are you going to stay in this limbo forever, or is it just a matter of time?"

"I don't know, but I don't think so. I would say it's just a matter of time, a reasonable time to start again. Until now, I had not dared to cross a line with you. Maybe because of excessive shyness that added to the inner conflict that I think the death of my wife has meant. But I wanted to tell you that I have been very connected with you for a long time and the truth is you fascinate me. For the time being, I would love to continue a friendly relationship as we have had so far, and let events develop over time and go step by step, before starting something more concrete."

"Okay," said Tinna, "I also want to have something with you, but I understand your apprehensions, and I think it is convenient for both of us to give some time and space to this possible relationship, while we get to know each other more thoroughly and while we decide if something is going to fructify or not. Either way, there is no commitment between us now, right?"

"True," Bruce concluded, "There is no commitment. However, I would like us to be patient before we open ourselves to other possibilities."

"Yes. Maybe," Tinna finished.

Bruce thought about the last word. That "Maybe" kept ringing in Bruce's head, as if it also implied a "Maybe yes or maybe no," and he felt that something broke in his inner confidence, as if he had just lost something valuable, but he didn't say or do anything. He had to wait until he felt more emotionally solid.

Around 10:30 that night they left the restaurant arm in arm, heading for the apartment. That night Bruce took a long time to fall asleep thinking about that "maybe".

The next day, Tinna saw Bruce off at Keflavik International Airport, who left for JFK on the 5:55 p.m. flight.

Manhattan, New York.

Every couple of days, Tinna and Bruce would have long conversations via Whatsapp or Facebook. They would catch up with each other about their lives, jobs, family matters and above all, the details of the research they were continuing to do. Meanwhile, Bruce was reading the drafts of the continuation of the research about the Icelandic Sagas, which Tinna had given him.

Report 2: HISTORY OF THE VIKINGS IN AMERICA

By: Tinna Olafurdóttir.

In brief:

“The first explorers, settlers and colonists recognized in the history of Iceland, and consigned in the Icelandic Sagas were the following: Naddoddur Ásvaldsson would be considered the first of the Norse explorers to reach the land of Iceland, along with other

important Vikings such as Garðar Svavarsson, who would be the first person to inhabit Iceland. Although he did so briefly during a winter after a storm drove him to a bay in the north of the island, a bay that would later be known as Skjálfandi bay or fjord. He built a house in that bay, which was later named Húsavík, (House Bay), and then, many years later, became a village with the same name. Flóki Vilgerðarson was the first to sail northwest from Scandinavia to Iceland, and did so with full knowledge of the facts that there was such a habitable land, and of good future projections to be colonized. And finally, Ingólfur Arnarson, who was the first settler who established himself definitively and began the colonization of the human settlements of Iceland, approximately in the year 874 AD.

In the late 9th or early 10th century, A Viking by the name of Gunnbjörn Ulfsson, was apparently the first European to discover Greenland on an eventful voyage between Norway and Iceland. He lost his way and drifted to the northwest until he found the land that later Erik the Red would misleadingly and propagandistically call Greenland. Even Erik the Red, forced by circumstances, traveled and settled in that land, having been banished and exiled for three years, according to the Thing who condemned him as punishment for murder. According to Icelandic law, the Thing was a sort of Supreme Court that dispensed justice in those distant times, to judge and settle disputes between Scandinavian settlers.

Erick Thorvaldson or also called Eirick the Red, once exiled, settled in Greenland, in the company of his family. He had a wife named Thjodhild, and three sons; Thorstein, Thorvald and the other Leif nicknamed - Den heldige (the lucky one). In addition, he had two natural daughters; Freydy Eiriksdóttir and Thurid Eiriksdóttir.

Thorstein Eriksson, son of Erick the Red, was an extremely big man, tall and strong. He was the tallest of all the population and a navigator and explorer like his father. He married Gudrid, the beautiful and intelligent daughter of Thorbjorg, a wise woman and sorceress, important in the community. Thorvald Ericksson, like his father and brothers, had an explorer spirit and would later participate in the exploration of America with his brothers. Thorstein died as a result of a fever epidemic that struck the population of Iceland. After this, Gudrid went to live with her husband's family. She had inherited an estate from her mother and was a wealthy woman.

There was a man by the name of Thorfinn Karlsefni. He was rich, important, and he was engaged in trade travel in the region. After some time, on some occasion, Thorfinn Karlsefni traveled with other merchants and sailors named Snorry, Bjarni and Thorhall. They came to Greenland to Eirikfiord where the farm of Erick the Red was and he gave them accommodation, not only to him but to his friends and their crews, to spend the winter there with the family of Erik. This gesture greatly strengthened the ties between these men and Erik's family. .

Karlsefni began to court Gudrid and finally with the consent of Erick the Red, they were married. Likewise, another man, by the name of Thorvald, namesake of Erik's deceased son, married Freydis, one of Erick's daughters, the one with a strong and indomitable character.

On the other hand, Leif Ericksson, Erick's son, was a character with great leadership abilities. He was a sailor, navigator and experienced explorer. On one occasion, traveling towards the so-called "Islands of Sudreyjar", composed by the today called the Isle of Man, in front of Ireland and the Hebrides Islands in Scotland, he lost course when he did not find favorable winds and went to Norway. Here is where Leif, his men, and and the guard of the King of Norway, Olaf Tryggvason, who had a special interest in Greenland, joined the army.

The Viking colonies in Greenland had progressed and reached up to 10,000 inhabitants in three places known as:

1. Eastern settlement, called: Eystribyggð,

2. Western settlement, called Vestribyggð

3. Erik the Red occupied the Eastern settlement which had the best land and was key in the colonization and progress of the new Greenlandic colonies.

With the progress of the Viking colonies in Greenland came the interest on the part of the Norwegians for those settlements. Even King Olaf of Norway, being a very believing man, proposed to catechize the colonists to bring Christianity to those

lands, and on some occasion, the King, who had hit it off and had formed an excellent opinion of Leif, -Den Heldige (the lucky one) asked him to join his apostolic work back in Greenland. This is where the King, through Leif, succeeded in spreading Christianity among the settlers of the island.

Around that time, voyages were made to the northwest of Greenland, mainly by Leif and his brothers, brothers-in-law, friends and accompanying crews, exploring and trying to colonize and settle, although without much success, in lands that would later become North America.

Around the year 1000 AD, Leif Eriksson and his brothers traveled westward from Greenland on a 1000 nautical mile voyage discovering several lands. According to the Icelandic Sagas, Leif and his men first encountered some territory which they named Helluland, describing it as a land of flat stones or flat rock. Apparently this region corresponds to present-day Baffin Island in Canada. Later, having continued their voyage of exploration further south, Leif and his party found another territory. This time it was covered with forests, which they called Markland. They then continued their voyage of exploration further south and found an excellent land with meadows, wheat fields and vineyards, which they named Vinland or vineyard country, located on what is now known as the Island of Newfoundland in Canada.

On later voyages to the new colonies, Leif was accompanied by his brothers, Thorvald (before he died), Thorstein, and Freydis. On one occasion in a battle against the natives, Thorstein was seriously wounded by an arrow and the sagas tell that he was the first European killed in American territory.

In the site called Markland, a human settlement was made that had some superficial and not transcendental contact with the natives whom they called skrælings (ugly men). This settlement was temporary, to shelter from the winter and was composed of a meager 160 people. Leif ceded the command of this new land under the leadership of Thorfinn Karlsefni, now husband of his former sister-in-law Gudrid.

At a certain point, Leif, who would return to Greenland, left another colony in Vinland, under the command of Thorfinn Karlsefni. On the other hand, Thorvald, son-in-law of Erik the Red, together with his wife Freydis Eriksson, settled in Vinland for a while.

The sagas tell that the internal struggles due to disagreements and negotiations within the human group, which settled in Vinland (America), affected the good performance of the new colony, in addition to the permanent skirmishes and confrontations with the natives of the region. The sagas mention Freydis Eirikdóttir, as an extremely strong and bloodthirsty woman. Once, she participated in a battle against the natives, even more aggressively than her male counterparts, causing some

natives to flee in terror, who did not expect such a reaction from a woman.

On another occasion, between two groups of settlers, she presented a strong disagreement for the participation in a business agreement and the distribution of profits. Freydis, with trickery and lies, made her husband send his men to murder in cold blood the other adversary settlers, and even Freydis herself massacred the women of that group with the point of an axe. Having taken possession of the ship from their dead adversaries, Freydis and her husband returned to Greenland, bringing back all the goods they managed to load onto the two ships. When Leif learned of what had happened, and in spite of his displeasure, he didn't punish his half-sister. However, the fact was recorded in the Sagas for posterity."

Bruce told Tinna about something he had found out about the State of Minnesota in the United States. In 2009, the President of the United States, Barack Obama, by decree, proclaimed October 9 as Leif Ericksson Day. It was in honor of the Icelandic Vikings who discovered North America, led by this explorer.

"Tinna," Bruce asked, "The question that arises is, how is it that in a state that is in the middle of the United States and relatively far from the American or Canadian coast, are the Vikings honored, and why does the Minnesota State Football team have the name Vikings?"

A probable answer is that the Vikings entered North American territory through the St. Lawrence River from the Island of Newfoundland, Canada. They navigated through the Great Lakes to Lake Superior and reached the territory known today as the state of Minnesota in the U.S.A. It is worth mentioning that the Mississippi River is born there, and through it one can navigate to the Gulf of Mexico, crossing the United States from north to south.

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Chapter 17

First Incursion to the Lands of America

Year 986 AD

Somewhere to the west of Greenland

They got off course and the terrible squall, composed of watery snow, fell severely on their bodies. It was not yet the time of heavy winter although it was near. This was a heavy first snowfall of the season, quite early and that distressed them more, for they knew they were far from the protection of their home, in unknown seas and for now, lost off course and heading towards who knows where the capricious swell would take them. The stormy hurricane wind, stained with watery snows, that swept the sea from east to west, had dragged them to a distant place unknown to them.

Instinct told them that this was not the sea near Iceland, nor Greenland, nor the southwestern lands of Britannia, nor any of the well-known islands of the North Sea. Despite the fog and bad weather, somehow they knew they had not sailed eastward to their known Scandinavia. They had to be far to the west of Iceland from where they had sailed, and surely, to the west of Greenland where they had planned to head, but misplaced their course. Now lost, but where? They had no idea.

In Europe at the time there were no records or certainties about lands west of Greenland. No one had traveled those distant seas and no one knew.

After several days, they sighted land in the distance. They sailed northward along the coast, and as they approached, they noticed that it was a rocky land, composed of flat slabs, spotted with eternal snows, barren

of vegetation and desolate of human presence. Then they turned and followed the coastline to the south. They found that little by little the panorama was painted with green forests and fertile meadows, which seemed even stranger to them, for it was not like what they had heard about Greenland, and besides, from the position of the sun and stars, they knew they must be far to the west. They calculated that from the moment they lost their course, they could have traveled at least 1,200 nautical miles to the west, and now they were in some unknown place.

They came in a Viking ship, but not a warship like the drakkars, but one of the so-called hafskip or Knorr ('sea or ocean ship'), which were merchant ships. They were less long and wider for transporting goods and livestock with a reduced crew of about fifteen men. Bjarni Herjolfsson was in command of the vessel and the crew. He was the son of the settler Herjolf Bardarson and Thorgerd, his mother.

Despite being an experienced navigator, adventurer and trader, Bjarni had not been able to win the battle against the fury of the elements. He had left Norway and arrived at the village of Eyrarbakki in Iceland when he learned that his father and relatives had sailed from Iceland and headed west in the company of Erick Thorvaldsson “Erick the Red” and had settled in Greenland, where they now lived. He intended to spend the coming winter in the company of his relatives and had

therefore set sail for Greenland in the hope of hibernating there.

Straying from his initial destination, and driven by the onslaught of the raging storm, he had arrived in that strange land. (Some historians say they reached Newfoundland in present-day Canada, or perhaps further north to Baffin Island. Others believe they were pushed further south, towards the shores of what is now Maine in the United States.)

Even though they were urged to head for Greenland to join their relatives before winter reached its strongest point, they didn't land in those beautiful but strange lands. Since the weather had improved, they again headed north-east to reach their destination in Greenland. History would judge him strongly for his lack of curiosity in not even taking the trouble to set foot on land on that occasion. However, some of those sailors confessed that they had seen some men on the coast. They were almost naked, fierce-looking, strange and unpleasant, and they felt intimidated and preferred not to disembark, considering that they were a small party of Viking sailors, traders and merchants, but not warriors, and without any possibility of successfully facing a confrontation with the natives of those lands. That is why they preferred to avoid landing.

On his return from his ill-fated voyage, and the weather having improved, Bjarni Herjólfsson returned to Greenland to his father Herjolf's colony and land, called

Herjolfsnes. From then on, he lived alongside his family and took over the farming of the land.

Bjarni gave his fellow Greenlanders first-hand information about the unknown lands west of Greenland. This was absorbed with great interest by the young Leif Ericksson, son of Erick the Red, who was fascinated by the stories told by Bjarni.

Year 1003 AD
Greenland

From 986 AD and for the next 17 years, until about 1003 AD, young Leif Ericksson had dreamed, almost obsessively, of the stories told by Bjarni Herjólfsson. He dreamed about the strange and beautiful lands he had encountered on his failed voyage, when he had been forced by nature to drift to an unknown land far to the west of Greenland.

It took those seventeen years for young Leif, now in his thirties, to become a seasoned navigator, of impressive appearance, very tall and strong, and with a charming character that made him very prestigious among his fellows. He had become an outstanding leader, very insightful, and was appreciated by his community. He shinned with his own light, just as his father, the famous Erick Thorvaldsson (The Red One), had done in his time.

Four years earlier, in 999 AD, Leif "the lucky one" had acquired the ship that once belonged to Bjarni

Herjólfsson. Together, with a crew of 35 men, they made a voyage to the Mann Islands in Ireland, but being close to winter, there was a storm in the North Sea. They were diverted from their course ending up in Norway, where they spent the winter received and hosted by King Olaf Tryggvason, a friend of his father Erick and who converted them to Christianity.

King Olaff I, (Olaff Tryggvason) originally from Norway and son of King Tryggve Olafson, as a child had been kidnapped and enslaved in a raid on a ship by Vikings from Estonia. His uncle, Sigurd Eriksson, brother of his mother Astrid Eiriksdotter, both distant relatives of Erick Thorvaldsson (The Red), was the one who rescued the young Olaff from his captors. Later, Olaff became an important Viking warrior who participated in raids and looting in the eastern regions of Europe, in the Baltic Sea, and the North Sea. Having lived later in England and Ireland, he and his warriors were assimilated to the customs and culture of Britannia, and finally converted from Nordic paganism to Anglo-Saxon Christianity. Eventually, having become King Olaff I., he became an important apostle of his new religion, abandoning his warrior spirit.

King Olaff I. entrusted the young Leif Ericksson with the mission of propagating the Christian religion in Greenland, a mission that Leif, in gratitude to the King, accepted with seriousness, carrying out the apostolic work with dedication.

This Christian evangelization, little by little, gave way to a change in the mentality of the once bloodthirsty Vikings, and the behavior of the inhabitants of Scandinavia, Iceland, the North Atlantic Islands. Greenland was modified, and with the passing of the centuries, slowly gave way to peace and harmony among its inhabitants.

However, Leif Ericksson had not been able to forget his longing to know the distant lands he had talked about with Bjarni Herjólfsson. So in 1003 AD, he organized an expedition to the new lands west of Greenland.

Year 1003 AD
First Viking expeditions to America (Helluland, Markland and Vinland)

A few months after an uneventful voyage, the new expedition had reached an inhospitable land, with no signs of inhabitants or intelligent life in sight. It was rocky to the point of exhaustion, with discolored stones in different shades of grays, browns and blacks, looking like slabs, some inclined and others vertical, in cliffs of impossible heights and black sandbanks covered with snow and ice.

In the distance, there were great chains of rocky mountains, crowned by eternal snowcaps, with steep cliffs and deadly gorges, and at the top, sharp points, as if it were the arsenal of the Viking Gods. A desolate, almost

gloomy and misty environment, which showed itself with difficulty between low clouds that had fallen from the sky, perhaps because of the intense cold of the approaching winter.

They knew of hostile environments from their familiarity with Greenland, but this was much more arid and desolate. A barren land, without any forest life, nor sufficient fauna, except for a few lonely polar bears that could be seen on the stony shores of that cadaverous place.

However, the desolate environment added to its inhospitable beauty, the arid wonder of those unreachable peaks and vertical walls that invited one to climb, risking their lives just to get close to the house of the Gods, and feel the unparalleled beauty of that unusual and tragically beautiful nature on their skin.

Although they came from Iceland, since almost all those sailors were natives of that Viking country, for this voyage of exploration to such distant and unknown lands, they had actually departed from their recently colonized Greenland, where they now lived and had their home.

At least they already knew in advance where they were headed, unlike Bjarni Herjólfsson's first bumpy journey, in which disoriented in the middle of a heavy storm, he had by chance arrived in this unknown region west of Greenland.

On this occasion, Leif Eiricksson was already aware of what awaited him as he traveled westward.

They followed the maritime East Greenland Current [the current name for the sea current that carries and aids navigation from Greenland to North America]. They set sail from the Greenland region and reached that western remoteness that was baptized Helluland (Land of Flat Stones) by the Viking explorers, in honor of the rocky slabs that stood out in the barren landscapes of the gigantic island.

Many centuries later, it would be named Baffin Island by the Canadian authorities, since it would be land that would belong to that country. In the meantime, it stayed without a name, without owner and without inhabitants, and no more than the sounds of accompanying fauna, and an odd stray Eskimo native, who had lost his way and had to reach such a distant, inhospitable place to rest a little while he caught his breath, and to continue the search for a safe route to his home.

Five days of a relatively calm voyage had passed, covering approximately 1,105 kilometers between the west coast of Greenland and the east coast of Helluland, at an average speed of about 5 knots. It was early October, when the winds were light and steady, and the ocean currents vigorous. In addition, the winds and currents were aided by the 26 oarsmen stationed on both sides of the ship, who rowed vigorously when the wind died down. They were going in a ship of the "Hafskip" type, a Viking ship suitable for transporting provisions, goods, and livestock, especially for long ocean voyages. It had a

length of 35 meters, a beam of 8 meters, a draft of 3.0 meters, 80 tons displacement, and rectangular sails, offering 120 meters of wind resistance to push the ship. It was crewed by a total of 35 sailors, almost all of them merchants with an explorer spirit and a desire to find treasures and opportunities to gain wealth in a good way.

The days of piracy and raiding European towns were almost over, but not quite. Now, the word Viking was more related to merchants and traders who offered products of good value, covering needs, and were also good buyers of the goods and services that other traders offered them. Now, the arrival of the Viking traders was awaited with eager interest by the people of many parts of Europe, from the north to the Mediterranean itself and even North Africa.

Like the first accidental exploration, and following the indications that Bjarni had given them, they headed south for a couple of days, bordering the coastline. The landscape gradually changed, although always with a cloudy background, and a misty air that gradually cleared slightly, allowing them to see the green pastures and lush forests, which were already beginning to be stained with the ocher and orange of the incipient autumn and with a sovereign beauty of fiery colors that invited them to find peace in their consciences. Among the whitish mists, they finally saw greens of all shades in the meadows and in the forest, green leaves and others of autumn color, which manifested themselves in shades of yellow, orange and red. They saw trees that they only remembered seeing in

their distant Scandinavia and Britannia, where lush forests were an everyday occurrence, but in their new place like Iceland and Greenland, they were scarce indeed.

There were oaks, yellow birches, sugar maples, ashes, hickories, elms, red maples and shrubs of all kinds and colors. “Generous” was the word used by them to name the graces granted by the Gods in helping them to find such pleasant lands. They were marveling more and more as they admired the forests of enormous trees and a wealth of timber whose value they already calculated as a high prize for such a risky journey. In both Iceland and Greenland, large trees were scarce and practically non-existent, and finding forests like these was an enormous gain. They called it Markland (Land of forests). It was located on what is now called the Labrador Peninsula, north of the Gulf of St. Lawrence in Canada. They disembarked and wandered around, amidst misty scents of wilderness and wild flora. At last they found new smells of promising land with longed-for fragrances different from the usual maritime brackish.

They walked a little way along the beach. It was cold, and in the distance, suddenly, they could hear a reverberating hubbub. In a narrow bay, on the shore, there was a party and they approached.

From the water's edge, the entire beach line, well out to sea, was occupied by hundreds of thousands of small, sardine-like fish called Capelins or Capelines (Mallotus villosus), which with a riot of leaping, twisting

pirouettes and somersaults, formed the feverish and spectacular annual mating dance, and cheered the already cold and misty beginning of autumn.

This event was being exploited by the big fish, which included everything from gigantic cetaceans such as whales, killer whales, sperm whales and dolphins to sharks, seals, sea lions and elephant seals, as well as tuna, cod, haddock, halibut, herring and mackerel, herring and mackerel, in large quantities, taking advantage of the feast. It became a fight of all against all, where the fishermen fished the other fishermen and the fish were all those who were careless to go fishing with distraction. Also, the birds of the icy region, such as puffins, gulls, eagles and a multitude of birds that were accustomed to those climates, with their squeaky uproar, competed with each other for the best positions to take advantage of the abundant catch. Now so did the crew of the ship, with all sorts of gadgets, pots, nets, and buckets, they collected large quantities of fish and overflowed the holds of the boat.

They appreciated the flavor thinking about the "masago", elaborated with the roe of the capelin, which they made the reddish caviar to smear on the breads and many other dishes made with the fish now available. They added it in eternal roasts and baked wonders that improved the provisioning of the ship. They would have food for several weeks and that comforted them. This was a great day of luck, and they gave thanks to the Gods. Some to the Norse Gods, others to the heavenly hosts and

to the God of the Christians, and others undecided, but who prayed to both. They were recently catechized in Christianity, but still respected and honored their ancestral Viking Gods, who awaited them in Valhalla (the heaven where the Norse Gods are) as a reward for dying in the fulfillment of duty and warrior struggle. It is worth mentioning that nowadays, the image of the Capelanes appears on one of the faces of the Icelandic ten krona coin.

Again, they set sail towards the south, sailing along the coast, until, after a few days, they found other land, more promising and beautiful, with an even more benign climate. They baptized it "Vinland" (land of vineyards) because they found wild vineyards with which they hurried to make wine and mead, and held a celebration of gratitude to the celestial entities for having brought them wellness during this voyage. However, some historians have considered that the name actually refers to a land of winds and call it Windland. In Vinland, they founded a village, as a winter base, which they called Leifbundir. It consisted of a few houses of oak and pine, with roofs planted with meadows. They left a small group of settlers as an advance party in that region, thinking to later return with a larger group after the winter was over. They then set out for Greenland. This was the first expedition to America, but it would not be the only one. There were many more.

In 1960, the researcher Helge Ingstad and his wife Anne Stine Ingstad, an archaeologist, found, in the island

of Newfoundland, some ruins with all the characteristics that allowed them to think that they could have Viking origin, with facilities that apparently were inhabited by Nordic settlers. These facilities were called L'Anse aux Meadows (Jellyfish Cove), and this name was recorded for posterity as the place where the first human settlement of European origin in America took place before the arrival of Christopher Columbus. The Vikings would return to this place again and again in the following three years with larger and larger groups of settlers and with clear intentions to take advantage of the great resources of the area, especially the wealth of timber so necessary in Greenland. They would bring herds of sheep and cattle to take advantage of the green pastures of Vinland, practically untouched. However, not all would be beautiful; they also encountered great resistance from the natives of these regions, with whom they began to have unpleasant encounters.

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Chapter 18
New Hypnotic Regressions
(Viking settlers in Vinland)

While Bruce was in New York, he talked frequently with Tinna, but some anxiety indicated to him that a dichotomous contradiction was brewing inside him, for he was realizing that, on the one hand, he enjoyed the close friendship with Tinna, but on the other hand, a cloudy mantle of reticence was overcoming him.

Unconsciously, he felt that he could not fail in the fidelity that he demanded from himself towards his deceased wife.

Moreover, he was also enthusiastic about the research carried out on the subject of the Vikings in America and his interest grew with the progress of the investigation, but this implied a greater closeness with Tinna, which delighted and puzzled him. At the University of Iceland, on Tinna's team, there was a researcher by the name of Jens Árnason. He was a blond young man of thirty-three, tall as an obelisk at 1.98 meters tall, wiry as if he had fed on only air for the last few years, but also muscular as a metal rod and who brought back memories of the legendary character from the story of the Pied Piper of Hamelin, by the Grimm Brothers.

The young Jens, on several occasions, had mentioned a complex personal experience that he had also called Déjà vu. It was related to his vivid impressions that he dreamt and hazy memories of a very early and primitive time, where he had the feeling of having lived in North America, in an environment full of forests, grasslands, huge lakes, and wild animals such as bison, elk, cougars and bears. He was there along with his Scandinavian comrades fighting with some of the natives of the region. Jens mentioned that his daydreams were too realistic to be taken as mere dreams. That had been the main motivation for volunteering to be part of the investigation led by Tinna.

Bruce contacted Dr. Magnus Clarke again in order to delve deeper into the inquiry about Jens Arnason's sensations. They determined that the most feasible way was to scrutinize the past in Jens' mind through some sessions with the hypnotic regression technique, for which it was necessary to move Jens to the city of Miami where the sessions would take place. Jens Arnason's transportation, lodging and travel expenses were paid by the University of Iceland, which was very interested in the proposed research.

Eight hypnosis sessions were conducted with the participation of Jens as a patient, under the envious observation and scrutiny of Dr. Clarke; sessions from which valuable information was extracted about the life and history of those atavistic times. This was complemented with historical research on books and articles that mentioned the topics, in addition to the information contained in the different Viking Sagas of the time.

It was necessary to bring Dr. Clarke up to date on the research done and to comment on the hidden and missing aspects of information on several issues that were still pending to be resolved. In these subsequent sessions with Dr. Clarke, a solid foundation was laid. A quite complete scenario of information was put together about some events that took place between the IX and XII centuries in the northern hemisphere, in the North Atlantic area and regions near the Arctic Ocean, and to the north of Canada. And then, little by little, they arrived

at events that took place further south of the American continent and about which there was not enough historical information. There were only legends and snippets of unconnected anecdotes, without much proof to opt for the possible acceptance by academic anthropology, but which were appearing as apparently true facts, according to what was investigated in the hypnotic regression sessions. Once again, the snippets of interwoven but somehow coherent information allowed that from the information provided by Jens Arnason under hypnosis, it was possible to put together a small story set in the time of the Vikings.

In the first two sessions, Dr. Clarke took the patient, under hypnotic influence, to a stage located between the year 1000 and 1007 approximately, where he had been reincarnated in the life of a white, stocky man, with Caucasian features, reddish hair, and an abundant closed beard. He was located in a rather primitive and wild scenario, in a green land, full of abundant vegetation and large forests of pines, maples, cedars, oaks and eucalyptus, in addition to green meadows rich in abundant and nutritious pastures. Given this description, this land was most likely located far from the almost sterile Nordic lands, rich in mosses, ferns and lichens and incipient grasslands, as long as the icy permafrost of the tundra allowed it, and also far from the frozen and infertile lands of Greenland. So they would most likely refer to the newly discovered regions beyond the west of Greenland, in Vinland, as could be corroborated later.

The name of the Viking personality used by the reincarnated consciousness of Jens, at that distant time, was not clearly determined, for what was reported was somewhat confusing. But one could guess a name similar to Gunnar or Gunngeir, however it was definitely a name of Icelandic origin. The story gleaned from the various flashes of information supplied under hypnosis and which Dr. Clarke was able to piece together and deduce is as follows:

"Jens Arnason, incarnated in the very ancient identity of Gunnar or Gunngeir, was living in a colony in the new lands called Vinland.

He mentioned a green landscape in the warm seasons and very cold in the winter, but without reaching the very low temperatures of Iceland or Scandinavia or Greenland, where he had left from three long years ago without returning yet.

Gunnar was a young Viking sailor, no more than 28 years old, born in Iceland in the village of Haukadal (the Hauka Valley), a neighbor of Erick the Red and a childhood friend of Erik's sons, when they all lived there.

Gunnar, like some of his fellow travelers, had been sentenced to exile by the Thing (the court of justice of his country), and could not return until he had served a long sentence. He had been tried and convicted for the murder of a man who had stolen some of his belongings, and in the process fell in love with his wife, who was a beautiful young woman named Brynja Kjartandóttir. She was

candid as a little girl, and was easily duped, which led to the consequent separation of Gunnar.

The man was a damn coward named Snorri Úlfursson; a rude, bad class, and womanizing person, whose relationships were marked by his interest for wealth. He was accustomed to taking advantage of others, and not to let an opportunity pass to trick his friends and acquaintances, and to seduce women with deceit. Bad for combat and saturated with fear and lies at the time of speaking, he had a recognized reputation as a coward who had fled in several battles retreating from the field in the middle of the fray. He earned the reputation of being timorous, like a cowardly animal, who always left with his tail between his legs, fleeing in haste and with a sideways glance, to see that he was not being pursued.

At the time, Gunnar made a claim that Snorri tricked his ex-wife to seize property. The damn trickster, among high-flown boasting, said he felt offended by Gunnar's claim and believed he could intimidate him. He dared to challenge him by pulling out a rusty sword that he had never used in combat. In response, Gunnar, skilled in battles and bloody skirmishes, had not the slightest difficulty in sending him for a ride to the afterlife with no return ticket. He was condemned despite the fact that the cursed man had deceived Gunnar's wife with lies and promised her a life of a queen, with the sole purpose of seizing several properties she owned. In the Thing that reviewed his case, there were several friends of the

coward Snorri Úlfursson, and at the moment of pronouncing a verdict, he was condemned. However, the influence of Gunnar's family and friends prevented him from being taken to prison and he was only sentenced to exile, outside his land and far from his people.

Gunnar, due the above, traveled in the expedition commanded by Leif Eiricksson and then became part of a colony in the newly discovered territory, with approximately 350 people of men and women. This colony grew over the years, but with it also grew difficulties.

The relationships between them were not entirely good. There were quarrels and differences of opinion and sometimes fights with deadly consequences, despite the fact that they already professed Christianity (Christianity established and catechized by Leif Ericsson since the time they lived in Greenland).

Many trips were made between Greenland and the new colonies in Vinland, and it was becoming normal to trade in timber, as well as different vegetables and iron, and these agreements sometimes caused differences and discomfort among the settlers themselves. On the other hand, they made exploratory trips from Vinland to nearby territories, on several occasions encountering warlike natives with whom they had to confront. In other cases, they managed to get along with the natives and this allowed them to reach commercial exchange agreements, negotiating corn, rice, beans and pumpkins, either wild or cultivated by the natives, in exchange for cloth, utensils

and pieces of iron, metal unknown to the natives until then. However, these agreements, for the time being, were very scarce given the distrust that they had for each other.

On one occasion, the Viking settlers took two natives hostage and trained them to understand their language. They treated them with deference and gained their trust, improving the relationship.

As the days went by, they learned their names: Sakari, which meant sweet and Takoda, friend of all. They also learned that these men belonged to an ancient Amerindian people in America, called Algonkian or Algonquian, and specifically to the Atikamekw, a tribe located in the limits between what today are the United States and Canada. These Indians informed them of large tracts of land, green meadows, beautiful forests and very fertile lands, full of animals to be hunted, both to the west, towards the interior of the continent, and to the south of Vinland, with much milder climates than where they were.

Vinland was located on a large island (today called the island of Newfoundland in northeastern North America in Canada), on the banks of the mouth of a great river (today called the St. Lawrence River). The Indians said that if you went up the river to the west, they could find a great inland sea, whose banks and boundaries were not possible to see from where they were. (The great sea they referred to is currently Lake Ontario in Canada).

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Chapter 19

Heading West up the Kaniatarowanenneh River

As far as Dr. Mark Clarke could deduce, here is where an extraordinary voyage of exploration within the American continent began. From the island of Newfoundland, and starting from the Gulf of St. Lawrence, they headed up the river traveling westward and into American lands unknown to them.

"With Gunnar traveled a first party of 78 men and 70 women, under the command of a leader of Germanic origin and ancestry, whom they called Ullman the Jarl

(noble title equivalent to Count or Duke). Many other contingents would follow later."

"They agreed to explore the new land without knowing for sure when they would return or if they would return. They were hoping to find fertile lands that they could colonize and that would assure them a new promising future."

"More days were added to their voyage of exploration, which turned into months full of experiences and great surprises when they found ample lands, very valuable for the quality of their soils and for the wide variety of their flora and fauna. The present St. Lawrence River, named Kaniatarowanenneh, in the Mohawk Indian language, or Great Navigable River, was wide and extensive and in principle served them as an excellent waterway for many miles to go deeper and deeper into the new territory they were exploring."

In their research, Dr. Clarke, Tinna and Bruce were able to determine that the St. Lawrence River in Canada is approximately 1,197 kilometers long from Lake Ontario to its mouth at the Atlantic Ocean in the Gulf of St. Lawrence on the Newfoundland Peninsula, hence the long and time-consuming crossing.

"In the Kaniatarowanenneh River, (St. Lawrence) they found a wide river space full of islands with green vegetation. There were thousands of islands of different sizes, which traveled the route to reach that "great sea,"

as the Indians said. But this was not a sea, it was really Lake Ontario."

"The word Ontario comes from the indigenous word Skanadario, a word from the language of the *Iroquois* tribe, which means "beautiful lake or shining water."

They spent several months navigating the Kaniatarowanenneh River, approximately three months, in a journey with constant stops to stock up on food, fish meat and easily harvested plant foods, such as berries, edible herbs and seasonal fruits, and to experience the life of the region. They were making communal and family routines, despite the changing circumstances of their lives as navigating explorers and nomads, without yet having a fixed and definitive settlement.

They tried to camp on land but without daring to reach the shores on the mainland. Instead, they preferred the large islands they found along the way, as these offered them a convenient strategic situation to watch the shores, and they could better prepare a defense in case of attack by the natives.

The skirmishes with the natives were now not so frequent as they went deeper into the continent. They began to notice that the indigenous groups they were encountering had no experience of any relationship with white European men and rather they found that curiosity made these natives approach them to verify who they were and what their intentions were.

The natives of these regions were of the great family of the *Haudenosaunee*, the Indian name for the *Algonquin Iroquois*, settled in the Ontario region, and in the area of the Great Lakes, around the territory that today is on the border between the United States and Canada. They were nomadic Indians; their settlements were tents and traveled with light, easily transportable gear.

In their long journey through the lands surrounding the great lakes of North America, they met many native tribes, some of them peaceful, such as the *Narragansett*, who, led by their chief or Sachen, named *Tashtasick*, managed to develop a good relationship with these white men.

In this first trip, and in other subsequent ones, the native friends learned from the Vikings to handle metals such as iron. They understood the use of looms to make pieces of sheep wool cloth, which was unknown to them, although they already knew and handled wild cotton. These pieces of wool were highly appreciated by the natives to protect themselves from the cold, being much lighter than the heavy animal leather garments they used to wear. It is worth mentioning that on this journey, the Vikings had brought Churra breed sheep from Scandinavia to graze in the new land and feed on them and taught them to the natives, and sold them some to start breeding them for themselves. They also found new ways of cultivating the land, since the natives were more accustomed to gathering than to growing and harvesting fruit trees, vegetables and grains, except for corn, and

wild rice, the crops were very widespread among the natives in the newly discovered land.

In addition, the natives learned about cattle. They learned to domesticate them and to take advantage of their benefits since the Vikings had brought them in their ships a good quantity of cows and bulls to graze in the lands of the new colonies. From the first trips between Greenland and the new land, the news was brought that there were excellent pastures for the cattle.

Other tribes with whom they had contact were those of the *Pocumtuc, Wampanoag, Nipmuc, Pequot, Lenape, Illiniwek, and Abenaki.*

Regarding the *Pequot,* with them they also had good trade relations, although they quarreled with their neighbors and sometimes requested help from the white Scandinavians to defeat their native adversaries, which they generally refused to do, as they wanted to avoid getting involved in the domestic struggles."

Based on the information supplied by Jens Arnason, in a state of hypnosis, in the embodied personality of Gunnar, and with the help of further geographical and historical research, and ascertained by Jens' accounts, they were able to find the navigation route used to traverse the new territory by the party of Vikings with which Gunnar was traveling:

"Gunnar mentioned sailing down a very wide river from the site of Vinland, on what is now called the island of Newfoundland in the estuary of the St. Lawrence River, until they reached a remarkable lake and then went

up many rivers and lakes, four in all, until they arrived at a beautiful territory with lush forests and a mild climate that would allow them to remain with ease. It was a land of fertile meadows, rich wild foods and abundant and excellent game animals."

"According to the location and topography mentioned by Gunnar, they must have entered American territory from the east in the North Atlantic Ocean, at the level of the Great Lakes to the center of the country, in what is now called the state of Minnesota."

"Sailing westward from the island of Newfoundland, they had to go up the St. Lawrence River, navigating its waters and walking its banks in places where the currents made navigation difficult. They reached the outlet of the waters of the river from Lake Ontario. Going upstream in the opposite direction to the direction of the sea, they found the Niagara River through which Lake Ontario discharges its waters into Lake Erie. Then, going northward, in the opposite direction, they navigated the Detroit River against the current, through which it discharges into Lake Sainte-Claire. And then, they went up that same river and they found Lake Huron. Finally, they went up the St-Marys River, and they entered Lake Superior in the center of the United States. At Lake Superior, they had to go up the St. Louis River to enter the Minnesota territory."

"Once there, some friendly Indians pointed out to them the presence of a great river that crossed the entire length of the unknown continental territory to the south,

and through which, after many weeks of navigation in a southerly direction for thousands of kilometers (approximately 3,700 kilometers), they could reach the sea again, in what is now called the Gulf of Mexico. The natives called this river the *Meschacebé*, today called the Mississippi River, very much used by the Indians of that time since it was navigable. They indicated to them the location of the source of this river in a very close glacial lake; Lake *Omashkoozo-zaaga'igan*, name that the *Ojibwa* Indians gave to the lake today called Lake Itasca, located in the northeast of the state of Minnesota. In those lands located in the northwestern end of Lake Superior, the Viking settlers began to settle in the forests and clearings of the new and beautiful location; a region that brought back vague and nostalgic memories of the ancestral land that had once been their home back in distant Iceland."

"There they found the Ojibwa Indian tribe, who were the inhabitants of these territories, and who lived in constant conflict with the Sioux Indians, a general name used to denominate the tribes: *Dakotas, Nakotas and Lakotas.*"

"These *Sioux* Indians, especially the *Dakotas*, were aggressive and had strong and bloodthirsty customs, among which was the scalping of defeated victims."

"The new settlers built a large wooden palisade fort to protect themselves from the attacks of these aggressive and bellicose native groups. They also built houses and sheds in the Nordic Viking style, with thick roofs made

of rammed earth and living grass on the surface, which resembled small hills."

"Some dwellings of this type were discovered in 1960 in North America on the island of Newfoundland (Canada), in the region called: L'Anse aux Meadows, also similar to the constructions found in Icelandic lands today.

"Unlike these, the natives of the region built their dwellings called Tipi or Teepee. They were conical closed spaces, with a wide circular base, and pointed at the top. They were built with skins and wood and very easy to dismantle and transport, according to the characteristics of their nomadic life."

"Although the newly arrived Vikings managed to find peace with the *Ojibwa* and settle in these territories, even temporarily, they were involved in the conflicts that took place between the *Ojibwa* and the *Dakotas-Sioux*. The Vikings introduced the *Ojibwa* to metal weapons (iron and bronze) and taught them how to use them against their enemy. They also taught them advanced combat techniques used in their battles in the ancestral Viking wars in Europe, such as the use of shields to form strong protective barriers, the very famous "shield walls", impenetrable at the time of a pitched battle. Also, they showed them techniques to study and define the position of the armies in combat terrain in order to make the most of the geography of the place."

"Gunnar and his fellow Vikings settled on these lands on a more permanent and lasting basis. They began

to cultivate the land to achieve rich harvests in contrast to the harsh farming conditions in the lands of Iceland, Greenland and even Scandinavia."

"On the spiritual side, the *Ojibwa* Indians of Algonquin ancestors, worshiped the *Great Spirit* whom they called *Gitchi Manitu*, and had other minor Gods to represent the sun, the moon, the wind, thunder, the soul and the most representative animals such as the bison, the buffalo, the bear, and the wolf, which they respected greatly. They exchanged information about their customs and religious beliefs and the Vikings also presented their beliefs that were very different from those of their indigenous neighbors, which included sacrifices and honors to their Viking Gods (*Thor, Odin, Loki, Freya, Heimdall and Balder*) or their Christian affiliations."

"In the same way, these Viking explorers learned to respect the religious beliefs of the natives and achieved the respect of their beliefs on the part of **them**."

"When the crops began to germinate, they found that the Indians of neighboring tribes, such as the *Dakotas Sioux*, who were unfamiliar with farming, began to see these crops as a way of obtaining stolen food, without bothering to ask for it, and this resulted in new clashes. The settlers established surveillance patrols to watch over the crops, especially at night."

"It seemed that five years had passed since the first exploration of the lands near Lake Superior in the territory of the *Ojibwa*, in which they managed to make at least ten return trips to Greenland and Iceland, in order

to stock up on food, various utensils and bring new herds of cattle and sheep to the new territory."

"On the last of these voyages between Vinland (America), Iceland and Scandinavia, new settlers and several crew members came well disposed for the exploration of the new territories. They were very enthusiastic with the news of the new lands of forests, green meadows suitable for the good grazing of cattle and many big game animals, among which would be found the moose, reindeer or caribou, deer, wild boars, and the unknown American bison, being of nutritious meat and thick skin."

Gunnar Dies

Additionally, in the last session, Jens Arnason, in the personality of Gunnar, mentioned the situation and the time of his death:

"Gunnar had left the palisaded fort with a hunting party consisting of several Viking settlers and guided by some native *Ojibwa* scouts. Later, they found themselves in a fertile meadow on a nearby plateau, where some bison were grazing. They were going to stock up on meat by hunting some animals."

"The party was divided into three groups; on one side, there were some horsemen on horseback who began to whip the bison while shouting and making very eloquent gestures causing a disbandment. Another group was surrounding them on the left flank and were also shouting, channeling them, and prevented the herd from disintegrating to that side. The third group began to run

to the right ahead of the herd as a way to show them the way to where they could flee."

"Gunnar was in this third group running on foot and heading towards a cliff where they were to channel the animals in order to drive them towards the cliff, causing them to fall off and meet their deaths."

"At the moment of reaching the cliff, the group of men who were rushing towards the cliff took some ropes from the ground that were previously prepared and firmly secured to jump into the void. By holding on to these ropes, they would slowly go down and avoid the fall and simply land a few meters down on a ledge of the cliff where they could take shelter while the group of animals went over their heads and crashed to the ground about thirty meters below."

"About fifteen animals managed to plunge off and crash off the cliff. The others managed to divert their course and head for flat ground where they were not in danger."

"Gunnar only felt an emptiness of frightful panic, becoming aware that in the rush and haste, he had not managed to firmly grasp the rope that awaited him. In the leap, he was lost in the void towards the indescribable horror."

"However, he did not feel the blow more than a distant sensation of a very soft shock before becoming aware of the deadly outcome."

"He saw or rather perceived a sparkling light that surrounded all his surroundings with an infinite clarity

that enveloped him and transported him to a transcendent dimensional plane. At that moment, he knew that his earthly life had come to an end, but his consciousness continued to exist as if it had only passed through a luminous door without receiving the slightest scratch. He simply remembered again that the state of his Consciousness, which was his true essence, and he was never affected by anything that happened in the earthly dimension."

"His companions found his body mangled and burst by the blow. His neck was fractured and dislocated by mortal inclination, impossible to survive, and his clothes totally covered in blood."

"All around them were the fifteen dead or dying animals that were quickly finished off by the men mercifully to end the mortal suffering."

"These Viking Icelandic settlers, ascribed to the Catholic religion, gave a Christian burial to the body of Gunnar and raised a prayer to the high heavenly courts to commend his soul."

"But the objective was accomplished, survival was assured, and the work was fully completed. The group of settlers and some natives of the *Ojibwa* race from the nearby village would have a supply of meat, skins, ropes and bone tools for a few more weeks."

"In the evening, satisfied with the word accomplished, they toasted with mead and raised the wooden cups in honor of their fallen comrade in the line of duty. He would be watching them from Valhalla."

Jens Arnason mentioned, in his last hypnotic regression session, being immersed in the personality of the old Viking Gunnar, the presence of a contingent of Viking crewmen, very experienced in the work of exploration, among whom was an important character with the rank of Jarl (hereditary rank equivalent to that of Count or Duke), named Harald Huffmann. Apparently, some were confused and called him Hullmann or perhaps Ullman, who was commanding this last expedition to the new land. They said that he was a man of integrity, trustworthiness and great leadership ability. They said he had Germanic ancestry closely related to his Scandinavian ancestors.

The interesting thing about this is that in some theory with hints of South American legend, there is talk of the arrival in Mesoamerica of a contingent of Viking explorers commanded by a Jarl whom they called Ullman.

From the information obtained in the hypnotic regression that Jens Arnason underwent with the help and support of Dr. Magnus Clarke, we took as a starting point and continuation, the end of the event, where the Viking settlers were settled in North American lands, in the north center of the country, in a territory today known as the state of Minnesota.

In the subsequent investigations, Bruce and Dr. Clarke found that indeed the Ullman or Hullmann surname corresponded to an ancient ancestor of Germanic origin, which derived from the German

surname Huffmann or Hoffmann. Hoffmann also meant "owner of a farm".

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Chapter 20

The Investigation Continues - Visiting New York

They had decided that the investigation would continue in the United States as the relevant information and evidence to be considered was more feasible to obtain there.

Several weeks later, Tinna traveled to New York. That day she had departed from Keflavik International Airport in Reykjavik on the 17:00 Icelandair flight, landing at JFK at 19:20. However, the flight duration had been approximately 5 hours and 42 minutes, taking into account the more than 4000 kilometers traveled between the two countries. It was a non-stop flight on a modern Boeing 757-200. She realized that the time change, flying west, made it mandatory to turn back the clock.

Bruce went to pick her up at the airport. As they met at the baggage exit, they gave each other a kiss on the cheek and a long, affectionate hug of welcome and went

to the parking lot to pick up the car, arm in arm. Next, they drove to Bruce's Manhattan apartment, a block from the Columbus Circle, just across from the southwest entrance to Central Park.

It was a comfortable 1,616 square foot apartment, newly remodeled, consisting of a living room with an integrated kitchen, Florida Room style, two bedrooms with double beds, each with its own bathroom. There was a study with a large library, where Bruce spent long hours reading and researching in his spare time, when he was not in the office.

Bruce had eagerly arranged the guest room where Tinna was staying, with a beautiful and cheerful new comforter in bright colors, as well as new linens, modern lamps on the bedside tables that played harmoniously with the colors of the comforter and curtains. The bathroom was stocked with all the relevant toiletries and a new set of towels, and the closet unoccupied so that Tinna could store her luggage. Bruce also offered her the study so that she could use it to organize her workspace for the proposed research. After all, there were two desks available, and they could work together.

Tinna and Bruce had become close friends, professing total trust and then some, but beyond any consideration of friendship, it seemed that something deeper was brewing between them, for the attraction they felt for each other was obvious.

However, even though it had been nine months since the death of Bruce's wife, Bruce felt he still had to

wait a little longer and was not yet ready to start a new relationship. He did not want to fail Tinna by making a commitment, while still longing for his wife.

In the evening, they had a light dinner at home. Tinna was exhausted from the hustle and bustle of the trip and was ready to go to bed early.

Tinna's last thought before falling asleep was about Bruce. She really adored him, and thought "What a complete man he was and how fortunate she was to have his friendship, but how she would like to start a loving and more committed relationship with him." However, she had to be patient and wait, as it wasn't yet the time to finalize the matter.

Bruce also thought about her in the darkness of the room before falling asleep. Tinna really fascinated him, she was a beautiful, intelligent girl, with a very nice, peaceful, and quiet way of being. She was one of those people that transpired peace and that appeased you just by being with them. But it wasn't yet the time, he had to wait a little to repair his heart.

The next day, they got up early, around 7:00 am, put on their sports clothes and went for a long walk in Central Park.

By 9:30 am, already changed, Tinna and Bruce were entering the New York Public Library.

At the entrance of the neoclassical building, there were two monumental stone lions, both with grim expressions, standing guard, which caught Tinna's attention.

Tinna commented to Bruce, “What a grand building, I love the lions at the entrance and the magnificent architecture with those columns that remind me a bit of Athens.”

Bruce, he replied, “Did you know that during the Great Depression of the 1930s in the United States, called the Crisis of '29, Fiorello La Guardia, mayor of New York in those days, had christened the lions Patience and Fortitude. These would be the great qualities that all those who wanted to carry out an investigation in that iconic place would have to have; the ***Patience*** to spend hours and hours reading among mountains of books, and the ***Fortitude*** of spirit to advance with determination and discipline, in the search for the pertinent information, in their sources and books, without losing their calm.”

“And you have both qualities," Bruce continued.

“No, I don't," Tinna replied, "I still have a long way to go, and I have to make a great effort to stay disciplined with this research.”

“I believe that there is no better person or more qualified than you for this job, indeed you have the patience and fortitude required.”

“Oh! Thank you so much Bruce, that's so nice of you.”

During the following weeks, Bruce and Tinna would devote themselves to explore all available information, and even some controversial theories, which contradicted each other, about the presence of Vikings in America, 500 years before the arrival of Columbus.

That day Bruce had to run some office errands and attend to some banking business and left Tinna at the library. They had arranged to meet in the evening at the apartment.

Tinna spent a long time at a computer terminal selecting a stack of reference books. Once the books were received, she sat down at a table near the window, as she preferred natural light for extensive reading. For the exploration of that day's topics, Tinna had chosen fourteen reference books from among the 3 million copies that the large library possessed and proceeded to begin her work for the week.

Several days later, late at night, after dinner, Tinna and Bruce sat down to talk.

Tinna commented to Bruce, “I'm currently reviewing information regarding the presence of the Vikings in the interior of the country and specifically in the north central area, on the border between Canada and the United States and I've found the following:

“The region of Minnesota, was called by the Indians Mnisota or Mnišota, a word that referred to water, given the importance for them of the lakes of the region and the Mississippi River. They called this region The Land of Ten Thousand Lakes.”

“The story we know of the Viking settler named Gunnar, would coincide and make sense if compared with a later tradition dating back to about 1350 AD. It was said that according to kinship agreements Magnus VII, from the dynasty of Forkung, and being King of Sweden was

also King of Norway, although they remained as independent kingdoms with their separate councils. King Magnus VII commissioned a prominent courtier named Paul Knudsson to lead a maritime expedition to the West in order to contact the survivors of Icelandic and Greenlandic origin, who were settlers of the western projections beyond Greenland in the settlements in Vinland (America)."

"The chronicles of the time tell that these navigators, commanded by Knudsson, entered the continent through the center of the State of Minnesota. They navigated the St. Lawrence River, from the estuary of the river in the Gulf of St. Lawrence in front of the Island of Newfoundland in the Atlantic Ocean, reaching Lake Ontario, and from there crossing the different local rivers and American Great Lakes up to the region of Minnesota."

"In the Royal Library in Copenhagen, there is a document containing the order of King Magnus VII to the navigator Paul Knutson: The text of this document is as follows:

"*Magnus, king of Norway, Sweden and Skaane by the grace of God, sends good health and happiness to all men who see or read this letter. We wish to let it be known that you (Paul Knutson), are to take the men who are to go on the Knorr (the royal merchant ship), be they appointed or named from my personal guard and also from the garrisons of other men that you may wish to take on the voyage, and that Paul Knutson, who will be the*

commander over the Knorr, will have full authority to choose the men who are most suitable either as officers or as men.

We ask you to accept this, our command, with all good will for the cause, inasmuch as we do it in honor of God and for the good of our soul and for our predecessors, who in Greenland established Christianity and have maintained it to this time, and will not allow it to perish in our days. Knowing this for certain, that whosoever shall defy this, our order, shall meet with our serious displeasure and shall therefore receive full punishment. Executed at Bergen, on the Monday after the day of Simon and Judah in the six and XXX years of our reign (1354). By Orm Ostenson, our regent, sealed."

Tinna continued her intervention, "It could be deduced that these navigators already knew this route of entry to the interior and center of the country. This happened three centuries after the first expeditions to *Vinland* that is to say that the routes, trade and relations between these regions of *Vinland* (America), with Greenland, Iceland, Scandinavia and continental Europe, were frequent. On the other hand, it must be taken into account that this expedition took place more than one hundred years before the arrival of Christopher Columbus in America. The arrival of the white men was not so crucial since the natives of the north had previous experiences with Irish explorers who had previously arrived in American lands. Although they were astonished by the arrival of the whites, their appearance

had not been so strange to them. Moreover, their verbal traditions were transmitted by wise elder natives from generation to generation, and they had already defined the prophecies about what would happen with the strong intercultural conflict, which implied the arrival of strange pale men, given the divergence of interests and beliefs of each culture.

“It is good to bear in mind," Tinna continued, "that some time before the arrival of the Vikings, in the 6th century A.D.C., according to the legends and traditions of the Irish people, the Irish Christian monks, seeking places of retreat and spiritual recollection to carry out their mystical practices, far from the civilizations of the time, sailed the waters of the North Sea, from Great Britain to Iceland, visiting the many islands of the area. In these voyages, sometimes, having lost their way due to the customary and more than usual strong storms of the area, they had arrived on several occasions to lands far to the west of the known area, arriving at what would later be called *Vinland* by the Vikings on the island of Newfoundland (Canada).”

“The legend says,” Tinna continued, “that the voyages of the mystic monk named *St. Brendan*, were recorded in a document of the time: Navigatio Sancti Brendani. This text was considered a best seller of the Middle Ages, and was most certainly known and consulted by Scandinavian, Spanish and Portuguese travelers, navigators and cartographers. Years later, the legend is also present and inscribed in several medieval

manuscripts, contained in the archives of the abbeys of *Strat Flur* and *Conway* in Britain. In the year 1168, the legend according to which Prince *Madoc of Wales*, the natural son of the king of North Wales Owen Gwynedd, who upon the death of his father, decided to emigrate to the new lands located to the west of Europe, entered by the bay of *Mobile* in America, and settled in a territory that later would be called the state of Alabama and later his brother *Rhyrid* would settle permanently in the territory of Missouri. Because of this and many other legends, it could be thought that the natives of North America already knew the white men who had recently arrived from Europe. However, controversy is the order of the day; much hard evidence is still lacking before official archeology and anthropology accept these theories as fully valid, which are so far considered by some as mere speculations and legends."

"On the other hand," Tinna continued, "there are also many other important historians and thinkers who consider the legends as fully valid stories and sagas from which these theories have been structured. The accumulated evidence is sufficient for them, such as a series of ancestral runes in petroglyphs discovered on the new continent, both in North and South America, and also certain native idiomatic features that make direct reference to their Scandinavian and Irish roots.

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Chapter 21

Vikings in Lands of the Upper, Middle and Lower Mississippi

Year 1,007 A.D./C.
The Mouth of the Mississippi River in the Gulf of Mexico

It was unbearably hot. It was the seventh month of the year in 1007 AD. They were in the middle of summer and the sun was baking their brains, poorly protected by their blond and dense hair, which was far from covering them and made them even hotter. It was impossible to use the traditional metallic helmets for defense, as they would burn one on contact.

Harald Huffmann commanded the party of explorers that had left from the fort established in Minnesota, on the lake named by the *Ojibwa* Indians as Lake *Omashkoozo-zaaga'igan* (Moose Lake) and currently called Lake Itasca. They had taken the course of the *Meschacebé* (Mississippi) River, towards the South, in an adventure where anything could happen; however, they trusted in their good fortune and in the skill

of their men to face any vicissitude. *Harald Huffmann* was a true leader, highly appreciated and respected by his men. He was fair and righteous when it came to constructing order and harmony, but his voice and his pulse didn't tremble when it came to establishing discipline, even if he had to personally confront a quarrel with one of his men when he tried to rebel. He had dark brown hair and dark brown features, as if his ancestors were of Arabian ethnicity and had formed a curious Germanic-Arabic combination, with a light brown complexion and deep blue eyes. Of medium height but with a thick and stocky build and a commanding voice that inspired respect without having to raise it. On the contrary, he spoke in a deep voice with a very low tone that imposed an obligatory silence when he addressed his crew members.

With the heat, came an ambient humidity that caused the salt to distill into a salty water-mass that made it difficult to sprinkle on the food. Likewise, the humidity also increased the perspiration that flowed from their bodies, even when they were immobile and in the shade, which prevented them from bearing it calmly and exhausted their weakened strength. The water they drank was not enough to quench their thirst and their parched throats had the sensation of containing thousands of granules of hot, dry sand. It was necessary to take sips of the precious element at every moment.

For several weeks they sailed down the *Meschacebé* (Mississippi) River, crossing various

regions, until they reached an enormous delta that flowed into the sea. It was the mouth of the Mississippi River Delta that dumps into the Gulf of Mexico.

They were in six sailing and rowing ships that they had built with wood from the forests of Wisconsin and Minnesota during the three years of their stay. They had settled in that land, trying to colonize it and having that territory as a second outpost, apart from the distant colony of *Vinland*, on the Island of Newfoundland on the coast of the Atlantic Sea.

It was an advance party of 180 people of Viking origin, including settlers, crew and family members, who had risked further discovery of new and strange lands, sailing south from the region of the great lake, which the *Ojibwa* Indians called Lake *Gichigami*, meaning "big water," now called *Lake Superior*, on the Canadian border. They had also left behind Lake Itasca, in distant Minnesota, where the *Meschacebé* River was born, which they traveled for many weeks.

Their experiences on that journey down this great river were unforgettable. Friendly Indians told them that practically the entire 2,000 mile stretch of the river was navigable, except for a few small waterfalls at a place, now called *St. Anthony Falls*, on the upper Mississippi. They had to climb out to the riverbed, carry their boats and supplies on their backs, herd their cattle, and cross through the forest to continue further downstream.

They encountered many tribes of Indians, some friendly and others really aggressive and unpleasant,

although the settlers tried not to mix with the natives as a precaution, trying to avoid scuffles with them. They did not always succeed and, on occasions, they had to face them and defend themselves.

In the encounters with the natives, the possibility of having warlike confrontations with them was 50%. There were aggressive tribes that saw in the settler explorers a bitter enemy that came with the bad intention of taking over their territories or to diminish the hunting of the area, and they felt the duty to defend their territories. Other less imposing and perhaps more astute natives saw opportunities to carry out trade transactions with the settlers and to take advantage of the knowledge they had in agriculture and cattle raising, and in arts and technical advances, such as the manufacture of weapons and work tools. It was also frequent that among the natives themselves there were quarrels, since some wanted to benefit from the exchange with the settlers, and likewise, they sought to avoid that the other tribes could take advantage of this exchange at all costs.

Björn Sigurdsson, a settler who traveled with the group, was a man of short height, was talkative and enjoyed mockery. He made the parties of all his companions and managed to raise the spirits of the participants of the voyage when the conditions were complex. He had a prodigious memory and in his mind, he took note of everything strange and remarkable that they were experiencing. Then at night, in the light of the campfires and amidst the luminous reflections of the

flickering fires, he verbally recalled and narrated to his companions the travel anecdotes that were developing. He kept the memory of the events, which would form the stories that would be told from mouth to mouth in the following years.

It was a very enriching journey where they were able to discover many new things about the area and its inhabitants. *The Mississippian Culture*, typical of the tribes that inhabited the region, was a mystery for these Vikings and they were very impressed by the strange local customs, but above all, by the high level of civilization reached by these natives. They were characterized by building large cities with an advanced building system, and with a clear influence of the *Toltec* culture of Mexico, with whom they had ancestral relations.

Following the course of the river, they were advancing to strang lands, in a zone of the *middle Mississippi*, and after three days of journey, they arrived at a region called by the natives *Cahokia* (near today called Collinsville, Illinois).

The Viking explorers found that in *Cahokia* there was a city that represented a great civilization located on the plain of the Mississippi River, four hundred years before the arrival of Columbus.

They used to form and build artificial mounds, where they performed ceremonies of religious worship and then later became burial mounds, with up to 200 dead bodies. These mounds were a very important part of the

Cahokia culture, with which the newcomers were very impressed.

Upriver, days before, the Viking settlers had a combat encounter with a group of *Lakota* Indians, who attacked them in the middle of the night at the camp they had set up on the banks of the river.

Three settlers were badly wounded in this encounter, one of whom was gravely hurt by an arrow that pierced his neck, cutting the sternocleidomastoid muscle and causing a severe infection that began to eat away at his throat. The other two were also badly wounded and died immediately and were thrown into the river in the middle of the fight.

As they continued their journey down the river to *Cahokia*, the friendly population of the more civilized *Illiniwek* Indians offered them help.

On the fifth day the wounded colonist died in horrible pain of high fever, and it was impossible to save him in spite of the care offered by the natives.

The settlers proceeded to assemble a large funeral pyre of logs and wooden sticks and placed the corpse on top of it and set fire to it, Viking style, according to their ancestral custom of cremating the deceased.

The natives were horrified by the ruthless and barbaric way these pale, strange men treated their ancestors, and a brawl almost broke out between settlers and natives over this. The natives felt that these white men disrespected their dead by burning them with no pain or a ceremony.

In trying to understand the cultural differences between one race and the other, the natives led them to an area where the curious mounds of earth were. They were carefully upholstered in green grass, and to approach this place, they used to prepare a series of rituals because they were entering sacred land.

They had to be barefoot, wear clean ceremonial clothes and could only reach a certain point, since only shamans and high-ranking members of the tribe had access to the top of the burial mounds. The Indians buried their dead under the ground along with their most important belongings. For the Indians, this was the most normal thing to do and, on the contrary, to cremate their ancestors was for them very rare and inconceivable.

PHOTOGRAPH - Mississippian burial mounds

In other tribes of the region, there were different customs to this one. For common men, they made high wooden frames, where at the top they placed the deceased together with their closest belongings and left them there in the open. But these areas where the cemeteries were located were considered sacred and could only be accessed through special rituals, requesting the permission of the deceased to enter the sacred ground.

The Viking explorers traveled through many camps where there were dozens of these burial mounds and except for some small variations from tribe to tribe. This was a widespread custom by the Mississippian culture in the region.

Definitely, they were people with different customs from the European ones, but these Viking explorers found people with deeply respectful cultures. They were sedentary tribes settled in ancient cities, with organized systems and government hierarchies established in an orderly manner and with urban planning schemes that could be compared to Scandinavian villages, without major differences.

There were other tribes that when they lost in quarrels and battles between them, had to abandon the territories and become nomads traveling through large areas in search of places to settle. They traveled even temporarily and with communities that lived in *Tipis*, which were easily dismantled but had to endure harsh conditions of survival. They were not able to cultivate the land and were only dedicated to the collection of vegetables and fruits and to fishing and hunting.

For example, among others, a very important ancestral city, which caught their attention, was the one called *Etowah*, where the *Muskogee* (Creek) Nation was located, and the Poarch Band of Creek Indians.

Other Mississippian culture groups called Muskogee included different people: the Alabama-Quassarte people, the Kialegee people, the Thlopthlocco people in Oklahoma, the Coushatta tribe of Louisiana, the Alabama-Coushatta tribe of Texas, and the Poarch Band of Creeks in Alabama.

The Viking explorers, really impressed with the degree of advancement of many tribes of the

Mississippian culture, didn’t have hegemonic intentions in those lands and their interest for the moment was to investigate the possibility of obtaining and finding territories for their settlements, with lands suitable for cultivation, forests to obtain valuable wood, prairies to graze their cattle and above all peace with the neighbors. But this would not be so easy to achieve.

The natives, when they were friendly, gave temporary permition so that the explorers and foreign settlers could live in their territories in a transitory way, and with the exclusive purpose of carrying out commercial exchanges and days of instruction of cultural exchange. When there was no empathy between natives and settlers, there were fights and combats, where the most usual thing was that the settlers cleared the area and continued their journey, without further combat. The reason for this was that the natives outnumbered the settlers, since a city of that time could house several tens of thousands of inhabitants and the Viking exploration parties were, in the best of cases, a few hundred, which made a long term confrontation impossible.

It's important to mention again that the culture of Toltecs of Mexico influenced the Mississippi region and its population.

The Viking settlers continued their journey through the Mississippi Delta, and went out to sea (in what is now called the Gulf of Mexico). Bordering the coast to the south, along the coastline, they reached a new and unknown land where they found friendly tribes of

cultured Indians on the banks of a river called the *Panuco* River, which flowed into the sea.

They knew where they were because the natives of both the Mississippi region and the new lands where they had arrived were indicating the exact location and geography of the territory, which, although there were no maps available, they knew perfectly.

There they would await the arrival of the second party of settlers who would come from *Vinland* (Newfoundland Island, in Canada) by sea, bordering the (North American) coastline, to the land of the *Toltecs* in the Gulf of Mexico.

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Chapter 22

Vikings in Mesoamerica in Pre-Columbian Times

Year 1008 AD.
Vinland Territory

He poorly grasped the handle of the ax, and when he hit the hard piece of wood in an instantaneous carelessness, the tool jumped through the air and hit the shoulder of his neighbor, who was also dedicated to cutting down trees. Fortunately, he hit him with the handle and not the blade.

His name was *Kjartan Jakobsson*. He had a grandiose appearance, a luminous aura, was self-confident, with ample muscles and enormous strength, blond with curly hair, which was badly arranged with a red baldric which made him look like a warrior wounded in combat and a survivor of many fights. It was best not to get too close to. Likewise, he was always distracted with a thousand matters that haunted his mind, and made him the quintessential dreamer. He was a young man of about 28 years old and had left his wife and children in Greenland, determined to travel to such distant lands in search of an adventurous life that would eventually allow him a better life for him and his family. He hoped to find good lands where to settle and where to become a landowner, as the promoters had announced of this exploratory expedition to the lands of Vinland.

His best friend, *Kristian Larsson*, was another giant Viking explorer and settler who had also settled for about five years in the colony of *Leifbundir*, in the newly discovered region of *Vinland*, founded by Leif Ericksson.

Kristian, 26 years old, a red-haired man with a serious appearance and a face tanned by the inclement sun and the weather. He had traveled with his wife and was part of the colony that at that time had already grown and was composed of a group of approximately 782 people. 550 were men, 210 women, and that had already included 22 children.

“If I had done it on purpose, I wouldn't have been so accurate," exclaimed *Kjartan*, letting out a loud laugh as he fled, since his friend *Kristian* was already chasing him to hit him back.

“Idiot! responded *Kristian* laughing, “you are always distracted, thinking about what you shouldn't think about and always dreaming about what you shouldn't dream about. Why don't you be careful?”

“Imbecil!" he said as he rubbed his shoulder.

They chased each other for a while, laughing loudly.

Snorri Thorfinnsson, another participant and companion of so many long nights of camaraderie, between tales and stories, in the heat of a campfire and the occasional *mead*, watched the scene and laughed heartily, celebrating the fun of his friends. As *Kjartan* passed Snorri in this race, *Snorri* tripped him and he went to the ground with all his humanity. They again raised

laughter, a product of the game of mere late teenagers who wanted to annoy each other for fun.

They were at the edge of the forest and those were the last trees they had to cut down to gather the wood required to complete the details of the ships they were building to begin the great expedition to the south, starting from *Vinland*.

This was the second expedition of seven ships that would travel south along the (North American) coast for long weeks to a land that the natives of the area said was home to a highly civilized population.

The first group of Vikings had sailed from the interior of the continent, departing from the region of what is now the state of Minnesota, through the Mississippi River, to try to reach the same territory.

From the mouth of the Mississippi River in the Gulf of Mexico, bordering the coast, towards the southwest, after several days of crossing, they had arrived at a strange land in whose dominions were natives, apparently belonging to a very developed culture. They already knew that they were in the vicinity of the land of the *Toltecs*, in Mexico, whose dominions extended from the Mexican highlands to the lands known today as the *Yucatan Peninsula*, on the Mexican coast, but they had not yet become acquainted with these people.

They would later learn with more certainty that the *Toltecs* came from a great city called *Tollan-Xicocotitlan*, now better known as *Tulle*.

The two groups met at the mouth of the *Panuco* River in the great Gulf of Mexico. Several days later, up the river, they had reached the high plateau in the center of the region. Their first contact with the native *Toltecs* was positive. The natives welcomed them with signs of friendship, and soon after, they learned that by their countenances, given the white skins and blond features of most of them, plus the robust complexion and tall stature of their bodies, they brought to the memory of the natives, images of what seemed to be their ancestral ancestors, according to traditions that the natives jealously guarded in their verbal communications.

Their legends said that in a very ancient time, perhaps before our era, the Gods had come from very high and dwelt among them, endowing them with a supra-dimensional knowledge, to establish the culture that they held today. The main exponent of this marvelous presence was *Quetzalcoatl*: an extraordinary being, who they considered as a God.

One day while the Viking visitors were near the city of *Tulle*, an inconvenience arose. The native *Toltecs* were having conflicts with the *Otomi*, a different race with a strange language. The *Toltecs* spoke a dialect called *Nahuatl*, while the *Otomi* spoke the *Otomi* language. The native *Toltecs* asked the Viking visitors for help and to participate in their fight against the *Otomi*.

Being faced against each other in one battle of many, the Vikings were unlucky, losing a total of twelve men. Among the fallen were the young *Kjartan*

Jakobsson and *Snorri Thorfinnsson*, the former hit by three arrows, one in the heart and two in the liver. While the second, *Snorri*, received a blow from a bolas that completely destroyed his skull. He lay in a large pool of blood on the battlefield.

As for *Kristian Larsson*, they never heard from him again. After the last battle, he had simply disappeared without a trace. They thought that perhaps he had been kidnapped by the opponents, but no one was certain that this had been the case.

Weeks later, after the news of his disappearance, they found *Kristian's* body. It was half-buried in a ditch, in terrible conditions, in an advanced state of decomposition. Naked, his thorax opened and his heart extracted, he was also terribly disfigured by the tortures and by the attacks of the birds of prey against his corpse. He had been sacrificed to the gods by the *Otomi* Indians. They had not forgiven him for being on the side of the Toltecs.

END OF ERICK THORVALDSSON AND LEIF EIRICKSSON

Brattalid Village, Erikfjord (Eirick Fjord) Greenland

On returning from one of his voyages from Vinland, Leif Eiricksson found that his father was very ill and close to death. Erick Throvaldsson (the Red) had

been the chieftain and first discoverer, colonizer, and was practically the most important patriarch, ruler of Greenland. Due to an epidemic that ravaged the shire, and after a short period of fighting against the disease, he died around 1010. a.d./c.

Leif Eiricksson succeeded his father as patriarch commander of Greenland, and there was a period of peace and prosperity in the region. However, not more than ten years would pass and due to another epidemic in the colony, Leif fell ill and although he was a very healthy man, he did not manage to recover and died around 1020 AD.

He was succeeded by his sons Thorkell Leifsson who would continue in command in Greenland and Thorgils Leifsson, who would be traveling to Vinland for a while longer.

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Chapter 23

Between the Absence of Evidence and Historical Speculation

VIKINGS IN MESOAMERICA
Details of the research carried out by Tinna and Bruce

During the investigation, Tinna and Bruce would learn that the Toltec dynasty covered a period between the years of 667 and 1051 AD, that is, between the VII and XI centuries. At that time, the Aztec people had not yet begun to participate in history known today, since their apogee began in the 13th century after 1200 AD.

But let's go back a bit in our story. Before Gunnar's death in Minnesota in the 11th century AD, he had mentioned a leader, a commander of the scouting party by the name of Harald Huffmann (the Jarl). In present time, a name slightly similar to this one of Germanic origin (Ullman) had appeared later in the theories sustained by the French-Argentine archaeologist, Jacques de Mahieu. The theories spoke about a white man, a leader of Nordic or Germanic appearance named Ullman, and the arrival in Mesoamerica, in the region where the Aztec people lived (and more concretely the Toltec people). He was accompanied by a party of strange white men, of European appearance and Caucasian characteristics, most probably of Germanic or Scandinavian origin and more concretely Viking.

The following hypothesis could be inferred. Apparently, these Viking explorers, after crossing the

entire country by sailing the Mississippi River, reached the Gulf of Mexico in the Caribbean Sea and bordered the coast towards the south. Then, they entered the continent again on dry land, in the domains of the Toltec people in Mexico, going upstream against the current of the Panuco River, which in those distant times was fully navigable and uncontaminated, unlike today, which receives the waste waters of the region. Entering these lands, they reached the Mexican high plateau where the Pánuco River rises, and had contact with the native people of Mexico.

Likewise, it could also be inferred that another group of Vikings or explorers could have traveled from the region of the Island of Newfoundland (Canada), traveled south, crossed the Caribbean Sea and entered the Gulf of Mexico. They traveled until they reached the vicinity of the mouth of the Panuco River, which is in the Mexican highlands, to make contact with the Toltec Indians.

This gives certain validity to the affirmations emanating from the research carried out by Professor Jacques Marie de Mahieu, about the arrival of the Vikings to the lands of Mexico, five hundred years before the arrival of Christopher Columbus, although more convincing evidence would be lacking.

Regarding the reaction of the natives, the fact of observing the arrival of some white, blond or red-haired men, with abundant beards and hair, of great stature and of a very strange appearance for the natives of the region,

could have been of great impact and cultural shock for them. And perhaps, they could have mistaken them for Gods coming from the north.

Tinna commented to Bruce, “It remains for us to try to review and determine the validity of all the theories that swarm in the anthropological environment about the truth regarding the ancestral Gods and the hypothesis that these might have been in reality white men of European origin who dared to explore the American lands from Mexico to the south of the continent.”

“That's true.” commented Bruce, “It has been speculated that the God Quetzalcoatl (Feathered Serpent; quetzal: 'feather'; and cōātl: 'serpent') (The Feathered Serpent), ruler of the Amerindian peoples of pre-Columbian times, could be the personification of a white explorer, possibly European, who arrived in American lands, and perhaps a Viking”

“But do you know that this has no real basis? It is not real because if we take into account that perhaps the first European explorers of America were the Vikings, long before Christopher Columbus, then we have to consider the time and the denominations of the periods to mark the time as a conclusive factor. This would give us a glimpse of the truth about this time when the advent of the European white man in America was not yet known.”

The cult of the God called Quetzalcoatl as a deity of the Mesoamerican culture has been documented since the 1st century BC, and it is necessary to take into account the three periods of Mesoamerican history. The first

period is called Preclassic, the second Classic and the third Postclassic.

"In a period between the Preclassic and Classic periods, which goes from the year 400 and 600 AD, is where the beginning of the veneration of the god Quetzalcoatl took place. And this veneration apparently extended until the so-called Late Classic Period, between 600 and 900 AD. Even later, in the Post-Classic Period, this God was still worshiped in the period between 900 and 1519 AD."

"Now," commented Tinna, "if we take into account that the Vikings could not have arrived before the XI century, and could only have arrived in Mesoamerican lands well into the year 1000 AD, they could hardly have been confused with Gods that belonged to the religious traditions of the natives for many centuries before, as in the case of the God Quetzalcoatl."

"We find ourselves with an absence of substantial evidence to be able to make forceful affirmations that are supported by concrete historical proof, except some pseudoscientific deductions, from runes printed in stones in South America. Supposedly, they are of Viking origin and apparently have similar linguistic meanings between the indigenous languages, the Spanish and the old Norse Norres language, achieved through games of syllables and words that could resemble each other in several languages."

Tinna commented to Bruce, "Until the arrival of the Vikings in North America, Canada and the United

States, around 1000 to 1050 AD/C, we had access to some information because we could rely on real documents that exist today. For example, there are the aforementioned Icelandic sagas, Greenlandic sagas and the Sagas of Erick the Red, as well as other real Irish historical documents, and those referring to monks like St. Brandan, and even Scandinavian and British historical documents. However, that's as far as the information goes. But, from this point on, it is very difficult to find documents in the New World, dealing with America that were dated before 1450, and even fewer documents between 900 and 1150, which is the period we are investigating."

"On the other hand, there is an enormous amount of supporting evidence when researching the history of Europe, with sufficient documented information in England, Scotland, Ireland, France, etc., with which it is possible to put together a fairly realistic and truthful historical picture."

"Because of this," Tinna continued, "we have to accept the truth that what is currently affirmed in relation to the possible arrival and voyage of the Vikings to Mexico and South America, does not have convincing evidentiary support. If we do, we would have to say, from the strength of that truth, that it is entering the realm of mere speculation."

"True, Tinna," said Bruce, "what we can say from now on would be confined to the realm of supposition."

"Besides," continued Bruce, "our research will have to be limited to describing the regions, the

geography, and the history of the natives of those regions and their possible customs. We will make references to the natives that are supported by historical documents after 1500 AD and that were documented by the Spanish and Portuguese conquerors. But the moment we try to refer to the life of the Vikings in those lands, we already know that we are entering the world of speculation and perhaps fantasy."

Bruce continued, "Some bold researchers have advanced their claims in essays in books about this period of history and make claims that, while they may seem speculated, do not stop having a touch of fantasy

"Now," said Tinna, "I have to refer again to the French anthropologist who lived in Argentina, since he is the author of several books that mention the existence of the Vikings in the pre-Columbian, Mesoamerican and South American periods. He is the author Jacques de Mahieu. A controversial character about whom very contradictory opinions are woven, some very much in favor and others totally condemnatory."

Tinna continued, "Regarding our research, I want you to read the report I have prepared to attach to the study addressed to the University. Here there are some sections of Jacques de Mahieu's hypothetical approach that are mentioned, exposed in several of his books, and which can be obtained in Amazon.com and even consulted by the Internet. The conclusions can be reached by analyzing these hypotheses.

REPORT ON THE HYPOTHESES RAISED BY SOME THINKERS IN RELATION TO THE POSSIBLE PRESENCE OF VIKINGS IN MESOAMERICA AND SOUTH AMERICA.

Jacques de Mahieu said that in the summer of the year 967 A.D./C. a fleet of seven Viking ships, coming from the region of Schleswig, located to the north of Germany and the Southwest of Denmark, approached the Mexican coasts, arriving near the Pánuco river, located in the Gulf of Mexico in the today's state of Veracruz.

According to the advanced investigation, this doesn't coincide with what is mentioned by the Sagas of Erick and the Icelandic Sagas that mention that the discovery of America on the part of Leif Eiricksson took place after the year 1000 AD or more than 35 years later. This expedition of Viking navigators towards Mesoamerica could have taken place between the years 1000 to 1010 and not before.

De Mahieu said that a party of white men, of great stature, of Scandinavian origin, and well armed, came on the ships. In command was a leader with the rank of Jarl, which means something like count or duke, named Ullman. According to De Mahieu, these Vikings became dominators of the Toltecs. De Mahieu said that the Toltecs were a very primitive tribe and the Vikings imposed a political order and organized them socially. Ullman becomes king of the Toltecs. They try the same in Mayan territory, further south, but do not succeed,

being rejected by the native Mayans. The above can be considered inaccurate because the Toltec people were highly civilized, and their advanced cities, gold work, sculptures and other archaeological evidence that have reached today prove it. So, the affirmation that they were primitive people is totally incorrect.

The affirmation that they could have been easily dominated by the newly arrived Vikings doesn´t coincide either, since there were numerous Toltec people in comparison with the visitors.

Let's see this subject. It is affirmed, in several websites, more speculation and no proof or solidity, that the Toltec people had a population of approximately 4 million inhabitants. However, I repeat, this is not proven. Others, riskier and without proof, affirm that the population of the zone, in the time of the Toltecs was between 7 and 25 million, which is very difficult to believe and even less to prove.

On the other hand, by serious archaeological means, it has been determined that the Toltec city of Tulla (the most important) had around 30,000 inhabitants. Then, we must go further into the future to calculate a possible more accurate answer. Let's go to the year 1325 when the Aztec city of Tenochtitlan was founded, which had between 80,000 and 200,000 inhabitants, which is more acceptable, if we take into account that, at that time, comparatively speaking, the most important European cities may have had populations of similar size, such as

Constantinople with approximately 200,000 inhabitants, Paris with 185,000 and Venice with 130,000.

Based on the above, we could infer and speculate with some reason, and being very conservative in our statement, that the total population of the region occupied by the Toltec people, could have consisted of a total of between 150,000 and 250,000 inhabitants in the year 1000 AD.

Now, continuing with the analysis of the assertions of Professor Jacques de Mahieu, the Viking hordes that could have arrived in seven drakars, couldn't have carried many men. Let us assume a maximum of 50 men per ship, which gives us a total of 350 Vikings at the most. It is impossible to believe that a party of 350 men could have overpowered Toltec people with a population of at least 150,000. It was a very low number of raiders for them to even attempt to think of subduing the Toltec civilization.

But let us continue with De Mahieu's theory. The Vikings travel further south along the South American coast and reach the coasts of what today is Venezuela and then pass to today's Colombia. They crossed the Cundi-Boyacense Plateu, where Ullman Ullman could have possibly been confused with a God, and they would have named him the Bochica God of the Chibchas.

This speculation, without much evidentiary basis, does not agree with the research carried out by the University team, which refers to several documents of different historians from the time of the conquest.

According to the Jesuit priest Alonso de Medrano, author of his book "Description of the New Kingdom of Granada" dated 1599. In this book, the God Bochica is mentioned as a blond white man who came from the East, who was accompanied by a camel (in America there were no camels), wore a white tunic and gave instruction to the natives. According to this priest, the Bochica God existed about 1500 years before the year 1598 AD, that is, he was in still around the year 98 or 100 AD. That is, about 900 years before the arrival of the Vikings in America, who, we repeat, according to the Icelandic Sagas, arrived in America around the year 1000 AD.

Likewise, according to the historian Bernardo Vargas Machuca in his book "Apologías y Discursos de las conquistas occidentales" of 1599 AD, he speaks of the legend of the God Bochica, who would have arrived to the lands of the Muisca civilization, approximately 1500 years ago. That is, he also agrees that the year in which Bochica was in these territories was around the year 100 AD.

Finally, Fray Pedro Simon, author of "Las Noticias Historiales de las Conquistas de Tierra Firme en las Indias Occidentales" of the year 1626 AD, mentions that the legend of the God Bochica goes back 1400 years ago. That is, according to Fray Simon, Bochica would have existed around the year 200 AD, came from the East, and arrived in Colombia from the Venezuelan plains.

The dates of De Mahieu's theories don't match at all with the aforementioned historians.

De Mahieu also mentions that the name Cundinamarca (Colombian Department) comes from the combination of the Scandinavian words: Shire of Denmark.

According to the research carried out by the University team, the results do not agree with De Mahieu's statement because of the following. According to the records of the histories of the Spanish Conquerors, the name of Cundinamarca has an ancestry in the indigenous Chibcha word: Kuntur Marga, which in Spanish meant Province of the Condor. The Spanish adapted this indigenous word and named the region as Cundinamarca, very similar to Kuntur Marga.

Following the revision of Jacques de Mahieu's theories: Crossing towards the west of the Colombian territory, they reached the coasts of the Pacific Ocean, and went towards the south. They reached what today is Ecuador and later they arrived in Peru. They entered again to continental land and went up to the plateau, finding Lake Titicaca in the limits of what today are Peru and Bolivia, and they settled in the region where Tiahuanaco was. De Mahieu supposes that the Vikings could have been the founders of Tiahuanaco, an argument that from our point of view already becomes a total lack of respect with the culture of those important American indigenous people, being this one of the oldest and most respectable of the native American cultures. The Scandinavian and Viking people of those times did not form a civilization comparable to that of the people of Tiahuanaco, with masterful cities and monuments that have enriched the

cultural heritage found by modern archeology and that can be demonstrated in the present time. We can´t allow, for the sake of making a point, the Nazi and neo-Nazi theories of the Germans and their non-German followers, to attempt to demonstrate the bad way and without evidentiary support to prove, that the Aryan Nordic and Germanic peoples could have been the cradle of civilizations that in reality had an enormous cultural and intellectual advantage over them, since several centuries ago.

According to Professor De Mahieu, continuing the history of the Viking's journey, it seems that the Vikings reached the countries of Paraguay and Argentina from the Bolivian civilization of Tiahuanaco. Another theory is that a group of Viking ships sailed along the South American coast, entering the continent, either by the Amazon River or by the La Plata River in Argentina and arriving to these countries.

The support for these assertions is that there is evidence of Scandinavian runes in the southern cone region and the proven existence of white indigenous populations in those regions.

Our conclusion is that there is insufficient proven evidence to venture opinions such as those put forward in some of Professor Jacques de Mahieu's theories.

Tinna Ólafurdóttir

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Chapter 24

A Harsh and Nostalgic Memory

Two months later
December present time - Manhattan N.Y.

Tinna had returned to Reykjavik from the previous month to attend to various personal matters.

Viking research was well underway, and Tinna and Bruce were planning a possible trip to the southern part of the American continent in order to gather more

information about the possible presence of Viking explorers in South America.

Ten months had passed since the tragic departure of his wife, Amanda, and Bruce's heart was still in recovery.

He had always been a pragmatic and concrete-minded man, but, as they say, that kind of man gets his life in knots when he has to deal with delicate emotional issues, and this was happening to Bruce. At times, he felt like his heart was in a wound up ball and found it difficult to adjust to his new situation as a widowed man.

It was the winter of that year, on a feverish and intemperate night, as if the Universe itself had conspired to create greater challenges to his dwindling emotional strength.

That night he dreamt of her.

That unexpected December night, it had snowed lightly in New York. It was a night of nostalgic longing, for he dreamed of Amanda. A vivid and totally real dream, as if he had spent the previous day with her.

When he woke up in the middle of the night, he felt his defenses collapsing and in the solitude of his apartment, he cried as he had never dared to do before. He cried without feeling ashamed, and he cried as every man must when trying to alleviate pain from the soul. He cried inconsolably and let the feeling of his soul run without having to measure the time and without allowing himself the usual control of his own emotions. He cried for a long time until he was exhausted.

The next day, he drove to East End Avenue between 86th and 87th Streets, in Yorkville, where the apartment they had shared for several years, and where he had been so happy with his beloved Amanda was located.

He walked across the street to Carl Shultz Park and sat down on the same bench just as he had done in the past with Amanda. He was alone, and now he was clearly aware that someone irretrievable was gone. Forever. Forever. And he had to accept it.

The cold sun was no longer able to warm the atmosphere, but only to give an ephemeral feeling of nostalgic softness to the landscape of the park, already covered with white snow that carpeted the paths and sidewalks.

Sitting on that bench, his gaze lost in the vision of the trembling reflection of the landscape, visible between the soft waves of the water mirror of the East River of Manhattan, he watched the minutes pass. In front of him, the hours, the days and his whole life were passing by.

He told himself that it was no longer the time to miss her and that everything was normal, except his soul. Everything was ordinary, except the languid feeling of helplessness that consumed his insides. Everything was acceptable, except the imminent death of his illusions and the total indifference to the lack of will to live that he sometimes felt.

At dusk, returning to his apartment, he prepared a cup of coffee, opened the blinds and saw the snow falling

again in soft flakes that slowly covered the sidewalks. Christmas Eve was almost here, and the Christmas spirit was already alive in the hearts of the people. A wave of melancholy flooded his soul.

At that moment, the muses came rushing in, and he felt the vivid sensation that comes with literary inspiration. Bruce sat down at his desk, opened the computer and began to write.

IF YOU WERE HERE I'D TELL YOU...

If you were here, I would tell you
that the discreet suggestive feeling
of a subtle and complicit longing,
is more eloquent and persuasive,
than the most seductive expressions.

If you were here, I would tell you
that I almost omit the words,
amidst the silent cries
of my truncated and muted dreams.

If you were here, I would tell you
that I always perceive in my deep interior
a pure and crystalline feeling,
that only the shadows of the unknown
can conceive with transparency.

If you were here, I would tell you

about that subtle and unapproachable something
that vibrates in my innermost recesses,
and that comes from the depths of my soul,
beyond this world of appearances.

If you were here, I would tell you
that since long before this time,
since that time of ancestral lives,
I already perceived you and drew you ethereal,
with thousands of colors of hope,
or perhaps an unattainable vain illusion.

If you were here, I would tell you,
that in many of my dreams and vigils,
I already saw you alive, jovial and amusing;
and also, on other occasions,
I had discovered you between sobs,
sadness, wistfulness and melancholy.

If you were here, I would tell you
that that hint of nostalgia and sadness
that I guessed in your dreamy eyes,
already moved the core of my essence.

If you were here, I would tell you
that from this silent feeling,
of nimble impossible illusions,
only the cautious glances and signs remain,
always full of chimerical longing.

If you were here, I would tell you
so many beautiful and fleeting things
that nestle in my wavering soul
with vain and fatuous hopes.

The months passed without pause or calm, he could no longer hold the image of her face and the relentless time erased her features without reserve. Likewise, the memories he had of her way of being, were increasingly diffused and somber, and that hurt him. He could not make sense of the fact that everything had ended so abruptly, after several years of love and understanding, which had not predicted such an abrupt end. But although time healed the wounds, it was also implacable when it came to stealing dreams and illusions and all that was left was an arid feeling of unfathomable emptiness.

But it was time to let life go and move on, accepting whatever came without reservations or worries. He had to continue living however he could.

An unfinished story was left behind. An ancient truth, deep and sad, that would become ephemeral with the passing of time. A misty memory of happy moments already gone, and a past moment that would not be repeated because the time to come would bring new things, only new things.

And he would have to force himself to live… again... But he didn't know how. Maybe later he would know.

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Chapter 25
An Unexpected Twist

Two months later
June, present time.

Tinna was at Keflavik International Airport, boarding the 17:00 Icelandair flight FL615, bound for New York.

When she looked for her assigned seat, she found that it was occupied by an obese man of average height, who didn't even look up from his magazine when she

asked him about the seat. He didn't answer either, and continued reading impassively, oblivious.

“I'm talking to you, sir. You are in my seat. 21D. Here in my boarding pass. It says that this is my chair.”

The man continued to pretend to read his magazine pretending that the matter was not with him.

Three times she addressed the question to him without getting any answer.

“How rude are you?," said Tinna, raising her voice and already visibly irritated. “Answer me!”

Nearby passengers were watching the scene and no one could not help but pay attention to the event. However, some of them began to make loud comments to pressure the individual to answer Tinna.

At that moment, as the uncomfortable situation began to turn very sour, the flight attendant rushed over and asked the man to show his boarding pass and verify the seat number. The man remained silent and impassive, appearing to read his magazine and not taking any notice. Four times the flight attendant respectfully asked him to show her the boarding pass, but the man did not even look up.

Now the situation began to get heated.

“Hey, asshole," shouted an upset passenger, "it's you, you son of a bitch, Do you want me to make you answer for real? Stand up, I'm going to bust you! You unconscious bastard!”

“Yes, get the fat bastard out," shouted another.

“That's right, get him out," said another one.

Two other large passengers had already risen from their chairs and were surrounding the obese individual with a visibly aggressive attitude, ready to give him what he deserved.

Roger Klein, commander of the Icelandair aircraft, alarmed by the shouting inside the cabin, decided to take the situation into his own hands and after getting a good look at the situation, rushed to the scene of the problem.

“Sir, As Commander of this aircraft, I am ordering you to stand down immediately and leave the aircraft. You will no longer be allowed to fly with us, otherwise, I am obliged to call airport security to have you removed.”

“I am not leaving," said the man, looking up, "if you think you are so tough, take me out yourself.”

He slurred his words grotesquely and from his mouth came out a smell of liquor mixed with an unpleasant musk of addiction. The man was drunk out of his mind.

When he looked up to speak to the Captain, his stomach had already become upset, and he surprisingly vomited all over his own clothes, in a disgusting and odorous spectacle, staining the seat and practically the entire area.

Five minutes later, four burly police officers, impeccably uniformed in black, entered the plane and after a slight interrogation, when no response was received, they proceeded to remove his seat belt,

immobilized him, and dragged him down the aisle forcibly removing the drunk.

Tinna, impressed, looked inquisitively at the commander.

“I'm sorry captain. I can't sit in that seat. It smells horrible.”

“Don't worry, miss. We have already called for service to clean it; however, I you can take a seat in the cockpit so you can travel comfortably.”

“Thank you very much," said Tinna, as she followed the captain into the cockpit.

Once in the cockpit, the Captain presented his hand to salute and said, “I am Captain Roger Klein, Commander of this Aircraft, and on behalf of Icelandair airline, I want to apologize for the problem. I hope that now you will be able to enjoy this trip.”

“I am Tinna Ólafurdóttir," she answered, "It is nice to meet you, Captain.

“You are not related to Ólafur Einarsson, from Julius Global Inc. are you?”

“Yes, I am his daughter, and I work with my father at Julius Global Inc. How do you know him?

“It can't be," said the Captain with a smile. "Icelandair is developing an information technology management program with servers managed by his firm in Iceland. I have participated in the company's decision-making committee to award them the contract.”

“Yes," Tinna replied. "I am well aware of that negotiation with us, as I was the one who presented our

proposal to Icelandair executives, and we earned the business.

“As they say, it's definitely a small world," said the Captain smiling, "Actually, we are practically from the same family.”

“Right, Captain! It's nice to meet you," said Tinna.

“Of course, I would have liked to have met you under less unpleasant circumstances than this drunkard," said the Captain, smiling.

“Captain, please excuse my question, but that last name of yours, Klein, sounds very American to me. Isn't it the same as the name of the Calvin Klein firm?”

“To tell you the truth, I'm not sure because I don't know much about my father's family, who passed away when I was about five years old. Someone in my family, not very reliable, told me that we are distant relatives of the famous designer Calvin Richard Klein, from New York. But another person with more arguments mentioned to me that my family descends from a branch of Austrian descent, as distant relatives of the famous Austrian psychoanalyst Melanie Klein; but I have no way to prove it.”

“Ah, it's because we are developing a proposal for Calvin Klein Limited these days. Let's hope we gain that business.”

“I wish you the best of luck with this negotiation, Miss?”

“My name is Tinna, Captain. Please call me Tinna.”

“And you, please call me Roger, just Roger," said the Captain, smiling.

The flight lasted a little more than six hours and in their free time Tinna and Roger continued to talk animatedly.

Once they landed in New York, when they were saying goodbye, Roger said to her:

“Look Tinna, I would like to apologize again for the drunken event on the plane, and invite you to dinner as a sign of atonement; I know a good restaurant on 5th. Avenue. I don't know if you know it, it's called The Petrie Court Café.”

“Sure, I think it's great to have a nice dinner in Manhattan.”

“Then I'll pick you up tomorrow at 8:00 p.m., okay?”

“Sounds perfect to me.”

Tinna gave him Bruce's address where she would be staying in New York, and they said goodbye.

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The next day, at 7:58 pm, Bruce's apartment doorbell rang. Tinna answered. Something was said to the doorman, and she hung up.

“Who was it?” asked Bruce.

“I forgot to tell you that I have an appointment with someone, the man's name is Roger, Roger Klein. He is the pilot of the Islandair flight from the fiasco I told you

about that happened to me on the plane with that drunk. Do you remember?"

"No, I don't remember, which drunk?"

"Hey, I think you're getting Alzheimer's, don't tell me you don't remember that last night I told you about the case on the plane with a drunk who was pulled off the plane by the security guards, and the commander of the aircraft allowed me to sit in the cockpit?"

"Of course," Tinna continued, "Sometimes you don't pay attention to me."

"Oh, right," said Bruce, "I forgot, but I think I remember. So, the pilot asked you to go out?"

"No, not to go out, but to dinner and nothing else! Now, don't tell me you're getting jealous. I didn't know that side of you, Bruce."

"Me? Jealous? No, no way! But why would I be jealous?"

"Because of your stupidity. Well, I have to go down now. I'll see you later. I think I'll be back around 10:30 or 11:00. Bye."

They said goodbye with a kiss on the cheek and the girl left.

Bruce was confused, uncomfortable. He was distracted for a while looking out the window towards *Central Park*, with the streetlights on, faintly shading the paths, illuminating the people who were walking or running doing their nightly exercise. Bruce couldn't think of anything, he couldn't concentrate, and in his mind the

ideas ran over and over, going round and round, feeling a sense of discomfort.

“No, I'm not annoyed. No!” thought Bruce. “But, not annoyed. What I am is furious! For fuck's sake! I think I've gone too far with the indecision to end the duel for Amanda and definitely court Tinna. Besides, she has hinted it to me, and I have stubbornly continued clinging to a past that is irretrievable. What a fucker!”

Bruce had to go to bed early as he had an early flight to Washington the next day and had to get up at 4:30 in the morning.

Before turning off the light of the bedside table lamp, he looked at the clock; it was 10:45 pm and Tinna had not yet arrived. With the light off he thought of Tinna and a nagging feeling of anxiety lingered in his heart for a while, then deepened.

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Chapter 26

Skirmishes in Vinland

Year 1069 AD.
Village of Leifsbúðir in Vinland (America)

The storm clouds they saw on the imaginary horizon were not of rain or thunder, but of hardship and despair. In the same week, there had already been two attacks in which three settlers had been wounded. In the last month, they had already had nine dead and thirteen wounded, and two were in very bad condition with a prognosis of an early fatal outcome.

Several men were in the forest logging, when the watchman noticed, almost too late, the now customary and undesirable approach of the *Mi'Kmaq* warriors. They had to make their escape to the protection of the palisade, which allowed the colony´s defense a chance of success.

The fort protected a settlement of Viking settlers, a village called in Scandinavian: *Leifsbúðir*.

In the rush, one of the settlers, a young man named Njord Thorsteinsson, cousin of Thorgils Leifsson, son of Leif Ericksson, and nephew of the latter, tripped over a boulder, stumbled and fell to the ground, rolled down a slope and hit his head hard on a log, knocking him unconscious. One of the natives caught a glimpse of him as he fell. He was the son of Thorstein Ericksson, and grandson of the late Erick El Rojo. He was a young man of 16, with red hair, with an impressive stature for his young age, well above average, animated, and the desire to take charge of life in one big bite. Those who knew him well said that he was always awake, agile of mind, curious, alert, and he was aware of everything. In spite of his age, he was an expert in cutting wood and carried the logs on his shoulders with much more dexterity and strength than his older companions.

The others arrived just in time to take shelter. That day, the natives appeared on the north side of the barrier that protected the village. They arrived on horseback, and they were about fifty Indians armed. They had bows of hard and flexible wood, pointed arrows with stone tips, bamboo spears with sharp stone blades, axes with iron heads, heavy mallets and stone truncheons, and boleadoras in which several rounded rocks were joined together by liana ropes tied at a single point. These boleadoras were thrown from over the head, and hurled them towards a target to kill, wound or knock down.

They split into three groups to attack, making the siege on three different flanks of the gate. Their terrifying howls filled the atmosphere with terror and hatred, and their faces were marked with war paint and attire of aggressive ferocity. However, even more frightening was their bellicose attitude. their determination of the bloody attack, and their faces with the visible desire to sow death with no mercy.

The hordes of Indians were numerous in comparison with the scarce defense forces of the colonists. Although, each time they came, they did so with not very big and always different groups of men with different chiefs who commanded the warriors. They commanded in a series of successive attacks in the style of the guerrilla skirmish, where they attacked. After a while they disappeared from the field, to return a few days later with another group of new and different men but of the same race. Each time they inflicted new casualties on their deteriorating resistance and diminished their population, it was difficult to recruit new settlers who wanted to come from Greenland to Vinland, to endure the harsh conditions of life in the midst of the quarrels that often arose with the natives.

Yes, *Vinland* was indeed a beautiful but dangerous land. What the settlers were looking for was a place to settle in peace and prosperity, and what they had found was war and enormous difficulties, given the natives' reluctance to allow them to make permanent use of their land.

Although, at the beginning, they had allowed them to settle in a temporary way, while they developed some kind of commercial exchange, this did not imply giving up the ownership of their lands that for generations had belonged to their people. The Indians did not accept that the new inhabitants, in their own domains, had built houses, solid and strong buildings, to remain indefinitely on their lands. What they wanted was to force them to withdraw immediately and definitively.

Harald Thorvaldson, another nephew of the late Leif Ericksson, and son of Thorvald and his wife Freydis Eirikdóttir, sister of Leif, and daughter of Erick the Red, had the command, as Chief of the community of Vinland. He felt the obligation to protect his fellow countrymen, being this the mission that had been entrusted to him by his relatives, but this work was becoming more and more complicated.

Of difficult and scarce dialogue, his companions thought that their leader was parsimonious and silent. However, when he demanded order, it was impossible to refuse because his eyes gave off what seemed to be fire. Harald Thorvaldson was the epitome of a cold tranquility, almost immutable in the face of any event, no matter how complex it might have been, and which would have affected and uncontrolled another. He was unflappable at almost all times, except when his orders were not carried out, which was almost never. Otherwise, Harald reflected an inner peace that was insinuated in the fact that he always had an unquestionable stability to handle

situations and people. It was said that he had the peaceful and stable character of Thorvald, his father, and also the terrible and bloodthirsty ardor of Freydis, his mother, when he was upset, which fortunately almost never happened.

His mother and uncles, based in Greenland, had not returned to Vinland, as they were too old for such adventures. Apart from the journey being very tiring, the danger of the indigenous Mi'Kmaq, made life there very complicated. But not only with the Mi'Kmaq, they also had difficulties with the beothuk, and occasionally when they intended to go into the territory, they encountered other tribes of the region such as the: Mohawk, Onondaga, Oneida, Cayuga and Seneca.

The reason for maintaining this colony in the lands of Vinland was the exploitation of the rich timber that existed in the area and that they took advantage of as merchandise that they could take to Greenland and Iceland and gain high profits. They also competed with the natives for furs, and for this reason, the natives resented their presence.

All decisions made in the Vinland colony were weighed by a committee, headed by Harald Thorvaldson and his cousin Thorhall Thorfinnsson, who was second in command in the Vinland colony. The latter was second in command in the colony, and was Harald´s second cousin.

Thorhall was the son of Thorfinn Karlsefni and his mother was Gudrid, ex-wife of the late Thorstein Ericksson, who was the brother of Leiff Ericksson,

Freydis. Likewise, young Njord Thorsteinsson, fallen, wounded in the aforementioned skirmish, was a cousin too.

On the subject of war, now the natives provoked the attacks and had metal and stone weapons that the Viking settlers had taught them to make, and had the fighting techniques that Vikings had also taught them.

It was the seventh month of the year, and the summer shone down on the landscapes with reverberating boiling images. In the heat of the midday, the fight between natives and settlers was much more dramatic and exhausting, especially for the Vikings who still remembered their frozen lands where the climate helped them not to tire.

That day, seven natives and four settlers had already fallen amidst the din. At that moment, an accurate arrow pierced the heart of a plump settler who had expressed fear since the beginning of the day, surely foreshadowing his soon end.

The obese man was fighting right next to Harald, and in an instant of harald's carelessness, while looking at the badly wounded companion, an Indian took advantage. The Indian was located seven meters away, who with great force threw a stone ax against and hit his head.

The immediate darkness left him with certainty that up to that point he had been able to participate in the fight, and then came the emptiness of unconsciousness.

On the other side of Harald was a young colonist just out of puberty, who with great skill was shooting arrows with incredible speed. He did not see what happened, but he did hear the shocking cracking sound coming from Harald's skull as it fractured under the blow of the ax. While he watched out of the corner of his eye, Harald fell unconscious.

The battle had lasted a little less than an hour and untimely the natives retreated, taking their wounded and dead with them. That night, Harald Thorvaldson remained in a coma.

Now Thorhall Thorfinnsson, was faced with the unexpected circumstance of having to assume the responsibility of taking over the command of the community of *Leifsbúðir*, Vinland, due to Harald's indisposition.

Thorhall was a red-head, with a thick beard, hard features and medium height, with a sharp mind, quick thinking and quick to understand the positions and approaches of his comrades. He was a bit demanding when exercising command, and he was sometimes criticized by his comrades when he would go too far when scolding a subordinate in front of anyone. However, he was an excellent second-in-command, who never saw any inconvenience in carrying out orders to a letter. But now, having the obligation to assume full command, he felt insecure, and in addition, he lacked Harald's experience, opinions and company. In those days, he demonstrated irritability, frowning, and eyes that did not

concentrate on anything and changed targets frequently, as if he was making an effort to concentrate on everything at once. Without succeeding, he scolded his subordinates more than necessary, overreacted and shouted orders to give the impression that he had the gift of command and the situation under control. This was not the case, and his companions felt his insecurity and nervousness.

At the moment of withdrawing from the battlefield, the natives found young Njord Thorsteinsson in some bushes where he had fallen after hitting his head. Sleepy and more drowsy than awake, he was taken to the village of the natives, some nine kilometers away, and was taken prisoner.

His companions thought that the missing young Njord had perhaps lost his way and figured he died in the fight. They did not notice the fact that he had been taken prisoner, and there began a new stage of life for Njord in the *Mi'Kmaq* community.

Although the *Mi'Kmaq* were accustomed to torturing and murdering prisoners, the young Njord curiously took a liking to them, and they respected his life. In the months following his capture, Njord was able to learn more about the *Mi'Kmaq* culture. *The Mi'Kmaq* began to regard the young settler with a certain deference as he never sat still and managed to participate in some way in the activities of the community, doing work that he considered useful to everyone, even if he was limited by his status as a prisoner.

The *Mi'Kmaq* were a tribe belonging to the Algonquian Indians, a confederation of many scattered clans, which nevertheless had the same strong ethnic heritage. They were inhabitants of what is now southern Canada, near the mouth of the St. Lawrence River, on the island of Newfoundland (*Vinland*).

The *Sagamore* or chieftain of the tribe was a great and powerful native, who imparted his justice and orders to his subordinates, in accordance with the judgments emanating from a council of elders. He exercised the command without overstepping, since the leadership was granted by the tribe at the head of the chieftain, and he exercised authority with moderation and more with a criterion of community service.

Among the different Algonquin clans there were certain rivalries and they only met to discuss war issues and peace agreements. The main rivals of the *Mi'Kmaq* were the Beothuk, natives of the area, whose main characteristic was that they painted their faces and clothes with red dye and were very skilled in seal fishing. The disagreements were originated by the use of the lands and the care of natural resources.

Among the *Mi'Kmaq* there were no social classes or slavery and all were similar in status. They were dedicated to hunting large game such as caribou, bison, fallow deer and marine fauna such as seals, sea lions, fish and shellfish. They were not accustomed to agriculture, except for the cultivation of corn, and were gatherers of vegetables such as fruits and wild vegetables. Their

dwelling, where families lived individually, were called wigwam, and were rounded conical domes, made of wood and straw.

Although the Viking settlers called the natives Mi'Kmaq, by the nickname of "*skraelingar*" which in Scandinavian language means "*ugly men*", Njord learned that the *Mi'Kmaq* called the settlers "smelly men" which in Icelandic Viking language was said "*slæmt lykta*," given their unpleasant habit of rarely bathing. Among the natives´ customs was that of bathing daily, and they resented the whites for the absence of this custom. Njord also learned from the natives to bathe daily.

A few days after his arrival in the *Mi'Kmaq* village, young Njord noticed someone who looked at him insistently and without any reserve. It was a beautiful, petite native girl, with large black eyes and an intelligent look. She was very curious about the young man with carrot-colored hair and a height that reminded her of the religious totems that were at the entrance of the village.

Weeks and the first two months passed and Njord was gaining the trust of the natives as he was a great collaborator with the village chores. Little by little, he was adapting to the life of the tribe and was making friends among the young natives of his own age. They called him in Algonquian language, *Opechancanough*, which meant "*He whose soul is white*." They said that the word white did not refer to the color of his skin but to the clarity and cleanliness of his soul. They had removed his moorings and allowed him to wander about the village,

provided he did not go beyond the watch line demarcated by the lookouts at the edge of the territory. He was threatened that arrows would be shot at him if he violated this command.

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Chapter 27
A Love Story: A Viking and a Mi'Kmaq

Year 1069 AD.
Village of the Mi'Kmaq people

A few weeks later…

It was night. The images of the village people and the dancing shadows were distorted. They were generated through the glowing reflections of the burning bonfires, blended into each other in a miscellany of shapes and shadows, illuminated by the bright fires and shadowed by the nocturnal darkness.

They were very young, and they were dazzled by the enthusiastic events of the night celebration in the Mi'Kmaq village. It was when they suddenly saw each other. A long look connected them again and forever. Both were transfixed, frozen, as if time had stopped and the planet itself had stopped spinning. Whatever could have been happening around them, from one moment to the next, was happening as if reality had slowed down and the events were suddenly being presented on a slow motion stage, losing their main characteristic of being real, to become mere facts of a surreal nature; a kind of impressionism, not painted, but lived. An instant whose presence was happening between two worlds, that of

fantasy and that of reality, but this being a reality surrounded by floating veils and nebulous appearances.

It was a deep and transgressive gaze, interculturally Infringing. That gaze between the two effectively infringed all their apprehensions and demureness. That look went past any cultural difference, any ethnic difference, any ancestral and temporal difference, and any customary or religious difference. They were saying everything to each other, but there were no words to do so. There was no common language to express what they wanted, but they didn't need it; they were speaking with the language of the soul, which was clearer than words.

They felt and understood for the first time that when the heart speaks the mind becomes silent, the mind is blocked and the underlying reality becomes forceful. Then, the profound reality emerges and becomes definitive, incontrovertible. And everything external that surrounds it, becomes a simple scenographic decoration, totally dispensable and puerile.

There were no words between them, there was no language to use, there was not even a common vestige of some cultural ancestor that could identify them. No. Everything was new to them. They were too young to have memories and experiences and they only had ahead of them what they could build together. There was no history to hold on to, no legends in their respective cultures that would allow them to affirm that what they felt had already been experienced by other fellow countrymen.

However, they were already certain that this was not the first time. They knew that they had already been together in several distant pasts of previous centuries, and they had always agreed and revalidated a bond that united them forever and ever.

That night there were many glances between them. A subtle smile fell softly and cautiously, and that complicity that came from atavistic times. It would continue forever and ever.

The young Njord Thorsteinsson, was seated in the circle among the dancing shadows that played on his impressive face. He was invited by the village elders to be present at the feast, and they watched with special curiosity what was happening. How he was now totally distracted by the presence of the beautiful young native girl.

Her name was *Onawa*, which meant "*Born in a grandiose dawn.*" She was a beautiful young woman grace, and a calculated agility befitting a clever fawn from the nearby woods. She was the beloved youngest daughter of Chief Pajackok Donehogawa, which meant, "*Thunder that watches over the sunset*", a chief regarded with special reverence by the natives, for being a just, honorable, and wise man.

Two years passed and they became great friends, and a bit more. Not a day went by that they did not share their experiences, and to everyone in the tribe, they were a couple. Njord learned the language of the *Mi'Kmaq* tribe; likewise, *Onawa* also learned the Icelandic Viking

language perfectly. On the other hand, Njord had adapted to all the customs of the *Mi'Kmaq*, and was already considered part of the tribe. In the quarrels and skirmishes with other tribes of the region, he was already allowed to participate as a full *Mi'Kmaq* warrior, which attracted a lot of attention given the difference in his physical characteristics in relation to other members of the tribe.

Little by little, the *Mi'Kmaq* had stopped harassing the Viking settlers, but they continued to have difficulties due to clashes with other natives of the region, which made life very difficult for them.

The *Mi'Kmaq* village was located at the mouth of the *Kaniatarowanenneh* River, now called the *St. Lawrence River*, in front of Newfoundland Island in Canada. One day, the news arrived that a curious vessel, typical of the Viking settlers, was sailing in the distance, probably heading towards the area where the village of Leifsbúðir was located with the settlers' fort on the aforementioned island. They learned that they were the remnants of the colony that had come from the distant land of *Minnesota*, and that they no longer intended to return to that land. Some time later, they learned that the settlers were now planning a final return to their home country.

Armed with courage and the impertinence of a very young man, Njord saw a golden opportunity where others might see a serious difficulty. With great determination, he went straight to *Chief Pajackok Donehogawa*, "*Venerable Chief Pajackok, I have decided to marry*

Onawa, and I want you to be the first to know. I know of the love you feel for her. I will take care of her like the most beautiful and rare wild flower. I also want to thank you for the consideration you have given me in these years, giving me the opportunity to be an active member of this community; and likewise, I want you to know that I will be worthy of your trust. It is imperative for me to unite in marriage with *Onawa*, and I want your consent. Without which, she would not accept, which would make us both unhappy. Also, I want to travel with her and my people back to *Greenland* so that she can get to know our people, our Viking customs, and live with my family."

He stared at him. His imperturbable face said nothing, not a single muscle in his face had the slightest movement. For a few eternal minutes, his deep gaze was lost, hypnotized, focused on the view of distant snow-capped mountains and millennial forests with thousands of greenish tones that embellished the horizon.

"Go and sit in front of my tent and wait for me there," *Chief Pajackok* replied.

He said nothing more.

The *young* Njord stood up, bowed his head silently and walked out to the Chief's tent and sat down in front of the entrance.

The first day passed, and the night came and Njord was still sitting in front of *Chief Pajackok's* tent, not moving, in the same position. Sometimes he stretched his legs to unwind and then returned to the position. The cold was bitter and the early morning frost made him feel sick.

He was terrified and almost lost consciousness, but he did not move from his place.

The second day passed with no new events. Young Njord was sitting in front of the entrance to *Chief Pajackok's* tent, but it showed no signs of life. He did not leave his tent all day, nor did he speak to Njord. Perhaps he still did not have an answer, or perhaps that was his answer, contempt. He did not know at the time, but he did not move from his spot.

The third, fourth and fifth days came. The carrot-haired young man was whiter than ever, pale and unripe, with an unpleasant tone, his skin was somewhere between grayish and burnt, his lips parched and split, his skin cracked by the weather and his guts protesting noisily for lack of food and drink. *Chief Pajackok* did not appear in those days either. He did not leave his tent and had no answer for Young Njord. Around his body, which remained in the same cross-legged position as on the first day, the women of the village and his native friends had placed plenty of food and drink on the ground for him to eat, but he did not eat a morsel. The village dogs feasted on such provocative viands, but he remained unmoved. In a nearby tent, from time to time, Onawa's sobs could be heard amidst the sepulchral silence of the entire tribe. It was imperative to respect the event, for it was a memorable moment for all.

On the morning of the sixth day, young Njord fainted. He could no longer sit upright and laid down in

the dust, but always in front of *Chief Pajackok's* tent, from where he had not moved.

At noon of that sixth day, it was unbearably hot, as the canicular sun was beating hard, and hit the young Viking even harder, but he did not give up, he continued to resist until the end.

Surprisingly, the blanket that covered the entrance of *Chief Pajackok's* tent was opened.

He came out with a firm step, dressed in his best ceremonial attire, his shiny leather breastplate, the zamarras of dancing leather straps, which moved in time with the movements of his body. He wore the moccasins of virgin leather and the enormous plume of feathers that distinguished him as the highest ranking personage in the village.

He stood in front of the boy, who was lying in the dust, being helped by two old women who were carefully supplying him with liquids in small sips to slowly begin to hydrate him. The young man sat up.

The Chief spoke, *"Young Opechancanough, just as your name says, you have shown that you have a clear and strong soul and perhaps because of this, the Great Spirit, Manitou, has favored you with the gifts of strength of spirit, unwavering purpose and a will to fight, similar to that of the honorable bison, conditions which you have been able to assimilate and take advantage of. My soul is filled with joy and respect for you. I am proud that you are now going to be my closest relative. Since my daughter was born, I have always dreamed of the day*

when the man who would be her husband would arrive, and that he would be someone with special conditions and who could earn my respect and the respect of my people. My daughter has chosen you with good judgment, and I support your union. I respect your wishes to travel to live with your people in the lands of the whites, beyond where the eastern sun rises, and to form a home with respect and honor. The marriage will be performed by the ceremonies you desire, and I suppose you wish to respect each other's beliefs, so if it is your wish it will be done by the Algonquin and Christian ceremonies."

Then he asked the old ladies, “And how is the boy?”

“Quite well, a little dehydrated, but he is very strong and has not suffered from the fasting," answered one of the old women.

A murmur of joy arose throughout the village and people began to approach to watch the scene with respect and admiration. The singing of heartfelt Indian tunes to the sound of drums began to announce the event.

Young Owana arrived and embraced her fiancé with manifest affection and she sat on the ground, and she cradled him, helping the old women who were feeding him.

Njord was coming out of his lethargy as the food was comforting his body again.

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Days Later
Drums!

That was what the settlers in the community of *Leifsbúðir*, Vinland heard. The resounding drums announced the approaching party of natives. Strangely, they did not do so with the normal surreptitious silence, but announced their arrival with singing and drumming, which made the situation rather strange.

The first thing they saw approaching the fort was a group of some thirty or forty natives, behind a man, curiously tall, dressed in Indian garb, but far from their usual warlike attire, they came in ceremonial clothes. The man in front was a tall, stocky white man, with carrot-colored hair, and he looked familiar. Next to him was a petite and beautiful young woman, although clearly of native features. And on the other side, someone important, with a dashing and proud bearing distinguished clothing, especially the plume that showed him to be an important leader.

Amazed, standing on the top of the palisade, with their hands on their weapons but without aiming, bewildered and surprised, they wondered about the reason for that strange spectacle.

It was then that someone recognized him.

“Don't attack," said one of them.

“It seems to be Njord Thorsteinsson," said another, "He is not dead, he is here and has come with the natives.”

It had been more than two years since he had been lost and presumed dead. Now everyone in the fort was

celebrating the welcoming; the return of Njord Thorsteinsson and the curious friendship with the natives.

After the required explanations, the next day they celebrated the marriage ceremony of the young couple. It was presided over, on the one hand, by his cousin Harald Thorvaldson, as the highest chief of the Viking colony, in the absence of an ecclesiastical authority. He had been fully recovered from his injury for a year, and on the other hand, by the shaman of the *Mi'Kmaq tribe*.

A few weeks later, Njord Thorsteinsson and his wife Owana left for Greenland. It was one of the last Viking emigrant excursions that were now returning to Greenland and Iceland, ending their stay in North America, and leaving the Viking settlement for good.

They settled in *Brattahlíð* (today Qassiarsuk), on the farm founded by their late grandfather, Erick the Red, in the region of *Eiríksfjord* (Tunugdliarfik) in the Eastern Settlement of the Island. For a time they devoted themselves to farming and tending the farm. This was a settlement consisting of 500 agricultural and livestock farms, with about 5000 people, and had an Augustinian monastery and a Benedictine convent and twelve parishes.

Later Njord and Owana decided to settle in Iceland and again they married, this time by the Catholic Christian rite and became totally assimilated to Viking culture, and had a long line of descendants.

Chapter 28

An Article on Amerindian Genetic Traces

in Icelandic Settlers

In the midst of their research, Bruce and Tinna came across the following article dated November 16, 2010 from the American Journal of Physical Anthropology entitled:

THE FIRST GENETIC CONTACT BETWEEN EUROPE AND AMERICA OCCURRED FIVE CENTURIES BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF COLUMBUS.

Researchers at the Institute of Evolutionary Biology (CSIC-UPF) participated in the discovery of a lineage of Amerindian origin in four families in Iceland. A woman would have been taken by the Vikings from the American continent to the island around the year 1000.
Several archaeological remains and chronicles show that the Vikings set foot on American soil centuries before the arrival of Christopher Columbus. The Viking settlement discovered at L'Anse aux Meadows in Newfoundland, Canada, and medieval Icelandic texts such as the Saga of the Greenlanders and the Saga of Erik the Red, written in the 13th century, suggest that these tireless explorers began to reach the North American coast from the 10th century onwards. Now, a team of researchers from the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) has found for the first time that this pre-Columbian presence also has a

genetic basis. The work is published in the American Journal of Physical Anthropology.

The key has been found by researchers in the genetic analysis of four families in Iceland, currently comprising about 80 people. The scientists have found a genetic lineage of Amerindian origin and have reconstructed the genealogies of up to four ancestors around the year 1700. Until now, it was known that the genes of the current inhabitants of the island came from the Scandinavian countries, Scotland and Ireland, but it was not known that the origin was more distant.

The lineage found, called C1e, is also mitochondrial, which means that these genes were introduced to Iceland by a woman. "As the island has been virtually isolated since the 10th century, the most feasible hypothesis is that these genes correspond to an Amerindian woman who was brought from America by the Vikings around the year 1000. Curiously, this fact would have remained hidden because this woman was anonymous," says CSIC researcher Carles Lalueza-Fox, who works at the Institute of Evolutionary Biology, a joint center of the CSIC and the Universitat Pompeu Fabra. The study was also carried out by researchers from the University of Iceland and the biopharmaceutical company deCODE Genetics, both in Reykjavik.

The study stems from the discovery four years ago of four Icelanders with a mitochondrial C lineage, which is typical of indigenous Americans and East Asians and absent in Europe. "It was first thought that they came

from Asian families recently established in Iceland, but when the family genealogies were studied, it was discovered that the four families came from four ancestors located between 1710 and 1740, and that they came from the same region in southern Iceland, close to the huge Vatnajökull glacier," details the CSIC researcher.

THE GENES OF THE ICELANDERS

To determine that this small part of the genes from the American continent would have passed to Europe, the researchers have used the deCODE family database, which collects the genealogies of all Icelanders and 80% of Icelanders who have existed. This information is of great use in the study of complex genetic diseases. Iceland's population (with about 320,000 inhabitants) is large enough for all diseases affecting Europeans to be present, yet small enough for scientists to monitor genetic diversity.

Researchers are now looking to find some pre-Columbian remnant with the same genetic sequence. "So far we have gone back to the early 18th century, but it would be interesting to be able to find an older remnant in Iceland with this same sequence. The first place to look would be in the same region where the four families with the Amerindian lineage come from, since, as is most logical, their ancestors should be buried there," adds Lalueza-Fox.

Sigridur Sunna Ebenesersdóttir, Ásgeir Sigurdsson, Federico Sánchez-Quinto, Carles Lalueza-Fox, Kári Stefánsson and Agnar Helgason (2010) "A new subclade of mtDNA Haplogroup C1 found in Icelanders: evidence of pre-columbian contact?",
American Journal of Physical Anthropology.

Chapter 29

Who will help the "Widow's Son?"

Washington D.C.
Spring season, current time

It was 10 a.m. and Robert Pilkington's cell phone rang.

“Hello?”

“Hello Robert”

“Hello? Bruce? Hi Bruce. It's a miracle that you called me. We haven't spoken in months, how are you?”

“Fine, thanks, and you?”

“I'm very well, Bruce. When did you arrive in Washington? How nice to hear from you. Where are you staying? What's the surprise?”

“Well, I just arrived. I'm staying at The Dupont Circle, and I was wondering, *"Who will help the widow's son?"*

“Well, if that's the case, right away, D:.F:. (*Dear Friend*), is it serious? Whenever you want. What about this afternoon?

"That's the point," thought Robert, "Something had to give and only on odd occasions would I ask for help."

“And is it very urgent?”

“Well, I would say so, but not life or death. But maybe it is urgent. Sometimes emotional things are also urgent," answered Bruce. “How about this evening at the Kramerbooks & Afterwords Café on Connecticut Ave? How about 6:30 pm?”

“Perfect, Bruce Whatever you say.. Is it very urgent? Do you want to give me a clue?”

“No, I'd rather in person.”

“Perfect. Whatever you say. Around 6:30 at the Kramerbooks, then.”

“See you there, D:.F:. Robert, sending hugs and thank you.”

At the end of the afternoon of that day, they were already talking at the agreed place.

After the usual greetings and hugs, they ordered some whiskies and Robert asked, "Well, what brings you to Washington? What's the urgency?”

“I am here because I am advising a world organization, the IDB, and I have a couple of meetings, one was this afternoon and the other is tomorrow. It is a financing issue for Nicaragua, but it is complicated. Our recommendation is that they do not do it because they are short on money, and we do not see it viable that they can make a serious commitment to pay their debts, and even less so with this government regime.

“Well, now tell me, what is the problem you called me about?”

“Well, it is not a problem. It is something I want to get your perspective on so you can help me review and understand it. Something that is happening to me, and something crucial for me, and to a certain extent I feel it is urgent. I want to take advantage of my stay here in Washington to ask for your advice, since I have always

considered you a very judicious and sensible person in your perceptions.

“Yes, thank you for your comment, but what is it about?” Robert said almost impatiently.

“I told you some time ago that I was having a friendship with someone who caught my eye, and with whom I was doing some historical research, right?”

“Yes, of course I remember, the girl from Iceland, and I think you told me her name was Tinna or something like that, but go on.”

“Well, the truth is," Bruce continued, "It has been difficult for me to accept Amanda's death, and that has complicated things for me. Although I'm interested in starting a relationship with Tinna, at one point I dragged my feet and I didn´t approach the topic, because I still don't feel ready enough to get into a serious relationship.”

“Now, Tinna has been coming to New York several times in the last few months to advance the proposed research. A couple of weeks ago, Tinna came and on the flight she met an Icelandic pilot who invited her to dinner. I think they are starting a friendship, which I suppose, may lead to something more serious. It is possible that given that I hesitated on proposing a formal relationship to Tinna, I missed my chance.”

Bruce continued, “I understand that she has to move on with her life and will not be waiting indefinitely for me to make up my mind, but I have my doubts and have not felt able to define the situation. On the other

hand, I think that if I go on like this, I might miss a good chance to rebuild my life. What do you think?"

"Look Bruce," Robert replied, "There are emotional issues that are as complex as they are strange and indefinable, and for which there are hardly any pre-established answers, as if they were mathematical formulas. The issues of the soul are uncertain and the best answer I could give you is to allow a space for reflection where you can have a deep contact with your inner self and allow your own State of Consciousness to answer you from the depths of your being."

"I know it's not the hard and fast answer you're looking for, but trying to find hard and fast answers in cases like this tends to be more of a mistake than a solution. If the relationship you are looking for is fairly solid, then you can afford to wait a while longer until you are more solid in your answer. I think that thirteen months since your wife's death is perhaps a short time, which depends on each individual case. There can be no standard for determining whether it is a short or long time."

"I think it would be wise to wait a little longer to consolidate your feelings and allow the emotional space you need."

"In short," Robert replied, "all I can tell you is that you have to be patient and act with prudence; a bad decision to accelerate the events can ruin the relationship in the long run if things happen. On the other hand, when

you feel that there is peace inside you, that may be the right time to start a more formal relationship."

Bruce was grateful for the meeting with Robert and his advice. They talked a little more. They talked about the company, how the results were going and also about Robert's restaurant. Then, they drained their drinks and hugged each other goodbye.

Now, Bruce felt calmer; however, some restlessness persisted and he had to make a decision: either he would decide to start a relationship with Tinna or he would decide to take the risk of losing that possible relationship, waiting for a more propitious moment. But perhaps, that would be the wisest.

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Chapter 30
A Lucky Surprise and a Complex Decision

Tinna awoke in the morning in high spirits. It was a splendid day and already a bright spring sun was

shining, reverberating through the multi-green trees of *Central Park*, which could be seen from the apartment window.

She had arrived in New York from Reykjavik on the night flight and had entered Bruce's apartment with the key he had given her several months earlier. At the building's concierge's office, they practically recognized her as Mr. Merino's partner, and she felt she was simply coming home.

Bruce was on a trip to Washington D.C. and would arrive in the evening. Bruce and Tinna were still very good friends, almost a couple, and the relationship had been maturing little by little, although they had not yet officially formalized the relationship or as friends with benefits. It was not yet the time.

Early in the morning, Tinna, already in her sweatshirt, went for a walk along 1st Avenue West, north to 72nd Street. At the corner of the *Dakota Building*, where the late John Lennon once lived, and across the street into *Central Park*, she sat down for a while to rest on a bench in front of the nearby irregular-looking lake. The lake was called by the neighbors simply, "*The Lake*." She meditated in silence for a few minutes. Then, she went out the other end of the park, toward Fifth Avenue and walked south, and returned to the apartment. An hour had passed and she thought that was enough.

At noon, Tinna went down to the corner to have lunch at *Sapphire Indian Cuisine*, which was next to the

Starbucks in the Columbus Circle gazebo, a block from the building where Bruce's apartment was located.

Early in the afternoon, noticing that the refrigerator was empty, Tinna went out to *Trader Joe's* on Columbus Avenue to buy fruits, vegetables, chicken, some cheeses, ham and other things like soap and detergent to have enough for the next few days.

On the evening flight, Bruce was very happy, as Tinna was waiting for him at the airport. He had also begun to hate arriving at the lonely New York apartment, with no other company than the view from the windows overlooking the park. He had grown accustomed to Tinna's company and now he just longed to arrive at her presence.

That evening.

“Hello, boy. How was your flight?” Tinna asked cheerfully as the suitcases came out.”

“Very well, my dear, a perfect flight," answered Bruce, as he struggled with one of the suitcases that was not rolling well because it had a lot of dirt and hair tangled in the wheels. He hadn't had time to detangle it.

“I have to have this suitcase fixed. I always say the same thing, and I never do it. I haven't had the time.”

“Let me help you with this one. I'll carry it and you carry the *carry-on* and the packages you brought.” Tinna said.

They were walking towards the parking lot where Bruce's Mercedes was. Tinna had brought it to the airport to pick him up.

“I already had the shower door fixed," said Tinna, "Remember it was damaged? They just put it in yesterday and it's working fine.”

“Oh, that's good," said Bruce.

“Oh," said Tinna, "And you know what? We also need to get the microwave fixed. It's glitchy. Sometimes it switches itself off and after a while it comes back on again. Maybe it's a short circuit.”

“Yes," said Bruce, "Tomorrow we'll take it to that guy in Brooklyn who fixes everything, remember?”

“Yes, of course I remember," said Tinna, "Last time we took the pots to the same guy to have the new Teflon put on them, and they were perfect. He's pretty good and skilled at fixing things. I think the guy is a novelty here in the United States, where everybody throws away almost brand new things and just buys new ones. However, I see that he has a lot of work, so many people must already know him.”

“So, tell me about your trip, how was your day?”

“Yesterday, I met Robert," said Bruce, "Do you remember him? *Robert Pilkington*, my partner?”

“Yes, of course I remember him. He's a very dear fellow.”

“Yes, I haven't seen Robert for months," Bruce replied, " I found him somewhat changed, grayer and thinner. He's always been a party animal. He's a very nice guy and a very good friend of mine.”

“And by the way, how is the company doing?” Tinna asked.

“You mean the *Pildumer Consulting Group*? Well, it's going very well. As they say: “everything is running smoothly. ” The various contracts are going smoothly. Robert told me that the projects of the company he is in charge of are going very well and for the month of July, when we have a shareholders' meeting, he will give us a report on his management. As for me, the projects assigned to me are also going very well.”

“What about Robert's company, the fast food place?” Tinna asked.

“He told me that it is also doing very well," Bruce replied, "he told me that sales have been growing, and he is already thinking of opening another in Virginia.”

“Oh, good for him.” said Tinna.

It was half past eight in the evening and Bruce asked, “Do you think we should stop on the way to get something to eat? I'm hungry. On the plane we got a sandwich and juice combo, but that was a while ago.”

Tinna replied, “The truth is I have a surprise for you at home. I made you the chicken curry you like with *Caesar Salad*. Plus, I have a bottle of *Chardonnay* chilling to go with it and celebrate that we are together again.”

“You are an angel. Tell me something, Why are you so perfect?”

“Oh, ask my mom. She's the one to blame.” Tinna said showing that beautiful smile he admired so much.

Tinna's mother's name was *Katrin Jónsdóttir*. She was a beautiful mature woman in her sixty-eighth year

with such vitality and joy that she looked like a teenager. She regretted a little the frequent absence of her daughter, who was spending more and more long periods in New York, but on the other hand, she was happy about her daughter's relationship with Bruce, whom she already considered a son, even though they were not yet engaged. She knew they were very good friends, but she held out the silent hope that someday they would be united in marriage, because for her, Bruce was the perfect guy for her daughter.

Arriving at the apartment, Bruce was pleasantly surprised. Tinna had bought flowers and arranged several vases to brighten up the atmosphere and give it the necessary feminine touch. Everything was spotless, the fridge full, dinner ready, and Bruce, seeing this thought, "It no longer looks like a bachelor's apartment, now it has the look and warmth of home." That impressed him, and he thought of his parents' home back in faraway *New Hampshire*. They were always so happy and peaceful, and he felt that something was being completed in his life, a logical and perhaps long-awaited cycle was being fulfilled.

That night they had dinner, drank *Chardonnay*, lit candles and talked at length.

“How did it go at the University, did you turn in your report?” asked Bruce.

“Yes, of course," answered Tinna, "and the report was very well received. I had a meeting to present it in the auditorium and that presentation went very well. They

asked me many questions, and I had everything very well prepared and clear, and I was able to defend myself very well. They also applauded me a lot. I mentioned you as one of the key members of the team that participated in this research.

“Oh, that's nice, thank you very much.” Bruce replied.

Tinna continued, “Some controversy arose on the topic related to Professor *Jacques de Mahieu's* theories, as some attendees spoke in favor and others were against his approaches; however, our position of not aligning ourselves with such theories for lack of hard evidence, leaving open the possibility that they were true, but not getting involved with blind acceptance of such theories, was approved and applauded by the audience in general.”

“Hey, and did you see the pilot again? What's his name, Klain?” Bruce asked, trying unsuccessfully to sound nonchalant and casual.

There was a certain air of tension in Bruce's voice, which Tinna picked up on and smiled inwardly.

“Klein, his name is Roger Klein," Tinna replied. But why are you asking me?” Tinna continued, "I thought you had already forgotten about it.”

“No, no reason," Bruce lied, looking a little uncomfortable with the question he had just asked and tense with the possible answer.

“You know," said Tinna. "I have a little feeling again that you're jealous, or am I wrong?”

“Me? Jealous? No, not at all," Bruce answered, "Why am I going to be jealous?” Again he lied feeling trapped.

“Anyway," Tinna insisted, "even if you don't ask me straight out. For your information, I do not have a relationship with Roger or with absolutely anybody.”

Tinna continued, “Roger's wife's name is Helga, and we have become very close friends. Roger and Helga invited me to dinner at their house the other day in Reykjavík, and they told me the next time they would like to invite you. Apparently, I got carried away talking about you, and they want to meet you.”

“But you don't need to tell me that," said Bruce, embarrassed, "anyway, although you and I have not had a relationship other than friendship, I have all the respect and admiration for you, and I want you to know that I have not had any relationship with anyone.”

Bruce drank his drink quickly, looked out the window towards the darkened image of *Central Park*, and with the reflection of the candles in the window, his eyes lit up with a trace of relief and satisfaction. He smiled subtly and threw his head back with an expression of relaxation and manifest relief.

As much as Bruce wanted to hide it, Tinna was noticing his every attitude and gesture and felt a certain inner satisfaction. "Of course this sucker is jealous," thought Tinna, smiling faintly.

Bruce did not notice that Tina perceived the change in him. He was no longer the taciturn and quiet man of

months before, now he was cheerful and eloquent, and he seemed lively and smiled more than usual.

“And how are your parents?” asked Bruce.

“My mother says she has a special recipe for you to try. It is called *Harðfis kur*, which translates to "hard fish." It is a very typical and traditional old recipe in Iceland. It is a dried fish that is served with butter and cream and served with freshly baked bread, a delicacy.”

“I would like to go to Iceland in a few months, but after the Halloween holidays, Andrew La Due and his wife invited us to their house for a costume party. Remember him? He is my other partner," Bruce replied.

“Oh, of course I remember, and yummy, let's go!" said Tinna.

“And you know what?" Tinna continued, "When we go to Iceland, this time. let's agree to travel via London. I want to see Scotland and also travel to the *Shetland Islands*, which I understand you can visit by ferry from *Aberdeen* in the north of Scotland, to *Lerwick*, the capital of *Shetland*.”

“Yes, that sounds great," Bruce replied, "plus I've heard of a famous Viking festival in the Shetland Islands, called “*Up Helly Aa”*, which is celebrated by the Scots in honor of their Viking ancestors that they carry very close to their hearts. According to studies I've seen, they say that 29% of the population of the Shetland Islands, being Scottish, have Viking ancestry. But you know, then we would have to make that trip in January, which is when those festivities take place.”

“Yes, of course," Tinna replied, "I have also heard about those festivities. Let me tell you it is true that the “*Up Helly Aa”* is celebrated at the beginning of January and has its origin in an older festival called Yule. It is also known as the *festival of the torches,* where they build a large wooden *Drakkar,* reminiscent of the Viking ships. At night they set fire to it to celebrate the arrival of the new year. The party starts at 8:30 am, and all the people parade through the city dressed in allegorical Viking costumes and at night all the people carry torches, and at the end they throw them against the *Drakkar*, setting it on fire. This feast is always celebrated on the first Tuesday of January, even in the most terrible weather because it is a very old tradition.

“Hey, it's kind of late, isn't it?” Tinna said.

“Yes, I'm sleepy," said Bruce.

Around 1:25 a.m., already tired and sleepy from the day's hustle and bustle, they said goodbye and went to sleep in their respective rooms.

At 2:35 a.m., Bruce looked at the clock. He couldn't get to sleep and a mixed feeling of restlessness and growing excitement was sweeping through him. He had a hunch that he wasn't going to procrastinate any longer. He was about to make a decision that would be definitive for his life. It was not fair to keep Tinna on tenterhooks. It was more responsible to be honest with her.

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Chapter 31

Novel Information Based on Real Events

Year 2019 - March.
Highway - Sopo - Guasca - La Calera, Cundinamarca, Colombia - Near the village of Meusa

Some time later, having just arrived in New York from South America, Bruce Merino was meeting with his partners Robert Pilkington and Andrew La Du. He told them about his recent trip.

Bruce said, “It was a Sunday morning, and it was a sunny day. I was driving along a road that looked new, recently widened, and with perfect signage. The road connected the municipalities of Sopo - Guasca - La Calera, in the region of Cundinamarca (at the height of Meusa) about 40 kilometers east of Bogota, the Colombian capital.”

“Suddenly, some signs indicated that the road was interrupted and only a very narrow passage allowed vehicles to pass with some caution. Curious and strange black with green canvas tents, crossed in the middle, interrupted the road and there was a big sign that read: "SALVAMENTO EN EXECUCIÓN" (SALVAGE IN EXECUTION), announcing that something was happening inside those tents.”

“Days before," Bruce continued, "someone had told us that a group of archaeologists were excavating some ancient tombs of the Muisca Indians. Something very common in the area, as there have been many archaeological excavations throughout the region long before.”

“I tried to look for direct information at the site with the archaeologists in charge, but they did not provide it. I felt that they were giving us evasive answers, and what they told us did not match with what a resident

farmer in the area would later tell us. We were sent to talk to another archaeologist nearby who we could not locate."

It is worth mentioning that these lands were ancestral domains of the Muisca Indians, long before the arrival of Columbus.

Now Robert Pilkington asked, "Could it be that they found something curious in the excavations and did not want to mention it?"

Bruce answered, "Look Robert, I really don't know, but I was curious and tried to investigate on my own about facts that were related to previous archaeological excavations. It was necessary to investigate the history further of this region and other archaeological excavations documented from long ago, about some necropolis found in the region since the beginning of the 20th century. I found some information in the nearby town of Sopó."

THE GIANTS OF MEUSA.

There, I was quoted by a local newspaper, which mentioned certain archaeological stories of ancient times that dated back to 1935 and earlier, and where the existence of the remains of giant men in some of the tombs was mentioned; there are even photographs to prove it.

Source: Newspaper: "*EL HABLADOR*" Sopó, Cundinamarca

See the article in the following link: http://elhablador.net/historia/

SEE APPENDIX No. 1.

Bruce continued his story, "That March Sunday, through some close Colombian friends, we managed to talk to a resident of the Meusa village by the name of *Francisco Galvis*. This character is a native of the region, as are his ancestors and his entire maternal and paternal family. The first detail I found curious was that *Francisco Galvis*, being an indigenous peasant, is a person with Aryan features. He has a white complexion, blue eyes, is quite tall, approximately 1.80 meters tall and well above the average of the peasant population of the area. *Francisco Galvis* told me that many old families in the region have these Aryan features, although he told me that most of them have migrated to other regions of the country."

"He also told me about the current archaeological excavations and others that have been carried out in the past in farms near the town, and a fact that shocked me was that archaeologists have found ancient tombs of men, even considerably taller than the average of the current population of the area. They were between 1.95 and 2.00 meters tall. Morphological analyses have determined that these very tall men have white characteristics in addition

to other contrasting information. In another nearby area, a couple of kilometers from Meusa, entering the municipality of Guasca, on the same road on the way to La Calera, they have found tombs of very small indigenous people. These men, who have been determined, would have died around 60 years of age and do not reach a height beyond 1.20 meters high, being indigenous people of the region also coming from ancestral times. Perhaps *Professor Jacques de Maieu* was right when he mentioned his theory that the Vikings had passed through Colombia on their way to the south of the continent."

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Chapter 32

Fiction Based on a Perhaps Quite Sustainable Reality

Year 1015 AD
Vikings (An experience in South America)

Those strange gigantic men that appeared, who used their swords like machetes to cut through the thick

virgin forests of those strange lands, were never before known to the white man.

They were slowly penetrating the tangled forest, where they found all kinds of shrubs, bushes, strange trees, and plants. They had never before known the genocidal hand of man, nor the accurate blows of swords. They cut right and left what they considered weeds and that was nothing more than the virginal nature of those remote regions. Unknown to them, they protected the fields, hills, moors and the water sources that emanated from crystalline springs of high mountains.

Now, they found a climate that seemed icy, and brought back the memory of their distant ancestral lands. After many days of travel, they came on the back of beasts, from warm and low lands, climbing slowly and arduously through very high misty mountains, with frigid whitish mists, which chilled the soul of the toughest and mistreated the body of the strongest.

From afar, the natives saw them coming. Since they advanced with difficulty, soon they knew that they were strangers, for they did not use the cleared paths, but went cross country, facing the thickest of the thicket. Either they were idiots, or they were lost, or perhaps they were strangers who did not know the proper paths. And then, by their countenances and exotic attire, they qualified them as strangers and perhaps abnormal beings. They were certain that they were strangers.

But before presenting themselves to them, they had to be cautious. First they had to know their exact intentions and motives for coming to their lands.

They were rough men of defiant and hostile behavior, who burst into the peaceful life of the zone, carrying weapons they had never seen before. Already, with the only behavior that they brought, frightened whoever dared to observe them in detail.

Soon after, they were ready. In a closed bend of the road, they had surreptitiously surrounded them, with a well-planned ambush, ready for the most ruthless attack, at the slightest provocation and sign of danger. They appointed a commission.

Thus, stealthily surrounded, the newcomers already felt that they were at risk of being the target of arrows, clubs, bolas, spears and blowguns with poisonous darts.

The Indians waited impatiently for the strangers to complete their arrival at the place of the covert ambush, and the strangers continued on their way.

Suddenly, the group of natives in commission that was carrying out the ambush appeared cutting their way, to either attack or welcome them, depending on the intention of the intruders.

They had already sensed the presence of a large contingent of natives, poorly hidden behind the weeds and did not want to risk losing lives. The main purpose sought was to explore the new lands without confrontation, and perhaps continue on their way.

They watched each other with growing curiosity. The newcomers saw a group of short, stocky men, almost naked in spite of the prevailing cold. They saw almost dwarfs with rough but harmonious faces, skin darkened by exposure to the weather or perhaps because of an atavistic race of indigenous semblance in their genes.

The natives saw men with pale faces, like specters from other worlds, gigantic presences with heights that seemed impossible for the usual image, an abnormal corpulence with large muscles that frightened them, being something uncommon in those lands. Faces covered with curious fur of very strange colors, blond or reddish. They had full, bushy beards, strange clothes made of unknown wool and animal skins, not the light cotton fabrics typical of the area. And most notably, a musk of unpleasant stench emanating from those foreign men.

"Við komum í friði til að þekkja menningu þína og venjur þínar," said the spokesman for the foreigners in the presence of the native commissioners.

He tried to say, "We come in peace to know your culture and your customs." But the natives did not understand him.

Then raising his hands with open palms he made a gesture of openness and good intention, which in any ancient or modern language can be perceived as an intention of peace. He then carefully took a knife by the edge and handed it to the messenger of the natives, presenting the handle for him to take. By handing him a

weapon, it demonstrates a gesture of friendship in token of cordiality and peace, and perhaps submission.

The natives were perplexed. Such big men with such blunt weapons were now showing signs of friendship. Little by little they disarmed their apprehensions and lowered their weapons to begin to look for ways to communicate with the newcomers.

Gestures and grimaces would help anyone who wished to communicate despite the absence of a common language, and this was what initially served for the first contacts between these men of such dissimilar races.

They offered them food, allowed them to pitch their tents in a clear appropriate area and treated them amicably.

It was a party of 128 men, 40 women and twelve children. Really a very small number of visitors when compared to the native people of the highland Muisca region. It was composed of some 17,800 people including men, women and children, and therefore the foreigners posed no real threat.

The Vikings signaled to them that they came from a land far away, many days away by boat, crossing seas of endless distances. The common natives did not understand the concept of the sea at all, and assumed it was a gigantic lagoon whose limits were impossible to conceive being unreachable. A few natives who knew the sea because they had traveled to very distant regions in the remote past, tried to explain to them what the sea was.

The food was another differentiating element, since the basis of the natives' diet was corn, potato and yucca, foods unknown to the newly arrived Viking visitors. And although the potato was originally cultivated in southern Peru, it had been brought to the Muisca lands by indigenous travelers who arrived from those distant lands. Likewise, yam, oca, chufa, quinoa and olluco, were foods used by the natives. They had high starch content, which provided energy to avoid wear and tear in the hard days of physical labor, and of which the foreign visitors had no knowledge, nor did they know the common bean. It was originally cultivated by a highly developed, cultured and very ancient people, called *Tiahuanaco*, on the shores of a giant lake called *Titicaca*, in a region where Bolivia is today. The *Tiahuanaco* natives represented a very advanced culture that had existed before the Incas and the Muiscas.

This food, the bean, had been taken by indigenous travelers to other South American and Mesoamerican regions extending its cultivation, and was now cultivated by the Muiscas.

The Vikings raised cattle and sheep as well as poultry and ate wild hunted birds and grew vegetables on small plots of land. This was the basis of their diet. In the exploration party, the Vikings brought animals for breeding and were able to share knowledge of animal husbandry and cultivation with the natives.

These Viking expeditionaries had been weakened by the wear and tear of the exhausting journey. They

traveled from Mesoamerica by sea, then entered the lands of today's Venezuela and made hard raids, crossing wild and sometimes jungle lands.

Many of them were sick and required rest. Others simply could not continue the journey and had to remain in that place indefinitely, others simply came to die in those very beautiful but strange lands. What was practically impossible for them was to return to their place of origin in Iceland or Scandinavia, and the ships that had once anchored off the coast of Venezuela had already departed to the south of the continent on a voyage of exploration with an unknown destination and no possibility of return.

Many of the newcomers stayed in that region and later mixed with the natives, forming new families.

Chapter 33
Epilogue

2:47 am.
New York - Bruce Merino's apartment.

Bruce tossed and turned in his bed and could not fall asleep despite the exhaustion of the previous day's travel and wine from earlier that evening. A series of recurring and contradictory thoughts prevented him from falling asleep.

“But, I can't leave Tinna," he thought. “That would be an unforgivable mistake.”

Nor could he risk losing her. Bruce finally made his decision.

“I'm not going to wait any longer.” he thought. “I'll either do it now or I'll never do it. That's enough.”

He got up, walked a few steps down the hallway, opened the door with quiet care, and walked in.

Tinna was sound asleep. Suddenly, she had a very distant sensation of something happening. It was manifesting itself in her dream and was taking shape in a nebulous reality that was taking shape from the dream world into the real world. She felt something next to her. She was getting closer and closer and felt the warmth of his body. Suddenly, she felt his hands embracing her and she smiled. At that moment, she was sure that she was totally happy and she fell asleep again. Bruce, hugging Tinna, immediately fell fast asleep for a few more hours.

The next morning, being 9:00 am, Tinna naked, put on Bruce's pajama shirt and went to make coffee. Bruce was sleeping soundly with a placid expression on his face. They had had a wonderful "bad night."

Reykjavik Iceland
Three months later.

The Lutheran pastor had already given his blessing after the wedding in the most famous church in Reykjavík: *Hallgrímskirkja* Church, in front of which in

the entrance square, was the equally famous statue, representing the most important of the Icelandic paladins.

On the way out of the church, as tradition, friends and family stood on both sides of the walkway and threw rice and flower petals on the newlyweds.

Outside, holding hands, Bruce and Tinna walked a few yards and turned and looked back. They saw how the figure of the temple stood out, projected to the sky in an ascending curve that forced them to think that this was the safest way to go to *Valhalla*, the celestial mansion of the Nordic Gods.

They could also observe there, in the front of the church, the image of the statue. It was the iconic representation of *Leif Eiricksson* himself, the first explorer of the Americas.

The next day, they traveled to New York where they had settled permanently, but that night, they went for a walk arm in arm in Reykjavík. It was the middle of summer, but the cold wind ruffled their hair and cooled their faces. They did not feel it because they were warm.

Without intending to, they slowly made their way to the sculpture *Solfar* (The Solar Traveler) on the pier of *Sæbraut* Avenue, and there, behind the monument, always imposing, shining in all its splendor, was the beautiful Icelandic Midnight Sun.

They stood for a while, watching the magical spectacle, and Bruce remembered they had returned to the same spot where, long ago, he had first seen the beautiful silhouette of Tinna.

And there, in the distant horizon, among the warm orange-colored trees, Bruce had the vague and strange sensation of catching a glimpse of the smiling face of his beloved Amanda. He would never forget her, but now he was happy, and Amanda was smiling at him.

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APPENDIX No. 1

The following is an excerpt of an article taken from the newspaper: EL HABLADOR of Sopo, Cundinamarca, Colombia.

HISTORY

Sopó, Stone or strong hill (Chibcha Language)

Sopó is a town located 39 kilometers north of Bogotá, capital of the Republic of Colombia, in one of the foothills of the Eastern Cordillera. It is bordered to the north by the municipalities of Zipaquirá and Tocancipá, to the east by Guasca and Guatavita, to the south by the municipality of La Calera and to the west by the municipalities of Chía and Cajicá.

The first deposit recognized was called "El muelle I", the chronology recorded in this deposit corresponds to the Herrera period and becomes the archaeological finding that presents the oldest material evidence of settlement, located so far in the geographical context of Sopó.

The Herrera period consists of a cultural period developed prior to the Muisca societies. A salt production and work site was located there, which was carried out by means of the evaporation or decantation system. According to the data established for the Herrera period, it is estimated that it began in 3300 BP (before the present).

➢ *Muisca Cemetery of Sopó - Rituals and Funerary Myths*

Archaeological excavations were carried out in 1935 in the Altamira hacienda, Sopó, Cundinamarca.

The antiquity of the Muisca culture in the territories of Sopó could be dated from the beginning of its settlement in the Sabana, as inferred by studies carried out on remains and archaeological material belonging to the territories of Meusa and Cueca.

In 1935, the archaeologist Gustavo Bolinder, who at that time was linked to the National University, located an archaeological site composed of 42 tombs containing human remains, ceremonial vessels and other objects. The excavation and classification of the archaeological material was directed by Bolinder, making this finding the first record of archaeological evidence in the municipality.

The site is located in private lands of the Altamira-Sopó farm, near the Moya stream, in the upper area of the urban sector.

Ortega Ricaurte, author of the first book written about the History of Sopó refers about the finding:

"...whose graves opened to considerable depth, contained the remains of a great race of cannibals, previous to the Chibcha, possibly one of the strongest, vigorous and civilized of those regions. The corpses of the adults had been buried from east to west, whose skeletons show an antiquity of more than eight centuries. The corpus of the children were buried from north to south. This particularity, not common to all the towns discovered until today, was found in all the graves in the jurisdiction of this municipality. Also, in each grave were enclosed all the members of the same family, which seems to indicate that when the chief died, the closest relatives were buried with him at the same time. Near the corpses, curious utensils of baked clay, cups, pots and other vessels were found, which they probably tried to preserve food with which they were buried. Also admirably carved stone necklaces were found in their tombs, some of them with a woman's face."

The characteristics of this indigenous cemetery, associated with other findings of Muisca tombs in the Sabana of Bogotá, show already known aspects of the Muisca burials, such as the grave treasures, the proximity to the stream, the style of the tombs, and their location on the slopes or hillsides of the hills.

"...a great race of cannibals..." This statement could be said to have been the consequence of an excited interpretation between the unusual discovery for that time.

The analysis of the Altamira find, carried out by Bolinder himself and later by Colombian scientists, among them Correal Urrego (1978), discard Ortega Ricaurte's reference to a "race of cannibals" since the evidence and its characteristics correspond to a Muisca cemetery.

Skull of a "giant" found in 1935 in the Altamira hacienda.

Correal's study on Altamira, mentions:

"...The shape of the tombs did not follow a fixed pattern; some were rectangular like some reviewed for the Savannah of Bogotá (Broadbent; 1962-1965), in Bolinder's research, in Tocancipá, Gachancipá, Guatavita and Subachoque but especially in Sopó where 42 tombs were excavated, the rectangular grave covered with flagstones also appears (Correal, Op. Cit).

To contextualize a concept close to possible cannibalism, the study of Aguazuque in Soacha carried out by Gonzalo Correal is cited, in which it can be observed that the characteristics recognized for Aguazuque differ notably from those of Altamira Sopó.

"stratigraphic level denominated unit 4.1, archaeological evidence cataloged as "a funerary complex not previously defined in Colombia, the packages of calcined human bones and isolated skulls suggest the practice of cannibalism..."

Bolinder in 1936 presented a report, where he recognizes that his finding in Altamira- Sopó, belongs to the Muisca Race of the Valley according to an article he

wrote, published in the European magazine Ethnos, of which in later pages you can read the transcript.

The characteristics of the archaeological pieces found inside the tombs, it could be inferred that they had established categories and styles for the manufacture of ceremonial ceramics, which were then used according to the social position of the deceased.

PAN Magazine in June 1935, published the analysis of Ramón Carlos Goez, archaeologist collaborator of Bolinder in the excavations of Altamira:

"...a great quantity of pots, chorotes, spindles, cups, vases and fragments of whimsical objects were collected by the commission in the excavations carried out. In some of the tombs, in addition to the chorote, cups in perfect condition in terms of the quality of the clay, shape and type of ornamentation were found. One of these cups had in the part that constitutes the base, three pebbles in the interior that when shaken, produced a kind of jingle like a rattle."

"...to be admired, especially the elegant style of the fineness of the color... to date it has not been possible to say anything about the way the Indians could prepare these colors (red and black). From the excavations carried out in Sopó, a beautiful and elegant anthropomorphic cup was found. It was characterized as a votive urn when burying it. On it, there were complicated drawings

engraved, and a print that should have been attached to the body (as indicated in the photograph) but that was surely found detached, by the total disappearance of the ropes that held it. Inside, it had a small gold image of the goddess Bachue.”

“...number 14 had five skeletons quite complete and for each one its corresponding chorote. The one marked with number 41 had three corpses, placed in the shape of a star.”

“The skulls found in the excavations of Sopó are no less interesting. Among them, the one we could call the 'giant skull of Sopó' stands out."

The above statement could be associated with the "Quechua" warriors who were men of strong build, but here it should be noted that the article by Ramon Carlos Goez exposes the finding of a single skull of giant proportions, while Ortega Ricaurte generalizes the size of the skulls and the build: "...possibly one of the strongest, most vigorous and civilized of those regions".

Professor Rodriguez in his osteometric studies on bone remains of the Muisca population points out:

"Some individuals stand out for their elevated stature, which could signify some status. Surely their elevated stature in relation to average individuals, indicated their social status because the Quechua, border guards, were selected among the tallest and acquired a significant status."

The brachycephalic skull and its large size, cited by Ortega R., are also Muisca characteristics, as

confirmed by studies of the scientist José Vicente Rodríguez, professor at the UN, in his research on craniometry of the Chibchas:

"...the Chibcha groups of the Eastern Andes manifest a marked process of brachycephalization, rounding of the head, accompanied by a widening of the forehead. It is probable then that the dietary changes generated by the agricultural development and food processing would have propitiated the selection of the mutations causing the gracilization of the masticatory apparatus and, therefore, of the brachycephalization (Hanihara, 1994; Lahr, 1995).

In conclusion, the cemetery excavated by Bolinder in Altamira Sopó belongs to the Muisca race and the record of the bone remains belongs to a Muisca warrior.

Note: At that time there was no knowledge about the possibility that in very ancient times, in the so-called pre-Columbian era, visitors of European origin might have arrived in American lands.

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Gordon McAllister