



Guidebook

To The Land

Of The

Green Isles

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Foreward

Herein lies the account of my travels in that mysterious kingdom known as the Land of the Green Isles. Lest this record be put down to the fevered imagination of a madman or the fiction of a notorious liar, let me assure you, Dear Reader, that the Land of the Green Isles does indeed exist. One can hear the name of The Land whispered in roadside inns off dusty roads from the hills of Daventry to the sea of Tamir—especially on nights when the wind howls and the rain plays havoc on the window panes. The storytellers inevitably take on that same tone of voice they use when speaking of the Fairy Kingdom. I cannot vouch for the Fairy Kingdom since I have yet to get a leprechaun in a position of compromise, yet, the Land of the Green Isles... Ah!...that is a place where the feet of a man can find solid ground and his eyes feast on such wonders!

My tale begins with a broken compass. I had taken passage on a ship bound east from Llewedor. Our destination was Serenia, yet in the second week out we encountered a terrible electrical storm. Waves crashed upon the deck of our

little ship, the Round About, and lightning struck the sea all around her. At one point it even



struck our secondary mast and we were saved from a fiery death only by the lashing rain which quickly put out the fire. We felt sure that we were all dead men, yet on we bailed and strove throughout the night. After long hours of the terrifying labor, we found ourselves still afloat on the other side of the storm. At first light, the damage seemed minimal despite the lightning that had struck the ship, but by sunset the Captain was forced to announce that the instruments of navigation had been magnetized by the storm—the compass spoke east, yet the sun sank low over the right of our prow.

The Captain did his best to sail by older methods, by the sun and the stars. He assured the voyagers that there was nothing to fear. Yet we seemed cursed, for a dense cloud cover settled over the sky far into the horizon—and stayed.

The Round About sailed like a blind man groping in a vast, unfamiliar room.

After a week, the Captain had to admit that we had missed our destination. There was no land to be seen anywhere. It was as if the storm had been another flood that had wiped civilization from the face of the Earth. With naught else to do we sailed on, by now so lost that turning around seemed futile. Who was to say that we were not turned around already?

A month later, I lay in a fitful sleep on my bunk—throat parched and skin stretched from the scant provisions allotted all hands from the near-empty hold below—when I heard the cry on deck, “Land Ho!” Startled from my sleep and exhilarated with hope, I sprang to the deck. The sky had cleared and its blue seemed a hue I had never seen. A sailor was wildly pointing off the prow where the bright green of a small body of land was dimly visible. The Round About

responded as though leaping from the sea towards that remote shore.

Yet within the hour, the curse upon our ship took its final vengeance. As though enraged to see us within view of escape, the sea came alive and swirled around us. Currents and whirlpools materialized and sucked at the beaten planks of the ship—turning her first one way and then another! I was thrown against the deck and rolled uncontrollably against the cables and the lifeboats. The last thing I heard before my head struck and blackness descended was the mate screaming, “She’s going down!”

Who can judge providence? I am not a hero, I am a wanderer—neither as strong nor as brave as the Captain of that good ship. Yet with no effort on my part—none greater, in any event, than the skill of getting myself knocked on the head—I awoke the following morning, not among the bones at the bottom of the sea, but on a beach. Of the crew and passengers of the good ship, there was not a trace.

Perhaps I was chosen for some destiny here. Perhaps the sea simply found me too sour an old

dog for the swallowing. In any case, that is the tale of how I found the Land of the Green Isles—or should I say, how it found me. Being but a poor traveler with feet that itch and a spirit that cannot rest, I have naught to leave this world but a record of the things these eyes have seen. Being not nearly as clever as a balladeer, I set this down in humble prose.

May this account someday find its way back to the land of my youth, though I fear I myself shall die on this distant shore.

Derek Karlavaegen

