

1A

+-----+

| In the second year of the Confederate War, Deacon Joshua |
| Lange, the son of a farmer of some standing, received |
| correspondence from one Ariel Haivri concerning a matter she |
| felt should be brought before his congregation without |
| delay. With the permission of Elder David Long, Joshua read |
| this epistle to the assembly at the Price Meetinghouse |
| following the Wednesday evening service. |
| |

| House Haivri to our fellow laborers in the vineyard of God |
| Most High: though by the sorrows of Providence we are |
| separated by the tides of history, yet our hearts remain |
| bound together in the bonds of holy fraternity. Be it known |
| to you, dear neighbors, that on the seventeenth day of the |
| present month, the hosts of war shall clash in earnest among |
| the wooded hollows and open fields near your house of |
| prayer. In earnest concern for the safety of your people, we |
| of the Haivri clan extend to you the offer of refuge within |
| our house of prayer. |
| |

| Any among you who seek shelter from the tumult of battle may |
| come without delay. Our doors stand open, and provisions are |
| prepared without charge. We urge this for the protection |
| of your horses, mules, and cattle; for although the |
| secessionists often profess courtesy toward the inhabitants |
| of the country through which they pass, it is well |
| understood that anything upon four hooves is taken as fair |
| spoil. |
| |

| Take heed also: when the guns open upon the heights, as they |
| will this coming Sunday the fourteenth of September, it will |
| be too late to withdraw by the surrounding roads without |
| risk of your stock and wagons being seized. |

+-----+

1B

+-----+

| We therefore entreat you, beloved brethren, that if you |
| judge there is wisdom in our counsel, your arrival, whether |
| with family or stock, by day or by night, will be taken as |
| your assent to this offer of shelter. Our watch will be |
| constant, and our prayers remain with you. |
| |

| In faith and charity, we remain your servants of the Way |
| Restored. |
| |

| In the months to come Joshua learned the heralds of House |
| Haivri claimed a lineage reaching far into antiquity and |
| were well accustomed to the indifference of both commoner |
| and magistrate. For they had endured such treatment as a |
| matter of course over many generations. |
| |

| Though Ariel had sent letters of similar tenor to nearly a |
| dozen congregations in the surrounding country, the Lord of |
| Hosts Fellowship alone returned an answer. The other faith |
| assemblies maintained a silence as predictable as it was |
| complete. |
| |

| The letter from Ariel produced a marked division even among |
| Joshua's parishioners. When he read it aloud following their |
| Wednesday evening prayers, they learned Ariel had given |
| the name of her house of prayer as Congregation Derekh |
| Me'hudeshet. This alone was enough to trouble many minds. |
| |

| Some held that they were not truly Christian, but rather |
| heathen, or Jewish, or even, as a few put it, Romish. Others |
| suspected a dark design behind the offer, supposing that the |
| the promise of refuge served as a pretext by which their |
| livestock might be seized. |

+-----+

1C

+-----+
| There was also the matter of the portrait enclosed with the |
| letter, that Ariel might be recognized as a friend when the |
| animals were taken to safety. The likeness itself did not |
| appear to be hand-tinted. Instead, it was rendered in |
| lifelike color to the last detail. None of the brethren had |
| ever seen the like. There was an outlandish tinge to the |
| whole affair. |
|
| Nevertheless, Joshua, while admitting to knowing very little |
| Hebrew himself, suggested Ariel herself had already revealed |
| the name of her assembly in her epistle as the Way Restored, |
| making her a sister in Christ and her people no different |
| from the Lord of Hosts Fellowship in all the ways that |
| mattered. |
|
| Hearing it put in this manner, a goodly portion of Joshua's |
| congregation availed themselves of Ariel's invitation and |
| drove their beasts to Williamsport. |
|
| On the afternoon of the seventeenth day of the month, one |
| week after Joshua received the letter of Ariel Haivri, |
| muskets were discharged in great number along two stone |
| walls. The sound carried rapidly from man to man, and the |
| smoke of black powder stung the eyes of those engaged. These |
| walls met at a bridge of dressed stone, where new believers |
| at the Lord of Hosts Fellowship were received in baptism. |
|
| It was there that the Union Left first came into direct |
| contact with the enemy. The Federal troops advanced in heavy |
| order and with much shouting. At the first encounter they |
| came near to the far side of the stream, but were brought to |
| a halt by a sudden paroxysm of violence. |
+-----+

1D

+-----+

| Under sustained fire, the Federal troops fell back over the |
| bodies of the fallen who lay in layers upon the bridge. Some |
| were already dead. Others were still alive and grievously |
| wounded, their bones broken or their bodies pierced by |
| musket shot. |
| |

| Among the fallen were men who had survived earlier battles. |
| Some of these had been at Shiloh Church, where the conflict |
| first attained a fearful level of slaughter. |
| |

| A large gun loaded with canister was brought to bear and |
| placed to command the length of the bridge. It swept the |
| structure end to end so that a second line of the dead was |
| formed upon the first. |
| |

| Some of those present had fought at Malvern Hill in |
| Virginia, where Federal artillery had wrought great |
| destruction. In reply, two Rebel guns positioned upstream |
| fired bursting shells that rained death down upon the Union |
| artillerymen. Another gun delivered accurate solid shot |
| until the Federal piece was broken into splintered timber |
| and twisted iron. |
| |

| Following this, the Confederate infantry advanced in |
| counterattack and regained much of the bridge, which by that |
| time had become a house of slaughter. |
| |

| During this fierce exchange, a Federal colonel was struck |
| squarely by a musket ball. To the astonishment of his men, |
| he quickly regained his feet unhurt. The projectile had |
| lodged within a small Bible he habitually carried on his |
| person. The men took this as a sign of Divine Providence. |

+-----+

1E

```
+-----+
| Emboldened, the colonel immediately led another charge |
| across the span. In the brutal close-quarters combat that |
| followed, soldiers on both sides stood upon the mounting |
| heaps of the dead, passing loaded muskets forward like a |
| bucket brigade at a fire and casting aside empty weapons. |
|                                                             |
| But the Confederate infantry found their supply of powder |
| dwindling, and the officer commanding them perceived their |
| resistance at the bridge was coming to a rapid end by that |
| stark fact alone. He accordingly ordered his guns withdrawn |
| under cover of a sharp rearguard action to permit an orderly |
| retirement.                                               |
|                                                             |
| The commander of IX Corps then crossed the stone bridge, |
| following the retreating Confederates.                   |
|                                                             |
| Having formed his command, he directed a lieutenant of his |
| staff to ride to headquarters and report that a foothold had |
| been secured on the left of the line at the stone bridge. |
|                                                             |
| The messenger, seeing the structure so thickly carpeted with |
| the dead of both armies, refused to ride back across it lest |
| he needlessly desecrate the fallen. Instead he went down to |
| the creek and forded it on foot. The officer suffered no |
| hardship in doing this; the water of the run was nowhere |
| more than waist-deep in all seasons, a topographical fact |
| well known to the local farmers.                         |
|                                                             |
| By sundown on the day of the great battle the Rebel army had |
| been pressed back into a wide bend of the Potomac River. But |
| it had rained, and the waters were running unexpectedly |
| swift, rendering the fords practically impassable.       |
+-----+
```

1F

```
+-----+
| The Federal commander surveyed the field but declined to |
| renew the advance, despite holding a numerical advantage. |
|
| Discontent circulated among the ranks and the officer corps |
| alike; it was widely remarked that even if the commanding |
| general's strength were multiplied several times over, he |
| would still manufacture delays and complain of insufficient |
| troops to strike the enemy. |
|
| At dusk on the following day the river subsided, and |
| a mounted courier arrived with orders for the general |
| evacuation of the wounded. Among those awaiting transport |
| were three men who claimed to have been grievously wounded, |
| but restored by the ministrations of an angel, though the |
| medical staff dismissed their accounts as the ravings of |
| delirium. |
|
| Outside the field hospitals heaps of amputated limbs were |
| set ablaze. Ambulances began the grim work of bearing away |
| the maimed. At every roughness in the road cries of anguish |
| arose from the men confined within the wagons. |
|
| No man who witnessed the procession of the casualties, nor |
| the carnage left upon the field, could ever again speak |
| lightly of the glories of war. This was a sentiment already |
| deeply shared by the faithful of Lange's congregation. |
|
| The morning of the nineteenth rose gray and thin. Smoke |
| still clung in the low places, and the fields about |
| the ruined meetinghouse were strewn with cast-off gear |
| and darker burdens awaiting the brethren. Daniel Price |
| came first among them. |
+-----+
```

+-----+
| He walked with the stiffness of a hard-laboring man who had |
| not slept, and after him John Rowland and Samuel Fahrney, |
| with Klaus Reichard and David Stouffer close behind. |
| |
| They espied Deacon Joshua Lange standing motionless next to |
| the ruins of the meetinghouse even as his fellow worshipers |
| emerged from their homes, in a state of deep apprehension, |
| to begin the cheerless toil of burying the dead. But to a |
| man they rejoiced to find Deacon Lange seemingly unharmed. |
| |
| "Brethren," he said, his voice hoarse but steady. "Ye |
| have come early to the house of the Lord, albeit the house |
| be cast down." |
| |
| And the men marveled that much of the fallen timber was not |
| to be found, as though the men of the armies had carted it |
| away to be used in their breastworks. |
| |
| Lange inclined his head, and told them, "A great timber |
| brake my leg, so that I could not rise." He set a hand |
| against his back. "Another pierced me here and I felt the |
| warmth of my own blood depart me." |
| |
| Reichard frowned and glanced at the others. "Your leg, |
| sir, may we see it?" |
| |
| Without protest, Lange drew his limb forward. The cloth |
| was rent, but the flesh beneath showed no swelling, no |
| misalignment, and no sign of fracture. Stouffer shook his |
| head. |
| |
| "There is no break here." |
+-----+

1H

```
+-----+
| "And your back," Price added gently. |
| | |
| Lange loosened his coat. There, between his spine and his |
| hip, was a pale mark no longer than a finger, as from a |
| shallow cut long healed. Lange could not see the hurt he |
| claimed to have suffered, but he said, "The pain was |
| fierce. It overcame me, and I fell into darkness." |
| | |
| Rowland and Fahrney exchanged a worried glance but they said |
| nothing. |
| | |
| Reichard said, "Joshua, I believe you were struck upon the |
| head. It is the mercy of God that you live, but visions do |
| come of such blows." |
| | |
| At this, Joshua reached into his coat and drew forth a |
| folded canvas which he opened with great care. Upon it were |
| traced winding lines. No names were marked on them, no |
| towns, no mountains or borders, only the flowing paths. |
| | |
| The men bent close. |
| | |
| "I know these rivers," Fahrney said |
| slowly, though his brow was knit. "Or I think I do. Yet I |
| cannot say which is which." |
| | |
| "There are no names," Stouffer said. |
| | |
| Reichard straightened, shaking his head. "A map without |
| names is no map at all, one would think." |
| | |
| "And yet it was given me," said Lange. |
+-----+
```

1I

+-----+

| Price studied him a long moment, then laid a hand upon his |
| shoulder. "However it be, Joshua, you are returned to us, |
| God be praised." |
| |
| Rowland glanced toward them, then back to Lange. "Can you |
| walk?" Lange moved without aid. His leg bore him true. |
| |
| Fahrney gave a quiet, almost incredulous laugh. "Broken, |
| was it?" |
| |
| "So I believed," Lange answered. |
| |
| In the uncomfortable silence the women of the congregation |
| were seen coming to join them. Price spoke again, and his |
| voice was heavy. |
| |
| "Come. There is work to be done. The living must tend to |
| the dead." |
| |
| But Rowland and Fahrney walked beside Lange as they left |
| the sacred precincts, neither pressing him further nor |
| dismissing what they did not understand. |
| |
| Now to expedite the necessary burial of the dead, the |
| Federal government promised a bounty of one dollar for every |
| soldier interred by the local farmers. It was whispered that |
| one man of Sharpsburg, unaffiliated with the church, had |
| merely dumped scores of bodies into a dry well to quickly |
| collect the funds. |
| |
| Amidst the desolation of the battle, Elder David Long sought |
| to rally his dismayed flock. |
+-----+

1J

+-----+

| "Do not grieve overmuch, my friends," he told them. |

| "We shall bury the dead, and make our meetinghouse as it |

| was before." |

| |

| "It may be wisdom," Lange countered, "that we accept |

| the assistance offered by our new friends of Congregation |

| Derekh Me'hudeshet, and remove ourselves entirely from the |

| path of the war." |

| |

| "We must seek the Lord's will in this matter," the Elder |

| decided. "Let every man among us pray upon it. And at |

| present, there is no prayer better than hard work." |

| |

| The brethren who had taken the prudent course of |

| driving their livestock northward toward Williamsport had |

| accomplished the task in strength. Yet following the battle |

| Ariel Haivri managed to return, unaided, every horse, mule, |

| and head of cattle entrusted to the Haivri family, as she |

| solemnly promised. |

| |

| Ariel seemed to possess an uncanny affinity for the animals, |

| a skill that did not pass unremarked by the faithful. And it |

| was noted that her own mount was tended with greater care |

| than she bestowed upon herself. Even so, Lange found his |

| heart drawn to her, which fueled whispers among the more |

| suspicious believers that her peculiar power over beasts |

| might well extend to men. |

| |

| When the work of burying the fallen was completed, Elder |

| David Long announced his decision to remain in Sharpsburg. |

| Joining him was the Price family, who had deeded the land |

| for the meetinghouse. |

+-----+

1K

+-----+

| Though their farm had been laid waste they aimed to restore |
| it, grateful at least that their fields had been spared from |
| becoming a military graveyard. |
| |
| Five other families likewise chose to remain. Together, they |
| covenanted to rebuild the house of prayer destroyed in the |
| crossfire. |
| |
| Ariel said the Haivri family pledged to assist any of the |
| brethren willing to relocate far from the threat of the |
| burgeoning war, possibly even to the territories. Several |
| families considered the migration, though liquidating their |
| land and making the necessary preparations for such an |
| overland journey would require considerable time. |
| |
| Furthermore, the seemingly boundless generosity of Ariel's |
| kinfolk continued to engender suspicion among some who |
| feared an underlying motive. Lange reminded them of the |
| Apostle's injunction: "Be not forgetful to entertain |
| strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels |
| unawares." |
| |
| Now when the faithful of the Lord of Hosts Fellowship had |
| first viewed Ariel's enclosed portrait many had mistaken |
| her for a young man, or even a lad. Lange himself had |
| initially shared this misconception. |
| |
| Riding north along the road toward the Haivri farm he |
| often positioned himself slightly behind her, observing her |
| closely as his affections increasingly engaged. She sat her |
| horse a full head taller than Lange. Her frame was slender |
| and her hair was unusually short for a woman of that era. |
+-----+

1L

+-----+

| During the march Lange remarked conversationally that it |
| might become her to allow her dark, reddish hair to grow |
| out, noting that her current appearance gave her the |
| aspect of some tall woodland spirit. Ariel dismissed the |
| suggestion. "No shears come near my head," she replied. "The |
| strands grow only as long as you see, and no longer. Then |
| they fall away, one by one, and I scarcely take notice." |
| |

| As the party neared the Haivri farm, the weather suddenly |
| broke, bringing a brief but violent squall. To Lange's |
| considerable astonishment, Ariel surrendered the shelter of |
| her tent entirely to her mount, electing to remain exposed |
| to the downpour herself. In the days that followed, he |
| observed that she consistently bestowed far more attention |
| upon her horse than she did in assisting her mother Mikaela |
| with the management of their household. |
| |

| Welcomed as an honored guest by Mikaela, Lange took the |
| opportunity to inquire directly whether her family was of |
| the Jewish faith. To Mikaela, the question seemed to afford |
| her a degree of quiet amusement. |
| |

| She said, "The Haivri family thrived even before the |
| construction of the First Temple. We predate the traditions |
| that the rabbis have codified in these recent centuries in |
| the absence of a sanctuary." |
| |

| Mikaela went on to say, "My surname, Ha-Ivri, means 'The |
| Ones Who Crossed Over.' The word Hebrew is a corruption of |
| that term over the passage of much time. We consider |
| ourselves the annunciators of God, though men seldom listen |
| to us." |

+-----+

1M

+-----+
| "But madam," Lange replied, "certain members of my |
| congregation, as well as myself, have already derived great |
| benefit from the words you have spoken." |
| |
| As time went on Lange observed that the Haivri residence was |
| seemingly kept in a state of disorder, but the untidiness of |
| the dwelling stemmed not from neglect, but from an abundance |
| of material goods, testifying to an unstudied wealth. |
| Ariel's kin similarly possessed ample means without any |
| ostentatious display. They appeared to operate as though |
| their resources were permanently assured. Each labored |
| industriously in their own specific pursuits. |
| |
| Ariel seemed to devote herself to her horses from a genuine |
| affection; she valued the animals for themselves, rather |
| than for the draft or saddle service they provided. |
| |
| The Haivri family set aside a small cottage for Lange, |
| situated somewhat apart from Ariel's own residence. Her |
| extended kin scattered around the large holding made similar |
| provisions for each of the families from Sharpsburg who had |
| joined the tentative expedition. |
| |
| Rations were supplied daily in abundance and without |
| cost. This charity, however, was received uneasily by the |
| refugees. It ran contrary to the ingrained independence of |
| rural Americans, who were wholly unaccustomed to accepting |
| sustenance without offering commensurate labor in return. |
| Observing this dynamic, Lange could not entirely shake a |
| troubling suspicion: he feared his uprooted congregation had |
| become an idle diversion for Mikaela, much in the same way |
| he suspected the horses were a diversion for Ariel. |
+-----+

1N

+-----+
| Regardless of her underlying motives, Mikaela graciously |
| granted the refugees the use of Temple Derekh Me'hudeshet, |
| allowing the congregation a proper place to assemble for |
| their Sunday services. But Lange's growing affections for |
| Ariel soon became a source of profound internal disquiet. He |
| could no longer dismiss his experience at the ruined |
| meetinghouse as ravings of a battlefield fever; the rapid |
| healing of his shattered leg stood as undeniable proof to |
| himself, even if none of the others believed him. |
| |
| He suspected the Haivri were real angels dwelling among |
| humanity, yet this conclusion brought him no comfort. As a |
| man grounded in Scripture, Lange was aware of the teaching |
| set forth in the Gospel of Luke, where those who attain the |
| resurrection are said to "neither marry, nor are given in |
| marriage," being made equal unto the angels. If Ariel was |
| indeed an angel, his growing attachment to her was not only |
| futile but presumptuous. |
| |
| Compounding his confusion was how the Haivri family's untidy |
| household and Ariel's fascination with beasts hardly aligned |
| with orthodox depictions of the heavenly host. Seeking |
| clarity, Lange approached Ariel while she was brushing down |
| her mount. He broached the subject cautiously, framing his |
| dilemma as a matter of theological inquiry rather than a |
| personal confession. He asked how a man of faith ought |
| to reconcile the revealed nature of House Haivri with |
| scriptural teachings. Ariel paused in her work, recognizing |
| the personal anguish hidden beneath his question. She |
| understood the rigid view of the Bible common among most |
| rural congregations, and she was reluctant to dismantle the |
| foundation of his faith. |
+-----+

10

+-----+
| "Joshua," she replied, her tone careful but direct, "you |
| read the Scriptures as though they were a monologue by God. |
| But consider the texts you know so well. The Book of |
| Proverbs promises the righteous will always prosper and the |
| wicked will always fall, yet turn to the Book of Job and you |
| find a world where the innocent suffer terribly under an |
| inscrutable God. Perhaps what we really have is a dialogue |
| by men." |
| |
| Lange conceded the point, though he was unaccustomed to |
| hearing it stated so bluntly. |
| |
| She said, "The scribes who compiled the texts understood |
| these contradictions perfectly, yet included them together, |
| not to confuse the reader, but to capture the full, |
| complicated breadth of existence. You should not assume that |
| the nature of my family is bound by a single verse in |
| Luke." |
| |
| One evening at supper Mikaela casually remarked to Ariel |
| that she stood in clear need of a male companion, if only to |
| quiet certain persistent rumors passing among the refugees. |
| The following morning, Ariel promptly purchased a stallion. |
| |
| On another occasion, Lange betrayed a momentary, sharp |
| jealousy upon discovering a strange hair clinging to her |
| coat; Ariel simply led forth the horse from which it had |
| been shed, to his considerable embarrassment. |
| |
| Determined to proceed properly, Lange sought out Mikaela the |
| next day and asked with all seriousness, "What must I know |
| of the customs of the Haivri clan concerning courtship?" |
+-----+

1P

+-----+

| Mikaela replied with a certain air of detachment. "If you |
| have a mind toward Ariel, then know that she is wholly free. |
| The Family keeps no rules of the sort you imagine. If there |
| are to be any such customs they shall be appointed by Ariel |
| herself, and it will be your task to discover them. That is |
| the nature of it, and truth be told, Joshua, therein lies |
| the interest!" |

| |

| Joshua fell silent as he pondered this. The matriarch then |
| shifted the conversation to a more serious theological |
| footing. "I would ask you, Joshua," Mikaela said, "what are |
| your views concerning divorce?" |

| |

| "The brethren have always held the New Testament to be |
| the absolute rule for every part of our lives," Lange |
| answered. |

| |

| "That is exactly why I asked," Mikaela replied. "In the |
| Gospel according to Mark, the Lord Yeshua is reported |
| to have forbidden divorce altogether. Yet in the text |
| attributed to Matthew, he permits it in cases of infidelity. |
| Paul also wrote that the marriage bond may be dissolved when |
| one party remains in unbelief. Thus, on this specific |
| matter, your Scripture says both yes and no, and something |
| else besides." By these remarks, Mikaela demonstrated a |
| grasp of Christian Scripture far greater than Lange had |
| anticipated. |

| |

| "Be that as it may, madam," Lange answered, "it is of |
| no consequence. I truly love your daughter, and I solemnly |
| swear to you that the question of divorce shall never be an |
| issue between us." |

+-----+

1Q

+-----+

| "Your words do you credit, Joshua," Mikaela said. "Yet even |
| with the veil of affection over your eyes you must have |
| noticed how Ariel has a certain manner with animals. And man |
| is certainly of their kin." |
| |
| "I am grieved, madam, that you accept the strange notions of |
| Mr. Charles Darwin," Lange replied, genuinely dismayed by |
| the comparison. |
| |
| "We consider it far stranger," Mikaela countered, "to |
| suppose that man is altogether set apart from the rest of |
| creation." |
| |
| "Then, madam," Lange pressed, "do you agree with the less |
| charitable members of my flock who whisper that I have been |
| bewitched by your daughter?" |
| |
| "No, there is no such enchantment, Joshua," Mikaela answered |
| calmly. "Yet as your courtship proceeds, it will inevitably |
| provoke discussions regarding the secrets of the Haivri |
| family that extend far beyond what you have already |
| witnessed in Kemen." |
| |
| She went on to offer a measured warning. "Mystery is |
| certainly part of the charm. But do not allow yourself to be |
| overtaken by surprises too profound to endure." |
| |
| And Joshua perceived that Ariel sought out his company in |
| her turn, requiting his affinity in small signs that waxed |
| at a stately pace. There came an evening when his suit |
| crossed some invisible boundary, and Ariel loosed some of |
| the bonds of her corselet. |

+-----+

1R

```
+-----+
| Ariel discreetly revealed something substantial of what a |
| mortal man was set to receive when an elyonth of House |
| Haivri set her heart upon him in return. To Joshua's mind it |
| seemed to settle matters. |
| |
| Yet, rather than feeling triumphant, this development seemed |
| to precipitate in him a profound sense of inadequacy. He was |
| a simple rural deacon, anchored to the mud and blood of |
| Maryland, while she was a living marvel. |
| |
| Unable to contain his doubts, he approached her one evening |
| by the stables. |
| |
| "Ariel," he began haltingly, "I must confess a great |
| bewilderment. You have traversed bounds of history and |
| geography in ways that I can scarcely comprehend. What could |
| a woman of your vast experience possibly see in a man of my |
| humble station?" |
| |
| Ariel paused in her work, leaning against the stall door. |
| "Joshua," she said solemnly, "Clear-sighted were they |
| who appointed you deacon of your church. I have never in my |
| life met a man more abundantly possessed of the grace of God |
| and more willing to share." |
| |
| Then, dropping all pretense of formality that Lange had |
| supposed was foundational to the great game of pitching woo, |
| she went on to say, "But I am genuinely astonished that a |
| man of your age has never received the Mommy and Daddy |
| Talk." |
+-----+
```

+-----+
| He had expected a philosophical treatise on the nature of |
| love across time. The absurdity of her actual response |
| shattered his insecurities entirely. The matter was settled |
| between them, and their course toward matrimony was firmly |
| established. |
| |
| At her bridal gathering, Ariel received numerous gifts, a |
| significant portion of which were, perhaps inevitably, horse |
| bridles. |
| |
| On the day appointed for the wedding itself, Ariel tarried |
| overlong mucking and tending the stables. Lange proceeded |
| with his vows regardless. |
| |
| It was not until the second week of July, in the year |
| following the battle, that the Remnant, having by then |
| adopted the name Root of Jesse Fellowship, set out for the |
| western territories. The House of Haivri made the necessary |
| provisions, securing for them passage by rail for part of |
| the distance. |
| |
| In retrospect, their departure was well timed. Events in the |
| East soon justified that conclusion. Following General |
| Lee's Maryland campaign, President Abraham Lincoln relieved |
| General George McClellan of command and placed General |
| Ambrose Burnside at the head of the army. Burnside, who had |
| commanded the bloody and useless contest for the stone |
| bridge, advanced upon Fredericksburg, where his operations |
| resulted in a severe repulse. A subsequent movement |
| undertaken in unfavorable weather was halted before it could |
| develop, the President acting upon urgent representations |
| from Burnside's own officers. |
+-----+

+-----+
| Command then passed to General Joseph Hooker, who had |
| previously directed the right of the Federal line during the |
| fighting at Sharpsburg. By this stage of the war a growing |
| sentiment had taken hold in both armies that Lee could not |
| be successfully opposed. The impression was not confined to |
| the ranks, and appears to have influenced Hooker himself. At |
| Chancellorsville, though in possession of superior numbers, |
| he failed to press his advantage. Lee, dividing his force in |
| the presence of the enemy, achieved another success, and in |
| doing so strengthened the prevailing belief in his army's |
| invincibility. |
| |
| The President next appointed General George Meade to command |
| the army, a decision widely regarded at the time as sound. |
| Meade had previously assumed direction of the First Corps |
| when Hooker was disabled during the Maryland operation, and |
| was considered a man of resolution. He was accounted more |
| decisive than McClellan, yet less impetuous than Burnside. |
| And unlike Hooker, Meade did not appear overawed by Lee. |
| |
| When General Robert E. Lee again crossed the Potomac River |
| with the intention of carrying the war into the North, the |
| converging roads brought the opposing armies together near |
| the town of Gettysburg. The first day's fighting was |
| marked by considerable confusion. Lee was absent from the |
| field for much of the action, and Meade would not arrive |
| until later that evening. |
| |
| The Federal forces, pressed heavily, withdrew to a ridge |
| of modest elevation but considerable extent, where they |
| established a defensive line. Lee's position immediately to |
| the west was on a somewhat lower height. |
+-----+

+-----+
| It afforded only a limited view of the enemy's dispositions; |
| his cavalry, upon which he customarily relied for |
| intelligence, was not available to provide timely reports. |
| |
| Efforts were made against the Federal right without success, |
| after which the left was engaged with even greater severity. |
| The fighting on both fronts was costly, yet neither effort |
| proved decisive. The situation thus left Lee with a narrower |
| set of options than he had previously entertained. |
| |
| The decision was made to attempt a direct assault upon |
| the center of the Union line. This was preceded by an |
| artillery bombardment of unusual magnitude, exceeding in |
| scale anything previously witnessed on this continent. But |
| the assault itself failed. A small portion of the attacking |
| force reached the stone wall, to be sure, but they could not |
| maintain their position and were captured or driven back. |
| |
| The result of the third day settled the contest in favor of |
| the Union. After the action, General Lee withdrew his army |
| behind South Mountain and made for Virginia with what speed |
| circumstances allowed. General Meade followed on a line |
| roughly parallel, keeping to the eastern side of the ridge, |
| though his movements were necessarily cautious. |
| |
| The armies came again into proximity near Williamsport. It |
| was there, as they later learned, the animals that had been |
| preserved from the earlier fighting were taken by Lee's |
| army, in addition to all the horses belonging to Ariel. |
| Temple Derekh Me'hudeshet, which had long served as the |
| chapel of the Root of Jesse Fellowship on Sundays, was |
| likewise stripped of its contents. |
+-----+

1V

+-----+
| News of these events reached the party after their train |
| approached Baltimore. The impression among their number was |
| that each misfortune served only to hasten their departure, |
| as if circumstances themselves pressed them onward. |
| |
| The members of the Root of Jesse Fellowship then continued |
| west by a succession of short rail lines, joined one to |
| another across the Appalachian Mountains. The rails, being |
| of wrought iron, did not permit high speed without undue |
| wear, and the journey was accordingly slow. The terrain |
| imposed further delay; the ridges, running generally north |
| to south, obstructed a direct course and required frequent |
| deviation. |
| |
| Numerous stops were made for fuel and passengers, and it was |
| not until the better part of two days and a night had passed |
| that they arrived at Pittsburgh. In that city they left off |
| travel by rail and took passage upon a small steamboat bound |
| down the Ohio River. |
| |
| Though borne along by the current, they were still in its |
| upper reaches, where the river ran narrow and winding, and |
| their progress was accordingly moderate. The change in |
| conveyance, however, afforded some greater comfort. Cabins |
| were available upon the upper deck, where most of the party |
| were lodged, the women of the party being assigned quarters |
| toward the stern. They were spared the necessity, common |
| among less prepared travelers, of sleeping upon the lower |
| deck among bales of wool and other cargo, and their meals |
| were taken aboard in regular fashion. For several days the |
| company passed the time in quiet observation as the river |
| wound through wooded hills. |
+-----+

1W

+-----+

| The vessel made frequent stops at small settlements set |
| close against the slopes, where passengers were taken on or |
| discharged, and where wood and water were brought aboard for |
| the boiler. This machinery, working constantly beneath the |
| decks, produced a noise and vibration that, though soon |
| familiar, remained a source of some uneasiness. |
| |

| At Cincinnati they left the boat and resumed their journey |
| by rail, the river having carried them through a district |
| where the lines were not yet continuous. A similar |
| interruption occurred at East St. Louis, where they again |
| crossed by boat, there being at that time no bridge over the |
| Mississippi River except at a considerable distance to the |
| north. |
| |

| Once on the western bank, they took passage again by rail, |
| traveling under the arrangement made with the General |
| Materials concern, and from that point their progress was |
| more rapid, as the tracks were newly laid and in better |
| condition than those they had encountered farther east. |
| |

| As the train slowed on its approach, Joshua observed among |
| those assembled on the platform a woman whom he at once took |
| to be of the House of Haivri. She was of uncommon height, |
| exceeding most of the men present by a full head, and was |
| dressed in a manner not usual among women. Her clothing |
| consisted of leather armor worked in overlapping scales of |
| red and black, ornamented with brass from neck to foot. |
| |

| Straightaway Ariel went forth to embrace her. |

+-----+

1Y

```
+-----+
| Ariel led them into the pasture, where they were permitted |
| to graze among the oxen, and she provided them with alfalfa |
| in abundance, which they consumed with evident satisfaction. |
|
| Following Lailah, the thirty-three pilgrims entered through |
| the great double doors of the house known as Big Blue and |
| observed the interior. Within was a large bay wherein stood |
| ten prairie schooners yet unfinished, their frames rising |
| nearly to the ceiling under the arc of the roof. At one end |
| of the structure was an area set aside for the taking of |
| meals in common.
|
| Along the walls were arranged chambers of various sizes, |
| allotted to the several families among the company. Lailah |
| then addressed them, saying, "I bid you all welcome unto |
| this place which we have made ready for you. There is much |
| that ye must learn before ye shall be prepared to complete |
| your journey."
|
| Lailah further said that when those under her charge had |
| been instructed sufficiently, it would already be too late |
| in the season to complete the journey and prepare all things |
| before the coming of winter. For this reason, she declared |
| that they should abide at that place until the spring.
|
|
|
|
|
|
|
|
|
|
+-----+
```