

## LONG, LONG AGO...IN A PLACE NOT SO FAR AWAY

Once upon a time long, long ago there was a Kingdom located on the remote southern shore of the Isle of Living. It was a Kingdom large in area, but sparsely peopled, due to its remote location and mountainous terrain. The Kingdom was, by most accounts, well and ably ruled with necessary services efficiently provided to its subjects and matters of law fairly administered by its courts. In recent years many subjects of far off lands had chosen to immigrate to the Kingdom seeking relief from onerous levels of taxation and civil anarchy in their native lands.

But all was not well in the Kingdom. A native grain called 'Electra' had long been a staple of life in all surrounding kingdoms. The grain itself was plentiful, but needed to be ground between massive stone wheels prior to consumption. The necessary power to turn these wheels had, for generations, been provided by large black oxen of the breed 'Carbone.' The ever growing demand for Electra had made necessary increased usage of the Carbone oxen to process the grain, and the manure and gases emitted by these huge beasts had begun to foul the air and water far and wide. In addition, a genetic abnormality had caused a progressive slowing of the breeding rate of the Carbone over the past years and their eventual extinction was thought to be unavoidable. Possible solutions to the impending calamity were widely debated, but no plausible solution was to be found.

Then there came a prophet into the Kingdom. He spoke of far off lands where Electra was ground without the use of oxen. This was not done by magic, the prophet explained, but by machine. The machine was called a "watermill" and was capable of capturing the power of flowing water and using it to turn the heavy grindstones. The eastern reaches of the Kingdom did appear to be an ideal location for the watermills, owing to the abundance of cascading streams. The prophet explained how the watermills would be of benefit to the air, water, the Public Treasury, and the subjects on whose lands the machines would be constructed. There was great rejoicing in the Kingdom.

A shadow soon fell over the celebrations. A retired sorceress, Mordredina, had recently immigrated to the Kingdom and was renovating a dilapidated castle in the remote eastern region with the intent of living out her days in her preferred solitude. When she heard that a watermill was to be constructed on the lands of a neighboring subject, she grew dark with rage. Possessed of a jealous Spirit and an abundance of free time and ably assisted by her loyal eunuch Delray, Mordredina exhorted her neighboring subjects, whose lands had not proven suitable for watermill construction, to journey with her to the Great Hall and petition the King to immediately and forever banish the evil watermills from the land.

During the long and arduous trip to the Great Hall, the tales of the honors of the watermills grew and grew among the petitioners. By the time that they assembled before the King they had become of a mind that, if a single watermill were to be constructed, a pox would fall upon the land, swarms of locust would descend, birds would fall from the sky and the firstborn sons of the Kingdom would surely be sacrificed. The King and his Ministers received the petitioners politely and heard their request. The King then explained that he, his Ministers, and several advisors, having heard the rumors of the calamities attributed to watermills, had recently returned from a sojourn to several Kingdoms where waterfalls were in operation. Contrary to the abundant rumors, the travelers found only peace and prosperity among the subjects of the distant Kingdoms and a sincere desire to construct more of the beneficial machines.

When informed that their wishes would not to be granted, the petitioners protested with a zeal rivaling that of the Crusaders who were, at that time, part way to Jerusalem once again. They denounced the legitimacy and competency of the King and his Ministers, holding that the only question to be decided was whether the King would forfeit only his Crown or his head as well. The petitioners attacked the management of the Kingdom, deriding the efficiency of administrative and court operations about which they had previously been unconcerned or unaware. The King, heretofore largely unschooled in the ways of sorcery or of watermills, and disturbed by the pandemonium in the normally civil Great Hall, set out to seek the counsel of the wisest man in the land, the timeless sage \*TILIIS. (Tell It Like It IS)

The King was surprised be conducted before TILIIS immediately upon his arrival having, in the past, been compelled to wait for days for his turn to address the wise seer. When he questioned TILIIS about this he was told: "Ah, yes. The demand for my services has been declining for years, owing to the fact that I speak only the truth. People today no longer seek the truth, only ammunition to defend their chosen position. I have had a vision of a time in the future when there will be no sages, only an omnipotent being called INTERNET. This being will dispense no wisdom, but will be capable of spewing information that will justify any desired position or proposition, no matter how ill-conceived or untenable."

When the King began to explain the reason for his visit TILIIS quickly raised his hand. "You are the seventh King this month to bring this issue before me. I used to anticipate a visit from the protesting petitioners, but have long since accepted that that is not to be. The causes of the organized opposition to the watermills are many. I will explain these factors as I have come to understand them,"

"People have a natural fear of the unknown and, when presented with an unfamiliar concept, will oppose it without thought. You should not concern yourself with this factor, as it will fade with time and the ranks of the protesters will thin accordingly."

"Jealousy is one of the most destructive human emotions, and often rears its head when people perceive that a change will benefit others more than themselves. Wise men have long searched for an antidote for jealousy, but I fear one will never be found."

"People have an inborn need to be a part of something larger than themselves. Many fulfill this need through religion and others through fanatic causes. Those who have elevated this struggle to this level cannot be swayed by facts or reason, but you must persevere for, as a leader, you must not allow the progress of your Kingdom to be stifled by inspired superstition."

The King then took his leave of TILIIS and began his journey homeward. The chronicles fall silent at this point, but it should be noted that recent excavations in the lands thought to have been the subject of this tale have discovered what is believed to be the one of the earliest installations of the fabled watermill.

**Anonymous Supporter of Wind Power for Cohocton**

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