

.....The people of the Land of Melcee had grown weak and disheartened, and storm clouds shrouded the land to the very peak of the Mountain of Enlightenment so that even the turrets of the new Palace of the Muddles were cloaked in mist. Discontent and strife did bubble through the halls and corridors of the Kingdom.

Loose- Change -Lorica, the Counter of Beans, whispered that the coffers of the Kingdom were empty, and plotted “philanthropy “, an ancient rite whereby the Little People should be upended and shaken to ensure any remaining shekels of gold and silver – or even copper – were collected.

Elaine (who is rarely Riled), Mistress of the Halls of Lost and Abandoned Children, did mutter in the Market Place of plagues of rats and possums pillaging the larders and storehouses of the land. The Physedites searched high and low for signs of the Builders of Stone

and Wood but they had deserted the land, likely never to return, and the Physedites were mightily aggrieved. And though King Stephanus Maximus of the Middle Yeas did laugh and entertain the people with drums and dancers and even clowns, but still the Tribes and Clans of Melcee frowned, and plotted treason.

Then the Lady Parker of the Lake descended from the Council in the Sky and in a commanding voice did say to King Stephenus Maximus of the Middle Years, “Maximus, thy coffers are empty and the Clans and Tribes of Little People speak of exodus. Even the trees of the Kingdom hurl mighty missiles of mayhem from on high to show displeasure. We can forgive thee these things, but rumours did reach the Council in the Sky that thee did inscribe spells upon the walls of the Muddle Castle, even though we did proclaim that they should be unsullied. We are much displeased, and decree that thou shalt be Banished from the Kingdom of Melcee, and shall never return.

And so it happened, and he did vanish without a trace.

Thus again the Kingdom of Melcee languished without a Ruler. And the hoards of Peelcee and the Warriors of St Hilde did gather at the borders and did plot to kidnap and enslave the Tribes of Little People, so that Melcee would be no more.

But Palm the Tree, formerly of the Clan of Humbio, did step forward with dignity, poise, and grace, and did exhort the Clans to Lock the Little People in the Halls of Learning, and in the deepest basements and dungeons, so that the Shufflers of Paper could continue to shuffle and impart their Pearls of Wisdom.

Brave Brian of Barclay did sally forth to dig up the Fields of Melcee to plant kale and cabbages and parsley to feed the starving masses. And MazzaLeis the Sleepless, and Baron Bruce, and Brown Michael from the Bowels of Barclay did set in motion plans and

did labour night and day to make ready the land of Melcee for Better Days. And Palm the Tree's fronds grew ragged and limp, and verily it did rain for 40 days and 40 nights so that she did think that the Kingdom of Melcee could take no more.

Then Baron Bruce did rush from his Palace Tower, and cried "Lo, behold a Long White Cloud, bearing a throng of brightly painted courtiers!" The people did gather in the fields and gazed in wonder as a Fair Lady alighted from the Cloud, surrounded by her painted retinue.

And she did parade her painted retinue throughout all the Kingdom of Melcee. Then she did sweep away the barricades around the trees and address the multitude: "I am the Fair Lady Codex, and I see many Clues that tell me that the Kingdom of Melcee has dire need of a new Chatelaine. I shall send my painted retinue back to the Land of the Long White Cloud, from whence they came. I shall retain only my Lord (but not master)

Simonski, and my little Jack of Hearts, for they shall bring me comfort in times of trial.

Gather to me and I will tell you tales of Kingdoms where apples drop without cease from the trees, and yet the people are unharmed; of Kingdoms with warriors taller than your Mountain of Enlightenment, where I dwelt beside a Wooden Ford; tales to show you that the trials of Melcee hold no fears for me.. “

And the people of Melcee did gather around the Lady Codex, and were enthralled.

Then she did draw a purple velvet glove upon her delicate hand and raised it, and lo, the trees did tremble and they ceased to cast great missiles of mayhem upon the people.

And she did call the Tribes of Little People to her and did say gently “Forsooth, thou shouldst lower thy hems and cease to flash thy undergarments, for instead I

shall give you Lotion of Kiwi to rub on your sandals that thou mayest flash them instead.”

Then she did raise her purple velvet glove once more, and did summon to the Banquet Hall all the Leaders of the Clans, the Shufflers of paper, the Wielders of broom and pail, trowel and rake and even the Preparers of feast and gourd, and the Counters of beans - yay all of the Tribes of Melcee, from all the villages of the Kingdom, and she did say “Fetch thy goblets, and partake in tea with me, that I may teach thee to speak to each other in dulcet tones, so that we may learn to stand together as one, to unite this Kingdom of Melcee”.

And there was much glinting of goblets and shining of shoes, and over the fields and market places of Melcee, the clouds did seem to lift and give promise of brighter days aheadAnd so endeth the one hundred and ninth chronicle.

