

ISLANDS OF EARTH

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John Cadwallader sat in his garden in the south east of Iceland enjoying the panoramic view of mountains and glaciers. A lot had happened since the vote that resulted in the United Kingdom leaving the European Union (EU) and the repercussions that followed. Immigration and ‘taking back control’ became hot topics not only in the United Kingdom but also in the United States where a valedictory president, who couldn’t differentiate between fact and fiction, succeeded in ‘repatriating’ the whole Latino population and all Indian tribes who were ‘fake’ First Nations. Following the example of the United Kingdom, which was renamed The Kingdom of the English and Welsh Confederation (commonly known as KEWC) when Northern Ireland re-united with the Irish Republic, Scotland had voted for independence and Wales had negotiated autonomy status with the kingdom. The rest of mainland Europe, and nearly the whole world in fact, moved in the same direction. Only one or two countries, such as Germany, tried to oppose the drift to a dangerous xenophobia. As most countries built walls and barriers along their borders the defunct UN was disbanded and a new body set up with the mnemonic **ODIN** (Organisation for the Defence of Independent Nations). The results of this general move towards nationalist policies were tribal wars in Africa and Middle East countries bombing each other and, in some cases, their own rebellious cities. (Syrian and Russian jets were still bombing hospitals, schools, and markets in rebel-held areas in a war that had now gone on for nearly twenty five years with no end in sight.) Some Asian countries embarked on a program of ethnic cleansing but other regions, such as South America and the Scandinavian countries managed the changes peacefully and humanely. Of course the main beneficiaries of this upheaval were the arms industry and cybercrime organisations. Taking a cue from India, the English parliament then instituted a new body: the Citizenship Information Bureau (**CIB**) which was assigned the task of registering citizens who could prove their English heritage, whatever that meant. A separate sub-division was also set up called the Divisional Executive for the Monitoring of Overseas Nationals, commonly referred to as **DEMON**. The CIB was allocated a budget of several billion pounds with staff numbering tens of thousands. The object here was to Hoover up the massive unemployed resulting from the exodus of all non-English companies fleeing the new restrictions.

All this apart, John then mulled over the impact these changes had from his own personal perspective. As he appeared to have Welsh parentage he, like other non-English, was allocated an **EVIL** (Extended Visitor Immigration Licence) work permit valid for six months. If his genealogy was still unresolved he would be assigned to **VALHALLA**, a VArIable Long term Holding Arrangement centre for Legal Licence Allocation. In the meantime he could continue to work in a non-critical area. Fortunately, John’s financial/technical skills as a freelancer were highly valued by his main client and he was well-liked by the Company’s the permanent employees, all of whom like him had voted to remain in the EU, so they turned a blind eye to his project work. They had all believed in ‘Strength in Unity’. Of course, the United States had gone

further than any other country in that those who couldn't confirm their ethnicity were sentenced to **DEATH** (DEportation And Transportation to Hawaii – which had been converted into a giant prison camp where the population was controlled by the volcanic activity and violent eruptions). Finally, John received a letter from the **CIB** stating that he was to be expelled from England and sent to Wales, as his father had been a Welshman from Carmarthen. This was the start of a long and expensive search for his true parentage. Fortunately, due to his skills and the demand for his services, he had travelled to many countries and accumulated substantial funds to invest. This was just as well, for over the next few years he ploughed through a fair amount of his savings.

However, this was not the end of his travails. As soon as he crossed into Wales he was again allocated a new **WEEVIL** (Welsh Edition of the Extended Visitor Immigration Licence) work permit, valid initially for a year this time. The official at the local **CIB** did apologise stating that as an autonomous state within the English kingdom it was obliged to follow Westminster directives. So the search to validate his Welsh ancestors was continued by the Welsh organisation **WITCH** (Welsh Institute for Targeting Counterfeit Homelanders). Initially he received encouraging news when he learned that the family name Cadwaladr was known in Harlech during the 7th century followed by the discovery of a church on Anglesey dedicated to Gadwaladr and linked to the 6th century. 'At last' he thought; but it was not to be. After nine months he received a brown window envelope, stamped *Private and Confidential*, from the **DEVIL** (Department for Evaluating Visitor Immigration Licences – Welsh Department). This stated that their genealogical search had shown that there had been an error in tracing his family tree and in fact one of his ancestors on the male line – a Joseph Cabwoladr – had in fact travelled to Anglesey from Scotland sometime around 1600. So he was deported to Scotland.

Fortunately he had a professional contact and close friend – Angus MacDonald – who was willing to put him up, and find short term contract work for him. On arrival at immigration he was handed a new temporary work licence signed by a **SLAG** (Scottish Licence Assistant Governor) and issued by the **SADIST** (Scottish Authorisation Department for the Issuance of Standard Tenures). This new licence was valid for only six months as Scotland was very sensitive about its demography with strict control over the numbers its economy could support. He enjoyed some good times with Angus and was working on a very interesting government project via one of his friend's contacts (legally he was forbidden to work on 'sensitive' projects when holding the temporary licence). Then the next bombshell hit him. It was discovered that Joseph Cabwoladr was in fact Jose Cebollada, a sailor who was serving on one of the galleons in the Spanish Armada. Jose's ship had floundered on rocks off the Scottish coast in September 1588 but he managed to struggle ashore and was taken in by a local family. Fortunately he had a rudimentary knowledge of English, which he managed to improve whilst he helped the family on their small homestead. On their advice he changed his name to Joseph Cabwoladr so that he could seek his fortunes elsewhere in Elizabeth's England. It was with great sorrow that he left the family who had looked after him but they understood and had wished him luck. The consequence of this discovery was that he was deported to Spain.

Having been dumped in Oviedo via an uncomfortable low cost air flight, John was immediately taken to the **TERD** department, TERD being the commonly used mnemonic (with letters arranged in English speaking countries) for the Territorio de la República Democrática de España, where he was issued with yet another licence valid for six months. Once again a professional contact, Maria Fernandez in Madrid, helped him with accommodation and some temporary work. Maria was very good to him and even negotiated some long term contracts, pending his successful application for permanent residence based on his Spanish ethnicity. When his licence was extended for another six months both he and Maria felt confident that things were looking promising, until that official envelope arrived once again. This stated that his ancestry had been traced to a Jean Gadwollen who had migrated to Spain across the Pyrenees sometime between 1350 and 1400. He was therefore ordered to leave Spain within one month.

He had met up with Maria to thank her for all the support he had received before being escorted to a train which took him to Cerbère where he was obliged to disembark and handed a six month **FILTH** (French Immigration Licence for Temporary Holders) issued by the **FLEA** (French Licence Evaluation Authority) or Français autorité d'évaluation des permis, as it is known in France. From there, he made his way to Paris where he managed to contact Michelle Sousson, another colleague with whom he had worked with in the past. Like other European acquaintances, Michelle offered to put him up. He had been very close to her to the extent that they had developed a romantic relationship when he worked on a two year project in France. She was a very attractive brunette who, he remembered, always wore jeans when working, changing into a tantalising short skirt when socialising. On completion of the project they had parted with some regret but neither was willing to commit, so agreed to meet up whenever they had the opportunity. Even now he had feelings for her but until his French ethnicity had been confirmed they just resumed their close companionship. As the review date drew close Michelle started dropping hints about them moving in together permanently but John wasn't going to get too excited this time after so many disappointments. It was just as well, as it turned out. His rejection letter was received on the day his licence expired. It had been discovered that he was descended from the Vikings who settled in Normandy in the 9th century with the name Gadwolsen from Norway. After an agreed couple of days to bid farewell to Michelle, he was flown to Oslo on an early flight.

There were a few other passengers on the flight under the same circumstances as John and all were very critical of the former British Government for triggering the fragmentation of international alliances with the BREXIT referendum. John couldn't help but agree but had heard through his various contacts that there was a groundswell of support to revoke all laws resulting from BREXIT. However, that was for the future. Once they landed they were taken to the **NASTY** - Norwegian Authority for the Segregation and Testing of Yokels - department (Yokels being anyone who couldn't prove they were of Norwegian ethnicity). For the sixth time he was handed a residents licence, this time issued by the **LOSER** (Licence for Other States Entrants Registrar) and valid for nine months. Having managed to contact Birgit Christiansen he felt thankful and relieved that he had travelled around Europe so much in his profession, even though at times he wished he could have cut it down what with spending so much time at airports and in hotels. Birgit was a very attractive petite blonde with an effervescent personality and was so pleased to see him that she gave him a big and close hug. She virtually dragged him to her car to put him up in her log cabin in Sandvika not far from the capital. They enjoyed good times together but John avoided the relationship becoming too intense until he had word of his status. He opened the envelope with some trepidation but more hopeful this time. However, the letter confirmed what he was half expecting: **NASTY** had traced his Viking ancestors to a Gadwollenssohn from Iceland.

So, with the usual farewells he soon found himself in Reykjavik and met by the **IDEAL** (Icelandic Department for Entrance Allocation Licences). This time there was no time limit and he was put up in a hotel until his application came through. He had only just re-familiarised himself with the city, having visited the country several years prior, when he received a 'notification of review' letter which stated that his application was up for consideration within two weeks. Optimistically, he started making approaches to local companies in the hope of picking up some work. Impressed with his skills and track record, many of them offered to help him with finding a home should his application be successful. Was he both surprised and thrilled when he received a Welcome Pack and a document proclaiming him a Citizen of the Republic of Iceland. Although the Vikings had settled in Iceland and Normandy during the same era, records showed that his particular lineage came from Iceland but it couldn't be confirmed from which specific Scandinavian country his family originated. Once the decision to let him stay had sunk in, it wasn't long before he had signed a contract with a networking company based in Hofn.

So, here he was one year on soaking up the summer sun with one project under his belt with several more lined up. He glanced at his watch noting the time when Katrin Gunnarssohn would arrive. Katrin was a

guide for adventurers who sought pleasure in exploring those parts of Iceland which the normal tourist avoids. John thought it was a dangerous occupation but she laughed it off and made a condition of their relationship that he accompany her on one soon, which he promised to do.

Excitedly, he heard her car arriving, scanned the vista in front of him and thought to himself '*These islands of Earth*'.

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