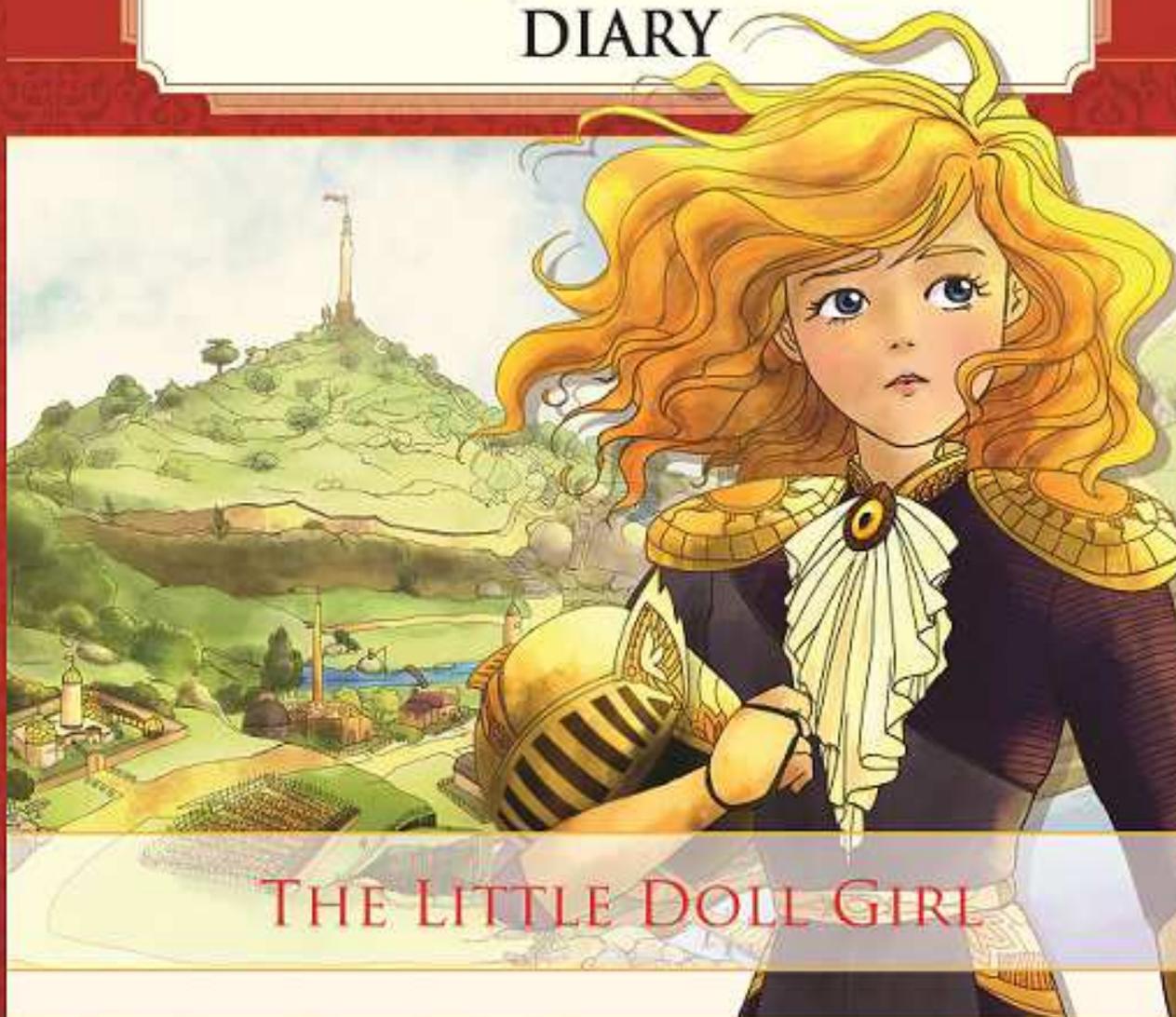


# THE WURTHERINGTON DIARY



THE LITTLE DOLL GIRL

TAMMY  
WURTHERINGTON

Transcribed By Reynold Jay

# The Wurtherington Diary

## The Little Doll Girl

Restored by Reynold Jay

**10-Adult Reader: Kindle Restored Color Edition**

“This book will be available in print at many online retailers.”

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The Wurtherington Diary: The Little Doll Girl

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*The Wurtherington Diary*

*The Little Doll Girl*

*by*

*Tammy Wurtherington*

Introduction and Notes by

Robert Landsbury, Amara, and Reynold Jay

Art Restorations by

Duy Truong, Nour Hassan

& Jesse Ty

## **Prelude:**

For the readers who may inquire about the discovery of the papers that led to the diary that is to follow I would like to give a brief history. I am Professor Robert Landsbury, and presently a teacher in the public school system of River Falls, Ohio. I have a wife and family and found it prudent to move into the area about a year ago in order to find employment in my chosen field of endeavor. I had moved my family from Chicago as we felt we would enjoy the comforts of a smaller, less stressful, town. River Falls seemed best to fit the bill and I discovered a quaint; however dilapidated, estate at the edge of the village. It was in quite a state of disrepair; however I felt confident that I could make the necessary repairs during the summer breaks without assistance from a handyman.

I was told that the estate had been built by Lord Wixby sometime during the 1870's. He had traveled across the Atlantic with his family for reasons unknown to me; however he settled into the estate and became a prominent member of the community. He led many organizations with charitable work and his name is prominent all about town to this day—various streets carry his name. I did find documentation on most of this at the library and could only conclude that he was a remarkable man in every way.

I did make inquiries with various acquaintances and my curiosity bore fruit when an older lady down the street stopped by and explained that Lord Wixby had two children, a boy and a girl. The girl was most vibrant of the pair although she was an adopted child being given custody to an aunt. It seems that her mother passed away from cholera during her first year and the girl was too much to manage for her surviving husband. As far as I am able to determine, the little girl is, in fact, the author of the story.

Her name is Tammy Wurthington. The diary indicates that she wrote it in 1883 around the time she was ten years old. When one considers that she was of such a young age, it is a remarkable achievement that she was able to write the story as well as she did. I can only imagine that she had the finest schoolmasters to educate her.

The estate was passed along in the family for five generations and the downturn in 2006 brought hardship to the entire town and the home came to a state of disrepair (I've been told) at that time. That is how I came to purchase the home. The owner had taken out a mortgage the previous year, lost his employment and the family has since moved away to parts unknown to me. The estate was sold to me for pennies on the dollar on a foreclosure sale.

There are several acres out back and a stream that runs through the property. It is quite picturesque and it is my hope that I may one day restore the entire grounds to its previous beauty. I only mention all this as I was cleaning up the shed that rests behind the house when I discovered the yellowed parchments amidst the dust and cobwebs that had accumulated over the years. The roof was nearly gone and everything inside appeared to be in a state of ruin. I imagined that no one had been out there for many years as the wood was decayed and the tools that were scattered about looked prewar to me. I was in the process of tossing out

everything; however the brittle documents were discovered in a well-made wooden box that apparently protected the contents from the water that leaked through the roof. I nearly tossed it away; however I was curious by nature, and being a scholarly person, I set them aside to look over that evening.

I had not anticipated that the papers were anything at all; however I was quickly drawn into the remarkable story that unfolded with each page. After reading the first several pages, I realized that this indeed was something special and was careful to replace each paper in its proper order. The paper was fragile and I was careful to lay out each page on my desk. In retrospect, I was careless with the first several pages and I did allow some of the parchment to fall away in my hands. Some of the original manuscript was lost in this manner and I did my best to recreate it from memory. All of this, of course, was hand written in purple ink in one of the loveliest scripts I have ever seen. It is unfortunate that the original script cannot be reproduced as the story written in the beautiful handwriting was a part of the experience for me. I am afraid, that part of it will be lost to others. I feel fortunate that I alone was the one chosen to read it as I did.

In conclusion, I did pass along the original diary to Amara, a distant cousin with writing ambitions and had recently published a memoir of her childhood years. It was only with her sworn honor that I would have allowed these precious papers to be loosed from my grasp. I was assured that she would do her best to pass it along to the world of readers who might be inquisitive in glimpsing into the mind of a little girl more than a century ago.

~\*~

Dear Robert,

The diary you have passed along to me is much too valuable for me to handle alone. I see water damage to many of the pages and they are nearly destroyed. You mention that there is a stream on the property and I imagine it is possible that the papers suffered from a flood. I don't know if there was a cover and binding to it. We think of a diary now as being in a bound volume; however I don't know if they had such a thing in 1883. I would guess that there was a book-like binding for it originally and that somewhere in its history it became damaged and the interior pages were torn from it in order to save the pages. I can see that many of the left-side of the pages are torn and that would suggest that they were bound at one time. We can only speculate how it arrived in this condition and I imagine it will remain a mystery for us.

I must tell you that the sketches are charming. In that that they were drawn by Ms. Wurtherington does make them priceless. They are an indication of the remarkable person she was and one can only wonder what happened to her when she became an adult. Hopefully, the drawings can be saved as they add much to the narrative.

I really know little of the publishing world; however I can assure you that I know the proper person who will treat it with the utmost care. He is my co-writer on my own memoirs and is a publisher.

Yours truly,  
Amara

~\*~

Dear Amara,

Please pass the diary along to your co-writer. I trust in you that he is of impeccable credentials. I did find time to read your memoirs and from that experience, I can see why you have chosen him.

Sincerely,

Robert

~\*~

Dear Amara and Robert,

I wish to thank you for forwarding the lost papers to me and after reading all of it, I can see your concern about preserving it. You must forgive me as many of the papers fell apart as I brought them out and much of it is now little more than dust. I can report that I was able to save the entire diary by transcribing it into my computer and I imagine that the three of us are grateful that I was able to accomplish the task. Robert, your re-creation of the first few pages would appear to be accurate and you did well to do that.

I must confess that the entire diary is a remarkable piece of writing and I can only wonder what other readers will make of it.

One of my first thoughts was, "In what manner will I present the book?" It is clearly a true accounting of her experience, and yet there will be those who would discount it all as being a preposterous tale not worthy of any discourse. I am at a quandary and by the time the book is ready to publish, I will have settled the issues, like this one, that run through my mind. You mentioned that there are other papers that appear to be written by Ms. Wurtherington that you are currently accessing and I will soon have those papers in my possession. I can only say that I greatly anticipate viewing all of the papers one day and perhaps assisting in getting those before the public eye.

As for the drawings, that are nearly lost, I plan to send them to Egyptian restoration artist, Nourhan Hassan, whose preservation skills are legend. Her grandfather was instrumental in saving the dead scrolls and worked with Carter in 1922 opening King Tut's Tomb. Many of

the scrolls as well as the wall etchings at the Temple of Deir al-Bahria were preserved as the result of her team's efforts. In that portions of some of the drawings are missing, I will call upon other internationally known artists, if needed, to recreate them and will note them in the back section of the book. The drawings that appear here are colored and enhanced by Duy Truong. The original drawings will appear in collector editions to be released at a later date.

As I write this note, I think I will take the liberty of dividing the diary into various parts such that the reader will find it more readable. Other than that, I see no reason to change a single word – to do so would be a criminal act.

For readers who may be reading this, I can say that you must understand that this was written more than a century ago and it was never meant to be more than the diary of Ms. Wurtherington expressing her most innermost thoughts. We can imagine that she never shared it with anyone and it is only because she has passed on that it may be appropriate for the eyes of others.

It will be up to readers to decide if the private thoughts of a little girl who lived in another time and place will have any merit at all in today's world. I suspect so, and without any further discussion, I humbly offer the diary.

Reynold Jay

Note: Vocabulary can be found at the end of the diary.



**I** would not anticipate that anyone will ever read my diary; however I will tell a little about myself in the event anyone should ever come upon it. I am Tammy Wurthington and live with Lord Frederick Wixby and Aunt May Wixby in River Falls, Ohio. My mother passed away during my first year and I have no memory of her—only a photo of her that sits on the desk in my bedroom. Aunt May was kind enough to take me into their home and raise me as her own child.

Lord Wixby pays little attention to me as he is always busy being the man of the house and providing the income required to run a household. I imagine that many fathers are busy and worried about matters that are beyond the understanding of their children, so I expect he is a good husband and father in our household—as much so as anyone could expect. When he is home in the evening he very often sits in the library smoking his pipe. Aunt May says it is a dirty and filthy habit that should be outlawed. However she puts up with it as does Mark, my step brother. However, I think Mark looks forward to the day he can smoke a pipe and he bears the stink more than the ladies of the house.

Lord Wixby does favor Mark more than me and I can understand that. Mark is his only son and I am not a true daughter. In that I have never known my mother, it is an empty place

in my heart that brings me apart in associating with my friends. I am grateful to Lord Wixby and Aunt May as they have taken me in and do everything they can to make me happy and provide for me.

You might inquire, "Do they love you?" I know they do. As long as I can remember I would find a doll under the Christmas tree. For many years I believed it was Santa that had left it, but now I know that it was not.

I particularly remember my third birthday; red and yellow balloons were strung around my chair and after a birthday dinner, Lord Wixby presented me with a package wrapped in colorful ribbons and bows. My eyes, I imagine, were as big as saucers when I found a raggedy doll that was nearly as large as me. I took that doll to bed with me every night and, to this day, the doll is my best friend in an imaginary world.

Aunt May loved to make clothing and the love of sewing was passed along to me. She spent hours sitting at the sewing machine making clothing for all of us. She often took me to the store to purchase fine cloth and I began to understand the worth of the various fabrics as well as she. I spent many evenings sitting beside her while she sewed. She talked about things that were rather personal and confided in me on most everything imaginable. She told me, "We women are the stronger sex. We let the men think they are running the show, but we know better."

"Yes, Aunt May." My voice was always a whisper. Some called me "mute," but I'll get to that shortly.

She was a strong willed woman. You would not want to ever cross her or betray a trust. She could catch a tiny fib before it was out of your mouth. "Would you like to say that again?" It was always the stern look in her eye that persuaded the truth to usher from my lips.

"Okay—I do know what happened to the cookie."

She would cross her arms looking down at that four-year-old that had gathered a chair, dragged it across the kitchen and raided the cookie jar. "Yes?" Of course she knew. The chair was still sitting by the counter.

The jig was up.

Cornered.

I may as well confess.

"I ate it."

She would gather me up and smother me with hugs and kisses. "Precious child. Always be truthful with others. There is no reason to ever tell a lie if you are a forthright child of God."

I was never able to talk like others. They took me to several doctors and they were told that I would never be able to talk because my nodules had not developed properly. It did not bother me that much as I could always make it known what I was thinking with a few gestures. When I was taught to read and write, I found that I could write a message and that

would always solve the problem. I was able to whisper the tiniest bit and around the house everything worked out fine. It was in school that some of the meaner kids would make a point of it and then others would come to my defense. I was looked as being a little less assertive than most, but I knew better.

Having no voice had drawbacks; however it had very little effect upon my life. Aunt May often patted me on the head and said, "You are wiser than the others because you are learning at every moment. Others would do well to follow your example."

She often chastised others who expressed political opinions that were out in left-field. "What did you ever learn while you are talking?" she often said. Then she would answer her own question. "Not a darn thing!" Then she would roll her eyes and shake her head and take pity on the person she clearly had identified as a fool.

Aunt May could see that I was fascinated with her sewing and one day sat me down to give me a lesson. Several books were piled onto the seat to prop me up to the proper height and soon I was sewing on the machine—just like her. It was magical for me to see how really easy it was and yet there was much to learn. Each night she allowed me to sew all kinds of things and in time I knew just about everything I needed to know to stitch seams. It was a big effort for a little girl as everything was the wrong size.

Aunt May was sitting at the sewing machine one afternoon and noticed that I seemed particularly quiet. She inquired as to what was troubling me. I told her that it was not my place to discuss my problems as she surely had more important things that would require her attention. She stopped the machine and turned to me. "You are more important to me than anything you could ever imagine."

I said, "It is not my place to ask for anything. You have provided me all the comforts and it would be selfish of me to ask for more."

"We all want things, dear. When you want something, you should tell everyone around you. When you get it all out, you will find that you are surrounded by those who love you and will help you in whatever way they can." She looked at me eye-to-eye. "Out with it, Tammy."

"I want a sewing machine of my very own. We had a puppet show at school and I want to make puppets." I broke down in tears. "It is too much to ask—you wanted to hear it and there it is. I feel ashamed to sound so ungrateful to want such a thing. Certainly there is no way that I will ever—"

She cradled me in her arms and wiped away my tears. "You have taken the first step, my dear. I should have guessed it. My machine is not right for you. You need something smaller—am I right?"

"I did see a machine displayed in the window of the clothing shop about my size...."

"I'll speak to Frederick about this." She looked at the ceiling and sang a little tune. "I know a little girl who has a birthday next week."

I threw myself into her arms. "Oh, thank you, Aunt May."

"No promises, girl. You must be on your very best behavior—eat your vegetables and no slouching on the chores."

I promised her I would be my very best. I was giddy all week in anticipation of my birthday. Would I really have a sewing machine of my very own? I prayed to God at the side of the bed each night and told him I was not a grasping person and that, "I promise to be a good little girl forever and ever if I had my very own sewing machine on my birthday. Amen."

The next day I passed by the window and there was an empty space where it had been displayed. My first thought was that someone else had purchased it and now it was a dream forever lost. I imagined my aunt coming down to purchase it and then discovering that it was gone. The again, maybe my aunt had come down and purchased it! I knew she would never let on one way or the other as she carried a poker face when it came to such things and I was wise enough not to inquire.

My sixth birthday arrived and after dinner I unwrapped the most wonderful gift ever—a sewing machine of my very own! They helped me set it up in my room and gave me another gift wrapped with a big red ribbon. I found it filled with brightly colored fabrics and buttons. Everything I would ever need was there for me. Now I had my own needles, and sewing threads of every imaginable color. I was at a loss for words. I whispered, "Thank you," and gave them hugs and kisses. Some things are beyond words and I knew they understood they had a happy little girl on their hands.

In the years that followed I made puppets and dolls of all kinds. My imagination ran wild and I found myself making my dreams become true with each new design. The crafting of a head was a challenge and I found a book that showed how to make the heads with paper and paste and then by whittling a stick. A furniture maker took me aside and showed me how to whittle and I spent afternoons in his shop learning the craft. It was not long and I was crafting marionettes and displaying them in the shop window. From time to time, he would tell me that traveling puppeteers had made purchases and then gave me the coins from the sale. Encouraged by this, I designed nutcrackers during the Christmas season and was given outrageous sums by those who made purchases.

"It is too much," I would say when Gus-toff laid the silver coins in my hand.

"Most would say it was too little for such beautiful handcrafted nutcrackers. You have a talent, my little Tammy, that comes from heaven. Surely angels perch upon your shoulder—you have a gift from God."

I ran out of space in my bedroom to display all my creations. I decided to cleanup the toolshed that stood in the backyard and work out there on occasion. I was all of ten-years-old and often carried the sewing machine into the shed. I needed the shed to do the whittling of the heads as it was dusty and I did not want the dirt in the house. Aunt and Uncle understood

that I was a creative individual and allowed me to work late at night out in the shed using the light of a kerosene lamp.

I often played with my creations and had tea parties with my favorite dolls. We had imaginary conversations and it was always great fun.

I had created an army of wooden soldiers as a gift for Mark. I knew he would love them. I enjoyed playing with them late into the night. I would have mock battles with cannons shooting and good soldiers shooting down the bad ones. Yes—Mark would certainly spend many happy hours playing with them.

One afternoon, I had them lined up on the work bench and was going down the line dressing each one in their new uniforms. I had little soldier hats and tiny wooden swords for each. I picked up one and it squeaked!

“Squeak!”

To my surprise it was a mouse! He had been standing there in line with my soldiers. I brushed back the curtain and I could fully see what I had come upon. I poked his belly with my finger. “Hey! Cut that out!”

“You can talk?” I whispered. I had never heard of a talking mouse.

“Of course I can—doesn't everyone talk?”

“I can only whisper.”

“Aren't you going to finish dressing me?”

I was flustered by all this. After all, I was having a discussion with a mouse. I had him raise up his paws and dressed him as best I could. He looked good in his little hat and he brandished the wooden sword then placed it in the scabbard as naturally as though he had done this all his rodent life. I had a doll-size mirror and let him see that he was quite magnificent. He stroked his tiny whiskers as he admired himself in the mirror. “I am quite extraordinary,” he exclaimed and patted his paws together. “Thank you my dear—now I must go.”

“Go where?” I was curious as to where in the world he was going.

“Back to Kira, of course.” He scampered under the cabinet. I knelt down and wondered how Kira could be under the work bench. I grabbed him by the tail and sat with him on the floor. He said he had much to do and implored that I should let him go. “You cannot follow me. It is not a place for little girls.” I was curious and insisted that he let me take a peek at Kira—after all he was wearing my soldier's outfit. He owed me a favor.

The discussion went on for some time and he finally agreed that I could follow him, take a quick peek, and then come back to the shed. “You must bring that machine with you.” He pointed to the sewing machine. “It is quite remarkable.” I told him I would bring it if I could see all of Kira before returning. He agreed, so I gathered up everything into a sewing basket and followed him under the counter.

## Chapter Two



**I** *scrunched down and wiggled around under the counter.* I held on tightly to his tail as I suspected he might try to run away and leave me behind. I pushed away some of the rotten boards so that I could squeeze through the back. I was fortunate not to be a full-sized girl as it was a tiny space. We made it through and I found myself in a tunnel in which I could barely fit. Eventually it opened up so that I could stand upright. I brushed the dust off my blue dress and gave myself a shake, much like a dog sheds water. While we strolled down the corridor he told me that his name was Alfred and admitted that the way back to Kira was uncertain. We walked for the longest time and then came to a larger tunnel that split in both directions. A road sign indicated that we were at the corner of Ohio and All Points. He indicated that we should turn to the left and passed more tunnel signs as we moved onward. We passed through a doorway and entered a large cylindrical room that reminded me of the lobby of the capital building in Columbus. I could see hundreds of

doorways, each with a signpost that indicated where it led. People and all sorts of odd creatures were walking about and passing through the multitude of doors.

“Ah—here we are!” Alfred pointed to the Kira signpost. I followed behind and we walked down a hallway that contained billboards expressing how beautiful Kira would be. I noticed that we were the only passengers. “Few people know anything about Kira,” he explained. “Come to think of it, I believe you are the only tourist Kira has had in many years.”

I fully expected to board something grand; however the tunnel ended, and there was only a large wicker basket floating in a puddle of water. It had a latched door that allowed us to enter and I sat down my baggage and took a seat across from him. He found a panel of buttons on the wall and contemplated for a moment. “East or West, up or down?” He looked at me and I shrugged that I certainly did not know. “We wish to go to Capira and that would be up and easterly.” He pressed the “up” button and then the basket gave a tiny lurch and his paw landed on the west button.

“Oops—now I've done it.”

“I hope we are not in any danger,” I whispered.

He looked a bit worried. “I have no idea where we are going. I've never been on the westerly side. We may very well have some traveling to do once we get there.” Water began to rise and we were swept at a furious pace down a roaring rapids that turned this way and that through a maze of murky pipes and tunnels. He did not need to tell me to hold on tight as we both clung to the rail for dear life. Alfred screamed at the top of his lungs as we approached a dead-end. I would have screamed if I had a voice. We surely anticipated that we were about to be smashed against the wall. Instead we were hurled skyward floating on a mountain of water that flung us straight for the heavens. Up and up we went at blinding speed until we hit daylight. Suddenly, we were shooting above an ocean of water high into the sky.

“I've got to talk to Catherine about this!” Alfred exclaimed while we reached the zenith and then our basket was pitched over the side of the cascading water.

“AAHHweeeehaaaa!

We were headed straight for the ocean and were sure to get a dunking. “There are some serious kinks that could be improved upon with this western trip!” He tore up our tickets and flung them over the side.

We both held on tightly and I was screaming for my life at the top of my lungs. “What—I have a voice?” I was incredulous at the thought. I had never heard my voice in my entire life. Unfortunately, I was about to go screaming to my death.

Alfred clutched the rail while holding on for dear life. “Well, now—of course you do. There are no exceptions allowed in Kira. Catherine decreed that everyone and everything should talk. She cast a spell over the land and now everything has a voice.”

“Everything?” I wondered.

“It will drive you crazy before we reach the palace. We'll need to tiptoe our way past talking flowers that we must ignore. They will suck you into all the local gossip and you would forget that you have a life of your own. If you utter a single word, they will pass it along and the entire kingdom will know your every thought before you take a step.”

We plunged into the water and we drifted off to one side. I could see that we had been released from a mile high water spout and now were in the middle of....

“This is horrible,” Alfred muttered. “We are sitting in the middle of the ocean floating around in a wicker-basket with no land anywhere to be found. If they charged money for this, I would lodge a complaint and demand a full refund.” He shook his head in disgust. “You get what you pay for.”



I looked around the interior of the basket and snatched a paddle off the side. There was life-preserver hanging there too. I hoped it would not go that far; however water was leaking in the bottom. I handed one to Alfred and grabbed another one for myself. We began paddling.

Soon we were caught up in a current. “Oh, oh—this is not good at all,” I heard him mutter, “Hold on, Tammy!” We were sucked into a giant whirlpool that must have been about a half-

mile wide. It wasn't that bad at the top; however we both became dizzy whirling 'round and 'round as we neared the center of it. We were jettisoned to the bottom of the ocean at a furious pace and we were finally flung back into the sky for another dunking. Poor Alfred—he was sick and turned green.

“This is getting us nowhere.” Alfred sat back on the seat exhausted. “We don’t have speck of an idea of where we are. We are going to die!” He got down on his knees and looked skyward. “Dear lord, I'm too young to die!”

“You don't look that young to me....” I was tuckered out too and then I saw a ship on the horizon drifting toward us.

Alfred found a spyglass and stared in the direction of the ship. “Come to think of it, I have no idea how old I am. There are blank spots in my memory—I can't even remember being born.”

“Silly mouse.” I paddled toward the boat that was drifting closer. “No one can remember a thing like that.”

He brought out a polka-dotted handkerchief. He wiped his brow; and then waved it at the ship. Abruptly, he ducked under the rail. “Oh, oh—it is a pirate ship.”

He handed me the eyeglass and I could see the skull and crossbones flag waving in the rippling breeze.

He began paddling in the opposite direction. It was too late. The ship was upon us and we were hoisted aboard by a ragtag crew of cutthroats.

“Ho, ho, ho. We are the pirates of Kira.

We sail the sea in search of booty and plunder!

We are the scourge, you and me—live a life full and free.

Let no man put us asunder.”

A scraggly underfed fellow dressed in a raggedy clothes dragged us up to the captain and pushed us to the deck. I could see the captain sported a peg leg and did my best not to mention it. Aunt May always said it was not proper manners to inquire or gawk.

“We gott'm, Captain Flynn.” He stood with a knife held at Alfred's back.

“Aye, Toby—that you do! They are a scurvy lookin' lot as ever sailed the seven seas.” He pinched his long black mustache and then adjusted the strap that covered the patch over his eye. He seemed lost in contemplation and walked a few circles around us with his hands clasped behind his back.

Alfred wrung his paws and spoke up. “Pleased to meet you, Captain.” He did a little curtsy and gave a bow with his hat as though he were in the presence of royalty. “You don't know how fortunate we are in that you rescued us.”

“Pitiful mouse—I expect you will be the first to walk the plank. A mouse has no place here.”

Toby said, “He would make a good sandwich, Captain.”

The crew agreed, "Aye, Captain."

Alfred drew his wooden sword and said, "We surrender to the good Captain and offer our weapons."

He knelt on one knee and held up the sword while he cast his eyes downward.

Captain Flynn laughed. "It is no more than a toothpick." He snapped the sword between his fingers and tossed it over the rail.

Then he turned to me. "...AND WHO ARE YOU?"

"I'm Tammy Wurthington." I thought I would offer a little curtsy and look a cute as I could. "We are lost at the moment and I ask that you will take us to the nearest port and we will be on our way. Thank you."

"You do now, lassie?"

I gave him a big smile. "We are fortunate that a big strong captain like you came along to rescue us."

"And where, might I ask, are you from?"

"I'm a country girl from Ohio. I live in a big house with Lord Wixby."

"Wixby? That sounds British to me and all British are our sworn enemy!"

Toby interjected. "No Captain, it is the French who...."

"That is a trifling detail," said the Captain who dismissed the remark. "I expect they are spies pretending to be British who are really...."

"That's it, Captain," said Toby. "They are scoundrels. Spies sent to infiltrate our ranks—gain our confidence and then send for troops."

Everyone agreed. "Aye! Spies, Captain!"

"Time to walk the plank!" Toby was giddy with anticipation.

Alfred tossed himself at the feet of the Captain. "You can't do this. I am a respectable rodent of the realm. Catherine will hear of this and cut off your monthly treasure!"

We both protested as we were led to the plank that jutted over the rail and out over the water. I could see fins swirling around—apparently sharks were looking for a quick luncheon. I took one last look around the ship and figured I would soon be shark-food. The pirates were a ragtag bunch, all right. Their outfits all needed mending, so did the shredded sails that hung lifelessly in the breeze. I realized that I had the sewing kit in my hands. "I could make your sails look like new, Captain."

"What do you mean?" said Captain Flynn. "How could this be done?"

Alfred found the last vestige of hope from the watery death. "She is a sorceress, Captain! She has magic that will repair your sails!"

"Sorceress?" Captain Flynn gave a signal to hold up the death sentence for at least a moment while he contemplated this new scrap of information. He rubbed his mustache.

He gathered his crew in a circle on the other side of the ship; however I was able to hear it all quite clearly as a gentle breeze was blowing in my direction.

All were very excited and buzzing with excitement. "Captain—she can repair our sails? That would be magic to do that. We've been stranded out here for weeks and we are tired of rowing the ship."

They all agreed, "Aye, Captain. We need sails and then it would be like the ole days. We would be masters of the sea once again."

The Captain agreed, "We could pillage and plunder once again, mates."

"Wenching, too, Captain." Toby did a little jig at the thought.

They launched into that pirate chant that sounded a bit out of tune. They could not sing worth a darn and should give it up as far as I was concerned.

"Ho, ho, ho. We are the pirates of Kira...."

The Captain was suspicious of the claim. "We have agreed to let you cast a spell and then take you to Port Wither-wind. You *must* repair the sails."

Arthur brought out the sewing machine and displayed it proudly for all to see.

"What is this magic contraption you show us?" wondered Captain Flynn. "Perhaps it is a compact with the devil of the deep blue sea."

"No, no, Captain," Alfred assured the crew, "Tammy is a good sorceress and soon she will not only repair your sails...."

"Yes?"

"She will capture your heart before the Sun sets in the West."

"That is to be seen."

I gave the order. "Tear down the sail and bring it to to me and I you will see magic like you have never seen before. My magic will only work when we work together. I cannot tear down your sail or set it in place. That is up to you."

"You heard the girl!" Captain Flynn was joyous that hope had returned to his crew. "What are you waiting for? Everyone get to work getting those sails down on the poop-deck!"

The crew launched into that nearly tuneless song while they worked the laces and straps that held the sails. They brought the first sail into place. I had them line up with it and hold it in place while I re-stitched it.

There were "Ohhh's and Ahhh's" while I worked my magic. It was apparent they had never seen a sewing machine. That was lucky for me, otherwise I figured I would have been shark-bait about then. As each one passed by holding the sail, I touched their hands in gratitude and smiled. The Captain gave me an unmistakable look when I touched his hand. I think they all fell in love with me that afternoon.

Alfred moved among the crew giving instructions. "Hey, mate—hold it upright. Move forward slowly. Work as a team and the sorceress will have your sails up in a jiffy."

I whispered to Alfred, "I wish you would stop that 'sorceress' stuff. You know it isn't a bit true."

"It is true." He whispered under his hat, "You came from another land to save us. I have

seen your magic and all who are here can see it clearly. I am afraid you must accept it as you are the hope that will save us from Catherine the Sorceress who has brought our kingdom to ruin."

"Hey, what are you two whispering about?" asked Toby, apparently a bit suspicious.

Alfred replied, "Nothing at all. Just wondering how quickly you can get that next sail down here for the sorceress? I see half the crew standing around with their hands in their pockets!" He ran off shouting instructions. "Git your lazy butts up on the yardarm before I have the Captain keyhole you!"



Several hours later the ship had its new sails. The shipped sailed effortlessly in a gentle breeze toward port. Captain Flynn brought out a parchment they had smuggled from the palace the previous year. Everyone gathered 'round as he spread it on a table out on the main deck. He pointed to parts of it while he explained. "We did not entirely understand it until this moment. We knew that it was hidden away in the vaults of Catherine and her sister, Lucinda and that they wanted no one to know of it. Up until now it was little more than a map of Kira except for this." He directed everyone's attention to the lower corner of the parchment. All eyes were affixed upon a drawing of a little girl brandishing a sword and cutting off the head of a korgoyle. He looked at me intently. "It is you, of course. Who else

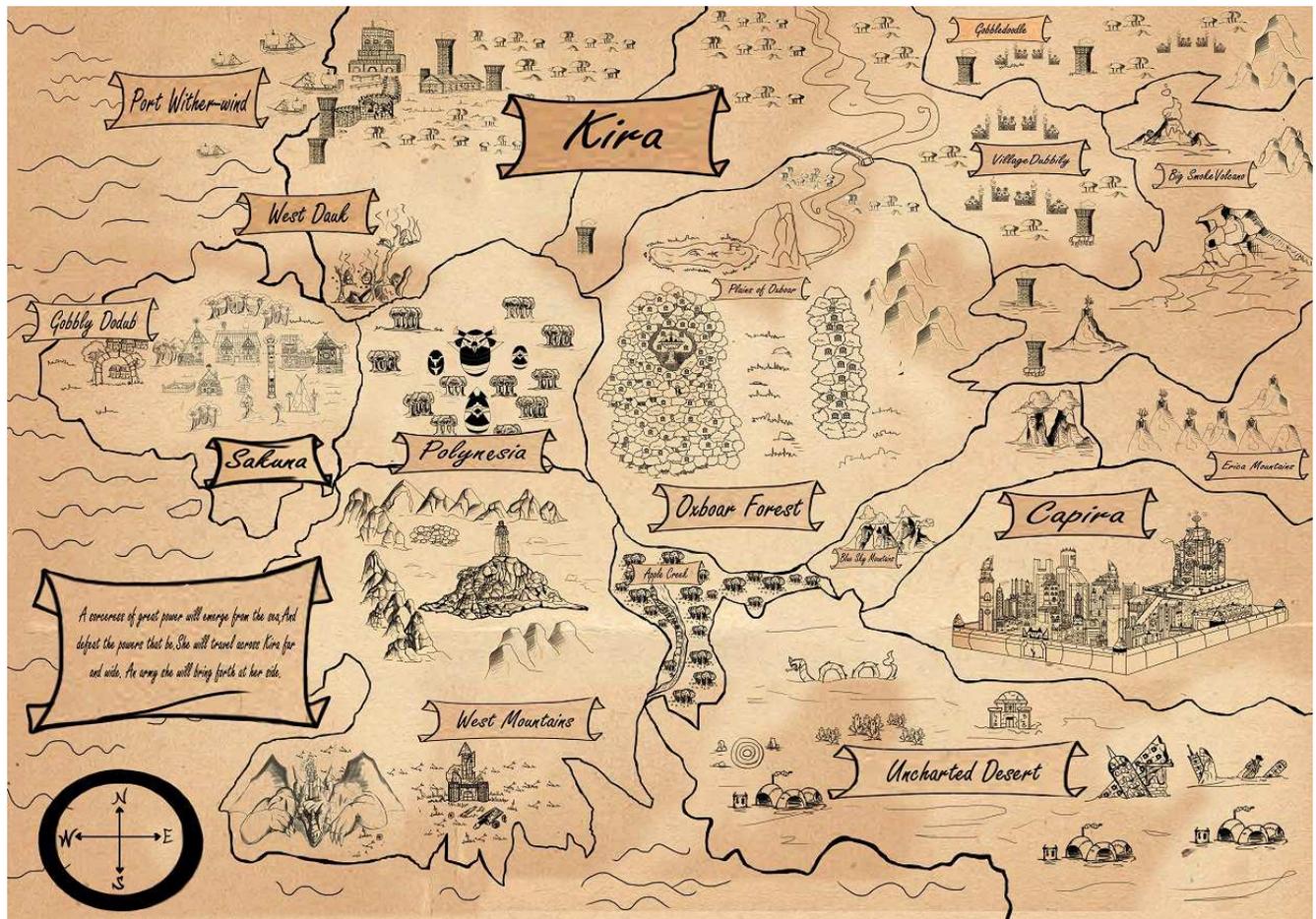
could it be?" I studied the drawing and I must admit that the girl did look a bit like me. "That could be anyone."

Captain Flynn said, "Let me read the prophesy  
'A sorceress of great power will emerge from the sea,  
And defeat the powers that be.  
She will travel across Kira far and wide.  
An army she will bring forth at her side.'

This is why the sisters kept this hidden away. They knew you were coming and figured they would destroy you before anyone had an idea that you were here."

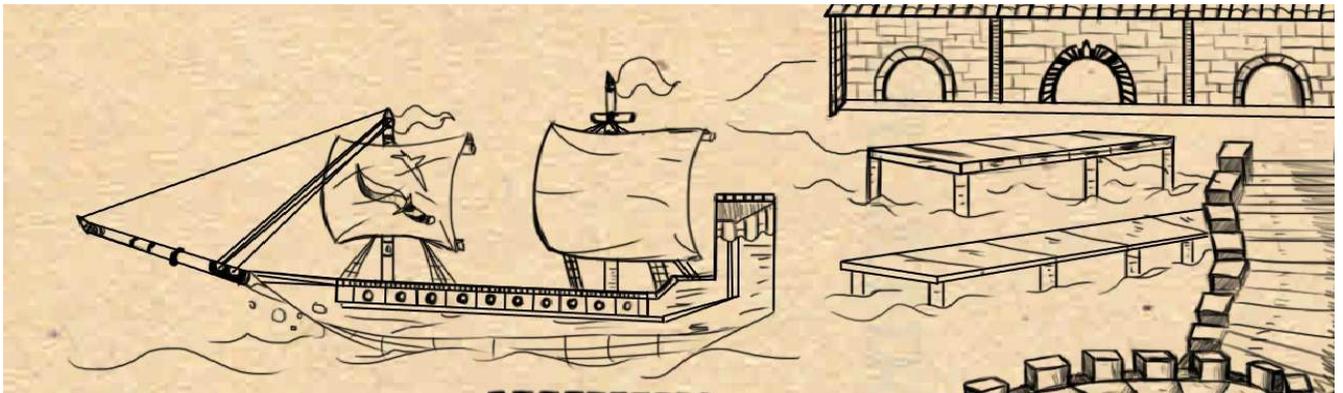
Toby said, "We know that you are here to save us." He bowed at my feet and the crew all dropped to their knees and bowed their heads. I knew then that I was the little girl that had captured their hearts.

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We spent the next day sailing for the port of Wither-wind located at the south-end of the Peninsula of Gobbly Dodub. I was told that I was now on the very west-side of the Kingdom and was given a map so that Alfred and I might better travel across the land. We found

ourselves in the Peg Leg Tavern among the beautiful lasses with bouncing bosoms that flirted with the mates. The ale flowed endlessly and all of them became quite drunk during the afternoon.



Captain Flynn drank more than the others; however held his liquor better than most. I inquired as to what Catherine and Lucinda were doing that had made life so unbearable for the populace. He had the answer. “It is the soldiers and the taxes. They march around the countryside like thieving crows grabbing up all the coin. Then they act like they are all doing us a favor by doling out small parts of it. They take too much and return too little. They have turned us all into beggars.”

One of the drunken pirates wandered over to the table spilling his ale. “I kind of like it. I don't need to work much anymore.” He wandered off into the riotous crowd.

Toby said, “No one is working anymore because of the dole. In the end we will all starve.”

Captain Flynn said, “You would not think that something like this would affect thieving pirates who live off the bounty of the sea.”

Toby finished off his fifth pint of ale and was nearly falling off his stool. “Lazy no good bums –that is what we are. There, I said it, and I admit it!” He passed out onto the floor.

The Captain said, “They were once a spirited crew of



seafarers. We would rise out of bed at dawn and begin plans to raid the other ships and ports. We had a grand time of it for as long as can be remembered. It began to hit us that something was not right when we raided several ports and they let us walk in and take whatever we wanted."

Toby stuck his head over the edge of the table. "Yeah—and there was never anything worth taking. The thieving soldiers got it before us!" He rolled his eyes and dropped his head to the table.

Captain Flynn said, "We were at our wits end and then we got a notice that since we were now good citizens that we would receive treasure directly from the palace coffers each month."

A pirate standing at the front of the tavern shouted, "Here she comes!"

Everyone ran to the front window and out into the street. A whale was swimming at a furious pace toward the pier. Someone shouted, "Get back! The stupid thing is coming in too fast!"

Everyone screamed, "Get back!" and ran for their lives just as the whale pushed up onto the dock crushing it like a toothpick and then ended up belching up a chest into the front window of the tavern.

"BURP!"

Toby patted it on the side of the head. "Poor big guy. He's drunker than we are."

Captain Flynn shouted, "Grab the chest, mates. Then see if he has our money." Everyone scrambled around dragging the chest down the street and passing out the dole that expunged itself with the second burp.

Captain Flynn shook his head in disgust. "I'm glad you saw this firsthand. This is how they deliver our mail and keep us fat and lazy."

"Fat and lazy—that is what we are." Toby hung on the arm of a wench and held up his sixth brew. "We should sing a song about it. Let's get our bellies up to the bar...." She carried him back into the tavern. Others were doing the same.

"I don't know what to make of it," I said. "Taxes and such are beyond the understanding of a ten-year-old girl."

"Heave ho! Heave ho! Back to the sea you go!"

The crew lassoed the beached whale and began dragging it back into the sea. While Captain Flynn directed his men with the task, long tentacles burst out of the water and wrapped around him pulling him in.



"It's Nellie!" he cried. Others rushed to his aid and began dueling the giant octopus. It was a fierce struggle for all. It did not look good for the Captain and I looked into the Nellie's eyes and had an idea. I ran into a toy store and grabbed a red rubber ball. The clerk looked at me when I picked it up. "Captain Flynn will pay for it—I'll be right back." I ran to the shore

where all the ruckus was taking place. I shouted, "Fetch, Nellie!" and tossed it as hard as I could out into the sea.

It worked.

Nellie had the captain by the ankle and swam after the ball. "Help!" Captain Flynn did not see any of this and must have figured he was a prisoner, perhaps a lunch, for Nellie. "I don't want to die!"

Nellie dove under the water and came up with the ball; then dropped it on the shore at my feet. One of the tentacles wound around my leg; however it was a caress and not at all threatening. I said, "You put down the captain and quit playing with him like that. You are a good octopus and he doesn't understand that you want to play."



She looked at me.

I looked back with a look my aunt gave me when I stole the cookie. "You heard me. Put him down now." I pointed to my side. "Not in the water, either. I want him here on the shore with me."

She hesitated. I imagined that all this was new to her. I could wait. I stomped my foot into the sand. "Now!" and I pointed again.

The poor captain was still screaming for his life. I shouted to him, "And Captain Flynn—I

am ashamed of you! Be quiet now and stop all that yelling. It's upsetting Nellie." He stopped his screaming and Nellie dropped him on the shore.

I chastised both of them. "You two should be ashamed of yourselves carrying on like spoiled brats. I want you both to shake a tentacle and a hand and promise me that you will never fight like this again." A crowd of onlookers filled the beach gaping at the spectacle.

Captain Flynn reached out his hand. "I can admit that I was wrong to carry on like that. Let's let bygones be bygones and be friends." A tentacle slithered over the sand and reached out for his hand.

"Awww!" The crowd murmured and then applauded the new friendship.

I tossed the ball back into the rippling water and Nellie went after it. We played fetch for sometime and when I felt she knew the game, I offered her the ball and told her that I had to go, but that the Captain and his crew would always be happy to play. I explained that the Captain and his crew could not always play as they had much work to do; however when they had time, they would play fetch with her. I would never know for sure if she understood any of this; however she swam off with the ball.

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*Dear Diary,*

**I** imagine that you think that yesterday was about as exciting as it gets; however I discovered that the land of Kira became more exiting with each passing day. Captain Flynn gave us a map of Kira and a petition requesting that the kingdom be returned to the olden days when times were much more pleasant. We were to take it to Catherine the Sorceress and speak in his behalf. He admitted that he was terrified of both sisters and feared for his life if they ever caught sight of him.

Captain Flynn took me into the toy store to pay the bill for the rubber ball that I had given to Nellie. He gave Alfred and me gold and silver coins so we would be able to pay for meals as we traveled eastward.

We found ourselves two doors down in a haberdashery where he had his eye on a new jacket for himself. He explained that it was a bit extravagant; however a captain had an image to live up to and fine clothing was a big part of that. The jacket sat in the front window where it could be admired by all who passed by. We went inside and I could see that they carried the finest Chinese silks and imported cloth from all parts of the world. He saw that I was excited to see all this fine cloth and insisted that he purchase many of the items for me. He calculated that, at the very least, he had to replace the thread that I used to repair the sails. "If you had no thread, your magic machine would have been useless, and my men would have

given you a dunking!" He laughed. I noted that his jacket was a bit worn and I would be happy to give it a little sprucing up with my magic machine. It would get him by until he could afford the new jacket.

"Would you have really fed the pair of us to the sharks?" Alfred inquired.

"It is an initiation. We've never done anything as foolish as that to our guests. We like to give everyone a good scare although my grandfather did it regularly." He thought for a moment. "I could make an exception if Catherine were ever a guest."

End of sample chapters.