

*SPIRITUAL STORIES FOR
THE NEW WORLD*



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The Way Back Home

It was at sunset that Aaterran realized that he was far away from the meadowlands and the great forest of Mareithia. In fact, he was quite lost. Aaterran had searched relentlessly for the beginnings of a small trail that led to the southern heading and homeward. But all he saw were orange-leafed hills and mossy stones that tumbled and crumbled under his big, heavy feet.

For many years Aaterran, the eldest of a family of seven boys, had helped his mother and father by giving his siblings encouragement and direction and now he himself was lost.

What a strange way to be, he thought, not knowing which way to turn. Aaterran was not frightened for his love of the earth was deep and eternal but he was tired. A deep fatigue began to slowly filter through his body like sand trickling through half-closed fingers and he knew that sleep would come whether it was invited or not.

Aaterran was considered by the villagers as ancient – not only in body, but also in wisdom. Around the evening fires the villagers murmured that he came from the land of the giants. Indeed, Aaterran was remarkably tall and astonishingly the only one in his family measuring such a great height. These facts alone nourished fervent speculation and awe in those who met him. Aaterran, like many others, was a traveller and like many others had accumulated stories of his adventures. But what the villagers enjoyed above all was the exquisite wisdom that poured out from Aaterran's spellbinding tales.

I wonder how I obtained all this wisdom, mused Aaterran as his feet and head slowed down, and why I am so different from my family? He breathed in the heavy scent of spicy honey and damp stone, found a bed of orange leaves, lay down and fell into a heavy sleep.

Early the next morning elegant ferns, bent over with silver dew drops, tickled Aaterran's nose to awakened him. Flicking at his face with a very long and impatient finger, Aaterran mumbled something unimportant and turned over. In doing so, he felt that he was no longer alone. Alarmed, he jumped up as quickly as a frog snaps at a fly and saw that he was

surrounded by strangers. Twelve giants encircled him, grinning at each other and grinning at him.

And so it was that Aaterran found himself in the very midst of the Great People.

“Who are you?” Aaterran asked in amazement.

“You don’t recognize us?” A strong woman of exceptional height, black hair and striking golden eyes spoke. “You are a part of our family. You left many moons ago to explore the land.” She continued sadly, “You then found a new home and in helping your new family you forgot all about us.”

Somewhere deep inside of him Aaterran knew that she spoke the truth and his heart opened. Memories flowed up to its surface like a tiny stream being born in the meadowlands.

“Imorow. Your name is Imorow and you are my sister,” whispered the astonished Aaterran. Slowly, as if walking through a thick, warm mist, he began to remember the names of the welcoming giants who continued to encircle him with warm faces and open hands. “You are my family, here, far beyond the mountains of mauve and the sacred forest of Mareithia!” Aaterran smiled broadly, his eyes filling up with tears of joy.

Aaterran remained for several days and nights with his family, the Great People, and listened to enchanting stories of velvet wisdom. One fine evening when the last of the twelve torches was lit to perform the musical dance called *The Celebration of the Earth Light*, Aaterran knew that, although he deeply loved his family here, he had to return to his other family in the meadowlands. His help was still needed there. With his decision made and tucked in his heart, Aaterran threw himself into the powerful dance of the *Earth Light*, slept once more among his family of giants and left just as the sun moved in front of the first and only cloud of the day. Imorow, large tears rolling down her cheek, hugged her brother and gave him a drawing of how to reach the southern heading.

Aaterran nodded with a short smile, held her close, waved a hand of kindness to the Great People of his heart and began his travels back down the orange hills of leaf and stone.

With long swinging strides Aaterran easily found himself back on the southern and soon his footsteps echoed on the Cheminaad. *What a wonderful time I have had*, he thought *and how*

*fortunate I am to have two families. This means I now have two ways to go back home! Aaterran saw the roadside flowers nod in agreement and walked on happily humming the music from *The Celebration of the Earth Light*.*