

A man and a woman in historical attire are shown in profile, facing each other in a field. The man is on the left, wearing a light blue long-sleeved shirt. The woman is on the right, wearing a grey dress with floral patterns and a pearl necklace. They are holding hands. The background features a green field, trees, and a mountain range under a blue sky. The overall tone is romantic and historical.

# MARGIT SANDEMO

42

The  
LEGEND  
of the

# ICE PEOPLE

THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM





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**ICE  
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# Acknowledgement

*The legend of the Ice People* is dedicated with love and gratitude to the memory of my dear late husband Asbjorn Sandemo, who made my life a fairy tale.

Margit Sandemo

# The Ice People - Reviews

‘Margit Sandemo is, simply, quite wonderful.’

**- The Guardian**

‘Full of convincing characters, well established in time and place, and enlightening ... will get your eyes popping, and quite possibly groins twitching ... these are graphic novels without pictures ... I want to know what happens next.’

**- The Times**

‘A mixture of myth and legend interwoven with historical events, this is imaginative creation that involves the reader from the first page to the last.’

**- Historical Novels Review**

‘Loved by the masses, the prolific Margit Sandemo has written over 172 novels to date and is Scandinavia's most widely read author...’

**- Scanorama magazine**

# The Legend of the Ice People

*The legend of the Ice People begins many centuries ago with Tengel the Evil. He was ruthless and greedy, and there was only one way to get everything that he wanted: he had to make a pact with the devil. He travelled far into the wilderness and summoned the devil with a magic potion that he had brewed in a pot. Tengel the Evil gained unlimited wealth and power but in exchange, he cursed his own family. One of his descendants in every generation would serve the Devil with evil deeds. When it was done, Tengel buried the pot. If anyone found it, the curse would be broken.*

*So the curse was passed down through Tengel's descendants, the Ice People. One person in every generation was born with yellow cat's eyes, a sign of the curse, and magical powers which they used to serve the Devil. One day the most powerful of all the cursed Ice People would be born.*

*This is what the legend says. Nobody knows whether it is true, but in the 16th century, a cursed child of the Ice People was born. He tried to turn evil into good, which is why they called him Tengel the Good. This legend is about his family. Actually, it is mostly about the women in his family – the women who held the fate of the Ice People in their hands.*

# Chapter 1

His name was Morahan. He was Irish but lived in Liverpool. Now he was in the doctor's surgery, trying to take in what was being said.

"How long have you been working with asbestos, Mr Morahan?"

"Since I was fourteen."

"And now you're thirty. That's sixteen years."

Silence fell in the surgery.

What a shame, the doctor thought as he examined Morahan. He was a fascinating man. Not particularly tall, but solid and well built. His eyes shone almost black in his dark face, and his frizzy hair was just as black. His features were sharp and his expression slightly grim. He was the epitome of withheld strength. The symptoms had become evident. The cough. The deep furrows in his cheeks. The glow in his eyes, the yellow pallor of his complexion ...

The doctor said half-heartedly: "Of course, we could try radiotherapy."

"And go through even more pain? Lose my hair and feel even worse? Don't you think it's a bit late in the day for that?"

The doctor didn't answer him directly. "We've had a lot of cases like yours in recent years. Doctors like me have raised the alarm, but the business world won't listen. It's all about making money, so what does it matter when an employee has to stop work after a long and disregarded service? Could asbestos really be a hazard to health? Nonsense, it's been used for many, many years. So why are cancer cases popping up all of a sudden?"



Yes, that's the crux of the matter, the doctor thought to himself. It was the long-term destruction of the human body: couldn't they get that into their heads? It was only now that the adverse effects had begun to appear.

The doctor read the expression in Morahan's eyes and he recognized it. He knew what kind of thoughts were entering his patient's mind right now: It was the first stage in the long process towards the end.

This doesn't mean anything. I'm certainly not about to die! It's just a lot of nonsense this doctor is telling me. Nothing can break me. I may have a slight, temporary defect in my body, but I'm invincible. I can fight this ...

"An operation?"

The doctor shook his head. "It's too advanced. It's spread all over your body."

Morahan's heavy breathing was the only sound. It was this strained and yet shallow breathing that had made him consult the doctor. He had ignored the pain so far, but now he realized that he had waited too long. But he certainly had no plans to die!

Nevertheless, before he had time to think better of it, he blurted out: "How long?"

The doctor sighed. "I can't say. It's a difficult question."

"Are we talking about years?"

"No, months. But speaking in terms of weeks would be too short."

"I see. Have I got time to travel? What I mean is, have I enough strength for that?"

"It depends on how long and how far you plan to travel."

Back home to Ireland? To the poor working-class district in Dublin? Nothing tied him to those places anymore. He had left home when he was still a boy to make a living in England, and

had landed in precisely the same circumstances there. His parents had died and his siblings were gone.

Without exactly wanting to, he said: “I’d like to visit my mother’s native country – Norway. She always spoke so wistfully of how incredibly beautiful it was. I think she would have been happy to know that I was on my way to Norway. Do I have time to make it?”

“I really think you should go ahead with your plan. Of course, you’ll know when you become weaker, and then you can just come back and I’ll have you admitted. To a hospital or nursing home.”

I recognize this calm as well, the doctor thought. He hasn’t accepted it: the death sentence has nothing to do with him yet.

Oh, well. He has to make his way through all the stages! What a shame for such a special person. There are so many nondescript people. Morahan is different. Nice to rest one’s eyes on. Strong. Indomitable ...

Morahan walked to the door. “See you!”

There was that slightly triumphant look: “See you. And you’ll be surprised, doctor. Because by then, I’ll no longer be sick!”

Morahan had begun packing. He had bought a new suitcase. Not one of the most expensive ones, but it looked *really* elegant. He packed his shirts and his other clothes, which the laundry had made look so nice and presentable. He had bought a warm sweater because people had told him that Norway could be cold. At the last moment, he had also bought a pair of pyjamas – something he had done without over the years.

The factory hadn’t given him anything extra when he left. He had saved some money, which he now intended to spend. Others would have to pay for his funeral, he thought bitterly, because now he had reached the stage when he could joke

about the possibility. But he had certainly not accepted it. Certainly not! It was somebody else he had in mind when he thought of funerals and such things. Ian Morahan ... he didn't know him, the dying Morahan. That was another person. He would survive, it went without saying.

The doctor would also have recognized this dual attitude.

He carefully placed an old letter in his suitcase. His mother had given it to him; it was addressed to her from her sister in Norway. It bore the name and address he needed if he wanted to find that part where his mother had originated from. He probably had a lot of relatives there. He wasn't quite sure whether he was interested in meeting any of them. Sitting and making stilted conversation over the best the house could offer in the way of food for their cousin Ian, or whatever they wanted to call him.

He wanted to be alone. To gather strength so that he could conquer his sickness.

He took a final stroll around the city. He walked past the pub where the Irish used to meet. He didn't feel in the mood to talk now.

It was strange how unsentimentally he viewed these familiar streets! He wouldn't miss any of this; he had no sense of it being "for the last time". Had he actually thrived here, come to think of it? He had done his job, but you could say that he had squandered his leisure time. Because what had he achieved in his life? As a child, school had been bad, but that was no excuse for not making amends later on. He had just let his spare time flow past in the simplest and laziest way.

Perhaps that was just as well considering his present situation. That he hadn't spent a lot of money on a useless education.

He had one advantage with regard to his journey to Norway: his mother had spoken Norwegian to her children. He believed

that he hadn't forgotten the language, even if it was quite a long time ago. What you learn as a young kid often pops up when you least expect it.

Morahan took a deep and painful breath. He was ready to begin his journey.

It was true what the Wanderer had said: Tengel the Evil was beginning to awake. Physically, he couldn't do anything. His body lay paralysed in a hidden cave in the forests of the Harz, so remote that only foxes and badgers went there. Even they wrinkled their noses at the horrible stench in his ravine and fled from it. But Tengel the Evil's thoughts were at work. They were seeking, seeking ...

The Valley of the Ice People was calm. Only the odd hiker came, and Tengel the Evil would soon chase them away with the thoughts that crept into their consciousness.

Occasionally, the valley had other visitors whom he didn't understand and hence didn't like at all. Very rarely, big bird-like objects flew over his valley. They made a terrible noise that roared in his ears and they were so horribly large, which made him terribly nervous. Worst of all: he had once seen people *inside* these mechanical monsters. It didn't make sense to Tengel the Evil.

On the night between 30 April and 1 May 1960, he was in an uproar. Not because of the stupid "birds" but because of something entirely different. He was no different from ordinary people: everything he didn't understand was "stupid" ...

Damn! Damn his inability to move. Damn the moment when he had allowed himself to go into hibernation, sometime in the thirteenth century. Damn the mandrake, which had made him believe that it wasn't yet his time! Damn the church, which was the main reason why he had hesitated. Damn Targenor and the



rat catcher, who had cheated him with the flute! Targenor was doubly damned because he had made him fall asleep here.

Most of all, he fretted that he hadn't seen the danger for himself. At why he hadn't seized power in the days when he wandered about on earth. It didn't matter that religion had been strong. He had been even stronger.

If it hadn't been for the mandrake that got in his way time and again.

Tonight ... tonight!

He had done his routine search ... at Linden Avenue to make sure that everything was calm!

But they weren't there!

Of course, this had happened before when they were on a journey or away from home. But this time, things were different. His thoughts wandered to the Voldens. They weren't there either, apart from their stupid partners, who were fast asleep.

Tengel the Evil had gone on searching all the places where the Ice People and their horrible friends used to live and move about.

Nobody! Not a soul anywhere! He couldn't even sense their horrible ancestors, nor even the damn defectors: the stricken ones who had changed their minds.

Everything was deserted. Completely deserted and quiet. As if none of his enemies existed on earth anymore.

Perhaps they thought that they could outwit him? Was that what they were up to?

If so, they would simply have to think again! Because who could outwit *him*, Tan-ghil the Evil, ruler of the world?

If only he could come to power ...

Now it *was* to happen. He felt it in every fibre of his body, in the tiniest corner of his consciousness. He was in the process of

waking up. There was no doubt about that. This time, it was irreversible. Nothing could stop him; the flute that could induce his hibernation no longer existed, so nobody could lull him into a deep, humiliating slumber.

Then let the earth shake. Above all, shake in terror, you presumptuous descendants of the Ice People, who refused to obey my orders centuries ago when I still resided in the Valley of the Ice People.

Where were they now? His inner eyes searched night and day, through time and space; he just had to find them and eradicate them!

But *where*? Where were they hiding, his rebellious descendants?

His descendants, who planned to fight him, were in the hall of the Demon's Mountain, where Tengel's global search couldn't reach them. Group upon group, flock upon flock had come to Tula and her four demons. All his living descendants, together with those who had already passed away, with the exception of the ones who had played his game. The Taran-gai, that small, oppressed people, were there. Marco and his black angels had already appeared. And there were still crowds hiding in the darkness on the top benches of the hall. They were allies of the unrighteous Ice People, but they were unknown, dangerous, and lurking up there ...

In the hall, everybody's curiosity was focused on a single person: he who stood on the dais. The excitement was intense. They were all staring at Rune, and the audience showed a rich spectrum of emotions.

Of course, most of them were simply baffled. They had all heard of Rune, Jonathan's friend in the illegal resistance movement against the Germans during the Second World War.

They knew he had helped Karine and had aided Jonathan loyally, sacrificing his life for the Ice People lad. However, they had paid little attention to Rune: his short life had merely been a tragic, minor episode in the great legend.

But here he was now. *Here!*

The little group that had gathered around him up on the dais laughed and wept. Heike was there, and so were Henning and Dida and Targenor. And Ingrid, Sol, Mattias, Daniel, Benedikte and André. And not least Nataniel.

Somebody in the hall suggested loudly: "Perhaps you'll give us an explanation?"

At last everyone calmed down, and Rune was alone with Tula and Dida on the dais.

He stood there, his light-brown, tangled dreadlocks almost hiding his ugly, wood-like face. His brown clothes looked as if they were made of coarse fibres, and his hands and feet were obviously mutilated. Most of his fingers had been more or less amputated and he moved about as if his feet hurt in his brown boots. You could still see the hole in his jacket and sweater, in the middle of his chest, where the bullet had killed him in the concentration camp.

Karine looked at his eyes. She remembered how strangely they had once gleamed in a lorry. Or was it in a train compartment? Perhaps both. And there was something else she had noticed about him, which she had sensed when he held her close to comfort her. Something that *wasn't* there ...

Now she understood how everything came together. Karine had gathered who Rune actually was. That wasn't the case with Mari. She believed that Rune's ghost had returned to punish her, Mari, because she had rejected him that time, turning away from him in horror.

Rune didn't think any such thoughts.

Right now, everybody in the hall recalled Tula's words: "We can thank the black angels that we have Rune with us tonight ... he's older than all of you put together. He's older than Adam and Eve. Nevertheless, he has chosen to follow the Ice People since their first days in the struggle to fight the worst scourge in the world: our ancestor, Tengel the Evil."

It wasn't until Tula said these words that Gabriel understood who Rune was: Rune was the Ice People's mandrake, which the black angels had transformed into a human being in Nataniel's room.

The thought made Gabriel feel dizzy. A small root ... How could it turn into a human being?

Nevertheless, Gabriel accepted the idea with a deep sense of joy and warmth in his heart. He was moved as he looked at the piteous, ugly figure on the dais. He was proud that in a way his family had contributed to the lonely mandrake having a life.

Dida said softly: "Now we want to hear your story, Rune."

Tula added just as gently: "Where were you born? On a hill near the gallows by the Mediterranean?"

Rune smiled and said in his creaky voice: "No." The audience could see that it was difficult for him to pull up his mouth to smile, partly because of the wood-like stiffness, and partly because it pained him to speak about his origins.

"No, I'm older than you would believe. I'm the first, the original mandrake."

The audience sighed audibly. Gabriel forgot to breathe.

Dida noticed that Rune was having difficulty standing and she discreetly pushed the tall "throne" towards him. He nodded gratefully and sat down. He creaked a bit, but he managed to sit.

"No, an ordinary mandrake would be unable to do what I did," he said in his slow, almost exaggeratedly clear voice.



“Mandrakes are mighty talismans, but they’re unable to move, see, hear or think, as I could even as a root. Now I’ve been transformed into a human figure and with that came language. Yes, I would like to tell you my story. You’re all my friends.”

Gabriel couldn’t help noticing that he cast a swift glance at the top rows. There was no fear in his eyes, just a subtle summing up, a flicker of matter-of-fact solidarity. The top benches were just as quiet as the rest of the hall. *Nobody* wanted to miss a word now.

This is Rune’s account – with some short interruptions now and then:

“I was a big, magnificent plant in a grove far away in the East. The grove was called the Garden of Eden. Divine plants and trees grew there and animals roamed about. It was good to be in the Garden of Eden. There’s no place like it on earth ...”

Gabriel blurted out: “Is it true that you have always yearned to be back in Paradise?”

“Yes, Gabriel, that’s true.”

Gabriel was excited. He knows my name. “So where is paradise? The Garden of Eden?”

Rune smiled wistfully. “I don’t know, my friend. Some say that it was situated in Ceylon, others that it was somewhere near Persia. Nobody any longer knows its precise location.”

“I’ll go to Ceylon and bring back some soil from there, Rune. It may be the right place.”

“Thank you, Gabriel.”

Then Rune continued his interrupted account.

“Lucifer, the angel of light, was the chief supervisor of this splendid garden. That was something I didn’t know at the time because I was just a plant, and although I could sense a lot, sun and earth and water were the most important things for me.”

Rune's eyes turned dark and pensive. "I also didn't know that Lucifer had a master above him. But one day ... one day, somebody entered the garden.

"He, to whom all animals and plants paid tribute, settled down under a tree and seemed to be finding his way. It was as if he was brooding over something. The Tree of Knowledge whispered: 'He wants to create something new. We're not enough. He wants to create a higher being, who is also to reside here.'

"The tall man picked up stones and small animals in his hands, putting them down again, one after the other. His hand searched in the lush vegetation – and found me.

"'Yes,' said his voice. 'From a plant, I can create the figure I want.'

"Then he pulled me out of the earth and with his hands he shaped my root until it resembled himself. He held me up in the air in front of him for quite some time, turning me this way and that, making small adjustments here and there ... I trembled in his hand because I sensed that I had been chosen for something great, and I promised myself that I would be worthy of him. I could feel him breathing air and life into me ..."

Rune's face seemed to darken. "Then he lowered the hand that held me. 'Or ... perhaps I can create my equal out of earth and sand? Or clay?' he said. And he put me down on the earth as I was, still merely a plant, albeit with more thoughts, senses and emotions than a plant normally has. The great one walked away, and shortly afterwards I saw a new creature in the Garden of Eden. A tall, two-legged creature, exactly like *him*. And the ruler was satisfied with his work and called the creature Adam.

"He worked with Adam for a long time and was pleased with him. My newly aroused consciousness felt intense pain at being

forgotten. Then the highest one caught sight of me and threw me away. There I lay, discarded, rejected, of no use at all. My newly shaped body, which had been created in his image, suffered badly in the sunlight. It dried up, became more and more stiff and yearned desperately to be put back into the earth.

“Then one day, Lucifer found me. This was on the very same day that he fell out of favour with the ruler because he didn’t want to worship Adam, who had been created from a lump of clay. Lucifer had been created from fire, and he considered himself to be more important than human beings. There was great bitterness in the Garden of Eden on that day. Lucifer found me and picked me up. Since he was angry with his master – I could feel his anger like seething fumes under his skin – he took me by the hand and carried me to the cool shadows by the gates of the Garden of Eden. The angel of light said: ‘You’re too valuable to languish here in agony. You have great power in you, so much that human beings will come to desire you. They will try to pull up other members of your species from the earth and thus kill them. In order to help them, I’ll make your fellow relatives small and inconspicuous so that it won’t be so easy to find them in the grass.’ The Lord heard him and said: ‘You, Lucifer, are damned, with everything you touch. The plant that you’ve made small and unobtrusive will have a heavy fate. In the places where human sinners die, it will grow up to cruelty and humiliation, and being pulled out of the earth will be agony. Because nobody has made me so angry as you, Lucifer, my brightest angel. You turned against me, presuming to be my equal. So you are to be plunged into the darkest abyss, and the owners of this plant are to lose their souls ...’

“In order to symbolize his intention, the Almighty picked me

up and tossed me over the gate of the Garden of Eden. I landed in the dry desert sand, which human beings had to live in. I had no idea how things turned out for Lucifer and all the angels that followed him, because the Garden of Eden was no longer my land.”

Rune hesitated a bit. Everybody in the hall shared his sorrow over his fate.

Then he gave a quick smile and continued: “Later on, a human child found me and took pity on me. His name was Cain. He kept me because he believed I might be useful to him, but he did something evil and was banished to the hostile mountainous regions in the east, where nobody wanted to live. He thought that I had bewitched him, making him kill his brother, and he tried to sell me when he was old. By now, there were many people on earth, and when they saw what I could do, they competed among themselves to buy me. The price that Cain received was very high. The Ruler had decreed that owning me meant the perdition of their souls when they died. So my first owner after Cain found me very useful – but when his hour of destiny drew near, he had to sell me at a lower price than he had paid himself. This went on and on. Everybody wanted to own me, but nobody wanted to die with me in their possession. In this way I passed through many hands, and I must say that my owners seemed greedy for earthly joy and wealth. For a long time, I wandered from hand to hand, residing all the time in the east. I knew that I had many fellow species, but for some reason the mandrake plant, *Mandragora*, wandered in the opposite direction, towards the west, until it stopped in the countries along the Mediterranean. This is where it grows today, albeit from a much smaller root. Meanwhile, I continued to journey further eastwards until I came to the land of the Rising Sun ...”



“Japan,” said André. “So that is where we are. Rune, I think you jumped pretty far ahead in time. You must have experienced a lot on your journey to Norway. Won’t you please tell us about a few episodes?”

Rune laughed. It sounded like a crow chattering. “I thought it would take too long. But ... I suppose I could mention some of my owners. Such as the son of a king in Anuradhapura. He had bought me quite cheaply from a Phoenician merchant. If I found that I had confidence in certain people, then I made life easier for them. After all, I was just a root, but I had strong powers, as I suppose you’ve discovered by now.”

Many laughed in the affirmative.

“The merchant was all right. However, like many others, he knew that owning me would lead to devilry. You see, it was impossible to just get rid of me, because I would always come back. He sold me to Kashyapa, the son of a king, who wasn’t a good person. In order to gain access to the throne, he had his father, the king, walled up alive. Kashyapa was forced to flee because he feared his brother’s vengeance, and on the top of a vertical cliff, Sigiriya, he built a town where he lived for eighteen years. Then his brother found him and besieged the beautiful Sigiriya until Kashyapa came down. That was where he was killed. Since he hadn’t had the time to sell me, his soul probably didn’t do so well ...”

Jonathan said: “Please stop for a moment. What you’re telling us are episodes from the history of Ceylon. So you *have* been there, haven’t you?”

Rune nodded. “Yes, although at the time, it was known as Sinhala, the Realm of the Lion. And I have been to Persia, or as it was once known, the Realm of the Parsees. I was in Mesopotamia and Assyria and Bactria. I was in China during the Han dynasty ... but that doesn’t matter. At the time, I had no

idea that Paradise was supposed to be located close to some of the places that I had been taken to. That is something I've only just been told."

"When Kashyapa died without having sold you, what happened to you then? You must have been *free*, surely?"

"Free?" said Rune with a bitter smile. "I couldn't function without an owner, because it was only through them that I could live. When Kashyapa's brother conquered Sigiriya and his troops ravaged the fantastic fortress, I ended up with many other more or less valuable things in his treasury. I was taken to Anuradhapura and kept in a huge stupa."

"The Ruwanwelisaya," said Jonathan, who had travelled widely. "You should all visit Ceylon and see Sigiriya, the cliff, which stands in the middle of the jungle. How they were able to build a citadel on top of that rock is unbelievable. They say that thousands of slaves lost their lives in the process. The Ruwanwelisaya is almost as incredible. A stupa is a reliquary chamber. Under an immense dome lies the treasure, but the dome itself is also a treasure. Many hundreds of life-sized elephants chiselled in stone encircle it. Among other things, the foundation of the stupa is said to include a twenty-centimetre layer of rubies, twenty centimetres of quartz, just as much copper and just as much silver. When you know that it takes *at least* twenty minutes to walk around the stupa, you realize what riches are hidden underneath it. Oh, well, this was an aside. Sorry, Rune, for interrupting you."

"I don't mind at all," said Rune. "I lay among the treasures in Anuradhapura for quite a long time because nobody in that country knew what I was. Then, several hundred years later, a silk merchant arrived. He came by ship from the west, wanting to take the so-called Silk Road eastwards. His ship had been stranded off the coast of Ceylon. He was helped onwards, but

first of all he got permission to see the treasures in the sacred city of Anuradhapura. Perhaps there was something there that he would like to buy? Then he saw me and asked for permission to buy me – among other things, of course. He knew what kind of object I was, which is why he insisted on buying me at a lower price than was previously paid for me. Of course, nobody knew my original price anymore. In order to be absolutely sure, he quoted a ridiculously small amount, which was accepted immediately since the ruler in the country didn't know my value.

“Then I was on the move once more. With the silk merchant, I arrived in Silla ...”

“Korea,” said André.

Rune smiled his quick, painful smile. “Now everybody knew what I represented. They bought me to gain riches, honour and love, and they sold me again at a lower price before they died. From Silla, I travelled easily to Japan ...”

Nataniel said plainly: “That was where you got in touch with Tengel the Evil.”

“Well, not immediately. First with his father, Teinosuke, who as a young boy fled into Asia and to the steppes of Manchuria. He had managed to buy me some time before he disappeared from Japan – and I can't say that I got along with that owner at all ...”

Dida said calmly: “I think you should tell us about *him*, first of all. Before you come to Tengel the Evil.”

“Right. Teinosuke was important. What Nataniel found out about him is absolutely true. Although he was so young, he was an evil wizard in Japan. He had it in him; many of his ancestors had been skilled magicians, and evil was a family trait, which was enhanced with Teinosuke.”

Rune pondered for a moment. The audience could see that he

didn't like those memories at all. "I was with him on the walk westwards across the deserted steppes. Teinosuke suffered a lot of evil and many times was at the point of death. Then, and only then, I would choose to help him because I didn't want to languish with a pile of bones out on the steppes where nobody passed by. I also helped him when he got into brawls with others – which happened often. Those he fought didn't know who or what I was. They just wanted to kill him and wouldn't have cared a damn about me afterwards. He was a bad master to serve and when I saved him once in a while, it was purely for selfish reasons. I was immensely unhappy and didn't thrive at all during those years. I just wanted to pass quickly to a different master.

"That wasn't how things turned out. Teinosuke misused my power year after year, using it for evil purposes. I, who was created by the Highest and blessed by the second-highest, suffered terribly. Yes, Nataniel: I was with Teinosuke when you saw him in an inn together with a group of merchants. I was also with him when he reached the little nomadic settlement where he finally settled down.

"By then, Teinosuke was a very experienced wizard, highly respected and feared by everybody. However, I must be credited with many of his skills; he knew how to use me.

"Among the nomads, there was a young shaman woman. Teinosuke settled down with her. And you were absolutely right, Nataniel, because this woman was also very cruel. She loved inflicting troubles and devilry on everyone. Yes, they decided to have a child, who was to be the representative of evil on earth. They probably had no idea at the time how well they succeeded. The evil god of the nomadic tribe was Kat, which was also the name of Tengel the Evil's grandson. On the night Tan-ghil was conceived, both parents sacrificed to Kat. I won't