

# Chapter 1



I am glad that Mother has taught me to read and write, so that I can record these terrible events on the pages of my journal. It is July of 1676, and we are living for the ninth year in a coastal settlement that used to be called Aldridge Town. Now the place is named “Pemaquid,” which, in the Penobscot language, means “point of land.”

This morning I was working in my mother’s herb garden near the door, cutting camomile and feverfew to dry in the rafters. Although I am not quite thirteen, I have learned much about the medicinal uses of herbs from Mother. Camomile leaves, I know, can relieve toothache, stomachache, and diarrhea. The petals of feverfew can cure fever and repel insects. It is also helpful to women in childbirth. Mother will be needing it one of these days, soon.

I turned for a moment and glanced toward the edge of the clearing. Six tall Indians were trading with four of our English colonists under the elm tree. Father was not among them. He was out on the bay with his mates, fishing for cod as he does every day during the summer months. The tall men were our friends the Wawenocks, I knew. During the years we have been here, we have become accustomed to seeing them often in our midst. Today they stood silent and serious, dressed in deerskin, with large piles of beaver pelts stacked on the ground near their feet. Our men were waving their arms sternly, and it seemed as if the trade was going badly. I slid the herbs into my apron pocket and ambled up the hill nearer to them, close enough to hear their voices, but not close enough to be noticed. From the words I overheard, I learned that our men were refusing to trade gunpowder or guns to the Indians for their fine, thick beaver skins.

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“Hannah!” my mother called from our doorstep down the hill. I knew she thought it unseemly for women to involve themselves in trade, so I stepped back and headed home. As I turned, I cast a look over my shoulder and spotted a young Indian boy standing behind the group. And just before I headed down the hill, my eye caught a swift movement. It was an older girl—dark and slender, dressed in deerskin, waiting in the shadow of the spruce trees at the edge of the woods.

## Chapter 2



“Hannah! Come quick!” My mother was shouting with some urgency. She was not calling me home because it was improper for me to be near the men’s trading. It was an emergency. When I reached the doorway, I glimpsed Mother at the wooden chest where she keeps her medicinals. She quickly stuffed her cloth bag with rags, lamb’s ear, yarrow, and some other leaves. Then she motioned me to hurry after her as she ran down the shore toward the fishing station and drying racks. Running was difficult for her, with her large belly, heavy with child.

There at the water’s edge lay a man covered with blood and fish scales. Other men hovered around him, some kneeling over him to help, some standing with aimless curiosity. I felt strange approaching the men, because it had always been a rule in my family that I stay far removed from the ruffians working on the shore. They were a young rough bunch of ordinary seamen from the old country, often fighting or drinking. Some of them had served time in jail back in England.

“William!” Mother gasped when we drew near.

I was shocked. The man lying on the sand was my father’s younger brother, who had just arrived to work in Pemaquid this year, and lived in our house with us. My first thought was that his hot temper had led him into another violent argument. But it had been an accident. Someone explained in a hurry that his fish knife had slipped as he worked on the cod, and made a deep gash in his forearm.

Mother instructed me to push down on his arm above the wound to stop the bleeding. She yanked some rags from her cloth bag and pressed down. Crimson blood was pulsing out of his arm, but it was slowing as I pressed firmly with my two slippery hands. Mother quickly mixed

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together a poultice of lamb's ear, yarrow, and moss. She threw it down hard on the wound and leaned on it till the streaming blood slowed even more. Soon it no longer flowed in the rhythm of William's heart. After what seemed like hours but was only minutes, the poultice soaked up the blood, and Mother wrapped more rags tightly around his arm.

The men from the trading party had run down from the hill and swarmed around the group. Before too long, they lifted William shakily to his feet and helped him hobble to our house with Mother. I stood up and glanced down at myself. My hands, apron, and frock were smeared with blood. A wave of dizziness swept over me. I sank down heavily on the sand and retched.

Two figures cast shadows over me. It was the native boy and the tall, dark girl, standing silently beside me. Without a word, the girl led me to the shore, waded in with her deerskin moccasins soaking wet, scooped up the seawater in her cupped hands, and gently washed the blood from my hands and arms.

"You go to your house now," she said quietly.

I staggered blindly toward home, and the two figures faded into the woods.

## Chapter 4



A party of Wawenock men appeared at the top of the hill a few days later. One of them, a tall, dignified man, seemed to lead the others out of the forest. Master Sewall and two other men from Pemaquid strode up to greet them, and they all walked together to the tavern doorway to talk. I couldn't hear their words, but the discussion appeared to be courteous. They did not enter the building, but stood outside.

Lingering behind, in the shadows of the trees, were the Indian boy and girl. When I beckoned to them, they stepped out into the sunlight. The boy was tall and muscular, with a very serious air about him. His black hair was pulled smoothly behind his neck and tied with something, perhaps a leather string. He wore a skirt-like garment of animal skin, open at both sides, but no shirt. On his feet there were knee-high leather moccasins, and above them his legs were uncovered. His bare skin was the color of tanned deer hide. He was very clean. I guessed him to be older than the girl by one or two years. I extended my hand in friendship, but they seemed unfamiliar with our custom, and did not reach out to me.

"I am glad to see you in our village," I said.

For the first time, I heard the boy speak. "Our people hunt many deer herds here before you white people come."

I thanked him for allowing us to build homes here on their land, and fish the sea.

He replied, "No one owns the land. It can be used by all people... Wawenock, Penobscot, or Englishmen. The animals in the forest belong to no one but themselves. The great harvest of the sea—cod, elvers, sturgeon, oysters, shad—they are there for all of us to catch and eat, for our need." Then he told me that we newcomers in Pemaquid had built our

village at the mouth of their carrying place from the other side of the peninsula. For thousands of moons, in summertime their people had traveled up and down the coast in canoes laden with beaver, otter, and marten skins to trade. They had carried their canoes out of the water and walked overland along a path they had made, to avoid the rough waters around the rocky and stormy point of land north of our settlement.

I told him that we English people had begun to use that portage path as an ox and wagon road. "Are you Wawenock people?" I asked them.

The girl replied, "We are of the Penobscot tribe, part of the Abenaki Nation."

"The French call us 'Etchemen,'" her brother added. "We are here with our grandfather, Madockawando. Our people are here to join the Wawenocks and speak together with the Englishmen."

"You speak very good English," I commented.

"Our French words are better," replied the boy. He ended the conversation, turned, and ambled down the hill in long strides to the cove.

"He goes to see if there are mussels on the shore," the girl told me. "The English build dams and sawmills on the river that rushes to the sea. Englishmen stop the alewives who run up the rivers. No more do they lay eggs in the ponds above the rivers of many fishes." She lowered herself into a sitting position, cross-legged in the grass. "We wait here for Madockawando."

I followed her example, and sat down facing her. "What are your names?" I ventured.

"He is called Bernard-Anselme. I am Claire. How are you called?" she asked.

I was surprised. "I am Hannah," I told her. After a long silence, I asked, "How is it that the grandchildren of Madockawando do not have Penobscot names?" I was thinking that perhaps it was not a polite question.

"Our mother is Madockawando's daughter. In the Abenaki way, women are heads of our families. I think that is not so with white people. But she is married to Baron de San Castin, Chief of Pentagouet, on the north coast. He is our father. He is a white man."