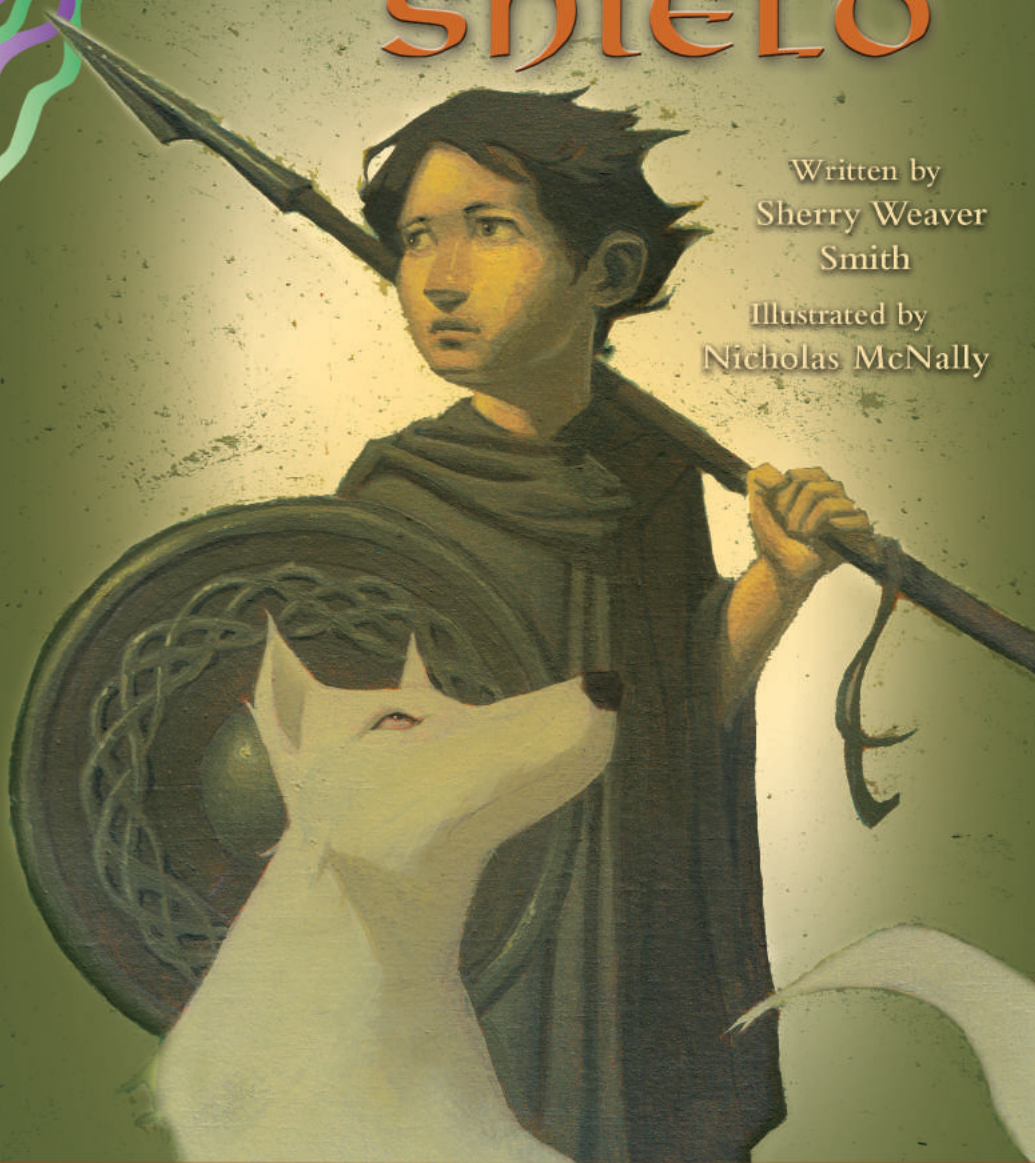




The WOLF and the SHIELD

Written by
Sherry Weaver
Smith

Illustrated by
Nicholas McNally



An Adventure with Saint Patrick

The WOLF and the SHIELD

An Adventure
with Saint Patrick

By Sherry Weaver Smith




Pauline
BOOKS & MEDIA
Boston

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Smith, Sherry, 1969- | McNally, Nicholas, illustrator.

Title: The wolf and the shield : an adventure with Saint Patrick / written by Sherry Weaver Smith ; illustrated by Nicholas McNally.

Description: Boston, MA : Pauline Books & Media, [2016] | Summary: "A young boy is influenced by his friendship with St. Patrick and his experiences caring for an orphan wolf pup"-- Provided by publisher.

Identifiers: LCCN 2015027479 (print) | LCCN 2015036936 (ebook) | ISBN 9780819883568 (pbk.) | ISBN 0819883565 (pbk.) | ISBN 9780819883575 (epub) | ISBN 9780819883582 (mobi) | ISBN 9780819883599 (pdf)

Subjects: LCSH: Patrick, Saint, 373?-463?--Juvenile fiction. | CYAC: Patrick, Saint, 373?-463?--Fiction. | Wolves--Fiction. | Orphaned animals--Fiction. | Wildlife rescue--Fiction. | Human-animal relationships--Fiction. | Christian life--Fiction.

Classification: LCC PZ7.1.S656 Wo 2016 (print) | LCC PZ7.1.S656 (ebook) | DDC

[Fic]--dc23

LC record available at <http://lcn.loc.gov/2015027479>

This is a novelized story including Saint Patrick. While Saint Patrick is a real historical figure, elements of this story—including other characters, conversations, the plot, and events—are fictional products of the author's imagination.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

"P" and PAULINE are registered trademarks of the Daughters of Saint Paul.

Cover/book design by Mary Joseph Peterson, FSP & Putri Mamesah, (Novice, Daughters of St. Paul)

Text copyright © 2016, Sherry Weaver Smith

Illustrations © 2016, Nicholas McNally

Published by Pauline Books & Media, 50 Saint Paul's Avenue, Boston, MA 02130-3491

Printed in the U.S.A.

WATS VSAUSAPEOILL9-110051 8356-5

www.pauline.org

Pauline Books & Media is the publishing house of the Daughters of Saint Paul, an international congregation of women religious serving the Church with the communications media.

CONTENTS

People and Places vi

The Hunt

1	2
2	5
3	8
4	11
5	13
6	16
7	18

Joining a Pack?

8	22
9	26

A Shield of Protection

10	32
11	34
12	37

A Slippery Stumble

13	42
14	44

A Slashing Attack

15	50
16	52
17	56
18	57

A New Den	
19	62
20	64
21	67
22	72
The Forest	
23	78
24	81
Betrayal	
25	86
26	88
27	90
28	93
The Saint's Path	
29	98
30	100
The Lake	
31	104
32	106
33	109
Historical Note	114
Saint Patrick's Prayer	115
Discussion Questions	116
Acknowledgments	118

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Who you will meet in this story

Kieran (KEER-ahn)

An eleven-year-old boy living in Ireland who has been trying to care for his family since his father died two years earlier.

Patrick

A Catholic Christian priest and bishop who has traveled from the island of Britain to share his faith with people in Ireland.

Aisling (ASH-ling)

An orphaned wolf pup.

Kieran's mother

A widow whose husband died two years earlier and mother of Kieran and Riordan.

Riordan (REER-dan)

Kieran's six-year-old brother.

Ida (EE-dah)

A ten-year-old girl who is Kieran's and Riordan's friend.

Alby (ALL-bay)

Ida's eleven-year-old brother.

Carrick

The leader of the clan king's warriors who protect Kieran's group of families and their farms.

Where and when this story takes place

This story takes place on the island of Ireland in the fifth century. The places in this story are part of today's Northern Ireland, near the city of Armagh (ar-MAH).

What you will encounter in this story

Bog

A wetland with a mix of grassy land, muddy land, and small ponds.

Clan

A group of families forming a community with its own chieftain or king.

Elver

A baby eel.

Foster family

In Ireland during the fifth century, many children lived with families other than their own to build strong friendships within the clan. Children still saw their birth parents.

Gorse

A bush with yellow flowers.

Ogham (AW-gum)

A very old alphabet used for the Irish language, often found on stone monuments.

Shillelagh (sheh-LAY-lee)

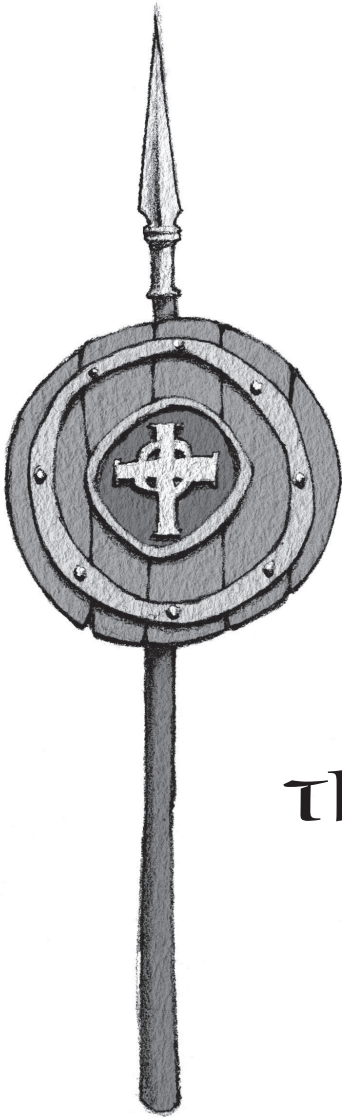
A club made from a tree branch, often used for a weapon or sometimes in sports.

Sett

The home, or burrow, of a badger.

Torc

A U-shaped, metal necklace worn by important people.



the hunt



Kieran searched the shadows for the trail showing which way to go. The far-off tree line blurred into a smoky smudge like the arch of a wolf's back. The moonlight sunk through the forest leaves and fell down, lost among the roots. The boy turned, his elbows bent like spiky wood branches.

He heard the shouts of the big group of hunters. He wouldn't go with them. They'd scare off the wolves with their arguing and boasting. In silence, with one spear, he planned to kill a wolf by himself. A pack of them had killed another family's cow. His family wasn't rich and had only one young cow, so Kieran didn't care much about guarding cattle against wolves. What he did want was the prize of killing a wolf. Everyone would respect him then, no matter whether his family had lots of cows or not. In Ireland, protecting families and their food was what mattered most.

Kieran listened. Was that a howl or just men shouting to each other? He led with his spear. He would have only one throw. Maybe that's all he would need. After all, hadn't Carrick, the clan king's best warrior, praised Kieran's aim?

His foot cracked a twig as he bent to go under a tree branch. He looked up to the moon, but a shadow cloaked it. Something had stepped over him, and he drew his spear back.

“Peace be with you. Put your weapon down,” said the shape. “Did you hear the howling call through the oak trees?”

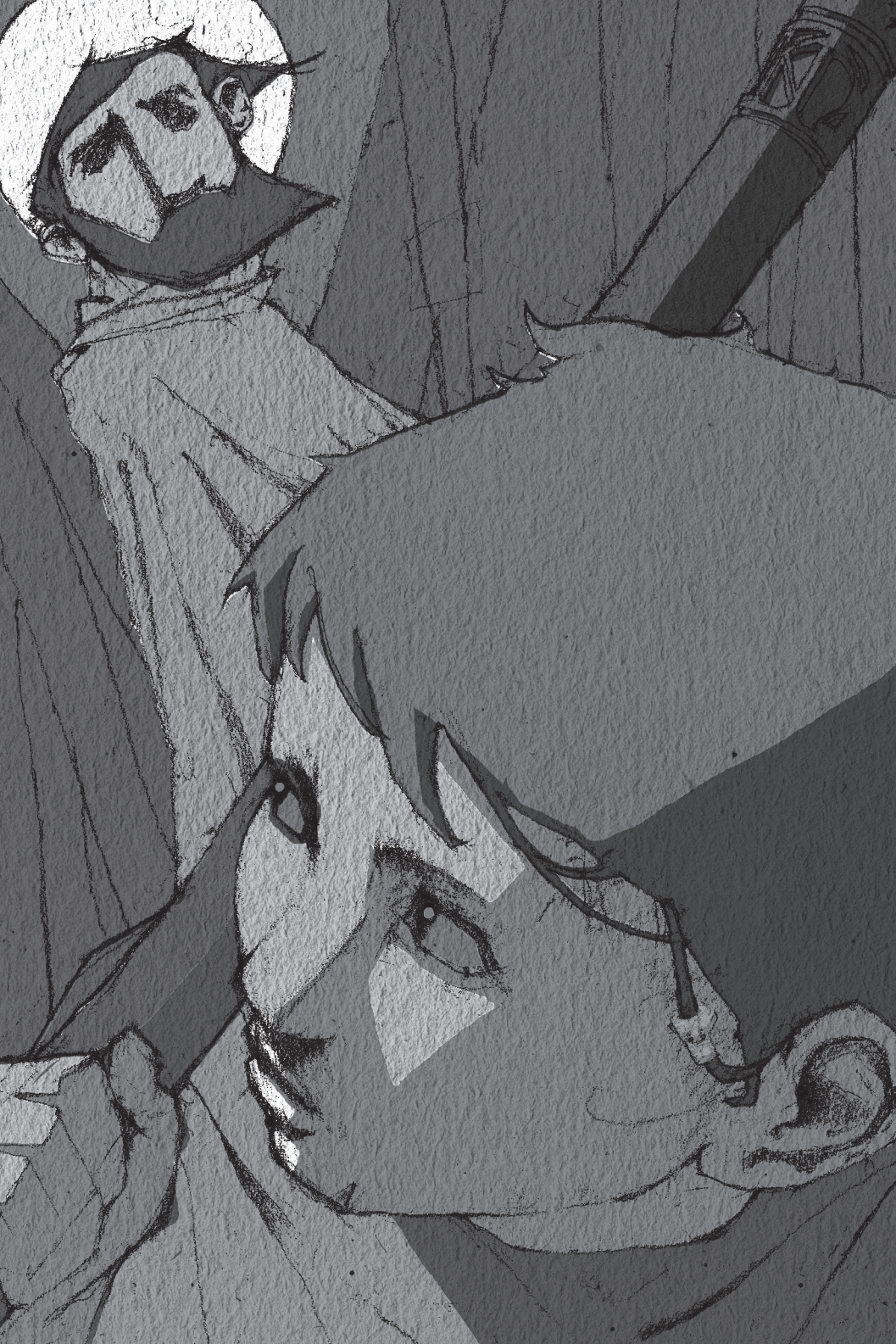
Kieran had never heard the man’s voice before. And his question made no sense to him. “I’m on a hunt. I’ve got to pass,” said Kieran.

“What are you hunting for?”

“A wolf,” said Kieran as he tried to slip round the man who still stood in front of him. “A pack attacked a cow at a farm nearby. I must pass.”

“But what does your heart hunt for?” The man lowered his hood, showing his face. Even in the dim light, Kieran could see his blue eyes. The man lifted his hand to a white blossom on one of the trees. “Go to the crescent meadow,” he said. “You will find what you hunt for there.” And with that strange command, the man stepped away.

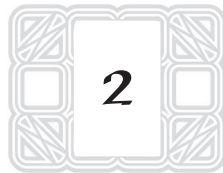
The crescent meadow was deeper in the forest. Some said the trees that used to stand there had been cleared away by a giant who had been gathering firewood. Kieran wasn’t sure how to find it and wondered whether or not to try. The man hadn’t



seemed to understand, but maybe he had seen the wolf there. So he started under the white blossom, finding one path and then another, until he came to a crescent-shaped meadow.

Coming out to the moon-white grass, Kieran fell to his knees to look around. Tiny, cuplike flowers glowed in bell shapes and seemed to ring. No, the sound was something else. Loosening his hold on his spear, he crawled.

A squeaking noise came from a low rise at the edge of the meadow. As he got closer, he saw a hole large enough for him to fit through. *Squeak, squeak.* The edges of the hole changed shape, like smoke rising from a fire. Kieran realized that there must be an animal there. Moving from side to side, it made the edges of the hole seem blurry. Kieran squinted. The pale gray of the animal became clearer. A wolf. A wolf pup.



“The wolf’s den!” Kieran was surprised he’d said it aloud. The little wolf scrambled into the hole.

Now what? Should he go in? If the wolf pack was out hunting, he could kill the pup and still get a small reward. But what if the pack was resting inside? The squeaking tempted him, and, on quick and quiet feet, Kieran rushed to the hole.

He had to squeeze to get his shoulders through the entryway, but then he slid fast. There wasn't enough time to even think to jab a knife in the floor to stop himself. The moonlight was gone.

A small growl sounded, not so far away. Kieran pulled his feet further in. The skin above his boots felt cold, a target for a wolf that could be following him. What if he got stuck and the pack should return?

Curving into a shell shape, Kieran slithered. He could see a tiny glint of teeth. The pup had gone up to a sloping ledge. The den was bigger inside, but he still couldn't draw back his spear. His knife in its scabbard had twisted around onto his back.

Kieran put one hand in a leather glove he carried and pushed toward the teeth. The pup didn't rush toward his hand as he expected. Instead, it froze like a rabbit in a field. Keeping his one hand in front of the pup's blunt nose, with his other hand he grabbed the back of the pup's neck.

Now he had a new problem: how to get out of the den with the twisting and growling pup held

against him. The spear's shaft scraped against the den's ceiling. Kieran felt a bite tear into his cloak, but he kept his grip strong. Finally, he could see the entrance again.

Back in the moonlight, Kieran held the pup away from his chest. Its furry feet fell just down past his elbow. With one hand, he would have to tether it somehow. That way he could thrust in the spear. He unhooked a rope from his waist and looped it over the pup's thrashing head and biting teeth.

As he tightened the rope, he felt the pup's fur, soft as dandelion fluff drifting over a meadow in late summer. He paused. "Dandelion fluff," that was something Ida, a girl he knew, would think.

He put the pup on the ground and stomped his foot on the rope. *You won't get away*, he thought. The creature stumbled to bite his leg. He grabbed the pup with one hand and kept his foot on the rope. With the pup lunging and biting, he couldn't line up the spear. So with his other hand, Kieran stretched to grab a heavy slab of quartz. He slapped it down on the end of the rope to hold it in place.

"What does your heart hunt for?" The strange question from the man he'd met came into his mind. It kept echoing there and wouldn't stop. *I am a hunter*, he thought.

In a motion he'd done so many times, he drew back the spear. The pup ran in circles—growling, then whimpering; charging, then cowering.

Kieran focused and aimed, the last things to do before striking. The pup's blue eyes looked straight at him. Kieran could see the golden amber they would become, and the fear they would bring to his whole clan. A sky and a sun, those colors, shone both at once.

But Kieran could not bring himself to kill the pup. He loosened his fingers, let the spear fall to his side, and sunk to the ground.



Kieran yanked the tether from under the rock and shoved the pup into a leather rucksack he carried. Avoiding the soft fur, he used a knife to cut a few air holes. The bag was ruined. And for what?

Kieran tucked the bag under his cloak. His mother had made him wear it for protection against the damp air, and it could be a blanket if he should ever get lost. He held the bag in the crook of his arm as the pup continued to shift.

The boy paused to think. He should toss the pup over his shoulder and leave it where it fell. A wolf pup would only grow into a wolf as surely as summer turned into winter. But Kieran could still hear the man's question: What did his heart hunt for?

Kieran ran, but he still couldn't decide what to do. He hadn't felt the pup move in some time. What if there wasn't enough air for it? He supposed then that would be the end of it. *No more worries.* But as he thought this, a memory of his father tucking a blanket around him flashed into his mind. There wasn't any time for memories. Kieran kept running out of the forest.

Shouts sounded as loud as shovels hitting cold stone.

"It was *my* spear."

"No, *mine!* Don't you see the three notches?"

So many voices clamored that Kieran could barely distinguish the men's voices from the boys'. It didn't matter. None was his father's. He had died two years before, when Kieran was nine. Now Kieran took care of his family.

He stepped out of the shadows, but his almost-black hair and dark clothing blended with the darkness, and no one saw him.

The biggest man carried a dead wolf. *A dead she-wolf*, Kieran guessed. Her paws would never again run along paths in the grass.

If he spoke up, he could still have some of the prize. He had the she-wolf's pup, helplessly hanging from his shoulder. He could show it right there. How would it survive anyway with its mother dead?

As the men and boys argued, a dark pool formed on the ground below the wolf's shape. In the daytime, that spot would be as red as rowan berries. From the crook of Kieran's elbow came a soft squeak. But the mother wolf couldn't hear, and her dead eyes were as empty as caves.

Something inside, maybe Kieran's heart, told him to run. His chest burned as he fled away fast. He knew that if the hunters saw him, they might throw their spears. It had become so dark, they might not be able to see that he was a boy.

Kieran didn't have a shield to protect himself or the pup. His father's old one was broken, and he couldn't bear to fix it. He had run back to the battlefield where his father had been killed to find it. He hadn't wanted the enemy clan to steal it. But no one was there—only the broken shield and ravens, the black birds that came for dead things.

He kept running, fast like warriors led by Carrick. He dreamed that someday he, too, would

become one of those warriors. He made it safely to the edge of the woods near his family's small hut.

Where should he leave the wolf pup? Outside alone? But what if it howled? All the men were still looking for wolves.

But what if the pack came to find it? What if wolves then attacked his family's farm and killed Kieran's gentle calf? He thought of the calf's round eyes that turned to look at him wherever he went.

He'd saved the pup once and he'd saved it again by running away. Kieran decided to keep the pup quiet overnight. He needed time to think it through. He would have to choose what to do in the morning.



Kieran made a little collar out of rope and tethered the pup to a sapling at the edge of the forest. The pup pulled against the rope for a moment and turned to try to bite it, but its young snout was too short. Although its teeth flashed silver, they were still small.