

Chapter Summary: New Bridge to Lyndesfarne

A chapter-by-chapter breakdown of [New Bridge to Lyndesfarne](#), a modern fantasy novel by [Trevor Hopkins](#) ([email](#)).

The story is set in the early twenty-first century, with the action split between our own world and the mysterious world of [Lyndesfarne](#). In Lyndesfarne, everyday technology from our own world simply fails to work, but a society every bit as sophisticated as our own is supported by pervasive [magic](#).

Alternating chapters are set in the present time and at various points in the past. Chapters set in the present are terminated by letters (sent by [magic slate](#)) from [Tanji](#) to her friend [Kithyn](#), until the two women met again in person.



Disclaimer: The world of Lyndesfarne described in these books is entirely fictitious, and bears no resemblance to the charming Holy Island of [Lindisfarne](#) in North East England.

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We meet [Kevin](#), a talented but lonely forty-something civil architect. He is inspecting the [Old Bridge](#) and [causeway](#) that forms the link between the our world and the world of Lyndesfarne. He is musing on the nature of the [magical barrier](#) between the [Two Worlds](#), as well as the economics of trade across the [straights](#). He then goes to meet [Tanji](#) who at this point has been his [guide](#) (from the [Guild of Directions](#)) for a scant few weeks.

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A year or two earlier, [Kevin](#) attends a rather discreet kick-off meeting for the [New Bridge](#) project, in the Manchester office of his employers, an international firm of architects. He encounters [Tweedledum](#) ([Duncan Tweedy](#)). He also meets both [Bret](#) and [Panit](#) for the first time, who are introduced as the representatives from the Lyndesfarne [Board of Construction](#). The lengthy meeting, chaired by [David Macmillan](#), is Kevin's first introduction to the mysterious [magical](#) properties of the [Other World](#).

The following day, Kevin drives to Newcastle to meet [Professor Alan Wilmington](#), head of the [Newcastle Institute of Special Sciences and Arts \(NISSA\)](#). [Professor Alan](#) and his colleagues give Kevin an introductory briefing on Lyndesfarne and the special properties of [magic](#) in the Other World.

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[Tanji](#) guides [Kevin](#) across the [causeway](#), stopping briefly to exchange [money](#) in the [Tourist Information Office](#) and to intercept some gossip about the increase in appearance of the [Watchers](#). Kevin cogitates on the nature of goods transported by the horse-drawn wagons over the [crossing](#), and on the slightly [elfin](#) appearance of Lyndesfarne natives.

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[Kevin](#)'s memorable first visit to the site of the Lyndesfarne [crossing](#). He meets [Bret](#) who is to be his counterpart and will be designing the Lyndesfarne part of the [New Bridge](#), with Kevin himself responsible for the England portion. Kevin and Bret together inspect the [Old Bridge](#), and Kevin first understands that quite different techniques will be necessary for the two halves of the New Bridge. Kevin also encounters the [magical](#) orange sparkles of [sprites](#) for the first time, which are being used as reinforcements for the Lyndesfarne part of the Old Bridge.

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[Kevin](#) and [Tanji](#) arrive at the Lyndesfarne side of the [causeway](#). Kevin witnesses Tanji [shapeshifting](#) for the

first time. Tanji explains more about shapeshifting in Lyndesfarne society. Tanji transports Kevin to the site of the [New Bridge](#) in her personal [transport](#), guiding the device with [magical gestures](#). Kevin also demonstrates some facility with these gestures. Kevin compiles a report on the progress of the New bridge, while Tanji writes a chatty note to [Kithyn](#), before they travel to the [Walled Garden](#), a local hostel.

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[Bret](#) and [Kevin](#) continue their inspection of the [Old Bridge](#) and confirm their approach over mugs of [hot chocolate](#). Later, Bret introduces Kevin to [Ricard](#), his first [Guide](#) from the [Guild of Directions](#). After completing his inspection, Kevin returns to the [Mainland](#).

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[Kevin](#) invites [Tanji](#) to join him for an informal dinner at the [Squirrel's Nest](#) public house. There, Kevin and Tanji become closer, and he learns more about the [ferry](#) route used before the [Old Bridge](#) was built, as well as the legend of the [Ferryman](#).

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[Kevin](#) returns to his Manchester flat, thinking deeply about the technical problems to be solved in order to construct the [New Bridge](#). Over a takeawy Chinese meal, he considers the problem of joining the the halves of the bridge, in the region where (because of the effects of the [barrier](#)) neither [magic](#) nor technology is entirely reliable.

Kevin also builds computer simulations of the entire New Bridge, to re-assure himself that it can be completed successfully, and also to learn more about the nature of magic.

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The morning after their date in the [Squirrel's Nest](#) public house, [Kevin](#) and [Tanji](#) leave the [Walled Garden](#). En route to the crossing, and on a whim, Kevin buys a [paperweight](#) in a curio shop, which has been [magically](#) enhanced to [predict](#) the weather.

Kevin, accompanied by Tanji, undertakes an inspection of the [New Bridge](#) (by now almost completed) in a crewed rowing boat captained by the [coxswain](#). A sudden storm puts their lives in danger, and they are forced to take shelter on the England side of the crossing. Cold and wet, Kevin invites Tanji to return to his flat to freshen up.

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Shortly after [Kevin's](#) first exposure to the strange properties of Lyndesfarne, he attends another planning meeting in Manchester. [Tweedledum](#), [Bret](#) and [Panit](#) are all in attendance. The meeting is again chaired by [David Macmillan](#) and boringly introduced by [Kenneth Nasterton](#).

New project managers from Kevin's company ([Peter Brenner](#)) and the [Board of Construction](#) ([Quarl](#) and [Craz](#)) are introduced, as are ineffective assistants for Bret ([Farmill](#)) and Kevin ([Smudger Greysmith](#)). Kevin and Bret present their outline design for the [New Bridge](#), to general approval.

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[Kevin](#) and [Tanji](#) drive to Kevin's flat. After bathing, Kevin cooks dinner, and plies Tanji with wine, as they talk about life, cooking and computer simulations. Coming to some kind of decision, Tanji invites Kevin to take her to bed.

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Another intensive briefing for [Kevin](#) from [Professor Alan Wilmington](#) of [NISSA](#). From [Professor Alan](#), Kevin learns a little of the language of Lyndesfarne, and he also gets a lesson in how to manage without technological artefacts from [Doctor Linda Braxton](#). Confused, Kevin begins to wonder about inconsistencies in the things which do, and do not, work in each of the [Two Worlds](#).

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[Kevin](#) and [Tanji](#) sleep together overnight, and shower together in the morning. While Kevin is shaving, Tanji finds the [paperweight](#) they had bought earlier, and discovers that it still works. Other [magical](#) items in their possession do not function, however. Kevin now has definite proof that it is sometimes possible to get magical artefacts through the [barrier](#) between the worlds.

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During an earlier stay in the [Walled Garden](#) hostel, [Kevin](#) discovers more about the nature of living in a [magical](#) world. Unable to sleep one night, Kevin elects to take an unaccompanied stroll to the moonlit [causeway](#). He discovers secretive work being carried out on the arches of the [Old Bridge](#) but, before he can investigate further, he is discovered and escorted away by an alarmed [Ricard](#). Ricard is replaced as Kevin's [guide](#) by [Tanji](#) a few days later.

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Feeling slightly paranoid, [Kevin](#) quizzes [Tanji](#) on whether she had special instructions to spy on him. Tanji denies this hotly, and a certain coolness descends between them. More gently, Kevin asks Tanji about the [Guild of Directions](#) and his ability to wander around in Lyndesfarne unaccompanied, if he wanted to. Reassured, and fortified with coffee and breakfast, Kevin and Tanji debate what to do about the discovery of powerful [magic](#) still working and finally decide to visit [Professor Alan](#) of [NISSA](#).

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[Kevin](#), accompanied by [Bret](#) and [Ricard](#), travel by horse and trap to a [Board of Construction](#) building in Lyndesfarne for a meeting to discuss the progress of the [New Bridge](#). Kevin understands more about the Lyndesfarne propensity to construct buildings underground, and is introduced to the [magical windows](#) which let natural daylight into every floor.

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[Kevin](#) and [Tanji](#) arrive at [NISSA](#) and quickly locate [Professor Alan](#) in his office. They explain about the [paperweight](#). The Professor is initially disbelieving but is convinced when they show him the actual artefact. On a pretext, Alan leaves the room, locking Kevin and Tanji inside. They overhear Alan speaking on the phone, making what appears to be a death threat. Frightened, Kevin and Tanji escape through the window and return to the car, only belatedly realising that, in their haste, they had left the paperweight behind.

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Concerned about the safety of the [New Bridge](#), [Kevin](#) asks for and received a further briefing on the physical properties of the world of Lyndesfarne, this time presented by [Wendy Rossiter](#). He also learns about the multi-dimensional shape of the [crossing](#) itself.

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Frightened for their lives, [Kevin](#) and [Tanji](#) drive rapidly away from [NISSA](#), wondering where they can go. They make their way towards Lyndesfarne, and hide out in an empty house not far from the [causeway](#) entrance. After nightfall, they walk the last few miles to the [New Bridge](#), Kevin believing that that can walk across using the scaffolding recently put in place to allow the construction of the overlap zone.

Kevin and Tanji are shocked to find the scaffolding barely more than a single plank of wood, but are forced to attempt the dangerous crossing when they hear noises behind them. Bravely, they cross without mishap, and Kevin is able to dislodge the plank to prevent them from being followed. They reach the far side of the New Bridge without further mishap, but the rapidly worsening weather forces them to take shelter in the [castle](#).

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[Kevin](#) enjoys a pleasant lunchtime visit to the Lyndesfarne [castle](#) in the company of [Ricard](#). Kevin speculates on the need for fortifications here, and on the coast on the other side of the [straights](#).

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[Kevin](#) and [Tanji](#) struggle through the weather to the [castle](#), where they find shelter. In tunnels under the building, they also discover a hidden and inoperable [portal](#). Tanji manages to activate the portal, and they use it to escape.

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Kevin receives another briefing at [NISSA](#), this time on weights and measures, this time presented by [Doctor Willis](#). He discovers strong similarities between the old english measurements and those in use in Lyndesfarne, as well as the distrust that people in Lyndesfarne exhibit towards high-speed ground-level transportation.

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[Kevin](#) and [Tanji](#) arrive at a [portal terminus](#). They lay low for a while. Tanji who, as a [Guide](#), knows a lot about portals and explains something about the portal network in Lyndesfarne to Kevin. Finally, they take a series of connecting portals to [Rhythlen](#), the village where Tanji's [Aunt](#) and [Uncle](#) live.

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[Kevin](#) receives an invitation to dine at home with [Bret](#) and his family, and to stay overnight, which he accepts. Bret and Kevin, not accompanied by the [guide Ricard](#), travel to Bret's house by horse and trap. Kevin is warmly welcomed by Bret's [Mother](#) and [Father](#), who entertain him with their fund of well-worn anecdotes while Bret goes to change.

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Exhausted, [Kevin](#) and [Tanji](#) arrive at her home, to be welcomed by her [Aunt](#). Fed, bathed and feeling safe, the two travellers sleep together overnight until Tanji wakes Kevin with passionate embraces.

While waiting for her [Uncle](#) to return, Tanji escorts Kevin around the gardens, where he encounters a tame [Nightwing](#), a small species of [Dragon](#) kept as a pet. Kevin learns more about the differences in fauna which live in each of the [Two Worlds](#).

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Before dinner, [Kevin](#) discovers that [Bret](#) is a [shapeshifter](#) and that Bret's true form is that of a statuesque woman. Recovering from his shock, Bret's [Mother](#) explains that she too has considerable shapeshifting abilities, and was in fact disguised as a man when she first met Bret's [Father](#).

Kevin also meets Bret's husband [Eosin](#), who demonstrates his skills with [sprites](#) by [magically](#) animating a toy Teddy Bear Kevin brought as a gift. Kevin also meets Bret's children [Myra](#) and [Andhra](#), as well as other relatives, and entertains the dinner table with stories from his own world.

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[Kevin](#) is interviewed by [Tanji's Uncle](#), with Tanji herself performing the language translation. Through Tanji, her Uncle explains something of the politics and organisation in Lyndesfarne.

In particular, he discusses the role of the [Board of Control](#) and its responsibilities to support the [Guardians](#) and to maintain the [barrier](#) between the [Two Worlds](#). This last point confuses both Kevin and Tanji, who previously understood that the barrier, which prevents the movement of effective [magic](#) and technology between the worlds, was a natural phenomenon. The fact that the barrier is artificial is a closely-guarded secret, as is the fact that the barrier's effectiveness is sometimes disrupted by the presence of iron and steel (as used for the construction of the [New Bridge](#)).

Tanji's Uncle insists that they are in no danger, and that there has been a misunderstanding - the Board was merely seeking to keep a knowledge of working magic from the other world. He explains that some leakage is inevitable, and Tanji tells the story of the [Loch Ness Monster](#) as a parable of what can happen when things inadvertently travel from one world to the other.

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[Kevin](#) performs some private computations on the usage of the [Old Bridge](#) and the likely use of the [New Bridge](#). He also muses on the economic impact of the trade across the [crossing](#) on both worlds, and on the logistics of trans-shipping goods at each end of the [causeway](#).

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[Kithyn](#) and her husband [Amiss](#) join [Kevin](#) and [Tanji](#) at her [Uncle](#)'s house. Kevin is struck by [Amiss](#)'s shifty attitude, and seems to think that he has met the man somewhere before. [Amiss](#), who is a senior member of the [Board of Control](#), outlines the political problems raised by [Kevin](#)'s discovery, and by their unscheduled transfers between the [Two Worlds](#).

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[Kevin](#) receives instructions on [magical](#) games - immersive, multi-player, role-playing games - as played in Lyndesfarne from [Professor Alan Wilmington](#) of [NISSA](#). [Kevin](#) speculates on the use of similar 'technology' for the design of the Lyndesfarne part of the [New Bridge](#), and wonders about the lack of enthusiasm for gambling games in the [Other World](#).

[Kevin](#) also receives a briefing on the magic [slates](#) which have been used for personal communications for generations, and wonders about the impact on social stability.

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[Amiss](#) explains to [Kevin](#) the dilemma, as seen by the Lyndesfarne [Board of Control](#): that technology is 'dirty' and, more importantly, raises a risk of social instability and change. On the other hand, [magic](#) is expensive and labour-intensive, and the wealth of Lyndesfarne is increasingly dependent on the import of raw materials, such as cement to make [construction stone](#). [Kevin](#) surmises that increased imports is the real benefit of the [New Bridge](#).

The explanations are suddenly interrupted by a commanding voice and the arrival of a military force.

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During the construction of the [New Bridge](#), [Kevin](#) makes a rare visit to his firm's offices in Manchester. [Kevin](#) has not had a great deal of recent human contact, and finds hints that he is somehow being removed from the firm's corporate memory. Curious, [Kevin](#) arranges to meet in a pub with a work acquaintance, [Frank Boxton](#), who [Kevin](#) suspects is verging on alcoholism. [Frank](#) tells [Kevin](#) gossip and rumours about strange 'hush-hush' projects, as well as the impending closure of the Manchester office.

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It seems that [Kevin](#) and [Tanji](#) have been arrested by a combined group of armed [Guardians](#) and [Watchers](#), together with [Tanji](#)'s [Uncle](#) and [Aunt](#). The armed force appears to be under the command of [Professor Alan Wilmington](#), who is accompanied by [Ricard](#). It seems that is also aligned with the newcomers.

The [Professor](#) is furious with [Kevin](#) for importing a powerful [magical sprite](#) (a [predictor](#) sprite is contained in the [paperweight](#)) into the [Other World](#). The risk of disruption is too high, he explains, considering the effect of a reliable predictor on gambling games, horse races and so on. He further says that the political impact of this extreme leakage means that the [New Bridge](#) will have to be destroyed.

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[Kevin](#) recalls a fractious planning meeting during the surveying phase for the [New Bridge](#) when it is discovered that there were huge errors with the underground scans. [Tweedledum](#), [David Macmillan](#) and [Peter Brenner](#) argue intermably, with numerous pointed fingers, but finally [Kevin](#) and [David](#) are able to facilitate a way forward.

Later, [Kevin](#) wonders about the reasons behind these delays, and wonders if there were similar problems during the construction of the [Old Bridge](#). He puts questions to [Bret](#) and is told that there were numerous

accidents and even suspected sabotage during the construction of the original [crossing](#).

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[Kevin](#) is understandably horrified at the prospect of the [New Bridge](#) being destroyed. He thinks about previous incidents, wondering if they had been attempts to prevent its completion. He suspects that has been using his wife [Kithyn](#)'s correspondence with [Tanji](#) as a way of keeping tabs on him.

Kevin himself is to be silenced - not killed, but subjected to a [mind-wipe](#). [Tanji](#) is to be sent away and threatened into silence. Appalled at the prospects, Kevin and [Tanji](#) declare their love for each other, at what appears to be the last moment they might see each other.

Suddenly, the black [capas](#) of the [Watchers](#) transform themselves into oiled brown waterproofs, making the wearers look just like the [Ferryman](#).

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[Kevin](#) and [Bret](#) are engaged in another inspection of the partially-completed [New Bridge](#). Sheltering from the weather and sharing a flask of [hot chocolate](#), Bret to Kevin explains the distinction between Lyndesfarne, the country, and the world of which Lyndesfarne is but a small part. He also explains that there is no adequate translation in English of the name of the [Other World](#) except for, perhaps, 'Earth'.

Bret also explains that, at one time, there were numerous [crossings](#) between the [Two Worlds](#), but all others have now been closed, sometimes explosively, for a variety of reasons. Bret expresses his own view that the Lyndesfarne crossing is therefore particularly precious, and should be protected at all costs.

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The [Ferryman](#) is revealed as [Bret's mother](#). Her companions, previously disguised as [Watchers](#), are Bret himself and [Peter Brenner](#), the Project Manager from [Kevin's](#) firm of architects. [Tanji](#) is astonished to learn that Kevin knows such important people.

The commanding presence of the Ferryman forces the truth into the open. has been secretly working to gain political power in the [Board of Control](#), as well as conspiring with [Professor Alan](#) and [Ricard](#) to use the [paperweight predictor](#) to make money illegally in the [Other World](#).

The Ferryman directs the [Guardians](#) to take Amiss, Alan and Ricard away for further questioning. She then thanks Kevin, and leaves the others in the care of Bret. [Tanji](#) comforts her friend [Kithyn](#), who has been used as a pawn by her husband, while her [Uncle](#) admits that it was him who had tipped off the Ferryman. Bret tells Kevin that he had met Amiss before, disguised (using [shapeshifting](#)) as [Panit](#), the representative from the [Board of Construction](#).

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Alone, [Kevin](#) toasts himself with single-malt Scotch whisky on the successful completion of the design of the [New Bridge](#). He thinks with a certain amount of quiet self-satisfaction about the quality of the design and the sophistication of the computer simulations.

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[Kevin](#) and [Tanji](#) are standing hand-in-hand on the coast of Lyndesfarne, looking out over the [straights](#) towards the by-now nearly completed [New Bridge](#). Kevin has left the firm of architects and found a new position as an independent consultant, with considerable success. He has been advising on ways to improve the efficiency of transport over the New Bridge. Kevin is now spending a lot of time with [Tanji](#), and his personal life is now happier than it has ever been.

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