

**A Synopsis of the Book:**  
**Kil. Wish: Wishing at the Edge:**  
**Elves and Chaos; Forest Defenders and Magic.**  
By Rath Avens, copyright, 1999. (145,000 words)

**I. CONFLICT:**

People everywhere figure out that they are in a war. They have to make important and conflicting choices and take sides.

Can young Sasha, the adopted son of a mid-level Militia leader, be independent?  
Can he trust others outside his clan?

Eco-commandos, the good militia and finally all of the good people form up together against traitors, the corrupt leaders of the fundamentalists and the control freaks of the federal fascists. Greed moves from dollars to power to dollars...

Elves versus Healers; the Deep versus fads; and Sacrifice versus patience.

**RESOLUTIONS:**

Victory, renewal, and some friends and allies are alive. Sasha opens to trust and leaves his powers behind, he matures. And then he dies or is reborn as all things and peace.

**PREMISE:**

Gaps between understanding lead to evil. If you don't use magic for good then evil will use it. To re-balance and reconcile all things – all of the single issues and concerns – good people must come together in a positive imprint or else evil will grow and triumph.

A struggle between the Elves and the healers over unification of the Symbols and the People:  
The Flower, the Earth, Water, Spirit, Fire, Rage, Edge Intuition, Wizardry, Love, Union, Trust, Air... and Forgiveness... And then we encounter Love, Rage, Truth and The Final Wish... all of the wishes catch up.

The Search for the pattern: Earth's Gaia Defense:  
To love simple; to renew and to heal; and to give magic back.

The Search for what is missing:  
Honesty, Truth, Reasoned Decisions, and Forgiveness.

Magic becomes the Purity of Youth; Right Intentions; Simple Love, love without Shadow influence; and a

time in space when Purpose is Truth.

Sasha sticks his young face around the door and says quietly,

**"I hope I'm not a bother, are you ready to head down to camp?"**

Jarred looks up at his fifteen-year old roommate: A tall boy, with soft features and those almost ghostly, deep-set eyes. He loved the boy's always-upbeat attitude. It was hard to think of Sasha as any sort of bother.

Sasha Shevchenko, the son of his dead Mother's closest friend. The two women - a peasant and a 'disappeared' General's wife - had fled the chaos of the 1990s in Eastern Europe. Together towing along a baby and a sixteen-year-old Jarred, the Gods only knew what wishes had managed the four of them this far and gained them some measure of security...

Jarred asks:

**"Sasha what should I do?"**

Hiding not a thing and knowing the response will be straight forward if blunt, nearly bordering on naiveté. Jarred rarely ignored his young friends advice, though figuring out what to do with it, that was the trick.

Sasha responded eagerly, gray-green eyes bright and clear as if he never once doubted anything in his young life.

**"About the younger men who want peace? Well I know you're tired of dogmas...and a compromise with Forest People is OK. So...You are going to speak your mind tonight at the military security briefing. Right?"**

Sasha looked at him closely for the first time. This man was the only shot – the only chance in Hell – that anyone in the Network or the North Coast had to survive the coming collapse of the government with honor. Jarred was also about the only chance that Sasha had of family or someone he could trust who was over 17 years of age.

Jarred looked like he didn't sleep so well last night. Like life, the General and all the petty problems in Haymarket were taking a toll. Sasha wanted so badly, to tell him more: To get all of it off his chest, and his conscience. Complications lead to doubts if you let them, his Mom used to say.

Jarred stands up to leave. He reaches out to Sasha and holds him by the shoulder saying:

**"Listen to me Sasha. Either way we will be putting everyone at risk. After the meeting tonight, we have to be careful. Anything could happen. You hear me? Keep alert and if we get split up, you go back to the farm and find Dave and Will.**

**No arguments. Please, Sasha, I can't stand thinking something will happen to you."**

Sasha looks into Jarred's eyes seeing the fatherly love he had known only from this stranger's heart and remembering all the things that Jarred had done for him since Sasha's mother died. He never knew his real father. His Mom said he had loved them dearly, but his father got himself in the way of trouble once too often... long ago, before Sasha was even born. The only man that Sasha had ever respected was Jarred,

though he knew the ‘deference and phony respect’ game well enough to get along and even get even with some of the worst scoundrels. The boy learned fast and made connections few adults are very accomplished at.

Sasha says:

**"Don't worry about me.**

**"Just be sure what you want, and don't lose your resolve.**

**You always tell me ‘stick to your guns boy’ and ‘don't back down from a bully’.**

**Come on we'll be late."**

Sasha pulls him out the door and down the trail to the meeting place. (Page 90)

### **Kil. Wish: Wishing at the Edge**

A genre crossing fantasy novel written by a veteran forest defender, it blazes a safe passage beyond the books: *Ecotopia* and *The Fifth Sacred Thing*. The story weaves us around a search for survival amid ecological and social collapse. This book is relevant now because it is based on a local nationalism – the only force in the world other than religion and greed that seem to motivate people. The book has its own nature-based, ancient religion too.

**Elves move now in the night. They take up positions, they watch and they prepare to sacrifice for Nature's Survival - which is all of our lives into the future. If you believe in keeping violence to a minimum, then you had better get to work fast. Prepare to put your life on the line that your mouth talks so much about: the line of Truth - of knowing when a situation has gone too far and something has to be done. Gaia manifests her own defense."** (Page 1, Introduction)

Wishing at the Edge is about martyrdom, about the ultimate sacrifices that are required for change and hope. If you don't have something (a religion, land or family) that you believe in enough to die for then you have nothing – you are no one! Find something and somewhere to love and find ritual and ceremony to honor these things... Before it is too late.

This is a story about Honor. If you love something then you honor it by learning about it and how you can best protect it. You learn in order to love, to understand and to honor it better. To honor something is to protect it, nourish it and keep it happy, safe, free and healthy.

*Ecotopia* was based on stealing nuclear weapons and the high tech path. *The Fifth Sacred Thing* was based on violent rebellion by federal troops and magic. Both of these are unrealistic or fantastic. *Wishing at the Edge* is based on democracy and local defense. A clever and practical deterrent is used in *Wishing at the Edge*: The Ranger ELF counter-sabotage threat against the US government should the Free States be attacked.

*Wishing at the Edge* has a plan with a goal: Local power and strong environmental protection voted in by a majority – or a super-majority in this case. Admittedly the voters are largely people who have moved to the region in order to vote in what they believe in. This has been going on in many regions since 1960. Timing is important in any grand strategy and this book shows the crucial tensions that build up as the climax –

the turning point - approaches.

The new regions: Lorien, Ecotopia, Haymarket and Siskiyou are protected by democracy, consensus, nationalism and Eco-Social Defense (Ranger Elf: Phases I, II and III...) This defense keeps violence to a minimum.

## **MAGIC**

The magic used in the book is subtle and organic. It flows from the dynamics and the faith of the people. You can actually take out most of the magic without affecting the story. Bravery and risk can replace the magic and the idea of "Wishing" is analogous to "Thinking Through." The marginal power of magic contributes to the mystery and helps to draw the reader in with its limited and sometimes quirky or unreliable nature.

Two "good" magics seek unification toward a purpose: to guide the Volkentrough - the collective last wish of all species. Complex forces arise to seek their own wishes. Wildryns – spirits of extinct species and all the children lost to toxics, abortion, and hate - are trapped on the Earth. These Wildryns wait for the time of their optimal release. But dark shadows of evil strive to undo the plans of others and to control the power of these tortured souls, for their own designs.

## **CONTEXT:**

The book crosses genres of fantasy, sci-fi and Utopian thought. Problems common to all struggles and movements are touched on: the factional in-fighting; federal or bully interventions; and refugees.

### **“Are we all refugees now?”**

The context of the story is a few years from now amid a social and political struggle in Northern California during the collapse of the national economy. Urban areas are exploding in violence and despair as the USA crumbles into chaos. Refugees clog the roads and threaten to overwhelm endangered habitats. Thousands of people have come to defend the wild and biodiversity - they come for survival. People are coming together to protect their localities and keep them sustainable. The Greens are about to win every election at the local-regional level, running on a platform of succession. Spies, assassins and a Christian Fundamentalist militia threaten the plans.

Healers, youth, Eco-commandos, and the young officers of the militia move cautiously toward mutual acceptance and tenuous alliance. Every event and encounter is fraught with danger, espionage and assassination. Into this mix, step Hazel, Sasha and Jarred. Each of them has a powerful network of supporters who work openly or behind the scenes to exert influence and gather information.

A 15-year-old, Sasha, and his adopted father, Jarred, try to get the independent-minded militia to ally with the Greens.

## **SASHA'S GROUP**

The Network plays all sides in this dangerous game. They are mostly young people who live in militia

zones, but they tend to favor the Healers and the Forest Defenders. This book is about honor – young Sasha – the adopted son of a militia leader - is determined to do the right thing, to do whatever is necessary to defend his homeland: Inland areas of Northern California.

But he knows that real peace does not come just by defeating your enemies – or the absence of war. It comes from building a broad alliance based on inclusion of many viewpoints. He struggles to bring all the powers of good together (on the physical and spiritual planes) and to lead and inspire them with his honor and sacrifice – his example.

## **HAZEL'S GROUP**

The Eco-Commandos have stopped commercial logging and attracted many young Forest Defenders. Hazel, a 24-year-old forest campaign veteran is thrown into a leadership role and forced to confront her qualms about violence. Hazel is respected by the militant wing of the Forest Defenders despite her struggles with the use of force, with the ambiguities of violence – attack versus defense. Eventually, following a rescue and a helicopter crash, she falls in love with Jarred as they wander lost in the forest,

hunted by Shadow and other magical dangers. On the verge of winning elections Hazel's group looks forward to restoring the ecology. But spies and traitors conspire to undue the elections and kill Forest Defender leaders. Elves come to the rescue.

Coming together – unification out of necessity or survival – is a key theme. A magical forest Elf, Anaya, brings gifts and aid to a meeting of the Greens military network – the Chosen.

## **MILITIA GROUP**

West of coastal Northern California the Christian Militia has consolidated its power. Two powerful factions vie for control. The "Young Officers" group wants peaceful coexistence, but an older "Fanatic Christian" faction is determined to establish itself over the whole region.

Weapons are being stockpiled in preparation for a showdown. Some militia groups are torn between fighting for their clan – their regional group of dedicated people or taking a risk and supporting the Elves and the Forest Defenders in a grand coalition. Everywhere everyone is at least becoming aware of the patterns of life, the life grid and the nature of things...

## **THE ACTION**

The Eco-Commandos split up into various missions in Colorado and San Francisco. Hazel and friends travel cross-country to a council meeting with powerful militia leaders. All three groups run into difficulties, but manage to accomplish at least part of their missions. Jarred and Sasha narrowly escape death by arranged ambush. Fighting through deception they pass through tragedy. But now blood has been shed and Shadow's allies have made their play. Jarred and Sasha rally elements of the Hayfork combined militias to put an end to these threats...

Escaping death once more, Hazel, Sasha, and Jarred end up lost and hunted in the forest. Shadows close in on them. Rescuers find them and they head toward the election day music festivals. Traps block their path

and more high drama unfolds before the day is done. Sacrifices are chosen and mistakes barely avoided. Sasha leaves his friends and strikes out on his own, in hopes of sparing them grief and hazard. Brione is kidnapped (again!) and she has to choose between safety, friends and honor.

Anaya (the Elf) and Miya (one of the Chosen) are trapped at the heart of a great vortex – impaled by a smoky crystal to a stone slab on a hilltop. A desperate challenge of will against darkest malice rages on minute by minute. Torturous desperation threatens to undo Miya, while the Elf tries to hang on and protect them both...

Unless most of us wish for the same things: Simplicity, Frugality, Sharing, then the Elves will die for nothing and many billions of humans too! Then chaos will rule and greater suffering will spread and deepen for centuries.

The Great Shadow moves across the land. The Goddess Lorien's plans progress too: Phase I of Ranger Elf is underway; Phase Two approaches quickly; and the secret plan, ELF III, is about to happen by plan and spontaneously. The value a Strategic Defense (ELF III) is grasped in many localities. Back in Northern California, Anaya's understanding of the Wildryns' powers crumbles against Shadow's tricks and Sasha's destiny at a rocky ridge in Colorado. Fate escalates and the dangers intrude on the Chosen.

Forces of fate and magic converge at a stony hilltop. Ships transport troops as the Federal government moves to nullify the election results through force and occupation. Storm clouds brew and emotions fill the sky. A moment of destiny builds to its multiple climax. Awareness of the situation grows until a spontaneous awakening is triggered. Most people come to realize that they have to defend the places where they live, since there is nowhere left to go. The refugee flood is slowed down by blowing up the bridges.

Straw-Men burn in the night sky as beacons shine from one community to the next, proclaiming solidarity and friendship with the new ways. All things come together, friends trust each other, and miracles of courage and hard work save the day. Across the planet, highways of commerce and greed are thrown down. Soon, most people recognize that technology or complex machines that do not serve basic needs of food and shelter are inherently wasteful and evil. Masses of people suddenly discover that they have something to fight for.

This book is about the contest between existence and a void (non-existence); between the powers of evil and of enlightened creativity – those who know the Love of sacrifice. A sacrifice is chosen to make magic – something powerful enough to resolve many threats and to affect all things with its imprint on our specie's fate. The Elves lead us toward existence, while the Shadows and other powers lead us to the void, the final abyss.

Much of the book is a drama around what Sasha is lacking – what he is ignoring or unable to fathom. He learns that it has something to do with the Earth, the Elves and their Goddess Lorien. And almost too late he learns that the influence of his mentor is part of the problem. Other people and groups too seem to be searching for something and they do not even know what it is...

Sasha has to embrace all of the magics and all of the help from his true friends – the Chosen. He has to accept the past and forgive those who he wishes would forgive him should he fail.

Brione and Hazel help him to see that he has to accept the limitations of youth without giving up his innocence.

We find a joyful chosen violence, the knowing of when to risk everything and to sacrifice until Death becomes the key weapon and the catalyst for change.  
...To love means "To Die For."

*Wishing at the Edge* is a unique work. Unlike the other books in the genre this book has teeth and claws... and charm. It's not a middle class pacifier or dreamy apologist for inaction (as is the book, *The Sheep Look Up*). Sweet, but down and dirty, it faces the reality of social collapse, chaotic refugees and double-crossing alliance intrigues. It shows us a non-violent way to defend and motivate the people of a region and to protect the ecology. Many of the young forest defenders and eco-commandos die, but overall violence is kept to a minimum. Joy and confidence spread and a helping hand is extended to refugees.

People are ready for something to believe in. Many know the kind of life they want but not how to get there – and this grows more extreme each day...A key thing people lack is a story that they can relate to and emulate. *Wishing at the Edge* is that story.

A lesson implied throughout the book is that when you have to make a decision about money, friendship or what to do with your life, ask yourself if the decision will lead toward the world you want and the kind of person that you want to be. Would you make a different decision if you were living your ideal life?

It's all in our heads – this apathy and inaction paralysis. Do you want to let out your rage and stop this insanity they call the modern world? Even if you do not plan to go out and sabotage, just the fact that people have this awesome power can help you to go on...Imagine thousands of people going out and destroying electric power substations – it's a possibility and as long as possibilities exist (potential) there is real power and hope...building.

This story is timely (Red-Blue State divisions and talk of successions in the US, Kosovo, the Basques...Kurdistan). The themes are provocative using violence and Pagan thought. It pulls the reader into a world and a strategy that they can actually believe in, one whose final impact gives value to sacrifice and leadership. Light reading in some ways, but heavy on subtle allegory, you could read the book five times and still find new meaning and new questions.

***ishing at the Edge* is a sure winner with broad crossover appeal from environmental, action, fantasy, New Age, Sci-fi and Earth worshippers.** Try it on for size. All you have to loose are ...chains of apathy smothering your imagination in the bland world outside.

Lorien's voice came out of Miya  
**"Do what must be done."**

The ending of the book is happy, considering how bad it could have been...(will be?). Friends miss those who die, but they cherish their victory and the relatively few casualties...A surprise in the epilogue helps to tie issues together and suggest the life ahead that they will all have to pursue.

-- **NOTE** -- Our powerful gift is to wish ahead! To wish or think ahead is the only uniquely human attribute – our loss of this gift results in our loss of our humanity...How can the one trait that was so key to humans' evolution – something that we have done for one million years – now fail us completely? The Wildryns' wish was the same as everyone's at the final moment – to protect the future of Nature's diversity and to escape their torture. This was a natural wish of letting their powers re-balance things – and aid the good people – even those who created them out of pain and dislocation.

.....What is your wish?

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