

When the three of them got there, everyone was already sitting around the fire on the beach.

"Dleit, there you are!" said his brother and father, who were standing toward the center.

"Where's Mother?" Dleit said, "Still not here, as you can see" X'aan said.

"Well She has to be okay." Dleit said, "But I was really wanting her to be here, this is such a special occasion!"

"I'm sure she's fine." said the brother, but he truly had some doubt, which Dleit knew, "By the way what did you find out."

"Oh, right! Kanat'á had a similar dream where the Eagle had missing feathers," Dleit said, "and the birds most likely represent You, Me and Her."

"How did the Eagle lose it's feathers?" X'aan said nervously.

"I don't know" Kanat'á said cutting in, "I'm still trying to remember the whole thing."

"One person at a time!" Éil yelled. "Into my house!"

And so the blessings began, this was Dleit's first time doing them alone, so of course he was nervous of mistakes in the song he had to sing.

The hunters had already done a pre hunt purification on themselves mainly by simply not eating food from the shore. Dleit and his family didn't have to worry about that part due to shaman's families not being allowed to eat shore food. All of this was in order to release any damage of the spirit and other burdens upon it, stress and such, to make them more effective and focussed in whatever important thing they are doing. Dleit's blessing was the next step to make them even more effective.

His first patient was Yaxté, a member of the family next door who was a little older than X'aan, in fact, he was commonly in the same warband with him.

For the ritual, the patient lay on his back in front of the shaman, right side facing him. The shaman would run burning herbs up and down above the body, the patient breathing deeply. The song that the shaman sang belonged, like many other things, to his clan. Dleit's clan's purifying song

was this repeated four times. The song was not very loud, and could only be heard within the shaman's home.

The next person was X'aan. "Are you really sure you want to go out there?", Dleit said.

"Yes, why?", X'aan said.

"We don't know how the Eagle lost his feathers," Dleit said, "or when it happened. You could fall ill in a month or you could be captured, beaten and thrown to the orcas by Kígáat today!"

"That's exactly it, we don't know." said the brother, "I could get injured soon, but at least we'll be prepared." Dleit opened his mouth as if to say something before X'aan placed his hand on his shoulder, "You've been waiting for this day just as eagerly as I have. We know the water and it's dangers well and I'll be sure to avoid them, and we always see warboats before they see us. Okay?"

"Okay." Dleit said in an unassured tone.

After X'aan's blessing, Kanat'á came up. "Remember anything now?", said the shaman.

"No.", She said, "But if I receive a purification that's, you know, meant to help me focus better, maybe then I could." She said all of that with her usual mischievous smile, which Dleit found himself sharing.

A few hours before midday, they were finally done. They headed off to a cliffside to the north, taller than five of their lodges piled on one another, which they were headed to, to jump from. For fun.

For The Jumping, as they called it, the hunters would gather on the cliffside in designated groups who would go in, find, kill, and take the huge halibut back to shore.

The area here had no trees, just grass and rocks. The entire barren cliff with it's side jutted out a good long way from the trees. Out at sea were Islands of all kinds; tightly packed together, and ranging from a less than a square mile, to some that were larger than their own. Those that were that size had mountains in their centers, that, even when it wasn't winter, were quite often snow capped. All of them were covered in trees, most had short,

rocky beaches, others had rocky crags.

“Grandpa,” Kanat’á said to him, “what happened to your annual ‘Dleit, please secede from fishing, I need things done here in the village, you can go next year’ that you always say to him on these first days?”

He only just started turning his head before she answered her own question. “Oh yeah, X’aan’s possible injury.”

“Correct, if-”

“If X’aan gets his injury Dleit will have to be there to stabilize him.” Kanat’á said with her usual smirk. He just smiled at her.

“I heard something about me and X’aan?” Dleit said joining in.

“Keep your eyes on him at all times.” Éil said.

“He wasn’t lying to me when he said he’d be careful, I could smell it.” Dleit said.

“I know,” said the mentor sternly, “but that doesn’t mean that whatever is going to happen won’t be sudden and out of our reach.”

Dleit paused briefly “Alright.” he said nervously but assuredly.

“Kanat’á,” Éil said, “there are some mixtures and herbs I just remembered I left back at the lodge that could help the injury.”

“You’re also running short on the essential herbs to make them.” She said.

“Oh, right.” He said, “Go gather some of those as well.”

“What would you do without us.” She said, then she walked away but turned around after a few steps. “Don’t jump without me, alright?” she said.

“Of course not.” said the brothers.

As she left, their father approached the elder. “Éil?” Gugáan asked.

“I’ll do my best with your son, I promise.” Éil cut in.

“I know,” Gugáan said, “It’s not him I’m worried about, he’s been holding his own quite well. I’m worried about my wife.”

“Awaadís may just be delayed.” The shaman said.

“Yes I know” Said the warrior, “but if she is not back by midday, I want you to go into a trance and search for her, I’m beginning to fear the worst.”

“Did you tell this to your sons?”

“No, I don’t want Dleit to worry. X’aan already has the same ideas I do, I could smell it on him, as could Dleit, and I don’t want him to worry more. Bless him, he hasn’t seen what I’ve seen.”

Kanat’á ran into the forest, looking for plants such as Poke and Devil’s club. The forest contained the songs of Juncos, Warblers, Sparrows, and as you would expect, Ravens, as well as Crows. The trees were smaller than most places, as this area was cut constantly for it’s wood, but deeper inland, many trees averaged almost twice as large as a humpback whale. The forest was almost nothing but a vast green, with bright undergrowth everywhere the eye could see: young trees, shrubs, and moss, so much moss. In some places that’s all that there was, hanging from everything like shaggy, unkempt hair.

The Devil’s Club plant is one of the most important plants used by people of the region, used for everything from teas for stomach ailments of all kinds, to mush applied directly to wounds as a painkiller, to being hung on doors to ward off evil spirits.

As she walked near a small ravine, she began to recover bits of the dream. The first thing she remembered was an attack or an accident she couldn’t quite tell as it was only the bare essence of a memory but she felt like it would break through soon. She then sat upon a boulder to think. After a few minutes, she then felt the wind on her shoulder and smelled the air. It was the smell of a storm. The exact smell of the dream. It could have been the day. She began thinking more and more, but quickly realised she had already taken too long. She quickly, while somewhat desperately saying every profanity known to her language, looked in the gathering bag on her hip.

“Okay everything’s here-The mixtures at the village!” Off she ran. She knew every tree and cliff in these forests well so she didn’t need to think much of where she was going, it was all in the back of her head. She was acrobatic, and she could take a fall: jumping off the shorter cliffs, and hopping through the lower branches.

