

BROTHER HAWK

THE FOREST IS *ALIVE*. ITS HEART *BEATS* WITH CHIRPS, GROWLS, HOOTS AND SCREECHES. ITS CRYSTAL BLOOD *SURGES* PURE AND STRONG. PRESS YOUR EAR TO ITS PULSE, LITTLE BROTHER, AND YOU WILL HEAR IT...

I HEAR IT, *THUNDERPONY*. THE STREAM GURGLES. THE WATER IS NOT FAR FROM US. WE WILL REACH IT SOON.

DO NOT BE IMPATIENT, FLEDGLINS. YOUR TIME HAS ARRIVED. NOTHING CAN STOP YOU NOW.

THE DAY OF THE *BEAST* HAD COME FOR BROTHER HAWK. ANIMALS WATCHED ANXIOUSLY, MOIST SHADOWS, UNDETECTED EVEN BY THE VIGILANT THUNDERPONY.

WILL IT BEGIN AS SOON AS I REACH THE *SPOT*? WILL I KNOW...

IT *WON'T* BEGIN RIGHT AWAY BUT YOU WILL KNOW. ALL THINGS WILL BE OPENED TO YOU.

THUNDERPONY HESITATED, SEARCHING FOR SIGNS. TIME HAD CHANGED THE AREA BUT HE KNEW IT WAS HERE. *HERE* WAS THE PLACE. *HERE* WOULD BE THE *CEREMONY*.

ARE WE THERE? IS THAT WHY WE'VE STOPPED? IS THIS THE PLACE?

YOU ASK TOO MANY QUESTIONS, BUT NOT AS MANY AS I ASKED WHEN IT WAS *MY* TIME.



WHEN I LEAVE, LITTLE BROTHER, IT SHALL BEGIN. YOU WILL BECOME A BEAST OF THE WOODS. YOUR OWN BEAST. YOU WILL KNOW THAT YOU WERE ONCE A MAN AND AS A MAN YOU WILL RECALL BEING A BEAST.

WILL I KNOW YOU, MY BROTHER?



AFTER YOU ARE USED TO YOUR NEW STATE, YOU WILL KNOW ME IF WE MEET.

YET YOU MUST NEVER SPEAK OF IT, NOR MUST YOU REVEAL YOUR TOTEM ANIMAL TO ANYONE... EVEN TO THOSE CLOSEST TO YOU.

NOW WAIT!



FOR A LONG WHILE THERE WAS ONLY STILLNESS, NOT EVEN THE LEAVES RUSTLED AND A FEAR ENTERED HIS HEART.

PERHAPS THE GREAT SPIRIT DOES NOT DEEM ME WORTHY. HE WILL NOT TAKE ME INTO HIS FOLD. I WILL HAVE NO TOTEM ANIMAL.

THEN, UNFOLDING SLOWLY LIKE THE PETALS OF A ROSE, EFFORTLESSLY... PAINLESSLY... CAME A NEW CONSCIOUSNESS.



HE COULD FEEL THE CRISP GREEN FOREST WITH A SENSE THAT ENCOMPASSED HIS ENTIRE BEING.



HE REACHED FOR THE WARM, GLOWING SUN WITH TALONED FINGERS, UNSHOCKED BY THE SIGHT OF THEM BECAUSE HE KNEW THEY WERE HIS.



HE CLIMBED INTO THE AZURE SKY AS IF AWAKENING FROM A SLEEP. HIS MUSCLES CREAKED FROM NEWNESS BUT SOON GLIDED FLUIDLY IN THEIR SOCKETS.



HE WAS HAWK! UNSHACKLED BY THE GROUND BELOW HIM. MASTER OF THE SKIES AND ALL THAT HE SURVEYED.



A LUMBERING GRIZZLY TURNED HIS MASSIVE HEAD WATCHING HIM, THEN NODDED A WELCOME TO THE KINGDOM OF THE GREAT SPIRIT, BUT THE HAWK HARDLY NOTICED.



NOR DID HE NOTICE UNTIL IT WAS TOO LATE, THE SHAFT WHICH SEEMED TO SPRING FROM NOWHERE, GRAZING HIS BELLY, OPENING A FURROW IN HIS FLESH.



AS HE PLUMMETED IN AWKWARD FLUTTERING CIRCLES TOWARD THE WOODS, HE THOUGHT HOW AWFUL IT WOULD BE IF THE ARROW HAD BEEN THUNDER-PONYS...!



BUT NO, HE THOUGHT, HIS BROTHER WOULD NOT HUNT IF THERE WAS THE CHANCE OF KILLING HIS OWN KIN. THEN HE LOST CONSCIOUSNESS.



OOOOOH!

AUTOMATICALLY HE RETURNED TO HIS HUMAN FORM. AS HE GREW, HIS WOUND STRETCHED...RIPPED AND HE CRIED OUT IN PAIN!



OOOOOH!



THE GIRL APPROACHED HIM CAUTIOUSLY. HER TRIBE HAD ENTERED THE HUNTING GROUNDS OF THE LENAPES AND THEY WOULD BE HOSTILE TO INVADERS. STILL A WOUNDED BRAVE COULD POSE NO THREAT.

FIRST SHE RUBBED HERBS INTO THE SLICE, THEN BANDAGED IT WITH THE OAK LEAVES AND VINES. HOURS LATER, HE OPENED HIS EYES.

LIE STILL, YOUNG WARRIOR, OR YOU'LL OPEN YOUR WOUND.

AT THE MOMENT, I WILL OPEN ONLY... MY MOUTH TO ASK YOUR NAME.

I AM CALLED SINGING WIND OF THE MALANPAWPACS.

YOUR TRIBE HAS ENTERED LENAPE TERRITORY! WE CANNOT PERMIT SUCH...

UAGH!

LIE DOWN! YOU SHOULD NOT TRY TO WALK SO SOON LATER, I WILL TAKE YOU TO MY TRIBE WHERE WE WILL CARE FOR YOU.

MUCH LATER, SINGING WIND, I WISH ONLY YOUR CARE FOR THE PRESENT.

THIS WAS THE DAY HE HAD TASTED THE FREEDOM OF THE ENDLESS SKY AND THEN LOST IT TO THE SOFTNESS OF A WILLOWY YOUNG GIRL.

LATER, WELCOMED, FED, WEARING RAIMENT OF A MALANPAWPAC WARRIOR, HE SPOKE WITH SINGING WIND'S FATHER.

WE ARE A POOR TRIBE. HUNGRY, OR WE WOULD NOT HAVE COME INTO YOUR GROUNDS.

THIS INTRUSION WILL NOT BE TOLERATED BY MY TRIBE. BUT I WILL SPEAK TO MY CHIEF ON YOUR PEOPLE'S BEHALF, GRAYWOLF.

WHERE IS SINGING WIND?

SHE IS GATHERING BERRIES. WE WILL FEAST TONIGHT. AT LEAST, TO MAKE YOU WELCOME.

"SHE HAS A GREAT TENDNESS FOR YOU," SAID GRAYWOLF. "AND I FOR HER," ANSWERED BROTHER HAWK UNASHAMEDLY.

THE MONSTER GRIZZLY, CALLED **BROKEN CLAW** BY THE LENAPES, FELT A GROWING RAGE.



THE WALANPAWPAQS HAD INVADED HIS HUNTING TERRITORY. NOW THEY WOULD PAY THE PRICE.

SINGING WIND WOULD BE THE FIRST INSTALLMENT.



GROWL

AIIIEE!



THWAK

KRRIP

THE MAIDEN PROMISED TO BE AN **EASY CATCH**.



GROOOWL



...TOO EASY!



WHAT IS THAT HORROR?

BROKEN CLAW!
WE SHARE THESE WOODS WITH HIM. HURRY!

CRASH!
AIIIEEEEEE



BROKEN CLAW HAD LEFT HER AS A WARNING. NO MATTER THAT HER PEOPLE'S BELLIES GROANED CAVERNOUSLY...NO MATTER THAT THE WOODS WERE FULL OF GAME. NO MATTER THAT THERE WAS FOOD FOR ALL. THEY MUST LEAVE.



BUT THEY WOULD NOT, NOT UNTIL BROTHER HAWK HAD MET WITH THE COLD BLOODED KILLER OF THE INNOCENT MAIDEN.

NOT UNTIL BROKEN CLAW HAD PAID FOR HIS DEED IN KIND.



A RUSTLE BEHIND GRAYWOLF BROKE HIS MORBID TRANCE. HIS COMPANION HAD VANISHED...AND A HUGE BIRD OF PREY ROSE ABOVE THE TREES WITH A CRY UNLIKE ANY GRAYWOLF HAD EVER HEARD.



THE WIND LIFTED THE HAWK'S RIPPLING WINGS. IT WHISTLED.

IT SANG. HAWK RECOGNIZED THE MELODIOUS STRAINS. IT WAS SINGING WIND'S SPIRIT WHO WAS GUIDING HIS FLIGHT.



SHE BROUGHT HIM TO THE BEAR. THE GREAT BEAST HAD PAUSED IN ITS LUMBERING TREK TO LICK THE GIRL'S BLOOD FROM ITS CLAWS.



THE HAWK SMELLED HER BLOOD AND BECAME INCENSED. RELEASING A WAR YELP, HE DIVED. TALONS THRUST FORWARD...



...AND LEFT WITH HIS FIRST PIECE OF HIS HATED ENEMY.



HAWK DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHY THE KILLER HAD **SPARED** HIM, AT LEAST, NOT RIGHT AWAY.

FOR THE MOMENT HE ONLY CARED THAT HE HAD BEEN **SET FREE**. IF IT WAS A **WHIM** OF POWER, HE WOULD MAKE THE BEAR **REGRET** IT.



RELENTLESSLY, HAWK ATTACKED. WHEN THE BEAR RAN IN THE **CORRECT** DIRECTION, HAWK IGNORED HIM, IN THE **WRONG** WAY. HAWK **SLASHED**. THE GRIZZLY CONTINUED TO GIVE GROUND.

FINALLY THE BEAR **ARRIVED**. HAWK FOLDED HIS WINGS FOR THE FINAL DIVE. HE STARED DEEP INTO THE BEAR'S EYES. HE SAW **BROKEN CLAW** AND...



...IN AN INSTANT ALL WAS CLEAR! "WILL I KNOW YOU, MY BROTHER?"... "YOU WILL KNOW ME IF WE **MEET!**"

HAWK **KNEW**...

HAWK RECALLED THE ANCIENT LORE OF THE **TOTEM** PASSED ON TO HIM:

THE BRAVE WHO DIES AS A BRAVE WILL ENTER THE GREAT SPIRIT'S DOMAIN AS SUCH. THE BEAST WILL STAY A BEAST.



AND STILL HE **STRUCK!**



IN DEATH THE BEAR REMAINED THE BEAR.

I HEAR YOU, **SINGING WIND**. YOUR PEOPLE SHALL FEAST...ON **BEARMEAT**. MY BROTHER. OR MY **BROTHER!**