



THE VISION

A light breeze moved the cool air around Black Eagle's face. A rushing noise in his ears decreased as he felt his head lean back. The light from the full on flooded his vision, and his eyes watered slightly.

The light illuminated a six-foot, two hounded pound Teton Sioux Indian. He was dressed in soft, doeskin pants, a breechcloth around his waist, and moccasins. His deeply recessed black eyes darted quickly to the left and right as he felt his chest begin to vibrate with sound.

He heard himself speak,

' "O great Holy One. Give me strength to overcome the Black-Tail Deer Nation. I need skins to wear and food for my family. Pity me. I am worthy and honest. I will give many sacrifices. This is my promise (1)."

Black Eagle felt the remaining air rush from his lungs and noticed he was breathing deeply. As his buck-skin shirt expanded, the elk tooth necklace rubbed against his chest. He stooped down and slipped off his moccasins. Returning to a standing position, he notices a rapid cooling of his feet. Motionlessly, he felt his mouth open and heard himself vocalize in a high-pitched, rhythmic tone,

"Wakan' (Sacred), Mi'cage (he made for me)

sinte' sa'pela wan (a blacktail deer) Wankan' (sacred)

mi'cage (he made for me) hena'kiya (those wanla'kapi kon (you had seen)(2).

Repeating the song four times, he continued to stand. Looking through the darkness toward the full moon, totally unaware of his body, his eyes began to wander through the stars.

Hearing a dog bark in the village below, his concentration shifted to his family. A mental picture of his wife, 'Little Raven', and his twelve year old son, 'Walking Bear', began to form clearer. He could see Little Raven lying on her back with her long, black hair shining as the flickering light from the burning wood dimly lit the tipi. The image grew larger, and he could see Little Raven's gently closed eyes twitch. A smile grew on her face as if she knew she was being watched.

The image faded, and another one began to form. He could see a large, black bear moving toward him. The bear moved closer and closer. Moving to within five steps of him, the bear stood and changed form before him. The bear turned into a Sioux Warrior, painted red from toe to head. The red image held a strange looking stick. It looked like a stick, but one half of the stick looked like the end of a pipe. The end with the hole at the end was rounding, shiny and black.

The warrior faced toward Black Eagle and began to speak,

"I have a gift for you. It will protect you from your enemies. You must first learn how to use it. It stands here at this place. I, the Black Bear Nation, say this to you."

The words echoed in his ears as the image faded. Unable to grasp the meaning of the vision, he puzzled aloud,

"A message from the Great Holy One Wanton' Tanka."

Closing his eyes, he tried to develop the image, but he could only see blackness. He felt himself begin to speak aloud,

"Perhaps I will find this stick. Where is 'this place'? This is what I must find out."

Looking toward the east, he spoke again,

"I will stand all night. I will suffer pain to please you, Wankan' Tanka. But, now I must seek something difficult. I must find the place of the stick."

Slipping on his moccasins, he moved to the edge of the hill and began to descend. Moving toward the village, he felt his throat move as thoughts continued to unfold.

"What does the vision mean?"

Unconscious of the movement of his body, he found himself walking through the village. The fragrance of burning wood entered his awareness. The crackling and popping of small fires sounded all around him. Horses stomped and neighed nervously as he passed by. The dogs were barking rapidly. Black Eagle grew uneasy.

Increasing his pace, he began to look anxiously for the markings of his tipi. His pupils dilated and his breathing increased. He searched around to detect a disturbance, but everything seemed to be quiet. Nervously, he felt of the handle of his knife tied onto his belt at his side. In the distance, the tipi came into view. Quickly, he moved to the opening of the tipi, pulled the flap open, and Little Raven jumped to a standing position. Looking at him disoriented and surprised, at first, she smiled and searched his face for expression. Black Eagle glanced toward his twelve year old son, 'Walking Bear'. He was lying to his right with a buffalo robe rolled over his head. Black Eagle drew a deep breath and let it out slowly, and began to speak,

"With the first light, I must go to hunt."

As their eyes met, a warm sensation exchanged between them. He moved closer and touched the side of her face and spoke,

"You are a good wife. You have bore a strong son. I will be a good hunter, tomorrow."

Little Raven smiled gently and replied,

"You are a skilled hunter and very brave. We will be successful in the hunt. The Elders speak, even today of accepting you into the White Horse Nation, but, why do you return to the mountain? Will Wankan' Tanka give you luck in your search for the Black Tail Nation without sacrifice?"

Hesitating for a moment, he looked into her eyes and responded,

"I have had a vision. Wankan' Tanka has sent the Bear Nation to tell of a new weapon. The possessor on this weapon will have great power. The spirit showed the weapon to me. It was shaped like a club on one end, and a pipe on the other end. I must search for the weapon."

Little Raven smiled and replied softly,

"You will know what to do when the time comes"

Black Eagle smiled and knotted his head in agreement. In a few moments, they were lying in the bed quietly. Black Eagle felt his body drift into relieving sleep.

THE DEER HUNT

The next morning, Black Eagle jumped up as if someone had shaken him. He dressed quickly, grabbed his bow and a quiver, and exited the tipi. Stepping outside, he found himself in darkens.. A sudden stillness comes over him. Leary of his new environment, he gazed upward, toward a hazy, full moon. A few clouds floated around the moon, seeming to make the moon move rapidly through the sky. Stepping forward, a steady, cool breeze caught him in the face, making his breath hard to catch. As his night vision improved, the path toward the dark ravine became more visible.

Placing one foot in front of the other, he walked through the prairie grass, listening to the crackle with each step. The glistening frost shined like a light cover of snow. A rushing sound from running water seemed to get louder as he approached the ravine. Becoming somewhat hypnotized by the monotonous step after step, he moved onward. Detecting the dark form of the mountain in front of him, he paused and gazed upward at the massive butte. Moving forward again, he continued to wind his way up the ravine. Entering a grove of hardwood trees, the light seemed to become much dimmer. The small branches raked his face from out of nowhere. The bank of the creek was clearly silhouetted by the lightened sky. Now ascending more slowly, he began to breathe heavily. Noticing his heart to be pounding vigorously, he stopped and observed as his breathing slowed. Waiting for his heart to settle, he searched the sky for a trace of daylight to ease the discomfort of darkness. Listening for a second, he could hear the rustle of leaves as the wind gushed into his face. Continuing to climb up the hill, with each step, he turned his feet sideways in order to dig into the leafy, loose dirt. Feeling a slight give with each step, he continued up the hill. After several more steps, he quickly leaned against a tree and took a deep breath. Waiting for his heart to slow, he gazed at the sky, demanding a little more light to aid his cause. with a sense of short-term accomplishment, he looked back toward the dark hollow, from which he came. His new vantage point made available more light and now he could see the trees as black strips. Gazing up the hill, he knows the climb had just begun. Feeling himself moving forward again, he took forty steps, and stopped to wipe the sweat from his face. Moving forward, he took shorter steps. He felt the muscles in his thighs tighten. His calf muscles began to ache. Forcing himself onward, he pushed himself forward by pressing his arms against his thighs with each step. Occasionally grabbing onto a branch, he pulled himself forward. One step after another, he moved up the mountain. He began to see the light silhouetting the crest of the spur more clearly. His journey was nearly over. Sensing the end of his toil, he moved more rapidly up the mountain. Finally, the grade flattened and he found himself on the flat part of the spur. Walking the next fifty yards with ease, a deeply trenched deer path became dimly visible before him. Enjoying the new, easy walking, his breathing slowed as he approached the next grade of the mountain. He was appreciative that he would not have to ascend the final two hundred yards to the top. He was at his destination. In front of him, he could see the large Cottonwood Tree, so bit at the trunk, that two people could not reach around it and touch fingers. Fifteen feet up in the tree, two large branches forked forming a wide, flat space, just enough room for one person to sit or stand.

He had carefully selected the spot after many days of scouting. He had seen much sign of deer, and he knew their basic movements. He knew that they would spend the night grazing on the prairie and move up the mountain at daybreak. They would bed down and take advantage of the coolness of the mountain breeze during the day. They would ascend the mountain similar to how he had done. But, they would climb with less difficulty and greater speed. He judged that they would pass directly under the tree a half-hour past daylight.

As if to escape the danger of the dark forest, he began to climb the tree. With an ease of his anxiety with each step, he moved up the tree. After considerable struggle, he settled into the fork of the tree. Developing as sense of well being and accomplishment, he leaned back. Feeling the quiver press into his back, he slipped it over his shoulder and tied it onto a small branch above his head. Lifting an arrow from the quiver, he placed it into the bowstring and lowered the bow to rest on his crossed legs. Shifting his attention to sound, he searched the surroundings for movement. Detecting the rustling of leaves, he spoke softly,

"A light breeze."

He turned his head upward and scanned the sky. A few stars were fading in power.

"Dawn is on its way. A new day, the day of the deer has arrived."

He spoke within himself.

Searching the sky, he turned to face the East. A flicker of light pulsated, announcing the great event. Then, another flicker interrupted the endless darkness. Suddenly, the entire sky brightened with a dim, gray glow. The glow increased slightly, and the sky took on a pale, blue color. Several dark clouds now started to turn lighter. Then, as if someone had turned the light up a notch, it became light. The fog in the ravine below became visible. The black trees turned to silver. The brightness was everywhere. It was daylight! Black Eagle's feelings of uneasiness, brought about by the darkness, seemed to be relieved by the daylight. He had a new sense of security.

He felt the sweat on his face, icy cold. His hair was cold and stiff. Giving a slow sigh with his exhaling breath, he knew the numbness in his hands and feet would soon be relieved by the warm sunshine.

Concentrating upon every sound now, he turned to locate its source. In a trance-like state, he was a slave to his senses. Helplessly, he was forced to direct his attention to each new sound. Hearing a noise over the hill, he moved his head in that direction, attempting to locate its source.

"It is surely something."

he thought to himself.

"It moves, stops, and moves. It is not loud, but louder than a chipmunk or squirrel. It may be a deer.

A rustling of the leaves came closer.

"Undoubtedly, a big animal,"

he thought.

Searching to the left and right, he thought,

"The Deer Nation is walking."

Locating the sound to be along the same path that he had previously ascended, he continued to stare. Suddenly, a brown form appeared before him. The animal moved its head to the left, then to the right. It's thick rack extended high into the air. It was a magnificent deer. The deer moved slowly, zigzagging up the hill. It moved closer and, Black Eagle's heart pounded louder. Looking at the tip of the arrow resting in the notch of the bow, he watched it quiver with each heartbeat.

"Calm down, calm down!"

he repeated to himself.

It was useless. His mouth was becoming dry. He began to shake all over.

The deer stopped and sniffed the air nervously. It bent its head to the ground and seemed to track his footsteps.

"It is time to pick a shot."

he thought to himself.

Pulling the bow back, he aimed right above the front leg. The deer moved behind two trees. It's mid-section and neck were exposed. The deer stood nervously, looking about as if it sensed something wrong. Aiming again, he felt his fingers loosen, and the arrow whistled toward the deer. Moving the bow to track the flight of the arrow, he heard it hit a leaf. The arrow continued to zip toward the deer. The deer, hearing the vibration of the bowstring, sprang forward, and bounced over the hill, waving it's long, white tail.

"Missed!"

he spoke aloud.

"Or, maybe I hit him. I'm not sure."

Descending the tree, he walked over to the spot where the deer had been standing. Ten feet down the hill; the arrow was stuck in the ground. Pulling the arrow out of the ground, he placed it back into the bowstring, and spoke aloud,

"Well, that is better than not shooting. I will aim better the next time."

A rustle in the leaves shifted his attention.

"Something is coming down the mountain."

he thought to himself.

"It sounds like a deer stepping along."

Taking a few quiet steps to hide behind a tree, he noticed his breath getting louder. Looking up the hill, a black figure moved toward him.

"It is a turkey, no, it is several turkey!"

He thought to himself.

Watching intensely, he followed the movement of the turkey. They moved along, pecking the ground and looking around. They scratched the ground and gave an occasional 'cluck'. Then, one turkey, give a rapid 'cluck, cluck, cluck, and the leading turkey raced over the side of ridge, and out of sight. The sound of the rustle of leaves grew weaker. Black Eagle had an urge to follow, but he knew he would never get another glimpse of them. He stood frozen in his position. He could only gaze in their direction. Turning to face the path toward home, he heard himself speak in a low voice,

"A difficult time, I am having."

He turned and began the long walk home. Looking over his shoulder, he searched in the direction of the turkey.

"I will set a trap for these wily birds,"

he spoke in anger.

The journey down the hill was effortless. Visualizing his plan to build a trap, the walk passed quickly. Soon, he found himself walking past the familiar row of tips along the creek bank. As he moved through the village, he focused upon a large pile of rocks to his right. Impulsively, he stopped and looked around. The guard on the other side of the river stood motionlessly. But, there was an uneasy calmness in the air. He focused upon the smoke curling out of the top of a nearby tipi. The smoked curled upward, and leveled off, forming a small, streak above several tepees. Black Eagle heard himself speak,

"Go, smoke of the buffalo chip. Give Wankan Tanka a message. I am a poor and unworthy Sioux Warrior. Send a Buffalo Nation. These people would like to live."



THE WARRIOR DOES NOT RETURN

Passing by the lodge of his father, he noticed that his great white buffalo horse was not staked at its usual place. Moving slowly toward the ring of rocks, a pang of fear shot through his stomach as the thought jumped into consciousness,

"My father has been gone too long. A month has passed since he was last seen."

Lost in thought, tracing visions of tragic possibilities, he sat down unconsciously and began to dig in the deep ashes. Finding a small twin still smoking, he pulled a handful of sage with his right hand, placed it gently over the twig and began to blow softly. The red glow grew and the smoke increased. Blowing a little harder, the sage suddenly flashed into a small flame. Piling more sage onto the flame, it started to creep to the top of the sage, and the smoke decreased and gave way to a warm glow.

Digging around the fire with his knife, he found several unburned, chartered chunks of wood. Piling the wood in a circle around the fire, the flame grew stronger. It began to provide a warm relief from the chilly, fall air. Holding his hands toward the flame, his concentration returned to the image of his father 'Crow Foot'. Seeing his tall, middle-aged frame in his visual memory, Black Eagle looked into his eyes. Crowfoot had a stubborn look frozen on his face. His face was slightly wrinkled, and outlined with streaked, gray hair hanging loosely over his shoulders. Above his head, Black Eagle heard a voice,

"Crow Foot does not return."

Jerking slightly from the sudden interruption of silence, he turned toward the source of the voice and focused upon a form to his left. Following the form, from the ground upward, Black Eagle developed the recognition of the face of his father's brother 'White Deer'. Black Eagle attended to the nervousness of White Deer's voice. A pang of fear shot through his stomach as he hears himself speak,

"Do you speak to make my heart strong? Speak the truth. My body is weak with worry."

"I speak with a heavy heart. All are killed by the Crow Enemy. The war party was found by Badger. Ten Warriors do not return. Your father does not return."

Seeing the deep, self-inflicted cut across his chest, he knew he was speaking the truth and his heart sank to his stomach. With his eyes swelling with sadness, his vision began to blur. Taking a deep breath, he began to chant in honor of his father,

"Ate' (father) tawi'cohan'pi kin (his customs)

Owa'pin (I adopted) Na (and) he (hence) iyo'tiye (a hard time) waki' yelo’ (I am having)."

As the chant came uncontrolled by his mind, visions of his father came to him. One picture after another, he could see his father coming through the tipi with his arms full of red meat. He could see him riding upon his great white horse, with his face painted black. Black Eagle's attention shifted to his voice now saying,

"Oh, wankan' Tanka, Crow Foot does not return! A great warrior does not return."

As the words vibrated his body, he felt himself pull the knife from the ashes and place the cutting edge upon his chest. Pressing the cutting edge of the knife firmly into his chest and the flesh bent around the blade. Black Eagle pulled the blade slowly across his chest. The dull tug of the blade formed a red line as it passed across his chest. Streams of blood formed along the line, and streaked downward. He watched the blood ooze down his chest and onto the dark skin of his stomach. He became aware of a slight burning sensation from his chest. And, his chest began to vibrate with a chanting sound,

"Kangi'-iyo-take (Sittting Crow) He'cel yunkin' kte hein (that is the way he wished to lie) ecel yunka' he (he is lying as he desired)."

Placing the little finger of his left hand onto one of the rocks near the fire, he repeated the chant and gripped the knife firmly. Raising his arm above his head, he took a deep breath, and the knife swished through the air toward his finger. The air from his lungs exhaled and a swift flood of sensation swept to his brain. The little finger dropped lifelessly from his hand to the ground. Blood spurted from the stub of his little finger with each heartbeat. He could hear himself cry out in a loud, wild, high-pitched voice,

"Oh Wankan Tanka, My father 'Crow Foot' does not return! A great Sioux Warrior does not return."

Feeling weak and dizzy, Black Eagle watched as his left hand moved toward the flame. The flame touched the stub of the little finger, and the pain shot through his arm and jolted his body. With blurred vision, Black Eagle began to detect several images moving around him. Feeling a

gentle tug at his arms, he resisted. Unaware of his body tumbling backward, he drifted into an unconscious state of deep sleep.

As the evening sun lost its power to a chilly breeze, Black Eagle felt his body lift effortlessly upward and float with his feet dragging the ground. His feet began to take on weight, and he began to help himself walk. Slightly aware that he was moving toward the tipi, not fully on his own power, he began to focus upon the small figure of his wife, 'Little Raven'. Kneeling downward, Black Eagle crawled through the opening of the tipi and melted into bed. Effortlessly, he returned to a deep, silent sleep.



PREPARING FOR BATTLE

The next morning, Black Eagle was aroused by the sounds of his wife, Little Raven, preparing parched corn and rabbit meat for breakfast. Raising to a sitting position, she handed him a bowl of food, and he watched her place more wood on the small fire. Little Raven, with her eyes still trained upon the fire, spoke softly,

"Will you keep the spirit of your father (5)?"

Black Eagle continued to eat and remained silent. After he had finished eating, he began to prepare his rawhide war bag. He packed the bag full of materials needed for the long journey into Crow Territory. After packing the war bag, he placed it beside his bow, lance, buffalo robe, and quiver. Taking a deep breath and letting it out slowly, he then drew his knife, gripped a locket of hair hanging in front of his eyes, pulled the locket tightly, and cut it with a sawing movement (5). Holding the locket of hair toward Little Raven, he spoke,

"Take this locket of hair to represent my father's hair. Place it with sweet grass and hair from Walking Bear's buffalo robe. Wrap it in a skin from the deer and hang it outside the tipi. Allow no one to pass between the pole and the fire (5)."

Looking into the empty bowl in front of him, he picked up the remaining rabbit leg, threw it into the fire and continued to speak,

"Let this meat be the first to be offered to keep the spirit of 'Crow Foot', my father."

Looking toward Little Raven, he continued to speak,

"When I am not here, throw meat into the fire. We will do this until the moon of cracking trees (5)."

He then place the empty bowl down near the fire, drew the rawhide war bag closer, removed the pouch of brown powder and pored a small quantity into the palm of his hand. Reaching into the empty bowl with his other hand, he rubbed the film of rabbit grease onto his hands. He began to apply the brown paint to his face. Reaching back into the bag, he pulled out a pouch of white clay. Adding new grease onto his index finger, he pressed the white clay onto his finger, and began to paint a line across his forehead and the cheeks, forking at the end (6). Watching quietly beside him, Little Raven finally broke the silence with an unsure voice,

"Your mother will ask that you allow her to stay in your lodge. Her provider does not return."

Searching the face of Black Eagle for an expression, she could sense that there would be no objection. Her eyes danced as she tracked the movements of his hand. After a few moments for thought, she spoke again,

"I will send Walking Bear to help her bring her belongings today."

Black Eagle knotted his head in agreement without looking up. Little Raven looked toward Walking Bear. He was sleeping quietly under a buffalo robe. Her brown eyes began to jump to the left and right as she contemplated. Looking back toward Black Eagle, she spoke again,

"The Crow Nation is very strong. They have many warriors. Their number is as many as the trees in the forest. Will you go toward the enemy with your Kit-Fox Brothers, or will you travel alone?"

Black Eagle jerked his head upward and spoke in a thoughtful tone,

"Do you have faith in my skill as a warrior? I have conquered the enemy many times. I have counted first coup (7)."

pointing to the golden eagle feather standing upright in the back of his head. (7), and continued to speak,

"Do you forget the winter of Walking Bear's birth? I brought back two scalps, one coup, and many horses."

"Yes, your skill and bravery has been proven many times. Your father was also brave, but, he does not return."

Pausing as if doubtful of whether to continue to speak or not, she seemed urged by some unknown reason to add,

"Remember the Kit-Fox want to help you. Your revenge is their revenge."

Giving another glance toward walking bear, she chanced to continue,

"You must not allow your desire for revenge to cause you to sacrifice your own life. You will be risking the lives of your mother, your son, and your wife. Walking Bear is strong and brave. He has seen but twelve winters. Your mother has seen many winters. She is no longer able to soften the buckskin with her teeth. You must be here to hunt."

Black Eagle stared for a few seconds and glanced toward the sleeping figure of Walking Bear. He stood up and spoke with confidence,

"Life without honor is not life. Wankan Tanka placed our enemies on this earth to prove our strength. Wankan Tanka brought the Crow Nation from under the ground so that we, the Teton, may risk life in order to gain life (8). I will vowel to take part in the Sundance Ceremony in the Moon of the Ripening Chokecherries (9). Wankan Tanka will give me strength to overcome the Crow Nation."

Black Eagle picked up the rawhide war bag, threw it over his shoulder, placed his wolf headdress on his head, picked up his bow, quiver, and lance, and exited the tipi. As he moved through the flap of the tipi, a loud yell came from around him. He found himself surrounded by his Kit-Fox Brothers. Imitating the call of wolves and the bark of a fox, they waved their bows and lances above their heads. They shouted pledges to help avenge the death of Crowfoot.

Black Eagle's face grew with reflections of emotion as he joined the group. The emotion of the group conducted into his body. He jumped high into the air. Facing toward the men, he yelled out,

" I seek the black paint. Kit-Fox Brothers, it is a great day for a Sioux Warrior to die!"

Moving through the circle of men, he ran toward his horse, 'Big Dog'. With the dim light from the breaking of day, he moved closer to his three-year old, white mare. Throwing the buffalo robe over the horse's back, he pulled the bridle from the rawhide war bag, placed the wooden bit in the horse's mouth, pulled the bridal over her nose and ears, threw the reins over her neck, grabbed the mane hanging from her neck, and leaped onto her back. Adjusting the buffalo hide, he tied the bag around her neck and looked around. Locating the Kit-Fox Brothers, he nudged 'Big Dog' forward. The warriors formed a single line and began to ride northward. Riding through the village, the dim daylight made visible several people gathering in a line to their right. Black Eagle raised his lance above his head, pointed the tip toward the north, and gave a howl, imitating the wolf, and kicked his horse sharply. As the hoofs of Big Dog began to thud into the hardened clay soil, he focused upon two elderly men. The men were wearing war bonnets and waving lances with streams of eagle feathers. They shouted as he passed by,

"HI! Hi!"

As he increased his speed, the people began to blur. Riding without purpose, Black Eagle attended to the movement of the mighty beast under him. Big Dog instinctively followed the horse in front of her. The war party moved away from the village, and visual memories faded. The pace seemed to slow. Jaws shouted,

"We must not travel fast. We have far to go!"

Slowing to a walk, the band of warriors moved through the thick prairie grass. Small valleys came into view, one after another. As each new hill appeared over the horizon, an occasional tall tree became the focal point. Black Eagle found himself leading the way. With the rays of the sun growing stronger, he moved step by step, closer to the enemy. Reaching the top of a larger than usual rolling hill, Black Eagle paused for a moment. He looked for landmarks, and determined the proper course. Looking toward the north, he spoke with a smile,

"Toward the north, I travel. I am prepared for battle. Something difficult I seek."

After traveling for the entire day, finally the sun began to fall behind a hill to the right. The rays shined overhead and lightened the clouds red. The air developed a cool sensation, and a chill came over his body.

Looking for a place to camp, Black Eagle searched for water and trees. Seeing several trees growing around a small creek in the valley to the right, he led the group of warriors downward. The creek seemed to wind its way endlessly down a gently sloping valley. Descending the brightness, the light dimmed as they entered the shadow of the valley. The coolness seemed to rush in as they moved from the rays of the sun. Nearing the trees beside the creek, Black Eagle looked around and spoke,

"We will rest here for the night."

The men shook their heads in agreement and began to dismount. The men prepared their beds with speed and precision. Spreading buffalo robes close together, they lay their weapons within reach. As the warriors completed preparation for night, the darkness had covered the earth, like a blanket. Night sounds increased their strength as Chases-The-Deer began to make fire. He twisted one pointed stick vigorously into a hole in another stick. In a few moments, he had a small fire. He continued to busy himself with feeding the fire.

Begin comforted by the head from the fire, the warriors settled into a small circle, crossed their legs, and began eating grounded buffalo meat and berries. Drinking water from their water pouches, they say silently, and listened to the night sounds. Laying back, one by one, they were finally all asleep.



BEHOLD, A GREAT WARRIOR ARRIVES HERE

Chases-the-Deer, the oldest of the group, pulled a long, worn pipe from his side, filled it with tobacco and handed it to Black Eagle. As he accepted the pipe, loud laughter, several yards away, caused him to jerk his head toward the disturbance. He could hear Badger shout,

"Behold, a great warrior comes!"

Black Eagle stood up and his mouth fell open. His eyes widened as he recognized his son, Walking Bear, walking toward him. Chases-The-Deer stood and spoke with a smile,

"Your son takes the war path."

Emotions of fear and pride struggle within Black Eagle as he replied,

"You follow these mighty warriors to battle, Walking Bear?"

Wild laughter followed his words as the men gathered around. They pushed him and jerked his hair. Walking Bear dropped his head and struggled for speech,

"I follow the Kit-Fox to seek the Black Paint."

He stammered.

Black Eagle smiled and motioned for him to tie his horse. Walking Bear moved through the men toward the horses and out of sight. The men continued to joke and laugh as Black Eagle made his way back to the fire. In a few moments, he spoke,

"Walking Bear will be a brave warrior. But, on this journey, he will watch the horses. He will be alert and he will not sleep. Let us smoke the pipe."

Still laughing, the men sat down. Black Eagle noticed the pipe still in his grip. Chases-The-Deer sat motionlessly looking into the flickering, blue flame of the fire. The blinking light revealed a deeply lined face with a long, thick, rough nose protruding above a wrinkled, small mouth. Black Eagle removed a burning twig from the fire, and placed it over the bowl of the pipe and puffed several times without allowing the flame to light the tobacco (10). Repeating the action, he finally allowed the flame to light the tobacco on the fourth time (10). Turning the pipe around so that the stem pointed away from him, he pointed the stem toward the ground, then to the north, then the south, the east and west. Finally, pointing the stem toward the sky, he passes it to his left (10). Chases-The-Deer accepted the pipe and repeated the pattern, and puffing the pipe slowly. He began to speak in a monotone voice,

"The earth and wind have many great powers. Wankan Tanka has power over the sun, the moon and the seasons. He gives us food, medicine and power over our enemies (11)."

Handing the pipe to Jaws, Chases-The-Deer continued,

"Since my body is the only thing that is mine, I will give Wankan Tanka my body in the next Sun Dance Ceremony. I will suffer pain because of what he has done. If I give him my horse, I am only giving him what he has given me. I will give the only thing I have, tolerance of pain. If I die, my spirit will be somewhere in the world (12).

Chases-The-Deer looked up in to the starlit sky and continued as if he were talking to Wankan Tanka by himself,

"Oh Great Wanton Tank, if you let me conquer my enemy, the Crow Nation, I will give you my flesh in the Sun Dance Ceremony (12)."

He raised his right hand, faced the east and began chanting a song in a high-pitched, rhythmic, monotone voice,

"eya' (well) miseya'tuwa'cante' (I depend upon no one's heart or courage but my own). Kacas (so), ecin (thinking this), sunk owa'le (I look four horses) (13)."

The men sat motionless, listening to the song. Chases-The-Deer stopped singing and his eyes wandered back to the flame. The attention of the men shifted to the pipe being passed to Swift Dog. Accepting the pipe with his head downward, in a humble fashion, Swift Dog took a quick puff. He passed the pipe to Lone Wolf and stood up. Moving closer to the fire, his strong frame began to sway with the movement of his feet. He began to shuffle his feet and sing. The Kit-Fox skin around his neck and the crow feathers in the back of his head, swayed with his movement. An eagle feather sticking up boldly in the back of his headband boldly acknowledged his success in battle. A white jawbone on an otter was tied around his forehead. The jawbone seemed to sway with the movement of his feet. The men listened motionlessly as he sang the words,

"Kangi'to'ka (Crow enemies) nita'sunke (your horses) hiyo'wau'welo'(I come after) ca (s0) hiyo' wanu' welo' (I come after them) (14)."

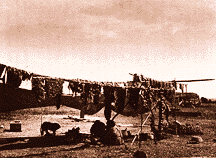
Repeating the song four times, Swift Dog stopped suddenly. He threw his hands toward the moon and began to speak in a high-pitched voice,

"I am an active and wily Kit-Fox Warrior. I am brave, generous and honorable. I will die for my brothers around this fire, the Kit-Fox Nation!"

Moving around the circle of men, Swift Dog touched each mans with his lance and began to dance and sing once more. Currents of emotion developed within the group of warriors. The heads of the warriors tracked him around the fire. With open eyes and dilated pupils, Swift Dog continued to sing wildly,

"Toka'la kon (the fox) miye' yelo' (I am) ta' ku(something) ote'hika (difficult) owa'le yelo' (I seek) (15)."

Listening to the songs, one after another, Black Eagle's mind began to wander back through time. Gazing at the dark hump of Walking Bear, coiled under the buffalo robe, he recalled the day that he had slipped off from his mother and followed his father, Crow Foot, on the war path. Loosing perspective of time, he remembered when he was a child. As the childhood experience raced through his mind, he stopped an image occasionally and examined it. Regaining his bearings on the present, he noticed that the fire was fading. He was sitting alone. His attention shifted to the loud echoing howl of a wolf. In a few seconds, the silence was interrupted by the hoot of an owl. A slight chill moved, like a wave, over his body. Feeling the coldness of the night air move over his arms, he pulled the buffalo robe over his shoulders and lowered himself to the ground. In a few minutes, he was asleep.



SOMETHING DIFFICULT, I SEEK

The next morning, the neighing of a horse disturbed Black Eagle’s slumber. It was daybreak. He quickly sat up, looked around, and focused upon the movement around him. Noticing his breath drifting in and out, he watched each breath make a white cloud. As he breathed in, the cold air made the hairs in his nose freeze and tightens. Carrying his belongings to his horse, he mounted and wrapped the buffalo robe around his shoulders loosely. Looking around, to make sure his Kit-Fox Brothers were ready, he nudged his horse into movement. The sky was beginning to lighten and a heavy frost was on the ground around him. Joining the others preparing for the day's journey, he watched as they mounted and began to form a single line. As the sun began to creep up behind them, to their right, exposing rolling hills, softly surrounding the valley in front of them. Black Eagle kept a close look toward the horizon in front of him. Occasionally, he looked back at the single file of men. There ahead, his eyes widened and his heart gave a strong thud and began to flutter. A great elk was standing motionlessly, looking directly at him.

'It would be a good day to stop and hunt."

he whispered, pointing toward the elk.

In the distance, a deer flagged it's white tail and bounced off gracefully through the creek bed and up the other side of the hill. Listening to the hoofs of the horses hitting the rocky path of the creek bed, he looked up at the sun overhead and watched a crow flying low overhead,

"Ka! Kaw!!"

is sounded.

Old Buffalo could not resist echoing a call back,

"Kaw! Kaw!"

A flock of geese slapped the water and splashed into flight. Their calling broke the silence in a defeating sort of way, as if to object to an intrusion into their domain. Traveling on up the stream, mile after mile, the occasional sighting of animals was a tempting and reassuring experience. The sun, shining down brightly, slithered in smoothness formed by the stream in the distance. As the Red River came into view, Black Eagle turned to the men following him and gave sign language with his right hand, to stop, and spoke,

"Red Fox, you will ride in front of our advance,"

Pointing to the left and to the right, he continued,

"Ride to the left and the right, but do not go too far ahead."

Turning toward Badger, he continued,

"You will travel behind our advance. Move to the left and right, but do not stay too far behind. You will follow the clouds of dust and the hoof marks of our horses. Be wily as the fox."

Badger signaled 'yes' with the movement of his right hand, pulled the reins of his horse to one side, wheeled his horse around and moved toward the rear of the group of warriors. Red Fox, seeing Badger execute the directions immediately, kicked his horse sharply with his heels and rode toward the north in a thundering cloud of dust.

After traveling at a steady pace through the day, Black Eagle motioned to the warriors to gather about him and he spoke,

"We have not traveled far, but, we must be cunning as the fox. We must slip as the bobcat, as he approaches his prey. The Crow nation hunts great distances. Our scouts will be our eyes in front of us and behind. When we move tomorrow, we will spread out, and watch to the east and west. We will stop here and prepare the peace pipe. we will make vows to Wankan Tanka. We will sing our death song."

Looking up toward the sky, Black Eagle examined the red clouds above. Some of the clouds were turning black as they climbed higher into the sky. The sun was now particle blocked by the distant hill in front of him.

"We will have a warmer night. It may be raining by morning."

he spoke looking toward Chases-The-Deer.

Later that night, the men were again gathered around the fire. Songs and talk filled the night air. Old Buffalo picked up the pipe and began to speak,

"Oh, Wankan Tanka, I will now smoke this pipe in your honor. I ask that no arrow harm me in the battle. I ask that I get many horses."

Old Buffalo picked up a burning stem, brought it to the bowl of the pipe and pretended to light it three times. Lighting it on the fourth time, he continued to speak,

"Behold this pipe. Behold me! I have let my breasts be pierced and I have shed much blood in the sun dance ceremony. I ask you to protect me from the shedding of more blood and give me long life. These men wish to live."

Old Buffalo drew on the pipe four times, pointed it to north, south, east and west. Passing it on to Lone Wolf, he blew the smoke out in a long stream, and watched it curl upward.

"Travel upward to Wankan Tanka! Take him my message, from an unworthy Sioux Warrior."

Lone Wolf accepted the pipe with both hands and began to speak,

"Oh great Wankan Tanka, behold this pipe! Behold it! I ask you to smoke it! I ask you to give me strength. That is why I speak to you with this pipe."

Holding the stem to his left shoulder, he offered the pipe as if to hand it to someone and spoke,

"Now wolf, behold it. This pipe, smoke it and bring me horses! Lone Wolf has said this!"

Passing the pipe to the left, Jaws accepted the pipe and pointed the stem upward and forward. Then, he began to speak,

"Oh Wankan Tanka, behold this pipe! I ask you to smoke it. I am! Look at me!"

As the pipe was being passed around, Old Buffalo stood, held his arms out, above the smoke of the fire, and began tossing,

"Ehan'na (a long time ago) he'camon kte cun (I would have done this). Nom'lala kes (only twice again) awa'pelo(I struck the enemy ho (now) naya'honpi huwo' (do you hear it) (16)?"

After Old Buffalo repeated the song four times, he sat down. In a few minutes, Jaws stood up and began to sing,

"Taku' owe' (why) hilu' huwo (do you come) hel ito' heya (toward here?" he (when) hibu' we (I came)

yace' yelo (you cried) (17)."

As the men stood, one by one, and sang their songs and danced, Black Eagle's attention began to wander. He thought back to the moment that his father was teaching him to shoot a bow. The images rolled through his mind's eye. His eyes swelled as he felt himself sway back and forth. Visualizing the first day his father showed him how to make a bow, the first bird that he brought home to show his father, the first rabbit, the first deer hunt with his father, the images rolled up, one after another, and faded. As he continued to visualize memories of his father, suddenly, a vision of his mother came into view. He could see her crying. Sadness slowly drifted over him, and changed to anger. Aroused into the present, he leaned forward and spoke aloud,

"I will conquer many Crow! I will!"

Visualizing Little Raven, and remembering Walking Bear, he moved his head around. Scanning the surroundings, he stopped his movement and focused upon Walking Bear, sitting across from him, on the other side of the fire. He breathed a deep breath, and let it out quickly. Returning to his thoughts, words came to him again,

"A boy will not become a man if he does not have a brave father to follow. It would be better not to grow old. If he doe3s not learn to be a brave warrior, his heart will be twisted. If he does not have a brave father, as I have had, it would be better to have no father at all. It is a good day to die!"

Comforted by these thoughts, he was contented to go to sleep. Anxious to meet the new day, and move closer to the Crow Enemy, he sunk into his buffalo robe, and gazed into the dark sky. Feeling the cool breeze drift across his face, he considered the possibilities of the next day. With songs filling the air around him, he visualized himself creeping closely toward a Crow Warrior. With his kit-Fox headdress and black paint on his face, he saw himself leap onto the back of the enemy. He imagined himself grabbing his head with his right arm and twisting it violently. He could see the limp body fall silently to the ground. He saw himself cutting hair from the fallen enemy's head.

Feeling his eyes grow heavy, he could see his father ridding toward him now. Crowfoot was dressed in a war bonnet, preparing to shoot his bow.

Black Eagle mumble to himself,

"I will grow to be more like him!"

and drifted into a deep unconscious state of sleep.



WE HAVE FOUND THE ENEMY

As the next day's light began to awaken Black Eagle, he began to hear the voices of his Kit-Fox Brothers. Moving quickly from his bedding, he gathered his belongings and carried them to his horse. Strapping the bundle over Big Dog's back, he then opened the rawhide war bag, hanging behind the horse's mane, and lifted out a pouch of white clay and buffalo grease. He began to mix the white clay with the buffalo grease, and began to paint lines on the horse's head. Making zigzag lines from Bigmouth’s mouth, down the front legs and branching at the hoofs. Moving to the rear legs, he repeated the pattern (18) and spoke aloud,

If you do great deeds, Big Dog, I will give you a yellow feather in your mane. You must run over the Crow enemy. I will place a fox hide around your neck."

Moving to the other hind leg, he continued to paint. In a few moments, he began to sing aloud,

"Le (this) maka' (earth) weci con kin (I had used as paint) on (causes) oya’Te (the tribe of the enemy) ini 'Han waye' lo (much excitement) (19)."

Looking around the camp, he saw that the warriors were all mounted and ready. The Kit-Fox Brothers formed towlines, and rode past each other. Touching each other's lance, one would say to the other,

"I will give my life to save my brother, the Kit-Fox!"

And, with yelling, and several wolf calls, they began the day's journey. Riding all that day, the warriors could sense the enemy to be nearer. Instinctively, their voices became lower. Every movement detected was examined closely. Every noise causes a freeze of movement and a strain to determine its source. A large ridge came into view to the right of the Red River. Black Eagle motioned for Old Buffalo to go to the top of the ridge to scout for the enemy. Signaling for the warriors to dismount, the men detected movement in the distance. An Indian was mounted at the base of the mountain, riding very fast in a small circle (20). Chases-The-Deer whispered,

"It is Red Fox. He has spotted the enemy! We must arrive there cautiously."

The warriors crept slowly over the open plain. As they neared the base of the mountain, Red Fox walked toward them, and whispered,

"There is a Crow Village on the other side of this hill! Your father's horse, The big, white, buffalo horse is in a coral, to the west of the village."

"Did the horse have spots on the left, rear hip?"

Black Eagle questioned anxiously.

"It is your father's horse!"

Red Fox answered without looking into Black Eagle's eyes.

"Many Crow are camped there. There is dancing in the village. The dogs did not know my presence."

He continued.

Chases-The-Deer knotted his head and led his horse toward Walking Bear. Handing him the reins, he spoke,

"We have found the enemy!"

Black Eagle threw his lance into the ground and vowed,

"Let no Kit-Fox Warrior go beyond this point, unless we are all returning in safely. Sing your death song and prepare for battle. It is a good day for a Sioux Warrior to die!"

The warriors raised their bows and spoke softly,

"Hi! Hi!"

Black Eagle led his horse over to Walking Bear and spoke in a whisper,

"Keep the horses here. Be alert."

Turning to look at the warriors around him, he whispered,

"We will go on foot to the top of the hill. We will attack from the west of the village. We will return down the creek. We will return over the hill after night fall."

With painted faces, buckskin shirts untied and hanging loosely, the warriors moved toward the hill. Bows over their shoulders, and lances in their hands, they made their way into the wooded area. Silently, they moved up the hill. As they came to the top of the hill, they dropped to the ground. With their Kit-Fox fur headdress pointing toward the enemy, they studied the village below. The tepees, a half-mile from where they were, filled the valley below. Fires were burning, scattered between fifty teepees. The village was very quiet now.

Pointing toward the horses corralled to the right of the village, Black Eagle signaled for Jaws to move down the hill to the left. Motioning for the other warriors to descend to the right, they bent low to the ground, and scattered as they stole silently through a few scattered trees. Stopping occasionally, listening and being re-assured by the stillness, they moved closer.

Coming into view of the horses corralled at the west end of the village, Chases-The-Deer stepped from the high grass into the open prairie. He moved toward the horses. Making his way to the coral, he dropped the gate down slowly. Moving into the herd, the horses moved around restlessly. Suddenly, a Crow Warrior came running him with his bow drawn. Jaws appeared from behind a tipi, flipped himself over the fence of the corral, and jumped onto the back of a white and brown spotted mare, as it moved through the gate.

Seeing his father's white buffalo horse follow Jaws as he rode by, Black Eagle made a run toward the horse. With the wind in his ears, he met the horse as Jaws passed by, caught it's mane, and pulled himself upward. Snatching the reins, dangling below the horse's mouth, he jerked back and an arrow struck where his body had just been. The arrow struck the horse in the neck and the reins pulled forward. Black Eagle felt himself hurdle forward over the horse's head. As he flipped to the ground, the horse continued to fall. Another arrow whizzed by, narrowly missing him. He jumped up quickly, and began to run up the creek. Hearing an arrow whiz by and glance from the ground in front of him, he continued to zigzag up the creek. The arrows were filling the jar now, thudding into the trees, and zipping by his head. He continued to run. Looking ahead, he caught a glimpse of Jaws shouting,

"Come this way! Come this way!"

Mounted on the Crow Pony, he held his arm out and Black Eagle grabbed frantically. Pulling himself upon the back of the horse, behind Jaws, he grabbed his waist as the horse leaped forward.

They rode up the creek, splashing and crashing. The ground went by in a jolting blur. After riding for several miles, Black Eagle spoke,

"We will stop here and wait for the Crow to follow. They will have to catch their horses. We will have enough time to climb high in these trees. As they pass under us, we will kill many. Stop! Let the horse return. It will confuse the Crow!"

Jaws knotted his head in agreement. Pulling the reins tightly, they came to a stop. Both men sprang to the ground, and Jaws gave a call to imitate a fox,

"Yap. Yap."

Our brothers may come and join in the trap."

He explained.

Pointing to a tall pine tree to the left of the gully, about twenty yards up a steep bank, Jaws continued,

"Take that tree and I will take this tree on the other side of the gully. Be quick. They will arrive here soon."

Shaking his head in agreement, Black Eagle gave the horse a slap and watched her gallop back down the creek. Hurrying, he scampered up the bank toward the tree. Moving up the bank another thirty yards, he grabbed the dead limbs hanging low, and began to climb. Climbing up the tree, one limb after another, up thirty feet, and settled into position, on a big limb, hanging above the creek bed. The horse had stopped and was looking back toward them. Moving his head to view the other side of the bank, he heard the call of the fox,

"Yap, Yap."

He was assured that Jaws was in place and ready on the other side of the creek. Hearing hoofs striking rocks and splashing, Black Eagle's heart raced wildly. Fifty yards down the creek, a pang of fear shot through his stomach as he caught a glimpse of the first rider. The Crow Warrior, seeing the horse standing in the creek ahead of him, made him suspicious, and motioned for those following to halt. Dismounting, the warrior began to wade slowly up the creek. With each step, Black Eagle's heart seemed to increase its pace. Drawing nearer and nearer, he realized that Jaws would have the best shot. The Crow Warrior moved under the tree where Jaws was located, and a swish of an arrow stopped with a loud thud. A bellowing, groan echoed through the gully. The Crow Warrior drooped forward, and fell face forward into the creek. The water seeped over his body and flowed, now, over his back. A red streak appeared in front of the limp body as the water tracked around it.

Listening for sound and watching for movement, Black Eagle strained to see another enemy make their way up the creek. Waiting and waiting, a sudden rush of leaves above him, caused his heart to race. With his moth dry and heart pounding, he turned in the tree and faced the disturbance. Straining to locate the rustling sound, the noise came into hearing again and then seemed to fade. Turning slightly toward the new location, he waited motionlessly. He heard it again, and then, it faded into silence again. After a long silence, a brown figure flashed for a second, fifty yards up the hill. He could see the figure clearly now. He recognized it to be a Crow Warrior descending the hill toward him. Slowly, Black Eagle placed an arrow into the slot of the bowstring, and very carefully laid it over the bow, and slowly raised the bow to point toward the figure. Hearing a noise now on the other side of the creek, his heart fell to his stomach. Jaws was moving down the tree, unaware of the danger. Black Eagle wanted to signal Jaws of the approaching enemy, but he knew that he would give away his position if he made the slightest noise. He anxiously turned toward the approaching enemy, and watched. The warrior descended closer and closer. Jaws made another rustle of the nettles and twigs, causing the advancing Indian to freeze. Crouching low now, the enemy altered his course, and moved toward Jaws. Moving directly toward him now, Black Eagle lifted his bow, pulled the string back, aimed nervously, and releases his grip. The arrow shot toward the enemy and,

"Thud!"

It sunk into the Crow Warrior's chest. Moving quickly down the tree, Black Eagle jumped to the ground and raced toward the kicking body. He slipped the bow over his shoulder, pulled his knife from his belt, and grabbed a hand full of the Crow Warrior's long, black hair. Pulling his head away from the ground, he the groaning with a quick jerk, the knife pulled unevenly, across his throat, letting a stream of blood flow over his left hand. Holding onto the hand full of hair, Black Eagle began to saw off a large chunk of scalp. Pulling the scalp away from his skull, the blood dripped from the roots, spotting the back of the Crow Warrior's buckskin jacket, dark red.

"Come here!"

Jaws called to him from the bank on the other side,

"There are too many."

Black Eagle leaped up and bounced down the bank of the creek bed below, and scampered up the other side, using arms and legs. He ran up the hill and found Jaws, mounted on the horse. Black Eagle sprang onto the back of the horse behind Jaws, and the horse broke into a gallop, up the hill. Making their way to the top of the hill, they broke into a fast trot, to the north, away from their camp.

Suddenly, Jaws pulled the reins, slowing the horse to a walk and whispered,

"We will wait until they go by, travel on foot, and circle back to camp. We will meet our Kit-Fox Brothers. Darkness will soon blanket the earth. We will be able to slip by the Crow Warriors through the darkness."

Listening intently, they listened as the Indians below tromped through the creek, following them up the stream. When the sounds began to fade, with a new sense of security, they dismounted and began to walk around the hill, and back down to the creek bed below. The last glimmer of daylight made travel along the creek easy. When the village sounds came into hearing, they made their way up the bank, toward their camp. As they ascended the hill, Jaws held his hand up, crouched to the ground, and pointed to the creek. Several hundred yards down the hill, near the Crow Village, the sound of horse hoofs echoed through the valley. The sound increased with intensity. Jaws rubbed the horse's nose to calm her. The sounds began to fade, and the sounds of the night began to increase. They moved again up the hill toward their camp. Reaching the top of the hill, now in total darkness, they look silently toward the small fires burning in the village below. Listening to the dancing and singing drift up from the village below, high-pitched sad songs filled the air.

Quietly, the two Sioux Warriors descended toward their camp. They looked and listened to every sound, and movement in the dark, the way seemed safe. Reassured with each step, they made their way into safer surroundings. Approaching the bottom of the hill, Jaws stopped and gave a low bark, the bark of the Kit-Fox,

"Yap, Yap."

Waiting for a few seconds, a

"Yap, Yap, Yap,"

Call was replied from about one hundred yards below them. A sense of relief was felt as they continued down the hill. Entering the camp, Walking Bear anxiously walked toward them. Jaws looked toward him, handed him the reins of the capture Crow Horse and spoke,

“I, Jaws, seek horses. Behold, I bring them home."

Walking Bear smiled and began to admire the sturdy animal.

"Where are the other warriors?"

Black Eagle questioned nervously.

"They have not returned."

Walking Bear replied.

"We will wait."

Black Eagle returned.

Sitting down, the men formed a small circle, and listened to the night sounds. They say motionlessly and waited. Black Eagle began to notice coolness in the night air. Moving to his horse, he3 removed the buffalo robe from Big Dog's back, wrapped himself in the robe and returned to the circle. Looking around, he thought of the seven brothers, still missing. A feeling of uneasiness seeped through his mind. Waiting, waiting, the night sounds repeated louder and louder. A chant began to repeat itself, causing his throat to move, but the sound remained internal,

"Pas'loka kin (The Crow Indians) natan’Ni' yelo (come attacking) kici' yanka' yo (sit you with them) wanzi' (one of them) kte'pi ktelo' (will be killed) (21)."

The group of men sat silently, listening for the slightest clue of the missing Kit-Fox Brothers. Nothing but the sounds of night echoed through the valley. Growing weary now, Black Eagle pulled the buffalo robe tighter around him and felt a chill move like a wave over his body. An anxious anticipation of the arrival of his brothers struggled with the desire for rest for his weary body.

A rustle of leaves up the hill several hundred yards away stirred his state of arousal. He turned toward the sound and awaited another audible clue. The rustle grew into an unmistakable signal that something big was approaching.

"Yap, yap,"

Came the call from the hill.

Black Eagle releases a nervous breath, and returned the call.

"Yap, Yap, Yap,"

The rustle of the leaves returned louder and uninterrupted. In a few moments, the seven Kit-Fox Warriors entered the camp. Black Eagle realized that all of the brothers were now accounted for. He breathed a sense of relief and lay back onto the ground. Wrapping the buffalo robe over his shoulder, he settled into a comfortable sleeping position. Regaining a normal pattern of breathing, he concentrated on his heart beat and attended its' beat as it slowed. In a few minutes, he fell asleep.



THE THUNDERBIRD SPEAKS

The next morning, Black eagle aroused from a light sleep, and raised himself to a sitting position. Looking around the camp, he located his Kit-Fox Brothers standing near the horses. He stood and carried his belongings to his horse. Tying the load onto Big Dog's Back, he adjusted the reins over his head. He moved to the right side of the horse and muscled himself upward. Shifting his left let over the horse' s back, he settled into a balanced position, and signaled for the men to prepare for departure. Being careful not to make a sound, he moved down the hill toward the creek. Proceeding down the hill in single file, they moved closer to the small creek. The Warriors returned the way they came, down Red River toward Sioux Territory.

As the Red River came closer into view, Black Eagle spotted a dark figure on the bank in front of him. He ducked down and motioned for the men to spread out. The warriors moved into the woods to the left, and Black Eagle remained in the clearing, near the riverbank. Black Eagle proceeded toward the unknown figure. Crawling on the ground, he searched the bank in front of him. Scanning the trees, he advanced cautiously. Approaching the point where he had first detected the movement, he stopped and crouched behind a rock. Searching the bank in front of him, he looked into the woods to his right. Waiting patiently, the sun raised higher behind him, obscuring his vision with new light. Looking behind his back, he studied the long shadows. Seeing the shadow of a tree top move unnaturally, he ducked to the right of the boulder.

"BAAAANNNNGGG..."

A loud crack of thunder split the silence. The boulder spit chips of rock into the air, spewing over his head. Bewildered, he peeped above the boulder and searched the sky. It was clear. Scanning the treetops, he searched for an object that did not look like a part of the tree. Detecting movement in a pine tree to his right, he focused upon a dark blot, half way up the tree.

"BOOM!"

Another burst of thunder rings the air. The concussion shattered the top of the boulder again. Chips of rock stung his face. Ducking down instinctively, he tried to slow his racing heartbeat. Looking at his hands as if he was helpless and moved to the right of the boulder and exposed his head again. The thunder cracked again and he heard a whizzing noise go over his head. The ground behind him kicked up a puff of dust and made a 'thud' sound.

"This Crow Enemy has the aide of the Thunderbird!"

Black Eagle spoke aloud in disbelief. Regaining his composure, me moved to the left of the boulder, removed his Kit-Fox head dress, pushed it above his head and,

'BOOOOM!"

The headdress sailed over his head and behind him. Moving toward the headdress, he picked it up and examined it carefully. Sticking two fingers through the hole, his face grew a puzzled look.

"Surely this is the magic of the Thunderbird!"

He mumbled to himself.

Unable to give up, or wake up from the dream, he peeped out to the left of the boulder again. Expecting to hear the thunder again, he heard instead a crack of a branch, a pop of a leaf, and a slight thud. He watched as the dark figure plunged down the side of the tree and fell with a crash to the ground. The Crow Warrior lay on the ground, motionless and silent.

"Yap, Yap, Yap!"

Came from the trees to the left. Standing up, Black Eagle advanced toward the fallen warrior. In a few moments, he saw Jaws move through the trees. As he moved closer, Jaws began to saw a chunk of scalp from the dead body. Several other Kit-Fox Brothers moved through the trees and gathered around. Noticing the strange object to the right of Jaws, black Eagle moved closer. Picking up the strange stick, he held it close and examined it with wide eyes. The stick was made of wood, three inches wide on one end, and the other end, one-inch, and thick and two feet long. It was hollow, like a pipe. This end was shiny, black and rounded. It was heavy, and smooth. Rubbing the stick gently, he moved the stick closer to his noose and sniffed it slightly. It had a smell hat he had never experienced. It was a smell of burnt meat, but, not exactly.

"It is the stick in my vision. The Bear Nation showed me this stick in a vision!"

Black Eagle spoke aloud. Jaws turned his head upward, lifted the scalp into the air and smiled. Noticing the stick in Black Eagle's hand, he moved closer and took a closer look. In a few moments, he spoke in a low voice,

"What is it?"

"It is the medicine stick the Bear Nation showed me in my vision."

Black Eagle replied half conscious of the inquiry.

"If you have had a vision of this thunder stick, you must keep it. It wears you."

Knotting his head in agreement, Black Eagle noticed a pouch strapped around the shoulder of the dead enemy. Removing the pouch, he loosened the rawhide string, opened it up and found a glittering, black grainy substance. Tying the top of the pouch again, he strapped it over his shoulder, gripped the thunder stick tightly, and spoke,

"We must travel. We have far to go."

Black Eagle tied the thunder stick on top of his bedroll, and pulled himself into a mounted position. Kicking Big Dog sharply, he rode toward the river. Traveling along the bank, they watched nervously, examining every movement or sound for danger. After following the river for an hour, they turned southward for the remainder of the day. Finally, the sun began to set to their right, and Black Eagle turned on his horse and spoke in a loud voice,

"We will camp here for the night. We must have guards. The Crow Warriors will follow us. They will seek revenge, as we have done. We will not build a fire."

Dropping to the ground, Black Eagle untied his bedding, and examined the surroundings for a suitable location to prepare for rest. He pulled the thunder stick from the bundle, and began to examine it again. Sitting down, he spread the robe in front of him, and ran his hand along the oval shaped part in the middle of the stick. He gripped the small metal tip in the middle of the oval, and gripped it with his index finger. Pulling the lever back and forth, he felt it wiggle. Looking into the hole, he observed the pipe-shaped, hollow end. After examining the thunder stick for a lengthy period of time, he placed it beside his right leg, and lowered himself downward. Squirming into a comfortable position, he stared into the open sky.

The fluttering of his eyelids and images of the day flipped through his mind shut out the light. Lying motionless, he gave in to the urge to sleep. Pulling the buffalo hide over his head, he instantly fell asleep.

THE DREAM OF THE THUNDERBIRD

After two hours of sound sleep, the muscles in his eyes began to contract. His eyes jittered up and down, and to the left and to the right. He began to track a giant bird. In his mind's eye, he could see the bird swoop down into a deep valley. The huge bird swished through the clouds and lighted in front of him. Scratching now, the bird began to dig gigantic ditches. Where the bird scratched, water rushed in, forming great rivers (22). Black Eagle's eyes tracked the movement of the bird as it fell over on its back, and from the bird, a silver cloudy mass formed above it (22). The mass glowed and formed into a blinding light. Then, taking the form of a giant silver bird, it began to flap its' wings, making a great thundering noise (22). From the birds' eyes, a lightning bolt shot out, lighting the sky with flashing whiteness (22). The bird flew over his head and out of sight, but the earth continued to shake with thunder (22).



THE BUFFALO NATION COMES WALKING

Leading his horse down the winding stream, Black Eagle picked his way homeward. Observing the surroundings, he tracked the stream's path, snaking down the valley. A steep butte projected upward in the distance. The banks of the stream were dotted with green pines, towering upward. Following the stream to the bend, he slowed his pace. Instinctively, he began to slip forward. Looking to the front, he could see the hoofs left by the horses of his Kit-Fox Brothers on the side of the river. The prints indicated they were hours ahead. Seeing the deep prints of a deer, he walked slower. Examining the new territory exposed as he rounded the bend made by the creek, he spotted a large, black object standing in the creek. He halted movement forward and slowly lowered his body to the ground. Tying the reins of 'Big Dog' around a large rock, he crouched, low to the ground and eased toward the black object. Slipping his bow from his shoulder, he pulled an arrow from the quiver, and placed it in the slot of the bow. Slipping the notch of the arrow around the string, he adjusted the bow in his right hand and continued to advance forward. He was only able to see the hind part of the animal now, and it appeared to be a buffalo. Testing the wind by wetting his finger, he determined it to be blowing into his face, and away from the buffalo. He lowered himself to the ground and began to crawl forward. As he crawled forward, the buffalo slowly turned its' head to face him. He froze into position, and waited patiently for it to turn away from him. The buffalo moved across the creek and climbed the bank to the right. It was out of range for a sure shot, but realizing that it was his only chance, he raised his right arm, and pointed the tip of the arrow toward the target. Pulling the string back with his left hand, the buffalo turned to face him. Releasing his grip, the arrow shot from the bow, arched above the target and dropped toward the furry body. The arrow hit the buffalo in the neck, and instantly, it fell on its side. The hoofs kicked above its' body, and fell back, limp to the ground.

With his eyes wide and mouth open, he pressed himself upward, and stood, facing the buffalo. He anticipated it to spring to its' feet any second. Re-loading his bow with another arrow, he moved apprehensively forward. Picking up the pace, he moved closer. The buffalo remained motionless. As he neared the animal, he focused upon its' furry head. Its' eyes were open, but, its' tongue was sticking out with blood oozing from the mouth in a slow stream. The absence of breathing and the motionless body gave him assurance that the animal was dead. A small stream of blood pooled up around the arrow, buried into the upper part of the neck. The arrow was stuck in the upper part of the neck, directly in line with the neck bone.

Black Eagle gripped the arrow with his index finger and thumb. Pulling the arrow out, the stem slipped out, without the arrowhead. The stem made a low, sucking noise as it exited the hole, and a dark red stream of blood oozed upward, filling the exposed hole.

He pulled his knife from his belt and began to saw the skin of the buffalo between the front legs. Cutting a slit toward the head, and up to the lip, he re-positioned himself, and continued to cut around the neck. Breathing heavy now, he pulled the tongue out and sawed it off. Moving back to the middle of the animal, he cut the belly open and removed the intestines. Pulling the rubbery, slippery, white intestines out, he cut one foot of the small intestines off, and held them above his head. Opening his mouth, he lowered the tip end into his mouth and began to chew. Repeating the process again, several times, he then returned to skinning the buffalo. Reaching around the stomach, he pulled the deep, red liver out. Careful to remove a small, white bag, in the middle of the slabs of liver, he cut off several bites, and, with blood soaked hands, he dropped them into his mouth and chewed vigorously.

He then returned to the task of skinning the buffalo. He moved back to the stomach, and began to saw his way back to the hind leg. Raising the top hind leg above his head, he allowed the hoof to brace upon his shoulder. He then made an incision from the hoof down to the stomach. Repeating the same incision of the hind leg, he then began to peel the skin from the animal. Pulling the hide on the upper hind leg, he held the hide with one hand and sawed with the other. Laboriously, he proceeded to remove the hide. He cut and pulled until he had worked the hide away from one front leg and then the other. Pulling and tugging, he flipped the carcass over and pulled and cut, until the hide was finally free from the back, leaving the pink meat exposed to the air. He then began to strip long, thick slabs of meat and pack them onto the buffalo hide, with the liver, heart and intestines. Repeating the process, the pile of meat grew higher and higher.

Tying the bundle securely upon Big Dogs' back, behind the saddle. Collecting the rest of his belongings, he scanned the surroundings one more time to assure himself that everything was in order. The job was complete.

Muscling himself upward, he swung his left leg over the meat bundle, and settled himself into a mounted position. Looking around one final time, he nudged Big Dog into a slow walk. He began to visualize himself telling the elders of his experience.

"My deeds will be known by every family in the village. Songs will be sung in my honor. The year may be called the year of the Crow Warriors' Thunder stick!"

Moving along unconscious of his surroundings, the hours passed unnoticed. Night was creeping in. Black Eagle searched for a good spot to camp. One spot seemed to be as good as another is so, he gently pulled the reins, and dropped to the ground. Removing the load from his horse, he spread his bedding out, and prepared for rest.

"The day was comfortable, and clear, and cool enough to preserve the newly acquired buffalo meat."

He thought to himself.

Settling into the bed, he pulled the buffalo robe around him, and turned to check on his horse. Big Dog was nibbling on the bark of a cottonwood tee, and swishing her tail. All was quiet. Black Eagle gazed into the gray sky, and in a few moments, he was in a deep sleep.

 A SIOUX WARRIOR COMES HOME, WEARING THE BLACK PAINT

Waking the next morning, Black Eagle jerked up quickly, and listened to the morning sounds. The call of crows filled the air around him. It was peaceful and quiet. Big Dog stood nearby, swishing his tail occasionally, moving her ears and staring toward him. Black Eagle moved to his feet and looked toward the sky. The redness announced the arrival of the sunrise. He then returned his attention to the surroundings around him. Gathering his bedding, he moved to Big Dog and re-loaded the bundles on his back. After securing the load tightly, he mounted and began the days' journey.

His thoughts turned to the thunder stick on front of him.

"I will be able to kill all of the animals needed for my family. I will be able to be very generous. The enemy will tremble. I must find the magic of this weapon. I will seek to reveal its' secrets."

As the miles of the prairie passed by, he began to notice familiar landmarks. The hill ahead was very near his village. As he rode up the hill, faint sounds of conversation drifted toward him. He smiled and breathed a sigh of relief. His journey was over. Moving to the top of the hill, he viewed the valley below. Teepees were scattered throughout the valley.

"Behold, Black Eagle returns wearing the black paint."

Riding down the hill, a mounted warrior rode toward him, with blazing speed. As the rider came closer, he recognized him to be his son, Walking Bear. Approaching swiftly, he yelled toward him with a proud tone,

"Father, you are invited to join the counsel meeting of the Strong Heart Society. You have been very brave. You come wearing the black paint!"

Black Eagles' heart grew light. He looked into his sons' glassy eyes and continued to listen,

"You must come to the lodge of the Strong Hearts!"

Walking Bear repeated with a smile.

"A great celebration shall take place in your honor!"



BEHOLD, THE THUNDERSTICK

Later that evening, Black Eagle entered the lodge of the Strong Hearts. He made his way to the seat reserved for him and sat down quietly. His eyes danced from the buffalo horns, to the eagle tail feathers decorating the noble, elderly men. Developing a degree of tension, he was somewhat eased when he looked toward Old Buffalo. Old Buffalo looked toward him, and began to speak with a clear, strong voice,

"Only brave warriors are allowed to enter the lodge of the Strong Hearts. Cowards will be kicked out. Heroes will be buried with their headdresses of eagle tail feathers. Tell us why we should allow you to enter among this group of honorable men?"

All of the men turned and looked toward the ground, awaiting Black Eagles' reply. Expecting Black Eagle to tell of his victory over the Crow in battle, they were surprised to see him, from the corner of their eyes, hold out a strange stick. Black Eagle began to explain,

"Wankan Tanka has lead me to this magic!"

Holding the thunder stick out proudly, he continued to speak,

"I was there when Jaws killed a Crow Enemy, and this enemy possessed this weapon!"

Removing the thunder stick from Black Eagle's grasp, Bull Calf stood to his feet and began to speak,

"This is the thunder stick of the Assiniboine’s. At the last Sun Dance Ceremony, the Assiniboine spoke of such a weapon. A White Tribe, beyond the land of many lakes has made the magic. You may be able to purchase knowledge of the magic from the shaman of the Assiniboine’s (26)."

"A White Tribe?"

Black Eagle echoed.

Bull Calf continued,

"The White Tribe is said to come from an eagle that died, and turned white from lying out in the sun (27). Dog Father, of the Assiniboine Nation tells of the voice of thunder.

"If this end,"

Bull Calf pointed toward the hollow end, and continued,

"Is pointed toward the enemy, or toward a buffalo, it will bring death. To make the thunder stick speak, you must know the wisdom of the thunderbird. I offered two fine buffalo horses to Dog Father for this knowledge. He complained that the horses were only good for dragging tipi poles. I felt so much angers, my heart twisted inside of my body. I was unable to talk to him any longer. The Assiniboine’s are becoming friends with the Crow Nation. They are becoming known as rebels, non longer our friends!"

Bull Calf looked down at the thunder stick again, and examined it carefully. Showing a great deal of curiosity, he handed it back to Black Eagle without further comment. Old Buffalo broke the silence,

"If you do not show that you are will to sacrifice yourself for another brother, you shall be taken from the tribe. Now, go around the lodge with the coals so that we may behold your courage."

Aiming his command toward Black Eagle, he watched as he moved toward the fire. Black Eagle buried his bare hands into the glowing ashes. Slowly lifting the hand full of smoking ambers upward, he proceeded to walk around the circle of elder’s (28). Walking in a dancing shuffle of his feet, the group began to chant,

"Friend, whoever runs away shall not be admitted!"

Walking around the first time, Black Eagle pretended to put the ambers back into the fire the first time, but then continued to walk around (28). With that, he sat back down and looked toward the ground quietly. Feeling proud to be allowed to sit in the circle of the Strong Heart Society, he listened as Two Shields spoke in a quivering voice,

"The water is like the cloud. The fire is like the sun. Meat is from the animals and steam is like the clouds. Wankan Tanka has provided all of these things. He takes care of the people with them (29). Let us each put a piece of meat in the pot and feast upon the gifts of Wankan Tanka."

Black Eagle looked around and waited patiently for an opportunity to be heard. Finally, the silence gave way for an invitation to speak,

"Elders of the Sioux Nation, I have come to share a vision that has troubled me greatly."

Two Shields interrupted, as Black Eagle paused,

"All men have visions of animals, trees, plants, or places on the earth. They must seek to know what is best to make themselves worthy of their vision. Do you seek to purify your life in this way?"

"I only ask that you listen to my words. Help me to understand."

Black Eagle replied.

Two Shields continued,

"Then you must first reach into the steaming water, and find a piece of meat to your liking. Do this to honor Wankan Tanka. We will then listen to your vision."

Black Eagle entered his hand into the pouch of boiling water, hanging above the fire on tripods. Moving his arm in a stirring motion, he pulled out a small hunk of steaming, gray deer meat. He controlled an impulse to change hands, and handed the hunk of meat to Old Buffalo, and began to speak,

"I saw in my vision, The Great Bird, enwrapped in clouds. It came in the form of a giant. As it flew, thunder vibrated from its' wings. Lightning shot from its' eyes. It dug ditches with its' great yellow claws. Rivers began to flow through the ditches. The bird died. His spirit went back into the clouds in the form of a great, white bird (30). The Bear Nation appeared to me in the vision and told me of the thunderstick. The Crow Nation has this thunderstick. A Crow Warrior burst rocks around me. Jaws conquered this enemy with his arrow. I found this thunderstick near him. Jaws gave me the thunderstick."

Red Fox looked toward the thunderstick in his hands and began to speak,

"You must participate in the ceremony of the Thunderbird Nation. You must play the part of the fool. If you do, your reward will be the power to command the sky (30)."

Old Buffalo stood and began to instruct Black Eagle,

"You must play the part of the Joker. You must do things contrary to nature, as it is done by Wankan Tanka (30). If not, you may be killed by thunder and lightning (30)."

Red Fox stood and began to sing the song of the Thunderbird Nation,

"Lena'ka (all these) waku'wapi kte (shall pursue) Lena'ke (all these) waku'wapi ktelo' (shall pursue) Wakin’yanoya’Te pi ca (The Thunderbird Nation) sito'mni (everyone) waku'wapi kte (shall pursue) sito'mniyan' (Everyone) wanla'kapi ktelo' (shall pursue) (31)."

Red Fox continued by saying,

"You must perform the ceremony of public humiliation. You must erect a shabby tent in the tribal circle. You must cover your face in a humble manner. You must tie sage in your hair and paint black, white and blue streaks of thunder on your arms and legs. You must cut your hair and place a dead dog on a pole beside your lodge. You must put on your poorest clothes. You must do everything in your life in reverse of how you now do it (32)."

Repeating the song four times, Red Fox nodded his head as if to answer someone. He seemed to be having a vision.

Black Eagle stood to his feet, gripped the thunder stick, and moved to exit the lodge. Not looking back, he moved through the opening of the lodge and continued toward his horse. Picking up the dangling reins of Big Dog, he led him toward his tipi. As Little Raven came into view, he could see her picking up a round stone with two sticks. She was poking the hot ambers and dropping the stones into a rawhide bag hanging from a tripod above an open fire. Standing in front of the tipi, she dropped chunks of red meat into the bag of boiling water, and watched the steam rise upward. Moving closer, he watched her movement freeze as she detected his presence. Running toward him, she spoke,

"A great warrior returns wearing the black paint!"

Black Eagle answered,

"I have had great success. I have discovered the thunder stick."

Holding it out, he continued,

"This thunder stick speaks with the voice of the Thunder Nation."

He held it out toward Little Raven. She examined it with a puzzled look and questioned,

"What is the magic of this stick? What does it do?"

Black Eagle answered,

"It is great medicine. It is powerful. The elders say a Shaman of the Assiniboine’s owns the magic. The thunder stick comes from a White Tribe to the east."

Little Raven became confused and anxious. She spoke in a puzzled tone,

"Well, come and sit by the fire. I would like to know more of this White Tribe, and their powerful weapon."

Black Eagle questioned,

"Did my mother not know that she could join us in our tipi?"

Little Raven answered,

"Yes, she will move to our lodge when we travel to the Big Muddy River. The people know of this plan. It has caused much celebration."

Black Eagle settled on the ground, ate and talked many hours with Little Raven. After the sun had disappeared, and darkness had blanketed the earth, he lay back onto the buffalo robe, and soon fell into a deep, unconscious state of sleep.



HE WHO SEEKS THE BUFFALO NATION, IT IS FORBIDDEN

Awakening the next morning, Black Eagles' attention shifted as his eyes began to track the movement of two men approaching. Their light buckskin pants blended into the brown sagebrush, as they approached briskly. In a few minutes, Black Eagle recognized one of the men to be Beaver, the son of Old Buffalo. The other man was known by the name of Badger. Standing in front of him, now, the youngest one, Beaver spoke,

"I am told by the Elders of the Silent Eaters (51) you bring buffalo meat home."

Glancing toward the bundle, lying on the ground near Big Dog, Badger developed a stern look and continued to speak,

"It is forbidden to hunt the Buffalo Nation. There is a ban on hunting (51)."

Beaver gripped the club in his hand. Black Eagle felt his heart beat faster. He began to speak nervously,

"Yes, I killed the buffalo, returning from the war path. I knew of no ban on hunting."

Looking toward the other man, Beaver gave Badger the sign language to strike. Badger drew back the club and gave a full swing, striking Black Eagle in the chest. A dull 'thud sounded and Black Eagle tumbled backward and crashed into the tipi behind him Badger dragged him from the tipi by his feet, and picked up the bow and quiver lying on the ground beside his buffalo robe.

"I have been required to punish you by the Silent Eaters Society (51)."

Placing one end of the bow on the ground and holding the other end, Badger stomped the middle of the bow, and a dry 'crack' ensued. He pulled the arrows from the quiver, held them toward Black Eagle, and bent them until they broke. He then spoke with a strong voice,

"I, a Mighty Sioux Warrior, have done this. It is the wish of the elders. The elders know that the Buffalo Nation is sent from under the ground by Wankan Tanka for food for the Sioux Nation, not just for the family of Black Eagle."

Black Eagle, being somewhat disoriented on the ground, listened as he continued to speak toward Little Raven,

"Tell your husband this. He brings shame on his family and the Sioux Nation."

Knotting her head to signal understanding, she remained silent. She knew that it was too late to explain that Black Eagle was unaware of the ban on hunting buffalo. She remained motionless and awaited their departure. The men moved toward Big Dog, loaded the meat onto their shoulders, and walked down the hill, quietly. Watching them descend, Little Raven felt a tear swell in the corner of her left eye. She moved to the side of Black Eagle and began to examine him. She discovered a small cut on the side of his forehead. The blow from the club had glanced his head, and struck him in the chest. The cut was not too deep, but a dark stream of blood was streaming down the side of his face, and passed onto his neck. Little Raven stood and entered the opening of the tipi. In a few minutes, she re-appeared with a pouch of water and several pieces of deerskin. Holding one deer skin cloth in front of the pouch, she poured the water, squeezed the excess and began to bathe the wound. Gently lifting his head, she stared into his eyes.

After a few minutes, Black Eagle moved upward to a sitting position and looked around. Moving his hand toward his head, he touched the wound tenderly, and then felt of his chest. Looking at Little Raven, he watched her lips move,

"Come to the tipi now."

Struggling to his feet, he moved toward the tipi. Little Raven held onto his arm to assist with his balance, and he staggered forward. She settled him into bed, pulled the buffalo robe over him, and he regained a normal rhythm in his breathing. She felt a sense of relief.

Settling into her own bed, she suddenly realized that Walking Bear had not returned. She shifted her attention to the sounds of the outside. Waiting motionlessly, a noise interrupted the night sounds. She jerked upward and listened intensely. The tipi flap moved open and inward stepped a leg. Walking Bear entered the tipi.

"Is Father asleep?"

He asked.

Looking at the bundle of fur move up and down rhythmically, she responded,

"Yes, it is time for sleep."

Sensing a concerned, secretive tone in her voice, he stared toward her. Unable to determine a problem, Walking Bear settled into his bed.

"Is father well?"

He asked finally.

"Yes, your father is well."

She replied without looking toward him.

In a few moments, they were all asleep.



THE MAKING OF A FINE BOW

The next morning, Black Eagle rolled from his back to his side. He felt the soreness in his chest. Reminded of the previous day, the crushing blow, the pain, he gently touched the cut on his forehead. Looking around the tipi, his attention shifted to Little Raven. He watched her form lying on the ground, moving gently in rhythm with her breathing. Turning his head to the right, he focused upon Walking Bear, lying motionlessly. He appeared to be a small bundle of fur.

Black Eagle smiled and struggled to his feet. He wrapped himself in his buffalo robe bedding, and stepped through the opening of the tipi to the outside. He breathed in a deep chest of air. The smell of new grass and pollen filled his sense of smell. Looking toward the clouds overhead, the dark clouds hanging overhead gave little hope for a sunny day. He moved to the ashes of last nights' fireplace, and sat down. Crossing his legs, he pulled the buffalo robe tightly around himself and stared forward. The broken bow and arrows in his field of vision reminded him of the previous day. He spoke aloud,

"I have arrow points, sinew, grinding rocks for sanding the shafts of the arrows, and plenty of prairie chicken feathers (34). I must get the wood for the shafts of the arrows and for the bow."

Touching the handle of his knife, he stood and spoke again,

"I will find the wood now."

Glancing toward the creek running through the village, he followed its' path through the village and through a wide patch of woods. Walking toward the trees, he made his way through the village. In a few minutes, he arrived at the boundary of timber growing on the bank of the creek above the village. He began to search for a small, young tree suitable for making a bow. Searching all around him, he moved through the woods. After searching for one hundred steps, he walked slower. Parting the thick weeds in front of him, he stepped across a rotten log. A small cherry (34) tree stood in front of him. He looked up and down its' ten foot stem and inspected it for straightness and width. Being satisfied, he began to cut the tree. Cutting the top off and removing branched; he re-examined the tree for strength and straightness. Sighting down the stick again, he bent it back and forth. Black Eagle was satisfied that the wood was suitable for making a fine bow. Returning toward the village, he stopped occasionally and cut several juneberry branches (34) for arrow shafts. Having a large bundle of wood now, he made his way back to his tipi. Little Raven was sitting outside. Black Eagle walked toward her. Dropping the bundle of wood beside her, he took a deep breath, and spoke in a low voice,

"Find the arrow points and feathers for making arrows. Bring all that is necessary to make a fine bow."

Little Raven nodded her head and replied,

"You will also need sinew and glue. I will send Walking Bear to the lodge of Chases-The-Deer. He will be able to give you glue, sinew, and perhaps a buffalo rib (34)."

Little Raven disappeared through the flap of the tipi. Black Eagle tracked her movement as he bent to the ground and sat down. He crossed his legs, adjusted the buffalo hide around his shoulders, and squirmed into a comfortable position. He pulled the bone handle flint knife from his belt and picked up the longest stick of wood, the raw form of his new bow. He began by stripping the bark from the cherry wood. After the bark was removed, he held the four foot stick up to eye level, and sighted over the top of its' surface carefully. He bent it to test its' strength in several places. With short strokes, he whittled the stick to take on a flat dimension. A notch began to form on each end of the stick. The notches were oval-shaped, to hold the bowstring. Moving to the back of the bow now, he began to cut a notch to hold the stem of the arrow.

Distracted by a sound down the hill, Black Eagle looked up and watched walking Bear move up the hill. With several objects in his hands, in a few moments, he was standing in front of him. Walking Bear dropped a buffalo rib bone from his left hand. From his right hand, he dropped two pouches to the ground. Looking up, he spoke toward Black Eagle,

"Chases-The-Deer had a rib from a bull buffalo, some glue and some sinew."

Awaiting an answer for a few minutes, Walking Bear continued,

"I will help you."

"Yes, you must learn how to make a bow. I will teach you. You will then teach your son."

Walking Bear sat down in front of his father and began to track every movement of his hands. Black Eagle began to cut notches in the back of the bow stick. Picking the rib up, he placed it against the bow (34) and measured it carefully. Placing the bow stick down, he began to work on the rib bone. Whittling the rib to fit onto the back of the bow (34), he placed the bone against the bow stick and re-measured the fit. Knotting to himself while measuring, he held the bow out as if to admire the snug fit. Picking up the pouch of glue, he wet his finger with the thick, sticky substance and began to rub it into the notches on the back of the bow stick (34). Fitting the rib onto the back of the stick, he looked toward Walking Bear and spoke in a low voice,

"Give me the sinew. It is soaking in that bowl."

Following the direction of the pointing finger, Walking Bear leaned forward and picked up the bowl. As he handed it to his father, his attention shifted to the movement of the flap of the tipi. Little Raven moved through the opening of the tipi, place a bag beside Black Eagle and spoke,

"We have arrowheads, chicken hawk feathers, plenty of sinew, and a string for the bow. We will need more arrowheads."

Looking toward Walking Bear, she continued,

"You must find an owl. We need feathers for making arrows."

Knotting his head in understanding, Walking Bear returned his attention to his father. From the bowl that Walking Bear had placed beside his knee, Black Eagle picked up a long string of dripping sinew, and began wrapping the rib onto the back of the bow (34). In a few moments, he lay the stick down and admired it for a few seconds. Looking across the fire toward Walking Bear, he spoke proudly,

"Will you be able to make such a bow?"

Walking Bear paused for thought, then answered,

"When I have the years of my father, I will have his talent."

Smiling after hearing these words, Black Eagle shifted his attention to that of making arrows. He picked up a stem of the juneberry branch and began to strip the bark. Shortening the stick to arms' length and checking for straightness, he began to sand the shaft with two grooved sand rocks (34). Picking up his knife again, he began to cut a notch in the smaller end. Shaping the notch to fit the width of the bowstring, he whittled it out carefully. He then flipped the arrow shaft around and began to work on the other end. Splitting the end to allow the arrow point to fit in, he pulled an arrowhead from the bag at his knee, and examined the slit for a snug fit. He then slipped the arrowhead into the split end of the shaft and began to secure it with sinew and glue. He applied the glue freely and wrapped it tightly with sinew. In a few moments, the arrowhead was in place, tight, and straight. Near the point of the arrowhead, he cut one-inch grooves (34). The three grooves were cut straight back three inches, and then they were cut to wave as they moved toward the middle of the shaft (34). The groove neared the feathered end, and straightened to meet the feathers at the lower end (34). He then continued to cut grooves, three inches in length, to glue on the feathers. He filled the grooves with glue, inserted the split prairie chicken feathers into the grooves and secured them with sinew (34). Reaching into the pack near his knee, he pulled out two rocks and placed them around the shaft of the arrow (34). The rocks fitted into his hands comfortably. The grooves chiseled into the insides of the rocks allowed the shaft of the arrow to fit snuggly (34). Moving the rocks to and fro, he sanded the shaft to a smoothie surface (34). Dropping the rocks to his side, after sanding the shaft for several minutes, he held the arrow toward Walking Bear, and spoke,

"This arrow may find the heard of a Crow Warrior. It may bring down the one who makes the wallows on the prairie. It will be shot with a steady hand. It will travel from a powerful bow, and a powerful warrior."

Walking Bear moved closer to the arrow, and lifted it from his hands. After inspecting the arrow for a few minutes, he spoke,

"You will paint the shaft red, with the blue band in the middle as you have always done (34)?"

"Yes,"

Black Eagle replied without looking up.

"That is my mark. What will be yours?"

"I do not know. I will know when the day comes. I am twelve winters. I have had my first experience with the war party. I will one day have my first buffalo hunt. One day, I will seek something difficult. I will seek their horses. I will wear the black paint. My days are in front of me!"

Black Eagle thought for several minutes, and spoke slowly,

"I have found a weapon that makes the magic of the Thunderbird Nation. I must show you. Your future will depend upon this weapon. Go into the tipi and find a strange stick in my red role. Bring it to me."

In a few moments, Walking Bear returned from the tipi carrying the thunder stick. HE handed it to Black Eagle with a puzzled look. Black Eagle accepted the weapon carefully, and laid it across his legs. Walking Bear inquired anxiously,

"How do you come to wear this magic?"

Black Eagle replied,

"The Bear Nation appeared to me in a vision. They told me of the magic. I found it beside a Crow Warrior. He made the thunder stick speak with the voice of the Thunderbird. The thunder rolled above my head. Lightning struck everywhere. Rocks burst in front of my eyes. This weapon has great power. Observing the disbelief on Walking Bears' face, he continued,

"I will learn of this magic at the next Sun Dance Ceremony. I do not know how to make the thunder stick speak, but I will buy the magic from the Assinibiones Shaman. He has the name of Bigmouth. I must find horses to trade."

Considering the many possibilities, he became lost in thought. Looking into the flames of the growing fire, he followed mental pictures unfold in his mind. Black Eagle began to speak in a loud voice,

"I will take part in the Sun Dance Ceremony. Oh Wankan Tanka, thank you for this gift. I will give you my flesh to show my appreciation. You will behold my strength to withstand pain. You will know that I am worthy."

As the night air causes a chill to wave through his body, he pulled the flap back and stooped to enter the tipi. Crawling into bed, he pulled the thunder stick close to his body. Images ran through his mind. Finally, a contraction in his stomach signaled the approach of sleep. His eyes fluttered. His head fell limp into the buffalo robe. Drifting into a deep, unconscious state of sleep, he began to breathe slower, and his heart rate slowed. He was sound asleep.



THOSE WHO MAKE THE WALLOWS, BEHOLD, THEY COME WALKING

Waking up that morning, Black Eagle heard the crier, White Deer, sing out in a high-pitched voice,

"The Sioux Nation must have buffalo meat. The elders have said this. The Strong--Hearts have said this. The White Horses have said this."

Black Eagle looked toward the Little Raven and spoke in a loud voice,

'"I will now test my new bow. We will have meat and new hides for the tipi.

A strong voice from the outside of the tipi answered,

"I will speak with you about great honor."

Recognizing the voice to be that of his friend, Jaws, Black Eagle moved through the opening of the tip Jaws, a six-foot, large-boned, thin man, stood in front of him. He was dressed in tan, buckskin pants, and a buckskin shirt. His long, black hair, thick and dull, hung loosely over his shoulders. An eagle's feather shook in the back of his head in rhythm with the movement of his feet. He spoke in an excited tone,

"The elders have decided there is not enough food in the village. We have been chosen to look for the buffalo (52)."

Black Eagle looked into the eyes of Jaws and responded,

"This is a great honor, but, I am not deserving. I have been punished for killing the buffalo before the word was given."

Jaws smiled and replied,

"The elders know this. They know that you were not aware of the ban on hunting. They had to punish you anyway, in accordance with the old law. They are giving you a chance to redeem yourself. You will travel with in search of the buffalo nation."

Black Eagle smiled and nodded his head as he spoke,

"I will! We will find the buffalo herd. Will we be the only searchers?"

"It is said that the buffalo are very nervous because they fear for their lives. The elders are afraid they will run away."

Knotting his head to signal understanding, Black Eagle replied,

"Be ready, my brother. We will leave as soon as possible."

Black Eagle entered the tipi, looked toward Little Raven, and spoke in a happy voice,

"I am chosen to search for the rubbings, and those who make the rubbings. I will need extra moccasins, my drinking cup and cooking materials."

Little Raven nodded her head in understanding and replied,

"What will you give to the people for a gift to show appreciation for the honor to search for buffalo (53)? You must give something. We have but two horses. We have no extra buffalo hides. We will be shamed."

Unable to answer, Black Eagle shook his head. He picked up his hunting articles silently, and made his way out of the tipi. As he exited the tipi, he looked toward the sky and spoke,

"Oh, Great Holy One, allow me to find the buffalo."

He slipped the bow and quivers over his shoulder, and made his way to his horse. Finding the horse staked near the tipi, he threw the buffalo hide over the horse, tied the rawhide bag around its mane, leaped onto Big Dog's back and rode toward the middle of the camp. Catching sight of Jaws in the distance, Black Eagle watched as Jaws took a blanket from the neck of his horse, and threw it into the crowd of people around him. Riding closer to the crowd, Black Eagle could hear Jaws shout out,

"This I give to the Sioux Nation for the honor of being chosen to search for the wallows and those who make the wallows."

Riding over to the six-foot stick driven into the ground near the camp fire, Jaws struck the stick with his lance and yelled,

"I have killed many buffalo and I have killed many enemy warriors! I will lead the search for the herd of buffalo!"

The people threw their hands up in the air and shouted (53),

"Hi! Hi!"

Struggling to stay on the horse, Black Eagle pulled the reins tightly. As Big Dog's front feet dropped to the ground, Black Eagle kicked him in the side and rode toward the stick. Striking the stick with his bow, he yelled,

"I have killed the buffalo and I have killed enemy warriors. I will lead the Sioux Nation to the Buffalo Nation. Behold me! I search for the buffalo. I hear them walking!"

The people threw their hands up and shouted with emotion,

"He! He!"

And fell to their knees with their palms on the ground (62). Throwing his buffalo robe to the ground, Black Eagle held his bow high above his head and gave a blood-curling imitation of the wolf. The people responded with an electrically charged, emotional cry,

"Hi! Hi!"

He watched as an older woman fell upon the buffalo robe and rolled herself up in it. Internal words entered his awareness,

"I must find those who make the wallows! My family and I will be cold and hungry. The Sioux Nation will be cold and hungry."

Several riders joined Jaws and Black Eagle as they rode through the village toward the creek. One of the riders spoke as they rode,

"The village will move to where the Smokey Earth River meets the White Clay Creek. After you have found the buffalo head, you will report your findings there!"

Knotting in understanding, Jaws and Black Eagle continued to ride through the village. Their escort of men stopped at the edge of the camp and waved a signal of farewell. Little Raven watched from the front of her tipi as Black Eagle rode out of sight. Feeling a sense of loneliness creep into her thoughts, her attention shifted to the voice of the crier, White Deer, as he called out to the crowd of people gathered near the creek,

"Make ready to travel to the Smokey Earth River."

Having already expected to be moving soon, she turned to the teepee and began to unwrap the buffalo hides from the frame. Removing the hides from the poles, she looked toward the people again, and recognized Walking Bear, moving from the crowd. He was walking toward the tipi. Tracking his movement up the hill, as he came closer, she called out,

"Hurry, We must move the poles. We must load the horses! We travel to the Smokey Earth River."

Dropping the poles to the ground, Walking Bear lead the white-spotted mare near the poles. He tied the poles to the sides of the horse, allowing the ends to drag behind the horse. He then stretched buffalo hides between the poles and tied them securely with strips of buffalo hide. Working together, they packed clothing, food, cooking utensils, materials for making fire, water, tripods, and cooking bags onto the buffalo hides.

Having their belongings packed now, Little Raven and Walking Bear made their way to the center of the village. As they neared the line of horses and people forming along the creek bank, Little Raven spotted Black Eagle's Mother, Hummingbird, standing in the line near the creek. Little Raven altered her direction and moved toward her.

Seeing Hummingbird's curved five-foot figure, with long, white hair, she could not help being happy to have her to join their lodge. Without them, she would surely die through the winter. And, with some compromise, the new addition would be helpful to her family.

Approaching closer now, Little Raven began to admire the horse belonging to Hummingbird. Coming within five steps of Hummingbird now, she smiled and looked into her light, brown eyes.

Viewing her face, Little Raven studied the lines around her indented lips. The lines forked from the corners of her mouth, forming a circular pattern into her cheeks. Her nose, a rather small and unnoticeable feature, led attention to her sunken eyes, with crow's feet coming away toward gray, dry hair. Her forehead, wrinkled with time, had the impression of optimism frozen into place. Wrinkles of a frozen smile covered her face, revealing a personality that looked for the good in everything that happened and an expectation for a better tomorrow.

Little Raven listened to her voice as the old woman began to speak in a kind, beholding voice,

"My daughter and my grandson, I am thankful to have such a wonderful family. We will have many happy days together."

Little Raven reached over and touched her shoulder affectionately, and smiled.

A small cloud of dust began to form as the line of people and horses moved forward. The line of people walked down the creek. Little Raven moved in front of Hummingbird's horse, and began to step off the long journey. Breathing in a deep breath, she led the way. Following the line in front of her, he occasionally checked on the progress of Walking Bear and Hummingbird behind her. They passed by hill after hill. Little Raven's thoughts wandered back to the mental picture of Black Eagle riding out of sight up the hill from the village. Being confident that he would find many buffalo, she had a feeling that everything was O.K.

After traveling all day, the line finally stopped. The word was passed by the crier, White Deer, to halt and make camp for the night. Walking Bear stepped from behind the horse, dropped the poles from the sides of the horses, staked them with ropes long enough to allow for grazing. He then removed the robes from the horse's back. Unpacking the baggage from the poles, he began to erect the tipi.

Tying the poles together at one end with rawhide, he stood the poles upright, forming the tipi. Stretching the buffalo hides; he looked toward the women for approval. They were busy preparing the evening meal. Little Raven was bent over a blazing fire, and Hummingbird was cutting meat, and plopping it into a pot, hanging over the fire.

In hours' time, the movement had slowed, and they were all settled around the fire, eating quietly. In another hour, they were lying in the tipi, sound asleep.

Waking the next morning, the three made ready to travel again. As the line began to progress, they moved forward. Traveling from daylight until darkness, they finally came into view of the Smokey Earth River. The river could be heard, and was barely visible, and looked like a dark, moving object, glimmering in the moonlight.

Feeling their way around in the darkness, they built a fire, and by the light of the moon and the light from the fire, they unloaded their bundles. The tipi was erected again, and the women began to prepare food to eat. Soon, everything was in place, and a small fire was glowing, their hunger was satisfied, and they were ready for sleep.

The next morning, Little Raven stirred from the deep slumber, contracted her stomach muscles, and rose to a sitting position. Looking around the dark tipi, she focused upon Hummingbird, snoring slightly. But, Walking Bear was not in the tipi.

Little Raven leaned to the side, and crawled through the flap of the tipi. Peeping through the opening, she detected Walking Bear, sitting near the fireplace. He was sitting with his legs crossed, staring into the white ashes. Little Raven stood to her feet, and walked toward him. Approaching within a few steps of him, he suddenly jerked and turned to face her. Little Raven spoke in a gently voice,

"Go up the river and set traps for rabbit. We must have meat!"

Walking Bear stood to his feet, smiled, and replied,

"We will eat rabbit for a while, but, soon we will have buffalo meat. Father's horse is fast. It runs as a swallow flies. He has a fine bow! He will bring home meat from the Buffalo Nation."

Little Raven smiled and continued,

"On your way home, pick up buffalo chips. We will need many."

Walking Bear stood and spoke in a thoughtful tone, I will need rawhide to form the trap."

Little Raven answered quickly,

"Use the hair from the tail of your grandfather's horse, It will bring you luck."

Walking Bear nodded in understanding and walked toward the horses.

Little Raven turned toward the river. Walking along, she looked to either side, searching for fuel for the fire. As she neared the bank of the river, she noticed movement across the river, in the distant horizon. Searching to the left and to the right, she again centered her attention upon the movement. Stepping backward, she eased her way up the hill, away from the river. Continuing to observe, the forms in the distance seemed to be Indian Warriors! The riders began to ride in a zigzag line. Little Raven recognized the signal for the discovery of the enemy by the zigzag movement to be a custom of the Sioux (53). She became more confident. She allowed the riders to approach without further retreat. Seeing the rider clearly now, she dropped the branches of wood from her arms and moved back down the hill, toward the river. The cloud of dust grew larger, and the two, dark, black objects came closer. As the riders rode up to her, they halted and dismounted. She could recognize by his walk, it was Black Eagle and Jaws! Removing the buffalo robe, Jaws began to wave it, and lay it flat on the ground (54),

"A large herd (54),"

She heard herself speak aloud.

She turned and made her way toward the village.

Joining the group of people making a circle around the six-foot pole near the lodge of Old Buffalo. Jaws and Black Eagle walked into the circle of people and the group began to yell,

"HI! Hi!"

They stopped and place their hands on the ground (54). The master of ceremonies, Walks Asleep, with his entire body painted red, lifted the pipe, took a piece of buffalo chip, sprinkled it on the tobacco pipe, lit the chip on the ground, laid sweet grass upon it, and passed the bowl over the sweet grass four times (54). Then, he pretended to light the pipe (54). Holding the bowl, first on one side and then to the other three times, he lit it on the fourth. Swinging the pipe in a circular motion, he then offered it to Jaws, sitting to his right (54). The people in the front row sat with their legs crossed quietly awaiting the report from the searchers. Walks Asleep began to speak,

"You are not a child. You must tell me truthfully what you have seen and where you saw it (55)."

Jaws replied as everyone sat motionlessly,

"I came across the hill to the east of the Hill with Sacred Stones, where I have seen buffalo before, and there I was two herds of buffalo near the hill where I was standing."

Pointing with his thumb, he then pointed in the direction they had entered the village, and continued,

"Yes, there are several in the two herds."

Walks Asleep looked into Jaws' eyes and spoke again,

"You say that you have seen the wallows and those who make the wallows! I am sure you have spoken truly and you have made my heart glad."

After these words, the people raised their hands and yelled,

"Hi! Hi!"

And touched the ground with the palm of their hands (54).

Jaws then continued to speak,

"Beyond the two herds, I saw the plain black with buffalo!"

The silence was broken now by a piercing emotional cry from the crowd,

"HI! HI!"

The Crier, White Deer stood up and spoke in a loud voice,

Put saddles on your horses. We will now go to hunt the buffalo!"

Walks Asleep raised his arm to silence the crowd and pointing toward Jaws, and Black Eagle, he spoke,

"You and you will be responsible for leadership. You will be sure to provide food for the helpless, the old, and the widowers. Move quietly, divide into two parties, surround the herd, and shoot accurately. We will need much meat for the Sioux Nation."

After these instructions, Walks Asleep stood and began to dance in the middle of the circle of men. In a few moments, he began to sing,

"Wahi' nawa' pin kte (I will appear) wanma'yanka yo (Behold me) tatan'ka wan (a buffalo) hema'kiya (said to me) (56)."

Walks Asleep paused briefly, then continued to sing, in a different tone and rhythm,

"Tatan'ka (a buffalo) ca (it was) ho'ye (a voice) wa'yclo (I sent forth) nunwe' (be it so) wa'lipetanka oya'te (a Blackbird Nation) ca (it was) itoye'ya (toward them) mawa'niye (I walk) (57)."

As Sleeps Walking concluded his song; Black Eagle stood and made his way back to his tipi. As he entered the tipi, he found Little Raven painting a buffalo skull with red and blue stripes (58). Seeing Black Eagle enter, she placed the buffalo skull on the bed of fresh sage and picked up the pipe by her side and began to fill it with tobacco (58). Black Eagle sat down beside her, and she handed the pipe to him. He picked up a burning branch from the fire, and tilted it downward, to increase the flame. Offering the pipe stem to the four cardinal points and then pointing the stem toward the sky, Black Eagle spoke in a loud voice (58),

"Oh Great Holy One, behold! I offer you this pipe."

Turning the pipe around, he puffed it four times and set it against the buffalo skull. Looking at the skull, he spoke again,

"Oh skull, turn into a real buffalo and call your brothers, the Buffalo Nation, nearer (59)!"

The next morning, Black Eagle met the hunting party in the middle of the village. Twenty men all together, they made their way by the line of people.

Watching them wave their lances, Black Eagle returned the wave with his bow, and crossed the creek toward the buffalo. In a single file, they rode quietly up the hill and across the prairie. Black Eagle motioned for one of the younger men, Red Bird, to go ahead of the party.

"Scout for the buffalo!"

Jaws explained.

Nearing the eastern side of the 'Hill With Sacred Stones', Jaws began to select several hunters to go with him. With ten men gathered around Jaws, Black Eagle took the remaining men, and they waited patiently for Red Bird to return.

Finally, Red Bird was detected moving toward them. Riding up in a gallop, he spoke in a low, but excited voice,

"The buffalo are near. They are in the valley on the other side of the hill."

Jaws turned to the men around him and signaled for them to move to the left.

Moving to the right, Black Eagle lead his band of men up the hill. Allowing time for Jaws to circle around to the other side of the valley, Black Eagle advanced slowly. Scattering the men over the rim of the hill, they silently eased toward the top of the hill. As the valley came into the view if front of them, the prairie was black with buffalo. There, in the middle of the herd, stood a great White Buffalo! Excitement bolted through the band of hunters as the white spot in the middle of the blackness captured their attention. Searching the other side of the valley, on the top of the distant hill in front of him, Black Eagle saw the small outline of figures, Jaws' band of ten hunters. Black Eagle checked the wind. Verifying it to be blowing gently up the valley from the south, he then motioned for Elk to move toward the herd on foot. Elk descended the hill in a crouch. The herd of buffalo seemed to be relaxed, as he moved toward them. One of the buffalo would occasionally look up, but gave no sign that there was danger. The Great White One, in the middle of the herd seemed to be protected from the enemies by being circled by a mass of brown bodies. Elk approached closer, and the herd detected his presence.

They rumbled off a hundred yards, but one old bull buffalo turned and stood his grounds. Standing between the herd and the approaching hunter, the large bull gave a grunt, and pawed the ground with his right hoof. Pacing nervously back and forth, the bull suddenly charged toward Elk. Elk raised onto one knee, aimed his arrow, and bent the four-foot bow, and 'SWISH', the arrow cut the air. A 'THUD' sounded, as the arrow struck the buffalo in the chest. The bull stumbled to its knees, twisted onto its' side, and flipped over onto its' back. Jumping to its' feet again, the bull turned and ran back toward the herd. Before the animal reached the herd, it stopped, and fell over limply onto the ground. As the bull tumbled to the ground, the herd bolted in panic, and rumbled up the hill, toward Jaws and the hunters on the western hill. The leaders of the herd detected the presence of the hunters and circled around. They ran back toward the valley. Black Eagle shook his bow to signal Jaws to send an attack upon the herd. Jaws responded. Descending the hill, the men galloped toward the buffalo. The herd stampeded upon their approach. The thunder of the hoofs echoed through the valley. Black Eagle watched the movement patiently. The herd passed in front of him, he signaled

'ATTACK'!

Black Eagle pulled his bow from under the rawhide war bag, pulled an arrow from his quiver, and placed the arrow onto his bow, ready to fire.

Kicking his horse into a gallop, he felt the wind hit him in the face as Big Dog sprang forward. The jar from the gallop blurred the visual field of the black stream of buffalo roaring by in front of him. He could see hunters drawing their bows and arrows sinking into straggling cow buffaloes. But, he moved toward the Great White One, as if it were his destiny. Urging his horse onward, with violent kicks, he could sense the presence of a rider approaching from behind. With the advantage of an angle, the distance from the White Buffalo, Jaws approach from the other side. Jaws moved closer, and Black Eagle hurriedly pulled the bowstring to his shoulder, and pointed toward the white, bouncing form with the tip of the arrow, and 'SWISH', the White Buffalo crashed to the ground. He pulled his horse to a halt and gave a loud yell of victory. Leaping to the ground, he threw himself onto the ground, rolled over and over, and laughed. Yelling with wild emotion, he rolled over and looked toward Jaws. He spoke in a loud voice,

"We must take the hide without spilling any blood onto it. Help me! I will give you some of the meat!"

Jaws dropped to the ground, and stared toward the white carcass in front of him He moved forward and rubbed it gently. Struggling, the two men rolled the buffalo to it’s' side. Pulling their knives, they began to cut the hide away from the belly (60). Severing the hoofs and using them as a hatchet (60), they worked together to butcher the animal. Cutting the front quarters, blankets of flesh from the back and sides, removing the kidneys, the liver, and the brain (60), they continued to work Pulling the bag from the intestines, they place the brains and liver inside (60). Finally, having the task completed, the men packed the meat onto their horses and tying the bundles securely. They checked the white hide to see if any blood had smeared onto its' pure surface (60). Pleased to see the hide clear, they began to lead their horses toward home. Turning toward Jaws, Black Eagle finally broke the silence,

"We will go home. We will sing many songs. We have made a day to remember."

Entering the village late that evening, Jaws and Black Eagle repeated over and over, as they passed the line of people.

"Behold, I have conquered the White Buffalo!"

A loud cry could be heard throughout the village as they saw the white hide over the horse.

Advancing through the village toward the lodge of the elders, the people followed. The crowd followed them to the lodge, dancing and singing.

Walk's Sleeping met them in front of the lodge and greeted them,

"Behold, the great hunters return with the White Buffalo!"

Black Eagle nodded and replied,

"I give the Sioux Nation meat of the White Buffalo."

Walk's Sleeping looked toward the White Buffalo hide hanging on Black Eagle's horse and spoke,

"A great day has come to our people. We will celebrate in honor of the White Buffalo. The people who have had dreams of animals may take of this meat. Give me your arrow and knife, they must be purified (61). When you have tanned the hide, bring it to me. I will purify it also (61)."

Black Eagle handed him the knife, bow, and arrow and spoke,

"People of the Sioux Nation! Behold! I, a great hunter, have done this!"

The people gathered around, began to scream hysterically,

"Hi! Hi!"

Falling to the ground onto their knees, they began to chant. Some of them chanted songs in preparation, while others praised the White Buffalo Maiden.

Feeling the electrical power of the emotion of the people, Black Eagle spoke again,

"I have killed this White Buffalo, with a fine bow. My bow and arrow will be purified and made Holy!"

Black Eagle opened the White Buffalo hide and dropped a portion of meat onto the ground. Turning to Jaws, he handed him the intestine bag of meat and spoke,

"We have looked for something difficult, and we have found it! It is good to have a Kit-Fox Brother."

Black Eagle wheeled his horse to the left, gave out a yell, and kicked Big Dog into a gallop. Giving a shrill wolf call, he raced toward his tipi. Riding up to his tipi, he called out,

"I have killed the White Buffalo! Behold, a great warrior returns wearing the White Buffalo Nation!"

Little Raven peeped from behind the tipi, and walked hurriedly toward him.

Losing control of his emotions, Black eagle dropped from his horse, and rushed toward her. Picking her up, he whirled about yelling,

"I have killed the White Buffalo!"

Running back to his horse, he pulled the hide stuffed with the meat from the horse's back and spoke excitedly,

"Behold, the meat from the White Buffalo!"

Black Eagle sat down by the fire, regained his composure, and watched as Little Raven unwrapped the White Robe, and admired the stack of red meat. As she began to cut the meat into small pieces, a pang of excitement re-entered his awareness. Looking toward Littler Raven, he spoke,

"I will be known as a great warrior. I have brought great happiness to my people. I now have what is necessary to buy the magic of the thunder stick. I will trade this white buffalo robe for the secrets of the thunder stick! With the power of the white buffalo robe, I will not be denied!"



I WEAR THE MAGIC OF THE THUNDERBIRD

Awaking the next morning, Black Eagle heard the crier announce,

"It is time to travel to the Muddy River! It is time to meet with all of the brothers and sisters of the Great Sioux Nation for the Sun Dance Ceremony!"

Thinking of the ordeal in front of him, Black Eagle felt a pang of fear shoot through his stomach. His heart began to race. His mouth became dry. Moving from his bed, he nudged Little Raven from her sleep, and stood. Moving through the opening of the tipi, he looked around and observed a busy village. The people were preparing to travel. Black Eagle moved to the tipi and began unwrapping the hides from the tipi poles. In a few moments, Little Raven stepped through the opening of the tipi with a bundle. She places it near the fireplace, and re-entered. Hummingbird stepped through with a bundle. Then, Walking Bear appeared with a load of articles to be packed. Working together, they packed all of their belongings. Soon, they were ready to travel.

Walking down the hill in a single file, they moved into a long line of people. In a few hours, the line began to move up the creek. They were traveling toward the Big Muddy River. It was a warm day, and a gentle breeze moved the surrounding prairie grass. Gladness was in the hearts of everyone.

Traveling for several days, the tribe finally arrived at the banks of the Big Muddy River. Black Eagle and his family moved to their traditional position, in the middle of the camp.

Unpacking, they erect the tipi, sort out the articles and settle in. Black Eagle picketed his horse, near the tipi, and led the other two horses to the coral, near the river. Walking along, he studied the progress of the erection of the counsel tipi. A few other people were working to make a sweat bath. The poles of the sweat bath tipi were already tied into place, but the hides were not stretched around them. Moving near the coral, Black Eagle noticed a group of men sitting in a circle in the middle of the village. Moving toward the group, he recognized the men to be a small council meeting. Moving into the group, Black Eagle sat down in an open space in the circle of men. Crossing his legs and assuming a posture similar to the men around him, he froze into a motionless position, and stared forward.

He was surrounded by several military societies. Red Fox, of the Strong Heart Society, sat to his left. Scattered in front of him, on the other side of the circle, sat Lone Wolf of the Wolf Society. Red-Dog of the Badger Society, and Jaws of the Kit-Fox Society. White Deer of the White Horse Society (62) was standing, and began to speak,

"We must select four young virgin women to cut the tree (63). Such a person is the daughter of Walks sleeping. White Hawk would be right for this honor."

"Jaws nodded his head in agreement and added,

"Yes, and four young unmarried men from honorable families must be chosen to select the pole to be used in the Sun Dance Ceremony (63). Such a person is Black Eagle's Son, Walking Bear."

The men nodded in agreement and Eagle Shield began to speak,

"We must first select the intercessor and the leader of the dancers (63). We need someone to be responsible for offering prayer, singing songs, painting the sacred pole and preparing the sacred place (63). Then, we will consider who will be chosen to select the sacred pole,"

Red-Dog began to speak,

"Yes. We must find an intercessor that is worthy of the position (64). An unworthy intercessor would not be listened to by Wankan Tanka (64). We would have no good weather, and disaster would hit the tribe (64). The intercessor must be unblemished (64)."

"Yes!"

Red Fox agreed,

"We must have an intercessor that will furnish offerings to be place upon the sacred pole. He must provide buffalo fat to make the pole sturdy (64). He must provide a buffalo skull without defect, a pipe decorated with porcupine quills (64). These things we must have! They will be left as a gift for Wankan' Tanka (64)."

"Yes!"

Badger added anxiously,

"Old Buffalo is such a person!"

Listening to the dialogue continue, Black Eagle's thoughts drifted to the thunder stick. His eyes widened. His pupils dilated as he developed a mental picture of the Crow Warrior. He could visualize the lightning from the tree. He could see the rock bursting in front of him. Returning his attention to the conversation around him, he deduced that the men had settled upon who would be honored to fill the various vacancies. Walking Bear was chosen to help select the pole to be used for the Sun Dance Ceremony. Old Buffalo was chosen to be the Intercessor. Being pleased with the proceedings, Black Eagle stood, and made his way back to his tipi. Approaching the tipi, he noticed Walking Bear sitting by the fireplace. He was carving on a stick.

Black Eagle walked up to him, and spoke,

"Are you making a fine bow?"

Without looking up, he replied,

"Yes, I will make a fine bow. I will follow you on the next buffalo hunt!"

Smiling, Black Eagle spoke again,

"You have been chosen to select the pole for the Sun Dance Ceremony. You must take my horse and join the other young men. You must find a strong, slender cottonwood. Find a good one, my son. Your father will be hanging from the pole that you select."

Laying the stick down, a broad smile crept over Walking Bear's face as he answered,

"I will! This is a great honor! I will find the strongest and the best!

"The other men await you near the coral!"

Black Eagle called out as Walking Bear mad his way down the hill.

Walking Bear increased his speed, until he was in the middle of the village. Passing through the village, he met Red Fox. Approaching him cautiously, he spoke humble, keeping his eyes to the ground,

"I am looking for the men chosen to select the pole for the Sun Dance Ceremony. Have you seen them?"

"Yes, they await you at the coral."

Moving away from Red Fox quickly, walking Bear ran down the hill. As he neared the coral, he could see three young men, mounted and looking toward him. He entered the coral, kicked the sides of Big Dog and let out a loud

"Yap, Yap!"

The young warriors fell into single file as they rode through the camp. They rode up the riverbed, searching for the right tree. They had not traveled far until they had found a slender, straight, cottonwood tree. Walking Bear listened as one of his friends, Fish, spoke,

"The white down of the cottonwood seed looks like eagle feathers (63)!"

Another one of the young men, Crazy Buffalo spoke,

"But the elm is the first to bloom in the spring. Let us use it (63)!"

"We will take the first choice. It will be the best!"

Walking Bear persuaded.

Returning his horse back to the stake, Walking Bear made his way back to the tipi. He found Black Eagle sitting by the fire outside of the tipi. Walking Bear sat down across from him and spoke,

"We have selected a fine, slender cottonwood for the pole for the Sun Dance Ceremony."

"You have done your duty. Tomorrow, we will witness the cutting of the pole. It will be a great day."

Black Eagle watched Walking Bear pick up the stick and continue to form it into a bow. In a few moments, he began to think about the thunder stick. Standing, he entered the tipi and picked up the thunder stick. He noticed Little Raven and Hummingbird sitting by the fire inside the tipi. Looking toward the White Buffalo robe, he spoke,

"I will now find the Assiniboine’s Shaman. I will buy the secret of the thunder stick!"

Pausing, to allow a response, he continued,

"I will return with the greatest magic!"

Lifting up the White Buffalo robe, he stuffed the hide under one arm, the thunder stick under the other arm and exited the tipi. Descending the hill, he walked with reckless abandon. Approaching the first tipi in the area reserved for the Assiniboine’s Tribe, he began to feel a slight discomfort. The people were dressed differently. Their customs were different.

A young man stood near the first tipi. He was keeping a watchful eye over the nearby coral of horses. Black Eagle altered his direction, and moved toward him.

"Where is the shaman with the knowledge of the thunder stick?"

Black Eagle questioned as he neared the guard.

Focusing upon the White Buffalo hide under his arm. The young man's eyes widened as he replied,

"The shaman known as Dog Mouth, has his lodge there."

Pointing toward a tipi near the bank of the river. The young man continued,

"He sits making medicine for his sick daughter."

Knotting in understanding, Black Eagle turned and walked toward the tipi near the bank of the Missouri River. Approaching the entrance of the tipi to the right, he rattled the horns on the flap of the tipi, and awaited a response. In a few moments, a leg stepped through the left side of the tipi. A large-framed man, in his late forties, stepped toward him. Looking into the eyes of Black Eagle, he spoke in an angry tone,

Sioux Warrior, you disturb my ceremony. Why do you come here?"

Black Eagle's eyes glistened, as he replied,

"I am sorry to disturb you, but, you are the Assiniboine Shaman, known as Dog Mouth?"

"Yes!"

He replied, still annoyed. He continued,

'I am now making medicine for my daughter. It is very important that I continue."

Quickly, Black Eagle explained,

"Do you know of this object?"

Showing him the thunder stick. Black Eagle watched his eyes dance as he replied,

"Yes!"

Black Eagle continued excitedly,

"I will buy this medicine!"

Spreading the White Buffalo robe out in front of him. Black Eagle watched his large mouth open wide and he began to speak,

"This will be great magic for my daughter."

"Give me the knowledge of the thunder stick and you shall have this powerful spirit of the White Buffalo Maiden."

Black Eagle added, and continued to speak,

"The White Buffalo Maiden looks kindly toward children, especially women!"

Dog Mouth felt of the fine, glorious White Buffalo hide, and nodded his head. Glancing at the thunder stick in Black Eagle's hand, he looked into his eyes, paused for thought, then entered the tipi. In a few moments, the shaman stepped back to the outside, carrying a thunder stick and a pouch. Sitting beside the fire, near the opening of the tipi, he motioned for Black Eagle to sit also. Sitting in front of him, Black Eagle began to track the movements of his hands. He watched as the shaman removed a long rod from under the barrel and opened a small pouch. Taking a buffalo horn, open on both ends, the shaman shook out a small portion of the black, sparkling flakes of powder, placed the small opening at the tip of the horn over the barrel and let it trickle in. Taking a small ball of red clay, he dropped the ball into the barrel and tamped it in with the long rod. Now, taking the small, heavy, black ball into the barrel and tamping it gently. The shaman then pulled the hammer back, aimed toward a boulder on the distant bank, squeezed the trigger, and

"BOOOOOMMMM!"

The noise made his ears ring with the concussion. The boulder on the distant bank, popped, and fragments of rock scattered about. Black Eagle nodded in understanding and motioned for the shaman to give him the pouch. Very slowly, very carefully, Black Eagle repeated the movements of the shaman. Looking for assurance after each major step, Black Eagle worked to load the thunder stick. Having finally loaded the thunder stick, he looked to the shaman for further instructions. The shaman motioned for Black Eagle to pull the trigger back. Pulling the hammer back, and a metallic 'click', he looked for further instruction. Dog Mouth pointed toward the trigger and signaled the likely result, by cupping his ears with his hands. Black Eagle gripped the thunder stick firmly. He raised it to his shoulder, pressed the stock into his shoulder, and looked down the barrel. Aiming toward the boulder on the other side of the river, he pulled the trigger with a jerk,

"BOOOOOOOMMMM!"

The sound pierced his ears. He fell back to the ground. Getting up quickly, he felt anger grow as he noticed the shaman was laughing vigorously. Staring toward him, he observed the shaman pointing at his feet. Holding the thunder stick tightly to his shoulder, he spread his legs, his left leg in front of his right. He then pointed toward his eyes and spoke,

"You must keep the thunder stick tight to your shoulder. You must look down the barrel with one eye closed. You must sight directly toward your target. You must be careful to aim it true!"

Black Eagle nodded his head in understanding and asked,

"And, where do you find the thunder stick? Where do you find the black balls, and the black powder?"

Dog Mouth answered,

"The Cree Nation has many thunder sticks! They say they have met a tribe of strange men, as pale as the clouds. This tribe dresses in a strange way. They have a strange smell. They are said to be as white as this buffalo hide. They will take furs for the thunder sticks, powder and balls."

Black Eagle nodded with a puzzled look. After a few moments of silence, he spoke,

"Where does this strange tribe live? I have not heard of them."

The shaman paused a few moments, then answered,

"I do not know. I have not seen them. The Cree Nation trades with them south of here, on the banks of the Muddy River. They sometimes travel up the river in boats."

Black Eagle nodded in understanding. Smiling, distracted in thought, he handed Dog Mouth the White Buffalo hide.

Dog Mouth gently accepted it, and turned to enter his tipi, removed from Black Eagle's field of vision. Black Eagle noticed his heart racing with excitement. He gripped the thunder stick firmly. A grim smile swept over his face. He held the thunder stick up and howled a wolf call, loud and wild,

"Aaauuu!"

Feeling of the hammer, the trigger, then, moving his hand to the rod, he spoke aloud,

"Yes, I wear the magic of the thunderbird!"

Arriving at the entrance of his tipi in a trance-like state, he rushed into the tipi, threw the bed roll aside, and lifted the pouch of powder in balls in front of his eyes. Loading the thunder stick as the shaman had instructed, he moved to the outside. Aiming the thunder stick toward a nearby cottonwood tree, he gently pulled the trigger, and

"BOOOOOMMMM!"

The bark burst from the tree in every direction.

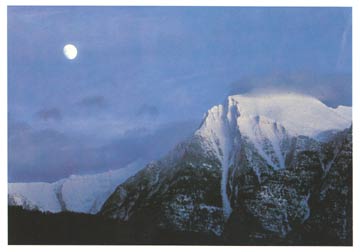
Little Raven and Hummingbird rushed toward him frantically. They searched the area with a worried look. Black Eagle smiled, rubbed the barrel and looked toward them proudly. In a few moments, he spoke,

I have the magic of the thunderbird!"

Speechless, the two women sat down beside the fire. Little Raven looked toward Black Eagle for an explanation. Insensitive of their presence, he continued to stare at the thunder stick. As the moments passed by, he reflected upon the words of the shaman,

"The Cree have the power of the thunder stick. A strange, new tribe, White as a Cloud, has come from a dead Eagle. We must consider this."

Looking around, he noticed that the sun had now gone down. The night sounds were beginning to gain strength. Standing upright, he moved toward the opening of the tipi. Passing through the entrance, he crawled toward his bedroll, beside Little Raven. Lying onto his back, she rolled over and placed her arm over his chest. Black Eagle settled into a tranquil state. In a few moments, he was fast asleep.



BEHOLD WANKAN TANKA! I OFFER YOU MY FLESH

Waking the next morning, Black Eagle slipped the thunder stick and pouches under his bedroll, slipped on his buckskin pants and shirt, and moved through the opening of the tipi. On the outside, he observed the blue sky, and the air, warm and still. The sun was beginning to shine brightly. Looking around, he saw Little Raven and Hummingbird cooking buffalo meat. He spoke toward them,

"Today, the Virgins will cut the tree. Will you go to watch?"

"Yes!"

Little Raven responded.

"We will leave after we eat the meat of the White Buffalo."

Knotting his head in understanding, Black Eagle accepted a chunk of brown meat. Placing one end of the meat in his teeth, he held the other end with his left hand, drew his knife and began to saw off a small chunk.

After eating, the family walked together toward the river. Following a large crowd, they came to the location of the tree. Black Eagle watched as the 'Leader of the Dances' handed a new axe to White Hawk, one of the Virgins. The crowd circled around the Virgins and the Intercessor. Black Eagle focused upon the Intercessor, sitting to the north of the tree. The Intercessor lifted his pipe upward and pointed the stem toward the top of the tree (65). He began to chant in a loud, clear voice,

"King Bird, small but feared by all enemies,"

Moving the pipe lower, he continued,

"The Yellow Hammer Bird dodges and darts."

Now, moving the pipe stem to the bottom of the tree, he continued,

"The spider is crafty and cunning (65)."

Then, the Intercessor, Old Buffalo, gave the signal. White Hawk held up the axe as a voice came from within the crowd,

"Behold Badger! He has conquered many Cree Warriors. He is a great hunter!"

White Hawk pretended to hit the tree. She stopped short of hitting the tree (65) and passed the axe to the next virgin (65). The young girls passed the axe around, pretending to cut the tree (65). The people continued to call out honors of their war hero’s (65). Finally, the Virgins began to cut the tree.

After a while, the tree fell to the south (65). As it crashed to the ground, a shout of victory rang out. They yelled as if an enemy had fallen (65). Seeing the people make offerings (65), Black Eagle realized that he had brought nothing to offer. He was somewhat relieved to see his mother, Hummingbird, throw a rabbit hide toward the tree (66).

Old Buffalo began to burn sweet grass, as the men began to carry the pole toward the village (66). The men were careful not to allow the pole to rest on the ground (66). Black Eagle reminded his family,

"Do not step over any of the branches. Do not walk in front of the pole! It is forbidden (66)!"

Following the pole to the village, Old Buffalo spoke,

"Now is the time to make an offering (67)!"

The men carefully laid the pole down and began to remove the bark. They stripped the pole and removed the branches (67).

Black Eagle noticed the man that was painting the pole and remembered, his name was 'Big Belly'. He watched as he painted the pole with vertical, red stripes (67).

Black Eagle thought to himself,

"He would be a good, experienced painter to paint my body for the Sun Dance Ceremony."

Walking toward Big Bell, Black Eagle moved close to his side, bent over and tried to grasp his free hand. Big Belly turned as Black Eagle spoke,

"I want you to prepare me for the Sun Dance Ceremony."

Big Belly pretended to hesitate. He would not open his hands. Black Eagle continued to struggle to open his hands. Finally, opening up Big Belly's hands, Black Eagle spoke,

"You will paint me red to show the sunset, blue to show the cloudless sky, and yellow for the lightning, white to show the light of day, and black to show night (68)."

Big Belly smiled and nodded his head in agreement. Black Eagle returned the smile and walked away quietly.

Moving up the hill toward his tipi, he noticed the crier, White Deer moving toward him. He was shouting in a clear, high-pitched voice,

"Strong Hearts, you are going to eat to your heart's content. Come on!"

Keeping his eyes fixed upon White Deer as he moved toward him. Black Eagle admired his fine clothing. Dressed with a single eagle feather in his head, standing straight up, and eagle wing fan, and fine beads wrapped around his chest. He was a proud, Sioux Warrior.

Moving through the village, Black Eagle glanced back down the hill, toward the sacred pole, seeing it being raised, he knew that it was the morning proceeding the day of the Sun Dance Ceremony. Approaching the tipi now, he surveyed the surroundings. Approaching within a few steps of the entrance of the tipi, he bent to the ground. Crossing his legs, he took a deep breath, and stared down the hill. Squirming into a comfortable position, he began to concentrate upon the ordeal that was to follow,

"I will swing from the pole,"

He heard himself speak aloud.

A mental picture formed in his minds' eye. He began to visualize the coming events, and his heart began to race. Feeling his stomach growl, he reminded himself that he would not be allowed to eat. Sitting in the same position, many events passed through his mind's eye. Sitting motionless, he was unconscious of time. The light faded, and darkness slowly began to engulf the surroundings. He stood and made his way to the sweat tipi.

After a short walk, he came to the sweat tipi. Picking up rocks from the ashes of the fire with sticks, he placed them in the hole in the ground inside the tipi. Then, he carried a large bowl of water inside. Closing the flap of the tipi, he poured water over the hot rocks, and steam bubbled upward. The tipi was soon full of hot steam. Finding his breath harder to catch, he continued to pour water onto the rocks. Unable to see anything now, he sat motionless. The sweat poured from his body.

After several hours, he stood and moved through the exit of the tipi. Without hesitation, he made his way to the lodge of Big Belly. In a few moments, he found himself standing in front of Big Belly's lodge. He shook the horns of the flap of the tipi, and waited for a response. In a few moments, Big Belly opened the flap of the tipi and spoke,

"Enter Kit-Fox Brother! I am ready to prepare you for the Sun Dance Ceremony."

"I will give you my next captured Crow Pony for your services."

Black Eagle spoke in reply.

After being painted, Black Eagle emerged from the lodge of Big Belly and made his way to the Sun Dance Lodge. His heart increased its pace once more, as he moved into the lodge. His mouth became dry as he sat down in the prescribed area for participants of the Sun Dance Ceremony. He looked toward Old Buffalo, the Intercessor, as he began to burn sweet grass. The smoke raised gently toward the sky, and Old Buffalo began to speak,

"Holy Smoke, take to the sky to the place of Wankan' Tanka from our home here on earth. The four winds that bring storms, we want peace."

By this time, the vow men stood facing the sun with hands upraised (69). Old Buffalo raised his voice again,

"Repent! Repent! (69)!"

Several people began giving gifts and compliments to the family of participant’s (70). South of the pole, a large drum sounded (70). Looking toward the men who had carried the pole seated near the drum, he was another row of women behind them (70). His eyes followed Old Buffalo as he moved to the west of the sacred place and laid on the ground west of the sacred place, face down. With his head pressed on the buffalo skull, he began to sing (71).

Black Eagle knew that his vow meant he would not simply dance for days, or cut his flesh, he must swing from the sacred pole! He must have thongs through his flesh. He must have skulls attached to his back and arms (72). For he had been favored by Wankan' Tanka (72)!

Watching the first participant being prepared, Black Eagle clinched his jaw as the cutter began to cut splits on the arm of the man (73). Removing a bit of flesh from his arm a circular fashion, the cutter would hold each bit of flesh in the air, cut it in half and speak, (73),

"To you Wankan' Tanka. I offer this flesh (73)!"

Another participant was being prepared now. Sitting beside the sacred pole until it was finished, Black Eagle watched as one hundred bits of flesh were cut from the participant's forearm, one at a time (73).

The dancers began to face the sun and begin dancing without food or drink until they collapsed (73). Black Eagle realized that the dancers were also giving an honorable payment to Wankan' Tanka (73). The cutter began to cut flesh on the next participant, and spoke,

This man promised to give his flesh! He now fulfills his vow!"

And now, it is Black Eagle's turn. He lay on the ground. The cutter bent over him lifted the flesh of his chest between his thumb and finger (74). He felt a surge of pain. He was able to repress sound, but he could not control his body from stiffening. The cutter thrust his cutting instrument up through the flesh. Black Eagle opened his squinted eyes and watched the cutter moisten a blue stick with his lips and slip the stick through his flesh (74). Repeating the motion on the other side of his chest (74), Black Eagle became dizzy. He felt himself being helped to a standing position. Ropes of rawhide were tied to the sticks. In a few minutes, a medicine man applied a liquid mixture to the openings in his chest (74). Feeling the sticks begin to pull, the pain caused him to shake and tremble. He gave no sound. Pushing on the stick in his hand, he eased the weight from his skin as the rope tightened. Feeling his toes barely touching the ground now, the pain began to ease slightly. He felt able to bear it. Faced toward the sun, the movements stretched into hours. The pain now crept over his entire body. He could no longer feel his toes. His body had become numb, except for the throbbing in his chest. Looking toward the ground, he could see his chest skin now stretched six inches from his body (74). A force came over him. He impulsively bounced and bounced to free himself (74). Continuing to attempt to break the skin, only pain shot through his body, like a lightning bolt. Feeling someone place the eagle bone whistle in his mouth, he began to blow, trying to keep time with the drum. Suddenly, he felt his body give! He tumbled to the ground!

Waking up hours later, he found himself in the vapor lodge (75). His chest throbbing reminded him of his ordeal Soreness with every movement caused him to lie motionlessly. Staring at the opening in the tipi, he concentrated upon the areas of his wounds in his mind. On the ground in front of him, there is a cup of water and near the water, a small piece of cooked buffalo meat (75). Picking up the piece of meat and water, he began to eat and drink.

Lying there for several hours, he finally heard himself speak aloud,

"Wankan' Tanka! Behold! Give me strength over my enemies. I have shown you my ability to withstand pain! I am worthy of your power! I am worthy of the secrets of the thunder stick. Give me strength to overcome my enemies. I will participate in the next Sun Dance Ceremony.



I SEEK THE BLACK-TAIL NATION

Concentrating upon the awareness of a human voice, Black Eagle's eyelids fluttered open. His attention shifted to a throbbing pain in his chest. Reminded of the previous day, a proud smile drifted over his brown face. Contracting his stomach muscles, he raised into the darkness of the tipi. Folding his knees under himself, he stood to his feet and moved through the opening of the tipi. Feeling the pain from his chest and dizziness from hunger, he focused upon several dark figures whooping and waving their lances. As the half-moon increase its power, a chilly breeze flowed across his face. Feeling his feet take on weight, he began walking toward his tipi. Passing by one tipi after another, his legs moved stronger, now. The sharp, burning pain seemed to be fading into a throbbing sensation. One step after another, a glimmer of blurry light flickered in the distance. As the light from the fire in the distance revealed the markings on the door of the tipi. He knew he was home. A sense of well is pulsated over his face as he recognized the familiar markings. As he came closer, a curved, five-foot figure stooped over the fire. Long, white hair moved over her shoulder as she turned to the sound of footsteps. He recognized the woman to be his mother, Hummingbird. Focusing upon her small nose, sunken eyes and frozen, aged lines, he spoke aloud,

"I have returned. It is a good day to be a Sioux Warrior."

As he moved closer, Hummingbird disappeared through the flap of the tipi. And, in a moment, Little Raven re-appeared through the opening and ran toward him. Slipping under his arm, she took on weight and struggled to help him toward the tipi. Moving through the flap, he stooped to his knees and crawled into his bed. Rolling onto the buffalo hide, he moved his head until his eyes met with the eyes of Walking Bear. A smile moved over his face as he spoke,

"When the sky turns light again, make ready to travel. We go to the Big Muddy River (Clarke, p. 423). We go to seek the Elk Nation. We will seek the Black Tail Nation."

Smiling widely, Walking Bear let out a whoop.

"Hi! Hi!"

Watching his excitement, Black Eagle felt the pain seize his entire sense of being. With blurred vision, he could hardly detect the images moving about him. Peaceful rest drifted over his weary body. An unconscious state of deep sleep overcame him completely.

The next morning, a heavy smoke aroused Black Eagle from a deep sleep. Coughing and gasping for breath; he raised to a sitting position and focused upon Little Raven. In front of her, dry grass continued to smoke and a light glow under the grass gave the hope for fire. Turning to confirm the movement of Black Eagle, Little Raven stood and quickly picked up a bowl of buffalo meat and reached it toward him. Leaning forward, he accepted the bowl and began to eat. Monitoring his body through the motions of eating, the absence of severe pain gave him some assurance that he would be able to travel.

"Is our son ready?"

He asked without looking up.

"Yes, he could not sleep. He is waiting outside."

She answered.

Glancing at his mother snoring lightly, Black Eagle smiled and began to slip on his buck-skinned pants. Slipping his quiver over his head, he adjusted it behind his back, looked toward Little Raven, and spoke,

"For good luck, eat nothing until I return. Tell my mother."

Little Raven nodded in understanding and watched silently as Black Eagle passed through the flap of the tipi. The rattle of bones attached to the flap brought Walking Bear to his feet. As he stood twenty feet in front of the tipi, Black Eagle stood silently and looked at his son from foot to head. Dressed in moccasins, frayed buckskin pants and jacket, five arrows were visible above his right shoulder, and the upper end of the bow appeared over his left shoulder. His long, straight hair was tied away from his face by a single rawhide string, exposing a big nose, wide eyes and a strong, square jaw. His five-foot frame was strong, muscular, weighing one hundred fifty pounds.

Black Eagle smiled, gripped his arm in a handshake and spoke,

"We seek the Black Tail Deer Nation. We will travel with Jaws, Big Belly, and Red Fox. We will meet them at their lodge."

In his excitement, Walking Bear let out a shrill wolf call and moved toward the horses,

"I must ride the horse of your mother. I will someday have a horse of my own. I will seek horses one day."

Black Eagle looked toward him solemnly, nodded his head in understanding, and spoke,

"There is plenty of time to seek horses. We must first find food for the family."

Mounting their horses, they rode by several teepees and a rider approached them in the distance.

"It is Red Fox."

Black Eagle spoke in a whisper.

As Red Fox rode up to them, Black Eagle announced.

"We go to the lodge of Jaws."

Riding side-by-side, they moved up the hill to the lodge of Jaws. Jaws stepped through the flap of the tipi, untied the reins of his horse, threw a blanket over his back, and sprang into a mounted position. Riding to meet Black Eagle and Walking Bear, he greeted them in sign language and continued to ride past, toward the lodge of Big Belly. Approaching the lodge of Big Belly, the three riders pulled their reins to halt, and waited silently. No movement or sound inside the lodge was detectable. Jaws motioned for Walking Bear to approach the lodge. Moving to the ground, Walking Bear approached the entrance of the tipi. Hearing the sounds of soft snoring, he turned and whispered,

"They sleep!"

"Wake them! They will not sleep on empty stomachs long!"

Black Eagle spoke sternly.

Rattling the bones on the flap of the tipi, Walking Bear spoke in a normal tone of voice,

"Big Belly, the hunters are ready. We seek the Black Tail Nation!"

A sudden scurry of activity instantly emitted through the buffalo hide of the tipi. Walking Bear walked back to his horse and, as he sprang onto his back, Big Belly stumbled through the tipi, furiously adjusting his pants, and straightening his jacket. He slipped his bow and quiver over his shoulder. Struggling to mount, he reached for the reins of his horse. Black Eagle, Jaws and Red Fox burst into uncontrollable laughter. Walking Bear struggled to wear a wide smile, as Big Belly slipped off his horse and fell to the ground. The laughter turned into hysteria. Big Belly picked up the reins again, and returned to the side of the horse. He grabbed its' mane, and strained to pull his chest over its back. With the laughter echoing through the night air, Big Belly settled into a mounted position, and nudged the sides of his horse. Hiding his anger with some success, he spoke in a trembling voice,

"I am ready to seek the Black Tail Nation. It is good to find my Kit-Fox Brothers so happy. May you be as happy, when the day ends."

Falling to silence, jaws spoke,

"We are happy to ride with you!"

Giving a fox call, Big Belly nudged his horse into a gallop. Turning to follow Big Belly, the warriors formed a single file and the pace quickened. The teepees began to whiz by on either side. In a few moments, the Teton River came into view. Entering the river, the splashing of hoofs altered the echo of rippling water. The coolness of the water drifted over Black Eagle's legs, as the water seeped upward, like a cold blanket. The rhythmic bouncing impeded his strain to see the movement of the water in front of him. Moving up the bank of the river, on the other side, he turned to monitor the progress of Walking Bear. Seeing him directly behind him, he returned his attention to Jaws and Big Belly in front of him. Big Belly turned, looked toward him, and spoke,

"We will go to the island below the mouth of the Teton River. The Elk cross near the island. We will be able to catch them in the water."

Wheeling to the left, to follow the riverbank, the hunters proceeded in single file. The pounding of hoofs continued and the trees thinned. The view of a large boulder passed on their right. As the Missouri River came into view, Black Eagle turned to face the warriors, and began to signal in sign language.

Extending his right hand, palm outward and downward in front of his body, fingers extended, touching and pointing up and to the front. With his hand the height of his shoulders; he moved the hand sharply to the front and downward, stopping suddenly (Clarke, p. 205). The warriors following behind him pulled their reins of their horses, stopping abruptly. They dropped to the ground and moved forward, forming a line behind Black Eagle. Pointing to Walking Bear, he signaled for him to take the reins of his horse and motioned for the others to do likewise. Black Eagle pointed to Walking Bear and signaled for him to stay. He held his closed right hand in front of and a little lower than his right shoulder, the back of his hand was about to the right. He then moved his hand downwards several inches (Clarke, P.349). Walking Bear held his right hand back to the right, in front of his right breast, the height of his shoulder. With his index finger pointing upwards, other fingers nearly closed, thumb resting on the side of his second finger, he moved the hand slightly to the left and a little downward, at the same time closing his index finger over his thumb, the sign for 'yes' (Clarke, P. 410). Crouching down, Black Eagle bent forward and moved toward the river. Looking back, he gave the signal to 'come'. Carrying his right hand, back out, index finger extended and pointing upwards, others and the thumb closed, well out in front of his body, toward the warriors behind him. He drew the hand rather sharply towards his body, lowering it slightly (Clarke, p. 122).

Seeing that they followed, Black Eagle watched the ground in front of him and picked his way toward the river. Moving into view of the Muddy River, fifty yards from the bank, he again gave the signal to 'halt' and 'come'. As they gathered around him, he pointed to Jaws and signaled. Moving his right hand in front of his body, back to the right, fingers extended, touching and pointing to the front and downwards. He moved his hand to the front and at the same time, by the wrist action, he raised the fingers, so as to point to the front and upwards (Clarke, p. 188) 'go. Continuing to signal, he held his left hand, back to the front, well out in front of his body, about the height of his neck, fingers extended, touching and pointing to the right. He brought his right hand, palm outwards, in front of and close to his neck. His index fingers were extended and pointing upwards, others and thumb closed. He carried the right hand out sharply and struck the palm of left; second joints of the fingers of the right hand about on line with index of left hand (Clarke, p. 46) 'arrives there'. Pointing to the island, he brought his hands well in front of his body, palms toward each other, and formed an incomplete horizontal circle with index fingers and thumbs, space of about an inch between the tips, other fingers closed. He then brought his wrists near each other, separating the tips of index fingers by wrist action, throwing his right hand slightly to the right, and his left hand to the left. Then holding the left hand in its position (p.224) 'island'. He then pretended to drink from the palm of his hand (Clarke, p. 399) to signal water. Pointing to Red Fox he signaled for him to ascend the river. Pointing to the spot above the island, he signaled for him to 'stay'. Black Eagle made a circle with his right hand, his index and thumb, and pointed it toward the sun and moved it westward, until it was one-fourth of the way, marking three hours (Clarke, p. 378).

Turning to Big Belly, he motioned for him to follow. Quietly, they crept down the river several hundred yards. Black Eagle turned to Big Belly and motioned for him to 'stay'. Continuing to signal, he pointed his thumb to himself to indicate 'I' and then, with his index finger, pointed to the direction he would travel. Then, Black Eagle turned to his right and began walking along the bank. Following the flow to the river, he searched the sky. The soft, light breeze rustled the leaves on the small bushes along the bank of the Missouri River. Moving two hundred yards down the river, he began to concentrate upon every sound. Directing his attention to the movement of every object, he attended to one movement, then to another. Hearing a noise overhead, he looked upward, and followed the movements as four ducks sailed into the edge of the water in front of him. Outlined in white, their white necks shined in the sunlight as they maneuvered to land. Tails and feet downward, they flapped their wings and settled into the water.

Moving to insert an arrow into the bowstring, the ducks detected the movement, and burst into quacking. Flapping furiously, they became airborne, and continued to quack. Gaining altitude, they circled and flew to the other side of the river. As they dropped back into the water on the other side, Black Eagle let out a nervous breath.

Moving into a crouch, he slipped forward. Kneeling between two trees, he froze into position. Locating the sound behind him, he turned to focus upon two small branches moving toward him. A magnificent animal moved its head upward and turned to the left and to the right. His heart pounded as he turned and faced the approaching Elk. His breathing increased as he slowly moved the bow to a shooting position. The Elk moved more cautiously, now, sniffing the air. As it moved within forty yards, he pulled the bowstring back and aimed the arrow above its front leg. The Elk turned and stared toward him. Loosening the grip of the bowstring, the arrow whizzed toward the Elk. The arrow approached the target; but, arched under the Elk's front feet, and skipped under its body. The Elk wheeled around and sprang into a swift, graceful run. The crashing of hoofs flooded his hearing. Black Eagle stood, and let out another nervous breath. Moving to the spot where the Elk had been standing, he looked around to find the arrow. A crashing noise in front of him caused him to instinctively fall to the ground. Searching the surroundings in the direction of the sound, he watched in amazement as a man appeared in front of him! The man was dressed with long, black boots, thick, gray pants, and a gray jacket. His light brown hair was short and fuzzy. His pail complexion was milky white!

The white man walked slowly up the bank of the river, leading a large, gray horse. Black Eagle concentrated his attention upon the thunder stick in his right hand. The white man stared toward the island in the middle of the river. As he passed in front of him, Black Eagle dropped his head lower. As the white man passed, he looked up and observed that the man had proceeded past him, a safe distance. Black Eagle crept away from the river, and began walking silently. Safe from detection by sound, he began to run. Running through the sagebrush, he angled toward the position of Big Belly. Running several hundred yards, he let out a wolf call, and waited a few seconds, for a reply. A return wolf call echoed fifty yards in front of him. In a few moments, Big Belly stood up in front of him. Black Eagle signaled by bringing his right hand toward his mouth and placing the palmer surface of the tips of his fingers over his mouth and inclining his head slightly (Clark, p. 341) 'silent'. Black Eagle signaled 'man', by holding the right hand, back nearly up in front of the center of his body, index finger extended, pointing to the front and upwards, other fingers and thumb closed. He then held his right hand out to the right of his body, six feet from the ground to denote height (Clarke, P. 239) 'man'. He then pointed to the white of his eagle feather, to indicate 'white'.

Holding his extended, left hand, back outwards in front of his chest and close to it, fingers pointing to the right, Black eagle carried his right hand, back to the front, well out in front of his body, index finger extended and pointing upwards, others and thumb closed. He then brought the right hand briskly against the back of the left, second joints of the closed fingers of the right hand about on line with the index finger of the left hand (Clarke, p. 46) 'arrive here'.

Black Eagle looked toward the island, remembered Jaws and instantly gave out a low wolf call. In a few seconds, his call was returned from the direction of the island. As the surroundings fell into silence, the splashing of water was heard faintly on the other side of the river. The quacking of ducks trumpeted across the water. The ducks seemed to object to an intruder with their quacking. Following their flight up the river, the splashing of water closer, by, re-directed his attention. Big Belly pointed toward the white man swimming toward the island. He had left his horse tied, on the bank.

Black Eagle pressed his thumb into his chest to signal 'I', and then held his extended left hand, back up to left and the front, well in front of his left breast, fingers pointing to the right and front. He carried his right hand under and close to the left hand so that the right wrist was under and close to the left palm, index finger of the right hand extended, pointing to the left and front, other fingers and thumb closed. He drew the right to the right, rear and slightly upwards, at the same time, curving nearly closed index finger (Clarke, P. 358-359) 'steal'. He then held the left hand, back to the left, in front of his breast, fingers extended, touching and pointing to the front. He then brought the right hand, back about outwards, and placed the first and second fingers astride the left index finger (Clark, p. 213) horse. Big Belly turned to watch as the man swam, holding his thunderstruck out of the water with one hand. Black Eagle stood, still bent over, keeping his eye on the man. Approaching the area where the man had entered the water looked down the river and spotted the horse, tied to a bush, a few yards from the riverbank. As he approached, the horse backed away from him, and snorted. Reflexively, Black Eagle knelt and examined the surroundings. He quickly untied the horse and led it up the hill and out of sight (41).

"I seek his horse,"

Black Eagle whispered with a smile.

Leading the horse up the hill, he mounted and rode toward the location of Walking Bear. As he approached, he gave a 'yelp' to signal his arrival, and strained to hear a reply. In a few moments, the return call sounded. He altered his course and proceeded in a gallop. As the horse came into view, he searched the surroundings for Walking Bear. Revealing himself from behind a tree, Walking Bear came forward smiling. Black Eagle signaled for 'silence' and then signaled 'you and 'stay'. Returning to the river, Black Eagle scanned the surroundings, and Big Belly waved to reveal his position. He quietly moved down the hill and sat down beside Big Belly. Focusing upon the island in the middle of the river, a hundred yards away, he watched patiently. The river moved silently. The minutes passed slowly. Suddenly, Big Belly nudged his arm and pointed toward the island. A dark object rippled the water and swam toward them. With long ears, and a pointed head, it was not a man. In a few moments, an Elk became plainly visible, swimming past the island. As it swam to the left of the island, a tremendous

"Boooommmm!!!"

Echoed across the river from the island.

Jerking slightly with the sound, they stayed focused upon the island. The Elk continued to swim, altering its course upstream, and away from the island. In a few moments, a dark form of the mane appeared on the island, and plunged into the water. Swimming toward them, he held his thunder stick above the water. Following his progress, Black Eagle stole a glance around the surroundings. No other movement being noticeable, he returned his attention to the white man, now stumbling back into the river as he attempted to climb the bank, not too far from them.

Looking down the river, the man watched the Elk climb the bank, near where it had entered, near where he had left his horse. Instead of aiming his thunder stick again, he pointed it toward the ground, and spoke aloud in an angry voice and walk down the river. A loud whistle ensued from the man and he began to shout out strange words. The man appeared to begin to track the horse, back up the river.

Black Eagle motioned for Big Belly to follow, but Big Belly pointed with excitement, down the river.

Looking down the river, Black Eagle's eyes squinted as a huge flat boat, with a massive sail came into view. Small oars splashed the water in unison, propelling the boat against the current. Jerking to see the movement behind him, Black Eagle turned around and focused upon Red Fox crawling up the hill to the left of him. Red Fox moved closer, and sat down beside him. Pointing toward the direction of Walking Bear, he whispered,

"The man with the thunder stick, goes toward Walking Bear!"

Knotting in agreement, Black Eagle's eyes shifted to the left and to the right. Returning his attention to the boat moving closer, he spoke,

"I will go to the boat! Who will follow? I do not seek the black paint. I seek knowledge of their magic!"

Standing boldly, he moved toward the river. Jaws called from the island, signaling danger. Black Eagle called across to Jaws,

"I will go to the boat. Does my Kit-Fox Brother follow?"

Not waiting for a reply, he entered the water and began to swim toward the boat. Turning to look over his shoulder, he smiled as the forms of Big Belly and Red Fox became visible in the water behind him. Jaws entered the water in front of him and began to swim toward the boat.

Nearing the side of the wooden-planked side of the huge boat, several white men, dressed in blue coats, watched silently. Black Eagle called out,

"We come in peace!"

One man, dressed in a black jacket and white shirt, spoke in a loud voice; the words were strange and run together. The men dressed in bluecoats motioned for them to swim to the ladder on the side of the boat. Climbing up the ladder onto the deck of the boat, the three Kit-Fox Brothers followed. The four Sioux Warriors stood side-by-side, facing the white men (76).

Black Eagle breathed heavily as he glanced around the deck of the boat. Ten men on each side of the boat continued to oar. The men in front of him gathered behind the man with the black coat. Looking toward them dressed in the black coat, Black Eagle studied the man's face. He had a small, pointed nose, short, curly black hair, and white face (77). In the middle of his pale face, a thing, long, pointed nose became a focal point. His small mouth began to jump up and down, producing the most peculiar sound (77). Looking at his black coat and thick light colored pants, Black Eagle listened intensely, attempting to understand. Motioning in sign language and speaking simultaneously, Black Eagle attempted to answer him.

"We come in peace!"

He signaled.

A broad-chested, five foot, seven inch man (43) stepped forward and spoke in a whisper to the man in the black coat, the white chief. Black Eagle continued to signal.

Clasping his hand in front of his body, the back to the left and down (Clarke p.295) 'peace'. Pointing with his thumb into his chest and to his warrior companions, he continued to signal by holding his right hand, back up, in front of his left shoulder, the height of his throat, index finger extended and pointing to the left, other fingers and thumb closed. He then moved the hand horizontally to the right, index passing near the throat (Clarke, P. 341) 'Sioux! Bringing the tips of his index fingers together, forming an angle, tips of his index fingers about the height of his breast and several inches from it, the other fingers and thumbs closed, and the back of the right hand up and to the right. His left hand was back up and to the left. His index fingers were in the same vertical plane (Clarke, p. 372) 'tipi.

He then brought both hands about fourteen inches in front of the center of his body, hands opposite and palms toward each other, fingers and thumbs partially curved, fingers separated slightly, forearms nearly horizontal, wrists a little higher than elbows about two inches spaced between the tips of the thumbs and the tips of the fingers of the right and left hand, thumbs and index fingers forming an incomplete horizontal circle. He then lowed the hands simultaneously and briskly some inches, mostly by elbow action (Clark, p. 95) 'camp'.

He then held his hands well in front, and to the right and left of his body, fingers slightly curved, separated and pointing about to the front, the back of his right hand was to the right, the back of his left hand was to the left. He moved the hands toward each other on a vertical curve downward. He then moved them slightly upward as though grasping hangs. The movement was terminated when the hands were a few inches apart and opposite each other (Clarke, p. 242) 'many'.

He then held his hands shoulder high and gave the sign for 'grass' to indicate that the village was as dense as a forest full of trees. He held his hands backs downward, well down, arms extended to full length, in front of, or to the left of the body, fingers and thumbs well separated, slightly curved and pointing upward. The right hand was close and to and a little in advance of the left, hands about the same height, the little finger of the right hand was near to the fingers of the left hand. He then separated the hands some inches, moving the right more than the left and to the front, considering the edge of the left hand as determining the direction (Clarke, p. 192) 'grass'.

He then carried his right hand, backs out, index finger extended and pointing upwards, others and thumbs closed, well out in front of his body, towards the white men in front of him, and then he drew the hand rather sharply in towards the body, lowering it slightly. The index finger kept elevated and covered as he brought his hand in toward his body (Clarke, p. 122) 'come'. He then added the sign for 'arrive there' to clarify his meaning. Sensing a failure to communicate, he pointed his thumb into his chest, pointed toward the men around him and then gave the signal by holding his right hand in front of his body, back to the right, fingers extended, touching and pointing to the front and downwards. He then moved the hand to the front, at the same time, by wrist action, he raised the fingers, so as to point to the front and upwards. He then moved his hand in the direction of the camp (Clarke, p. 188) 'go'. Black Eagle repeated the message verbally, very slowly,

"Our village is up the river. You will honor us with a visit (76). The broad-chested man whispered again his interpretation. The man with the black coat, the white chief, spoke in a loud voice, with a smile, but the language was foreign. Encouraged by the attempts to interpret by the broad-chested man, Black Eagle continued to signal and talk simultaneously. He brought his right hand well out in front of his body, about the height of his neck, the back of his hand was nearly to the left, lower edge nearest to the body, fingers extended, touching and pointing upwards. He drew the hand in toward the body, at the same time he lowered it slightly, keeping the hand level ((Clark, p. 187) 'give me'.

He then held his right hand, back up, close to the left breast. He swept the hand outwards and to the right, turning the hand by wrist action, palm nearly up, thumb and index extended, other fingers closed, thumb and index about horizontal, index pointing nearly to the left, thumb about in front (Clarke p. 231) 'know'. He then held his extended right hand, back up, in front of his body, fingers pointing to the left and to the front. He then moved the hand to the right and front, at the same time turning his hand, thumb up. So that the back of the hand was to the right and downwards. He then swept his hand into its position on a curve (Clarke p. 271) 'no'. Then he held his right hand, back out, some eight inches in front of his neck, hand partially closed, palmer surface of his thumb pressing against the nails of his first three fingers. The edge of his hand was pointing upwards. He then elevated his hand some inches; at the same time he extended and separated his fingers and thumb with a snap (Clarke, p. 200) 'gun'.

He then held his extended right hand back down, in front of, close to and a little lower than the mouth, fingers pointing to the left, mostly by wrist action, moved the hand outwards a few inches. He then repeated the motion two or three times. He then held his hands, as above out in front of about the height of his chin. He then removed the hand toward his body by a few inches, mostly by wrist action (Clarke, p. 369) 'talk to me at length'.

Finishing the gestures, Black Eagle spoke slowly,

"I seek the knowledge of the thunder stick. I will give you horses."

The broad-chested man seemed to watch his motions with great interest, but gave no attempt to interpret. Black Eagle moved toward the semi-circle of bluecoats, and attempted to point toward the thunder stick in their hands. As he moved forward, the men stepped back and one of them pointed his thunder stick toward him. Instinctively, Black Eagle halted, and began to signal again,

"I seek the knowledge of this thunder stick."

Pointing toward the thunder stick again, he repeated the gestures, but, to no avail. Looking upward, he followed the pole as it towered overhead. The pole was draped with massive sails. The man with the black coal spoke to the man with the broad chest. He called out toward the lodge in the middle of the boat. In a few minutes, a large man moved through the door of the lodge. As the man moved toward them, Black Eagle's eyes dilated. The man's skin was black!

"White men and black men!"

He spoke aloud. Looking toward Jaws, he repeated,

"The man is black!"

Jaws nodded in agreement.

The black man moved closer. He was carrying four metal objects. As he passed by, Black Eagle leaned forward and rubbed his skin. He felt of his curly, black hair and stared into his brown eyes. The black man smiled and rubbed Black Eagle's arm. Speaking a few words in the foreign tongue, he let out a loud laugh. Continuing to laugh, the black man walked toward the warriors and studied them up and down. The man with the black coat walked toward them, and handed the metals to each of the Indians. Handing a metal to Jaws first, he grabbed his hand, shook it and spoke a few words. As the man approached Black Eagle, he began to talk louder. Black Eagle motioned in sign language,

*"*Come to our village. We will give you many gifts."

Smiling, the white chief nodded his head, and passed to the next person. After everyone had been presented with a gift, the man with the black coat attempted to talk to them. Black Eagle strained to hear each word, and repeat any sound. But, the words were meaningless. The bluecoats began to motion for the Indians to go down the ladder. Watching the gestures, Red Fox spoke,

"They mean for us to go. Let us go! We must warn the village."

Big Belly signaled agreement, and motioned toward the water. The four warriors lined up on the side of the boat and dived into the water. As they swam to shore, Black Eagle felt an uneasiness come over him. Looking nervously over his shoulder, he could see the men staring toward them. Feeling a slight sense of security, he swam somewhat relieved, and swam less strenuously, toward the shore. Moving over the hill, and out of sight of the boat, Walking Bear met them with the horses. Black Eagle approached him eagerly, and questioned,

"The white man, did you see him?"

Walking Bear, somewhat puzzled by the question, answered,

"The horse of your mother has a twisted heart. She wants to stay with your mother. She broke the twig and ran toward the village. I followed her, but she was too fast. She acted crazy!"

The warriors listened solemnly, and then, broke into laughter.

In a few minutes, Red Fox spoke

"It is good that you pursued the crazy horse. The white man would have found the stolen horse. The crazy horse has saved our honor. We shall call you, "He Whose Horse Is Crazy'!"

"He Whose Horse Is Crazy!"

They all shouted together.

"We must tell the village!"

Jaws called out.

Mounting, they whirled into a gallop, up the hill and through the trees. Moving with the wind in their ears, the trees passed by in a blur. Crossing the open plain, the teepees became visible on the other side of the Teton River. Splashing into the water with force, Big Belly called across to the sentry,

"The White Tribe travel the Muddy River on a great boat!"

Moving through the water onto the bank, they were met by several men. Jaws rode up the bank and spoke,

The White Tribe travels the Big Muddy River. They will be near our village soon."

Red Fox called out,

"We have visited the White Tribe on their great boat! They have many soldiers! We have many more soldiers!"

Riding through the village, Black Eagle turned and searched for 'He Whose Horse Is Crazy'. He was right behind him, leading the gray horse of the white man. Coming into view of their tipi, they dismounted and Black Eagle spoke,

"The horse shall be yours. You must not keep it in the village. Take it up the Teton River. When you have ridden a safe distance, stake the horse with a thirty-foot rope. Find a safe place." Turning to enter the tipi, he stopped to focus upon Little Raven, standing at the opening of the tipi.

She spoke softly,

"You have seen the White Tribe?"

"Yes, they travel the Big Muddy River on a great boat."

Watching the change in expression on the face of Little Raven, Black Eagle continued,

"They have the magic of the thunder stick, and much more! They will pass by the mouth of the Teton today. They speak a strange tongue. They do not dress as any human being that I have seen. They are strange. Behold, they gave me this!'

Pulling the badge from his war bag, he handed it to Little Raven. She examined it curiously, and handed it to Hummingbird.

"I have stolen a horse from the white men. Your son has earned his warrior name. He shall be called 'He Whose Horse Is Crazy'. My mother's horse went crazy and ran off. Our son pursued, and the white man was unable to follow him. He will hide the horse up the Teton, and return home after dark. The White Tribe may visit our village, and discover the horse."

Little Raven nodded in understanding, and replied,

"We may eat the horse if another day passes without more meat."

Black Eagle nodded in agreement, and followed her into the tipi. Sitting down near the fire, he crossed his legs and listened as Little Raven continued to speak,

"Why are these human beings called 'white'?"

"They are as pale as a dead eagle that has laid in the sun. But there is one with the skin as black as the sky with no moon."

"A black man, too?"

"Yes, he is black!"

Little Raven's eyes floated upward darted to the left and to the right. She handed him a bowl of crushed berries and buffalo meat and waited for his next words.

"Their boat is as wide as the ceremonial lodge. It has a great pole. The pole has a hide as big as the lodge. It is pushed by the wind. And, they drag the water with poles to move themselves upstream."

"Where do they come from?"

"They come from the south."

"Do they seek the black paint?"

"They travel with no women and children. But, I do not think they seek war."

Finishing the bowl of food, he motioned for the animal pouch, and took a long drink of water. Sitting back, he smiled and spoke,

"When the daylight comes, I will visit the White Tribe."

Slipping off his buck-skinned pants and jacket, he placed them beside his head, and spoke again,

"Tell 'He Whose Horse Is Crazy', to be ready to travel when the daylight comes."

Lying back onto the buffalo hide, he stared toward the opening in the top of the tipi. Watching the smoke curl through the opening, he spinned the day's events through his mind's eye. Over and over again, the mental pictures of the boat came into focus. Feeling a contraction in his stomach, in a few minutes, sleep drifted over him peacefully.



IT IS A GOOD DAY FOR A SIOUX WARRIOR TO DIE

Waking the next morning, Black Eagle slipped his buck-skinned pants on and looked around the tipi. A fire was burning softly and Hummingbird looked toward him and spoke,

"The crier, your father's brother has called for warriors to travel to meet the White Tribe. Four men of the Crow Society have seen the boat move into the mouth of the Teton River. They tried to speak, but, were unable to understand (76)."

Continuing to dress, he slipped on his buck-skinned jacket. As he slipped on his moccasins, Little Raven handed him a bowel of meat. She spoke softly,

"Meat from the White Buffalo."

Accepting the bowl, Black Eagle sat down near the fire and began to eat. After a few bites. He spoke,

"Is 'He Whose Horse Is Crazy' ready to travel?'

"Yes, he awaits you outside the tipi. The White Man's horse is staked below the great boulder where there are many stones from the Sacred Stone Nation."

Black Eagle slipped the rawhide war bag in front of him and filled his mouth with the remaining meat in the bowel. Placing the empty bowel down near the fire, he drugs the rawhide war bag closer. Removing a pouch of brown powder, he pored a small quantity of brown powder into the palm of his hand. Reaching into the empty bowel with the other hand, he rubbed the film of buffalo grease onto his fingers and pressed his fingers into the palm of the other hand containing the brown powder. After applying the brown paint to his entire face, he reached into the bag again, and pulled out a pouch of white clay. Adding more grease, he began to paint a white line across his forehead. Continuing the white line down the cheeks, he then drew a fork ending at the jawbone (5). As he drew the line on the other cheek, he began to sing,

"Kaitsenko ana obahema haa ipai degi o ba ika Kaitsenko ano oba hemo hadamagagi oba ike."

(Oh, sun, you remain forever, but we kaitsenko must die; oh, earth, you remain forever, but we kaitsenko must die" (Weems, p. 135).

Black Eagle stood and moved through the tipi. Picking up his bow, he slipped it onto his shoulder, lifted the quiver over his head and adjusted it onto his shoulder, lifted the quiver over his head and adjusted it onto his head, picked up his lance and coo stick, and spoke again,

"Life without honor is not life! Wankan Tanka placed enemies on this earth for our strength. I am risking life to win life. I will take part in the Sun Dance Ceremony in the next Moon of Ripening Chokecherries!"

Little Raven returned softly,

"Yes, your skill and bravery have been proven many times. But, remember, the Kit-Fox want to help you."

Black Eagle answered firmly,

"I have counted 'first coup'."

Pointing to the golden eagle feather standing upright in the back of his head,

"And, I have counted second coup."

touching the feather sticking sideways from the back of his head.

"In the winter of 'He Whose Horse Is Crazy's' birth, I brought two scalps and many horses!"

Not waiting for a reply, Black Eagle hastily moved through the flap of the tipi, and stood on the outside. Looking upward, a red-striped sky over the eastern horizon was bordered by a dark mass of cloud. His eyes squinted. A dry, cool breeze swept over his face moving his long, black hair. Looking downward, he focused upon 'He Whose Horse Is Crazy', sitting motionlessly, ten yards away. As he moved toward him, he sprang to his feet and shouted,

"Hi! Hi! It is a good day for a Sioux Warrior to die!'

"Yes, a good day to die. We will visit the White Tribe, today."

Moving beside his horse, Black Eagle visualized giving thunder sticks to his Kit-Fox Brothers, Dropping the war bag to the ground, he began to speak aloud,

"This earth I have used as paint, it causes the tribe of the enemy much excitement."

Opening the bad up, he took out a pouch of black powder, and began speaking to his horse,

"If you do great deeds, Big Dog, I will give you a yellow feather in your mane. If you run over the White Tribe, I will paint a hand on your chest."

As he made a zigzag line from Big Dog's mouth, down the front legs, and branching at the hoofs, He Whose Horse Is Crazy spoke

"Do I come with you?"

"Yes, but you must stay with the horses!"

Moving to the rear legs of Big Dog, Black Eagle repeated the design, and continued to talk gently to the horse,

"I will paint a red hand on your chest>"

Finishing the last drawing on the horse's leg. Black Eagle motioned for He Whose Horse Is Crazy to mount. He then grabbed the mane of Big Dog, and pulled himself upward. Wheeling his left leg over his wide back, he kicked and Big Dog sprang forward, into a trot. Riding side-by-side, they moved through the village until a group of mounted warriors came into view. As they approached the warriors, Crazy Buffalo rode to meet them and spoke,

"We, the Kit-Fox, go to the Muddy River. We meet the White Tribe today!"

Knotting in agreement, Black Eagle raised his lance, gave out a shrill fox call, and nudged his horse into a gallop. The other warriors cued to the movement and fell into single file behind him. Some warriors moved in front of him, now. Big Dog instinctively moved faster. Following the waving war bonnets and lances with streams of eagle feathers, the village soon became a fading visual memory. The pace continued, and Jaws shouted,

"We must not travel fast. We must watch closely. Slow down!"

As the pace slowed, Black Eagle could hear He Whose Horse Is Crazy singing out,

"I follow the Kit-Fox. I seek the Black Paint."

In the distance, the glimmer of the Teton River reflected the morning sun. Large boulders lay at the bottom of a cliff on the other side of the river, and three antelope stood looking toward them. A bluff behind the antelope towered toward the red sky. Wheeling the horse to the left, to follow the riverbank, Black Eagle strained to see the path through the dust from the thundering hoofs. The stride of Big Dog jarred methodically in time with the thumping of hoofs. An internal voice began to repeat the words,

"All these shall pursue! All these shall pursue."

Instinctively, the warriors slowed their pace and lowered their voices. Examining the horizon for movement or sound, they proceeded slowly. Freezing for a moment, the warriors in the front signaled for silence. The enemy had been spotted. Dismounting, the warriors proceeded on foot, forward, slowly. Seeing the Missouri in the distance, they walked into the clearing, and moved toward the bank. The Eton River intersected the Missouri with a swift silence.

In the distance, two canoes floated motionlessly. Black Eagle's heart fluttered as several men on the boat began to climb down the ladder and step onto the canoes. Holding his breath unconsciously, he watched the six oars splash the water in unison (78). The dugout canoe moved toward them. Handing He Whose Horse Is Crazy the reins of Big Dog, Black Eagle left the semi-circle of warriors and walked toward other warriors now standing near the edge of the Missouri. The canoe rowed closer and the appearance of the men on board became more distinct. The dark-skinned man, with curly, black hair and long side burns began to speak

"Come on board, Chiefs of the Teton!"

Motioning to the warriors behind, Crazy Buffalo called out,

"The great Sioux Nation welcomes you!”

The men in the boat waved and the curly-haired man spoke,

"Go with us to the great ship. We bring gifts from the Great White Father."

Watching Crazy Buffalo, Beaver, Bull Calf, Badger and Chases-The-Deer (76), Black Eagle spoke,

"I seek to know the magic of the thunder stick!"

Crazy Buffalo turned and answered,

"The earth and the wind have many; great powers, but Wankan Tanka has power over the sun, the moon, and the seasons. He gives us food, medicine and power over our enemies."

"You speak truth, but, this White Tribe has the power of the Thunderbird Nation!"

Crazy Buffalo paused a moment and then replied,

"Stay my brother! vow not to leave from this point!"

Black Eagle stuck his lance into the soft mud, near the bank of the river and replied,

"Let no Kit-Fox Warrior go beyond this point unless we are all returned safely. Sing the death song and prepare for battle!"

Big Belly turned to face the semi-circle of warriors, jerked his lance up and down, and shouted,

"The fox! I am! Something difficult I seek!"

All of the warriors began to jump up and down, giving loud fox calls. Black Eagle could pick out He Whose Horse Is Crazy's high-pitched voice chanting along.

"I am an active and wily Kit-Fox Warrior. I am brave, generous and honorable. I will die for my brothers, the Kit-Fox Nation!"

Black Eagle watched as the canon slowly oared toward the huge boat in the middle of the river. The canoe grew smaller as it neared the larger boat. The bluecoats climbed up the side of the larger boat and the Indian Chiefs followed slowly behind them. As the men moved out of sight, a murmur drifted through the crowd of warriors around Black Eagle.

He Whose Horse Is Crazy looked across the seventy yards of water and watched the current push the boats. The canoes resisted the current effortlessly. Turning to his father, he spoke,

"I have seen canoes in this river; but, they do not stand in the water. They move with the river."

Black Eagle looked toward him and replied,

"The White Tribe has much magic."

In a few moments, Red Fox began to chant in a low, monotone voice,

"Father, his customs I adopted, and hence, a hard time I am having." (2).

Taking a deep breath, Black Eagle looked toward his son and spoke,

"Go to our tipi and tell my wife and your mother that I will pursue the White Tribe. I seek to know more of their magic."

Turning to view the river again, Black Eagle focused upon the small canoe oaring rhythmically back to shore. A pang of excitement shot through his stomach. Moving closer to the bank, he gripped his coup stick. The boat slowly drifted nearer. As the canoe neared the bank, it drug on a rock and came to a halt.

The curly-haired man watched as the Indian Chiefs climbed out of the canoe and up the bank, onto shore. Beaver stumbled up the bank, laughing, and fell to the ground. Slowing his laughter, he struggled to speak,

"The White tribe will travel to our village! We will have a great council! Our women and children will be happy to see."

Beaver reached his arm forward, and Black Eagle gripped his arm and pulled him to his feet. Smiling, he continued laughing and spoke,

"I will tell our people of the things we have seen. Their firewater is powerful. It makes me dizzy. I have a fire in my stomach."

Black Eagle frowned and replied,

"We must find the magic of the thunder stick! We will be able to conquer our enemies with knowledge of the thunder stick."

Beaver turned to look into Black Eagle's eyes, and nodded in agreement.

The bluecoats waved and began to oar back toward the larger boat. He Whose Horse Is Crazy and two other warriors jumped into the water and grabbed onto the canoe (80). The bluecoats began to object strenuously. Black Eagle shouted toward the white men,

"We seek to know the magic of the thunder stick."

Waving his hands in sign language, he repeated,

"We seek the magic of the thunder stick!"

Badger yelled,

"We are poor! We wish to keep the dugout!" (76).

"We must have the canoe to travel up the river!"

The curly-haired man countered.

Badger retorted,

"Give us these canoes!"

Without understanding of his words, but understanding of his tone,

"Yes, but our soldiers are trained. We have medicine on the big boat that would kill twenty such nations in one day (76)."

Red Fox called out,

"We want our women and children to see the boats."

Suddenly, the white man drew his sword, and began to speak with a strong, red face (80). Waving the shiny, long knife, he called over his shoulder to the men in the larger boat. The bluecoats in the other canoe oared back toward them (80). Most of the Sioux Warriors placed arrows in their bows (80). Black Eagle spoke to Crazy Buffalo,

"We must keep these men and force them to teach us to make the thunder stick."

Crazy Buffalo nodded in agreement and gave sign language to hold the white chief, and yelled,

"The man with the black coat and the man with the Sioux tongue will stay."

Black Eagle shouted,

"We must know how they make the thunder stick! Where do they find the rock? Where do they find the small, black balls, and the black powder?"

"Let this boat return."

Ordered Crazy Buffalo.

Surrounding the white men, the other bluecoats oared away. (80). Black Eagle smiled in understanding, and moved toward Jaws and spoke,

"Tell the man with the black coat that we will give him his freedom. He must first teach us how to make the thunder stick."

Jaws turned to the white man and began to speak,

"Using sign language simultaneously, he relayed the message. The white man, with the curly hair, lifted his shoulders upward, shook his head and spoke,

"The thunder stick is made of iron, a rock found in the earth. Only the Great White Grandfather knows how to make the thunder stick."

Black Eagle, somewhat puzzled, fell silent.

In the distance, twelve bluecoats oared toward them (78). As the canoe moved closer, the white men stopped oaring, stood and clicked the hammers on their thunder sticks. The warriors withdrew, leaving the chiefs and the white men near the shore (76).

Crazy Buffalo spoke,

"We will let these men go back to the boat. We will invite them to come to our village and show their magic to our women and children."

Releasing the men, the warriors watched as the man with the black coat, and the curly-haired man waded into the water. After they had waded no more than ten paces, Black Eagle, Jaws, Big Belly and Red Fox followed them toward the canoe (80).

"Come on. We will take you to the boat."

The curly-haired man yelled.

Big Belly and Red Fox stopped and Red Fox spoke,

"Go with them. We will stay here. We will not leave until both of you return."

Knotting in understanding, Black Eagle and Jaws followed the white men into the canoe. Sitting down, they watched as the men began to oar toward the larger boat. Black Eagle’s eyes shifted from one man to the other as they oared in unison. Nearing the side of the huge boat, the white men grabbed onto the wooden ladder, and climbed upon and over the side of the boat. Standing on the deck, they leaned over the rail and motioned for Jaws and Black Eagle to follow. As Black Eagle began to climb, several white men above him whispered in the strange tongue. Climbing onto the deck of the boat, Jaws, and Black eagle found themselves surrounded by forty men (70). Black Eagle's eyes moved upward, following the outline of the twenty oars standing against the sides of the boat (79). Returning his attention to the bluecoats around him, he focused upon the thunder sticks held firmly in the hands of each man. Turning toward Jaws, he spoke in a whisper,

"You see the thunder sticks! We must learn of them!"

Not seeming to hear him, Jaws stooped and felt of the smooth wooden floor. Standing again, he began to examine the mast. Turning to the curly-haired man, Jaws questioned,

"What is the great flag hanging from the pole?"

Sensing the gist of the question, the curly-haired man replied as if he would understand,

This flag uses the wind from the four corners of the world to move with the ease of the deer over the water. This boat can travel over great rivers and across bodies of water a hundred times the size of the land of the Teton Nation."

Jaws nodded his head as if he understood.

The man with the black coat stepped through the crowd of bluecoats and spoke,

"Come closer and see the power of the White Nation."

Not understanding the strange language, but interpreting the beckoning motion of his arm, they stepped forward. The white chief pulled a box from his black jacket, and pressed a heavy lever on the side of the box. A spark and then, a flame sprang up! Moving back in amazement, he mumbled to himself,

"A fire, without rubbing!"

The white chief moved the flame to a white rope attached to a large, smoothie, black, rock-like object. The hand carried the flame closer, and touched the white rope. The rope suddenly began to smoke, and sparkle. Burning profusely, with a sizzling, smelly cloud of black and white smoke, the rope burned shorter and out of sight into the rock-like object. A pause, and then a deafening 'BOOOMMM!!! Range out from one end of the black object. The hollow of the cannon is allowed a cannon ball toward the bank of the river. The thunderous sound shook as if a thousand flashes of lightning had filled the sky. The concussion made his ears ring, and rush. On the other bank, trees broke and crashed to the ground.

Stiff and scared, Black Eagle stood motionless, with his heart pounding. Watching the white teeth of the pale faces jump up and down with laughter, Black Eagle returned his focus upon the barrel, still smoking. The white men continued to laugh, and the white chief, lifted up a brown jug and took a drink. Passing the jug to Jaws, he motioned for him to take a drink (80). Accepting the jug, Jaws took a small sip, made a face, and took another swallow. Jaws passed the jug to Black Eagle. Turning the jug up slowly, he took a small sip. The wetness heated his mouth and tasted sweet, pour and hot at the same time. Swallowing slowly, the fire crept through his mouth, down his throat and burned in his stomach. Passing the jug back to Jaws, the fire grew hotter in his stomach. With perspiration flowing, Black Eagle felt his knees seem to grow weak. Refusing to have another turn, he watched curiously as the jug moved around the circle of men.

Black Eagle moved closer to Jaws and spoke,

"I seek knowledge of the thunder stick. I will give my buffalo horse for this knowledge. Tell the White Chief!"

Jaws moved to the curly-haired man and spoke,

"Tell us of the magic of the thunderstick."

The curly-haired man nodded in understanding, and moved closer to the man with the black coat, and whispered in his ear. Seeing the man with the black coat shake his head and frown, he knew the answer was 'no'. Moving toward him, Black Eagle spoke forcefully,

"I offer you my horse!"

A blue-coated man stepped between them and held his thunderstruck firmly in front of himself. A bluecoat behind him pulled the hammer back on his thunder stick, and the click signaled 'danger' to him. Black Eagle looked toward the curly-haired man and spoke,

"Tell your chief that I only want to know about the thunder stick. I want to know how to make it. You say that only your Great White Grandfather knows the magic. Is this true?"

A man stepped up, with features like an Indian, and Black Eagle asked the question again in sign language.

The man answered back in sign language.

"It is True."

Black Eagle returned in sign language,

"Perhaps I will travel with you and meet this Great White Grandfather."

The curly-haired man turned and spoke to the other white chief in the strange tongue, and, in a few minutes, he spoke toward the sign language interpreter, who signaled,

"Yes, our chief has agree to visit your village."

Jaws moved toward the edge of the boat, and began to climb down the ladder. Following Jaws down the ladder, he felt emptiness. Sitting down in the canoe, he stared toward the hole in the bottom of the canoe, stuffed with a stob of wood. The water seeped into the bottom of the boat through the plug, and formed a small puddle.

As the canoe neared the shore, Black Eagle and Jaws jumped into the water, and waded ashore. Climbing up the bank, Black Eagle sat down quietly, took a deep breath, and gazed toward the men on the canoe oaring back to the larger boat.

Moving to his horse, he removed the bedroll and spread it out on the ground. Sitting down, he crossed his legs and resumed to stare across the water Listening the strange sounds, an occasional laugh drifted over the surface of the water. Mystified, he reviewed the events of the day.

As the sun went down, the breeze picked up and night sounds circled in closer around him. Rolling up tightly into the buffalo robe, he turned onto his back and face into the starry sky. The moon glowed brilliantly just above the horizon, and the thick spray of stars glittered majestically. The call of a coyote drifted toward him.

One-by-one, the warriors mounted and rode away. Black Eagle closed his eyes, and images of the day passed before him. A thought moved his vocal cords,

"Where do these strange people come from?”

In a few moments, he passed into an unconscious state of deep sleep.



THE WHITE TRIBE ARRIVES AT THIS PLACE

Jerking into a state of acute awareness, Black Eagle oriented himself to his present position. Rolling out of the buffalo hide, he crawled up the hill, parted the tall sagebrush and looked toward the boat. He focused upon the movement of a large, dark-hook-shaped object as it moved up the front side of the larger boat. Attached to a rope, the huge hook dropped onto the deck of the boat, and a 'clank'

Echoed over the surface of the rippling water. The boat began to move. It was ascending the Teton River!

Black Eagle slipped to his horse, grabbed the reins, and leaped onto his back. Swinging his leg around, he leaned forward and kicked 'Big Dog' into a trot. Kicking vigorously, he rode swiftly toward the village. As the distant village became visible, he slowed to a walk and slid to the ground. Searching the river below, no movement was detectable. Listening to the movement of the water, a call of a coyote caused his to focus upon the bluff on the other side of the river. Shifting his attention to the hoot of an owl, he looked up the river and scanned the eighty tepees, showing up as blurry, white spots. Feeling the coldness around his arms, he slipped the buffalo robe from his horse, pulled the edges of the robe over his back, and around his neck. Listening and scanning the river below, silence returned. A rushing noise within his ears entered his awareness. Developing a mental picture of the bluecoat with the thunder stick, a frown drifted over his face.

"A boy will not become a man if he does not have a brave father to follow."

He spoke aloud.

A faint splashing from the river came into his awareness. Spotted with dark shadows, the silver glimmer of the river gave no sight of the boat.

In a few moments, in the furthermost distance down the river, dark images seemed to move. The glimmer of the river was now broken by distinct dark images. The splashing of the water became unmistakable. The boats were moving up the river, toward the village!

Black Eagle instinctively bent into a crouch. Several calls in the strange tongue drifted across the surface of the rushing water. He monitored the pounding of his heart. Letting out a nervous breath, he slipped toward his horse. Grabbing the mane, he pulled himself up. Whirling into a mounted position, 'Big Dog' sprang into a trot. Moving with the wind in his ears, the tepees bounced in front of him. The light smell of smoke drifted into his breathing. The twenty-foot poles, wrapped in white buffalo hides, became larger. Bouncing, the first tipi passed on his left in a blur. The cool wind blew in his face and swept across his body. The movement of his horse under him, and the excitement moved through his mind like a whirlwind. Impulsively, his lungs tightened and his throat vibrated with a shrill yell,

"Yeeee Haaaaa!"

Moving through the village at full speed now, Black Eagle focused upon several people standing in front of him. Slowing his horse with a forceful jerk, he moved toward the group of warriors. The buzz of voices increased as he neared the edge of the riverbank. Several warriors stood holding a buffalo robe between them. The warriors in front of him began to yell, and point down the river. The emotion conducted through the crowd. Feeling the electrical hysteria, he strained to his tiptoes, to view the river. As the boat oared closer, Jaws yelled out,

"Send the crier, the White Tribe has arrived here. Prepare a great feast. We will dance and smoke the pipe."

Turning toward the warriors holding the buffalo robe between them, he continued to speak,

"When they near the bank, enter the water and carry the chief to the ceremonial lodge. The man with the black coat is the chief!'

At the boat neared the shore, the men slowly waded to the edge of the boat, and motioned for the chief of the white men to climb onto the robe. Knotting his head and smiling, the chief of the white men rolled onto the robe and sat up with his legs folded under him. The warriors moved from the boat carrying the chief on the robe through the water and up the bank. Moving through the crowd, the warriors cleared a channel and fell in behind as they proceeded toward the ceremonial lodge (Gass, p. 46). Following the crowd, Black Eagle kept his eyes fixed upon the middle of the semi-circle of men. Watching the pointed-nosed man bob up and down on the buffalo robe, the bluecoats followed close behind. Moving up the hill, the ceremonial lodge came into view. A column of eighty women, sitting in their customary position, looked toward the approaching men. As they men came closer, they began to wave their six-foot poles, topped with scalps (Gass, p. 53), and began to shout out the conquests of their brave husbands. Searching the column of women, Black Eagle focused upon Little Raven, sitting quietly, staring toward the men from the White Tribe.

The warriors carried the pointed-nosed man to the elaborately decorated buffalo robe spread on the right side of the chief, 'Crazy Buffalo'. He was already seated in the middle of the ceremonial lodge, behind the fire. The bluecoats followed the warriors into the lodge and sat down to his right. The men filed in, single file, and sat down to the right of the women, forming a column (Gass, p. 46). The crowd quieted and the chief of the Teton Sioux, Crazy Buffalo stood and began to speak,

"We welcome our visitors from the White Tribe. We offer peace, and give them a place of honor in our ceremonial lodge. We will sing and dance to honor Wankan Tanka. We will smoke the pipe of the White Buffalo Maiden."

Crazy Buffalo looked toward the white men, smiled and motioned for the pipe. The pipe, resting on two sticks in the sacred six-foot square (Gass, p. 46), was in front of Black Eagle. He moved toward the pipe and all eyes seemed to converge upon him. Picking the pipe up, he handed it to Crazy Buffalo who then removed a burning twig from the fire, placed it over the bowl of the pipe, and puffed several times without allowing the flame to light the tobacco. Repeating the action three times, he finally allowed the flame to light the tobacco on the fourth time. Turning the pipe around, the stem pointing away from him, he pointed it toward the ground, then to the north, then to the south, the east and west. Finally, he pointed the stem of the pipe to the sky, and spoke in a high pitched voice.

"Wankan Tanka, you give us food, medicine and power over our enemies. You have power over the sun, the moon and the seasons!"

He then passed the pipe to the pointed-nosed man. Black Eagle followed the movement carefully. His pupils dilated, as he stood motionless. Words came into his awareness,

“Where do they come from? Do they come from under the mud? Where do they find blue fur, the color of the sky? Has the Thunderbird given them the magic? They do not have women with them. Do they seek horses? I must learn about the thunder stick!"

Distracted by the sudden beating of drums and shaking of rattlers, a song changed by the men entering his awareness. Close to him he could hear the voices of Bull Calf, Badger and Beaver singing,

"Friends, behold sacred I have been made. Friends behold, In a sacred manner, I have been influenced at the gathering of the clouds." (20).

Black Eagle monitored his body. He felt alive, energetic, and alert. A warm glow drifted a radiant sensation through his blood. He had a strange feeling, as if he would succeed.

"I must find a way to talk to them! I must! But, I don't know how. The curly-haired man, I must talk to him!"

The frustration mounted as his eyes shifted from the left to the right. The conflict seemed irreconcilable. Feeling anxious now, depression seemed to creep over him

"I could take the powder and balls from the bluecoats,"

He thought to himself.

Looking toward one of the bluecoats holding the thunder stick firmly across his legs, a pang of excitement shot through his stomach. In a few moments, one of the bluecoats looked toward him, pointing at him then leaning over and whispering into the ear of the man with the pointed nose. The pointed-nosed man turned to Crazy Buffalo, and pointed toward Black Eagle. Crazy Buffalo looked toward Black Eagle, and motioned for him to enter and sit down. Realizing that he had been standing in the entrance of the lodge, staring at the men, he felt his heartbeat quicken. His face and mouth became tight. His body was tense. Disbelief of his behavior caused him to be overwhelmed by feelings of embarrassment.

Sting down, Black Eagle quickly examined the crowd. Seeing the women move to a standing position, and the beating of the drums, he breathed in a long breath and let it out slowly. With his eyes shifting left and right, his vocal cords now ceased their movement, but his eyes continued to shift. The women jumping up and down, the beating of the drums were blocking his awareness.

After a period of incubation, Black Eagle eased back into awareness of his surroundings. Focusing upon the dancers, a thought emerged,

"I will go with them. I will stay until I have learned their secrets. But first, I will give them meat! I'll give them White Buffalo meat!'

As Swift Dog stood up beside him, Black Eagle examined his fine clothing. Dressed in a full war bonnet, eagle feathers stood around his forehead, and steamed down his back. An eagle fan and fine beads dangled around his neck onto his powerful chest. Standing with his eyes looking toward the stars, he began to speak in a high-pitched voice,

"Great, Great Grandfather, again one of your songs, I shall sing. Listen to me. These you require me to sing. Now this day I shall recall one."

Swift Dog began to sing,

"I have killed the buffalo! I have killed the Cree! I will lead the Sioux into battle of the Nations! Behold me!"

As Swift Dog repeated the song, several women threw their hands up and shouted emotionally,

"Hi! Hi!"

They fell to their knees with their palms on the ground. Chases-The-Deer then stood up and began to shuffle his feet with the beat of the drums. The Kit-Fox skin around his neck, and a white jawbone or an otter tied around his forehead swayed with the movement of his feet (11). As the song, lead by Swift Dog faded, Chases-The-Deer began to sing,

"Well, I depend upon no one's heart but my own. So, thinking this, I look for horses (10)."

The women continued to dance (76) and several younger women entered the ceremonial lodge, carrying dishes heaped with cooked meat. The curly-haired man leaned toward Crazy Buffalo and spoke,

"What food is this?"

Crazy Buffalo responded with a smile,

"The flesh of dog (76)."

The white men smelled of the meat curiously, and cautiously began to eat. Smiling, the man in the black coat nodded his head to show approval. After eating a few bites, the white chief whispered to the curly-haired man. He nodded in understanding and spoke toward the interpreter, who then signaled to Crazy Buffalo,

One of our hunters, as he approached the Teton River, lost a horse. He tracked the horse in the direction of your village."

Crazy Buffalo paused a few moments and then responded toward the interpreter,

"If the horse was taken by Teton Warriors, we will return it (76)."

Crazy Buffalo and the Great White Chief turned his head slightly and studied him closely. Looking serious, with a curious expression of mistrust, he observed that the Indian Chief had a full face, with thick creases of flesh on each side, a slight double chin, with a cleft. A magnificent war bonnet, with a white band circling his head, bordered in black. The eagle feathers leaned over the top of his head, and drooped downward as the lines of feathers proceeded toward his shoulders, and behind his back. Dressed in a white buffalo robe decorated brilliantly with drawings, his arms were covered, but the bulge of the buffalo robe suggested a heavy, muscular body, slightly overweight.

Leaning toward the curly-haired man, he spoke toward the interpreter,

"You travel on a huge boat. Where do you go? What do you seek?"

The curly-haired man responded,

"We travel the river to the great ocean in the west. We seek to know what lies between this river and the great Pacific Ocean."

"Do you seek furs?"

"No. We seek knowledge of the land, to tell our Great White Grandfather that lives on the Great Ocean in the east, the Atlantic Ocean."

"Will your Great, Grandfather visit this land?"

"The Great White Grandfather now owns this land. He is the chief of all the land from here to the Atlantic Ocean."

Crazy Buffalo began to laugh and respond,

"Own this land? No one can own the land! It is the land of the deer, the elk the buffalo. The land is for the birds, the great eagle, not for man. Wankan Tanka gives everything, man can only give pain"

"Yes, but, the Great White Grandfather will rule the land. We will build forts. He will send for traders. He will send farmers. He will send soldiers. He will own the land."

Crazy Buffalo leaned back again, and turned toward the blazing fire. Starring into the flames, his eyes darted from left to right. The curly-haired man leaned toward Crazy Buffalo and spoke again through the interpreter,

"The scalps on the poles, the women have scalps on the poles. Where do they come from? Are you at war?"

Crazy Buffalo smiled and spoke proudly,

"We attack the Maha's! Many come home weaning the black paint. We killed seventy-five Maha Warriors and captured thirty women (76)."

The curly-haired man turned to the man with the black coat and spoke in the strange tongue. In a few minutes, he returned his attention to Crazy Buffalo and spoke,

"Our chief says that it is the wish of the Great White Grandfather that the Indians live in peace. We ask that you make peace with the Maha. You should return the women that you have captured."

Crazy Buffalo paused for a moment and responded,

"We will have a great council and speak of these things. If we do not fight the Maha, they will fight with us. We must show that the Sioux are brave and Wiley. Without honor, we cannot live. Wankan Tanka gives us strength to overcome our enemies. Ask your chief of the wisdom of this council."

The curly-haired man turned and spoke to the man with the black coat. In a few minutes, he looked toward Crazy Buffalo, smiled, and spoke in a strange tongue. Crazy Buffalo smiled and nodded his head up and down.

Black Eagle's eyelids fluttered as he listened to the rhythmic drumbeat blending with the rattling and chanting. The chief stood up, smiled and nodded his head in approval. The curly-haired man moved toward Crazy Buffalo and began to speak. The chief stood and motioned for the music to halt. The chief of the Assiniboine moved toward the white chief and began to talk. Crazy Buffalo nodded his head up and down, and signaled for the dancers to clear the path for the men to depart. As the white men filed out of the ceremonial lodge the Assiniboine Chief and his younger son followed them out (76). Black Eagle turned to Jaws and questioned,

"Does the Assiniboine seek to visit the white men?"

Jaws responded,

"I do not know."

Black Eagle continued,

"When the white man come toward the island, what did you do?"

"I saw the man enter the water and swim toward me. I slipped to the other side of the island and stayed under the water. I breathed through a reed."

"The white men moved out of the ceremonial lodge and a large crowd followed. Badger moved toward him and spoke,

"Crazy Buffalo wishes to speak with you."

A pang of fear shot through his stomach as he moved toward the chief. Moving into the talking distance of Crazy Buffalo, Black Eagle crossed his arms as the chief began to speak,

"The White Chief speaks of a stolen horse. Beaver tells me that you stole a horse from the man traveling the Muddy River. I ask you to bite the knife. Is this so?

"Yes, I did steal the horse. I do not know that the man travels with these men. He was white."

"They have asked me to give the horse back to them. I promised that if my braves took the horse, we would give it back (76)."

"Your promise is honorable. I have given the horse to my son. I cannot answer for him."

Crazy Buffalo nodded in understanding, and turned to walk away. Black Eagle called out to him, and he turned to look at him again. Black Eagle spoke,

"I say to you, Chief of the Teton Sioux, do a great service for your people. Let us attack these white people and kill them. We will take the powder and the thunder sticks. These men are a scouting party for a White Nation. They will return to their people and speak of the Sioux Nation. They will say that they were able to control us with fear. They will brag of their bravery. They will bring many men. They have spoken all of this to you. The white chief said that he would be able to kill twenty tribes of our strength. I have seen their great thunder stick. It has the power of twenty lightning bolts. We could capture their wooden kegs of powder, and their thunder sticks. We would be able to destroy them with their own magic.

Crazy Buffalo nodded in understanding and replied,

"I will council with the White Horse Society of what you speak. We will consider what you say."

Black Eagle followed him out of the ceremonial lodge, and began the short walk toward his tipi. Reviewing the events of the day, one visual image followed another in sequence. Looking upward, the half-moon, illuminated a clear sky, filled with twinkling stars. Returning his attention to the view of the ground in front of him, the image of the cannon booming fire out of its barrel, emerged in his mind's eye. Focusing upon his tipi, fifty yards away, Black Eagle impulsively spoke aloud,

"I will not give the horse back! I will seek the black paint."

Coming closer to the tipi, the thud of hoof beats faintly pounded behind him. Turning to look, the dark figure of a mounted rider moved toward him. Watching intensely, the rider drew closer. In a few seconds, he was within talking distance. Black Eagle called out,

"What message do you bring? What do you seek?"

The rider, Red Fox, spoke in an excited tone,

"The dugout hit the rope that holds the boat in the middle of the river \*76). The white men are bringing the boat to shore!"

Black Eagle nodded in understanding and Red Fox prodded his horse into a trot and moved up the hill, calling out,

"The great boat comes ashore!"

dogwoodth

WHEN THEY RETURN, WE WILL ATTACK

The next day, Black Eagle walked down to the shore, and the huge boat floated motionlessly tied to a boulder with a heavy rope. The bank was covered with warriors. Two bluecoats were in the process to untying the boat. The boat was lined with a string of bluecoats, standing solemnly watching their progress. As they unwrapped the rope, several Indians picked up the loose end of the rope, and held tight. The bluecoat turned toward them, tugged on the rope and spoke,

"Let go!"

The Indians responded as if they understood,

"We are poor. We ask that you give us tobacco (76)!"

The man with the black coat motioned for the men to come on board. Pulling his long knife, he held it high and shouted. The bluecoats clicked their thunder sticks and pointed into the Indians. The curly-haired man spoke to the white chief, and, he lowered his long knife, and the men lowered their thunder sticks. In a few moments, the black man appeared with a small rawhide bag. The curly-haired man spoke,

"Release the rope and I will throw to you what you seek!"

The warriors looked up and murmured as they saw the man with the black skin. The curly-haired man heaved the bag. It sailed over their head, and splashed into the water. Turning to follow the flight of the bag, the warriors released their grip, and swam to retrieve the rawhide bag.

One of the bluecoats on the boat pulled the rope with his right hand, and rolled it around his left shoulder and elbow. The oars slowly moved downward and gently stroked the water. The boat moved with current toward the middle of the Teton River. Black Eagle stood motionless, watching the boat grow smaller. The boat drifted further and further away. In a few moments, the boat was out of sight.

Black Eagle closed his eyes and visualized the face of the man with the black coat. The visual picture transposed into a picture of the boat at a distance and several sounds from the foreign language echoed through his internal consciousness. Repeating the words over and over again, he attempted to retain the sounds. Unsure of their meaning, he repeated them, but, as one word changed, he frowned and left out a nervous breath.

Black Eagle turned and walked toward his tipi. One step after another, he moved up the hill, considering the events of the day. The image of the thunder stick, gripped in the hands of the bluecoats pointed at the warriors came into view. A ping of fear caused his pace to quicken. He spoke aloud,

"We must seek the black paint!"

Entering the tipi, he focused upon Little Raven, sitting quietly in front of the small fire. Moving to his bed he searched the tipi and spoke,

"Where is my mother?"

"She is visiting the lodge of White Buffalo. She has been feeling weak. She seeks the medicine for healing."

"Where is my son?"

"He has gone to bring the gray horse home. He will be home soon."

Knotting to show understanding, Black Eagle folded his legs, bent sideways and pulled out the thunder stick.

Little Raven spoke,

"Did you learn of the thunder stick?"

"I know that the Great White Grandfather makes the thunder stick. We will attack the boat. We will have the powder.

The boat has enough powder and thunder sticks to kill twenty times the number of Teton Warriors in this village. That will been enough to last many winters."

"You will seek the black paint?"

"I will seek the black paint!"

As he spoke, He Whose Horse Is Crazy entered the tipi. Breathing rapidly, he sat down, and spoke,

"The White Tribe has left. They travel up the Muddy River."

"Yes, they travel up the river. We will follow."

In a few minutes, the bones rattled on the flap of the tipi. And the voice of Hummingbird broke the silence as she entered, she spoke,

"It is only I, a poor old woman."

"These words are not from my mother, the strong woman who bore one great Teton Sioux Warrior."

"Yes, my son, but time has taken a great toll on my body. It is time for me to return to the earth."

"You will feel better in the morning."

Little Raven encouraged.

"We will be traveling soon. The beauty of the grassy plains will lift your spirits."

"But one day, I will be left behind." she replied sadly.

Black Eagle listened quietly, then looked toward He Whose Horse Is Crazy, and spoke,

"It is a gift from Wankan Tanka to grow old. But, you do not need to be old to die. Death in battle is common and it is an honor. To live without honor is not life, but existence."

He Whose Horse Is Crazy replied,

"I will follow you into the battle. I will participate in the Sun Dance Ceremony!"

Hummingbird listened with a stone-faced expression of sadness. She spoke in a weak, broken voice,

"Several Kit-Fox and Crow Societies have banned together vowing to strike the boat as it travels toward the Mandan Nation."

Black Eagle's eyes darted to the left and right as he spoke rapidly,

"When do they travel?"

"They are gathering at this moment, at the lodge of your father's brother, White Deer!"

Jumping to his feet, Black Eagle spoke in an excited tone,

"I seek the black paint!"

Picking up the thunder stick and the buffalo robe, he moved through the flap of the tipi. Riding toward the lodge of White Deer, he could see the crowd in the distance. The warriors were lined up, hitting their lances and making vows. Black Eagle joined into the line, and He Whose Horse Is Crazy appeared behind him. Red Fox slapped his lance against the lance of He Whose Horse Is Crazy and shouted,

"The son of a great warrior joins to seek the black paint. Hi! Hi!"

Returning the call, He Whose Horse Is Crazy shouted,

"It is a good day to die!"

Black Eagle took a long breath, and looked toward his son and spoke,

"You will watch the horses!"

He Whose Horse is Crazy looked toward the ground, and the smile on his face faded.

Badger moved up to Black Eagle and reported,

"Chases-The-Deer is on the boat of the White Men. He travels with them up the Muddy River. He will persuade the white chief to visit again. When they come to shore this time, we will strike!"

Knotting in agreement, Black Eagle replied,

"Yes, my brother, this is the best council! We will capture the powder and balls. Each warrior will be given a thunder stick! We will wear the black paint!'

The yelling increased in intensity, and Big Belly shouted above the roar,

"Follow me, those who seek something difficult!"

The warriors burst into a furious mass of horses and human beings. The hoof beats vibrated the ground into a violent thunder. Following the flow of the movement, Black Eagle felt detached from him, a part of a powerful, alien body. Moving through the night, following the riders in front of him, he trusted them to lead the way. The horse moved under him, methodically bouncing his vision into a blur of shadows. The prairie in front of him was open, flat, and dimly lit, by a half moon. After riding for several hours, the Missouri River came into view. The warriors slowed their pace, and followed along the riverbank, single file. After advancing for another hour along the river, Big Belly turned and whispered to Black Eagle,

"The boat has been spotted!"

With another few paces, the warriors in front of him began to drop to the ground. In a reflexive movement, Black Eagle dropped to the ground, and moved forward, on foot.

Red Fox turned to him and spoke softly,

"Chases-The-Deer returns from the boat. He says the White Tribe refuses to stop and visit. They will stop at night-fall, in the middle of the river!" Black Eagle felt a frown drift over his face as he heard himself speak,

"We will wait until daylight. We will strike when the sun returns!"

Knotting in agreement, Red Fox turned, and began to walk slowly up the riverbank. Following close behind, Black Eagle glanced over his shoulder, and a visual image of his son was focused for a second. Returning his attention to the path in front of him, he picked his way through the brush. Proceeding for another hundred yards, several warriors came into view in front of him. Approaching the warriors sitting quietly in a large semi-circle facing the river, Black Eagle focused upon Chases-The-Deer. Dropping the reins of 'Big Dog', he motioned for He Whose Horse Is Crazy to guard the horses. Moving into the semi-circle, he sat down, and glanced around, examining each warrior closely.

Chases-The-Deer began to speak,

"The White Nation will travel the river, cross the Great Mountains, and search for a great body of water. They will return after the winter, down this river."

"We will swim to the boat at daylight, and attack!"

Black Eagle shouted.

"We would be killed in the water! We would not be able to climb onto the boat!"

White Buffalo answered with an angry, forceful tone.

"We will follow them!"

Black Eagle countered.

"No, we must return to our people. When they return in the next summer, we will have our warriors ready."

Badger interjected.

Black Eagle quietly stood and spoke softly,

"I say to you, we must strike! The White Tribe is our enemy! They have the power to wipe the Sioux Nation from the face of the earth."

The group of warriors looked toward him solemnly. They stared motionlessly. In a few moments, White Buffalo broke the silence,

"It is a time to be patient. We are fearless warriors. We seek the black paint. We seek first coup. But, in the water, we are not able to shoot our arrows. The thunder sticks would bellow. The Muddy River would flow red with Sioux blood. We would not be given a proper burial. Our bodies would float far from our homeland. Our spirit would wander the earth!"

Black Eagle responded,

"Then, we must follow the great boat. We will seize the first opportunity. They will come ashore. What we fail to do today, our children will be facing tomorrow!"

White Buffalo answered,

"Yes, the son of my brother speaks wisely. We should have attacked sooner. The signs of winter remind us of the great struggle ahead. We must return to our winter camp. When the White Tribe returns in the spring, we will be ready."

White Buffalo gripped the pipe in front of him, and began chanting in a low voice. Black Eagle felt helpless as he watched White Buffalo light the pipe, and take several puffs. The pipe dominated his visual attention as it passed from one warrior to the next. He began to think in a clear, mental voice,

"I will be ready. I will prepare. When they return, I will be ready!"

Looking across the river, the sun was falling out of sight, beyond the grassy, rolling plain behind him. Gazing toward the sun, the birds intensified their calling. The sounds of crickets and grasshoppers picked up a louder rhythm. The day was coming to a close.

The sounds of the night filtered into his awareness again. The sounds of crickets and katydids blended harmoniously. The stars flickered, and the chill of the night air raised chill bumps on his arms. Black Eagle raised from the ground, and motioned for He Whose Horse Is Crazy to follow. Moving toward the horses, he felt a weakness in his knees. His body seemed to be heavier. He felt his leg movement to be awkward. His head felt dizzy. As each foot struck the ground, his legs seemed to give slightly. His body did not seen 'right'. Moving to the side of his horse, he removed the bedroll, and turned to search for a safe place to bed down. As his eyes adjusted fully to the moonlight, a three-foot boulder appeared in front of him. Walking slowly to the boulder he stopped and spread the buffalo robe onto the ground, and bent to his knees. Rolling onto his back, the stars were gleaming brightly, now. But, they seemed to be slightly blurred, and unworthy of study. As his body quieted, he began to monitor his body. Thinking in a clear, mental voice, words came into his awareness,

"As my body quiets, I hear my heart beat through my ears. I feel my head throb. I breathe in and out. The air goes into one side of my nose. My ribs move. The air changes from one side of my nose to the other. One passage now is being blocked. My body seems to be hot. My breath is hot. I feel my body. It seems to shrink. I feel smaller. I feel uneasy. I am dizzy! I must sit up. But, no I must lie still. It will pass. My left eye is twitching. My breath is slowing. My body is becoming relaxed. My body is resting, now. My hand is relaxed. My pulse is slowing. My heart is slowing. I see a flower, a daisy, with white pedals and a yellow center. One pedal drops and another, until only the center is left. Now, the yellow center fades."

Black Eagle realized that his efforts were in vain. Turning to 'He Whose Horse Is Crazy, he motioned for him to mount. Grabbing the reins of the horse, he pulled his chest over the horse's back. Twisting his body around to face the front, he dropped his legs to straddle Big Dog's back, and looked around. The warriors were all silently watching his movement. Raising his hand above his head, he gave the sign for 'blanket'. After covering his body from view with the buffalo robe, he turned toward the village, and kicked his horse gently into a slow, walking stride. He rode toward home.

Watching the tail of his mother's horse swish to the left and right in front of him, he felt the rage within his body. He monitored his heart, beating rapidly. His breath was fast and audible. Altering his attention to monitor a voice speaking within himself,

"These warriors are afraid! They fear for their lives. They let life for the children slip away. I should have said something to challenge their courage. I should have spoken stronger. I should have been wiser. Because White Buffalo is the brother of my father, I was too easy."

Impulsively, he kicked his horse into a gallop, and rode up to the side of 'He Whose Horse Is Crazy. His son searched his face and waited for him to speak. Black Eagle looked toward him blankly, and kicked his horse again, and galloped in front of him. Moving with the rhythm of the horse, he guided him through the trees and back out onto the open plain. The jar of the hoof beats blurred his vision every other second. The jar of his vision, the focusing between hoof beats, the flow of air over his body, was in his awareness.

Racing through the village now, the teepees whizzed by on either side. Children ran to the left and right, dodging his movement. Kicking and slapping his horse, the wetness under him and the smell of horse filled the awareness. In a few moments, he focused upon the tipi. The familiar markings and the right surroundings confirmed that he was home. Pulling the reins with a sudden jerk, he slowed Big Dog to a walk, and sprang to the ground. Dropping the reins to the ground, he shifted his visual picture to focus upon Little Raven and Hummingbird, as they stepped thought the flap of the tipi. Seeing smoke raise from behind the tipi, Black Eagle walked to the back of the tipi, toward the fire, passing by his wife and mother, without any gestures, or eye contact. Moving close to the fire, he sat down, crossed his legs, and immediately, he began to stare into the small flame.

Black Eagle rested his hands on his thighs, leaned slightly forward, and stared into the fire. He felt peaceful. Looking into the flame deeper, the yellow and white ovules of light waved back and forth, back and forth. He felt very relaxed. He heard himself speaking in a low voice,

"You will be O.K. You will have another chance.'

His eyelids fluttered as if they were going to close. Gazing into the fire, he felt peaceful. He was unaware of his body. He was unaware of his surroundings. He was deeply aware of the flame in front of him. The flame waved peacefully, back and forth, back and forth. He felt his hand become heavy. He felt his hand become very heavy. He fell into a deep, deep sleep.



MY SON, YOU MUST RISK DEATH, TO GAIN KNOWLEDGE

A mental picture of a man, the man with the pointed-nose, formed before him. Dressed in his black coat, he was wearing a strange headdress, with no feathers. Black Eagle spoke softly to him,

"You have come to give me the secret of the thunder stick?"

The man smiled, but nodded his head 'no'.

"I will give you anything you ask. I will give you anything that you desire. I will tell you of the Sioux."

Receiving no response, he continued,

"I will speak to you of great beauty, honor, sacrifice, love."

Still receiving no answer, Black Eagle raised his voice slightly and spoke in a high-pitched voice,

"You trick yourself into believing that love confirms your existence. You feed your body to satisfy your hunger for love, but you bleed from fear of mental pain. You are born into a world of chance, and you are free to choose. You may choose to believe, or you may choose not to believe."

The man with the black coat looked at the gun in his hand and looked toward Black Eagle and spoke,

"I have come to you to give you peace. I have come to tell you the truth. The black balls, the black powder, the Great White Grandfather makes them. He, alone, knows the secret."

"How may I have this secret?"

"You may not have the knowledge. It is for your children's children to learn. For you, it is too late."

As the man spoke, he faded into the crackling flames in front of Black Eagle.

The crackling of the flame in front of him flickered dimly. Looking into the white light, surrounded by a yellow, arrow-shaped flame, the blurred form of a man became more defined. A distant, audible tone seemed to vibrate in the distance. Black Eagle moved his head sharply, to the left and to the right, to detect the sound, but, failed to locate its' source. Looking around, he could recognize his surroundings, but he did not feel that he was part of it. Lying down onto the ground, he drew his knees toward his stomach, and curved his back to enclose his folded arms. Drifting into a deep sleep, he felt an uneasy sense of distress. An image began to appear before him. As it gained form and drifted toward him, he recognized the form to be his father. Black Eagle spoke in a high pitched voice,

"I am happy to see you, my father. Since you have departed, fear and darkness have followed me. I should have gone with you on the war party. There is a powerful White Tribe that has come from under the mud. Since I have met them, I have had no peace."

Black Eagle's father began to speak in a slow, monotone voice,

"The place you live is bad. You should come and be with me in the land of the ghosts."

"Yes, my father, I should go to be with you. I feel worthless here. I feel failure. I am separated from my people. I no longer want to do anything. I feel separated within myself. I do not want to continue at the cost of others."

His father nodded in agreement, smiled and bent over, picking up a bowel of white fluid, in front of his crossed legs. Extending his arms forward, he moved the bowel toward Black Eagle and began to speak,

"Here, my son. Drink and be at peace."

Black Eagle saw himself accepting the bowel. Moving the bowel to his mouth, he began to drink one mouth full after another until the white fluid was gone, and the brown bowel glimmered black before his eyes. When he moved the bowel away from his eyes, the image of his father had disappeared. Looking through his hands, darkness was all that was around him. He was surrounded in darkness. Looking around in the darkness, Black Eagle detected the form of the tipi. Unfolding his legs, he moved onto his knees. Raising his right leg, his body weight shifted, and he stood erect. Turning, he carefully felt his way to the front of the tipi. Lifting the flap, he stooped and entered on his knees. As the light from the fire flickered around the inside of the tipi, he could see three bodies, lying quietly, scattered around the sides of the tipi.

He Whose Horse Is Crazy sat up, and stared toward him. The light from the fire illuminated his expressionless face with a pale glow. Black Eagle continued to crawl until he was close to the flame opposite his son. Crossing his legs, he sat in silence and looked toward him. In a few moments, his son broke the silence,

"Is my father well?"

Black Eagle replied,

"Do you say that I am ill?"

"I do not know. Do you have a twisted heart because we do not seek the black paint?"

"I know that the secrets of the white men are not for me. You, my son, must first find the secrets. You must go into the desert without food, clothing or arms. After you have starved, frozen in the night, and sung the death song, my spirit will come to you in the form of an animal. I will reveal the future source of your medicine power. When you return to our people, you will know of the magic of the thunder stick. You must risk death to gain knowledge. When you return to our people, you will know of the magic of the thunder stick. You must risk death to gain knowledge. When you have passed this knowledge to the Sioux Nation, you will know the season. Farewell, my son. It is a good day for a Sioux Warrior to die."

Pulling off his shirt, Black Eagle continued,

"Do not think about it, my son. You will do the right thing, when the time comes. I have seen you do many brave things. I have seen your strength. You are a wise and wily, like the fox. I will see you when the blanket of darkness uncovers the earth again. Go to sleep."

Black Eagle rolled over to the side of Little Raven, and spoke,

"You are my wife. You have given birth to my son. He will bring honor to our family."

Little Raven rolled away from him, and let out a long, sigh.

Black Eagle responded,

"Death always comes at the right time. The earth goes on forever, but, we, the Sioux, were born to die. I have great love for you. You make me proud. I have tried to bring honor to my family. I have risked death, to bring honor to the Sioux Nation. You must know these things."



THE THUNDERBIRD CEREMONY SENDS AN OWL, A CROW AND A WHITE EAGLE

Waking up the next morning, Black Eagle looked toward Little Raven and spoke,

"I will participate in the Thunderbird Ceremony. Send He Whose Horse Is Crazy to White Buffalo. He must announce that I will be a clown. If anyone wishes to join me, I will be near the Teton River. I will erect a small hut. I will need a pot; several buffalo robes, and buffalo meat. Give me the worst that we have."

Black Eagle turned and began to toss the bedding into the middle of the tipi. Sorting through his clothing, he found the oldest clothes that he had, and began to slip them on. Sorting through the buffalo hides; he picked out three of the poorest hides and rolled them into a bundle. Tying the hides together with a rawhide string, he placed the bundle near the opening of the tipi and crawled to the back of the tipi. Pulling his knife from his side, he cut another string of rawhide, picked up several strands of sagebrush, and tied the lock into his hair. The lock of sagebrush dangled over his forehead (43). Searching through the tipi, he found his war bag, and placed it near the opening of the tipi. As he moved back to the rear of the tipi, a high-pitched singing voice filled the tipi.

"Four men riding painted horses. Wolf standing toward the west. Thunderbirds in human form. Friend, in a sacred manner, I return. The nation sitting holy (44)."

As the medicine man entered, rattling and singing, Black Eagle recognized him to be Two Shields. Hitting his rattler against a small drum, he stopped in front of Black Eagle, hovering over him and spoke,

"I see a man lying on the ground and many horses. The Thunderbird Nation shall pursue (45). Follow me, he who chooses to participate in the Thunderbird Ceremony."

The medicine man began to sing as he exited the tipi.

"In a sacred manner, he made for me a pipe that is different. In a sacred manner, he made it for me. Friend, behold me (46)."

Black Eagle followed close behind him, picking up the bundles at the flap of the tipi. Passing through the opening to the outside, he stood up and Little Raven handed him another bundle.

Black Eagle spoke,

"I will need the pipe, tobacco, the sticks to make fire."

Knotting in understanding, Little Raven entered the tipi, and Black Eagle watched her movement. Turning as she disappeared through the opening of the tipi, he focused upon his mother, Hummingbird. Standing in front of him, she spoke in a weak voice,

"I will place a decorated robe and tobacco on high poles to show that you seek the Thunderbird Nation (47)."

Black Eagle nodded in understanding and shifted his attention back to the movement of the flap of the tipi. Little Raven re-appeared, and handed him another bundle wrapped in doeskin. Holding the bundles under each arm, Black Eagle walked toward Two Shields. The medicine man turned and led the way, singing, rattling and beating on the drum (48). Black Eagle dropped his head and followed the movement of his heals, and mumbled to himself,

"The steam is clouds, fire is like the sun. Meat is from animals. Wankan Tanka takes care of you (49)."

As they made their way through the village, two young boys ran up to him, laughed and shouted,

"He is playing the part of the clown (50)!"

Several women turned and shouted,

"Look! It is a poor beggar. He is dressed in rags. He has a lock of sage in his hair."

Feeling humiliation mount, Black Eagle mumbled,

"I am unworthy of speaking to Wankan Tanka."

As they neared the bank of the Teton River, Black Eagle dropped his bundles and began to remove his jacket and pants. Adjusting his breechcloth, he slowly knelt to the ground and began throwing dust over his body. As the dust filled the air around him, he spoke in a high-pitched voice,

"I will dry before I bathe. Behold me, Wankan Tanka, I do things in reverse. I am a poor, unworthy beggar!"

Returning to his feet, he slowly felt his way down the bank backwards. Moving into the water, it seeped up his legs and over his waist. Stooping down, he picked up a hand full of sand from the riverbed, and began to rub his body in a circular movement. Rubbing gently, he cleansed his body. After rubbing all over, he dipped into the water and began to swim on his back. Paddling out into the current, he pulled with all of his strength, fighting the swift current. Using his left arm now, he turned himself in the water and kicked violently. The water splashed high with a thumping noise. Using both arms now, he kicked and pulled, until he was back near the bank.

Standing to his feet, he felt his way through the river backwards. Reaching his arms behind his back as he neared the bank, he grabbed onto a branch hanging out into the water and pulled himself up the bank backwards. Feeling his way up the bank with his feet, he carefully backed onto the flat surface, near the river. Continuing to step backwards, he made his way to the bundles lying on the ground. Sitting down, he turned and drug the war bag closer. He opened the war bag up, and spread the contents on the ground. Picking up the pouch of buffalo grease and white paint, he began to paint the right side of his face, from his nose to his ear, white. Making streaks of lightning on his right arm and leg (51), he began to chant in a high-pitched voice,

"It was a guard predicted for me. A wind wears me. Behold it! Sacred it is (52)!"

Changing mixtures, he painted the left side of his face, from his nose to his ear, black (53). Rubbing in a circular movement, he worked slowly. As he began to make the streaks of lightning in black down the left arm and leg, he heard the crier, White Buffalo shouting in the distance,

"Black Eagle will take part in the Thunderbird Ceremony. Those who have visions of Thunderbird, those wanting to participate, come and join him!"

In a few moments, Black Eagle finished painting, and placed the paint and buffalo Greece back into the war bag and re-tied it. Reaching for another bundle, he removed the rawhide string, and spread it open. Picking up the bowstring inside this bundle, he picked up the small, pointed stick beside it, placed the stick into the string and twisted it around, and stuck the pointed end into the hole of the other stick. The then placed them on the ground, held the bow with his left hand, sturdied the pointed stick stuck in the hole of the other stick on the ground, and held them both tightly on the ground with his feet and hands. He gathered sage and twigs around him and piled them into a small heap. Moving the bow back and forth, the stick turned in the hole. Back and forth, back and forth, the stick twisted forwards and backwards. Picking up a handful of sage and placing it near the hole, he looked around and focused upon Two Shields. The Shaman was sitting motionlessly staring at the spinning stick. In a few moments, the Shaman spoke,

"Tell me of your dream!"

Black Eagle stopped the movement of the bowstring, looked up, and his eyes shifted to the left and to the right. In a few minutes, he slowly began to speak,

"In the thaw of the winter snow, a Thunderbird came to me and spoke. He told me of the great magic of the thunder stick. I did not know what to do."

Two Shields spoke,

"You should have taken part in the ceremony then! You have waited a long time."

"Yes. Now, I have visions of eating with my father. I have lost my appetite."

With a concerned look, Two Shields shouted,

"You have ghost sickness!"

"I do not know."

Black Eagle responded.

"I believe the visit of the White Tribe has robbed me of my spirit."

Continuing to rub now, a string of white smoke crept upward from the hole in the stick. Rubbing profusely, and blowing, he placed a handful of sage near the smoke. Rubbing and rubbing, the sage began to smoke. Blowing and rubbing, the sage smoked and burst into flame. Laying the flame in front of him, he piled more sage on and lay several twigs over it. Standing, he looked toward Two Shields staring into the flame. Picking up the pot in the buffalo robe, he moved to the water's edge, filled the pot with water, picked up several round stones, and several branches of dead, river wood. Moving back up the bank, he picked up the pot by its rawhide string and proceeded toward the fire. Breaking three branches into four-foot sticks, he tied them together at one end, forming a tripod, and tied the kettle of water to hand into the fire. Dropping the round stones into the fire, he added a few branches of wood to the fire.

Returning to his original position, he opened another bundle, picked up a buffalo tongue, a pipe and a pouch of tobacco. Passing by Two Shields, he gave them to him and sat back down. Two Shields broke two twigs, pressed them into the ground and placed the pipe on the twigs. Taking the buffalo tongue, he stood and pretended to put the meat into the pot. Three times he passed it over the pot, and on the fourth time, he plopped it in (53). After watching the meat sink to the bottom of the pot, he looked toward Black Eagle and spoke,

"Do you have a liking for a special animal, tree, plant or spot of earth (54)?"

"Yes, I like the Elk. It is a beautiful animal. It is brave and graceful. It's teeth last many years. (55). I like the trees that have green needles like the porcupine. They do not stick the enemy, but they stand facing the sun through the summer, and the snow and cold of the winter. They refuse to give up their color. Insects do not eat them. Animals do not eat them. They are too strong. They drop to the ground silently. You may find the earth covered with them. In their death, they make a fine, brown bed. The shade is pleasing to animals. The plant that I like is the 'loco' weed. It has great medicine for stomach problems. It is very powerful. The Bear Nation has not showed me any plants, but I have always wanted to know of a plant that might be used to help my people. My favorite place is the Black Hills. Our enemy, the Crow Nation, holds this place. I would like to be able to live there with the Sioux Nation. With the help of the Thunderbird Nation, I will seek this land. I must wear the magic of the thunder stick. With this weapon, we will be able to pursue our enemy. We will wear the freedom of the lands."

Two Shields responds,

"I see you pay attention to your desires."

You must do worthy deeds to have dreams to purify your life. You must learn the sounds and motions of all the animals around you (56). The sun makes life possible. From the clouds, we have rain. The plants have roots for water. Wankan Tanka teaches the animals what to do. They have their own way. You must rely on yourself (57). Plants learn to live in a certain place. They depend upon their surroundings. You do too (58). You are free from disease. You are rugged and healthy. You drink pure water. You live naturally. But, you are spiritually ill. I do not know if I will be able to help you. You have ghost sickness."

Black Eagle looked toward him as Two Shields awaited a response. But, Black Eagle was unable to answer. Looking into the flame, no thoughts came to his mind. Two Shields, threatened by the silence, continued to speak,

"The owl moves at night, when men are asleep. I receive power through dreams. My dreams are clear, like the owl's vision. I have the soft, gentle ways of the owl (59). Visions may come. I may be able to help."

Suddenly, Two Shields began to beat his rattler against the drum, and sing in a high-pitched voice,

"Father, somewhere comes home howling, A young calf, father is bringing. Mother comes home in a sacred manner (60)."

Two Shields danced around the fire, and moved toward Black Eagle. Dropping his rattler and drum beside him, he grabbed his hands and began rubbing an oily mixture on them. Picking up his drum and rattler again, he began to beat, sing and dance.

Black Eagle looked into the pot and watched the boiling water spew over the brim and drip into the leaping flame, hissing as it hit the hot coals. Black Eagle stood, and looked into the pot. As the bubbles rolled upward, the buffalo tongue was a brown blur in the bottom. Two Shields monitored his movement, and began to sing another song.

"Where the wind is blowing, roaring, I stand by my supernatural power. I made it walk. I roam, galloping, trotting in a timid manner. I watch cautiously (61)"

Black Eagle slowly lowered his hand into the boiling water (62). The water, the head, all sense of being was lost, except the sensation of his hand. Slowly, he lowered his hand to the bottom. Grasping the buffalo tongue, he pulled it upward, and slowly raised it above his head. Not taking a breath or making a sound, he handed the tongue to Two Shields. With a stone face the Shaman accepted the meat, and somewhat lower, continued to repeat the song.

Black Eagle sat back down with blurred vision; his awareness was fixated upon his right hand. Two Shields looked toward him and spoke,

"The sickness seems to be caused by the visit of the White Tribe. You have lost your spirit. I will send a sacred stone to find the White Tribe. (63)"

Black Eagle watched as the Shaman lifted his charm necklace from his neck and over his head. Unraveling a smooth stone, he placed it in the palm of his hand and continued to speak,

"The stone is round, with no beginning and no end. It is a perfect, natural work of art. It is solid (64). I will send it to find your spirit. If you believe in the sacred stone, make a place for the stone to lie. If you do not believe, the stone may strike you (65)."

Black Eagle silently leaned forward onto his knees, picked up a rock near the fire, and began to beat it against another rock lying on the ground. The sandstone rock began to shatter into small fragments As his right hand moved up and down, the redness, and the swelling of his right hand focused his mind's eye briefly. One thud after another, the smaller bits of rock were pounded into sand. Smoothing the foot square of pulverized sandstone out, Black Eagle rolled back into a sitting position, and stared into the flame. Seeing the flame loosing strength, he placed three sticks across it gently. Two Shields moved over to the prepared spot, and placed the round stone down. In a few moments, he spoke,

"I will send you to the White Tribe. When you return, you will tell me many secrets. I release you from being trapped by eagle down feathers (66). You may now have movement. Find your rounded relatives. Go to them in high places looking at the sun. Find your friends that strike with the lightning, and bury into the ground. Talk to Wankan Tanka. Behold, a Sacred Stone Nation (67). Two Shields returned to his seat and began to tie his arms, fingers and toes (68). Black Eagle watched the stone, waiting for it to disappear before his eyes. Two Shields continued to tie himself up. As he maneuvered the rope over his body, he spoke again,

"In the direction of the sunset, the wind is blowing. These stones are round, another round flying, continuing to fly, behold them. In the direction of the giant. Something worthy of reverence. The stones flying toward us. Behold them (69)."

Black eagle looked toward the stone. It was gone! Looking toward the shaman, he lay on his side, motionless. Standing to his feet, Black Eagle added branches to the fire, and slowly paced around the fire in an increasing spiral. Looking toward the ground, searching for firewood, he bent to collect several dead branches, ten to fifteen feet long. Bending further to the ground, he pulled out his knife and began trimming the branches. Collecting several long poles, he returned near the fire, and began to tie the ends of the poles together, and spread them straddling the fire. Standing them up, he spread them out on the bottom, forming a frame for a small sweat lodge. Continuing to work, he wrapped the buffalo hides around the poles, until he had erected a small hut. Picking up a piece of wood near the fire, he began to pole in the burning coals, uncovering the round stones. Gripping the stick with both hands now, he flipped the rocks clear of the fire, and began dragging them with the stick away from the flame. Forming the stones into a small pile, he picked up the pot of water hanging over the fire. Two Shields spoke,

"The Sacred Stone Nation returns!"

Two Shields then began to squirm around and motioned for him to come closer.

"Free my hands!"

He spoke.

As Black Eagle removed the rawhide from his arms and legs, the Shaman continued to speak,

"The sacred stone did not travel far. It spoke to me."

"What did the stone report?"

Black Eagle questioned eagerly.

"The sacred stone says that the White Tribe is in the camp of the Arikaras. The stone speaks of a great meeting. The White Tribe will travel to the Mandan Nation. They will be friendly. They will help the White Tribe. But, the Sacred Stones speak of a long voyage for these White Men. The stone says that the White Tribe will not be back next year. They seek something difficult. A hard time they are having. The stone speaks of a ghost that travels with them."

Black Eagle listened intensively to every word. Watching the Shaman pick up the stone, mumble a few words and place it into the cloth in the palm of his hand. Placing eagle downy feathers around the stone before he closed it up, Two Shields spoke aloud,

"Surrounded by the eagle down, you are unable to travel. You have something between you and the eagle (70)."

He tied the cloth around the stone, and slipped the necklace over his head, and settled it over his chest. Looking toward Black Eagle, he spoke,

"I do not know if I will be able to help you. You have waited a long time to take part in the Ceremony of the Thunderbird. If you do not know if I will be able to help you. You have waited a long time to take part in the Ceremony of the Thunderbird. If you do not know if I will be able to help you. You have waited a long time to take part in the Ceremony of the Thunderbird. If you do not know if I will be able to help you. You have waited a long time to take part in the Ceremony of the Thunderbird. If you do not know if I will be able to know if I will be able to help you. You have waited a long time to take part in the Ceremony. The Shaman began to sing another song, beat the rattler against the drum, and walk up the hill, toward the village. As he proceeded past Black Eagle, he increased the strength of his voice and the pitch trembled slightly higher. As he moved up the hill, growing smaller, and smaller, Black Eagle picked up the bucket of water and crawled through the opening of the hut. Maneuvering into a sitting position, he drug the bowl of water closer, picked it up and began pouring the water onto the pile of round stones in front of him. The water hissed as it splashed onto the rocks, and a cloud of smoke streamed upward, filling the air with steam. Continuing to pour, the hut was soon full of dense, hot air. The steam blurred his vision, and shut out the light from the outside. He could only feel the wetness on his body. Slowly, he began to rub his arms in a circular motion. The wetness on his fingertips rolled the paint, mixed with grease between his fingertips and the surface of his arms. Impulsively, he picked up the bucket of water and poured the remaining contents in front of him. Adjusting the flow of water to the sound of the hissing, he emptied the bowl and threw it behind him. Sitting motionlessly, he listened as his breathing increased with the heat. Monitoring the thump of the pulse behind his eardrums, he awaited each beat. The thump turned into the sound of wings flapping as a picture of an owl came into his awareness. Looking into the yellow eyes of the owl, it became smaller as if he were backing up away from it. The owl leaped into the air, and sailed toward him. Swooping downward, it landed on a large boulder in front of him and spoke,

"Don't run away! You must be brave. Follow me! I will take you to my camp!"

The owl sprang into flight, and hovered effortlessly before him. As the owl moved upward, it remained toe it size, as if he were following. Looking downward, Black Eagle could see the ground below him. Sailing effortlessly, he pursued the flight of the owl. As the owl flew, so he followed, dipping down, and sailing upward. Feeling somewhat relieved to see that the ground was not too far away, he followed the owl. Sailing downward, he came closer to the ground. Following close behind the flight of the owl, the ground came closer and closer. To evade crashing, he held his head up and arched his back. It worked! Gaining altitude, he looked around to locate the owl. Searching frantically now, he saw a bird in front of him. Sailing closer, he saw that it was a black crow. Turning to look in another direction, the crow swooped down and flew in front of him. Lifting his left arm up, he turned and sailed away. But, there in front of him was the crow. The crow called back to him,

"Follow me, I wall take you to my camp!"

Black Eagle resisted the suggestion, and sailed to the right, but the crow swooped in front of him. As he attempted to maneuver upward, the crow changed into an eagle, a White Eagle! Black Eagle held his head up and arched his back to gain altitude. Going up, he turned up and over and the eagle were in front of him.

"You must follow! I am of the White Tribe! I was left out in the sun. I am White! You will follow!"

Black Eagle lowered his head, and looked toward the ground. He was high, too high! The trees looked like specks below. The river was a small, black ribbon. And now the ribbon grew larger.

The ground became black. And, now, looking around, he was suspended in darkness. The repetition of his breathing entered his awareness. His pulse, the thumping in his ears raced and slowed, raced and slowed, sporadically. Unfolding his legs, he felt behind him, picked up a buffalo robe, slipped it over his shoulders. The air was cooing, and a faint light beamed through the opening of the hut. Leaning forward, he braced his body weight with his arms and began to crawl on his knees to the outside.

Moving through the opening, he squinted his eyelids to focus on the six-inch square of red ambers. Pulling the buffalo hide tighter around his shoulders, he felt a shiver sweep over his body. Rubbing the palm of his hand down his chest, the cold wetness formed a line on the side of his right hand. Leaning backwards, he lay down on his back and stared upward. The thousands of specks of light filled his eyes. Scanning the blanket of stars, he focused upon one speck as it started to move. Following it's movement as it streaked downward and out of sight, he looked upward again and searched the sky. Focusing upon a bright light, near the half-moon, he watched it for several minutes. To the left of the bright light, a smaller light blinked dimly, and vanished out of sight. Waiting, and watching, the light seemed to appear, but he wasn't sure. His eyelids began to flutter. His eyelids became heavy. He moved his head to fight off the drift. But, they were too heavy. His eyelids closed, but he was still wide-awake.

He could see teepees burning, men and women were screaming with pain. He felt himself float upward and drift down the hill. Several black balls were chasing him. He felt himself floating down the hill, further.

"Someone is after me."

He heard himself speak.

Running now, he glided down the hill. The black ball was following close behind.

In a creek-bed now, he continued to run frantically. He ran with ease, one splash after another. IN the distance, the stream entered the cave, at the foot of a large mountain. Splashing, splashing, he entered the cave. Everything became quiet. Slowing to a walk, he listened to the voices behind him,

"He went that way! Hurry! Hurry!"

Running faster, the splashing returned methodically. In the distance, the cave forked to the left and to the right. Bearing to the right, he continued to run. The voices seemed to fade. In the distance, a beam of light shined faintly. Running for the light, things became more visible. Moving from the cave, he found himself running on a small dirt path. The path led through a forest of thick, six-foot buffalo hair. The light was dim, with no sun, moon, or stars. To the right, a bright star suddenly appeared over the horizon. The light skipped above the mat of buffalo hair in the distance. The light skipped along with the beat of a strange noise.

RRRRrrr,RRRRrrr."

The noise seemed to get louder and louder.

Black Eagle heard himself speak,

"I don't want to go! Got to go back! Got to finish!"

In the distance, a body of water appeared, covering the horizon. In the middle of the water, fifty feet in the distance, an island came into view.

"I can't go around it!"

he spoke aloud.

"I see people on the island. They look like people I know! I feel peaceful. I see my pale, lifeless body behind me. I see a light, a light guiding me. It is my father. Yes, I will go! As I enter the water, my feet and legs are now warm. I'm up to my knees, up to my waist. I feel warm all over. My body is covering up, over my shoulders, over my head. I see a light, a hand, a body, I see you now, Wankan Tanka! I'm coming! I'm coming!

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