

THE SHAMAN

The World started spinning at full speed. Life was streaming joyfully through every little piece of the Earth, wiggling in all the beautiful forms that have come into existence. Especially in the house of the younger Ksaw Wala's children, everything multiplied and branched infinitely, and soon the whole place was teeming with little curious beings of all shapes and colours. And after some time, all the offspring of the Great Spirit became accustomed to their own house (the sphere of the familiar, so many times touched and seen things), and so engaged in their own activities, that they forgot they all had once come from the One, and that there were other houses inhabited by their spiritual relatives.

And so it happened that the older children of the Great Spirit didn't spare the younger ones a single hardship they could inflict on them. The Sun was always on the move, heaving and tossing violently. He wanted to become whole again, its underground part leaking onto the Earth's surface and his upper part scorching plants and the soil unmercifully. The impatient Moon and the capricious Water danced together the wild dances of changes flooding the valleys and fields underneath their indifferent, treading feet. The younger children also forgot their origin. They forgot that they could talk with Water or ask Wind to blow away black clouds. Plants forgot that they bore in their bodies the magical strength of the Sun and the playful, diamond-like drops of ever-changing Water. Even animals felt scared and lonely in the world, where everyone thought to be separated from others.

The little underground people were also confused. They grew to think, that the region they lived in was the whole world. Their resilient bodies and imaginative minds never stopped creating new and new corridors and massive halls, digging and drilling carelessly through the bones of the

Earth, and if they were to continue, all the ground would have collapsed into the deep, fiery abyss of its molten core.

At this moment, the Great Spirit, Ksaw Wala, realized that it was very important to remind all his children that they had come from One, and that they would stay forever connected with each other through the silver filaments of their actions and thoughts.

Thus he summoned three animals, which were to spread his word of wisdom and compassion to all the houses.

"Condor, you have the respect of everybody for you are indeed the master of the skies. You can easily fly high up, nearly touching the Sun himself with your widely spread, majestic wings. You are also the messenger of life and light. From now on, you will be my interpreter. Henceforth you will have my permission to visit all the houses and talk with all my children. Thus they will pass messages to each other through you."

Then Ksaw Wala thought for a moment and called to himself a little, inconspicuous but curious animal. "Armadillo", he said, "you know, better than any other animal, how to walk through the labyrinthine paths of the underground people as well as through the burrows of the smallest of earthy creatures. Your armour protects you well, and you sneak unnoticed through every narrow cranny. You are a very old, wise and discreet being. Therefore, you will receive the wisdom of the language without words, and you will be also allowed to travel in-between the spheres."

Just at that moment, the magnificent King of Vultures passed by the high mountain, from which the Great Spirit talked to his messengers to-be... as if called by the faint voice of intuition. His noble, pitch-black, glistening wings swished through the air. Ksaw Wala called him also and said: "You, of all the animals that inhabit this sphere, are the most familiar with the world beyond death. You are the healer,

for you clean all the carcasses from the Earth, but you also foretell, when life is about to end. Your featherless head has all the colours of sunset, and your wings reflect the ivory tears of Luna. Particularly the younger of my children become more aware of the mysteries of Life while confronted with Death. Therefore you will also be their interpreter. You will learn the language of all four spheres, and I will show you how to find the air currents that shall carry you to all the houses."

And so it happened. The birds flew away, each in a different direction, and the Armadillo quickly disappeared in the intricate net of the mountain paths.

The Shaman was watching all this with his inner sight, being the Condor, or the Armadillo, or the King of Vultures, each for a little while. However, it was forbidden for him to learn the mystery of the four houses.

And the world became unified once again. Plants and trees remembered that the Sun was in fact their older brother and were transforming his rays into delicious fruits and juices, which they offered as food and medicine to their brothers and sisters. Animals became playful and wise, and the underground people started talking with minerals and precious stones and turned them into gems and jewels of incredible beauty. Water revived with its cooling presence every little particle of life.

However with people, the troubles remained. Not only did they forget that they had been born from the One Spirit, but they also lost all the recognition of their closest siblings—animals, plants and minerals. Surely, they were using them, but forgot that they were their relatives, and the animals, plants and minerals never received anything in return. In that time, people started speaking many languages with many empty words. They talked a lot, but scarcely ever listened. Their

pride and their mind, burdened with the strings of entangled thoughts, cut them off from reality.

And alone they were in their pride, and alone they were in their greed, and there was no help for them. How many times did the Condor try to explain a message from Daati, the Spirit of Brotherhood, but people, accustomed only to their words, heard nothing but frightful croaking! So many times did the vulture bring an urgent note from Weetahn, the Spirit which Stops Illnesses on Time, to help them find a cure with plants, water or minerals, but at seeing him, people fled to hide for they feared death he was said to foretell. And the Armadillo, curled into a shielded ball, arose in them nothing but laughter. But not all people were like that.

In the corner of the house, surrounded by ancient trees and gentle little herbs, lived Shaman. He was a very wise man, and he knew how to speak with all the plants, animals and stones. He saw how the people had separated themselves from the other beings, and it made him very sad. They even built their own house within the original home that Ksaw Wala had given them and enclosed it with a very strong wall of their conceptions and fears.

So Shaman, immersed in his evening prayer, visited the Great Spirit, Ksaw Wala and asked him: "Ksaw Wala, Father of Forms, you gave life to your special child, a human being, to rejoice with him celebrating the beauty of the World. You also endowed him with many skills and talents. However, the very mind that should have made him special had separated him from his siblings. I ask you, give me also the privilege to visit all the houses of the creation and interpret the messages of their inhabitants to people who have totally forgotten their origin. Only thus I can be useful and able to cure them and teach them about their great family."

And Ksaw Wala immediately granted the Shaman his wish, for it came from a pure heart and with a noble intention. And since then, the Shaman, who could speak with people for he understood their language and their unpredictable nature, joined the three privileged animals, the Condor, the Armadillo and the King Vulture in their quest.

And thus the one who wants to listen has the possibility to learn and understand. A person who wants to live as one of Ksaw Wala's children and have compassion for all their brothers and sisters can live that way... for even now, shamans live amongst people. Healers and teachers, men and women who understand the supreme language without words and who know the paths to all four houses.