



AGAIN THEY HAD PUSHED THEIR BODIES BEYOND THEIR LIMITS.



CH'IDZIGYAAK ... WAS AMAZED THAT SHE COULD SIT AND LISTEN TO SA' CRY AND FEEL NO EMOTION. PERHAPS IT WAS NOT MEANT FOR THEM TO GO ON.

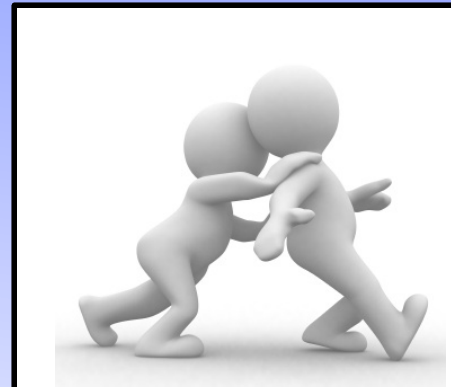


YET, FOR AS LITTLE WILL AS HER OLDER FRIEND HAD, SA' POSSESSED ENOUGH DETERMINATION FOR BOTH OF THEM.

SHE DID NOT WANT HER FRIEND TO KNOW THAT SHE WAS AWAKE, FOR THEN, CH'IDZIGYAAK FELT, SHE WOULD BE OBLIGATED TO MOVE, AND SHE DID NOT WANT TO MOVE.



INSTEAD OF SLIPPING BLISSFULLY INTO OBLIVION, CH'IDZIGYAAK SUDDENLY FELT THE URGENT NEED TO RELIEVE HER BLADDER.



SA' FELT A SLIGHT DISAPPOINTMENT WHEN CH'IDZIGYAAK AGREED TO RESUME THEIR JOURNEY, WONDERING IF DEEP WITHIN HER SHE HAD HOPED CH'IDZIGYAAK WOULD REFUSE TO MOVE.

WE ARE THERE.

EXCEPT WE ARE ON THE WRONG SIDE.



THEY KNEW THEY WOULD HAVE TO HURRY TO MAKE FINAL PREPARATIONS FOR THE WORDS OF THE WINTER, FOR EVEN COLDER WEATHER LAY AHEAD.

CH'IDZIGYAAK: ONCE WHEN I WAS A LITTLE GIRL, THEY LEFT MY GRANDMOTHER BEHIND.

SA': WHEN I WAS YOUNG, I WAS LIKE A BOY.

THEY TALKED. AND A SENSE OF MUTUAL RESPECT DEVELOPED AS EACH LEARNED OF THE OTHER'S PAST HARDSHIPS.

MY PRIDE GREW WITH EACH MOMENT THE OTHERS PRETENDED I WAS NOT THERE, AND I CONTINUED TO PLEAD FOR THE OLD WOMAN'S LIFE.



AS THE DAYS SLOWLY PASSED, THE WEATHER LOST ITS COLD EDGE, AND THE WOMEN SAVORED MOMENTS OF GLEE - THEY HAD SURVIVED THE WINTER!



STANDING UP WITH THE DEAD GROUSE IN HER HAND, CH'IDZIGYAAK TURNED TOWARD THE TENT TO FIND HER FRIEND'S FACE WEATHER IN SMILES.



THAT THE WOMEN DID NOT CATCH ANOTHER BIRD FAILED TO DAMPEN THEIR SPIRITS, FOR THE DAYS GRADUALLY GREW LONGER, WARMER, AND BRIGHTER.