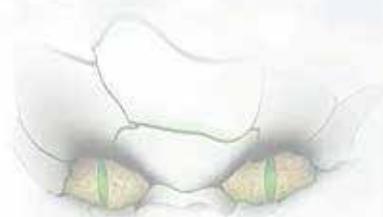


*Te-le'k'*



*The Legend*

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# 1

## KOY

It was a good snow. Koy hadn't seen it so heavy for many seasons, it would be good for the hunt. He remembered back to his childhood years running through the tunnels, and how much game would travel just ahead of him under the manzanita and buckbrush below the snow. Sometimes he would wait at the end of the runs and ambush the wild game as they scurried from the tunnels. This technique usually ended up with quite a catch of the smaller critters, but every once in a while his hunt would be enhanced by a sleeping deer that was sheltered from the cold in a burrow just inside the end of the run.



Dawn was trying to creep through the thick forest, and the morning was still too dark to see very far ahead. So cautiously, he made his way to the first opening hoping not to scare anything away. One of the reasons he liked to hunt in the fresh snow was the quietness of each step. You could easily sneak up on an unsuspecting animal. There were other factors you had to consider though, such as the direction of the wind and how much cover there was, but the soft snow made it all the more effortless.

As he neared the first hole he saw that the snow had been stirred up and the opening was smashed shut. What had happened? Someone or something had beaten him here. Blood was everywhere. It looked like whatever it was had taken a large deer, probably a buck.

Koy was troubled and disappointed at what he'd found at the first location and hoped the next one would be clear.

As he made his way through the dense forest, he could feel the cold wind against his face and smell the freshness of the new storm. The sky was growing dark and the clouds were sifting through the trees, as if to say, it would be a long dreary winter.

As he neared a small clearing, something caught his eye through the mist. He wasn't sure, maybe it was the top of a bush or a small tree? As he approached, it was clear that it was a large hole. It was unusual for one to be in the middle of a run. As he drew close, he saw that the snow was pushed up from beneath and whatever made it was quite large, maybe a wolverine or possibly a small bear.



He surveyed the area, found some dead tree branches and made a makeshift blind near the hole, then sat and watched. The silence was almost

haunting, but it was also relaxing. He would have dosed off, if wasn't for that strange vibration. Maybe it was the snow in the nearby trees falling, causing a low rumbling sound.

He was hungry, tired and stiff from sitting. He had waited a long while hoping for at least a rabbit or quail to exit the burrow. Whatever made the hole probably left its scent and discouraged anything from coming around, besides it was mid-afternoon and he had to get back to the camp to take his younger brother for the late hunt.

Koy stood, stretched and looked toward the clouded sky, hoping to see the sun for direction back. It happened so suddenly he didn't have time to react. The heavy breathing, the pressure on his lower torso and the pain, was all he could sense as he was pulled helplessly to the silence of the snow.