

Story plot: The short story is set in prehistoric times, when people lived inside caves. The tribe leader is dead and his place is taken by his younger brother Nebu. Nebu falls in love with beautiful Kaori, but she is expelled from the tribe. Kaori is accused of witchcraft. Nebu and his clan fight against wild animals and diseases. The untamed wilderness is full of dangers.

Chapter 1 The New King The saga of the Raven Goddess was passed on orally from one generation to the next. The older tribe members told it to the younger ones as bedtime story. It was how the kids learned about the power and splendour of the Goddess. She was their only protectress in the untamed wilderness. The clan of the Goddess inhabited the forest. There they had set up their camp. So that it remained hidden from the outside world. The young leader, Nebu had been selected to inherit his father's place. Nebu's older brother, Sim, was dead. Sim's body lay over a wide, flat rock. The rock was in front of a large cave. The body was going to be burned soon. He died in a battle against another tribe leader. Sim was attacked in the forest by his enemy. During the time of the battle, Sim was unarmed. Nebu had shed tears earlier. Now his face didn't expose his grief. He needed to remain fearless and strong in front of the entire tribe. He was their chosen leader and they treated him almost like a half god. He viewed the tribe members in front of him. They stared at him in silent adoration of his youth and glory. Nebu's skin was still white and flawless. However, his other shoulder blade included a tattoo. It was a black symbol, which included three circles that resembled clouds. The symbol meant "As great leader as the God of Thunder". The ten-year-old Nebu held a spear in his right hand. In its one end, was a pointed hand axe. The axe was attached to the spear with a piece of leather string. His father had made it for Nebu as a birthday present. The boy closed his eyes. He saw a vision of his grandmother Sharma. She was a powerful witch when she was still alive. Sharma sent her blessing to her grandson. She told Nebu to give up fear and anger. She promised him to protect him and his dignity for his entire life. A shiny talisman emitted light from her necklace. Sharma carried the holy stone, since it gave her special powers. She was able to foretell the future and to make herself invisible with its aid. Her husband had found the precious stone by accident. He discovered it inside a mammoth's jaw, which he killed. After slaughtering the beast, her husband took the jewel out. He also cut out one of the beast's giant teeth. He made a horn out of the tooth for Sharma to blow. Nebu stood on a meadow holding Sharma's hand. Suddenly, he awoke from the vision. He opened his eyes. The picture of his grandmother disappeared. Her spirit still nested in his heart and body. Sharma's fortune stone was buried along with her corpse. It was a pity that no one took the stone out of her necklace before she was laid in her grave. Nebu thought. Nebu's eyes were made up with black eyeliner. It made him to look scarier. He would scare away his enemies more easily by looking older than he was. Nebu was the Crow Child. He was never to be sacrificed for the gods. The gods took care of him. Nebu gave his advisors order to start the funeral ceremony of his brother. Men blew into mammoth horns. They produced hollow music. Drums were also played in the background. Nebu watched the priest, who carried out the traditional funeral ceremony. The priest was half naked, thirty-year-old man. His upper body was entirely covered in tattoos. He chanted prayers for Sim's spirit to be salvaged. He warned Sim of the Devil, who would try to trick him on his way to the Underworld. After blessing the corpse, the priest lit the funeral pyre. It produced smoke that was inhaled by the audience. Nebu was disgusted, when he tasted the odour of burning flesh. He felt nausea and sickness. He had to sit down. He began to cough wildly. The advisors supported him by his arms. They led him to sit down on a rock behind Nebu's back. After sitting down, the boy held his breath. He was unwilling to breathe in the smoke. He turned his head away from the pyre. Sim's body

disappeared within twenty minutes. A pile of ashes was all that was left of him. After Nebu left to his home cave, he cried. He couldn't hold back his sadness any longer. His feelings were true for Sim. Sim would never return to him in this life. Nebu knew it. This was the last day of his childhood. Nebu fell asleep on the ground. He rested his heavy head on a wood log. He closed his eyes and started dreaming. He watched a beautiful dream, where he was playing in the forest with sticks and stones. He turned his face to the sun above. Its light warmed him nicely. Then he noticed a butterfly. Spreading its white wings, the butterfly rose in the air. Nebu encountered the goddess's face in the blue sky. She came to him from the clouds. Her motherly presence soothed the boy. Then, his dream ended too soon. Nebu opened his eyes in the dark cave, where the fire had gone out. He knew that it was morning. He was expected to get up. People waited him outside the cave. They expected him to tell them what to do next. Nebu was supposed to lead them to hunt and kill animals for food. He'd learned those skills from his father already. If I only had Sharma's talisman, I would be able to tell the future. Its only a pity that I don't have her stone. Thoughts went flying around in his head. He stepped to the entrance of the cave. A twelve-year-old girl carried him cod fish and snails for breakfast. She handed the meal to his hand inside a large leaf. The dark-skinned girl had black messy hair and large brown eyes. She enticed him with her appearance. The girl was taller but skinnier than Nebu. She introduced herself as Kaori. She was not one of Nebu's family members. Nebu didn't remember seeing her before. Kaori didn't smile when she handed the meal to him. She just said: "eat quickly, we haven't go much time left." Then, she left. Nebu's eyes followed her back. Holding an empty basket, she moved to the river. She was going to swim and collect water from there. Nebu couldn't take his eyes out of her. He watched her getting undressed. Kaori's full apple-sized breasts revealed to him that she was a woman. Kaori threw her clothes on the stone next to the river bank. She got immersed in the cold bath, like she was used to it. She knew that Nebu was watching her. She turned her head towards him. Ashamed, he looked away. Kaori gave him a scolding look. She was used to boys peeping her. Whenever she went bathing in the river or the sea. After a while, Kaori returned with a clay basket full of fresh water. She laid the pot on the ground next to cooking fire. She sat down on the ground. Her upper body was only partly covered by a thin garment, which she wore over her one shoulder. One of her breasts was visible from underneath its fold. She grabbed and twisted her hair dry with her fingers. Looking at Nebu, she asked: "So did you eat your breakfast while I was away?" "Yes, I did. Thank you. Soon, I'm ready to go hunting. What about you? What are your plans for today?" The ruler answered. "I'm going to collect some firewood. It's getting so cold during the night. We need more wood to stay warm." She explained. "Yes, you are right." She noticed that one of her breasts was exposed. Blushing, she pulled the cloth over it. Then, she informed Nebu that she had to leave. She wished him a successful hunting trip, before she ran away. Smiling, Nebu watched her disappear. Then, Nebu joined his hunting team. The group consisted of men and boys, who were of Nebu's age and older. The younger children remained in the camp with the women. Nebu rode on the back of a black dog. The dog was huge, but it was friends with humans. A bag of spears was carried by Nebu on his back. He was going to kill deer, rabbits and moose with the weapons. Of course, the hunters feared the wolves and bears. There were many beasts, who lived in the same forest. Yet the hunters had to take the risk. They had to kill animals in order to survive. The prey was the Goddess' gift to them. They needed their meat and skins desperately. Especially, against the cold winter, the tribe required the hides. The spring had arrived a couple of weeks ago. Snow had melted finally. The air was warmer than usual. The sunny weather

was ideal for the men to go hunting. Their excursion lasted from one to three days. They slept in the open forest without shelter. They were surrounded by wild beasts, who lurked behind the trees. Nebu missed Kaori for the entire trip. He wished her to become his wife one day. Kaori's brave heart was so much like his own. They could sleep together in the same cave and have children. He thought. After he'd get back, he would try to win her heart. He decided.