

# Chapter 1



## Shala's Story

**R**edheaded Shala watched from high on the Skara Dune, searching with her hazel-green eyes through the misty spume blown from the barrage of tidal waves. Was that a speck of humanity far off on the raging sea? Could this faint vision be the core of her quest approaching from that vast, dangerous distance?

Momentarily, the flashing redshanks' flights, searching the churning beach at the foot of the great sandbar, distracted her: she was taken inexorably back to her earliest memories.

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Shala was late. She always was, despite the excitement of the Ancestor Tales. Her northern world had short winter days. When you are a four-year-old girl, on a bright afternoon with the sea gently lapping on that vast expanse of sand, you just want to stand and watch. Her bird friends, the redshanks, dabbled in the tiny advancing waves, searching for wee crustaceans, casting long shadows in the low Orcadian sunlight. Her footprints were scarcely larger than those of her favourite

birds, and she sported a similar redness of leg as her little limbs chilled in the zephyr from off the sea.

Her village was at the head of the bay; she turned towards the wispy smoke trails drifting inland. The main house was closer to the shore than the others. It was big and strong, its stonework sturdy and tight. The wonderful reed-thatched roof pointed up to the very skies. A shimmer of warm air venting from its high pitch told her that her home was warm. Shala waved to her redshanks and ran back. At the high-tide mark she caught her mother's watching eye, making her even more aware of those midwinter stories. Shala's keen eyes flashed over the lines of flotsam. To her right she spotted an amber nugget. Stepping sideways, she garnered it; its glinting, rough-hewn shades matched her finely plaited hair perfectly.

Shala had been dressed for the storytelling for seemingly ages. 'Why does everyone else take so long?' she thought. Her mother beckoned to her, not going down the stone steps to meet her lest she scuff her new shoes. Shala skipped over the pebbly foreshore to nip up the treads to her mum. She held out a small pair of newly braided booties for her. Shala gripped them with her left hand as she opened her right, exposing the amber.

Gull picked her up. 'Amber,' she said kindly. 'It will take on your character. It will polish in your hands. If you are rough it will scratch. If gentle, it'll polish. All its colours, nature and hue will grow as you do. But hurry, dear. We're off to the storytelling.'

Her older brother, Flint, and middle sister, Juniper, were waiting at home. Gull put Shala down on the slab threshold as she called for Jasper, her man. From their door, many neighbours appeared, stooping slightly as they emerged from the great house into the flagstone courtyard.

Everybody was so well turned out. Shala was amazed. 'This happens every year,' Gull said. 'So if you fall asleep during the tales, it won't matter – you'll catch up next time.' Gull lifted Shala and carried her to the raft on the loch far up behind the village. Shala watched as her mum's shell earrings glinted blue and pink as they swung on beaded loops from her pierced lobes.

When the raft had filled with villagers, it was pushed out gently across the lochan. The journey was lovely. The short midwinter day soon turned to evening. As the sun dipped, the water took on a pinkish shimmer with gilded frills. Guiding the raft to the stone-paved slope at the far end, the polesmen sang their solstice songs. The raft nudged the flags and was roped to two stubby standing stones marking the way to the Ancestors' Hall.

Shala was put down on the paving. Everyone leapt to dry land without wetting shoes or hems. The women adjusted their hair as Gull straightened Jasper's feathered headband. She wiped Flint's face. He'd chewed a messy drake's wing on the voyage. Juniper, always neat, smoothed her reddened hair back smartly. In a warm hustle and friendly bustle, the villagers circled left along the cold, shaded path beside the tall mansion. They veered further as the walls lowered to an adult's waist height. The neat masonry stopped abruptly, ending in a standing stone even taller than Shala's father.

Their procession rounded the monolith. A breeze ruffled Shala's feather band. In front of them was a vast hide awning. Inside were neat piles of smouldering ox bones. Resting on the glowing femurs were the largest pots Shala had ever seen. The huge round-bottomed vessels steamed appetizingly.

The light faded. Behind her the cliffs, and the lapping sea: before her, cauldrons of simmering meat and fish. Past them a great arching wall with an imposing central doorway. 'It's like ours, but under the tent roof,' Shala thought. Reflecting the glowing fires, the lintel's polished surface shimmered brilliantly. Through the dark opening was the portal to their past. Within that shadow, Shala's ancestors dwelt.

Though it was her first time here, she had heard about it from Flint and Juniper. 'All you could ever wish to scoff,' Flint would say with dreamy eyes.

'Everyone looks so bonny and happy,' Juniper said as she twiddled with her blouse.

Everything Shala had heard was true. Everybody in their best paints and splendid hair. A wonderful spread too. Folk mingled, delighted, until it was time to start. They dipped strips of fish on sharp sticks

into savoury, simmering water, then pulled them out moments later. 'Here you are, Shala. Yours is in a scallop shell. I'll blow gently to cool it,' Gull said as Juniper and Flint dipped theirs.

'Have some of your favourites... Steamed oysters, Gull,' Jasper said. 'And I think little Shala is ready for some mussels.'

'Thank you, Daddy... I love them.' she responded.



The fish pot had limpets with wild chives as flavouring; samphire and seaweed gave body to the breeze. A crab or three were seething, and had seethed long enough. They were shared round and others popped in to take their place. The meat was for later. Its wafting steam filled the air, giving a richness that only

well-hung auroch produced.

The party evolved. The children played. Hot little drop-scones were handed round as the first part of the Solstice Celebrations entered the second. The chatter of adults subsided. A small glimmer of light showed from the dark of the ancestors' portal. A huge horn blast echoed from within. As this subsided, another resounded, then a third. In a quicker succession, a fourth and a fifth. Shala jumped, clasping her ears. The trumpet sounded again even louder as others joined it from that darkness. Auroch, mountain goat, and rams' horns, were all blown from the innards of the house. Suddenly it stopped; only the reverberating stones retained the frequency of the diminishing blasts. The arching wall echoed, enhancing the effect, enshrouding the partygoers in its acoustic thrill.

The crowd hushed; mouths opened in wonder. All stared towards the entrance. As the inner silence of the dark tomb grew, so did theirs. Moments elapsed like eons as the company began to relax. The flutter of an eyelid, that unconscious movement of someone just thinking of another drop scone was the signal for an uproarious clatter. Deer antlers, auroch shins and hammers were invisibly striking the erect stone slabs in their sepulchre. The resting stalls for those past souls

were uttering their annual hammered shriek, calling the New Year forward. The woman who had been so intent on the drop scone stood stock still, mouth agape, shaking.

'Nobody told me it would be like this,' Shala whispered.

'No, dear,' came Gull's answer. 'If anyone had, you'd have been too scared to come.'

'Oh, Mum, no. It's wonderful. Will they do it again?' Shala asked, beaming into her mother's eyes.

'Not that, but there will be many more things. We're going to listen to our stories. There are many, and they remind us of who we are.'

'Who are we then, Ma?' the tot replied.

'You'll find out,' Gull assured her.

In the shadows, Quernstone, Reaper's wife, reached for that tempting scone once again. Her brave decision calmed all tensions, which Shala had totally missed. Although the clamour from within the ancestors' abode was part of the ancient ceremonies, the drama of it never lessened. Someone from within the antechamber signalled the best moment to crack the first auroch shin against the polished upright for dramatic effect.

A large leather barrel was brought to the throng. The secure lid was eased, fizzing as it loosened. The contents of the bin smelt delicious. Malt, honey, autumn aromas of juniper, blackberry and a sense of apple were ladled into rounded pottery cups that had been warming beside the fire. The warmth matured the brew to a soothing mixture, making it a delight to imbibe. There were parent-sized vessels, youthful measures, and small cups for the wee ones. Some of the big ones disappeared into the darkness under the lintel.

The flaps at the back of the leather awning were lowered, cutting out the world of sea, cliffs and the gathering dark. A nearly full moon hid behind a clouded sky. It broke out occasionally to dapple the translucent roof in lighter and dimmer shades of parchment. The air warmed. Jasper took his precious heron leg-bone flute from his quiver. Placing it to his lips, he played gently. The variation of notes, highs and lows, shrill and soft, called on the Ancestors to emerge

from their haven; to yawn and wake, to stir, to remember and to tell... A muffled belch came from far within the tomb.

Vertical framed parchment panels were lowered a couple of feet in front of the great facade, just leaving the portal in view. Behind these frames a line of small, stone grease-lamps were lit at the base of the slate foundation. Gradually, as people were enjoying a second or third cupful of ambrose, the glow of the lamps increased. They lit up the hides to a warm yellow.

The heron bone obeyed the lips and breath of its master, issuing tunes of joy. Dale, a dark-haired lad of nearly ten, knelt beside Jasper. He had a large cauldron, tightly skinned with a stretched seal hide, its centre painted with a birch-pitch roundel. Suspended from the braided belt on his hare-hide tunic was his drum beater, a shank of springy, dried tangle stalk. He took it in his right hand. In his left he held a mallard's wing. Kneeling at the bowl, he struck the tight skin with the tangle root. The drum boomed. As he struck again and whisked the feathered limb over the surface, the sound of waves and the crashing sea were summoned. The music began rousing the ancestor spirits from slumber.

From within the black void, Longo leaped. He was thin, ancient, naked and dark brown. This aged figure gyrated outside the tomb door, white bones painted on one leg and on the opposite arm. The fleshed arm sported a skeletal hand; the opposite side of Longo's face, a divided skull. Only one side of his pelvis was human flesh, the other white pigment. Alternate vertebrae were shown stemming up from it. Every other rib moved free of his disjointed vertebrae. They flowed around his chest with a life and death of their own. This ancient being leaped in the light and the music.

Shala gripped Gull's hand. Between them they pressed on the warm amber lump. It had never left her grip for a moment. It was becoming hers, part of her. She watched intently as Longo performed his 'Twixt Life and Spirit' dance, leaping behind the screen, casting vast, sharp shadows on to it. The assembly drew in sudden breath as his silhouette was projected forward at them. Jagged movements darted as a startling, spiky-haired figure took the opposite screen.

Other drums played. One skinned pot, with strings stretched across it, was rapidly twanged. As the dervish dancers leaped on, lads and lasses rhythmically rattled smaller drums with shells and nuts inside.

Suddenly complete silence reigned. The music stopped with one bang on Dale's drum. The figures vanished. The heron bone fell silent. The rattle drums stilled. The silhouettes vanished. Nobody moved. Only the blank screens glimmered gently. Tiny wisps of lamp smoke rose behind them. A woman's deep chant came from the dark terminals of each screen. They crouched like sheltering hares. They arose slowly, arms outstretching, every finger showing jet black. They inched towards each other as their chants grew like crying seals, eventually reaching the door to lie like basking selkies.

From high above, Longo dropped to the floor twixt the silenced seals... signalling hush. From behind the doorjamb he reached behind for a long, ornate stick. He leant on it.

Nothing stirred. Longo stood gazing at his congregation. He boomed, 'This is Longo's story. Listen and learn.' Those words hadn't altered for centuries, nor the rest he'd recite: they had been told and retold by generations of Longos.

'Before there was anything, there was *Nothing!*' he began.

'Then there was a Presence.' He pointed to all in his audience with his staff. 'Guman came down from the Stars.' His skeleton hand reached heavenwards. 'Tuman came from the Deep.' The half skull peered far down as his bony foot scraped the solid stone. His look described a place many leagues below. 'Guman and Tuman met in a great cavern.' The staff, clenched in a bone hand, arched to show the enormity of that cave. His voice boomed on every utterance. After each statement he paused. After every movement he waited. His flesh and bone remained stock still.

'Guman and Tuman fashioned a clay Man,' he yelled out mystically. Longo's bony, agile, frame walked round an imaginary figure and admired its many features. The congregation murmured appreciatively. Shala watched Longo's foot lift. His heel bone shifted, showing Longo's skeleton arch and toes.

He spun on this deceased foot. 'Guman and Tuman dried Clay



Man by their fire until he was hard,' he sang loudly, miming tapping gestures on the imaginary figure with his staff.

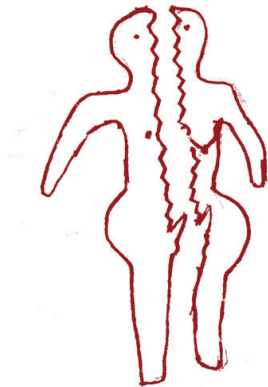
The audience repeated, 'Hard. Very hard.'

'Guman and Tuman drank ambrose in delight.' The onlookers sipped, nodding appreciation.

'Guman and Tuman slept for thirty days.' Longo made exaggerated snoring sounds.

'Guman and Tuman woke from their dreams.' The old man rubbed his eyes; a bone knuckle sank into the flesh eye, a flesh knuckle into skull.

'Guman and Tuman pissed on to their clay Man.' Longo peed on the ground where the imaginary figure stood. A yellow stream twinkled in the dim light. An arched shadow was cast briefly across a screen.



'The clay image of Man parted and softened.' Leaning on his staff, Longo gazed at the stone floor.

'One side was Man.... the other, Woman.'

Longo chanted, 'The man fell near the warm fire and felt desire stir in him.' He stroked his own skin and pulled his curly red pubic hair.

'The clay woman fell away from the fire and stayed cold.' Longo shivered in sympathy.

'Man went hard, and Woman stayed soft.' The ancient actor twirled on his heel.

'Hard Man felt Soft Woman. Man felt sad for Cold Woman. Hard Man lay next to her and mated inside Soft Woman, warming her.'

Longo paused. He stared at his riveted audience.

'Soft Woman woke. She felt life inside. She spoke to Man and called him Husband. Man's first word was 'Wife.' They danced by the fire.'

Behind the shadow screen two naked figures salsa'd as Longo chanted, 'Guman and Tuman were pleased. Guman and Tuman drank ambrose in delight. Guman and Tuman slumbered for two hundred and seventy seven days and nights,' recited Longo.



'Husband and Wife loved life. Husband and Wife embraced. Husband and Wife mated oft. Husband and Wife felt good.' Longo sang out.

'Guman and Tuman Woke from their slumber. Guman and Tuman heard Baby cry. Guman and Tuman shared ambrose with Husband and Wife. Husband and Wife sang to Guman and Tuman of their loving for each other and for Baby.'

Longo's listeners sang, 'Aaaa, aaaaah, baby.'

At Longo's bony-fingered signal, they ceased. 'Husband and Wife named baby LONGO!'

'Aaaaa, aaaaah, Longo. Aaaaa, aaaaah, Longo,' the chorus climaxed.

'Guman and Tuman went to other places. They made more images with different clays. They drank ambrose. They pissed on the figures. They liked what they did and saw.' Longo danced a dance of joy and creation on his drying sandstone flag. 'Guman went back to the Stars. Tuman returned to the Deep.'

He then screeched, 'I am Longo. Son of Man and Woman.' A brightly painted wooden screen dropped in front of him with a loud crack. He vanished abruptly.

Dale drummed briskly with his fingers to shrill blasts from the heron flute.

An echoing shout of, 'That was Longo's tale,' was yelled from deep within the Ancestors' House.

The remains of the fish stew were shared. The reddened crabs broken up and enjoyed.

'I want to learn drumming,' Flint confided to Shala. 'It's brilliant.' He wandered off and spoke to Dale, his older cousin. Dale happily showed many tricks. They tapped away together as the chatter and feasting continued.

Quernstone and Gull removed the large, empty bowl. Quernstone lifted the last cold scone, thinking, 'Reaper might like it. If no, it'll do for something.' Jasper held Shala and Juniper's hands. They wandered in the crowd, chatting. Juniper fiddled with the heron flute, wiping a glob of spit from it. Reaper and his mate Quartz put wood on the fire

to smoulder gently. They adjusted the bones then placed a flagstone on three scorched rocks over the fuel.

That thick slab of level stone warmed and steamed gently. The fine blue smoke from the embers mixed with steamy vapours like rising gossamer. More ambrose appeared to disappear behind this veil through the Ancestors' portal.

The footlights behind the screens glowed. The air became expectant. Flint raised his tangle stalk. *Bang!* it went. He swept the gull's wing over the selkie hide. Jasper placed his lips on the flute, breathing shrill music into it. Their playing was soon accompanied by a rhythmic hum from the womenfolk; then a sonorous male dirge. Shala was wide-eyed, taking in every sound, every note. The amber in her fist warmed. The duo fell silent, the voices ceased. The steam cleared, leaving only pale blue smoky wisps.

Auroch horns resounded from within the Departed Ones' Hall, accompanied by a clatter of bones. In one leap, out from the entrance shot a younger, tall, red-painted man. No bones were painted on him. Instead his internal organs were shown in shades of grey and white and pale limestone yellows. He, fuller in body, was stronger looking: a dramatic sight. His right hand gripped a long, polished leather tube. He stepped forward. In the glow of the fire, Shala noticed his red hair. 'Mum, that's Partan,' she blurted.

'Shhhhh,' came Gull's reply.

'But Mum, it *is* Granddad.'

Gull looked down saying, 'Yes, we know. Rub your amber and watch.' Partan's role demanded fast heel spins and high splits. Shala saw the black entrance loom from beneath him. The leather tube remained gripped fast in his hand. He repeated the acrobatics many times. He juggled the tube from hand to hand. Sometimes in front, then behind, between his legs and over his shoulders. To Shala, he wasn't Granddad Partan any more. He became spirit, like Longo.

Partan ceased whirling abruptly. His scrotum swung still. He gazed with his wide eyes, whites glistening against the hematite greasepaint. His deep blue irises fixed those gathered before him. He knelt to reach

Longo's staff from the paved stage, his gaze keeping his audience anchored.

Partan began Karnal's story in deep, powerful tones. His agile feet spun as he gyrated. Each word projected to the audience in the time-honoured dance.

'Longo lived for 247 years and became dead.' He boomed and spun again. 'Karnal' removed the cap from the tube. He pulled out a long bone. It shone in the goose-fat lamplight. He leaped back onto the heated stone, dancing on his toes and heels.

From behind the screens, Longo's silhouette walked to and fro. At the word 'Dead,' Longo's shadow fell writhing to the floor and lay still. A final twitch and deep death rattle indicating his end. The audience bowed their heads in respect.

Karnal stood still on the slab, 'This is Longo's leg.' He waved the femur around for all to see. He tapped it with the staff. Clack, clack it went. 'Vulture took this sacred bone from him.'

A dark, swooping bird crossed the screens. The shadow-vulture ate Longo's thigh. It dragged his leg bone away and flew off with it. Squawking came from deep within the Ancestor House. Longo's venerated bone dropped loudly deep within.

'Longo was 94 years old. Guman and Tuman saw him in his cavern,' Karnal recited.

Longo's shadow arose and stood behind the parchment. Karnal leaped off the stone. Reaper's hand cast a dish of water on the heated slab. Steam rushed upwards. Two hazy figures emerged from the door to eternity. One hailed, 'I am Guman.' The other, 'I am Tuman.' They became shadow figures beside Longo.

Karnal continued the history, 'Guman and Tuman said to Longo, 'We made Man-Woman from clay. Man mated inside Woman. It was good.' The female Guman and the male Tuman silhouettes mimed the words. A shadow figure of Longo nodded at the images of his visitors. The yellow light accentuated his spiked hair. The congregation nodded.

Karnal jumped on to the steaming stone. The air was refreshing and

different. Vapour hung mistily over his head. He smiled widely at his gathering; his teeth gleamed white, his tongue red. On his forehead, a pattern of vivid grey spirals: his brains. His red hair, bright as a cooked crab, gave him his name Partan, also meaning crab. This mat thinned in the middle. When he bowed the same grey spirals could be seen painted on his crown. Karnal's ochre blended beautifully with that tousled crop. His smile closed. Behind him the shadows continued their discourse.

Karnal spoke: 'Guman returned from the stars. Tuman rose from below the Earth. Together they made many clay images and pissed on them. They liked this... It was good... The figures split... making Man and Woman. Man mated in Woman. Guman and Tuman were truly happy... Many babes breathed.'

To Karnal's right, shadow images raised themselves behind the screens. Karnal peed into the fire. Steam, ash and sparks rose in another cloud, obscuring him in mist. The risen images behind him split in two and tumbled to the ground. Karnal stepped down in front of the glowing embers. He too became a silhouette against the firelight. He held Longo's femur and the staff up high. He lowered his arms, leaning towards his rapt onlookers. He bowed, pointing those totems closer to the folk. Some reached out to touch as they swayed past. Karnal's brain was clear for all to see.

In one elegant move, he straightened, reversed on to his hot platform and said, 'Guman and Tuman told Longo that there were many beings they had made from different clays.'

The audience repeated, 'Many beings made from different clays.'

'Guman and Tuman instructed Longo that he, the first born from Man and Woman, must wander and mate with the daughters of those from other clay beings.' Karnal said this slowly, deeply and deliberately. 'You Longo! Leave your home and mate within daughters of clay.'

That was Guman and Tuman's command. Partan had acted this role for some years. His understanding of the History was immense. In time he would become Longo, when Longo's present actor entered the Mansion of the Spirits.

Karnal stood again on the hot dais, forcing strange muscular movements on his left breast. There beat his painted heart. His great toes gripped the edges of the stone. An ember glowed.

'Guman and Tuman,' he sang in a high tone, 'told all the first sons of Clay Man and Woman to go and mix their clay blood. They must mate and multiply with the daughters of other clay women.'

Karnal's feet twitched, changing position. His movement seemed like dance, but the film of heat-protective ash and fat under his soles was virtually gone. He shifted to the cooler back of the stone. Karnal moistened his lips. His white teeth gleamed. Below his navel were twists of whites, greys, yellows, creams and greens, depicting his guts. A darker brown, outlined in black, described his liver. Just above his neatly groomed pelvic beard, pale yellow showed his bladder.

Karnal chanted on. 'Guman and Tuman say it is right for Men and Women to mix blood. It is bad if they do not. It is therefore forbidden that no more than two generations shall pass without this happening... This is Guman and Tuman's command and mating law.'

Karnal rested on his heels. The shadow pictures mimed every word and action, from left stage and to right. The lamps glowed ever brighter.

Karnal's last lines were delivered. 'Longo told Guman that he understood and would obey. Guman and Tuman returned to their domains. Longo left to make his first babe. His name was Karnal. That is I. I am he. I am Karnal,' he shouted, placing the bone of his father on his leg.

Partan, completing his role, released the remaining contents of his bladder into the ash and embers. Through the reek and steam, he took a final bow.

Shala fell asleep. Gull put her into a reed-woven hammock. The acts continued, illustrating endless history. Each generation represented eons. Race memories were being passed down by means of theatre, poetry, mime and music, along with song and chorus. The character of Jurt was still to perform and tell of Karnal's life.

The screens darkened. No light shone from behind them. Only a bright yellow glow, beaming from the tomb's entrance, faced the

clan. Flint and Dale watched a twisted straw carpet lower over the doorway. It blocked the light. Only tiny chinks of brightness escaped through its thick layers. This blind was ancient: straw strands fell as it was raised to show the silhouette of Jurt.

Jurt's high voice screamed out, 'I am Jurt, daughter of Karnal. I will tell you his story and then mine.' Her voice rose to a high, enveloping pitch from the tunnel mouth. The space behind her echoed, enhancing the shrill tune her larynx played.

'I tell you of my father, Karnal. My mother was Nistor. My father travelled to mate as Guman and Tuman told him. He mixed his blood among many. Karnal found the great cavern. There my mother and her sisters greeted him like others who passed among us. He shared ambrose.

'Guman and Tuman came to Karnal and Nistor. They shared ambrose too. Guman and Tuman announced, "We drank ambrose with you. It is now for Man and Woman, Woman and Man: all the bloods, waters and clays of human have been mixed by the milt of Man and the grace of Woman."

'They turned to Nistor, saying, "Men have done Men's work." They anointed Nistor with honey. They put feathers in her hair. They told Nistor, "All knowledge of life is for you to hold. Your Daughters will inherit that knowledge to guard forever."

'Guman and Tuman said, "We depart now. We shall remain only in your memory and not return."

Jurt moved forward. Her silhouette met the light. She was adorned in feathers from lots of breeds of birds. They lay close, as though perfectly preened. Candles shimmered. When she moved, that glow was reflected. The colours of the many species took their place and part on her: sea eagle, sandpiper, gannet, chaffinch and razorbill. Puffin beaks ringed her neck; ducks' feet hung from her wrists; goose feet covered her toes, shining and glistening.

Jurt's voice fell on her listeners, 'Guman and Tuman were seen no more,' she repeated over and over. 'Guman and Tuman were seen no more.'

Jurt recited on. 'Nistor, my mother, took the knowledge and became bird. She flew with Guman and Tuman as they parted from this world. "Mothers will see all," was the last ever heard from Guman and Tuman. Mother returned to the depths of her cavern. She mated with Karnal. I was born of that tryst.'

Jurt raised her winged arms. They shone with the dark shade of raven, the grey of goose, the black of auk. 'I, Jurt, grew and became Aiva. The Bird, who knows of land, sky and the depths of the waters: Our flocks soar and remember.'

Aiva turned, vanishing into the tomb. The straw mat descended.

Silence reigned. The Ancestor House was quiet. The entrance went pitch dark as the screen lifted. Quernstone swallowed to choke on a scone crumb. Another fell and lodged between her breasts. The tales were at an end for that night. Reaper handed her a draft of ambrose. Her choking ceased.

The throng of Lee Holme sang on as Shala slept in the comfy hammock.