

MARY HUNTER AUSTIN

THE ARROW-MAKER: A
DRAMA IN THREE ACTS

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Austin M.

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

The greatest difficulty to be met in the writing of an Indian play is the extensive misinformation about Indians. Any real aboriginal of my acquaintance resembles his prototype in the public mind about as much as he does the high-nosed, wooden sign of a tobacco store, the fact being that, among the fifty-eight linguistic groups of American aboriginals, customs, traits, and beliefs differ as greatly as among Slavs and Sicilians. Their very speech appears not to be derived from any common stock. All that they really have of likeness is an average condition of primitiveness: they have traveled just so far toward an understanding of the world they live in, and no farther. It is this general limitation of knowledge which makes, in spite of the multiplication of tribal customs, a common attitude of mind which alone affords a basis of interpretation.

But before attempting to realize the working of Indian psychology, you must first rid yourself of the notion that there is any real difference between the tribes of men except the explanations. What determines man's behavior in the presence of fever, thunder, and the separations of death, is the nature of his guess at the causes of these things. The issues of life do not vary so much with the conditions of civilization as is popularly supposed.

Chiefest among the misconceptions of primitive life, which make difficult any dramatic presentation of it, is the notion that all human contacts are accompanied by the degree of emotional stress that obtains only in the most complex social organizations. We are always hearing, from the people farthest removed from them, of "great primitive passions," when in fact what distinguishes the passions of the tribesmen from our own is their greater liability to the pacific influences of nature, and their greater freedom from the stimulus of imagination. What among us makes for the immensity of emotion, is the great weight of accumulated emotional tradition stored up in literature and art, almost entirely wanting in the camps of the aboriginals. There the two greatest themes of modern drama, love and ambition, are modified, the one by the more or less communal nature of tribal labor, the other by the plain fact that in the simple, open-air life of the Indian the physical stress of sex is actually much less than in conditions called civilized.

When the critics are heard talking of "drama of great primitive passions," what they mean is great barbaric passions, passions far enough along in the process of socialization to be subject to the interactions of wealth, caste, and established religion, and still free from the obligation of politeness. But the life of the American Indian provides no such conditions, and, moreover, in the factor which makes conspicuously for the degree of complication called Plot, is notably wanting, – I mean in the factor of Privacy. Where all the functions of living are carried on in the presence of the community, or at the best behind the thin-walled, leafy huts, human relations become simplified to a degree difficult for our complexer habit to comprehend. The only really great passions – great, I mean, in the sense of being dramatically possible – are communal, and find their expression in the dance which is the normal vehicle of emotional stress.

In *The Arrow-Maker* the author, without dwelling too much on tribal peculiarities, has attempted the explication of this primitive attitude toward a human type common to all conditions of society. The particular mould in which the story is cast takes shape from the manner of aboriginal life in the Southwest, anywhere between the Klamath River and the Painted Desert; but it has been written in vain if the situation has not also worked itself out in terms of your own environment.

The Chisera is simply the Genius, one of those singular and powerful characters whom we are still, with all our learning, unable to account for without falling back on the primitive conception of

gift as arising from direct communication with the gods. That she becomes a Medicine Woman is due to the circumstance of being born into a time which fails to discriminate very clearly as to just which of the inexplicable things lie within the control of her particular gift. That she accepts the interpretation of her preëminence which common opinion provides for her, does not alter the fact that she is no more or less than just the gifted woman, too much occupied with the use of her gift to look well after herself, and more or less at the mercy of the tribe. What chiefly influences their attitude toward her is worthy of note, being no less than the universal, unreasoned conviction that great gift belongs, not to the possessor of it, but to society at large. The whole question then becomes one of how the tribe shall work the Chisera to their best advantage.

How they did this, with what damage and success is to be read, but if to be read profitably, with its application in mind to the present social awakening to the waste, the enormous and stupid waste, of the gifts of women. To one fresh from the consideration of the roots of life as they lie close to the surface of primitive society, this obsession of the recent centuries, that the community can only be served by a gift for architecture, for administration, for healing, when it occurs in the person of a male, is only a trifle less ridiculous than that other social stupidity, namely, that a gift of mothering must not be exercised except in the event of a particular man being able, under certain restrictions, to afford the opportunity. There is perhaps no social movement going on at present so deep-rooted and dramatic as this struggle of Femininity to recapture its right to serve, and still to serve with whatever powers and possessions it finds itself endowed. But a dramatic presentation of it is hardly possible outside of primitive conditions where no tradition intervenes to prevent society from accepting the logic of events.

Whatever more there may be in *The Arrow-Maker*, besides its Indian color, should lie in the discovery by the Chisera, to which the author subscribes, that it is also in conjunction with her normal relation for loving and bearing that the possessor of gifts finds the greatest increment of power. To such of these as have not discovered it for themselves, *The Arrow-Maker* is hopefully recommended.

NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The Arrow-Maker was first published as produced at The New Theatre, New York, in the spring of 1911. In that edition certain concessions were made to what was thought to be the demand for a drama of Indian life which should present the Indian more nearly as he is popularly conceived.

After four years the success of the published play as an authentic note on aboriginal life as well as a drama suitable for production in schools and colleges, seems to warrant its publication in the original form. As it now stands, the book not only conforms to the author's original conception of the drama, but to the conditions of the life it presents.

With the addition of notes and glossary it is hoped the present edition will meet every demand that can be made on an honest attempt to render in dramatic form a neglected phase of American life.

M. A.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA

In the order of their appearance

CHOCO	}	
PAMAQUASH	}	<i>Fighting men</i>
TAVWOTS	}	
YAVI		<i>A youth</i>
SEEGOOCHE		<i>The Chief's wife</i>
TIAWA		<i>A very old woman</i>
WACOBABA		<i>Wife to Pamaquash</i>
THE CHISERA		<i>Medicine Woman of the Paiutes</i>
BRIGHT WATER		<i>The Chief's daughter</i>
WHITE FLOWER	}	
TUIYO	}	<i>Friends of Bright Water</i>
PIOKE	}	
SIMWA		<i>The Arrow-Maker</i>
PADAHOON		<i>Rival to Simwa for leadership</i>
RAIN WIND		<i>Chief of the Paiutes</i>
HAIWAI		<i>A young matron</i>

ACT FIRST

Scene. —*The hut of the Chisera, in the foot-hills of the Sierras. It stands at the mouth of a steep, dark cañon, opening toward the valley of Sagharawite. At the back rise high and barren cliffs where eagles nest; at the foot of the cliffs runs a stream, hidden by willow and buckthorn and toyon. The wickiup is built in the usual Paiute fashion, of long willows set about a circular pit, bent over to form a dome, thatched with reeds and grass. About the hut lie baskets and blankets, a stone metate, other household articles, all of the best quality; in front is a clear space overflowing with knee-deep many-colored bloom of the California spring. A little bank that runs from the wickiup to the toyon bushes is covered with white forget-me-nots. The hearth-fire between two stones is quite out, but the deerskin that screens the opening of the hut is caught up at one side, a sign that the owner is not far from home, or expects to return soon.*

At first glance the scene appears devoid of life, but suddenly the call of a jay bird is heard faintly and far up the trail that leads to the right among the rocks. It is repeated nearer at hand, perfectly imitated but with a nuance that advises of human origin, and two or three half-naked Indians are seen to be making their way toward the bottom of the cañon, their movements so cunningly harmonized with the lines of the landscape as to render them nearly invisible. Choco and Pamaquash with two others come together at the end of the bank farthest from the Chisera's hut.

Choco

Who called?

Pamaquash

It came from farther up.

Choco

Yavi, I think.

Pamaquash

He must have seen something.

Choco

By the Bear, if the Castacs have crossed our boundaries, there are some of them shall not recross it!

Pamaquash

Hush – the Chisera – she will hear you!

Choco

She is not in the hut. She went out toward the hills early this morning, and has not yet returned. Besides, if the Castacs have crossed, we cannot keep it from the women much longer.

Pamaquash

(Who has moved up to a better post of observation.) There is some one on the trail.

(The jay's call is heard and answered softly by Pamaquash.)

Choco

Yavi. But Tavwots is not with him. *(Yavi comes dropping from the cliffs.)* What have you seen?

Yavi

Smoke rising – by Deer Leap. Two long puffs and a short one.

(The news is received with sharp, excited murmurs.)

Pamaquash

More than a score – and with all our youths we cannot count so many.

Choco

And this business of war leader still unsettled – The Council must sit at once. Go, one of you, and tell Chief Rain Wind that Tavwots has signaled from Deer Leap that more than a score of Castacs are out against us.

Pamaquash

And tell the women to prepare a gift hastily for the Chisera. Who knows how soon we shall have need of her medicine.

(One of the Indians departs on this errand.)

Choco

Never so much need of it as when we have neglected our own part of the affair! Even before the Castacs began to fill up our springs and drive our deer, we knew that the Chief is too old for war; and now that the enemy has crossed our borders we are still leaderless.

Pamaquash

So we should not be if we had followed the tribal use and given the leadership to years and experience. It is you young men who have unsettled judgment, with the to-do you have made about the Arrow-Maker.

Choco

I have nothing against years and experience, but when one has the gods as plainly on his side as Simwa —

Yavi

Never have I seen a man so increase in power and fortune —

Pamaquash

Huh – huh! I too have watched the growth of this Simwa. Also I have seen a gourd swelling with the rains, and I have not laid it to the gods in either case. But the Council must sit upon it. We must bring it to the Council.

Yavi

(*Hotly.*) Why should you credit the gods with Simwa's good fortune since he himself does not so claim it? For my part, I think with the Arrow-Maker, that it is better for a man to thrive by his own wits, rather than by the making of medicine or the wisdom of the elders.

Pamaquash

(*From above.*) Tst – st, Tavwots!

(*Tavwots comes down the cañon panting with speed. He drops exhausted on the bank, and Yavi gives him water between his palms from the creek.*)

Choco

Have they crossed?

Tavwots

Between Deer Leap and Standing Rock – more than a score, though I think some of them were boys – but they had no women.

Choco

They mean fighting, then!

Yavi

Well, they can have it.

Tavwots

But they should not be let fatten on our deer before they come to it. Winnemucca, whom I left at Deer Leap, will bring us word where they camp to-night. In the mean time there is much to do. (*Rising.*)

Choco

Much. No doubt Simwa will have something to suggest.

Tavwots

The Arrow-Maker is not yet war leader, my friend. I go to the Chief and the Council. (*He goes.*)

Choco

And yet, I think the Chief favors Simwa, else why should he prefer to put the election to lot rather than keep to the custom of the fathers?

Yavi

(*Going.*) There might be reasons to that, not touching the merits of the Arrow-Maker.

Pamaquash

Tavwots has met the women!

(*Sounds of the grief of the women in the direction of the camp.*)

Choco

They are coming to the Chisera. We should not have let them find us here; they will neglect their business with her to beset us with questions.

(To them enter three women of the campody of Sagharawite, carrying perfect-patterned, bowl-shaped baskets, with gifts of food for the Chisera. Seegooche, the Chiefs wife, is old and full of dignity. Tiawa is old and sharp, but Wacoba is a comfortable, comely matron, who wears a blanket modestly yet to conceal charms not past their prime. Seegooche and Tiawa wear basket caps, but Wacoba has a bandeau of bright beads about her hair. They show signs of agitation, instantly subdued at sight of the men.)

Seegooche

Is this true what Tavwots has told us, that the Castacs are upon us?

Choco

No nearer than Pahrump. Not so near by the time we have done with them. What gifts have you?

Tiawa

The best the camp affords. Think you we would stint when the smoke of the Castacs goes up within our borders?

Wacoba

Where is she?

Choco

Abroad in the hills gathering roots and herbs for to-night's medicine. Wait for her. – We must go look to our fighting gear.

(He goes out in the direction of the campody.)

Pamaquash

(*To Wacoba.*) My bow case, is it finished?

Wacoba

And the bow inside it. See that you come not back to me nor to your young son until the bowstring is frayed asunder.

Pamaquash

If you do your work with the Chisera as well as we with Castac, you shall not need to question our bowstrings. (*Going.*)

Seegooche

Leave us to deal – though if she cannot help us in this matter, I do not know where we shall turn.

Tiawa

Never have I asked help of her, and been disappointed.

Wacoba

(Gathering flowers.) Aye, but that was mere women's matters, weevil in the pine nuts, a love-charm or a colicky child. *This is war!*

Seegooche

(Still peering about.) As if that were not a woman's affair also!

Tiawa

You may well say that! It was in our last quarrel with Castac I lost the only man-child I ever had, dead before he was born. When the women showed me his face, it was all puckered with the bitterness of that defeat. You may well say a woman's matter!

Seegooche

That was the year my husband was first made Chief, and we covered defeat with victory, as we shall again. It was Tinnemaha, the father of the Chisera, went before the gods for us, I remember.

Tiawa

Well for us that he taught her his strong medicine. Not a fighting man from Tecuya to Tehachappi but trusts in her.

(Goes to the creek and dips up water to drink in her basket cap.)

Wacoba

(Tentatively.) It is believed by some that she makes medicine for Simwa, the Arrow-Maker, and that is why his arrows are so well feathered and fly so swiftly to the mark.

Seegooche

Simwa! Why, he scoffs at charms and speaks lightly even of the gods.

Tiawa

(Giving the others to drink from her cap.) Aye; Simwa puts not faith in anybody but Simwa.

Seegooche

And with good reason, for he is the most skillful of the tribesmen. He has made all the arrows for the fighting men. Do you think they will make him war leader?

Wacoba

(Ornamenting the basket she has brought with a wreath of flowers, which she plucks.) Padahoon will never agree to it.

Tiawa

But if Simwa is the better man?

Wacoba

The Sparrow Hawk is older, and has the greater experience.

Seegooche

Prutt! If age and experience were all, my husband would not ask that a new leader be chosen. Young men are keenest-eyed and quickest afoot.

(She moves up the trail looking for signs of the Chisera.)

Tiawa

(Going over to Wacoba, aside from Seegooche.) So the Chief favors Simwa? I would not have thought it.

Wacoba

(Significantly.) Seegooche's daughter is not married, and the Arrow-Maker has many blankets.

Tiawa

Ugh, huh! So the scent lies up that trail? Well, why not?

Wacoba

Why not? The Chief's daughter and the war leader? A good match.

Tiawa

(Going across to the hut.) Aye, a good match!.. Do you know, I have never been in the Chisera's house. It is said she has a great store of baskets and many beads. Let us look.

Seegooche

No, no; do not go near it.

Wacoba

(*Alarmed.*) *Kima!* Tiawa, she may be watching you.

Tiawa

(*By the hut, but not daring to enter it.*) What harm to visit a neighbor's house when the door is open. Besides, she makes no bad medicine.

Seegooche

We know that she does not, but not that she could not if she would.

Tiawa

(*Returning reluctantly.*) Why should we hold the Chisera so apart from the campody? Why should she not have a husband and children as other women? How can she go before the gods for us until she knows what we are thinking in our hearts?

Wacoba

(*Jumping up.*) I have seen something stirring in the alder bushes. I think the Chisera comes!

Seegooche

Do not be seen too near the hut. Come away, Tiawa.

Tiawa

Have you the presents ready? (*The women take up their baskets hastily.*) Hide your basket, Seegooche. It is not well to let all your gifts appear on the first showing, for if she is not persuaded at first, we shall have something of more worth.

(*The Chisera comes out of the trail by the almond bushes, young and tall and comely, but of dignified, almost forbidding, carriage. She is dressed chiefly in skins; her hair is very long, braided with beads. She carries a small burden basket on her back, supported by a band about her forehead. She removes this, and drops it at the hut, coming forward.*)

The Chisera

Friends, what have we to do with one another? Seegooche, has your meal fermented? Or has your baby the colic again, Wacoba?

Seegooche

We have a gift for you, Chisera.

(The women draw near timidly, each, as she speaks, placing her basket at the Chisera's feet, and retire.)

The Chisera

(Looking at the gifts, without touching them.) The venison is fat and tender; Seegooche, there is no one grinds meal so smoothly as you. The honey is indeed acceptable.

(After a pause, during which the medicine woman looks keenly at them.)

Tiawa

We do not come for ourselves, Chisera, but from the tribeswomen.

Seegooche

From every one who has a husband or son able to join battle.

The Chisera

(Eagerly.) Is there battle?

Seegooche

Even as we came, there was word that the Castacs are camped at Pahrump, and before night our men must meet them.

The Chisera

And you ask me – ?

Seegooche

(Approaching appealingly and sinking to the ground in the stress of anxiety.) A charm, Chisera!

Tiawa

(Approaching with Wacoba.) A most potent medicine, O friend of the gods!

Wacoba

That our men may have strength and discretion. That their hearts may not turn to water and their knees quake under them —

Tiawa

(Urgently.) May the bows of Castac be broken, and their arrows turned aside —

Seegooche

For the lords of our bodies and the sons of our bodies, a blessing, Chisera!

Wacoba

That our hearths may be kept alight and our children know their fathers —

Tiawa

When the noise of battle is joined and the buzzards come, may they feed on our foes, Chisera —

Seegooche

O friend of the gods, befriend us!

(The women cast dust on their hair and rock to and fro while the Chisera speaks, lifting up their arms in an agony of entreating.)

The Chisera

Am I not also a tribeswoman? Would not I do so much for my people? But your gifts and your prayers will be acceptable to the gods, for of myself I can do nothing. *(She stoops to the gifts, but hesitates.)* Who is this that comes?

(The young girls steal up noiselessly through the bushes, led by the Chief's daughter. Bright Water is lovely and young; her hair, flowing loosely over her shoulders and breast, is mingled with strings of beads and bright berries. Her dress of fringed buckskin is heavily beaded, her arms are weighted with armlets of silver and carved beads of turquoise; about her neck hangs a disk of glittering shell. She walks proudly, a little in advance of the others, who bunch up timidly like quail on the trail, behind her. The women, catching sight of the girls, spring up, frightened, and stand half protectingly between them and the Chisera.)

Tiawa

It is the Chief's daughter.

Seegooche

What do you here? You have neither sons nor husbands that you should ask spells and charms.

Bright Water

How, then, shall we have husbands or sons, if the battle goes against us?

The Chisera

Well answered, Chief's daughter.

Bright Water

(Surprised.) You know me?

The Chisera

I have heard that the loveliest maiden of Sagharawite is called Bright Water, daughter of Rain Wind, Chief of the Paiutes.

Seegooche

(Going over to Bright Water.) You should have stayed in the wickiup, my daughter; you are too young to go seeking magic medicine.

Bright Water

The more need because we are young, mother. If the loss of battle come to you, at least you have had the love of a man and the lips of children at the breast. But we, if the battle goes against us, what have we?

The Chisera

Ay, truly, Seegooche, there are no joys so hard to do without as those we have not had.

Bright Water

Therefore, we ask a charm, Chisera, for our sweethearts; and, in the mean time, may this remind you —

(She drops a bracelet in the Chisera's basket.)

White Flower

(Going forward.) The scarlet beads from me, Chisera. I am to be married in the time of tasseling corn.

Tuiyo

The shells from me, Chisera. Good medicine!

Pioke

Strong Bow is my lover, Chisera. Bring him safe home again.

(The girls retire after dropping their gifts in the Chisera's basket.)

The Chisera

(A little stiffly.) You have no need of gifts. Am I not young, even as you? Should *you* pray for your lover any more or less for the sake of a few beads?

Seegooche

(Anxiously.) Be not angry, Chisera. They would repay you for the dancing and the singing.

(The Chisera gathers up the gifts that the older women have brought and goes into the hut. The girls take up their gifts, puzzled.)

Seegooche

I am afraid you have vexed her with your foolish quest.

Bright Water

Has the Chisera a lover also, that she speak so?

Seegooche

It is not possible and we not know of it, for since her father's death if any sought her hand in marriage, he must come to my husband in the matter of dowry.

Wacoba

No fear that any will come while she is still the Chisera.

Bright Water

She is the wisest of us all.

Tiawa

Wisdom is good as a guest, but it wears out its welcome when it sits by the hearth-stone.

Bright Water

She has great power with the gods.

Wacoba

So much so that if she had a husband, he dare not beat her lest she run and tattle to them.

Seegooche

She is our Chisera, and there is not another like her between Tehachappi and Tecuya. If she were wearied with stooping and sweating, if she were anxious with bearing and rearing, how could she go before the gods for us?

Tiawa

Aye, that is the talk in the wickiups, that we must hold her apart from us to give her room for her great offices, but I have always said – but I am old and nobody minds me – I have always said that if she had loved as we love and had borne as we have borne, she would be the more fitted to entreat the gods that we may not lose.

Seegooche

(*As the Chisera comes out of the hut.*) If you are angry, Chisera, turn it against our enemies of Castac.

The Chisera

You know that I cannot curse.

Tiawa

Is it true, Chisera, that you make no bad medicine?

The Chisera

Many kinds of sickness I can cure, and give easy childbirth. I can bring rain, and give fortune in the hunt, but of the making of evil spells I know nothing.

Seegooche

But your father, the medicine man – he was the dread and wonder of the tribes.

The Chisera

Aye, my father could kill by a spell, and make a wasting sickness with a frown, but he thought such powers not proper to women: therefore he taught me none.

Wacoba

But you will bring a blessing on the battle? Oh, Chisera, they do not tell us women, but we hear it whispered about the camp that the men of Castac are five and twenty, and even with the youths who go to their first battle we cannot make a score of ours. It is the Friend of the Soul of Man must make good our numbers.

The Chisera

Even now I go to prepare strong medicine.

Wacoba

Come away, then, and leave the Chisera to her work. (*Going.*)

Seegooche

May the gods befriend you. If we have your blessing, we care little for another's curse. (*Going.*)

The Chisera

Stay. After all, we are but women together, and if a woman may give counsel, women may hear it.

Tiawa

Would we might hear yours to-day!

The Chisera

When the smoke of the medicine fire arises, so as to be seen from the spring, do you come up along the creek as far as the black rock.

Women

Yes, yes!

The Chisera

When you hear the medicine rattles, stand off by the toyon.

Women

By the toyon – yes!

The Chisera

But when the rattles are stopped, and the singing falls off, come up very softly, not to disturb the Council, and hear what the gods have said. If the men speak against it, I will stand for you.

Seegooche

Our thanks to you, Chisera, for this kindness.

Tiawa

And though you are a Chisera, and have strange intercourse with the gods, I know you a woman, by this token.

The Chisera

Doubt it not, but go.

Seegooche

Come away, girls.

(They go out, the girls with them. But Bright Water lingers, and comes back to the Chisera.)

Bright Water

Chisera —

The Chisera

Chief's daughter?

Bright Water

Call me by my name.

The Chisera

Bright Water, what would you have of me?

Bright Water

Can you – will you make a charm for one going out to battle whose name is not spoken?

The Chisera

How shall the gods find him out, if he is not to be named?

Bright Water

(*Earnestly.*) Oh, he is handsome and strong in the shoulders; the muscles of his back are laced like thongs. He is the bravest —

The Chisera

(*Laughing.*) Chief's daughter, whenever I have made love charms, they have been for men handsome and strong in the back.

Bright Water

(*Abashed.*) I know not how to describe him.

The Chisera

(*Still smiling.*) And his name is not to be spoken? (Bright Water *continues to look down at her moccasin.*) If I had something of his: something he had shaped with his hands or worn upon his person, that I could make medicine upon —

Bright Water

Like this?

(Takes amulet from her neck and holds it out.)

The Chisera

(Taking it.) Did he give you this?

Bright Water

He made it.

The Chisera

(Examining it.) It is skillfully fashioned.

Bright Water

Will it answer?

The Chisera

To make a spell upon? Yes, if you can spare it.

Bright Water

Shall I have it again?

The Chisera

When the time is past for which the spell is made.

Bright Water

Make it, then; a powerful medicine against ill fortune in battle. And this for your pains, Chisera.
(Holds out bracelet.)

The Chisera

(Proudly.) I want no gifts. Keep your bracelet.

Bright Water

(With equal pride.) The Chief's daughter asks no favors.

The Chisera

But if a Chisera choose to confer them? *(With sudden feeling.)* What question is there between us of Chief's daughter and Chisera? We are two women, and young.

Bright Water

(Uncertainly.) The Chisera is the friend of the gods.

The Chisera

And therefore not the friend of any tribeswoman? *(Passionately.)* Oh, I am weary of the friendship of the gods! If I have walked in the midnight and heard what the great ones have said, is that any reason I should not know what a man says to a maid in the dusk – or do a kindness to my own kind – or love, and be beloved?

Bright Water

(Moved.) Therefore take it *(offering bracelet again)* as one woman from another – and you shall make a charm for me for love.

The Chisera

(Taking the gift.) I shall make it as though I loved him myself.

Bright Water

(Startled.) Oh, I did not say I loved him.

The Chisera

(Smiling.) No?

Bright Water

(Studying the pattern of her moccasin.) Is it true, Chisera, that you have been called to the Council that decides upon the war leader who is to be chosen in my father's place?

The Chisera

I am to inquire of the gods concerning it.

Bright Water

(Diffidently.) Chisera, I have heard – my father thinks – Simwa, the Arrow-Maker, is well spoken of.

(The first note of the love call is heard far up the cliffs. The Chisera starts and controls herself.)

The Chisera

(Coldly, in dismissal.) Simwa needs the good word of no man. It shall be as the gods determine.

(Goes over to hut. The love call sounds nearer.)

Bright Water

(After a moment's hesitation.) Farewell, Chisera. *(She goes.)*

The Chisera

(Looking up the trail.) Ah, Simwa, Simwa, what bond there is between us, when, if I but pronounce thy name in my heart, thy voice answers.

(The love call is repeated far up the cliffs above her hut, and she answers it, singing:)

Over-long are thy feet on the trails,

O Much Desired!!

Dost thou not hear afar what my blood whispers,

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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