

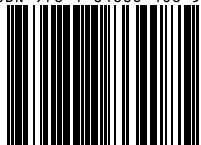
Weakness of any kind is frowned upon.  
Only bravery is admired. I pray to the  
spirits every day to make me brave.

It's almost the end of the Stone Age. People are  
meant to be tough and strong but young Wolf  
struggles to fit in. When a sacred spear is stolen,  
Wolf is blamed for its disappearance and vows to  
find it. But Wolf has never left the village before  
and the world beyond the sea is a complete  
unknown... where will this journey take him  
and what secrets will he uncover?

Join Wolf on his hunt for the spear, as  
he journeys from the village now known as  
Skara Brae to a wider, ancient world on  
the cusp of a new age.

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SAVIOUR PIROTTA  The STOLEN SPEAR

Maverick



# The ISLANDS

(Now known as  
the Orkneys, Scotland)



Wolf's Village

Great Island

The Island of  
Red Cliffs

High Island

Seal Island



## CHAPTER 1

### A Beached Whale

The sun had not yet risen as I stumbled bleary-eyed out of our house, closely followed by my dog, Shadow. It's my elder brother's job to look after the sheep during the night and he doesn't like it when I'm not there to take over the moment the sun comes up.

I was making sure my flint knife was secure under my belt when Shadow started barking. I looked up to see a girl running towards me. I knew her well. She was my cousin. Her family lived in a small village close to the shore where they collect a strange black stone called pumice.

'Raven,' I called.

‘There’s a beached whale down by Green Rock,’ gasped my cousin. ‘Father spotted it only just now. Mother said to let everyone in your village know before strangers get to it.’

I watched her turn and run back along the path. Then I hurried indoors along a dark, twisting corridor that led to our front door. It was so low you had to duck to get through it.

‘Did you forget something?’ asked my mother, peering through the smoke of the cooking fire.

‘There’s a whale washed up on the beach,’ I said. ‘Just on the other side of Green Rock.’

My father looked up from his breakfast. ‘A beached whale, did you say?’

‘Aye! Cousin Raven came up from the shore to tell us.’

He was on his feet in an instant. My father is a tall man and he cast a long shadow on the wall. I flinched as he spoke to me in his gruff voice.

‘Go and inform the others in the village. Tell everyone to gather at the meeting place. And tell





the shaman to be there too.’

The corridor that leads to our front door connects all the houses in our village, the best one on Great Island, our home. That way we can visit each other without having to step out in the cold and rain. I ran along it now, poking my head through the open doorways.

‘Father said we’re all to meet outside the tool workshop. Right now.’

Our village has no official leader. We are all equal. Even Moon, the shaman who protects us from evil spirits, is not considered above others. But some people are better at certain things than others and they become temporary leaders when they are needed. My father is very good at organising crowds and it was to him that people turned as he came out of the stone corridor.

‘What is the matter, Bear? Has someone tried stealing the sheep?’

‘There’s a beached whale down by Green Rock,’ said Father. ‘We must get to it before the

other villages find out about it. Bring your flint knives and axes. Bring baskets for the meat.’

A beached whale is always good news for our village, for any village really. It means plenty to eat for the next few moons. There will even be a feast around the fire with guests and storytelling. We have a very good storyteller in our village. We call him ‘the keeper of the stories’ because he can remember the slightest detail about people and events, and weave it into his stories. His tales keep memories of our ancestors alive.

Mother will hang great chunks of whale meat from the ceiling where it will get cooked by the smoke from the fire. It’ll be a life saver in the coming winter when fresh food is scarce. The whalebone will be turned into tools and beads for necklaces.

‘I’ll come with you all to thank the spirit of the whale,’ said Moon, ‘and to offer a gift to the sea.’

He was a short fellow with a bushy beard and wild hair, both of which had turned white with



age. Feathers and pierced shells dangled in his hair. His round, pale eyes had given him his name. They were full of kindness when he looked at you.

Moon lived in a house just outside the village with his son, Rain. It was bigger than anyone else's but I wouldn't want to live there myself. It's close to the underground rooms where we keep the bones of our dead ancestors.

'I'll fetch a basket for our family's share of the whale, Father,' I said.

Father scowled. 'You'll only get in the way, Wolf.'

'But, Father--' I started to argue.

Father's eyes narrowed, which meant he was getting angry. 'You know the sight of all that blood will give you bad dreams.'

This was true. The sight of dead or injured animals makes me feel terrible. It's why I never go hunting. But today I promised myself I would not be squeamish. I would earn my share of the meat.

'I was the first one in the village to get the news,' I insisted. 'I want to go with you.'

'Don't argue with me,' growled Father. 'Go and take over from your brother in the meadow. Hawk will come with us instead. Hurry up!'

'Yes, Wolf,' said the shaman kindly. 'Do as your father says.'



My ears burned with shame as I set off to the meadow where we grazed our sheep. Shadow

trotted loyally behind me. He always sensed when I was upset and was as quiet as a mouse.

I know I can talk back but I hate it when Father puts me down in front of others. He would never do that to Hawk. The other children will be making snide remarks behind my back for a long time now, especially Rain. For some reason, the shaman's son doesn't like me. He takes every opportunity to push me around, although never in front of his father, who only has gentle words for me.

Weakness of any kind is frowned upon in our community. Only bravery is admired, because it helps us to survive the harsh winters and attacks from our enemies.

I pray to the spirits every day to make me brave. I especially pray to the spirit of the wolf because I am named after him. We of the stone village believe our names affect the way we live. My father's parents called him Bear because they hoped he would grow up to be as fierce as one.

Their wish came true because my father has a wild temper and lashes out at people when he gets angry.

I got my name because a shadow of a wolf fell across our doorway the moment I was born. My mother says it was almost like the wolf had come to pay his respects. It was a sign from the spirits, although she had no idea what it meant.

I pushed the thoughts of names and their meanings aside as I got to our grazing field. My brother, Hawk, smiled when he saw me and Shadow approaching.

'I'm so glad to see you,' he said. 'Can't wait to tuck into a warm breakfast when I get home.'

'You'll not want to waste time on breakfast when you hear this,' I said. 'There's a beached whale down by Green Rock. Father wants you to go help strip it.'

Hawk's face lit up at the news. 'Great! I could do with a bit of action after sitting here all night. Don't let the fire go out, Wolf. I don't want to have

to light another one tonight. And make sure you watch the lambs carefully: I spotted an eagle earlier.’

‘I’ll keep an eye out for it,’ I promised.

Shadow and I settled down to wait out the long day. In the distance, I could hear the rest of the village making its way down to the beach. Then all was quiet. The sun rose higher and I lay back in the grass to watch the sky. I often do that, just look up at the sky and wonder what lies hidden behind that ceiling of bright blue. I know that every rock on our island, every animal and tree has its own spirit that must be kept happy at all times. Hidden spirits control the earth, the sea and the sky.

Was the sky spirit looking down at me right now? I hoped so, for I have always felt closer to the sky spirit than any other.

Some time later I heard the villagers coming back from the beach. They sounded happy and the women were singing. That made me feel

miserable all over again. How I wished I had been allowed to go with them.

I ate my lunch, feeding Shadow most of it for sadness makes me lose my appetite. Then I walked around the meadow, making sure the lambs had not wandered off. After that there was nothing else to do, except look at the sky some more.

The hot sun must have lulled me to sleep because the next thing I knew, Shadow was barking furiously. I sat up, hastily wiping my face. The sun was setting. I had slept for ages. To my horror, I could hear a terrified bleating. An eagle had snatched one of the lambs!

I scrambled to my feet, trying hard not to panic. What would Hawk do in this situation? *Ha*, snickered a little voice inside my head, *Hawk would never fall asleep when he’s looking after the sheep. And you promised him you’d watch out for the eagle too...*

Shadow had set off after the bird, still barking

