

Theresa Robinson

Age: 14

Tsashaht and Ahousaht

Grade 9 – Alberni District Secondary

Port Alberni, BC

Amitola – “Rainbow”

Once long ago, a village existed near the sea. The beach was glimmering with white sand, green seaweed, raw driftwood and the land was covered with tress that could survive the salty air. A rainbow crossed the raging sea; the seven colours shining on the waves.

A hideous longhouse was located farther from the other longhouses. The wood had decayed horribly in different places of the structure and instead of an oval wood roof, a large and ripped looking cloth covered the top.

“Brother, I’ve returned...”

A girl of fourteen entered the longhouse; her dark sapphire eyes glittered black with guilt as they glanced back before taking in the scarred back of her older twin brother. Her long wavy and slightly mussed hair spilled over her shoulders; his light aquamarine eyes noticed as he stopped carving, stood and turned around. It had been braided back before. She held her body stiffly; scarred hands that held a basket of leaves and herbs shook. The brother strode over and pushed her hair back. Her dark skin had bright red hand marks that were slowly turning dark purple. The thick straps of her long deerskin dress his some of the redness.

“Hinto, what happened?” He asked sharply, taking her by the wrist and making her sit on a scarce pile of poor quality furs that was on the dirt floor, grabbing a large flat stone, some herbs and another stone shaped like a rough and jagged-like cylinder. Hinto bit her lip as tears fell.

“Co-cocheta... went and said something to the Chief’s wife, Yahto...” He began to grind the herbs into a fine powder then poured water over the powder, waiting for it to dry. “And?” “Cocheta said that I tried stealing what she had gathered but I didn’t! When the Chief’s wife came to check her basket, I was standing near them so Cocheta accused me. I argued but his wife didn’t believe me and started shaking me then sent me home.” Hinto sniffled out.

While she rambled, Yahto had been making a tiny fire in their humble hearth, heating a small bowl of water. “I see...” He scraped the wet mud-like powder off the flat rock and scooped it into the boiling water. Silence would have ensued if not for Hinto’s sniffles and whimpers of pain for her now rapidly bruising arms, the bold purple on her skin caused Yahto to grimace. Yahto hastily and uncarefully took the bowl off the fire, which was now full of an icky-looking and smelly paste. He began to stir with difficulty. A few moments after, he scooped the now gooey paste into his sister’s hand then left outside, securing the door’s flap tightly. Hinto winced as she applied it to her wounds.

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No one dared to leave their homes as the children of bitter beauty Winter awoke. The Chief glanced coldly through the door of his longhouse to Hinto and Yahto’s. Miyax, his current wife, busied herself with their dinner and his two children boredly drew scribbles in the dirt ground of their home. The coldness in his eyes turned into warmth as they glanced towards his children. Elan was his son and the soon-to-be Chief, yet he favoured his cherished Cocheta, who was the most beautiful in the village. He decided that he would throw out those twin abominations to keep himself in the favour of Cocheta, hearing the newest tale she spun of their trouble.

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Hinto's teeth chattered as they moved through the dense branches of the trees, looking for something that would be a temporary home. Yahto sighed and wrapped one of his tattered furs around her. She smiled as best she could before her eyes widened in surprised fear. Yahto looked at her worriedly and a small gasp sighed from his mouth. Reflected in Hinto's eyes was a wolf pack. The alpha was a large proud-looking black male. His hard yellow eyes narrowed and his mouth bore into a snarl. The villages heard a scream from the forest and they all smirked maliciously.

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Miyax tended to her husband wearily. After they had banished Hinto and Yahto a half year ago, the village had been taken over by foreigners who were like the white sands of the beach. Most of the people died and the rest of living were treated as slaves. Elan had been killed; his dying words gurgled out with his blood in questioning: "Is this the Wrath of the Creator for shunning those two?" The now ex-Chief hadn't shed a tear nor spared one last glance to his son as Miyax had sobbed and clung to his corpse. The Chief had disowned him because Elan had, somehow, been in love with Hinto. He became very deathly ill, however, after Cocheta had been forced to marry the outsiders' leader. Miyax glared at nothing spitefully.

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Hinto laughed happily as the new pups chased after her, trying to bite the flowing tail of her dress and nipping at her ankles playfully. Yahto, however, tumbled back through the large den opening, when the pups saw him. His twin simply giggled more and ignored helping him, seeing their 'father' and the other adults come back from the hunt. Their 'babysitter' howled in welcome, the pups rushing out of the den with Yahto and barking their greeting. Hinto crawled over to the alpha they had met six months ago with her head lowered as the black leader bit her nose gently, to which she rubbed her head lovingly against his furry cheek. Yahto and the pups followed suite as his sister moved away and greeted the others.

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The villagers gaped as they saw the two people who they had shunned and thought were dead, kneeling so calmly to the feral looking black wolf, whose mouth dripped with the blood of the foreign leader. Golden eyes narrowed into hard emeralds as they glared at him. The foreign leader stammered in horrified fright, holding his deeply gashed arm. They gawked even more as he and his followers fled. Yahto closed his eyes and signed through his nose peacefully while Hinto gave a small but warm smile.

“Why?” asked Cocheta, staring at the twins with shocked horror. Her father leaned against her for support. The twins didn’t answer but watched their wolf pack with curious eyes. Gasps and screams came as the wolves turned into humans. The Chief began shaking, knowing who they were. “The Mingan...” Whispers arose silently into the air. The twins blinked but they weren’t surprised. Hinto wiped the blood from the mouth of the black haired man with gold eyes who she and her brother were standing next to. He patted her on the head. Yahto moved backwards a few steps as a white haired woman with pale eyes, the black haired man’s mate, warmly embraced him. More surprise for the villagers came as a woman appeared out of thin air. The man and woman gently pushed their ‘children’ towards her.

“Tainn... Do you remember who I am?” She asked, softly stroking their faces.

“Tainn...mother.” They said in unison. “Mother.”

She smiled broadly and turned towards the aged Chief. “The unjust shall receive nothing... yet you received kindness for being unjust.” The villagers flinched at her coldness. “Remember this.”

Knowing where they were going, the wins hugged their wolf spirits fondly before returning to their mother's side, smiling as the rainbow glowed with luster over the village.

Somewhere in the flow of time, a village existed near the sea. The beach had glimmered with white sand, green seaweed, raw driftwood and the land had been covered with trees that could survive the salty air. A rainbow reflected on the frozen sea; the colours shining on the ice.

They taught something very important in this village. It was said in a riddle of the skies: "The day may be chased away by the night unwillingly but does not the day's aquamarine sky return, always in harmony with the sapphire sky of night?"