

## DEER LESSON

by Rylen Bordeau

It was a time before the Europeans came to our lands. My name is etsim skelaw and it means little beaver and I'm going to tell you a story of how I learnt that it is important to follow our people's teachings.

It all started when I was a young man and I was out hunting with my dad. We were hunting this deer for some time now and I just wanted to get it.

My dad could see it, but he kept on saying, "not yet". After a while I could not wait any longer, so I pulled back the string with the arrow and let go. I hit it!

My dad was angry I could tell but he didn't let it out. He went on his knees and started to pray but I didn't pray. I just wanted to get home with this deer. I said to my dad, "let's just go already!" He didn't answer so I said it again.

He finally got up and with a big mean voice he said, "SON!! You must pray to the Creator and thank the deer for giving us his meat and fur."

I don't care, I said. Let's just get home.

We finally got home, and my dad went some place but I didn't care to know where. I was just happy I got the deer.

My mom came to me and said she was so proud of me. Let's go and get this meat and cook it, she said. I replied, "I should get the most." My mom asked, why? Why should you get the most? Because I killed it.

We all get the same amount Mom said. "But I killed it" I said. We all get the same amount, she said again.

I saw my dad come and he whispered something to my mom, and my mom got a look of rage. An elder came from around the corner and the look of rage on my mom's face disappeared.

The elder came to me and said "etsim skelaw! Why didn't you pray to the Creator and thank the deer when you killed this deer?" Why do we need to? I asked. It is very important to do, the elder said.

Well I'm not going to do it, I quickly replied.

If you will not change your ways then you must canoe to that island and not come back until you have learned your lesson", said the elder. "What????!!! No please? I don't want to go," I said.

You must go, I am sorry, the elder said.

Mom, Dad you're just letting this happen? You must go son, you have to learn on your own, my dad said.

Fine I am going, bye.

I was terrified when I was walking to the canoe. I didn't know what I was going to do. I looked at my mom and dad holding back my tears. I got in the canoe and started to paddle and as soon as they were out of sight I felt tears streaming down my face.

I was thinking what if I never return, what if I never learn my lesson or even die at this island. Where would I sleep? I couldn't make a long house on my own. I don't have any weapons or tools and I haven't ate since I woke up.

I need to get some food.

I'll make sure to pray and give thanks to the animal and then I can go home right? Ya okay let's go, I told myself.

After I arrived at the island I realized that I have no idea what this place is. I have never been here.

So I looked for an animal and prayed to the Creator "please let me find an animal Creator." and I apologized

to the Creator, 'I am sorry Creator for not giving thanks to the deer, please forgive me!?"

I then made a spear. I saw a deer and I thought I snuck up on it but it heard me so I threw the spear at it and I got it.

Then I heard something behind me, and it was three little fawns. A huge wave of guilt came over me... I killed their mother.

They ran off and I was mad at myself, so I prayed and said "Creator please watch over those fawns, I don't want them to die and I am said sorry to the Mother deer.

I was thankful to the mother deer and began saying thank you for her meat and fur and I am sorry.

It didn't feel right but I needed the food.

When I saw another deer I thought to myself, is that the deer you sent to me Creator? I am sorry for thinking that this mother deer was the one you sent me.

It was getting dark and I needed a fire. I found the stuff I needed for the fire and was cooking the deer. Creator please protect me through the night and thank you for this day.

When I woke up, I didn't feel like I was ready to go back. If I were to stay then I needed to make some sort of shelter and I had a lot of deer meat left so I cut a large piece of meat off and left the rest for some animal that would come across the deer could eat it.

I couldn't hold the meat all day so I will cook it in a couple hours.

Creator please help me find some materials for a shelter.

I was walking along the shoreline and saw a family of yewyews swimming and also seen a family of mixalh with her cubs.

Finally, I had all the materials I needed to make a little shelter. I need to cook the meat before it goes bad. I made the fire and ate my food and now I was going to bed.

Creator please help me have a good night sleep and keep me protected during my sleep.

It was a cold night that night. I first felt it on my toes and then felt it moving up my body and I woke up freezing. My hair was frozen from my sweat.

I think had a vision that night, I am sure of it. I don't know where I was in the vision but it was somewhere on

this island. I remember from the vision that I was standing over an animal. I don't know why but that was all I could remember.

I need to make a fire before I freeze to death. I need something dry but that could be hard to find because of how cold it is.

After I found the materials for the fire, I made my fire.

Then I saw a spider on my shoulder, and I am terrified of spiders. "HOLY CRAP!!!" I said, as I hit the spider off my shoulder and ran about ten feet away from where I was sitting. I felt embarrassed even though there is no one nearby.

I am still wondering what that vision was. It hasn't been in my mind but now and then it pops up in my thoughts. I have been thinking and wondering if I am the first person that's been put on this island, or am I the first in a while? And when will I know when it is okay to go back. I could just lie!? No, I'd never let myself live with it.

Now that I'm nice and warm I am ready to go to sleep. I wasn't sleeping long when I woke up and I had another vision. It was more clear this time and I could see the animal I was standing over, it was a moose. I still don't know why I was standing over it but it is getting clearer. I

got distracted because of my hunger pains. I need to find food. I went go look for food and found some berries.

Now that I ate, I am going to explore around the island. When I was exploring the island I saw a lot of things like a family of beavers or skelaw, bears or mixalh and a school of salmon or sts'ukwi7.

I kept hearing noises behind me. What are those noises? I said. Then I saw it a huge moose!

The moose saw that I seen it and It charged. So I put my spear in front of me and then a huge amount of force hit me and sent me tumbling down the hill. Now my spear is in half. The moose charged again but I went for the neck and I felt the spear hit something and the moose hit me and I fell to the ground. I heard a big thump and it was the moose. I walked to the moose and saw it was still alive but in so much pain.

This was what I seen in my vision?

I began praying to the creator without hesitation, Creator please help the moose with the pain. "I'm sorry for your pain", I said to the moose.

I had to put the moose out of his misery. I felt bad but I had to do it. "I am sorry but thank you for your meat. I

hope you have a good journey to your loved ones, I said to the moose.

Creator thank you for giving me this journey, now I have learned my lesson. I understand why we give thanks and pray.

As I prepared the moose for my return home I was thinking of my parents, were they sad or happy that I was gone? Or were they waiting for my return? Do they miss me?

When I returned home my mom and dad were on the shore waiting for me.

Later I thought about what I learned and the reason why it is so important to give thanks.

It's so important because the animal is giving you their fur, meat, bones and it's giving you their life!

I realized how important it is to be thankful because without the animal you cannot eat, you cannot stay warm, and can't live.

Today and every day since I thank the Creator for giving me a meal and thank the animal for its life.



I have become a great hunter and that is because of the Creator and the lessons and teachings I learned on the island.

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