

want to see my mother and father again. I love them. Do you believe me? *(He nods.)* I want to be friends with the villagers, but they won't let me. You're the only one who tries to understand. I used to wake up and say. "To-day will be different." My mother said. "Anatou, every day is the beginning of some new wonderful thing." But it wasn't true! Each day ended the same way and each dawn I was frightened again. And then today...today was the worst of all.

TARTO. I'm sorry, Anatou.

ANATOU. Tarto, you were brave to come back here. You know they'll be angry if they find you here.

TARTO. I know.

ANATOU. You will be a fine hunter, Tarto...the finest of the whole village one day. Tarto, why did you come back?

TARTO. I am your friend, Anatou. I always will be even if...

ANATOU. Even if what, Tarto?

TARTO. Anatou, listen. My father said...that...well, he said... *(Gulps.)* He said you put spells on the seals so they couldn't come out of the water. Anatou, couldn't you say another spell so we could all eat? Then it would be all right again, Anatou.

ANATOU *(horrificed)*. Do you believe that, Tarto?

TARTO *(miserably)*. Well, first I said it wasn't true! But today...

ANATOU. Tarto, listen. There's nothing I can do. I can't make a spell like a shaman, like the wise man. I'm hungry, too, Just like you. Even if I wanted to, there is nothing I can do.

TARTO *(slowly)*. Don't you want to? Don't you want to help us, Anatou?

ANATOU. Don't you believe me either, Tarto? Doesn't anyone? I'm not any different. I don't have any magic powers. I'm just like anyone else.

TARTO. Your skin is white, mine is brown. Your hair is pale like the dawn, mine is dark like the night. *(He is colder now.)* You're not like anyone I've seen. *(A long pause.)*

ANATOU. I've never heard you say that before. Everyone else, but not you! You never seemed to care. You made up for all the others.

(Sound of dogs.)

TARTO *(uncomfortably)*. I have to go, Anatou...it's late. What will you do?

ANATOU *(with a horrible realization)*. I know I can't stay here now. Tarto, when you lose everything at once, your choice has been made. You can only follow it.

TARTO. But where will you go? What will you do?

ANATOU *(pauses, makes difficult decision)*. The forest, Tarto, It's only a few days from here. I've heard about it from the old men and the Shaman.

TARTO *(impulsively)*. But you can't. Don't you know about it? It's a place of whispers in the night, of strange whines. They say the trees are living beings but they can't speak. It's not safe for an Inuit to spend a night in the forest. What if the Wood God changes you into a wolf or another animal?

ANATOU *(slowly)*. Yes...what if he changes me into a wolf?

PLACE AND TIME

The entire action of the play takes place in a small, isolated Inuit village, Little Whale River, and the forest, a few days inland. It is located in the Hudson Bay area of Canada.

The time is long before the missionaries established their settlements, long before white man had been seen. A time when the spirits and the Shaman, or the wise man, ruled.

Prologue

It is the end of January. In foreground we see an expanse of white spread out. It is broken in a few places by hillocks which rise up like seal's heads from the plains. There is an atmosphere of cold beauty and awesome space.

The STORYTELLER enters on the apron of the stage. He is dressed, as all the Inuits, in the attire of the Hudson Bay Inuits, but somehow there is the quality about him of excitement. He is no ordinary hunter.

STORYTELLER. Far beyond the world you know—

Of sun, rushing rivers, and trees

Is the Northland

Where the winter snow is gray,

There is no sound of birds

Nothing but the stillness of space

Of endless snow

And endless cold.

There, the child Anatou was born

In the village of Little Whale River.

It was small, beside the sea.

But the search for food never ended.

TARTO (*continuing without hearing her*). It's dark and mysterious, Anatou. It's a place where Inuits never go. ANATOU. But. don't you see? That's just why. There is no place else! (*Pauses.*) Maybe the Wood God won't care if my hair is pale...like the dawn!

END OF ACT I

ACT II

Scene i

Outside the forest at night. Late March. The opening of this scene is mimed and the audience only sees ANATOU's silhouette.

STORYTELLER. Anatou ran. It was dark and frightening. The only sound she heard was the wind whipping the snow around her.

(ANATOU drops from exhaustion. She is crying but she must continue.)

ANATOU. Where shall I go?

STORYTELLER. No one could hear her cry. There was no one but the wind. Anatou knew if she stopped too long she would freeze in the fierce cold. Then suddenly she saw the place where no one had ever been.

(Part of the forest appears stage R. ANATOU stops stage L.)

ANATOU. The forest! I remember the old men used to tell each other tales by the fire. What did they say? No Inuit must ever go into the forest. You must never spend the night there. But that's where the Wood God lives. (*She*

starts to move toward the forest.) I must go. I must ask him. *(Rest of forest scrim appears as ANATOU runs first stage R, then stage L, stopping at center stage. Exhausted, she sinks to the ground. She is trembling with fear and slowly rises to her knees. Softly.)* Wood God! *(Louder.)* Wood God! *(Looks all around her.)* Wood God...help me.

(The WOOD GOD enters. He appears, as the spirits are reputed to, in the shape of an animal. He has chosen the shape of an awesome owl which is white in color.)

WOOD GOD. Who dares to come into my forest where the wind and snow cry into the darkness?

ANATOU *(draws back)*. Are you the Wood God?

WOOD GOD. I am! And will be till the end of time! Who said you could enter my forest?

ANATOU *(terrified)*. No one.

WOOD GOD. Where do you come from?

ANATOU. I come from Little Whale River.

WOOD GOD. Are you an Inuit? *(She nods.)* Then why did you come here? Don't you know no Inuit comes into the middle of the forest and dares to disturb my sleep? Leave my kingdom now and be glad you still have your life.

ANATOU *(pleading)*. No! You don't understand. Please don't send me away. *(Crying. The WOOD GOD comes closer and as he approaches, moonlight shines around them both.)*

WOOD GOD. Ah-ah. Even in the darkness your hair shines. Is it the moon, child?

ANATOU *(desperate)*. Wood God. Wood God, can't you see? Even hidden here it shines and glitters. If I were to crawl into a cave it would be the same.

WOOD GOD *(lifts her face and peers into it)*. Your face is as pale as ice. *(Softer.)* And your eyes are red from crying. *(Shakes his head.)* That's too bad. It means you're human.

ANATOU. I am an Inuit. But they don't believe me. Nobody does. Help me. Wood God, help me!

WOOD GOD. How can I help you? Are you hungry, child? Is that why you came here?

ANATOU *(nods)*. We all are...no one has eaten in days. But it is not my fault...they blame me because my hair shines, because it isn't like the raven's wing. But I am hungry too. I can't go any further...I can't.

WOOD GOD. We have no food to give you, child. You must leave. Your people will be worried. *(He starts to exit.)*

ANATOU. Wait! Wait and hear me, Wood God. It is not food I want. It is not food that made me wake the great spirit of the Wood God.

WOOD GOD. What then?

ANATOU *(slowly)*. I want what only your powers can grant. But first, Wood God, hear my story.

WOOD GOD. Begin. Quickly, child. You mustn't savor what tastes bitter.

ANATOU. Aja. It is true. You do see much.

WOOD GOD. Begin from the beginning; when you were born.

ANATOU. Even though I was a girl, my parents were happy, or at least they seemed to be. Even though I

KIVIOG. And he'll be a companion for my son, Tarto, born under the same moon.

(They all laugh except KARVIK and ARNARQIK, who are strangely quiet.)

VILLAGER 1. Karvik! Arnarqik! You are silent. Show us the man child. We've come a long way to see him.

(ARNARQIK moves slowly.)

ARNARQIK. It is a girl child...but we are glad.

KARVIK. She will be good.

ARNARQIK. It is true. There is joy in feeling new life come to the great world.

VILLAGER 1. A girl! Ah-ah. That means more care.

VILLAGER 2. And more attention.

KIVIOG. She cannot hunt.

VILLAGERS *(politely)*. But let us see her anyway.

(ARNARQIK moves away troubled, then points to the caribou skin.)

ARNARQIK. There, look for yourself.

(KARVIK has turned away. VILLAGERS crowd around the child, move back abruptly and whirl on KARVIK and ARNARQIK.)

VILLAGER 1 *(in low horror)*. Her hair is white!

VILLAGER 2. Her face is pale.

KIVIOG. She cannot be an Inuit.

VILLAGER 1. She cannot be one of us!

KARVIK. Of course she is. Her hair will get darker. Wait.

VILLAGER 2. But her face. Look at it. No Inuit child was ever born as pale as that.

VILLAGER 1. She's a devil.

ARNARQIK. No!

VILLAGER 1. She will not live one moon.

ARNARQIK. She will live.

VILLAGER 1. She will bring bad luck.

ARNARQIK. She's only a baby.

KIVIOG. Put her out in the snow now, before she turns the gods against us.

VILLAGER 2. And our stomachs shrink.

VILLAGER 1. And our dishes are empty.

VILLAGER 2. It's happened before. We all know it. Get rid of the child before it's too late.

KIVIOG. She will offend Nuliayuk, the goddess of the seals. Nuliayuk will stay at the bottom of the sea, and keep the seals beside her, and we will all go hungry. Put the child out into the snow or we will die of famine!

ARNARQIK. No! She will be a good Inuit.

VILLAGER 2. Then let her grow up in another village. We don't want her here.

KIVIOG. She doesn't look like us. She won't think like us.

VILLAGER 1. She doesn't belong here.

KARVIK. Then where does she belong? Where should she go?

VILLAGER 1. Put her out in the snow. *(Starts to grab her.)*

ARNARQIK. No! No! No, I can't. Don't you understand? She is our child.

VILLAGER 2. Then leave our village in peace. Don't anger the spirits of Little Whale River.

KARVIK. But this is our village and you are our people. How can we leave it? Wait! She will be like the others. You'll see. She'll sew and cook just as well as any Inuit girl. Better! Arnarqik will teach her.

KIVIOG (*holds up his hands*). Very well. We will watch and wait. Perhaps you are right, and we will see her hair and cheeks grow darker. But we have no gifts or good wishes to welcome a white-faced child—a white-faced girl child!

(*VILLAGERS exit. ARNARQIK tries to run after them.*)

ARNARQIK. Come back! Please wait. Don't go yet. Oh, Karvik, what will we do?

KARVIK (*slowly*). Her hair should be as dark as the raven's wing.

ARNARQIK. It is as white as the caribou's belly. Karvik, what if they are right? She is different. Karvik, why is her hair pale? Why doesn't she cry? She is so still! It's not natural.

KARVIK. She is frightened already. The Fair One will have a hard journey. (*Looks out the passageway.*) Arnarqik, the villagers spoke wisely. (*Looks for a long time at his wife.*) She would never know. It would not hurt if we put her in the snow now.

ARNARQIK. No, Karvik! You mustn't ask me to.

KARVIK. But if we leave, will the next village think she looks more like an Inuit?

ARNARQIK (*shakes her head*). No, she is Anatou, the Fair One—she will not change. But I will teach her, Karvik. She will be a good Inuit girl!

KARVIK. But will they ever think she is like the others?

ARNARQIK. Yes. Yes. Of course they will. Let us stay here. Who knows what is beyond the snow?

KARVIK. Then we must be strong. We must teach Anatou to be strong. Only then will our home be her home and our friends her friends. It won't be easy, Arnarqik.

(*ARNARQIK is beside the baby.*)

ARNARQIK. Oh Karvik, I couldn't leave her. Not like that! (*Abruptly she changes.*) Look, Karvik...she is smiling. (*Picks her up.*) Oh, Karvik, we mustn't let them hurt her. We must protect her.

KARVIK. Sing, Arnarqik, sing the morning song. Bring Anatou luck. She will have a hard journey.

ARNARQIK (*sits, sings or chants*).

I rise up from rest

Moving swiftly as the raven's wing

I rise up to greet the day

Wo-wa

My face is turned from dark of night

My gaze toward the dawn

Toward the whitening dawn.

(*Lights fade.*)

STORYTELLER. But her hair did not grow dark as the raven's wing. Instead, each day she grew fairer. They called her the "different one," and when the blinding

Scene ii

STORYTELLER. All that winter Anatou lived with the animals enjoying the forest. She made friends with the beaver, fox and ermine. She forgot she had ever been Anatou, the Fair One—an Inuit. Then one morning she woke up to a spring sun. It warmed the air and touched her fur.

(Spring in the forest. Early dawn. ANATOU wakes, stretches, and smells the air with curiosity.)

ANATOU. Whortleberries. That's what I smell. And sunlight! Even the forest can't shut it out. *(She puts a paw down on a patch of melting snow.)* Beaver! Fox! Wake up. The snow's melting.

(They enter.)

FOX. Did you have to wake me up to tell me that? It happens every spring.

ANATOU *(with growing excitement)*. But there are at least a thousand things to see and smell and hear. Come on. I'll race you through the forest and we'll explore the other side.

BEAVER *(slowly)*. What do you mean by the other side? We've never gone beyond the edge.

ANATOU. Oh, that was all right in the wintertime. But now it's spring. I want to leave the forest today, see what else there is.

FOX *(sharply)*. No, Anatou.

BEAVER. I thought you liked it here in the forest.

ANATOU. Of course I do, but... *(Reluctant to speak of it.)* But last night I had a strange dream. I can't remember it now. But it was something out there. There's something I have to see.

BEAVER. Outside the forest?

FOX. Don't go there, Anatou.

ANATOU. Why not?

FOX. Don't go, or you'll be sorry.

ANATOU. I just want to look. It's a beautiful day. I want to run in the sunlight and explore.

FOX. If you leave, the Wood God will be furious.

ANATOU. The Wood God? Why? I'll be back tonight, I promise. What's there to be afraid of?

FOX *(quietly)*. Danger.

BEAVER. Danger.

ANATOU. Maybe there's something dangerous for little animals like you, but I'm strong. I've got sharp teeth and claws. *(Boasting.)* Nothing can hurt me.

FOX. You're a fool!

ANATOU *(angry)*. Wait and see. I'll be back without a scratch on me. I'm not afraid like the rest of you.

BEAVER. Listen to her! We'll let her go if she wants to.

FOX. For the last time. We're warning you. Don't go. There'll be trouble if you do.

ANATOU. I must go. I don't know why, but I must. Don't try to stop me.

FOX. Remember, we warned you!

BEAVER. You wouldn't listen.

ANATOU. I can't help it. It's something inside.

(Lights fade, animals exit. Forest scrim rises and ANATOU mimes her journey through the forest. She stops at

snow swept across the North or when the hunters returned with empty sleds, the villagers whispered, "It's Anatou. She's the one."

Scene ii

The village. TARTO, SHIKIKANAQ and MOTOMIAK are playing an Inuit game, a combination of Hide-and-Seek and Touch. MOTOMIAK is just dashing for the goal pursued by SHIKIKANAQ. TARTO is at the goal watching and laughing.

TARTO. Hurry up, Motomiak. She's right behind you. Shikikanaq is right behind you!

(MOTOMIAK turns to look, still running. ANATOU enters. She sees the race but moves out of the way too late and they collide. MOTOMIAK falls and SHIKIKANAQ tags him.)

SHIKIKANAQ. There! I won!

MOTOMIAK. That wasn't fair. You made me lose the game, Anatou. I've never lost before—not to a girl! See what you made me do. Clumsy!

ANATOU. I'm sorry. I tried to get out of the way. I didn't see you in time.

SHIKIKANAQ *(whispering)*. You better not say anything more, Motomiak, or Anatou will put a spell on you—the way she did the seals.

TARTO. What are you talking about? You know that isn't true.

ANATOU. Oh, I'm sorry I spoiled your game, Motomiak, but couldn't you start again?

SHIKIKANAQ. No. I won. Tarto saw. Didn't you, Tarto?

(TARTO nods.)

MOTOMIAK. Besides, we don't want to play in front of a freak.

(ANATOU gasps.)

TARTO. Who's a freak?

MOTOMIAK. She is. The whole village says so.

ANATOU *(furious)*. No, I'm not! I'm an Inuit just like you.

SHIKIKANAQ *(doubtfully)*. Ohh...

MOTOMIAK. Well, her face is different enough.

(ANATOU touches it.)

TARTO. Why, what's wrong with it? It has two eyes, a nose and a mouth just like everyone else's.

SHIKIKANAQ. But it's white, Tarto—like snow. I bet if you put her in the sun she'll melt and that's why she stays inside all the time.

TARTO. You're just jealous because she's prettier than you, Shikikanaq.

ANATOU. Stop it. Stop it, all of you. *(She is crying.)* Leave me alone. *(Starts to go.)*

TARTO *(furious)*. Now see what you've done. If she were made of snow, Shikikanaq, she couldn't cry. *(Crosses to her.)* Come on, Anatou. They didn't mean it. Please

the edge. The hilltops are brown, and there are black willow twigs with new buds.)

Willow trees! And sunlight everywhere. Wood God, what a beautiful world outside your forest. *(Her journey continues in dance movement. The lights fade to indicate twilight. She stops, worn out.)* Loons on the water. It's so peaceful here. *(Enjoying it.)* I'm all alone in the world.

(She prepares to settle down when lights begin to come up on a summer village tent and we hear the sharp sound of an dog howling. ANATOU peers at the tent and moves in cautiously, closer and closer. NOTE: The tent should be a movable unit that glides on. As ANATOU gets closer, we hear the sound of Inuit singing or chanting. ANATOU realizes what it is and cries out.)

Inuits! Wood God! Wood God! I'd forgotten. Oh, I should never have left the forest.

(As she watches, KIVIOG and TARTO cross stage to tent.)

Tarto. And he still has the charm I gave him. He still has it.

KIVIOG. Tarto, we'll never have to worry with you as a hunter. All the pots of the village will boil this spring.

Aja, since Anatou left, there's been plenty to eat.

TARTO. There'd be enough for her, too, if she were here.

KIVIOG. Forget about her, Tarto. *(They go inside.)*

ANATOU *(creeping closer)*. Look at them eating, laughing and singing. "Let her die in the snow." That's what they said. I'll show them. I'm strong now. I'll get even. If it's the last thing I do, I'll get even. *(She moves nearer the tent and sees a piece of meat outside.)* I'll take some back to the forest.

(But the dogs hear her and they start howling. The singing stops and a VILLAGER runs out with his bow and arrow. ANATOU sees him and runs but not before he shoots an arrow at her. ANATOU falls and the man disappears into the tent. ANATOU is hurt but gets up, limping to the side of the tent.)

That one! That one used to call me names. He hurt my mother and father *(In pain.)* I'm remembering. His arrow cut through my heart!

(VILLAGER comes out to check whether the animal is dead or not, and he carries another weapon. He looks about.)

He'll kill me! Unless... *(ANATOU springs. There is a short struggle and the man falls without a sound.)* Who is stronger now, Inuit? Who's stronger now? *(ANATOU leaves. CURTAIN.)*

come back. *(To others.)* Let's have another game—all four of us.

SHIKIKANAQ. Well...all right...if she'll tell us why she looks that way.

TARTO *(sharply)*. What way?

SHIKIKANAQ. I mean her eyes and her hair. They're such funny colors. There must be a reason.

ANATOU *(desperate)*. I don't know. Each time you've asked me I said I didn't know.

SHIKIKANAQ. I bet if you asked your mother and father they'd know. It must be something terrible or they'd tell you.

MOTOMIAK. Maybe the Wood God from the forest put a spell on an animal and sent it back here. No one else in Little Whale River looks like you. Maybe that's why you look so funny. They say he has the power to make an animal appear like a human.

SHIKIKANAQ. And he can make people look like animals too...just by saying a spell! My father says that's why no Inuit should go into the forest.

ANATOU. No! No! It's not true. I'm just like you are!

MOTOMIAK. Then maybe some devil spirit looked at you and took all the color away.

SHIKIKANAQ. Yes, that's it. And why do you always sit inside and sew?

ANATOU *(lying)*. There's a lot of work. It has to get done.

TARTO *(quickly)*. She can sew better than any woman in the whole village! Show them, Anatou. *(He points to her dress which is carefully and beautifully stitched. SHIKIKANAQ examines it.)*

SHIKIKANAQ. It is beautiful. There aren't any mistakes at all.

ANATOU *(can't believe her praise)*. My mother taught me and she is very good and careful.

SHIKIKANAQ. Can you make anything else?

ANATOU. Two snows ago, I made warm boots for my father. Very special boots and he's worn them ever since.

MOTOMIAK. Then how come he's lost in the snow right now, if the boots you made were so special?

ANATOU. He went to look for food. Both my mother and father did. That's all I know.

MOTOMIAK. There's barely any food left in the village. For three days the hunters have returned with empty sleds.

ANATOU. Famine is everywhere. Not just here. I heard my father say so before he left. That is why he said he was going far away to look.

MOTOMIAK. You made those boots your father wore. I bet you put a charm on them. Shikikanaq and I saw you talking to them once and blowing on them.

ANATOU. That's not true. I was cleaning them.

MOTOMIAK. But you were talking too, you were putting a charm on them, weren't you?

ANATOU. Don't you see? If I did have any magic powers, I'd bring them back. They're my parents. I love them. They're the only ones who've been good to me. *(Softly.)* I couldn't stay in Little Whale River if it weren't for them.

SHIKIKANAQ *(cruelly)*. Well, they're gone now. So you can go too.

ANATOU. What do you mean? They're coming back. I know they are.

Scene iii

In the forest. ANATOU goes toward FOX. FOX retreats. ANATOU approaches BEAVER. He moves away in fear.

WOOD GOD. You must leave the Inuits alone.

ANATOU. He did not leave me alone. Why should I?

WOOD GOD. They have bows, harpoons, knives, spears.

You will see, Anatou. They will hunt you out. Stay away! Do not hurt another human.

ANATOU. But he wounded me.

FOX. You shouldn't have gone near his tent.

BEAVER. You don't deserve to stay in the forest with us.

ANATOU. But the wound hurt. *(Softly.)* And then...I saw his face. I remembered. I remembered everything before then!

WOOD GOD. That wound will heal, Anatou. But will this new wound heal? Your hatred is more chilling than the ice caves near the sea. It will grow if you don't kill it now, Anatou. It will grow and freeze your heart.

FOX. You are a disgrace to the animals.

BEAVER. Animals kill because they must eat.

FOX. They must survive.

WOOD GOD. It's the law of the forest. But you, Anatou, killed out of hate. Humans do that, not the animals!

ANATOU *(with awful realization)*. Wood God...when I saw him, and I saw the tent, and I remembered how they made me leave the village, and the arrow pierced me...I felt something...something I had forgotten. I had to get even!

WOOD GOD *(sternly)*. Live in peace with humans, Anatou, or leave the forest forever. *(He sweeps off with the animals. CURTAIN.)*

Scene iv

The interior of a snowhouse. Drums are beating. Three VILLAGE HUNTERS are assembled in a circle. In the distance there is the piercing cry of a wolf. They shudder.

KIVIOG *(rises)*. We must try again. The wolf must be stopped.

ATATA. Never was a wolf spirit so hungry for men's souls.

VILLAGER. Hunter after hunter has gone and not returned. What can we do?

ATATA. Aja! But what good is a bow and arrow?

VILLAGER 2. What good are knives if we live in terror in our own houses?

KIVIOG. The great North is no longer safe. We mustn't let the wolf escape this time. Since spring, he has not let us alone. At night he always disappears into the forest... where no Inuit ever goes.

VILLAGER 2. Even if it does go into the forest, we must find it and put an end to this.

ATATA. But if we go into the forest, we'll be trapped.

KIVIOG. We are trapped in our own homes now!

ALL. Aja! Aja!

ATATA. Never has there been a wolf like this. Its howl makes the fire die and the seal-oil lamp tremble.

VILLAGER 2. We must hunt till we find it.

ATATA. We have lost many good hunters.

VILLAGER 2. They have all failed.

KIVIOG. But we must find it.

TARTO *(has been sitting there all the time unnoticed by the others)*. I have hunted before. Let me go, Father.

KIVIOG. Tarto! This is a council for our best hunters. Go outside. You should not be here. You're too young.

VILLAGER 2. He is so small that we don't notice him. It's all right, Kiviog.

ATATA. Perhaps he is so small that he could creep up on the wolf and he wouldn't notice him either. *(All laugh.)*

TARTO. Please, Father. Please, I'm strong.

KIVIOG. No. We go too far. You will be tired.

TARTO. I won't. Wait and see.

KIVIOG. The men of Little Whale River are going to the forest, Tarto. It's dangerous.

TARTO. Then I will find the wolf's hiding place.

VILLAGER 2. He is swift, Kiviog. His eyes are sharp. He is as good a hunter as the men. If he wishes, let him come.

(KIVIOG thinks, then nods to TARTO. TARTO beams.)

KIVIOG. We must cover the great North and not stop till the snow is free of the wolf's tracks.

VILLAGERS. Aja! Aja!

VILLAGER 2. We must hunt toward the great plains.

KIVIOG. And hunt towards the forest.

ATATA. And by the caves along the sea.

KIVIOG. We've no time to waste. Harness the dogs!

(Drums increase. Men leave to get dog teams and begin the hunt. Interior fades.)

ACT III

The forest. There is snow on the ground and a rock unit has been added LC. There is a group of tangled trees that have been blown down in the winter near RC. ANATOU sleepily comes from behind the rock. She sniffs the air casually, then her body tenses.

ANATOU *(calling with increasing alarm)*. Wood God! Wood God! Wood God! I smell danger.

(BEAVER and FOX appear.)

FOX. The hunters are here.

BEAVER. The hunters.

ANATOU. But the Inuits are afraid of the forest. Why do they come here?

FOX. They hunt the wolf.

BEAVER. They hunt you.

FOX. Anatou.

(WOOD GOD enters.)

WOOD GOD. I warned you, Anatou. You have hurt too many of them. They are angry, angry enough to enter the forest and to hunt you out.

ANATOU. I'm frightened, Wood God. Please help me.

WOOD GOD. You hate and so you killed. You deliberately disobeyed me after I first sheltered you. I cannot protect you now.

ANATOU. Was I wrong to defend myself, Wood God, to wound when I was wounded?

WOOD GOD. You've been cruel, Anatou, and hate is like a disease spreading through your heart. If you strike an Inuit, how does the Beaver know that you won't strike him, too, when he sleeps in the night?

ANATOU. No! I'd never do that. You know that, Wood God.

WOOD GOD. How do I know? I only see what you do. That speaks for itself.

ANATOU (*ashamed*). I won't leave the forest again, Wood God. I have been wrong.

ANATOU (*angry*). It's too late for that, Anatou. The hunters are here.

FOX. They're coming closer.

BEAVER. Closer.

ANATOU (*panicked*). Wood God, what should I do?

WOOD GOD (*harshly*). Replace the hunters you made them lose. Erase the terror you've caused them. Anatou, even the animals have been frightened of you.

ANATOU. But I didn't mean them. They've been good to me. I didn't want to hurt the animals.

WOOD GOD (*watching her intently*). If you cannot live in peace with humans, Anatou, then one day you will have to face their bows and arrows. There is no law of the forest that can protect you from that time.

ANATOU. Wood God, why didn't you warn me? Why didn't you stop me? I have worn a coat of thick hate—so thick it stopped my feeling or seeing anything else.

WOOD GOD. We tried, Anatou, but before you weren't ready to hear our words.

ANATOU. I am now, Wood God. Please, please, animals.

FOX. Hurry, Anatou. They are closer.

ANATOU. What should I do?

WOOD GOD. Run, Anatou. There is no time. If the hunters find you...

ANATOU. I know.

WOOD GOD. But remember this: if you are truly sorry, if you know what understanding means, if you can show me your heart is empty of all its dark hate and cruelty, no matter what happens, your spirit will not die. It will live forever and teach others. Remember that.

ANATOU. Thank you, Wood God.

WOOD GOD. Now run, Anatou.

ANIMALS. Run, Anatou, run.

(ANATOU exits across the stage. VILLAGE HUNTERS enter. They are frightened. Suddenly a wind comes up.)

VILLAGER 2. Aja! The wind is alive.

ATATA. Let's leave. No Inuit should be here.

KIVIOG. No! We have promised our village.

TARTO. We cannot return till the wolf is found.

KIVIOG. Look! His tracks are here.

VILLAGER 2. Follow them!

KIVIOG. Sh-h-h-h. Fresh tracks. Quickly, carefully.

(There is silence as they begin the serious search.)

ATATA. Watch out. *(They move cautiously.)*

TARTO *(with a cry)*. It's... *(Turns to KIVIOG.)* Anatou. It's Anatou. We've hurt her.

(They all stare amazed by the sight of the girl. TARTO kneels down by the rock unit. ANATOU's spirit appears above. NOTE: This can be done by seeing her through a scrim on a higher level so that she looks the same but paler, as though in a dream.)

ANATOU. Tarto...don't cry.

TARTO *(to himself)*. Anatou. You were my best friend. *(To her.)* I didn't mean to hurt you. Do you understand? We didn't mean... *(He can't say it. TARTO tries to hold back the anguish inside.)*

ANATOU. I do, Tarto, I do. Oh, Wood God, they can't hear me.

TARTO. She could have killed me, Father, but she didn't. She saved my life instead.

VILLAGER 2. Aja. She was brave.

KIVIOG. Braver than all the hunters of Little Whale River. None of us would have done what she did. *(He puts his hand on TARTO's shoulder, but he can't say what he'd like to.)*

VILLAGER. But why did she run into the forest?

TARTO. Don't you see? She had no place else to go. We chased her here. *(This is the most painful of all.)* Anatou, even I chased you away.

KIVIOG. We would not speak or smile at the different one, remember. Our silence was worse than a hundred harpoons.

TARTO. Will she forgive me, Father?

KIVIOG. The spirits of the dead know our hearts, Tarto. You cannot keep a secret from them.

TARTO. But will she forgive me?

KIVIOG. We are all to blame.

TARTO. But I want to know! I have to know! She saved me, Father, and then the hunters shot an arrow when she finished.

KIVIOG. She had a bigger heart than you or I, Tarto, but if she is angry we'll be trapped by the snow and the wind and lose our way. No Inuit should ever enter the realm of the forest. If she forgives us, our way will be safe.

ANATOU. Wood God! Please let me help them.

WOOD GOD *(pleased)*. Till the end of the forest and then I will guide them.

ANATOU. Do they understand, Wood God? How will they remember?

WOOD GOD. Tarto will tell your story tonight, the first time, and they will tell it for many nights. They will remember, for someone will always tell the story of Anatou, the Fair One.

VILLAGER 2 *(goes over slowly and picks up the arrow, holds it thoughtfully)*. I shot it! I killed her!

KIVIOG. No, we all killed her. But when? Today or long ago?

THE END