

tensely, their faces shaded by their robes. The thousands of both tribes present bent forward, too, especially the young braves, all pent and tense as full drawn bows. They regarded the stag as a cousin—a man in the guise of a stag.

He was quietly slipped of his thongs.

As soon as the chief of the white-breasted tribe felt the lightness of freedom, he drew in one quivering breath through his silken black nostrils and with a lightning bound darted, as if through the air, into the woods. A single scream leaped from thousands of throats and the two runners shot after him. Their task was to defeat the very symbol of fleetness—to run the stag down!

The Sun, the Chief of Chiefs, passing high in the west, looked full upon the contest and rejoiced.

The stag had the whole green forest before him, covering the forty square leagues of the Island, but all knew with native certainty that he would follow some one of a few runs only—for at the commencement the Great River was on his left hand and the Little River on his right; and the smoke-scent of habitations along the Great would drive him to choose the side of the Little; and thus they reasoned for other