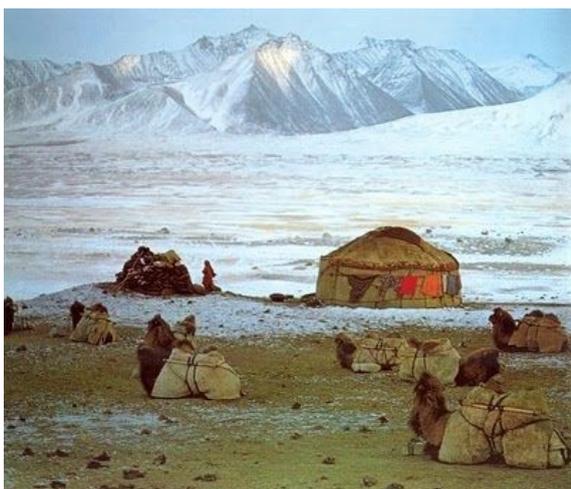


MIDAIR - 01 chapter - draft
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Chapter 1 - Life of a hero

(Central Asian Steppe - Steppe Geoglyphs and Steppes Deer Stones)



Zura is holding the old lady's arm while they walk up a small hill full of tall grass. There is only a narrow food road made in the grass.

They're talking. Behind them there are a few of the people from the old ladies clan, mostly children. Children are intrigued by Jas' (Tejasvin) long hair and are arguing who will be

holding her hand. One lil girl is holding a large waterskin and is all red in the face but determined to do a good job.

The people and the Old lady are all dressed less ornately than Zura and Jas. Most of them have skin and fur clothing and simple earth colored textiles and felth. The Old lady has a little more color in the clothes.

Old lady

We are grateful that heroes still came to our little shrine in our time of need. We are such a long way away from the sea lands and the bigger clans.

Zura

Yes, we come from far to the east. This land, the beautiful steppe that is our home, doesn't have many clans nor spirits. Just fields of tall grass greeting the sky every morning.

Old lady

It used to, a thousand seasons ago, when the spirits were still happy with us. Zura looks back to see how Jas is doing. Jasvin smiles. She's now got one of the little ones in her arms.

Zura

How long has your shrine been empty?

Old lady

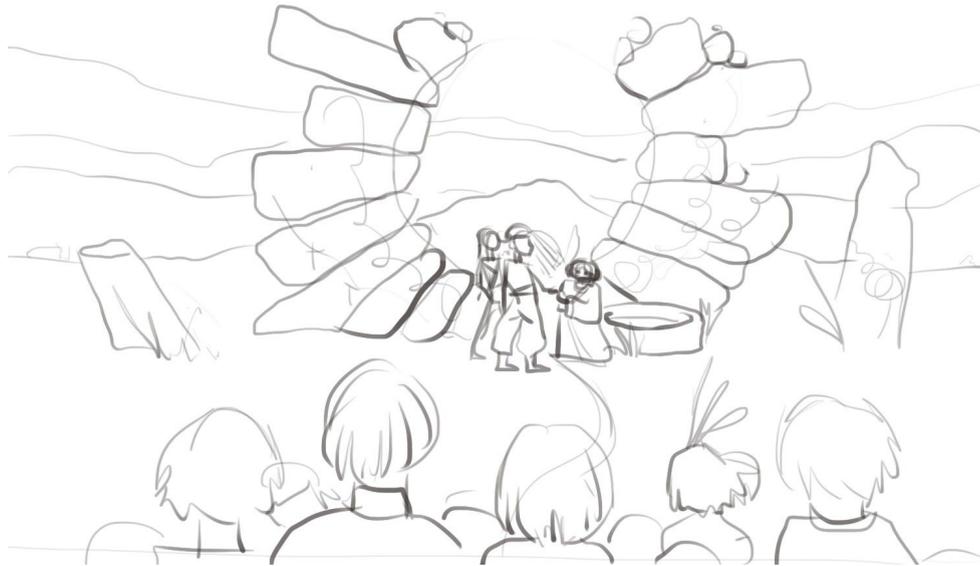
Since my grandson got ill. We thought it was just one of those moons. He was sickly even as a child. But he never got better. And he was the only magh and sage for days walk from here.

Zura

We'll see what we can do for you. Sometimes a spirit just hibernates for a little while.

Old lady squeezes her hand tighter and smiles.

They arrive at the top of the grassy hill. The small group stops. There are herds of horses in the background of the people and a beautiful Eurasian steppe landscape. In front of them there are a few deer stones in a circle around a small entrance to a cave in the middle. (Or forming a circular gate with a few stones dislocated and laying near the gate.)



Zura lets go of the Old lady and steps closer to the stones.

Old lady

It's an old shrine. But they were happy with it.

Zura

It's beautiful." she touches the stones and they shimmer a little.

There is a small stone bowl in front of one of the stones. One of the young men takes the water skin from the child (or helps her) to pour fresh water into the stone bowl.

Zura and Jas clean their hands and faces in the water. The old lady takes a small stone pot from one child, there is black 'paint' in it, and paints a small line of Zuras forehead and then another one on Jas'. She chants in the common speech.

Old lady

You are clean and clean you shell enter a sacred space. Let your inner eye guide you."

Jasvin

Thank you.

Z and J step into the circle and to the entrance to the cave. (Take off shoes before?)

Zura walks/climbs into the cave while Jasvin is waving a 'we'll be ok' to the people who gathered. They all look a little pale. And worried. Like their lives depend on them. The footsteps stop and Jas looks at Zura who looks worried.

(They need a torch of some sort. Or there are symbols/a line that lights up when they enter to guide them into the center of the shrine.

Zura

Are you ok?

Jas

Yeah, I just don't feel right.

Zura

I noticed. I think there's something off in this cave.

She touches the wall of the cave.

Zura

It's not like we're used to. Just talking to the spirit and giving some offerings won't help.

Jas

No...

Jas takes Zuras hand and they walk deeper into the cave.

After a few turns and low ceilings they come to an open room. A low light is shining from the water in a large stone bowl in the middle of the room.

Zura

The Soma looks fresh-ish. Maybe a half a moon old. The magh was keeping good care of this little home even when he was ill and the spirit was gone.

Jas just stopped at the entrance so Zura looks back at her.

Zura

That bad huh?

Jasvin nods.

Zura I'll make it quick. I think there might be something here that doesn't belong.

Jas nods.

Zura walks around the bowl and checks all the corners of the room until she finds a small dagger (stone) laying on the ground.

She takes out a small skin from her belt and puts it on the floor. She pricks her finger with her own tiny blade, so a little blood comes out and draws a symbol (six way cross?)

Zura

I bind you by stone, earth, water, wind, tree, moon, and sun.

The symbol glissens a little and she wraps the blade in it, careful not to touch it.

Jas walks to the water and touches it. It shines a little stronger.

Zura smiles at her. She looks worryingly at the dagger.

Zura

The dagger looks a bit off.

Jas

Feels a lot off.

Zura

Yeah, I don't know any stronger rituals for cleansing so this one is the best I can do for now.

Jas

Nona would be proud of you.

Zura

I should do better.

Jas

We should ask if these people know where the next shrine is. Nona was talking about the small and big seas with all their shrines. But I have no idea if we're even close.

They walk out of the cave. More people are there. Zura tells the old lady that they removed a dagger from the shrine that was probably keeping the spirit away. The spirit might return now but the people will still have to make some offerings and clean the shrine again.

Throughout the day there are festivities and rituals that go into the night.

(Sky burial/jhator inspired) - The bones of the previous magh are to be properly cleansed and the skull decorated. The bones have been left to be picked clean by the vultures. After that they are ready to be made sacred.

(Drumms accompany rituals)

In the morning when everyone is still asleep Jas and Zura are wrapped in one of the skins by the dying fire. The old lady and a nephew of hers are telling them the way to an old empty Mammoth temple that has many sages there still keeping the temple clean in case the mammoth comes back from the other side.

When they are alone again and getting ready to move (packing their things) Jas seems worried over the 'dead spirit' part but Zura ensures her that they'll just drop off the knife, learn some rituals and then head south.

When they are walking away after the last goodbyes from the people a large spirit appears (a woolly mammoth or a Saiga Antelope with its horns entangled together like one large horn). It doesn't stop when it walks past Zura and Jas but it's eyes lock it Jas' and we can see they both have a light blue ring around their irises.

It walks to the people and to the ger (yurt) that has the skull of the deceased magh. The old lady is standing next to it and it pouches its head in their arms, they are both crying. (figure the composition out here.)



Zura takes Jas' hand and they walk off into the steppe.

Extra info and explanations

Spirits (alternative names: gods, godlings, Anu - sumerian for sky , Daimon - greek for godlike, Shedim - spirits or demons in Jewish mythology. Jinn - supernatural creatures in early pre-Islamic Arabian and later Islamic mythology and theology, Devi/Deva - heavenly, divine, anything of excellence and is also one of the terms for a deity in Hinduism) Creatures who are not entirely from this world and have powers beyond human knowledge. They are made of parts of this world and parts of the otherworld. They teach humans craft and protect them.

Most known spirit worldwide is El or Sol the sun god.

Soma (amrita, nectar, ambrosia) - food of the spirits. Made with a ritual.

Sage (shaman, wise man/wise women/wise one) - person who knows rituals, healing and talks to the spirits and takes care of the shrines.

Shrines (temples) - are places where the spirits dwell and rest. Their homes.

Magh - person connected to a spirit.

Some clans have patron spirits that are not connected to any person in particular. They protect the people and the people care for the local temples and shrines where the spirits live. They usually have more sages because they lack a magh.

Soma clans have a magh/sage that leads them spiritually.

Some spirits and magh travel the earth to keep the worlds of people and spirits in balance, mend disagreements and help the peoples that have no sages or spirits.