

For three days Kya'yuk stood in a cage of wood barely large enough to hold his body. Three days without food, without rest. Not a single body approached the tribal leader during those endless days; the minutes passed like hours.

Convinced the excursion into the forest had failed, Kya'yuk patiently awaited what would be a miserable death. That is until he saw the chubby face of Kai'boot, supreme chief of the Kai'boot Kai.

The chief's child-like smile brought radiance to an otherwise dreary holding cell. Kya'yuk was surrounded on all sides by a thick forest whose canopy blocked the light of the sun all too well. Several torches scattered throughout the encirclement provided the only illuminations; however the flames issuing from them were akin to fireflies in a dark forest—they provided a minimal amount of light at best. The area set aside for his imprisonment was mostly bare, save for the shadows of some scattered bones which Kya'yuk was barely able to recognize due to the dimness of the light.

Kai'boot waddled over to the cage, never ceasing to smile. The grimace remained as he struck the weakened Kya'yuk in the abdomen and carried him on his shoulder. Aside from the incessant gasps for air from a fatigued Kai'boot, the forest was silent. With little else to think about, Kya'yuk had observed the lack of activity in the forest during his imprisonment. The animal inhabitants of the forest had obviously learned to keep away from the Kai'boot Kai.

Kya'yuk was about to discover the reason.

With a sharp thud that left him queasy and disoriented Kya'yuk found himself thrown to the ground by Kai'boot Kai. As he gathered his bearings his eyes met the hundreds of villagers he had first seen some three days ago. They sat with their legs crossed in perfect rows, gazing with wide open eyes at the stranger.

"This man say, 'I am sent by god of thunder,'" bellowed Kai'boot Kai, pointing a chubby finger at Kya'yuk. "This man liar!"

The crowd issued a gasp at the accusation, their eyes now squinting with rage at Kya'yuk. Before he could defend himself, he found the thick arms of Kai'boot Kai wrapped around his weakened body. Now it was Kya'yuk's turn to grasp for breath. Tapping into those reservoirs of strength that had led him victor among countless battles, he managed to break free of the grasp. The forest spun in circles as Kya'yuk vainly attempted to steady himself. With no time to react a sharp blow from Kai'boot Kai sent him back to the ground.

Ears ringing, Kya'yuk propped himself on his elbows. His parched mouth initially welcomed the taste of blood, but he soon grew nauseous as the bitter taste took over his mouth. Looking up he saw Kai'boot Kai nearing in for another attack. Mustering that last bit of strength, he successfully dodged what would have been a deadly kick to the ribs. Kya'yuk's new position filled his empty stomach with a glimmer of hope as he spotted a bone only a few feet away from him. He scrambled to grab it but found it was covered in a gooey substance which led it to fly from his hands into the crowd. With dismay he heard them laughing at him, some even screeching.

Kai'boot Kai was among one of those laughing. Seizing the opportunity Kya'yuk lunged towards him, landing a blow directly into his stomach. He quickly learned it was a poor choice for the failed attack had no affect on the chief who laughed even louder than before.

Frantic to save himself, Kya'yuk grabbed one of the torches which caused Kai'boot Kai cease his laughter. For the first time he appeared to be serious. The two stared at each other in silence for a moment. Kya'yuk was the first to blink, exhausting his strength with one last attempt at the leader of the Kai'boot.

He should have seen it coming. After nearly thirty years of battles, it was impossible to explain how the otherwise skilled warrior could trip over his own legs.

Kya'yuk fell hard on the torch. He screamed as his body painfully extinguished the flame. Laughter, this time much louder than before, erupted throughout the village.

In a matter of seconds Kya'yuk found his body placed upon a wooden dais by several silent guards, his legs and arms soon secured with a taut rope. The crowd now silent awaited what would happen next.

Torch in hand Kai'boot Kai slowly approached the defeated warrior. Turning to the crowd he bellowed once again: "We find out if this man a god."