

Shirley van Zyl

On Borrowed Time

This story takes place during the last century in the northernmost reaches of the Cape. ! and !! indicate the clicking sounds made by the Bushmen. A glossary is included at the end of the story.

!!Otoab knew they were going to leave him behind.

For days now, many more than three and three, their looks had meant this, their eyes saying what their tongues were afraid to speak. He was too old to stay with his clan. Not only was his hair grey, his face and body folded in creases and wrinkles, but he had not walked with ease on his stiff leg since the time of the hyena.

Though they did not say so, he knew they could not feed him for it was the rainless season, when waters ceased to run or bubble through the crusty soil of the earth, when trees dropped their leaves and grasses were sapless. All that was left to them lay underground. Even the animals trekked to distant parts where lightning woke up the darkness with light and noise, but never gave rain. In this the eland, quagga and others were deceived too.

His clan was going in search of new hunting grounds across the !Garib and north to the Kgaligadi. They began withdrawing from him, breaking the ties by not quite looking at him. Not even his son Tji-Tji would speak to him.

But he knew these things, his flesh twitched inside. So, sitting alone on the sand in those last days, he made a decision.

On the day when his shelter of dry branches was made, when his son's wife put an ostrich shell with water in it and a piece of dried meat there before him, he knew the moment had come. His people stood in a group, banded together against him, those whom he had fed with the skills of his arm and eye. They no longer needed him, or wished to be

burdened by him. He was old and had to stay behind until he died of thirst or hunger, or the hyenas came for him.

Tji-Tji spoke at the final parting, kindly yet firmly so that his father would not doubt their decision. "It is so, Father must stay until the last wind, when !!Gauab comes to fetch you. I will make the first fire now, I am your son . . . I will be the gei-khoib."

Having said this, Tji-Tji walked away, the people following him. Their concern was for the living: regret had no place in this drought-stricken land, nor did it live in the hearts of the young.

!!Otoab watched them go, carrying their skins and pouches with bows and arrows, their ostrich shells filled with water. The men walked in front, women and children behind. Not once did they turn to take one last look at him, not even the children. It was as well. They would not only have seen sadness in !!Otoab's rheumy eyes, but a gleam of defiance.

He was not going to sit there and die like they wanted him to do. He was going to seek out his old white friend near the Tooverberg. He would find Seur Paulus the way he would find his hidden ostrich shells of water. And what they would give to each other would be like the water in the shells—cool from being buried so long in the earth, sweeter for the great thirst they would know on seeing each other again.

He had not seen Seur Paulus for many seasons. Once, in another time of drought, he had tended the Seur's sheep, taken them to grazing lands the white man did not know about. In his absence the sheep had multiplied so that he brought much satisfaction to Seur Paulus on his return. From that time trust had grown between the white man and him. The Seur had not only given him meat in exchange for his herding, but tobacco and the promise that if he were ever in need he could return. Never again would there be a debt between them, only friendship.

!!Otoab chuckled softly as he thought of Seur Paulus. He never did know why the white man kept animals for meat when the veld was full of game. Nor did he know why the white man preferred the flesh of kept animals rather than those who ran free, or why he liked to drink their milk.

!!Otoab lay down to sleep, drawing his kaross over his body. With the sun beyond the horizon, the air cooled swiftly; the chill of winter was set in the night like the ache in his leg. He would leave early tomorrow, make his way to the !Garib, follow the river eastward to the Tooverberg. On his journey he would catch fish in the river and hunt a

bok, but only a small one, since he had no one with whom to share the meat.

Yes, he thought before he fell asleep, his leg might not be straight from the time of the hyena, it might ache in the cold and before the rains came. He might not be able to see the four moons of Jupiter, or the Bushman's Rice star so clearly any more, but he was San. He still had the heart of a hunter.

The next morning he put his meat in his pouch with his bow and arrows, and draping his kaross about his shoulders, he set off for the east. In his hand he carried the ostrich shell with water. His steps were slow, for indeed his leg was stiff. Still, he was not aware of any discomfort so filled with courage and hope was he.

He would never have broken from tradition if his wife had been alive. But N!oshay had died young. She had never been old or grey, nor had her skin sagged or become wrinkled. She had remained young for him, her skin smooth and the color of damp sand. Often he saw her in the sky, her dark eyes looking down at him, smiling through the years at the fine hunter he had become. He was known amongst all the San of the Cigariep for his hunting skills; his name had passed over the tongue of many a stranger in respect.

But if N!oshay had lived to be old, had not died when she did, giving birth to their second child, he would not have ventured on this journey. He would have stayed with her, protected her with his body from the hyenas. But there was no N!oshay, nobody to think about, no hunger to concern himself with other than his own. Second child was dead too, buried with N!oshay. It was not right he should live without his mother.

His first son, Tji-Tji, was now leader of the clan, the gei-khoib. But he too would have to make way for his son one day, be left behind in the sand, maybe with his wife, waiting for the end. Only Tji-Tji did not think about it now; he was young and brave, his arm was still strong.

!!Otoab plodded on through the sand and days with neither too much heaviness or lightness of heart. Rather he walked with hope. His eyes were often on the ground, stopping at times to dig for a root from under a certain dry grass, or to examine a spoor, or to drink water from his ostrich shell. They had thought he would die from thirst, but he had been leader too long not to know the water places in this dry land. Water did not rot like meat or birds' eggs.

Not only did he know where water was buried in ostrich shells, but he knew where sip wells and secret springs of water lay hidden beneath rocks. As long as he remembered, he would not die of thirst. And he

did remember. No kopje was new to his sight, or congeries of rocks, or lonely kokerboom. He knew his part of this vast land well, all the features of its face.

The Khoi had named this place Karroo after its dry river beds and salty pans. It was a thirstland, but they should have rather named it after its many distances. The sandy earth was without end; a man could not see all its hours at once, nor walk all its paths in a lifetime. Not even !!Otoab who knew it well. Indeed, the earth, for being empty and waterless and vast, was master of the one who walked over its face.

So !!Otoab walked with respect, though he did not kneel before the earth's greatness. He had suffered when the land had suffered, he had taken only when he was in need and according to the law.

At nights !!Otoab rested, sitting beside a small fire chewing on the meat until it was finished, or eating the veldkos he had collected that day. The firelight gave him comfort from the darkness, from the ostrich that could roar like a lion and frighten the man who did not know the difference.

As the flames swayed in the cold night breezes, he dreamt of a time long gone. Of successful hunts, thereby increasing his strength. Of the time when he had taught his young son to make a bow and arrows, to shoot and be a good hunter. But never did he recall the time the hyena bit his leg when he lay in a fever. Never this, for it was the cause of his loneliness.

He thought of Seur Paulus often, of the tobacco they had smoked. The white man had used a wooden pipe, while !!Otoab had made his pipe from a springbok horn, smoking it through a little pool of water, sucking that invisible pleasure into his lungs and knowing enjoyment. They had shared meat, fire and tobacco like true !!hosabs, friends, in a way that defied the thinking of the San and the white race. So now he felt free to go to Seur Paulus in his old age, that he might take comfort and rest and die slowly without knowing it. Without having to wait for thirst or the hyena to take the last breath from him.

True, there was nothing in this white man to cause the San grief, no lion to hunt and tame. His old friend could drink from any water hole; he gave meat when others were hungry, and was a trusted man of peace.

With Seur Paulus often in his thoughts, !!Otoab walked through the sand beside the cloven hoofprints of buck and eland, even the ostrich. Though he was hungry, he did not follow the spoor; they went north and his path was set towards the Tooverberg.

But as one sweep of sand flats passed another, as thorn bushes became sparse and stones hardened the already crusty surface of the land, !!Otoab felt more than usually hungry. He had not eaten meat for many days and the roots he ate beside his fire at night had not given his old body the strength it needed. Neither had the tamma melon nor the wild spiky cucumber; they were like air passing through his body. He needed meat.

On the day he found the spoor of a steenbok, he followed, though it meant going out of his way. He was caught in the hunger of his body and had to suffice its needs so it could take him where he wished to be. This he told himself as he followed the spoor hour after hour, aware of the distance out of his way, of the sun's white heat pouring down from the sky. He heard his heart thudding in his chest, heard his breath coming from him in harsh bursts like a hunter who had run far and carried a load.

He found the steenbok standing quietly in a thicket of tall dry grass and thorn bush. The bok turned its head, twitching its ears for the faint sounds it thought it heard. But there was nothing, not even the smell of the human who was downward of the wind.

!!Otoab stood mesmerized by the beauty of the steenbok. More than its red-brown coloring and sleek body, it was a creature without suspicion, unlike the wily duiker. It stood there so trustingly, turning its head to nibble on the dry grass, that !!Otoab was loathe to kill it. And he would not have tried to kill it, if it were not for his hunger.

With beating heart, he lifted his bow and arrow. Still the steenbok seemed unaware, lifting its head, its docile brown eyes without a hint of fear.

!!Otoab released the arrow. It flew through the air with a slight swishing sound, falling short of the animal. But before the arrow ever touched the ground, the steenbok spun around, fleeing instantly into the tawny shades of dry grass.

Disappointment rose in him like bile on an empty stomach. He had failed in this his greatest skill, and he would have sat in anger, grieving over his loss, if a thought had not come to calm him.

The steenbok's spirit person had pulled his arm so that the arrow had fallen in the grass. With this thought comfort came to him, silencing the voice of anger and giving him a measure of courage to go on.

He turned away, walking in the direction of the !Garib. He was hungrier than ever now that meat had escaped him. When he came upon the light three-pronged print of a bird, he looked again to make

sure that what he saw was real. Indeed, the markings were impressed on the crusted ripples of sand and he was glad they were not the tread of his longing.

!!Otoab took new heart and followed the prints until he reached a spring of water hidden beneath a pile of stones, seeping through where the grass stood in a handful of green amongst other brittle stems. A long time ago somebody had dammed up this spring so that the animals could not drink here. But the water would have its way. Though there was only a seepage, it was enough to wet the beak of a guinea fowl.

By the last rays of the sun !!Otoab sat by his fire, teasing apart the leaf of the hemp, rolling it on his good thigh, twisting the threads into string. As he worked he recalled the taste of giraffe meat, the soft liver the hunter removed immediately after the kill, cooking and eating it before taking the rest of the meat to his people.

But neither the memory of fresh giraffe meat nor the thought of fowl flesh the morrow could appease the gnawing at his innards. A sickness grew in his stomach, crawling up until it inhabited his brain. He thought of nothing else that night. He even dreamt of meat, waking up many times with the taste in his mouth.

Since he did not feel satisfied, was it his spirit who had eaten?

!!Otoab set the trap the next morning, putting a noose about a circle of short sticks stuck in the ground. The end of the string was tied to a branch planted a few yards away. To tempt the guinea fowl he placed a bulb on the sand in the centre of the circle.

His trap set, he moved into the thick grass a short distance away and sat down to wait.

His wait lasted many hours. The sun moved across a cloudless sky and !!Otoab became drowsy. In the end he did not struggle with his heavy eyelids, letting them stay shut.

He dreamt of the time when his son was young, when Tji-Tji sat beside him watching him tease and twist leaf fibres into string. Wonder was in Tji-Tji's eyes; they said his father was a great being. He was not only big in stature but made string and bows and arrows, and always brought meat home to his people, so good was the skill of his arm.

!!Otoab dreamt of N!oshay too, of her strong body and fine buttocks, the way she had looked at him before going with the women to collect veldkos. She was fine woman in every way: she had pleased him well.

A sudden squawk broke into !!Otoab's dream.

He sat up, startled, scrambling to his feet, stumbling through the grass in time to see the guinea fowl disappear with the bulb in the opposite direction. !!Otoab frowned. How could it be? Not since he was a boy had he failed to trap a fowl of sorts!

He bent to examine the trap, but it was flattened by the guinea fowl. What had he done wrong?

!!Otoab straightened up and went to fetch his pouch and skin blanket. Soon he was walking towards the river again. In his search for meat he had gone off course—the river was still far away. Though he was tired, hungry and sick at heart, he decided not to allow anything to stop him from reaching the !Garib again. Not a bok or guinea fowl. When he reached the river he would eat fish, and only by staying beside the river would he reach Seur Paulus's place.

!!Otoab's spirit lay heavy in him as he walked; he could have been carrying a dead wildebeest on his shoulders for the weight he felt sitting there. Not even when he found the tortoise and picked it up, did his spirit lift. Anybody could pick up a tortoise, it was the slowest-moving creature on earth. Neither was there any triumph in eating its flesh; rare though it might be, the flesh of a tortoise was merely food. Food for the flesh, not the heart.

By nightfall the next day, he came close to the river. The thought of water and fish lightened his heavy heart. Before his fire died down the first time that night, he fell asleep. His sleep was dreamless, without recollections, so that when he awoke in the dead of night on hearing a roar nearby, he knew at once it was a lion not an ostrich.

!!Otoab moved against the sleeping stiffness of his straight leg, and twirling his fire's sticks, he rekindled the fire, adding more brush and twigs. The flames leapt into the night, making known its threat to all prowlers.

He sat with pounding heart, his knowing eyes searching the shadows for a darkness that was substance not air. He could hear the soft footfalls of padded feet beyond the crackling of the wood and his beating heart. He trembled, waiting in fear. For the hyena to try to take him in his weakness was one matter: for the lion to come near him now would be the end.

As the fire grew smaller the flames swayed weakly until they were like a breath taken, and he was left with the embers. The darkness fell about him like a skin, yet !!Otoab sat as still as a tree until the light drifted into the sky in the manner of fingers pulling the sun up on to the horizon.

A spread of burning red and saffron spilled on to the eastern sky, charging the earth and air with a promise of heat to come.

When !!Otoab saw that the world about him was empty save for sand and bush, when he had searched as best he could without moving, looking from the sunrise to sunset place, only then did he get up. He found the spoor of the lion some fifty yards away.

!!Otoab walked around the spoor, contemplating its direction, whether it was male or female, with child or not. The lion would not return, he decided; she had gone towards the pans where the buck would go to drink. As !!Otoab reasoned this matter to its conclusion, he noticed not only the imprint of his feet next to the padded spoor, but his slight shadow cast on the ground by the rising sun. A smile creased his face. With his shadow beside him, he was not alone. He was suddenly glad to be alive, and for the first time since he had left his death place, he spoke aloud.

“O you there, shadow. . . . O you that shows no face. . . . O you who walks on the sand and dances. Who are you, if not me, !!Otoab, the San . . .”

With uplifted heart, !!Otoab made his way to the river. He was not so much hungry that day but happy. He was alive. And who would deny that all men wished above all things to be alive?

He was renewed: he lived, he was close to the river, he was nearer to Seur Paulus. Nothing could mar his happiness. Even when he reached the banks of the !Garib and saw that the water did not flow but lay in pools, making islands of sand in the almost dry river bed, he did not fret.

!!Otoab stood on the woody banks between the willows and acacia. At the sound of birds in the trees, he nodded. The eggs in the nests would sustain him while he plaited the river reeds into a basket. Tomorrow he would use it to catch fish in the pools.

Before night could descend, clouds gathered in a dark, tight blanket above. !!Otoab directed his gaze at the almost black sky, waiting for the storm. Wildebeest, eland, gemsbok, quagga and hyena would be drawn to the storm this night. The rain would be direction for their hunger: some for new grass, others to prey on them.

He was not perturbed; the drooping willow branches would be a shelter over his head. Moreover, he had eaten two eggs, the basket was finished and he was ready for the next day.

At the deafening rolls of thunder, !!Otoab jumped. Lightning forked and crackled, splitting the sky with momentary petrified light. When the warring was done, the rains came.

It was the signal.

!!Otoab clapped his hands and began singing, his squeaky voice ringing triumphantly through the sound of falling rain. Then he began stomping around in circles, dancing despite his stiff leg. His voice grew stronger with each step, starting on a high note, falling jerkily only to rise again at the end of its short passage. Repetition incensed him further, giving him new courage.

If only his son could see him now, and his people. He was not dead but dancing here by the !Garib in the rain. His heart was filled with gladness; he had escaped death and the lion, and he was going to Seur Paulus. His time to die had not yet come, his thinking strings were not broken.

But things that rise must fall, so it was with !!Otoab. The spirits let him down gently for he was an old man with a stiff leg.

The rains did not come again after that night. Nor were there any fish living in the pools. In the days ahead he lived on ants' larvae, roasting them on embers while giving silent praise to Canopus, the Bushman Rice star. At times he found berries or birds' eggs, even wild honey in the rocky banks of the river. He smoked out the bees, removing the comb dripping with honey and ate hungrily.

On the day he recognized a certain bend in the river, the acacia trees and steep banks, he turned inland towards the Tooverberg. The table-topped kopje rose from the flatness of the shrubbed veld, marking its emptiness with a sense of direction. !!Otoab knew there was a water hole at its feet where quaggas drank, sometimes the lion and the San.

He rested by the Tooverberg for his body was weakening and his steps were slow now. From where he sat he could see towards Seur Paulus's place, lying a day away. For him, perhaps two days. No matter how long it took he would reach there; he had not walked this distance for nothing. Nor had he suffered the loss of a steenbok and guinea fowl, or been saved from the lion for nothing.

He began again at sunrise. After many hours his quickening heartbeats were not so much for joy as from exertion, and he stopped often to rest. If he found a root, he rested longer, chewing slowly on the nourishment, savoring its juices, feeling the need to sleep. But he fought against his tired body and drooping mind. He would never reach Seur Paulus if he slept so many times in a day.

!!Otoab's eyes strained ahead for the sight of the hartebeesthuis. Somehow it seemed further away than he remembered, always out of sight. Enough to try a man sorely who had walked so many days without meat in him. Yet the little anger kept him going all day, firing

his will. When he stopped for the night, he knew he would need help from a source outside of himself.

He looked up at the sky. How the stars shimmered, how close they seemed when there were no clouds or drifting smoke to blur the wondrous sight. How the milky way glowed, he thought, longing for another time shared with N!oshay. Since she had belonged to the Kung tribe in the land west of the Kgaligadi, she did not know the story of the milky way. One night, as they had lain on the warm sand looking up at the stars, he had told her the legend of the Cigariepine clan.

A San girl had once thrown the embers of her fire into the sky and commanded them to lie white against the night and give light to the people returning home in the dark.

So too, !!Otoab was comforted by their presence now, and heard the stars making their sounds. Tsi-tsa. . . . tsi-tsa He picked up a burning stick, pointing it at the stars and began to sing, his voice cutting through the night song of insects.

“O star sitting there
let me find food tomorrow
let me eat, O star
let me find Seur Paulus . . .”

!!Otoab sang on and on. Only when a star fell, as if a hand had dropped a burning ember, did he stop singing and sit perfectly still. Something bad had happened, but he knew not what.

He slept uneasily, rising early and setting out on the last day of his journey. The happiness in him was gone, tiredness was a cloak about him, a weighty kaross under the heat of a summer sun. The world about him began to lose sense: shrub, stone and kopje faded and melted. He walked into shades of white and grey tinged with green. All his vision was a landscape of moving colors, pastel swaying shapes.

The hours did not measure his progress, only each painful step, sapping the last dregs of his strength.

As he stumbled around a clump of rocks, he stood still, not daring to breathe, narrowing his eyes so as to see better. O wonder of wonders! Down there lay Seur Paulus's house! A hartebeesthuis with its chimney sat amongst a cluster of reed huts, more than he remembered or had ever counted. On the far side were the kraals filled with sheep and cattle. Seur Paulus had prospered in the time he had been away.

Weariness and weakness suddenly drained from him. He was filled with a joy that soared like a bird in him, lifting him up until he laughed softly with the gladness of having arrived.

Carefully he broke off a branch of a kameeldoring, removing the few thorns with his hard nails, and leaning on it, hobbled down to the farm.

A Khoi woman servant looked up from a tub of washing she was doing in the yard. She frowned at the sight of the dirty old Bosjesman. Even when he stopped a few yards from her, she could smell him.

"Tsjamm," !!Otoab said, "I saw you from afar and I am hungry."

The Khoi woman kept frowning at him. He was just another stinking beggar; they were all the same these Bosjesmans.

"What do you want?" she asked, drying her hands on her skirt.

!!Otoab leaned heavily on the stick to prevent himself from falling over. Now that he was so near to food his hunger rose like a river after the rains, flowing swiftly through him.

"I have come to see the old Seur Paulus."

The woman's eyes widened, her mouth dropped as the Bosjesman spoke the unspeakable. With a wail, she rushed into the house.

!!Otoab stood swaying, blinking his eyes, not sure why the Khoi woman had run away. From inside the house came the sound of raised voices. He wished Seur Paulus would come so he could sit down; he was more tired that he had ever been in his life.

An old man emerged from the house walking over to !!Otoab. He had a big stomach and a long grey beard, but he was not Seur Paulus. He did not look like him, nor did he have his manner. When he spoke, his voice roared like a lion.

"What do you want?" he shouted.

!!Otoab saw the clouds gather on the man's face. "I have come to see old Seur Paulus," he said in a mixture of his language and broken Dutch. "Once I looked after his sheep."

Now the white man's face was like thunder. And the other white people—men, women and children who had crept up behind him—were frowning too. Their faces were as stormy.

"Seur Paulus died yesterday," the man said.

!!Otoab's head began shaking with age and disbelief. The falling star! If he had hurried he might have still had time to see the old Seur, now it was too late. His stiff leg had betrayed him, kept him back, and his hunger.

"You had better go," the man said, "I do not want Bosjesmans around my farm!"

!!Otoab lowered his eyes, slowly turning around. His body ached, his leg was stiffer than ever before. His heart was gone from his body, like a dead animal. He was empty, only he lived, and he was limping to nowhere.

His white friend was dead. And he, !!Otoab, who had succeeded in coming so far, had also failed. He saw many other things too, not least his blindness. It was not the spirit person of the steenbok who had pulled his arm and made his arrow fall in the grass, but he, who no longer had the heart of a hunter, had failed. Take the matter of the guinea fowl as well. He saw more too. He had defied the custom of his people and had thought to escape death. He had thought he could live on borrowed time, but he had been wrong.

He should have kept to the laws, stayed in his death place, waited for the hyena. He should have let be those things which come to all men. !!Kaggen was master of life and death. Who was he, !!Otoab, to say otherwise? By now !!Gauab would have come to fetch him and taken him to the sky where there was no hunger.

Instead his hunger was even greater for he had tried his old body. Pushed it, made it walk for days on end, from one place to another. Now there would be no last meal, he would have to find a place to die while his heart was still beating.

!!Otoab sat down on a rock, utterly weary. He licked his dry lips, looking up at the sky for help even though his vision was blurred. He sat thus, his face turned upward, his rheumy eyes no longer defiant, only wet with sorrow. Then he saw her, a faint image of N!oshay impressed on the clouds.

He opened his eyes wide.

She smiled down at him, her dark eyes shining with pride.

!!Otoab stood up suddenly, as straight as he could, throwing away the stick. He did not want N!oshay to see him looking old, or see his stiff leg.

He kept looking skywards at the image, his mouth moving until the words came. "O N!oshay, how my heart beats for thee," he said softly.

At the sound of approaching hooves N!oshay disappeared. !!Otoab turned to see a horse coming to a halt near him. The rider was a young man, alighting and walking towards him. He was tall with hair the color of the sun, and his eyes were like a sky with no clouds in it.

"Good day, old man."

"Tsjamm." !!Otoab nodded.

"You came to my grandfather's house, I saw you."

!!Otoab nodded again.

"What did you want with him?"

!!Otoab looked up at the young man who was like a tall tree. "Seur Paulus was my friend, I came to look after his sheep . . ."

The young man studied him carefully.

“Where do you live?”

!!Otoab shrugged. “Anywhere. . . . everywhere.”

The young man stood looking at him thoughtfully. He was sure the old Bosjesman before him was the person his Oupa had once told him about. He knew of the hunting prowess of the Bosjesman his grandfather had befriended. Of the fires they had shared, of the time old man Paulus had seen fit to leave his sheep in the Bosjesman’s care. Because of this and the old Bosjesman’s honesty, he wished to undo the harm his father had just done.

The last encounter between frontier farmers and the Bosjesmans had taken place in the Sneeuberge when he was still a boy. There had been no bad blood between them since, but his father chose to live according to the ways of early frontier days. An eye for an eye, dislike, therefore distrust. He had sent the old Bosjesman away without a drink of water. Anybody could see that the wizened person in front of him was a harmless old man. He had walked far in the name of friendship and received hostility. The time had come to give a hand, to keep the peace for the sake of the children.

And it was clear as the young man began to speak in his soft voice that old Seur Paulus’s goodness lived on in his grandson.

“You can look after my sheep, my farm is over the bult,” he said, pointing southwards. New heart sprang up in !!Otoab. “You can stay and look after my sheep until you can’t any more, and even after that. I will give you meat in return.”

!!Otoab stood up straight, slapping his stiff leg.

“And tell me, klein Seur, when I die, will you bury me with my skin and will you put my bow and arrows over my grave so that my shade will know where to find them?”

“I will,” the young man promised.

“What is your given name, klein Seur?”

“Paulus.”

“Ah,” said !!Otoab.

GLOSSARY

Bosjesman: Bushman.

Bult: hill or ridge.

Cisgariep: area near the Orange River.

!Garib: Bushman name for the Orange River.

!!Gauab: spirits that take the soul of a Bushman to the hut in the sky.

Gei-khoib: leader of a Bushman clan.

Hartebeesthuis: house made of reed and huts, occupied by white frontier farmers.

Kagen: Bushman for mantis, or praying mantis.

Kameeldoring: Acacia tree.

Kaross: blanket made of the skins of animals.

Kgaligadi: the Kalahari.

Khoi: Hottentot.

Klein: small, young.

Kopje: hill.

Kraals: enclosure for farm animals.

San: Bushmen called their race by this name.

Seur: Dutch for Sire.

Veld: plains of southern Africa.

Veldkos: food which was gathered in the veld.