

7. The Festival of the Sun

With their stone axes and Tenko with his bronze axe, the men of Skara broke up the skeleton of the whale. Each man was given a share of the whalebone. Lokar saw that all was done fairly.

"As Birno and Tenko, Kali and Brockan brought the whale to our shore, to them should go the bones they choose."

"I choose the two jawbones," Birno decided. "With them I will make rafters for the thatch of my roof."

"And you, Tenko?" Lokar asked.

"I will take some of the smaller bones to make harpoons and enough of the whale's teeth to make a necklace."

Brockan chose a bone that he could shape into a large knife.

When Kali's turn came she pointed to the whale's backbone.

"Those bones could be used for little dishes to hold paint when the men paint their bodies for the Festival of the Sun. I should like some small bones too that I could shape into bone pins for our cloaks."

Some of the men used the ribs of the whale to make supports for their roofs; the women rejoiced over bone to make needles to sew their sheepskin garments. Even the children were given large flakes of bone to work into knives. The tribe felt richer than it had been for many years.

The summer days grew longer. The sea sparkled round the islands, fringing the edges of the shore with curling white.