

# *The Cannibal Monster*

## *Tlingit*

The Tlingit (KLING-it) people live in the far north along the coast of Alaska. Dwelling in a land where woodlands and wildlife were abundant, they developed a culture rich in decorative arts, particularly wood carving. They carved giant canoes out of redwood trees and traveled great distances in them. They went out to sea to catch salmon and even hunt for whales. They built huge longhouses made of cedar planks, and carved and painted designs that stood for the animals of the land and the ocean on the doors and walls. They believed in sharing things with each other and often had great ceremonies called potlatches. At the potlatch, important people such as chiefs would give away many gifts to everyone.

The Tlingit are still great fishermen to this day and tell many stories of how things came to be. The Tlingit people also continue to make very tall totem poles that tell stories. Raven is usually carved on top of the pole. This story of the cannibal monster can be seen carved into a beautiful totem pole that stands on the campus of the University of Alaska in Fairbanks.

## *Characters*

### SPEAKING ROLES:

RAVEN

VILLAGE CHIEF

FIRST MAN

FIRST WOMAN

SECOND MAN

SECOND WOMAN

CANNIBAL MONSTER

BROWN BEAR

THIRD MAN

THIRD WOMAN

### NON-SPEAKING ROLES:

OTHER PEOPLE—AS MANY AS GROUP SIZE WILL ACCOMMODATE

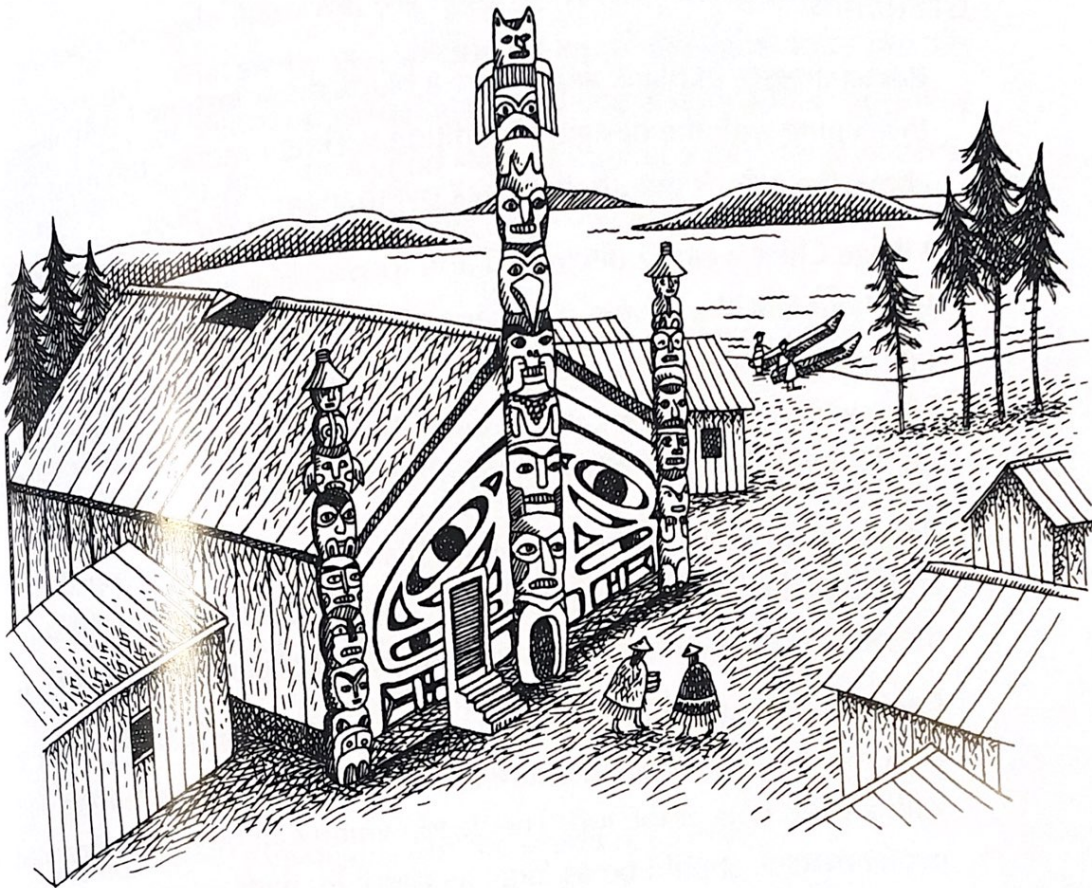
DRUMMER (offstage)

## *Props/Scenery*

The **Tlingit village** can be suggested with a painted backdrop showing a large longhouse decorated with traditional Tlingit designs. Alternatively, children can paint large cardboard boxes to represent the longhouses.

**Raven's tree** can be represented with a painted backdrop. Raven can stand on a small **stepstool**.





A **drum** is needed to make the booming sound of the cannibal monster's approach. This can be a real drum or an upside-down wastebasket.

**Spear** for Brown Bear can be a child's toy (rubber, preferably) or made from a long cardboard tube with a cardboard spearhead.

**The fire** for Scene III can be created by placing a red sheet or large piece of paper with flames painted on it over the cannibal monster. Moving the sheet or the paper can create the impression of rippling flames.



## Costumes

**Raven** dresses in black and wears a black mask fastened with elastic. In keeping with the design of traditional Tlingit masks, the mask ends above the actor's mouth, the beak overhanging his nose.

**Village Chief** wears a decorated and fringed blanket or sheet around his shoulders like a cape. The cape can be decorated with designs for one of the Tlingit clans. Designs of the different clans include the killer whale, the salmon, or the bear. (Be sure not to mix clan designs on the same person's clothing.) The chief wears a cone-shaped hat.

**People** wear everyday clothing with blankets or sheets wrapped around their waists. The blankets or sheets should be decorated with the designs of one clan or another. All people wear cone-shaped hats.

**Cannibal Monster** can be carried by two children hidden inside its costume. The monster can be made of sheets hung over a tall pole with a cross pole at the top. The head, which can be made of painted papier-mâché, should be as large as possible, with a long nose and a big mouth. Fasten it to the top of the pole. Be sure to cut holes in the sheets so the children inside can look out.

**Brown Bear** (who is human, not an animal) wears blankets or sheets decorated with bear designs. Brown Bear also wears a cone-shaped hat.

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## Scene I: A Village on the Northwest Coast

*The people of the village pantomime various activities such as carving wood, fixing fishing nets, working on canoes, and mixing food. Raven stands in his tree to one side of the stage.*



**RAVEN:** Caa-awk, caa-awk. My name is Raven. One of my jobs is to keep watch. That's why you see me on top of the tallest trees like this one. I can see better up here. Let me tell you a story about something I saw once long ago. It's a good story. It's about a monster and some brave people. It's a story about me too. Caa-awk, caa-awk! That makes the story even better.

**VILLAGE CHIEF:** What a good day this is. I am glad we moved to this village.

**FIRST MAN:** I just hope that the cannibal monster does not find us again.

*Offstage, Drummer beats the drum, BOOM-BOOM-BOOM-BOOM, like heavy feet striking the earth.*

**FIRST WOMAN:** Oh no, do you hear that sound?

**SECOND MAN:** I think it is the cannibal monster!

**VILLAGE CHIEF:** Maybe it is just the sound of thunder.

**SECOND MAN:** Or rocks rolling down the mountain.

*Offstage, Drummer makes the BOOM-BOOM-BOOM-BOOM sound again, louder this time. Then Cannibal Monster gives a loud ROAR.*

**SECOND WOMAN:** It is the cannibal monster. Run for your lives!

*The people run in all directions as Cannibal Monster enters the village.*

**CANNIBAL MONSTER:** WEY-HAH! I AM HUNGRY!

**BROWN BEAR:** Throw your spears at it. Shoot your arrows.







*The people pantomime throwing spears and shooting arrows.*

**CANNIBAL MONSTER:** WEY-HAH! SPEARS AND ARROWS CANNOT HURT ME!

*The cannibal monster turns to chase First Man offstage.*

**FIRST MAN** (from offstage): Help! The cannibal monster is going to catch me! Agggghhh!

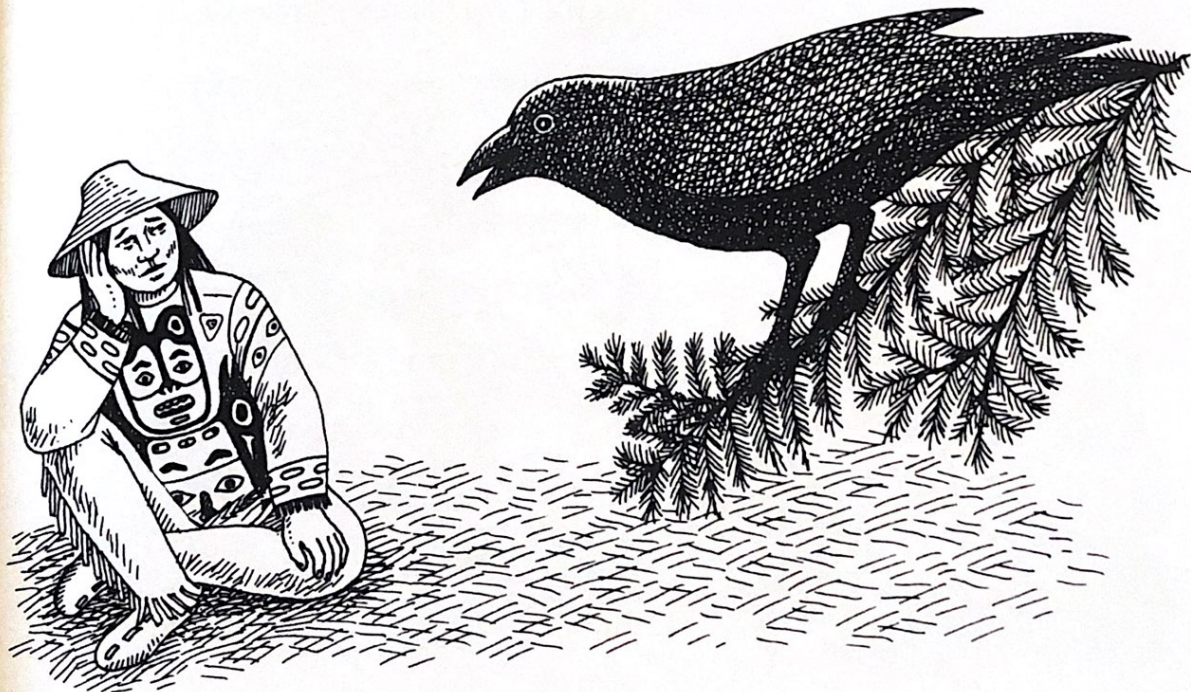
**RAVEN:** As you can see, things were not going well for the human beings. Luckily for them, I decided to help.

## Scene II: The Same Village

*Brown Bear sits alone in the village. Raven is in his tree above him.*

**BROWN BEAR:** What can we do? Nothing can kill that monster.

**RAVEN:** Caa-awk, caa-awk. I can help. I can help.





**BROWN BEAR:** Raven, how can you help us? Do you know **how** to kill the cannibal monster?

**RAVEN:** Shoot the monster in its left heel. Shoot the monster in its left heel.

**BROWN BEAR:** I will do as you say, Raven. Thank you.

### Scene III: The Same Village

*People are gathered around Brown Bear.*

**VILLAGE CHIEF:** Brown Bear, are you sure you know how to kill the cannibal monster?

**BROWN BEAR:** Raven told me. He wants to help us.

**SECOND WOMAN:** Remember what happened yesterday? Our spears didn't hurt the monster.

**BROWN BEAR:** It will be different today.





*Offstage, Drummer makes BOOM-BOOM-BOOM-BOOM sound.*

**THIRD MAN:** What is that?

**THIRD WOMAN:** It is the cannibal monster. Run for your lives!

**BROWN BEAR:** No. Everyone stay right here.

*Cannibal Monster makes its ROAR sound offstage. Then monster enters.*

**CANNIBAL MONSTER:** WEY-HAH! I AM HUNGRY.

**BROWN BEAR:** Try to eat me!

*Brown Bear holds up his spear.*

**CANNIBAL MONSTER:** WEY-HAH! YOU CANNOT HURT ME.

*Cannibal Monster moves toward Brown Bear. Brown Bear ducks behind Cannibal Monster and stabs down with his spear at the monster's left heel.*

**CANNIBAL MONSTER:** YOU HAVE KILLED ME!

*Cannibal Monster falls down onto the stage.*

**VILLAGE CHIEF:** It is dead.

**FIRST WOMAN:** Brown Bear has saved us all from being eaten alive.

**THIRD MAN:** But what can we do with the cannibal monster's body?

**SECOND WOMAN:** Let's burn it up!

**RAVEN** (*calling down from his tree*): Caa-awk. Caa-awk. Bad idea. Bad idea.

**VILLAGE CHIEF:** That is a good idea. Everyone go get wood.

**BROWN BEAR:** Wait! Raven says that is a bad idea.



*No one listens to Brown Bear. They all gather wood and pile it around Cannibal Monster's body.*

**RAVEN:** Don't do it. Don't do it.

**BROWN BEAR:** Raven says we should not do this.

**SECOND MAN:** Brown Bear, step back. We are going to light the fire. *The People place the sheet of "fire" over Cannibal Monster.*

**RAVEN:** You'll be sorry. You'll be sorry.

**CANNIBAL MONSTER'S VOICE:** YOU HAVE SET ME FREE. NOW I WILL EAT YOU FOREVER. WEY-HAH.WEY-HAH!

**VILLAGE CHIEF** *(swatting at something in the air):* Something is coming out of the smoke.





**SECOND WOMAN:** The smoke is turning into little creatures.

*She swats her arm.*

**THIRD WOMAN:** Ouch. One of them bit me!

*Everyone is now swatting at the air and at their arms, legs, and heads.*

**FIRST WOMAN:** They are eating us alive.

**VLLAGE CHIEF:** Run for your lives!

*Everyone runs offstage, leaving Raven alone in his tree.*

**RAVEN:** Caa-awk, caa-awk. They should have listened to me. That is how mosquitoes came into the world. They came out of the smoke from the cannibal monster's body. They are still eating people alive to this day. Caa-awk, caa-awk! And that is my story.