

121. Wealth From a Shag (Sa:ya:ch'apis)

The young Chief from 2Ots'o:s was unmanly.² His father was a Getter of Humpback and Gray whales. His father was also Head Chief of the 2Ots'o:s'ath. His wife did not bear children; that is why his father was very angry at him. So his father 'threw him away' as you would any useless article. That is what our forefathers used to do: 'throw away' sons who were useless and unmanly. He was looked after by his uncle, his father's younger brother, who didn't throw away his nephew. He was just friendly to his nephew although he did not have him with him. That is who was counselling him about what he should do if he saw someone unnatural, telling him everything, including how and when to bathe ritually, counselling his nephew.

He obeyed, K'o:k'ots'itl'i:k, whatever he was told to do by his uncle. His father had named him K'o:k'ots'itl'i:k because of the fact that he only went after small mussels; that's all he had as food, the young man. He would usually be gone for two days when he went for the small bay mussels though he sometimes would be gone longer, up to six days. There they bathed, trying very hard, the couple did. That is the reason they would be gone so long, because they were bathing ritually. The father would give him a piece of blubber whenever he got some. But he used to throw it away, didn't eat it, because he was looking as well for a way to become a 'man', saying that he was counselled by his uncle. He really hated his father.

Even so he was going home, the rascal, and then lo and behold: there was a great big shag on the beach. All at once he remembered what his uncle used to tell him. Right away he jumped out of the canoe and ran, for there was the shag walking. It was as if he saw it to be wingless although it had wings. But they were bare, without plumage. At once he took it.

"Give me what's inside you," he said.

"Give me what's inside you," he repeated.

"Please give me that which you have inside you," he pleaded.

After he asked four times, he saw that out of the shag's rear end came a Hi:xwa:, dentalium!

"All right. Give me another, make it man and wife!" he said.

Then and there another one came out making a mated pair. Then he released the shag, saying,

"All right, you can go."

The rascal K'o:k'ots'itl'i:k now had something! For a while, the span of a day, he attended to that which he had seen. Then he went home to his little abode. His small mussels were packed up the beach, what he had brought in his canoe and was fond of eating for which he was called by that name by his commoners. He tied up his box and put it in his canoe, the box which he usually kept at the head of his bed. That night he had in his canoe the thing he had found, what he now had. Daylight came and he unpacked it. He found that box half full of Hi:xwa:. The pair of Hi:xwa: kept on top of the mass of stuff the two were spewing out of their rear ends. He divided the mass into three groups for they were of three groups of Hi:xwa:. That night he found that the same thing happened as before that morning: there he found the box half full again of Hi:xwa:. It was adding up very fast, he could hardly keep up dividing it up, the remains of the big ones were adding up to so many Hi:xwa:, the rascal! He put mats where he was keeping them on the floor and put up boards for partitions to make little rooms to store his Hi:xwa:. Nobody knew of what happened because no one ever came to visit K'o:k'ots'itl'i:k. Hey, now he had lots of Hi:xwa:, the rascal!

When summer came he was still storing and separating the Hi:xwa: on the floor into the big ones, the mid-size ones, and ones that were small. None knew of this, that he had lots of Hi:xwa:, that he was getting plenty. When it became summer some Tl'a:ʔasʔath⁴ came along the coast on a Hi:xwa: buying trip in four canoes, looking for Hi:xwa: from tribe to tribe. They were full of goods to trade for Hi:xwa:.⁶ They could not find any Hi:xwa: among those villages they had visited and began telling of their failure in getting them the Tl'a:ʔasʔath⁴ did.

"Ha! I guess we will not get any on this trip for these people have only a few Hi:xwa:."

"You fellows go to that single house there on the beach. He is the only one who has a house full of Hi:xwa:," someone said, speaking sarcastically to make fun of K'o:k'ots'itl'i:k.

"Is that so?" said the three canoes.

They sent one canoe to take a closer look and it went past the house to see. The three canoes didn't move. They found out that they were just making fun of him because K'o:k'ots'itl'i:k was unmanly.

"We are looking for Chiti:nok," said the Tl'a:ʔasʔath⁴.

The Tl'a:ʔasʔath⁴ used to call Hi:xwa: 'Chiti:nok'.⁶

"Those from across the bay said you have lots of Chiti:nok," said the Tl'a:ʔasʔath⁴, "That yours is full, those of you who live here, we heard."

"Oh. Take a look then. On the floor towards the door is what you're looking for," said K'o:k'ots'itli:k.

The Tl'a:ʔasʔath uncovered it. He got red in the face as he saw that there on the floor piled high in the partitioned room were many Hi:xwa:.

"There are more on the other side of the house. Push aside the cover again," said K'o:k'ots'itli:k. "There are still more at the head of the house. Pull the curtains aside. You'll see what you're looking for. I want to sell the small ones and the medium size for the same price."

The Tl'a:ʔasʔath canoe started buying. K'o:k'ots'itli:k was fair in his dealing: he was selling the Hi:xwa: for less than what it was worth so that the purchasers would feel good about buying. Pretty soon the Tl'a:ʔasʔath ran out of the wherewithal to buy. They went back over to their fellow canoe parties. They started telling them,

"It's true what they said, the house is really full of Hi:xwa:.. We ran out of trade goods. He's not selling the Hi:xwa: for what it's really worth. He's not stingy."

The rest of the Tl'a:ʔasʔath, the three canoes, went across and began buying as well. In a little while they, too, ran out of goods to trade. Then the four canoes went home, all four. They arrived at their home at Ni:ya:.' The four canoes had a consultation in which they agreed to keep it all secret. They remained at their home two days, then started off for Kwinyo:tʔath,⁸ all four canoes, intending also to reach the Kwi:na:yilʔath,⁹ they who are called ʔI:ts'oqʔath, because that is where they used to sell Hi:xwa:, the reason for the Tl'a:ʔasʔath buying trips. For that's where Hi:xwa: was worth lots, the seaward side. The four Tl'a:ʔasʔath canoes then headed home all loaded down with wealth goods. They arrived at their home.

Again they got ready to go towards ʔOts'o:s, the four canoes. The people got suspicious of them, for they were about to travel in their canoes again, those who travelled by fours. One of the four canoes' crew told one of his friends, a relative. He said that even if all the tribes should land at the beach front there were so many Hi:xwa: they would not seem to get less, there being three varieties partitioned off. The Tl'a:ʔasʔath held council, those who were left behind. They, too, got ready and started off.

K'o:k'ots'itli:k got a measuring stick. That was their measure, the people of old: one string of Hi:xwa: was one fathom long strung out. Then strings of these were called "N'o:phta:yok". This is how K'o:k'ots'itli:k used to measure his

Hi:xwa:, that's what he went by. He pulled it out into the container as much as the measure would be; that's how he measured it easily when he sold it.

The Tl'a:ʔasʔath followed in ten more canoes. These canoes and the original four added up to fourteen canoes coming to buy Hi:xwa: from K'o:k'ots'itli:k. The whole fleet of canoes got to K'o:k'ots'itli:k's beach front, all fourteen of them! They landed bow first on the beach where K'o:k'ots'itli:k lived, the rascal! They started buying from the man: ten measures for a slave - some bought with slaves, those who wanted to, the Tl'a:ʔasʔath Chiefs - five measures for a slave boy the size of No:txasʔaqtli and Ma:ma:tli:ts.¹⁰ The main villagers just watched from the other side. K'o:k'ots'itli:k got five slaves, two female and three male. He was buying everything, all the wealth possessions of our forefathers like mountain goat blankets. There were no trade blankets at that time. Some of the Tl'a:ʔasʔath had them on the back. All of the fourteen canoes were overloaded. There were also camas bulbs, steam cooked; that's what the Tl'a:ʔasʔath used for trade, too. They had twenty sacks of steamed camas, one hundred of dried blubber, also a sea lion bladder full of oil for his dried herring eggs. Those of the people of the village who had spoken sarcastically saying, 'He's the only one full of Hi:xwa:, the one over on the other side,' were now ashamed.

All this caused the Hi:xwa: piled up in the house to become a little less, about half the amount on the floor there. They ran out of things to trade with again, the Tl'a:ʔasʔath, so they went home. K'o:k'ots'itli:k got loaded down with wealth possessions. He invited the people from the other side to a camas feast, giving it at his father's house. He gave a feast of blubber twice, doing so there at his father's house.

The Ni:ti:naʔath¹¹ as well heard about this from the Tl'a:ʔasʔath on their way home full of Hi:xwa:, saying that even if all the tribes went to buy Hi:xwa: from him it wouldn't make a dent:

"We never even made it a wee bit less because there are so many."

Right away the Ni:ti:naʔath started off in twenty canoes. Round the point they came again. Ni:ti:naʔath. Oh my, but it looked like many canoes, the twenty! The Ni:ti:naʔath, too, brought many trade goods including mountain goat blankets. They, too, started to buy. Again they had slaves to barter for Hi:xwa:. K'o:k'ots'itli:k bought five more slaves. He also bought mountain goat blankets. Some of the Ni:ti:naʔath Chiefs had two. This time they bought all of the Hi:xwa:. The people from the other side were looking with envy at those trying to outbuy the others, they were just watching all the bartering.

For a while he had put away his Hi:xwa: producing couple; they were not producing for a while.

He got a house for all his slaves. He didn't let them live in the same house with him but put them far away at the back of the village, his slaves. The tribe gave him two boards from each of his subjects, and he paid each person who gave him boards in Hi:wxa:. Then he rested a while, having sold all his Hi:xwa:! The Hi:xwa: couple that defecates knows when they are not required to produce when they defecate; they just stop what they were doing. He would put them into a small bay mussel shell and tie it together when he made them stop defecating. The Hi:xwa: couple would also know when they were required to give birth again. They would be put into a large box, and they would start giving birth in a hurry!

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Then K'o:k'ots'itli:k went to get small mussels, what he did all the time. He went again with his wife and started getting bay mussels because he held them in high regard as his best food. He worked till dark and was going home. then he saw a fire there on the rock point. The island by the shore had a sandy area at its neck. The fire was there at the little island separated from the shore by a strip of water. Hey, then he heard a baby cry!

"A:ho:," said the Na:ni:qa mother.

Na:ni:qa it's called by the up-inlet people, but we call them Ya*2*i:, those of that kind. That last noise sounded, the one which makes us scared. K'o:k'ots'itli:k turned his canoe and went backwards. They say it's as if the earth trembles when it utters the last sound; that's what caused K'o:k'ots'itli:k to become weak in his bones. It was just as if a woman was saying 'Aho:, a^ho:' trying to stop its crying when her baby is crying. K'o:k'ots'itli:k's canoe hit the sandy beach stern first like a spear.

"All right, guy, jump out of the canoe," he said to his wife.

He used to jerk the canoe. 'All right, you rascal, jump out of the canoe,' he'd say.

K'o:k'ots'itli:k became crippled, his legs going dead. He was crippled and unable to walk.

"The rascal here in the canoe has done great!" said the wife.

Out jumped the wife and went at once to the one on the rocks holding the baby, the Na:ni:qa. Hey, she took the baby from her, K'o:k'ots'itli:k's wife did!

Give me my baby," it said. "For a belt it has a Hi'itl'ik. Take that off. It has a Hihiqtoy'i:k for a belt. Take that off it, too. For a side pillow it has a Sea Otter on the right side of the face. For a side pillow on the left side of the face it has a Hair Seal."

After it said all that, she threw the baby behind her. The Na:ni:qa caught it. Its baby did not hit the ground. The fire went out, as if you closed your eyes. The channel had given up what it had for him.

He went towards Ma:n'o:ʔisʔath,¹² starting to make medicine of it. He didn't take the whole thing but took only half of each one. It is taboo to keep the whole thing: you're supposed to split it in two, take the right side and throw away the left. He put it onto a yew tree. It is the yew that knows how to look after medicine and the cedar, the slender ones still growing up, saplings. On the yew tree he placed the Hi'itl'ik and the Hihiqtoy'i:k, then on the cedar the Sea Otter and Hair Seal together. He stayed there praying and waiting ritually, was away four days, and while there he saw Wolves, ten of them. These must have been the great hunters of the Wolves. They gave him tree needle twigs from which they were empowered to be good hunters. He then added these to his medicines, the more reason to pay and wait.

On the eighth day he headed home, starting off at night. He reached a nice flat rock sloping slightly downward. From there came the sound of a hair seal squealing, so piercing it was as if the world burst! At once K'o:k'ots'itli:k went towards the shore, towards where the sound came from, and just then as he approached he heard the squealing start again. K'o:k'ots'itli:k got out and went up on the rocks. Suddenly he was looking down into a hole and saw things that looked like stars for a whole bunch of seals were looking up at him. Not doing anything, he went down the beach. Thinking that he had found something, he didn't even touch. He arrived at night at his little house.

"K'o:k'ots'itli:k must have some kind of sea mammal in his canoe; that's why he was gone," he heard them saying about him ironically.

He stayed home quite a while, about six days, then went back to where he would go to and stayed there overnight. He got out of his canoe and went to the secret cave. He took a mid-sized seal, not a real big one. He took it down from the rocks and put it into the canoe. He cut it on the side, making it look like it was wounded, and landed at the village on the other side.

"Hey now, this happened just in time to us poor folks! We have found a dead drift carcass. There's a hair seal here in the canoe. Come and see, guys, if it's the one that got away from

you," said K'o:k'ots'itli:k.

The hunters went down the beach to look at the seal.

"I'm the one who speared it at this spot. It pulled out," said one the hunters.

"All right. All right, all right. Take it," said K'o:k'ots'itli:k.

My, the hunter took it out of the canoe and up the beach! Then the one who pretended to have gotten the seal gave a feast. The people at the feast began talking, being satiated, saying that K'o:k'ots'itli:k was very useful because he was always about doing something or going someplace.

"We would never have gotten this if it was not for K'o:k'ots'itli:k being always on the move," they said.

K'o:k'ots'itli:k stayed home for quite a while before going out again. He was gone for two days. Two nights he was away and then came home. He had taken a big seal, the biggest one, taken it down the beach and put it in his canoe. He had fixed it the same way: wounded, with guts sticking out.

"Now then we have met again, those of us who are orphans, always on the go," said K'o:k'ots'itli:k. "Come down the beach again, you hunters, and look at it to see which one speared it. Here in the canoe again is a hair seal."

Again one of them recognized it as the one, the big one he had speared. My, he took it up the beach and gave a feast again! They were glad that they were now having feasts often. They were thanking K'o:k'ots'itli:k, saying that it was he who was finding those seals that had gotten away from the hunters.

For a while K'o:k'ots'itli:k did not go out. Then after staying home eight days he went out again. He was away for two days again, then came home. This time he took two from his seal cave. He took one big seal and one medium sized. He put the seals in his canoe; now he had two in there. Again he fixed them with a cut on each in the side with the guts sticking out and went towards the village, paddling. My, once again the hunters came down the beach to meet him.

"You guys must be busy spearing seals. This time we are really in luck!" he said.

He told them where he got each of the seals, making the places far apart.

"That big one is mine. I'm the one who speared the big one," said one hunter.

Hey now, two hunters started arguing, each pretending to be the one who speared the big one! One of them had as a witness his steersman testifying that it was he indeed who speared the big one. The steersman was saying that it nearly upset the canoe for it was so big, pulling very hard! The two began to quarrel, each saying to the other that he, too, knew how to get big ones. Then one of them weakened and took the smaller one. K'o:k'ots'itli:k was secretly laughing at them for now he was getting even for the times they were making fun of him. K'o:k'ots'itli:k went home. The two hunters were often giving seal feasts while K'o:k'ots'itli:k was always left with nothing; that's why they believed him, for he kept only his paddle.

He called his uncle who had helped him. He asked him if he was not willing to go along the coast to find him a sealing spear.

"I am willing to go if you send me looking for it," said the uncle.

He left and went to Hishkwi:ʔath¹³ looking for a sealing spear complete with the harpoon heads strung on because his nephew had said to look for a spear already strung with the harpoons and lines. No one knew that he went to buy a spear because he arrived at his nephew's place at night.

"Burn the bottom of your canoe," he told his uncle.¹⁴

Over four fathoms in length was his uncle's canoe. His uncle put the canoe on its side, drying it. Then he burned its bottom that evening. It was all ready, burned and burnished, the next morning. He pulled it out that evening when the sun went down, then went across to where his nephew lived. Hey, the rascal K'o:k'ots'itli:k came down the beach and, lo, there he was carrying a spear! Not many spoke in suspicion save two.

"So that's why he pretends to get drift seals each time. He's acting funny indeed for there he goes getting ready to go seal hunting," they said suspiciously. "He's in a big canoe for sealing, K'o:k'ots'itli:k; nevertheless, he'll fill it up no doubt," they continued, making fun of K'o:k'ots'itli:k.

He went towards the open sea with the spear sticking out on the bow, the rascal. As soon as he reached the open sea he stopped there and waited until dark. Then as soon as it got dark he went back inside and travelled at night towards where his seal cave was. He arrived there while the night was not too advanced, while it was not yet midnight. He got out of his canoe and tied it up. He started killing the seals, and his uncle was taking them down the rocks right away. He killed fifteen, selecting

only big ones. He went and put the seals in the canoe, then looked to see how his canoe was loaded and found that it had lots of freeboard yet, still needed more. He went back up and got five more. My, again he took them down and put them in his canoe. My, this time it really sank lower into the sea! When he had put twenty seals in, they started off, still at night. He went towards the open sea where he had gone before and stopped out there. He was still there when daylight started coming. He was not out there long when daylight came, and waited until it got really light before starting off; that's why it was just at sunrise that he rounded the point, the rascal K'o:k'ots'itli:k! The whole village sprang into action, everyone running outside.

"Ko:k'ots'itli:k is loaded to the brim with seals!"

His sealing spear which he did not even use was still strung in the canoe in pretense of having been used. **The people all ran** down to where K'o:k'ots'itli:k lay alongside the shore; the whole village was down the beach to meet him. **The hunters again came** down to take the seals from him.

"Here he is again, the one from whom you're taking things," some of the people were saying. "Did he really bring in your seals? Come on down and take his seals like you've been doing before."

Those who used to pretend they speared the seals went inside in shame. K'o:k'ots'itli:k's canoe was now being unloaded. All the seals were wounded as if from his spear. He gave all he had in the canoe to his steersman, his uncle, all twenty seals. Then he cruised by the village in his empty canoe with no more seals inside. The slaves lifted up his canoe and beached it. These were the slaves he got from his Hi:xwa..

After ten days he went out again with the same person, his uncle. Again he went towards the open sea, pretending to go out there as always. As soon as it got dark he headed back to where he went before towards his seal cave. He arrived at night at his cave and started killing the seals. This time he changed things by taking not just big ones; he took the mid-sized ones. He began taking them down the shore in the night. That was done without too much effort because the rocks there below the cave were sloping down; it was easy to do by one man. Twenty-five seals were loaded onto the canoe. It sank down; the canoe got very low in the water. While it was still night he started off again, went past where he left from and back towards the open sea. He was not out there long before daylight broke. Again he came around the point early in the morning. My, my, it looked like K'o:k'ots'itli:k had seals again in his canoe, coming round the point with his spear sticking out of the bow! Hey, all the villagers ran down the beach to meet him! Oh my, this time it looked like there were even more seals than before on the beach,

twenty-five! His uncle cut up the seals once more because he got all of them for being the steersman, all twenty-five seals. Then they heated stones, throwing them on the fire. There were many layers of wood over the fire. The ʔOts'o:sʔath sat down to a feast. Just as the people were eating K'o:k'ots'itli:k entered. His father gave him a name. He gave him a new name for the other time before when he came in with lots of seals and his uncle gave a seal feast.

"I don't want you all to call me anything else. Just keep calling me K'o:k'ots'itli:k," said K'o:k'ots'itli:k, "For I don't want to shame you because it was you who gave me this name when you disowned me."

After saying that he went out and headed home. Then he went out hunting again but this time he didn't get so many. He had just ten in the canoe for he was afraid they might get suspicious and start spying on him. It became winter and he was out hunting all the time. He would have up to ten in the canoe but didn't bring home many too often.

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Then while it was winter he began getting ready to go whale hunting. He bought a whaling harpoon shaft, also cedar withe rope, and started making the sealskin floats himself. He got everything ready. He put pitch on the blade of the harpoon head he bought from the Tl'a:ʔasʔath with his Hi:xwa:. He bought a whaling canoe. When summer came he had all his equipment ready; he had everything ready by the time the Gray whales started blowing.

The whalers of all the tribes started going out. The ʔOts'o:sʔath whalers went out, too. It was when all the whalers had gone out that K'o:k'ots'itli:k also went out. For crew he had his uncle as steersman and the rest were all slaves, four of his slaves, for there are six men in the canoe of those who go out whaling. There was no one at the middle of the canoe. That space was saved to store the coiled up cedar branch rope and the sealskin floats, for which reason there were men only at the ends, three at each end. They paddled out towards where the whalers were waiting and tied up to kelps on the sea. They were there not too long when, my gosh, the water started churning at the front of their canoe where they were tied up! There it blew at the right side of their bow, a Gray whale. They took but two strokes, the Gray was so close. Hey then, the rascal K'o:k'ots'itli:k speared, the shaft going in right up to the binding¹⁵ it sank in so deep! His whale just shook a little and died at once. The other whalers came and only towed K'o:k'ots'itli:k's catch. They tied it on the beach in front of his father's house. He had them butcher the whale, had the whole tribe come to cut the blubber off for themselves, all the people.

His dorsal fin was taken up to his father's house and suspended facing downward on a horizontal pole at the head of the house.

Next day K'o:k'ots'itli:k went out whaling again and had another one tied up on the beach. Again it had died at once because he was powered by the Ya?i: spirit he saw. He tied the Gray whale again in front of his father's house. He did the same as before: had all the people help themselves to the whale. Just the steersman, his uncle, would get his measure of blubber, four hands wide on each side at the mid-section, the wide part of the belly right around the girth. His dorsal fin went up the beach once more to where his father lived. There were now two dorsal fins suspended on rafters in the house of his father.

For four days he went out each day, caught four and then stayed home for a while. The villagers got lots of blubber because there were now four Gray whales on the beach. Then they cooked the dorsal fins for him, all four saddles which K'o:k'ots'itli:k had. The whole village had a feast when they cooked the four dorsal fins. Just those women who had stopped menstruating were allowed to come to the feast, not those who were still having their monthlies. When one gives a dorsal fin feast, the leftovers are not taken home; they stay right in the house. People used to go in there to finish eating cooked dorsal fin. K'o:k'ots'itli:k now spoke when everyone was there at the dorsal fin feast:

"You people are now sharing this feast with me, what I'm eating," he said. "These are the small mussels that I eat. You are now eating small mussels."

The people were all ashamed, those who used to delight in making fun of him, laughing at him for liking to eat small mussels. Then he went out again for four days, getting one whale a day. He had the same number of dorsal fins suspended on the rafters again.

"This is my own catch, what you're eating now," he said to his fellow tribesmen. "I did not use my grandfather's equipment, though my father is also a Getter of whales, for I don't know his ritual words."

His father wanted him to move into his house. K'o:k'ots'itli:k didn't have him have all the four Grays. They cut up the whales for him. Then he invited the other tribes to come buy his blubber. The Tla?o:kwi?ath came to buy blubber; also the Qiltsma?ath, ?A:ho:s?ath, Hishkwi?ath, and Mowach'ath. The rascal K'o:k'ots'itli:k got wealthy; his house became full of riches. Then he went out again, went whaling once more, K'o:k'ots'itli:k. He only took two, got two more,¹⁶ and then let it go for a while. That's as far as the story of K'o:k'ots'itli:k goes.