

One afternoon his father told him that it was time for the finishing touch. He took the bow from Lleuad and threw it into the fire of the house. Then blew up the fire until it was roaring hot. Flames went into the chimney.

Shocked to see his precious work go up in flames, Lleuad almost grabbed the bow from the flames, but his father held him back.

"Just wait a moment, you'll see," he showed his son how the hot flames licked the wood and turned the white and yellow material into brown and black. The flames slowly died and when the wood was charred, his father took it out of the fireplace. He extinguished any flames still burning on the bow then showed the blackened wood to his son.

"Now comes the best part," he told his son, who saw a twinkle in his father's eyes.

"Think of some nice things to carve into the wood. Something that is really you. You, see?"

He took a small carving knife and showed his son how to decorate the bow.

With quick motions his father created a nice curve that adorned the handle of the bow, the charred surface revealing a wonderful golden pattern underneath.

"Now you work this around the handle." Alainadd said, returning the wood to his son.

Lleuad stood there and watched in awe, surprised how well this turned out.

He took the knife from his father and started carving his own patterns.

Later that evening he gave the bow back to his father, declaring that he finished decorating. Meanwhile his father had made a bowstring and he strung the bow.

He had even fletched a number of arrows.

"Now, my son," he told Lleuad, "it is time for testing."

Lleuad had to pull the bowstring several times without releasing.

"Never shoot a bow, without an arrow," his father told him. "The power of the string might snap your bow."

After each draw, he returned the bow back to his father, who twisted the string a bit more, until he judged that the bow was at the right strength.

Since it had turned dark, before the string was correctly adjusted, Lleuad had to wait until the next day, before his father helped him with the shooting of his bow. That night he dreamt of shooting his bow.

For a couple of years, the boy trained day after day with his knife, the bow and his music.

Until one day Lowan came to his parents' door.

"We will be leaving," he said, standing in the doorway.

Lleuad's father nodded and Neidd reached out her hand.

"I wish you all a good journey. Will you all travel together?" she meant him and his wife and children, but Lowan shook his head.

"Donna is not feeling the Wanderlust yet, like the rest of us. She wished to stay, so I came to you." Lleuad saw the hope in the man's eyes. "I was hoping she could stay with you until her Wanderlust comes."

Neidd and Alainadd exchanged glances then both nodded, without hesitation.

"Of course," said Lleuad's father, and Neidd added: "We will take care of her."

A day later Donna took her place in the small hut, while the rest of her family waved their goodbyes.

To Lleuad's taste, the hut felt crowded with just one extra person. And Lowan's daughter, with her quick wit and sharp tongue, was not a person that Lleuad enjoyed having around for too long.

He made excuses to avoid her, by making his new bow, or taking long walks outside the village, sometimes returning home with prey that he shot or killed with his bow or his dagger.

The outside world started to feel like a second home. He learned about plants and finding edible ones to bring home. One time, when he was seven, his mother wanted to talk to him.

"You already heard about Wanderlust," she told him, and Lleuad nodded. Since he was born, many families had left the village, or individuals, even without families, leaving everything and everyone behind, looking for a different place. "But do you know what it means?"

"It means going away," answered Lleuad, with a question on his face, but his mother shook her head.

"I see why you would say that," she explained. "But it is a feeling that we all receive one day." She laid a hand on Lleuad's chest. "A feeling that you want to know more about the world. Like you were given a present, but you were not able to open it. One day you feel that you can no longer stand it, and you must know what is inside. You probably don't feel it right now, but one day you will."

"And you do have Wanderlust?" Lleuad asked and his mother nodded.

Lleuad must have looked terrified because his mother quickly added that he would come along.

"We will all travel together," she reassured him. "Your father feels it too. And Donna wants to know what lies beyond the village. Maybe it is Wanderlust, or she is just curious."

Within two days they were fully prepared to leave.

They said their farewells to everyone of the village and set off into the big unknown world.

Lleuad knew the grounds around the village, and thought he had nothing to be taught, but within a day they had walked further than he ever dared to go. While they travelled, Lleuad and Donna were taught about the different beings that lived in the world. Neidd told them where North or South was, and how to know where you are in the world. Lleuad's father taught about using the sun, the stars and about the phases of the moon.

The world grew larger every new lesson.

Each day, under the supervision of Alainadd, together with Donna, he practiced with the dagger, shot arrows and his parents quiz them every evening about directions and landmarks.

Neidd and Alainadd had decided that they would start with a small journey, Alainadd told the children about it.

"We will first walk around the village, just a little further than you were allowed to go, when you were young. After that, we will return to our village, see what we have learned and then make a larger journey."

It took five days before they returned. Spring was almost over and the hot days of summer were approaching.

"We will now go for a larger journey. We will go around a place that people call Dour Douar."

It was the night before they left the village again. Alainadd crouched by the children to explain their oncoming journeys.

"We know the land as Tirdwr. We won't go through this place for it is infested with various kinds of evil. Monsters of all sorts who love killing."

"Are these great monsters?" Lleuad asked eagerly. In his own mind he was already a hero, but Donna made fun of his eagerness.

"Not all monsters are big," his father explained, stepping between the children before they would start a riot. "Big monsters can be scary, but small monsters can be even worse."

Every night after a long day of walking, to educate the kids, Lleuad's father told them stories about all kinds of monsters, races and creatures that might live around the Dour Douar.

His stories were so detailed that Lleuad believed that his own father had witnessed them firsthand. It was for the first time that Lleuad heard about creatures that looked like him but were still totally different. In his father's tales they were shorter, or taller. Or had small ears, long ears or had fur covering their whole body. Some