

XIII -At the earths core

The chapter "The Sly One" from "At the Earth's Core" unfolds with a dramatic escape through a narrow canyon, led by the protagonist and his companions from their Sagoth pursuers. Amidst their desperate flight to reach the cliffs of Sari and hopefully the aid of the Sarian warriors, they suddenly realize the betrayal by Hooja, who had promised aid but instead had left them to fend for themselves, seeking revenge on the protagonist for past grievances.

As the Sagoths close in, a strategic decision by the protagonist to lead the pursuers away sacrifices his safety for that of his companions, Ghak and Perry. This diversion takes him into a more dangerous path, requiring quick thinking and skill with the bow and arrow, an ancient weapon unfamiliar to the Sagoths but effective in the protagonist's hands. His escape becomes not just a fight against the Sagoths but a race against his own physical limits.

The chase leads to a precarious moment on a ledge with nowhere to run, where the protagonist encounters a massive cave bear. The creature's unexpected appearance turns the tables, offering an unforeseen ally against the Sagoths. In a terrifying encounter, the bear decimates the Sagoths in a frenzied battle, ultimately saving the protagonist from a grim fate.

The chapter closes on a high note, revealing the protagonist's survival and rescue, thanks to the return of Ghak and his party. The savage victory of the cave bear over the Sagoths is recounted by Ghak, highlighting the unpredictable and wild nature of the world within the Earth's core, where survival hinges on fleeting alliances and the merciless law of the strongest.