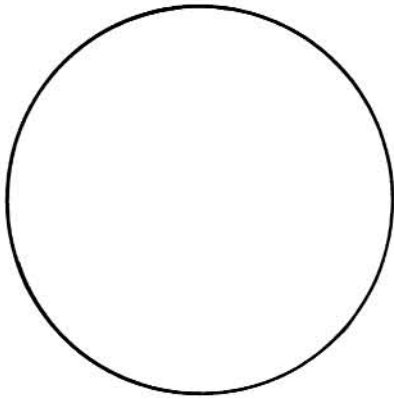


STORY ABOUT THE SUN AND THE MOON

(Ft. Peck)



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STORY ABOUT THE SUN AND THE MOON

(Ft. Peck)

Long ago the sun and the moon had an argument. Each said that he had the prettiest woman. One day the sun told the moon, "We must prove today who has the prettiest woman."

The moon said, "All right, but you get your woman first and let us take a look at her to see how pretty she is." The sun got his woman. It turned out she was a frog. The moon thought this was very funny. He laughed and laughed. He laughed so hard that it made the frog angry. The frog jumped for the moon's face and hung on there.

The sun was also mad. He said, "All right, let us see your pretty woman." The moon turned himself into a porcupine and came down to earth to find a woman.

There were two pretty women who went out to collect wood, in the evening. While gathering wood the oldest girl saw this porcupine in a tree. She told her sister, "Look, there is a porcupine. Let's get that porcupine and take it home so we can eat it." She climbed the tree. When she was just about to hit the porcupine with a stick, it climbed a little higher up the tree. The girl struggled to reach it. About the time she raised her stick to hit it, it again went a little further up. Again the girl struggled. When she reached it again, it climbed farther out on a limb.

Her sister told her to come back down. She was going out too far and might fall and hurt herself. The older sister insisted on getting the porcupine. She needed to go just a little further out on the limb. Her sister was worried the limb might break. The older sister started going out on the limb, and as she was about to hit the porcupine, it grabbed her and went up into the sky.

The moon then showed the woman to the sun. "Here is the pretty woman I was telling you about," he said.

The moon won the argument but he still had that frog stuck to his face. Today you can see the frog on the face of the full moon.

Meanwhile, the younger sister returned home. She explained how the older sister had disappeared and that the porcupine had taken her up into the sky. The parents of the girl were pretty upset. They didn't know what they were going to do.

As time went on, the moon told the woman that every time he went hunting, she had to stay home and attend to the work around his tepee. He told her not to dig the wild turnips. There seemed to be a lot of them up there.

One day she thought to herself, "I wonder why he does not want me to dig the turnips? There are many and I like them." She took a sharp wooden peg and

started digging around a turnip. Soon she poked a hole through the ground. She peeked down through the hole and she could see the earth way down there. She quickly covered up the hole.

The girl began preparations to return to earth through the hole. Every time the moon went hunting and came back with buffalo, she made rawhide strings out of the hide and braided them. Finally she thought she had a long enough rope to reach the earth.

She drove a peg into the ground and made the hole bigger so she could fit through it. She started down on the rope. She could almost touch the tree tops when she realized her rope was too short.

The moon came back and saw the girl was gone. He saw the hole in the ground. He walked up to it, looked down and there she was dangling at the end of the rawhide rope. He took a small pebble and said, "I'm going to drop you. You go down and hit her on the head. Knock her loose from the rope and kill her, but don't hurt the little boy she is carrying within her."

He dropped the small pebble and watched it hit the girl on top of the head. It knocked her loose from the rope and killed her.

When she hit the ground, her stomach popped open and a little boy was born. This little boy grew up pretty fast. When he got to be about six or seven years old, he went out to play. One day he found a cornfield where he had a lot of fun playing. He always returned to where his mother was killed. There was an old lady who owned the cornfield. When she went out to pick some of her corn, she saw footprints and noticed that someone had knocked down quite a bit of the corn. She returned home and made a small bow and arrow to put in her cornfield. She also made a small doll. She had a peg that was used to dig turnips and left it with the doll.

She said, "Now I'll see if there is a little boy or little girl. If the bow and arrow are gone, it will be a little boy, but if the doll and peg are gone, I know it will be a little girl."

The next day the little boy went to play in the cornfield. As he was playing, he found the bow and arrow and also saw the little doll and peg. He grabbed the bow and arrow and ran back home.

The old lady returned to the cornfield and when she came to the place where she had left the items, she noticed that the bow and arrow were gone. She knew it was a little boy who had been playing in her cornfield.

She decided to try and capture him. The next day she hid in the cornfield, waiting for the little boy. Sure enough, she heard him come into the field. He was playing and singing to himself. When he came by, she threw a buffalo robe over him. He screamed and tried to get away but she hung on tightly. She told him, "Grandson, I want to keep you. I have nobody to stay with me."

The boy said, "All right, I'll stay with you."

She took him back to her tepee.

The woman was very good to the little boy. She made some clothes for him and dressed him. When she asked him where he had come from, he told her that his

mother had died and he was living by himself.

One day before she left on a journey, she told the little boy not to look into a cage which she had made of willows and had covered with leaves. However, the little boy went over to look in the cage. He saw two big snakes and killed them both. When his grandmother returned, he said, "Grandma, do you know what? You told me not to look in that cage, but today I looked in there, and you know what I saw? There were two great big snakes in there and I killed them."

She said, "Oh, I wonder how they got there." She didn't want to tell him that those were her pets. She kept them around all the time. She then told her grandson, "I'm going to go out. Don't follow me." She was gone for quite awhile. When she came back, her face and arms were all scratched and her hair was cut.

The little boy asked, "Grandma, what happened to you?"

She said, "I fell into a bunch of blackberry bushes which scratched me." She didn't want to tell him that she was mourning for the snakes. Indians used to mourn one of their loved ones who passed away in this way.

One day the boy's Grandmother said, "Grandson, look north at those high hills. There is one place there where the ground is white. Don't ever go there."

But one day when his grandmother was gone, the boy took his bow and arrow and a club and went up there. When he came close to the hill, a door opened and someone said, "Come in little boy, come on in." He went in, the door closed and he was inside the hill. A man was sitting there with people all around him. The man said, "Little boy, we would like to tell you a story. We will tell you a story about a young woman who went up to Heaven."

The man told about two young women who had gone after wood one moonlit night. They had walked along picking up wood when the oldest girl saw a porcupine high in a tree. She wanted to get it. She climbed the tree and was going to hit the porcupine, when the porcupine climbed higher. She followed it further out on a limb.

All this time the little boy was listening, he knew this oldest girl was his mother. He knew this because he had powers given to him by the Great Spirit. Because of his origin, the little boy could do anything he wanted. He had that much power.

The old man continued his story. He said her sister had told her not to go any further since she might fall. But the oldest girl said, "No, I'm going to get this porcupine." When she lifted her stick to hit the porcupine, the porcupine took her back to Heaven. That is where she had to stay since the moon told her that he was taking her for his wife. The moon told her not to dig turnips, but one day she went out and poked a hole through the ground and saw the earth.

All this time the man and people sitting around were looking at the boy, expecting him to fall asleep. But he knew what was going to happen. The boy pretended to go to sleep. When he looked up, all the people sitting there, even the old man who was talking, had turned to snakes. He jumped up and started to kill all of them with his club. One snake got away. Just before it went into a hole, the snake told the boy, "Young man, as long as you are alive and walk on the face of the earth, don't you ever sit down."

The boy came out of the hill and went home. When his grandmother returned, he said, "Grandma, remember you told me not to go to that hill?"

"Yes, I told you not to go up there," she said.

"Well, I went up there today, and do you know what was in there? That hill was full of snakes. I killed all but one. It told me that as long as I'm alive and walk on the face of this earth, I'm not to ever sit down."

She said, "I didn't know that place was full of snakes, but that's what they used to tell men."

The boy told his grandmother that she didn't have to go hunting all the time. "I'll go out and hunt and you can stay home. You do not have to hunt anymore." The young man went hunting. He killed game such as buffalo, deer, antelope and elk. His grandmother always had plenty to eat.

As he got older, his grandmother told him that she thought it was time he returned to his true grandparents. "Your grandparents are mourning for your mother and they do not know that she had a little boy. You had better go back and tell them what happened."

She started getting him ready. She made him moccasins and fixed him pemmican to eat on his journey. When she had finished, she told him, "Grandson, your grandparents live a four days walk from here. You go south, straight south, and you'll get to where your grandparents are living."

The next day shortly after sunup, he left. By noon he was tired and hungry. He decided to sit down and eat his lunch. He thought of what the snake had told him. He saw a great big rock and thought it would be a good place to eat his lunch. He walked up to this rock, sat down and was going to get his lunch, when a snake crawled inside his stomach. He cut himself off at the waist and thought he could kill the snake but it went further up. It went up to his throat and then into his head. The young man cut his neck, and his head was lying on the ground.

The boy tried to get the snake to come out, but the snake would not. The boy was rolling his head in every direction, bouncing it. Still he couldn't get the snake out.

The boy asked for rain. When he asked for rain, the Great Spirit gave a real downpour but the snake would not come out. Water was running out of the head from the ears, mouth, eyes and nose but the snake would not come out.

The boy asked for a really hot day. It got awfully hot. The temperature was about 110 degrees. The water inside the boy's head started to boil.

The snake thought to himself, "Oh no, now the boy is going to get me." The snake tried to stay in the head, but the water was getting so hot it couldn't stand it. It had to come out. As it did, the boy grabbed it.

The boy put his head back on his body and put his body back together because he had the power which had been given him. The boy held the snake behind its head and rubbed its nose on a rock. He kept rubbing until he wore the snake down. He told the snake, "From this day on, all you snakes will have short flat noses." To this day, snakes have square flat noses.

The boy continued his journey to the south which took four days. As he neared his grandparents' camp, he saw a big high hill. He climbed the hill and noticed several tepees. Though it was a big encampment, he knew right where to go to

find his grandparents' tepee. People looked at him but didn't know who he was. He went into his grandparents' tepee and said, "Grandpa, Grandma, I am here." They grabbed him, hugged him, kissed him, and asked him what had happened.

"It's a long story," he told them. "My mother was taken up to Heaven by the moon."

"Yes, we know that," the Grandfather said.

The boy told the whole story of how his mother had tried to return to earth through a hole in the sky. "I stayed around my mother until I was old enough to get along by myself. The Great Spirit saw to it that I had something to eat all the time. That is how I stayed alive. I got a grandmother who took care of me. I stayed with my grandmother until I got to be a young man. I'd go hunting for her. One day she told me that my grandparents were mourning for me. She said they were getting pretty lonesome, and I had better go to them. That is why I came, Grandpa."

The grandparents were very glad to see him.

The young man said, "I am going to go get my mother." His grandparents didn't know what he meant by that. Before he left, however, he told his grandpa to make four sweat lodges. When he got to his grandmother's place, she was glad to see him and asked if he had seen his grandparents.

"Yes, they were very glad to see me." I came to get my mother, but my grandpa said to bring you back with me also."

"All right," she said, "but we will have to take some of this corn back with us. As time goes on, your Indian people are going to have to learn to plant the corn and take care of it. That will be the food for them to live on all winter long.

The young man told his grandmother, "I'm going to look for at least one strand of my mother's hair. She has been there for a good many years and it is going to be hard to find, but that's what I have to get, just one strand of her hair." He went to where his mother had died. There was nothing left but dried bones. He walked around looking and crying. Eventually, he found one strand of her hair. He put the strand of hair in a buckskin pouch and placed it around his neck. He took it and returned to his grandmother.

He told her, "You better get ready. Pack up, because tomorrow morning we're leaving early."

Grandmother got ready. She took a bunch of dried corn to be used for seed.

The next morning they started early. The grandmother was old and couldn't walk very fast but the young man helped her. He gave her some medicine so that she could keep going. It took them four days to get back to his grandparent's tepee.

The people had heard about this young man's desire to bring his mother back. They couldn't figure how he could do it after so long a period. They thought he went back to pick up her bones and that he would probably bury her near the encampment.

Upon his return, the sweat lodges were ready with a pile of rocks in front of each one.

The old lady told the grandparents, "Here is some corn for you to pass around to

the people. As time goes on, you Indian people will have corn. You will know how to plant and dry it and keep yourselves fed during the winter months.”

The young man said, “I know you people doubt in your hearts that I’m going to bring my mother back to life again. All I have here is one strand of her hair. This is the reason I had you people make four sweat lodges.” He went into the first lodge with that one strand of hair and started praying and singing. As the curious people listened, they could hear a woman’s voice. It sounded as though she was in pain, sort of groaning very faintly, and they could hardly make out what it was.

When he finished the ceremony, he came out and went into the second lodge. He still had the strand of hair with him and he started praying and singing. Now the woman’s voice was louder and clearer. He came out and went into the third lodge. Again he sang awhile and prayed. The people could hear him splash the water on the red hot rocks. The woman’s voice was loud and clear and she was really in pain.

He finished and came out. He still had the strand of hair with him.

He went into the fourth lodge and prayed and sang. The people could hear him splashing water on the hot rocks. Pretty soon they could hear a woman screaming. Finally, she quit screaming and moaning. A woman began talking inside the sweat lodge with the young man. When he finished with the ceremony, he came out and told his mother to come out, too.

His mother came out of the lodge. She was alive again. The people had witnessed the unbelievable things that the Great Spirit could do.