

SUN'S DAUGHTER

(Skokomish)



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A long time ago there was a young man who had within himself a great power, the skill of shooting duck. He was a hunter of ducks. He was a tall handsome young man. The girls all liked him because he was so handsome. He was also quite bashful. He was so bashful that he would avoid looking at the girls. This made them very angry. He would look the other way whenever they were around.

Some girls decided to play a trick on him. "Let us make a wooden duck and put it in front of our house and call for the duck hunter to come and shoot it." One of the girls had magic power and put life into the wooden duck.

The young man came, avoiding the prying eyes of the girls. Mink was his friend and the captain of his canoe. They went out in the canoe and the young man shot the duck. He crippled it and it flew off with the young man's arrow in its hip. He chased the duck until he saw that it was made of wood. This made him angry.

The young man was so angry and upset because of the trick played on him, he decided to go away from home. He left with Mink. After paddling a long time they came to land. The young man told Mink to stay with the canoe while he searched the beach for a club to destroy the canoe. He came back with a club and smashed the canoe into many pieces. Now they could not return home. He looked around day after day and found they were on an island.

One day an idea came to him. He would make wings like an eagle and fly. He shot an eagle and tried flying with its wings.

Mink stayed on the beach and didn't do much of anything. The young man didn't tell Mink what he was doing. Everyday he practiced flying. One day he flew around the island. When he got home, Mink told him he had seen the funniest looking eagle. It looked like a man with wings.

The young man then told Mink that he was the funny looking eagle. He could really fly. He told Mink he had a few feathers left. The young man was going to send Mink back home. He put some feathers on the Mink's rear end and some on each arm and sides, and told him to fly into the sun in the early morning and reach home safely.

After Mink left, the young man flew up to the sun. He reached a world above this one. He found a trail and followed it. He came to two old women who were cooking mud pies. They were both blind. He watched them for awhile before he spoke to them. "Grandmothers, where does this trail go?"

They asked him many questions about himself. He told them, "I got in trouble on my own earth. The women bewitched me and now I must make something of myself or die."

The old woman called him grandson and asked him how he got to their land. "My Tamanawis (spirit power) brought me here."

"Are you going to marry Sun's daughter?" they asked. This started him thinking about marriage. "If you have any thoughts of marrying Sun's daughter, we are the ones who can help you." They explained to him that many had tried but were killed.

They told him what to do. "You'll find a fence around the house. Someone at the gate will ask you what you want. You will say, 'I want to marry Sun's daughter.' He will open the gate to let you in but the sharp spikes on the gate will kill you. We will bake mud pies and put them under your clothes to protect you from the spikes.

"The next thing that will happen is that the doorkeeper will take you into the house and make you sit down. There will be sharp points in the seat. We will bake more mud pies and mold them to your bottom. We will give you some clothes to wear over the mud pies.

"You will find an old man on the right side of the trail. He will show you what else to do. Tell him we helped you and show him the mud forms."

The young man found the old man. He spoke politely to the old man. The old man asked the same questions the old women had asked. The young man looked down and could see earth. He pointed out where he had come from. The old man said. "You couldn't get up here without spirit power." The young man told him the whole story.

The old man felt the mud forms and said they were all right. He told the young man "After you get in the Sun's house and sit down and nothing happens, they will ask you to go out and kill a duck, deer and elk for a wedding feast. This is where I can help you. There will be a lake with lots of ducks near the house. You will get them there." He gave the young man a two-pronged spear and gave him his magic power. "This spear will do anything you tell it."

The young man began his journey. He came to the fence and entered through the gate. It closed on him but he was unhurt. The doorkeeper took him into the house, where he was asked to sit down. Again, he wasn't hurt.

Sun's daughter came in and said she had no husband because all her suitors had been killed. The doorkeeper told him to go to the lake and kill some ducks for the evening feast.

He went to the lake. It was rough and very dangerous but he used his power to make the water smooth. He killed all the ducks needed for the evening meal with his magic spear.

The doorkeeper asked for deer and elk. The young man told the spear "Go after them!" and it killed all the deer and elk needed.

The Sun came home after working all day in the sky and found that the young man and his daughter were in love. Everything was ready for a wedding feast. They had the wedding, and the Sun and the Moon and all the Stars were fed. It was night when the marriage took place because the Sun was not working then.

A year passed and the couple had a child. It is the custom to go home after the

first child is born. The young man told the Sun, "I must go home to see my people and show them my first born." The young man had been feeding all starland with his magic spear.

Sun told him to take plenty of food and have a big feast for his people. He told his daughter to help with the work while she was in this new land.

Before the young man had left his home, his family had been very prominent. They had many slaves, one of which was Raven.

The young man killed many elk, and the caretaker packed them into many small bundles so that one basket held seven elk. He returned to his home with his new wife and firstborn. He found that his parents had mourned for him for years and were now very poor. Raven, who had been their slave, was now a big man in the village.

The young couple put on a big feast. Sun's daughter served the food. She wiped the tears from her mother-in-law's face. They were tears of happiness. They did not invite Raven. Sun's daughter threw the bones away on the beach.

Raven sat outside the door and said nothing. Finally Raven said, "That can't be Sun's daughter. She is working all the time." Sun's daughter became very angry. She was annoyed with Raven's talk and told her husband.

The young man told her, "Pay no attention to Raven. He is just a former slave."

Raven's continued harassment annoyed her so much that she returned to her home alone, leaving behind her child and husband. Before she left she told her husband that she would come every year and visit him. She just couldn't put up with Raven any longer. True to her word, she appears year after year in the form of a junebug.