

THE STORYTELLERS

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AN ALGONQUIN OF GOLDEN LAKE FIRST NATIONS

P.O.BOX 100 GOLDEN LAKE, ONTARIO, CANADA

PUBLISHED BY DREAMWALKER PRODUCTIONS

180 NS' KLALLAM Dr. Port Angeles, WA. 98363

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INTRODUCTION

Excitement fills the air, as pow wow drums echo through the mid-day sky, the voices of many people celebrating another day of lives great mystery share laughter and happiness. As the van enters the high school parking lot Grandfather smiles as he hands the attendant five dollars. All the children in the back of the van have their faces pressed against the windows. The children's faces can not disguise their great excitement, eyes afire with sparkles of innocence and clarity not commonly found in others of the same age lost in the urban jungles of these modern times. For even in these days, shared by us all as part of the great mystery of life there was meant to be a constant celebration of life and yet, multitudes of lost souls are still wandering in search of the key to lost treasures within. In the eyes of these children shine a wisdom and energy so free that the parking lot attendant could hardly look away transfixed in the moment. Excitement filled their eyes as in the distance they could hear the m.c. Over the loud speaker announcing, "ITS POW WOW TIME!!" The children in the van begin jumping up and down, grabbing each other and laughing. Grandfather laughs and answers the loud speaker with a yell of "OH-KAH-HEY" and in unison the children join in, with the van bouncing and swaying, all laughing and Grandfather just smiling. They continue their journey leaving a dazed but smiling parking lot attendant frozen at the front gate. When they finished pulling into the parking space, the children run to the front seat gathering around Grandfather giggling and dancing with joy. Grandfather reaches into his bag and pulls out a large roll of twenty-dollar bills. He starts to divide it up between the children giving them equal amounts; in fact the amounts each one receives are so large that they have to use both hands to hold their treasure. Grandfather chuckles and opens the door for the children and as the children run out the door of the van Grandfather softly speaks to himself "I love you my sacred ones." Grandfather blinks his eyes and as his vision clears he notices that the children are already gone. "Whew they sure do move" Grandfather couldn't help but laugh. Traveling at the speed of sound, you know what I mean, the boys run past booth after booth, to the left they pass big toys and to the

right all kinds of candy. "Boy, this is heaven", they thought and yet they keep right on running past all the shiny things. As the children run laughing with their money tightly gripped in their little hands only the youngest one stops briefly to look at a beautiful choker made of silver and buffalo horn. "FORTY BUCKS", says the man behind the counter. The little boy smiles and runs on. He has enough money to buy that choker many times over, so he giggles as he runs and when he reaches the Navaho Taco stand he throws all of his money down on the counter as his brothers smile at him. With their arms and hands full of plates of food the children disappear into the crowd toward the sound of the drums "I'll be right back" says the littlest one as he carries what seems to be more than what he can balance in his little arms. As he carries the food out to the crowd he begins his search for mothers, children and elders. He gives food to many people and when he and the others were finally finished there's enough left over for each one of them to have a plate of food with their Grandfather. With plates in hand they return to the van quickly to find grandfather waiting for them with the van door open, his hair neatly braided and already in his dance regalia. Grandfather very softly sings his favorite Sun Dance song. The children pile into the van and Grandfather follows them still singing. Then the littlest of the children pulls on grandfathers "please tell us a story." So, as the young ones start to dress in their regalia, Grandfather begins telling the story stones of our ancestor's lives. "Each breath we take is as sacred as the beginning of creation itself because . . . In the beginning", grandfather pauses and makes a sweeping motion with his arm. "When this great mystery came together, sacred creation began, The Cloud, The Fire, and The Whirlwind and from this came forth the heavens. And the heavens were separate from the earth. Standing tall people were called forth along their relations. Producing fruit and seed after their kind. The Star people were called forth to begin their dance of life dividing day from night. Bringing forth signs and seasons, days and years. Father Sun and Grandmother Moon came forth. The greater light "Father Sun" to govern the light of day and "Grandmother Moon" whose heart lights the night. Creator touched the sacred waters, and finned ones began their dance of life. The mists of this creations beauty brought forth winged ones and all their relations to soar in the heavens. Creator blessed them saying, be fruitful,

and multiply. And Creator called forth from Mother Earth the four legged, the creeping crawlers, and the beast, each after their own kind. Creator then called forth from Mother Earth, let us bring forth in our own image, after our own likeness, man and let them have dominion over all my relations. Then Wakan Takan created male and female, them both of Creators own images, thus a people were put upon the land. They were given a name, long forgotten by many, they were known as humane, to be caretakers of these sacred nations. Creator blessed them and spoke unto them saying, be fruitful, and multiply, and to these nations Creator commanded live in harmony with one another and Mother Earth. In six days all that which is of the heavens and earth were created in this way and blessed.

These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that Creator made them. And on the next day Creator caused a mist rise up and rain to fall upon the lands, and every plant of the field and herb began to grow, but there was no man to till the ground. Creator having formed of the dust man, breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and he became a living soul. And Creator planted a garden to the east, and lifting him into the heavens creator carried the man to the east where he set him down gently in this sacred place. From out of the ground Creator made to grow every tree that is pleasant to sight and good for food. Within this garden also lives the tree of life, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And in the center, a river flowed from Eden through the garden to water it, parting the garden it into four directions/nations. From these nations were chosen the "Tokolas", guardians of the four directions. The first being The Eagle, guarding the West, next was The Buffalo, guarding the North, then The Lion to guard the East, and Man to guard the south. And on each side of them were placed their relations, the male and female nation. So plentiful, beautiful and sacred was this place they were given, that the drums rang out and all relations came to pay homage to Creator. All relations and nations came, the four legged, the winged ones, the creepy crawlers and the ones of fin. In this place that Creator had chosen, were many of the plant nation, and all knew this place to be sacred. The ones we know as stones, then were known as the star people, and they arrived in a rainbow of colors, textures and wisdom. The drums

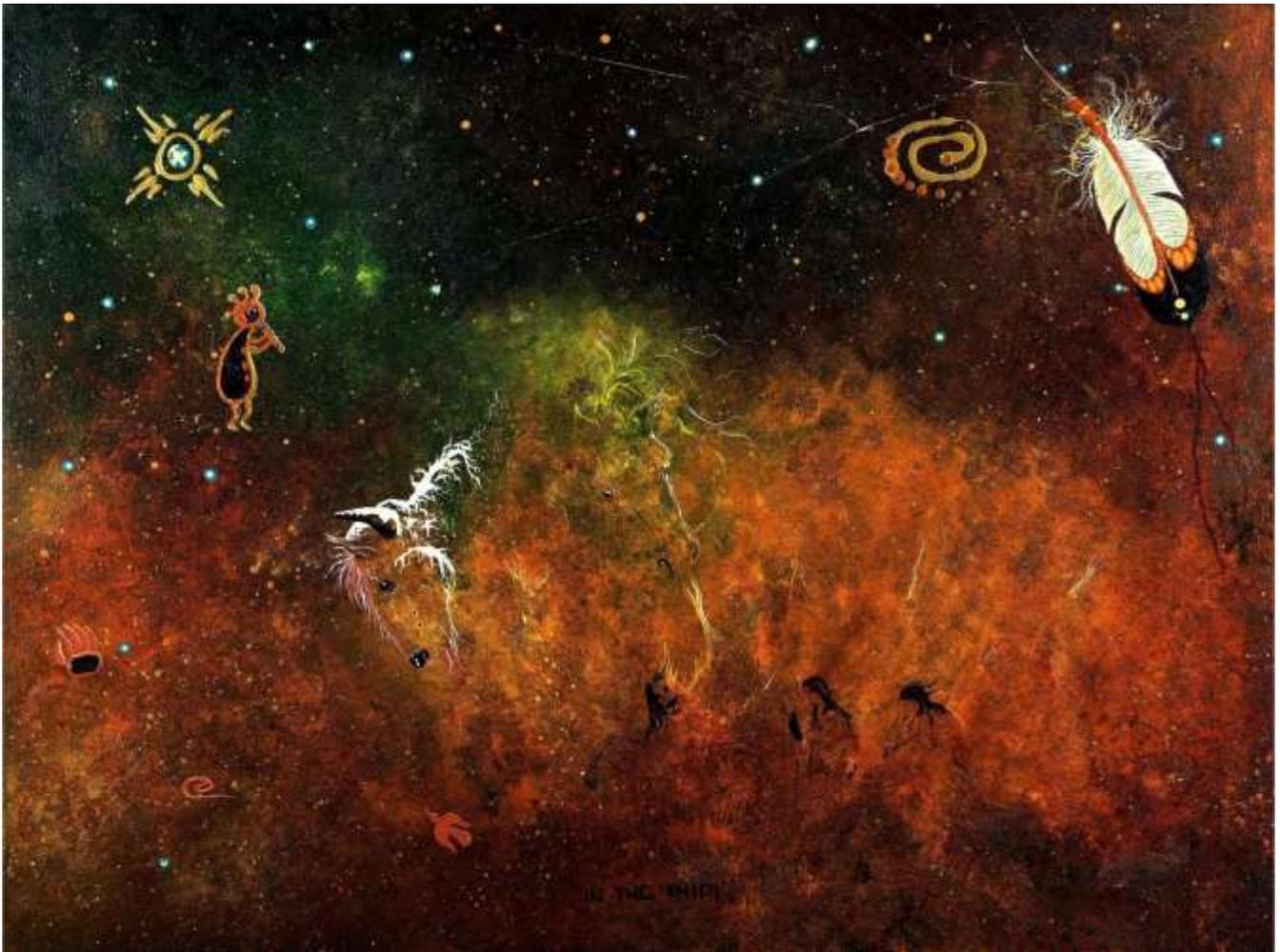
of mother earth continued to ring, saluting all our relations, and answering the drum came the humans from all four directions with many colors of skin and stages of life completely knowing it was time to give thanks. As all arrived, a great counsel was called to answer the question. "What can we give as a gift in honor of this sacred life?" The deer was the first to speak, "I give my skin, and the trees came forward, a cedar and a cottonwood. I give my trunk, so that combined with deer; humans can make the drum to be heard throughout the land. This is my eternal gift to the sacred mystery of life, and my flat leaves will remind all, with the kiss of the stone people, of our first breath of life. The spiritual leader of the winged nation came forward then, placing his own feathers in the soft branching arms of the flat cedar saying I vow always to carry these prayers and with that the eagle circled high above, singing his commitment to all of the relations. As usual the humans were still in council for days, without food or water. Fed by the breath of life the humans purified their hearts until it came to them what they could offer creator. And as the sun rose and glimmered its first light of blessing, the humans emerged happy and singing from the lodge. To the center of the circle of life was called the cottonwood tree and many colors representing all creation and from all nations were gifts given. When the four winds gave their breath to the sacred cottonwood tree, the sacred flags of every nation danced in unison. The humans braided long ropes and yelled a cheer of rejoice and the first Sun Dance began. All the nations rejoiced upon this commitment and the humans danced on for four more days and nights without food or water, paying homage to their creator and giving thanks for all the wondrous gifts bestowed to all of their relations.

Wakan Takan looked upon all of his children, giving them the rainbow and putting in their hearts, minds, and spirits the promise that they would never be forsaken. Telling them also, that if they keep their minds, bodies hearts and spirits clear that anything they pray for will be possible and that their families will live on forever. The people were told that in the future during a time called the seventh generation. Families would be called upon to fulfill their destinies in the fabric of time and be joined together to determine if they have forsaken their creator and misused the gifts.

Grandfather sighed and a tear rolled down his cheek. "You see, my little ones, this is the time and you are the seventh generation who must face our creator with clear hearts. You must reawaken the family by remembering why we are here. Honor mother earth, each other and all of creation. For this is the destiny of all of our relations".

Grandfather smiled and reached toward the sky with his arms softly whispering.

"WE ARE ALL RELATED"



TWO DOVES

On a beautiful afternoon the sky blue with clouds like little puffs of pillows.

The wheat sways like a soft flowing stream and currents of the afternoon wind dance across a lake of golden wildflowers. It is here in this valley that lives a nation of people with delicate beauty and uncompromising principle.

The chief of this nation is very honored by his people and they loved him very dearly. Traditionally back in that time our spiritual leaders and elders were looked upon and embraced as sacred.

Many still remembered the sacredness of the tree of life itself.

I'm talking of a time when people recognized the sacredness of motherhood, of grandmother and of mother earth. A time when people were clear of heart, clear of mind, honest, honorable, and living in harmony with nature. The chief of this tribe was very honored for his deeds of great charity. His headdress showed more than 250 eagle feathers each one given to him for a great deed he performed selflessly for people. Now the elders of this tribe also equally honored, loved and cherished the chief's wife. Early in her life, she was recognized by the spiritual leaders of this nation as a great leader because of her compassion, her empathy and her wisdom. Many blessings of life came to this couple of virtue, the greatest of which was their daughter Two Doves. Two Doves was truly the most beautiful woman of this nation. She was loved and honored by everyone. She had not only physical beauty she had beauty of spirit and mind and an aura of peacefulness all enjoyed. Every young man longed for the opportunity to be honored with the hand of Two Doves as their wife. As fate would have it Two Doves only had eyes for only one particular young man. He was truly an honest man a man with a great heart of true conviction. He treated everyone around him with honor and respect and in Two Doves eyes, this young man was the greatest of all warriors in her tribe. Now if you were to see him as another member of the tribe you would know these things were true despite the fact that he

was very tall and very skinny. In his crossed eyes there shined a light for Two Doves. Now you would also notice his severe overbite and his nose, which resembled the head of a tomahawk. Whenever he saw Two Doves he would take in a deep breath and flex his muscles as a peacock in spring. But to all others around him they would only see his ribs. Truly Two Doves was madly in love with this young man, overbite, nose, ribs and all.

Now this young man whose heart was as vast as the plains themselves had only one slight problem. He was equally born with an inability to make bows and arrows because of his eyesight. They always turned out crooked and even his shield held on his arm would flop over like a soft taco. Why in fact I would say the whole tribe recognized this young man as the tribal geek, but they loved him dearly because they knew his heart was true. On this particular day as two hawks played in flight over this valley. Two Doves was sitting in front of her family's lodge. From inside the lodge her mother called to her "Two Doves come and braid your father's hair."

You see traditionally in this time of life only the women of the family were allowed to touch the man's hair. As Two Doves knelt behind her father, she motioned to her mother and her mother began to speak to Two Doves father.

"You know theres this very special young man who wishes the honor of being invited into our lodge as family. And this young man has a great love for Two Doves."

The chief smiled and Two Doves hands began to shake partly with excitement and nervousness, truly she was bashful. As the chief was smiling, Two Doves mother mentioned the name of the young man. The chief's eyes grew wide and it was all he could do to refrain from laughing. He could no longer restrain the humor and as he began to chuckle Two Doves pulled tightly on his braid. "Ouch, do you want a bald father." The two women giggled. "Hmmm, well, this young man, I've heard of him and he has a very good heart."

At this point, the chief couldn't help but start chuckling again. The chief called loudly for a runner to come from outside of the lodge and instructed him to go and

inform this young man that the chief's family would be honored by his presence in their lodge on this day. Upon hearing this great miracle brought forth to him tears welled up in the young mans eyes for his greatest dream was to become fulfilled.

The young man was so full of excitement that he could hardly tie his buckskins on and finally after four attempts he felt prepared to go forth and bring gifts to the family of his life's love. Quickly before he left his lodge he grabbed his shield which flopped over his arm. Of course he was so excited he didn't even know that one of his braids went much higher than the other above the top of his ear. Tripping over the stones that surrounded his fire he grabbed his spear which looked more like a mop handle of present day. When he stepped outside of his lodge the young man brushed the ashes from his knee, took a deep breath and called to his horse.

Now his horse loved him so much that they were virtually inseparable and his horse was equally as unique as he.

His horse had large round hoofs, bony legs, was cross-eyed and had a severe overbite also. The young man loved his horse as an equal and respected his friend. Because of this he was very gentle when he would jump on his horses back as you see his horse had a very bad sway back. Why it swayed so much that when he jumped on, the young mans feet would hit the ground before he would sit.

The young man now felt ready to go forth to the lodge of the chief's family in honor. As his faithful horse started out on the journey it would seem that both horse and rider became one. The horse wheezed while extending his head as if to gain velocity and the wind blew through their hair and both had their mouths partially open overbites extended.

The young mans eyes were crossed and his concentration extended to the space between the two lodges before him which he knew would lead him directly to the lodge of the chief.

Momentarily his faithful horse stopped, his eyes bugging outward and the young man felt the sudden jerk of his feet off the ground. Astonished he thought the horse was bucking. With froth coming from the horses open mouth came numerous horrible sounds and more wheezing almost loud enough to cover the giggling coming from the village around them.

Again they began the journey for the next twenty feet. The young man dismounted from his horse and approached the chief's lodge. His faithful friend wheezed and coughed in relief. Suddenly the chief appeared and the young man humbly pointed to his horse, his lifelong friend and presented him to the chief as an honoring gift. The chief smiled and then bit his lip, which is all he could do to keep himself from breaking into gales of laughter. Gently he extended his hand and patted the young man on the shoulder inviting him into his lodge. Now back in this time it was traditional for a suitor to speak only to the parents of their beloved.

In fact the young sweethearts wouldn't look each other directly in the eyes partly from modesty but mostly out of respect. I guess you could say it worked a great deal to the young mans advantage.

The young man took Two Doves mothers hand in his and thanked her. Forgetting the black potash on his hands thereby covering Two Doves mother's hands in soot. Even though her compassion and empathy were well known by all she couldn't help but giggle. She motioned for the young man to sit down beside her by the fire. Two Doves was motioned to sit beside her father so casual conversation could begin. As it turned out everyone enjoyed each others company immensely. Every once in a while either the young man or Two Doves would sneak a little glance out of the corner of their eyes towards each other, but they never made eye contact. Every time Two Doves would look at the young man her feelings would overcome her. How she longed to have her arm wrapped around his ribs. Then she would become embarrassed and giggle quietly to herself. Time flew by so quickly and the day seemed so short, but to the young man and Two Doves it was the beginning of a life filled with beauty, excitement and happiness.

That night when the young man walked back to his lodge he could never remember a time when he had felt so happy. Very early the next morning the chief emerged from his lodge to sing his morning songs of prayer for his people. It was then that he realized that his gift from the young man had disappeared from his lodge and he began to call to his people, "Where's my horse. Has someone brought dishonor to the chief? And to the people? Where is my great war pony this fine gift the young man brought me?"

The chief continued on raising his voice louder and louder almost unable to contain his laughter. It was at that moment that the young man came forward with the horse and explained to the chief that the horse had come back to him in the middle of the night.

Once again the young man presented the horse to the chief and the chief smiled and shook his hand saying "You honor me but this honor is not as strong as the love your horse has for you." The young man smiled and walked back to his lodge.

This went on every morning for many days and after a little while the people of the village would get up very early so they could watch and laugh and gossip. Even the little children would mimic the chief and the young man but especially their favorite the coughing and wheezing sway-backed horse with the severe overbite. Now, for many years the chief had received a certain air of respect from his people but this current situation was turning him into the laughing stock of his tribe.

So it was that on one fateful morning the chief very loudly expressed his feelings to the young man that although he was honored with the gift there was no foreseeable remedy to the situation. The chief told the young man to take his faithful companion and return to his own lodge. And with this he whispered in the young mans ear that he didn't appreciate his new position as tribal clown and that he would be sending a runner to the young mans lodge later when he could find a way to remedy the future of their relationship. The young mans feelings were very hurt but he also understood the chiefs position so he gracefully extended his hand in acceptance. And with a over

expressed stoic look on his face the chief returned to his lodge only to find Two Doves in tears. Many days passed and Two Doves fell more and more into a deeper and deeper depression. Then one evening as the sun was setting behind the dark clouds of gray signaling the approach of the thunder beings. Two Doves mother leaned close to the fire preparing dinner for her family and began to speak to Two Doves father. She reminded him of his requirements to fulfill a healing for their family by visiting the lodge of this broken-hearted young man. Agreeing completely the chief called to Two Doves and explained to her that he must dress in his finest regalia (clothing) to visit the lodge of his new son. Upon hearing this a now glowing Two Doves quickly began to brush his hair and sing to him the lullaby that had been handed down in their family from the beginning of time. Finally the chief was dressed in the most beautiful white buckskins ever seen by his tribe. Only on the most very special of occasions would he wear these fine gifts that had taken many years and many hands of family members to create.

A runner was sent with lightening speed to the young mans lodge bearing news that the chief was coming forth to honor the young man with a visit in his finest of ceremonial dress. And with great excitement the young man earnestly put himself to the task of preparing his lodge.

Now not only was he lacking in talent for making things. The young mans lodge also had the problem of leaning and when the mildest of winds would come.

His lodge would shake and sometimes fall over exposing the disarray of his belongings not unlike any teenagers room today. Though he worked fast and hard at throwing things to clear a space he heard the chief approaching his lodge before he was finished.

Fortunately the young man had already started a small fire in the center of his lodge. The smoke was beginning to fill the lodge because he could never figure out how to tie his smoke flaps open, so one of them hung over the top opening partially blocking the smokes escape. The flap was completely covered with the black soot of many

fires. "A-ho little brother I have come to smoke the sacred pipe with you, so please invite me in for the rain it comes and I wear my white regalia." The young man was very honored and requested the chief to please enter and sit in the seat of honor. Of course it was the only clear space in the whole lodge. So the chief entered and sat by the fire. The young man knelt beside the chief because there wasn't any other space to sit down. The visitor could hear the rain drops beginning to pitter patter on the outside of the young mans lodge. The chief began to speak, "I'm very honored to be here. It is good to visit such a beautiful lodge. It is good that we have this opportunity in our lives to share this sacred pipe together." The young man was happy and excited, so excited that he was beginning to develop froth on the sides of his mouth and he couldn't take his eyes away from the pipe. Knowing the sacredness of this moment the young man also knew that from this ceremony their hearts could only grow closer together. The rain began to come down harder for the thunder beings had arrived. Looking up the young man spoke a silent prayer of thanks and noticed the engorged smoke flap hanging just above the chief's head. The chief leaned forward and grabbed two small sticks to take a coal from the fire so he could light the pipe. As he did this he noticed the black dots on his regalia caused by leaking water from the hundreds of holes in the young mans lodge. But he was in ceremony now and could not be bothered with such trivial matters.

Naturally the chief's emotions had their own voice, but with his years of discipline and spiritual wisdom he calmed them. The young man watched and learned from the display of this leader's compassion. It was about that time that the engorged smoke flap began to drip on the chiefs head. Fearfully the young man watched as black lines appeared to form on the chief's face. The rain began to pound. The young mans legs began to shake. The chief calmly retrieved a hot ember from the fire and as he placed the ember to the bowl of the pipe, the smoke flap gave way and the chiefs beautiful spotted white buckskins, his two hundred and fifty eagle feathers turned a shiny black and gray. The pipe was so full of water that as the chief jumped to his feet drops of water like black pearls dripped from the stem. The chief could no longer contain himself all his years of training flew out the door like a raven seeking the

comfort of its murder. Yelling, the chief spoke so fast that the young man could hardly make out what he was saying. His words were so strong that to this day those words must still be circling around the cosmos causing concern to the thunder beings. Finally the young man could make out what the ranting chief was trying to tell him. "That did it, I can't take this anymore. I've tried as hard as I can, but now I don't ever want you to be seen near my lodge or consider seeing my daughter again unless you bring me three fine war ponies. Further-more, well, we have nothing more to discuss." With



that said, the chief stormed out of the lodge. People throughout the whole village were standing by the open flaps of their lodges watching and listening as the chief stomped, enraged and dripping his way back to his lodge. The splashes of his footsteps stopped briefly and were followed by another very loud display of ranting and raving. As the chief started kicking puddles in his rage he slipped and fell headfirst into a puddle of mud and horse droppings. There was momentary silence then lightning flashed across the sky as all the village watched a creature none had ever seen before emerge from the earth with shoulders and head hung low. The creature emitted the saddest of moaning sounds and slowly slogged its way back to the chief's lodge. Lightning flashed again. It was at the very moment that the creature disappeared into the chief's lodge. Lightning crossed the skies again and

the young mans tipi fell over exposing another tall, skinny, black creature with what seemed to be the most gigantic teeth. Once again the yelling began. The skinny creature screamed so loud that everyone for miles could hear. "I take a vow this night to go forth and bring war ponies to the family of my beloved or I will die." The Lightning struck again. Throughout the village you could hear shouts and cheers from all the young men.

Three of them appeared from their lodges and vowed to join the young man and bring honor to their families. Then all was quiet. All, but the sound of the rain and Two Doves tears.

Early the next morning as the sun came up the village was already astir with the sounds of cheering and excitement as the three young men performed tricks of great agility and skill upon their horses backs at a full gallop. Two Doves, her mother and father stood before their lodge watching the skillful display. Two Doves looked over at the heap of the young man's lodge and searched the crowd for the face, the ribs, of her loved one. As the cheering grew more intense the three young men raced off.

Chuckles and laughter followed, as Two Doves beloved emerged from the crowd on the back of his horse. Although his face was still black from the night before he sat tall and proud. Conviction showed in his crossed eyes and as he inhaled deeply he flexed showing his ribs, which brought another peal of laughter from the crowd. Pushing himself forward with both feet, he got his faithful steed to momentarily make like a gallop. And so with a cough and a wheeze they were off on their way. Children laughed and rolled in the mud pointing at the young man on his horse, such a sight they were!

For the first time in Two Doves life her heart was clutched by fear as she watched the trail form behind her beloved as his feet dragged leaving two distinct lines up over the ridge.

As she watched his skinny silhouette from the distance tears once again welled up in her eyes. She turned and ran as fast as she could out behind her family's lodge and

disappeared into the brush. The chief hung his head and he prayed for the safety of the young man.

Now, its taboo in this time for the women to leave the village and go with the men. For the women are the caretakers of the sacred ceremonial grounds. They raise the children, teach compassion to the youth, and never do they go on the journeys of warriors. The punishment of such an act is banishment forever and dishonor to the family name for generations to come. But Two Doves love for this young man was so strong and her fear of his never returning so strong that she ran away. She ran to be by his side despite the consequences. She figured that if they were together on this journey they would then be considered husband and wife and their love would shine the world over.

Well it didn't take very long for Two Doves to find the drag marks and the distinctly oversized hoof marks on the trail. In fact, it took no time at all for her to catch up on foot with the young man. And even if the ground was hard as stone, she would always find her love because the coughing and wheezing could be heard for miles. Out of breath from the arduous journey, the young mans war pony wheezed to a stop. Two Doves ran into her loves arms. They embraced. They kissed. She ran her fingers over his ribs.

She drew back and smiled, her lips and cheeks black with soot. Yes, truly they were in love. The young man took a deep breath and put his arm around her his crossed eyes showed his devotion. Then his total concentration became focused on the ridge ahead. Together he and Two Doves walked to the wheezing horse and together as lovers of old. They helped each other to push that wheezing horse up over that ridge. The first night of the journey when the couple finally reached the camp of the three young men, they were both very tired from pushing that wheezing horse. So the young man tethered his war pony down wind because he didn't want to suffer any complaints from the others in his exhausted state. As he approached Two Doves her eyes shone a reflection of the moon, brighter than the sky itself and hand in hand the happy couple ran off into the bushes.

The war pony was so exhausted it didn't make a move or a sound. The three young men who had seen the bedraggled trio arrive began complaining to each other out of their fear and suspicion.

"It's truly a bad sign to ignore such taboos."

Surely it would anger the spirits and surely they would come in the night as they were known to do. Later that night the bushes started to shake and a loud noise began to emerge. Then the moaning, the wheezing, the coughing, grew until the three young men were very frightened. They looked over at the young man's horse only to find the sounds weren't coming from the war pony. It was then that they finally guessed that in fact the sounds were coming from angry spirits in the bushes very near, and it went on all night. In the morning the three young men were exhausted because they were never absolutely sure through the whole night whether the spirits shaking the very earth underneath them would come and carry them away to their deaths. The funny thing was that the young man and Two Doves weren't frightened at all. They just grinned from ear to ear constantly stealing glances at each other and giggling like little children at play with innocents in their hearts.

This behavior only caused to infuriate the young men until they voiced their opinions. "This is taboo!!! "" We will all die!!!" "The spirits were here last night. The ground shook. We heard wild screams in the night."

Two Doves and her lover looked into each other's eyes and with every comment they giggled more. To further raise the suspicions and superstitions of their companions tragedy struck later that day when one of the young warrior's horses badly sprained its ankle by stepping into a gopher hole. With this the young men began complaining again of the presence of Two Doves. But Alas they would have had better luck yelling into a blizzard for all the good it did. The young man whose horse was wounded saddened by not fulfilling his vow reluctantly returned to the village to nurse his sacred companion back to health. Because it was an injury to his horse he still returned home with honor for it is more honorable to protect a friend than to count

coup on an enemy. Naturally because he was so upset and so many questions were asked the young warrior told everyone in the village of Two Doves presence in the war party in vivid detail including a few embellishments. This added to the chiefs suffering and sadness for he truly missed his daughter. He loved her so dearly and in his heart he had already forgiven her.

However there still remained the fact that his loving daughter could not return home without dishonor. Grief filled his heart and tears often filled his eyes. In fact the people of the village saw less and less of the chief as time went on. Meanwhile on the trail the remaining warriors continued their complaining over the next days for every night the moaning spirits would return.

Well it was about the fourth day of their journey that these embarrassed warriors finally figured out what was going on. This enraged them even more. So in counsel that night the two remaining young men confronted the couple.

"Brother, sister, this must cease and desist. Your love for each other is going to give our position away and we will all suffer as slaves in our enemy's camps. We must be quiet so we can sneak up and steal the horses to return home victorious." The young lovers giggled again and disappeared only to start the racket one more time. During the next day one of the young warriors returned with the news that he found the valley where the horses were hidden. So early that night the two warriors planned their strategy even though Two Doves and her love were nowhere to be found. And the couple were still drawing attention to the party heedless of the warnings and protestations they had heard. The spirits returned once again and sleep continued to elude the two young warriors.

Now the young warriors plan was to get up very early and sneak into the camp where the horses were kept then gallop as fast as the horses would carry them escaping as far away as possible.

The bad news was that there were at least six Cheyenne warriors guarding the horses.

And I must mention that the Cheyenne are the greatest of horsemen. They train their horses to bump kick and push their enemies in order to keep them off balance. Back in this time people didn't kill each other, and the game was based on honor and skill. Each warrior would wear a very small braid coming from the top of the back of their head, called a 'warriors lock'.

The idea was very simple each warrior carried a shield and a coup stick. The smaller the stick the braver the warrior. The first warrior to touch the other with their stick would count coup and out of honor the defeated warrior would cut off his warriors lock and present it to the champion. This also meant that the loser would accompany the winner back to his village and work as a slave until the warriors lock had grown back to its full length. Now as you can guess if you have very long hair this could mean that you don't get to go home for a long time. Now I would like to point out that this honorable way included that the loser must learn the other tribes language, spirituality, and customs. Thereby creating an understanding between each individual as eventual friends. To count coup is to touch another but not hurt them, and win the greatest battle by making an enemy into a friend.

Now before I forget where I left off lets get back to my story.

Unfortunately for everyone the Cheyenne had also heard the spirits in the bushes the night before and they planned to lay a trap the next morning by pretending they didn't know of the war party's presence. The Cheyenne were very excited at the prospect of having some new slaves. Very early the next morning before sunrise the young Kiowa men prepared themselves for the task at hand. They sang their early morning prayers very quietly and painted their faces in the same way their families had done for generations, then they blessed themselves with sweetgrass.

Their excitement was extremely hard for them to contain yet they were now at the point of no return. Quietly they motioned to each other that they were ready. They mounted their horses and warmed them up by racing them back and forth in their camp. The two young men raced to the top of the ridge and from behind the bushes

they saw many, many Cheyenne ponies in the valley below. Searching the area and looking in every direction they did not see one Cheyenne warrior. This set their minds at ease. Two Doves was very frightened as she watched her lover finishing his preparations. Deep in her heart she knew she loved him. She watched as he proudly jumped to mount his horse. She could hear the soft pat of his feet touching the ground. He inhaled deeply flexed his ribs extended his teeth in a smile and winked at her. Then pushing off with both feet the young man was on his way. As Two Doves watched the coughing and wheezing of his faithful companion. Their unified struggle to reach the top of the hill she knew in that moment that she would probably never see her lover again as his warriors lock was a very long one. Tears welled up in her eyes and her hands shook. This was the second time in her life that Two Doves experienced fear. By the time the young warrior reached the top of the ridge his faithful companions eyes were bugging out His mouth frothing and the horses coughing and wheezing continued. The young man could see over the ridge down a long steep hill into the valley below. His two companions were already engaged in battle and surrounded by many Cheyenne. So the young man encouraged his horse forward to the edge of the ridge to ready for the descent. At this moment the horses hoof caught on a rock causing him to lurch forward and with the hill being so steep the horse could not slow down. He continued down the hill bumping over stones. Each time running faster and faster to keep from falling.

At the bottom of the hill the Cheyenne had the two Kiowa warriors completely surrounded and were laughing and taunting them as they already knew the victory was theirs. And as they were toyed with the young warriors shed tears of frustration and humiliation at their predicament. Then one of the Cheyenne glanced up at the hill and saw a sight that frightened him more than anything he had ever seen in his life.

It had many legs, giant crossed eyes, huge teeth and its screams shattered the valley with an unearthly sound. At that moment the other Cheyenne also froze at the sight. When they recovered the Cheyenne called to one another with fear in their hearts,

"spirit warrior..spirit warrior" for only a demon could appear in such a way. Even the two Kiowa warriors were frightened because they didn't recognize who it was either.

As the young man flew down the side of the ridge he and his companion screamed in fear. Neither one had ever traveled that fast before and both had their mouths wide open panting, frothing and wheezing. As they reached the bottom of the hill the young warriors horse hit another stone which launched the young man from his back. As the young man and his horse both rolled into the center of the battlefield all became silent. Everyone was in shock but when the shock wore off the Cheyenne were the first to recover, and the young man then found himself completely surrounded by many angry warriors.

They had still been unable to attack him because once they saw him and his horse, they broke into gales of laughter, pointing at his ribs, mimicking his overbite, and crossing their eyes at his horse. But in the matter of a few moments they became even angrier because they remembered their fear. The leader yelled, "Get him," and immediately the Cheyenne leapt forward with shields and coup sticks in hand. The young man tried to protect himself with his shield which only flopped over his arm like a soft taco.

He jumped, dodged and his whole body was on fire with pain. At every blow of a coup stick hitting his shield he screamed and screamed. "OUCH.....OUCH" The Cheyenne focused only on the young man at this point, for he had insulted them by causing them to show fear. The young man was now rolling on the ground, he was covered in bruises from the rocks and tears stained his face, and he knew the end was near.

He knew Two Doves would return home in dishonor and he would become a slave to the Cheyenne for many years. He could no longer see the enemy through his tears and as they closed in for their final attack on the three Kiowa warriors.

Once again loud screams could be heard coming from the ridge. The Cheyenne froze and as they looked up they saw a warrior unlike any other they had ever seen come

flying down the hill. This warrior approached so fast, in a fit of high-pitched screaming, they hardly had time to turn and face their enemy. Into the dust of the battlefield the warrior disappeared and with loud screams all that could be heard was "Get away from my man." The valley now resounded with many different screams accompanied by slapping sounds. In fact, every time a loud slap was heard it would immediately be followed by a warrior's cry. Then came the silence. As the dust settled there stood Two Doves holding a long willow branch and before her sixteen Cheyenne warriors stood with heads hung low, and whelp marks on their faces and arms.

The Cheyenne warriors proceeded to cut their locks off one after another, stepping forward to present them to Two Doves.

Two Doves willow branch was covered with sixteen Cheyenne warlocks. At this point Two Doves instructed the warriors in her party that her lover's horse would lead the procession back to their village in honor for the great deeds that had been accomplished that day.

Together the young men led the coughing wheezing war pony to the front. Two Doves and her lover mounted the finest of the newly acquired ponies giggling and making faces at one another. Which we already know wasn't a difficult feat for the young man.

It went something like this, Two Doves winked, wiggled her nose and smiled seductively at her lover and in return her lover pulled his lip back over his gigantic teeth, opened his crossed eyes wide and wiggled his eyebrows at her. Everyone laughed except the mortified Cheyenne.

And so the journey home began victoriously with Two Doves happy and singing. One of the young men in the Kiowa war party was so excited that he ran ahead to share the news of the great victory with the people of his village. Upon hearing all the news Two Doves father dressed in his fine gray regalia as the village filled with activity.

As the Kiowa people watched the war party returning over the horizon they couldn't believe their eyes. They gathered in a circle in the center of the village. Everyone knew the meaning of this circle of life, and that it calls one out either in great honor or in great shame. This circle always takes place in front of all people, all our relations, and within the circle, one must always be ready to answer for their deeds. As Two Doves entered the circle with her lover and the sixteen Cheyenne warriors, she was called forward by her father who spoke now only as her chief. Everyone was so quiet that only the birds could be heard in the distance. The chief scanned the faces of all the young Cheyenne warriors behind Two Doves as they sheepishly looked at the ground. Then he began to speak loudly. Two Doves could hear the tension in his voice, never before had she heard him speak so loudly, with the exception of one night in a lightening storm.



"Two Doves, you have violated the sacred taboo of our people by going on this journey as a warrior. You have left your family behind and returned to us with another. As life teaches, we all have many difficult lessons to learn."

Two Doves could see her father's hands shaking and as he reached toward the sky. The eyes of the people grew wide and some began to cry. When the chief's hands came down they grabbed both sides of his headdress. The headdress of two hundred and fifty eagle feathers. He removed the headdress and held it high above him as he looked to the

sun, and he spoke again, "Two Doves, I must do this as your chief and as your father." With that said he placed the headdress upon Two Doves head and loudly proclaimed, "From this day forward, you shall be known as Aye-koe-pay-all-aye, Woman who carries a stick, chief of the Kiowa nation." The chief smiled at his daughter and proudly he continued to speak, "And from this day forward there shall never be discrimination or limitation placed on the woman of this great nation again."

THE END

Now did I forget to mention that Two Doves and the woman nation led their Kiowa family for generations? In fact, Two Doves continued to be such a great warrior and chief that when the cavalry came to attack the Kiowa nation she would mount her war pony with only a small stick, instructing all others to remain on the ridge and as the other warriors watched she would ride her pony down the hill into the face of death smacking each soldier on the head with her coup stick. With this, the warriors on the hill would laugh.

Hundreds of bullets were fired at Two Doves and she was never touched by even one. She taught her people that war was a non-humane thing, and below the Kiowa nation. This is all documented in the Library of Congress in the logs of the cavalry accounts of that time on the plains.

Did I also fail to mention that Two Doves husband became spiritual leader of the Kiowa nation and together their love flourished like the eternal spring in the hearts of all sacred beings?

Their lives were blessed with very special children ... but then that's another story!

LITTLE ONE

Pow wow time and its in full swing. The young children watch as the dancers compete to win in the trick song competition. Grandfather is dancing in the center of the arbor, and around him are young men putting on their very best moves!! Tension fills the air as the youngsters look on with amazement as grandfather dances faster and faster, almost seeming to be in flight at times. Grandfather is a fancy dance grand master and he has been for twenty five years.

"NEVER DEFEATED." But now he's easily pushing seventy two years old and most of the other dancers are around him are the average age of eighteen or so. More and more people are coming to watch the dancers and the children can hear them yell and cheer as grandfather spins faster and faster. Suddenly the drummers stop!! Grandfather stands there balancing on one foot and is like stone sculpting of an old Indian warrior. But three young men kept on dancing missing the trick stop. The children quickly glance over at the judges and see them mark off their cards to take away precious points for missing their stop.

Once again the drummers begin but this time their rhythm booms out in such a unbelievable speed. The crowd starts to yell and cheer frantically some of the dancers quickly stop exhausted and out of breath. The trick song continues and the people watch in wonder as dancers become blurs of color.

Again the drums stop and one young man dropped to his knees out of breath.

The M.C. calls out to the people with the announcement that the finals will continue after the dinner break. The youngest of the little children looked over at grandfather and asked him to tell another story. Caught up in the moment grandfathers full attention was focused on the M.C. and the part he would play in the future dance competition. Just about the moment the young boy was ready to ask grandfather to tell him another story. A traditional dancer arrived and stood next to the young

child's elder. "Segi, competition this years tough... but as usual your out in front leading our people in a good way"

Grandfather smiled. The youngster looked at the dancer's style of dressing in his regalia and couldn't help but focus on his beautiful claw necklace. In fact the necklace seemed to capture the child's complete attention.

"I said. . . , would you like me to tell you a story?"

The dancer smiled at the youngster as he freed his focus from the necklace.

Grandfather was giggling in the back ground, and grandfather leaned forward saying, " Time for another lesson".

The little child looked at the dancer with wide eyes and nodded his head eagerly with a positive response. The little youngster couldn't help but rub his hands together in excited anticipation. "Well, you see when I was about your age my Grandfather was sitting on a. . . , well let me start over okay??"

The little boy smiled and nodded his head with approval. His doe like eyes touched the traditional dancer's heart. As he looked closer, he could see his own reflection in the young ones eyes. "hmmmmm." The dancer momentarily saw his own past, present, and future unfold before his very eyes. Patterns of light and matter began to swirl in shapes of almost recognizable entities. Faintly the dancer could feel movement between his eyes just above his brow. For the first time in his life the dancer could see everything around them with out even moving his head, and the clarity was beyond any experience he had that he could remember.

All of a sudden the dancer realized that the boy had transformed himself and, the old man sitting before him now spoke softly, and the intensity grew with each word.

"Please tell me your story." Suddenly like waking from a trance the dancer looked at the young boy before him and smiled. The past few moments felt like an eternity but yet this could not be? Not even a moment of time had passed. the perplexed dancer

realized that he had just sat down. Scratching his forehead, and without any verbal input from the any one. The man smiled widely "Oh!! I get it" This time without any coaxing he began telling his story.

Grandfather was sitting on a large granite stone over looking the stream that he once played in as a youth and enjoying the memories of summers past, and as he looked up in to the sky an eagles screech echoed though the trees. Grand father looked at his Sleeve of his ribbon shirt where fluffs of a near by cottonwood tree landed on his arm.

"Grandfather are you going with us to town. Mom and dad say that I should keep clean... Grandpa are you listening? Grandpa!!" Before the old man stood a chubby little boy with long black hair and as tattered as his clothing was. They were clean like the day the boy first got them from his older brother. "You know,.. when I was About your age. I used to come down to this same little stream and play. You know, the same way you do!! I remember on this one particular day. My mom told me not to get dirty cause we were going to your great aunts lodge for

a feast that evening. Well,.. When I got down by the water I herd a kind of high grunting and growling sound!!! Sure enough behind some rocks this little one had gone and got his foot coughed in between them boulders. And boy was he mad!!. We were both kind of scared of each other at first. But when he figured out that I was there to help him. He settled down a bit. Of course he still whimpered from time to time.

He was kind of cute, I liked him. I grabbed on to the bolder with both my hands and gave my best yank that I could muster. The little one screamed so loud that it made me jump backwards. Scared the day lights out of me!!.

I didn't realize I still had that bolder in my arms. And I hit that water, god it was cold.

The bolder landed on my chest and I couldn't get up. Water was getting up my nose, and it was so cold that my entire body got numb. I felt, I was going to die, but somehow, and I don't know how, that bolder just rolled off of me. I jumped up as fast as I could, and my entire body wouldn't stop shaking. My clean new buck skins were soaking wet. My teeth were chattering uncontrollably. I looked over by that tree." Grand father pointed his finger at the cottonwood near by. "Sure enough there he was, just standing there. And he was looking right at me!! My teeth were making a chattering sound real loud, and he started to mimic me. I told him to stop, but he kept on doing it anyway. I tried to stop my teeth from chattering but I couldn't do it. I ran back to our lodge as fast as I could.

I was so cold that my entire body ached. Well,.. When I got home and ran in the front flap of the tipi. My Mom gasped with shock, and my sisters pointed at my new buck skins. They started laughing and saying that I was not going to be able to go. "You girls shush," Mom was smiling at me kind of like when some one tells jokes. "And you out of those wet cloths before you freeze to death. My mom handed me a deer hide to rap my self in. As I started to change my teeth started to chatter again. It was just about then that little one opened the door flap and stuck his head in. He started chattering his teeth, my teeth were chattering, and everyone in the lodge started laughing hysterically.

My sisters pointed at the little one laughed even more. You know, He didn't even care.

He just walked on over to me and sat down right beside me. My mom brought over two bowls of food, I think it was deer stew or something??

Father arrived, and when he entered the lodge he saw the little one and I sitting next to the fire. My body was feeling a lot better and my hands started to get their feeling back. So,.. I started to rub my hands together in a circular motion, and my little friend grabbed some food from his plate and started to wash it. My father began laughing as well as everybody else. My father came forward and grabbed up some

black ash from the edge of the fire in the center of the tipi. He leaned down to kneel in front of me and wiped the ashes across my face and he said.

"My son you and your great friend have been given the opportunity to live the life of spirit warriors. Recognized by this family and our people. So from this day on as the rest of us have been doing. You shall wear your facial paint this way as a proud member of the raccoon clan." Well,.. That made me feel real good to know that was my destiny. My father motioned towards my food and so. I leaned to reach for my bowl, but as I did the little one copied me.

I froze and so did he. I grabbed some bannock (Indian bread) and he did what I was doing at the same time. Everyone was amazed at the sight, but then he started to lead me in this game. We took our food in our hands and washed it in our stew bowls. Father smiled, my sisters giggled, and my moms were wide with surprised. I had no idea what was going through her mind, But she had to be seeing something that no-one else could. Anyway,.. That was the beginning of a truly magical friendship. We were inseparable, I mean all that summer we played and played, I should tell you we ate together, we slept, and we bathed together." The dancer paused for a moment, and looked at the young boy sitting beside him. "You see my grandfather and Little one were the best of friends. They even had a special way of calling each other. Can you guess what it was?" They would chatter their teeth, and the other would come running. Well,.. a year had passed since they met by the river. And little one wasn't so little any more. In fact he was big, and he had a family of his own. But my grandfather was still a little boy. Now that didn't bother either one of them one bit. And little one would bring his littler ones with him when it was time to play.

My grandfather was beginning to make his first bow and arrows as every young warrior dose. It must have been the seventh summer of my grandfather's life. It was a clear blue skied afternoon, and grand father was working on one of his arrows in his mom and dads lodge.

Suddenly outside the lodge there was loud bangs of thunder. People were running all over the place. My grandfather looked up in the sky and couldn't see not even one cloud. Dust was everywhere, and people were screaming in terror. When my grandfather ran outside he saw a young girl he knew grab her side and fall in front of him. Blood covered her hands. She didn't move, and he knew at that moment that she would never move again. Total fear engulfed him, so he ran back inside the tipi as fast as he could. Grabbing his bow he turned and jumped out side and ran quickly towards the safety of the brush. Everywhere was thunder crashing, bodies falling and screams silenced for ever. As he got closer to the cover of the near by growth. My grandfather told me that he could hear the distinct sound of little one's chattering sounds. Instinctually he followed the sound until he reached a small clearing inside the brush. Little one motioned for him to sit down beside him and he did with out a thought.

Little one started to crouch into a little ball and rub his hands together. My grandfather copied him, and together side be side they sat

Watching for signs of danger. Slowly the loud noise of the thunder quieted to almost a low distant roar. All of a sudden Little one froze completely!!! In fact they both froze at the same time. It was just about that time that a strange yellow haired man stepped forth into the small clearing. My grandfather could sense his presents just on the other side of Little One. Now this young stranger didn't want to kill anyone and in fact he never knew what he was getting him self in for. The uniform was a job and a way of helping his family back home.

"Home,..... thought the young man and the driving memory of eating a hot meal accompanied pains in his stomach. Well,.. looking over to his left the soldier saw two raccoons sitting completely frozen, And the farthest one was bigger !! The soldier remembered the taste of his mothers cooking back home in a place Kentucky. And how raccoon was a daily treat to all of kin folk. He quickly raised his gun and aimed at the bigger one. He pulled the hammer back, held his breath,..... My grandfather didn't move, but all of a sudden Little One Jumped up. Once again thunder banged,

but this time it was so loud that it brought total darkness. The world just seemed to disappear. When my grandfather awoke his head hurt like a stone had hit him, His ears rang, his balance was gone. As the blurring of his eyes cleared my grandfather was horrified by the sight that laid before him. Little One was gone, and all that remained was his two front paws!! Blood was every where and he knew that Little One had given his life so he could live. "You see son,. My grandfather was known to never lie, and he was a very well respected Medicine Chief of our people. But more so I knew that his story was true!!



Well,.. My grandfather sat on that big granite stone. And after telling me the story of how our family passed on the sacred medicine of our spirit helpers. He handed me the raccoon claw necklace he wore all of his life. My god I was honored and I vowed to never take it off.

My grandfather told me to run along and play.

So naturally I did, But as I was running down to the river. I stopped, I looked back and saw my grandfather fall over. He didn't do anything to break his fall, And at that point I knew he was dead. My heart ached and I started to feel the tears well up in my eyes. But just then I herd the sound I had never herd before. So I looked up past where my grandfather laid and saw two raccoons chattering as they played and ran away!!!.

"This story is true Little One for I was there!!"

Now I am Chief of our nation, we are called the Northern Cree and my family is the raccoon clan. The reason why I have these white spots running down my cheeks. below my dark mask is for "all my relations" who die to this day needlessly!!"

The young boy looked at the dancers eyes and he knew that before him sat "Little One"

"I would like to remind all you readers that these stories are true and these events are factual!!"