

Iktomi & the Animal Warrior Society - Duane Hollow Horn Bear - Storytelling

Iktomi is in his village, and it's early morning. He hears all this commotion outside.

He hears all this commotion, people hollering and running. They're going somewhere.

He peeks out of his tipi and, What's going on? What's going on here?

He says.

They're calling all the warrior societies down to the middle of the camp.

We've been attacked from the other side of the camp here. They want warrior societies down there right now.

Each goer goes back in his tipi and he says, Today's going to be my warrior day. Today I am going to be a warrior. I'm going to go with one of those warrior societies, and I'm going to help. There's been some children and some women that have been taken captive. I'm going to go join and help. He goes down there. He goes down there and stands up amongst them warriors. Each goer, what are you doing here? The leader says, I want to help. I want to help. I'm going to go with one of the warrior societies. Those other warriors are looking away from him.

I'm not taking him, they're thinking.

He ain't going with us, they're saying.

He's a big goof up, so they don't want to take him. He causes trouble.

They don't want to take him. Each goer, you're not going to go.

Come on, I want to go. I can be a good warrior. I want to help save those women and children. It's my duty as a Lakota. I have to join a warrior society.

They kept talking. One of the warrior societies leader comes over. Each goer, we have enough men. Most of us are all going. I am going. I'm going to lead these. But I am leaving my women, my wife and my children home. You know, each goer, you could really honor me if you stay home and you protect my wife, protect my children.

You would very honor, highly honor me if you could do that for me. Each goer looks at him and says, okay, yeah.

Yeah, I could stay behind. I'll protect the women and children. I'll protect them. I'll watch over the children.

So the chief announces that they're leaving there.

Each goer is staying over here to watch over all of you.

These children all look up at each goer.

I'm going to watch you kids.

These children all look at him, and then they all just turn and scatter, run off in different directions.

And the women look at each goer and say, he's not going to take care of us.

Each goer is saddened by this.

Well, they don't want me to watch them either. And as he's walking along, he finds himself walking out of camp.

He's going out of camp, and he's very sad.

They don't want me to be a warrior, but I want to be a warrior.

They don't want me in their warrior societies. I'll make my own warrior society. That's what I'm going to do.

I'll make my own warrior society.

And as he's going along, all of a sudden he trips on something.

I see that rock there in my path. Oh, wait a minute.

Oh, little brother, Turtle. Well, I'm sorry I didn't see you there. How are you doing, little brother? I didn't see you. I'm sorry. Hey, you know what? I'm going to, I'm building a warrior society, and you can help me. You can be part of my warrior society.

Turtle looks at him and says, me?

Part of your warrior society?

I don't think so. Come on, you know, you're already protected.

They shoot arrows at you. Look, you got your armor on. You got your shield. He said, yeah, I do. You can move out into the enemy's territory. Their arrows will just bounce off of you.

So he's really bragging enough to that Turtle, saying, yeah, yeah.

I probably would make a good warrior.

Well, come on, join me. You'll be one of my lieutenants.

So Turtle and him are going along.

He said, well, Turtle says, is it just the two of us?

No, we're going to get some more.

Wait, what's that noise?

What's that noise?

That's Mr. Turkey over there.

Looks over, oh, Transheet, cousin, come here, come here.

Turkey comes over and he says, I am building a warrior society, a mighty, powerful warrior society, and I have selected you to join us. Turkey looks at him and says, me? How can I help your warrior society? Because you speak a language that the enemy does not know. You could go in amongst them and signal back to us where they're located, what they're doing. You teach me those sounds, we can communicate.

They'll never know. So, yeah, yeah, I do speak different. Then join me. So Turkey says, okay, yeah, I can, I'll be your spy.

So there goes the three of them marching along. Well, who else is there? By this time, a dragonfly's coming by.

Little brother, little brother, come here, come here.

Turkey's saying, him?

I could eat him for supper, he said.

But he said, no, he can help us. Look how fast he is. So he says, I'm building this warrior society and you're gonna be one of my elite members from the air. You can fly over them, you'll know where they're at and you move so fast. Not an arrow can ever strike you, you are very fast. You'll never get an arrow in you.

So dragonfly says, yeah, yeah, I can dodge any arrow.

Okay, so off they go, they're marching along and all of a sudden somebody's crossing the path over there.

Oh, I know who that is, he's got a powerful weapon. Turkey says, no, no, no, no, no, no, you don't want him. No, we need him.

Cousin, cousin skunk, come here, come here.

As he calls the skunk over, Turkey and him are backing off. I'm gonna keep my distance from this guy. You have a powerful weapon. I'm building a warrior society and we need your weapon to help us.

So the skunk says, okay, yeah, I can be dangerous if I need to be. So there they are, the Turkey and them following back and then they make camp that night and they're talking about how they're going to be successful.

They're gonna overcome the warrior. They're telling big stories.

They're gonna, we'll be heroes. They'll be making songs about us and they'll be, we'll be honored. We'll, all the other societies will be envious of us. They'll be, they'll be jealous of us.

They're talking late into the night. Then they fell asleep. Then they fell asleep. Next morning, somebody was waking them, hollering around. So they wake up and here, they're surrounded by the enemy. Oh no, and the enemy looks around and says, all right, who's the leader here?

Who's the leader here? And Turkey says, it's not me. I'm not no leader. I think Iktomi is. Iktomi, who's Iktomi?

So he is the skunk, everybody's pointing at him.

No, I'm not their leader. Come on, talk to us. Talk to us, tell us, what are your secrets? Is this all of your army and do you have more? Do you have more warriors? You talk to us or we're gonna put your feet in the fire.

And Iktomi doesn't want this to happen.

He says, oh, please have pity on me. Have pity on me, he says.

He says, captain, if I tell you their secrets, you promise not to throw me in the fire?

Well, talk, speak. What is that turtle?

What kind of a weapon does he have? He said, you know, that turtle, he's very afraid of water. He does not like to go deep into the deep part of the water because he's heavy.

He's gonna sink like a rock.

He'll drown.

He never wants to go near water.

So they all surround the turtle.

You going to talk to us? Tell us. Where's the rest of the warrior societies?

Where's your camp? Turtle says, I don't know anything.

Talk to us.

And they carry him and take him to the edge of the lake.

You don't talk.

We're going to throw you in the lake.

No, please, please don't throw me in the lake. Please, I'll drown. You don't talk. I don't know anything.

They throw him out into the lake, and he's pretending, he's bobbing around.

And then all of a sudden, he goes down under, goes down there, and he just swims back towards the shore. So now they say, well, grab that turkey.

Grab that turkey. So they grab that turkey, and they're holding him. Then they go to each go, what is this one's secret?

He can't fly. He's just scared of high cliffs. He never wants to be thrown off of a cliff. He's very afraid of heights. So they take him to a high cliff.

You going to tell us where the camps are, where all the warrior societies are, what are your plans? I don't know anything. Talk to us. Talk to us, or we'll throw you off the cliff.

No, please, don't throw me off the cliff. I don't know anything.

He says, you're not going to talk?

I don't know anything. Throw him off.

So they threw him, and he spread his wings, and off he flies away. Off he flies away into the forest. OK, what about that dragonfly?

He goes, you know what? He can dodge one arrow. But if you were all to use arrows, 100 arrows, one after another at a time, he can never outfly all of the arrows all at once. You got a good point there, sis. You're right.

Everybody, start shooting your arrows.

So dragonfly is up there, but he's dodging every arrow.

And they're exhausted, all of their arrows. Well, we'll just have to get new arrows. But he's so little, we won't have to worry about him. What about that one there? What about that skunk?

Iktomi says, well, he's very shy.

He's very quiet.

And you know, it would embarrass him. It would embarrass him very much if anyone was to ever lift his tail and look at him.

What?

Pick his tail up, look at him once. He'll die from embarrassment.

So two of you guys lift his tail up.

And one says, I'm not lifting his tail.

So the others all gather. Everybody gather around. We're going to lift his tail up if he doesn't talk.

So he doesn't talk. So up goes the tail, and out comes the blast.

Everybody is screaming, oh, my eyes, I can't breathe. My face is burning.

Iktomi and the others, they get their clubs, and they start beating everybody up. They got no arrows, and they knock them all out, and they tie them all up.

They tie them all up, and they take them captive back towards the camp. They had won the battle. And Iktomi, some days, Iktomi can be a warrior. And he had beaten the enemy with his warrior society. And so some days are lucky for Iktomi, and he was honored for that one time in his life. Thank you.