

The Boy and the Bear - Duane Hollow Horn Bear - Storytelling

There was a day when two young men, very good friends, one young man said, I have chosen to go on a journey on my own, for myself. And he leaves. He travels a great distance, through the hills, through the rivers, and comes to this river along the bank. He doesn't want to take his horse down there, so he ties his horse up to a tree. And he walks carefully along the bank, following the steep side of the bank, going down towards the river. And he sits there to rest as he gets to the bottom. It's a beautiful river, a shallow river.

And on the other side there's this big dead oak tree that has fallen right below this hillside. And something catches his eye when he looks to the right. There's that little boy, a little boy running through the trees, and has no clothes on. He's coming and he's sitting there in silence, watching this kid. He's watching him. He comes and he goes over to that big tree that has fallen there, the big dead tree stump. He watches him, and the boy opens like a door. He parts it, and he goes in.

So the young man is astonished by this, and he sits back, and my eyes are playing tricks on me. He becomes afraid. I come to a place where I don't feel good. He goes back and he gets his horse, and he finds his way home. Then one day at an appropriate time, he tells his very good friend, he says, you know, that time I went on my journey, this had happened. He explains to him what he had seen. And his friend is sitting there looking at him, and he says, you know, I want to tell you something, that I have been keeping a secret all my life.

I have been there, too. It's a little bit different, but I think that little boy belongs to me. He doesn't need to explain. Maybe you'll go with me. I'll go and I'll go get my boy. The young man, the other young man says, I'll go with you. Now his curiosity is up there. So they travel together, and he says, tonight I want to share with you a story of why I know this little boy is mine before we get there, because I want you to believe me, and I want you to help me.

And the young man, he's your sister listening, he says, I was there the same way you went, but when I got there, and I sat along that bank, I was sitting along the edge of the bank with my legs dangling, and from that direction you saw the boy. I saw this beautiful young woman come in, and I watched her, and her clothing was different than ours, so I thought she was from another tribe, but she was alone. She knew I was there because she looked at me.

But I sat there, and I was looking at her, and she began to talk to me, and she came across that shallow river, and she sat down beside me, and we talked, and we talked. And she said, come home with me. And so I was taken by her beauty and her words. So I followed her, and we went to that dead tree, that big tree stump you saw laying there. She pulled back the bark, and there was an opening. She went in, and she said, come on in. Without question, I followed her in. The whole inside of that hill was a beautiful home.

The flowing was the softest of grass. It was beautiful. Along the walls was the bank of the hill, and there were openings, and she would reach into them, and she would bring out some very sweet food, and it was delicious. It was good. Each one, she had different foods. She fed me, and I stayed there with her for quite a long time. Then one day, I knew I had to leave. And so, in the night, I snuck away, and I came home. But now I know that little child is mine, because I stayed there with her that long. You must help me to get my son.

We're going to go there, and I'm going to go in, and when I find my son, I'm going to bring him to the door. I want you to take him. Come back to the horses as quickly as you can." They got there, and what he said was true. There was the little boy. He was playing outside. The boy went in. So the first one, he goes down there. He follows the boy in. The other is standing outside, waiting, waiting, looking around and waiting. Finally it opens, and he brings the boy out. Let us go. Together they take the little boy, and they return home.

They return home back to their village. And then one day, many days, weeks, months later, there's a commotion at the other end of the village. People are hollering, and they're screaming, and they're running, running out of the camp, running through the village. What is it? What is it? And here comes this big female bear. She goes to a lodge. She looks in it. She goes to another lodge. She looks in it, sniffing the ground, standing up on her back legs, looking about, coming and coming, searching. And he knows she is searching for me.

The people are leaving the camp, the bear comes and comes, he goes into the lodge, he sits to the back in his lodge, with the little boy by his side. The bear comes to the teepee, puts her head into the doorway, and sees them, comes in, and sits down beside them, takes the little baby boy, cuddles the bear, the little boy in her arms, and just stays there. Time goes on, the bear stays, taking care of the little boy.

Some days she'll go off, she'll bring back honey, she'll bring back plums, cherries, sweet foods, she'll bring back rabbits, things to eat. So we would prepare and we would eat, and she lived with us, as if she were one of us. The people accepted her, she came and

went as she pleased, and then one day, there was trouble, war parties were forming, and this man says, I'll have to go with them. He prepares, his mother helps him to prepare, gets his weapons, prepares the food that he will take, prays with him, smudges him, encourages him.

The bear remains, taking care of the little boy, and off he goes. Well, he returns, he returns. Time goes on, years, and then something had happened with this man. He got sick, and he died, but before he died, he told his mother and his son, he said, I know, she understands me, but put me up on the scaffold, but do not adorn my scaffold with anything. We will know what to do, and leave the area, and so, time went on, he did pass away. People came, they cried in sorrow for him.

The bear came to the gravesite, under the scaffold, laid down there, under the scaffold. Through the night, you could hear the bear, grieving, and crying. The next day, the camp is preparing to move, as they began to leave, they go so far, and they look back, there she is, she's laying under that scaffold, grieving, as the camp gets further, each time they look back, she stays there, she stays there under that scaffold, until they leave. She stays there, until her end, for that man, who she had a son with.

The young boy went with his grandmother, but those two, in the spirit world together, what do we learn from a story such as this? Ask yourself, what does it mean? What do I have to take away from this story? You'll understand, when you think about it. Thank you.