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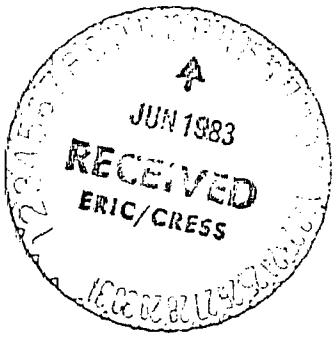
ABSTRACT

Intended for people working in drug abuse prevention or trying to help American Indian youth feel pride in themselves and their culture, the booklet provides specific guidelines on how to use tribal stories in preventing drug abuse. Following a brief introduction to drug abuse problems and prevention strategies, the booklet explains three kinds of American Indian stories: the "How It Came to Be" stories, which explain almost everything; the Hero stories, which tell how young people overcome great obstacles to achieve their goals; and the Trickster stories, which are humorous reminders not to take life too seriously. According to the guide, the stories are good drug prevention tools because they touch the heart, spirit, and mind; give examples of how to deal with problems; help develop self-awareness and self-esteem; and can be the basis of many activities. The booklet includes specific guidelines for telling, dramatizing, collecting, and illustrating the stories. It includes four sample stories to use in drug abuse prevention: the Cherokee story "How the Raccoon Got Rings on His Tail," the Nez Perce story "Coyote Breaks the Fish Dam at Celilo," the Blackfeet story "Scarface," and the Micmac story "The Invisible Hunter." (SB)

COME CLOSER AROUND THE FIRE

Using Tribal Legends, Myths, and Stories in Preventing Drug Abuse



"I listened to the singer's song
he sang of old times
and I found the path."

From a poem by
Maurice Kenny
in *Akwesasne Notes*

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
Public Health Service
Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration

National Institute on Drug Abuse
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OF TALES

TELLER OF TALES

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I am not to be named
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Minatou of the Ways of the People
Come closer around the fire
And I will speak my story

I am anonymous
I am not to be named
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Slave of Truth, Master of Lies
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I am not to be named
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Listen to your soul for we are one ....
We are anonymous
We are not to be named
Come closer around the fire
Let us speak the dreams of our people
Tell the tales of love and longing
And sing the songs of the yet unborn

Manitongquat
from Medicine Story
in *Akwesasne Notes*

I. The Purpose of the Guide

This is a guide to using tribal stories, myths, and legends as a tool for preventing the abuse of drugs among Native Americans. It is intended primarily for people working in the field of drug abuse prevention, but it can be used by anyone (teachers, counselors, librarians, elders, parents, community workers) looking for ways to help our Indian young people feel pride in themselves and in their culture, and to provide activities that will increase their skills and their confidence. It is also for anyone who does not want to see the stories or the traditions that surround them lost.

The two basic objectives of this guide are:

- to show the *value* of the tribal stories in preventing drug abuse; and,
- to provide specific guidelines on *how* to use them (telling, dramatizing, collecting, recording, and illustrating the stories).

II. The Prevention of Drug Abuse

Problems Leading to Drug Abuse

Finding meaning and purpose in one's life is difficult for any young person today. For the Indian youth, the conflict between traditional Indian values and the urban American lifestyle imposes a greater burden. The concepts of harmony with nature, cooperating, sharing, patience, listening, and respect for elders, as well as the importance of the spiritual life are challenged constantly. The anxiety and frustration this creates are made more acute by poverty, boredom, and lack of hope.

Too often, Indian men and women have felt the need to escape these problems through alcohol. Now, in increasing numbers, Indians (especially young people) are turning to other drugs as well.

Prevention of drug abuse in the Indian community requires developing ways to help strengthen the inner resources of each person and those of the family, the community, and the culture.

Prevention Strategies

At one time, the strategies used to prevent drug abuse were simply to provide information on drugs, often using scare tactics. Now, prevention focuses on the person. The goals are to build personal strengths and abil-

ities, to provide ways of coping with problems and to clarify values. This means helping young Native Americans to strike their own best balance between the two cultures. It means helping them to make good decisions about the direction of their lives, based on a sturdy sense of who they are and what their values are.

Drug abuse prevention involves several approaches. Particularly important is that of providing alternatives to drugs. These alternatives are activities which satisfy the same needs that drugs do, but in ways which provide lasting satisfaction.

III. The Myths, Legends, and Stories

> *The myths of modern man are often unfocused; we don't celebrate our myths enough . . . . For a variety of historical reasons (the emergence of machines, cities, anonymity, money, mass media, standardization, automation) we've lost awareness of storytelling as a way to dramatize and order human existence . . . . We feel nameless and empty when we forget our stories, leave our heroes unsung, and ignore the rites that mark our passage from one stage of life to another.*
>
> *Keen and Fox, 1974*

Yet, a rich variety of myths, legends, and stories exists among the tribes and nations of North America—tales that touch the soul as well as the mind, through which the elders of each tribe have passed on the history, values, and ideals of their people. The heroic myths, the "how it came to be" stories, and the trickster animal stories are all a part of this heritage.

Some of the stories are common to tribes throughout the continent; some are restricted to specific geographical areas; and some, to a particular tribe. The Iroquois Confederacy tells stories of monsters that are found nowhere else. The tribes of the Plains (including Cheyenne and Nez Perce) as well as the Navajo all tell Coyote stories. The tribes of the Northwest tell Raven stories instead. Yet, whatever the variations or similarities, the basic themes are universal. They feed the spirit, they teach ways to solve problems, and they put life in perspective.

The "How It Came To Be" Stories

Examples of the creation myths and "how it came to be" stories include the California Indian tales, the humorous Kiowa stories of Saynday, "who got things started in the world," and many of the Coyote stories of the Plains tribes. There is a story to explain almost everything, big stories about how the world was created and little stories about how the chipmunk got its stripes.

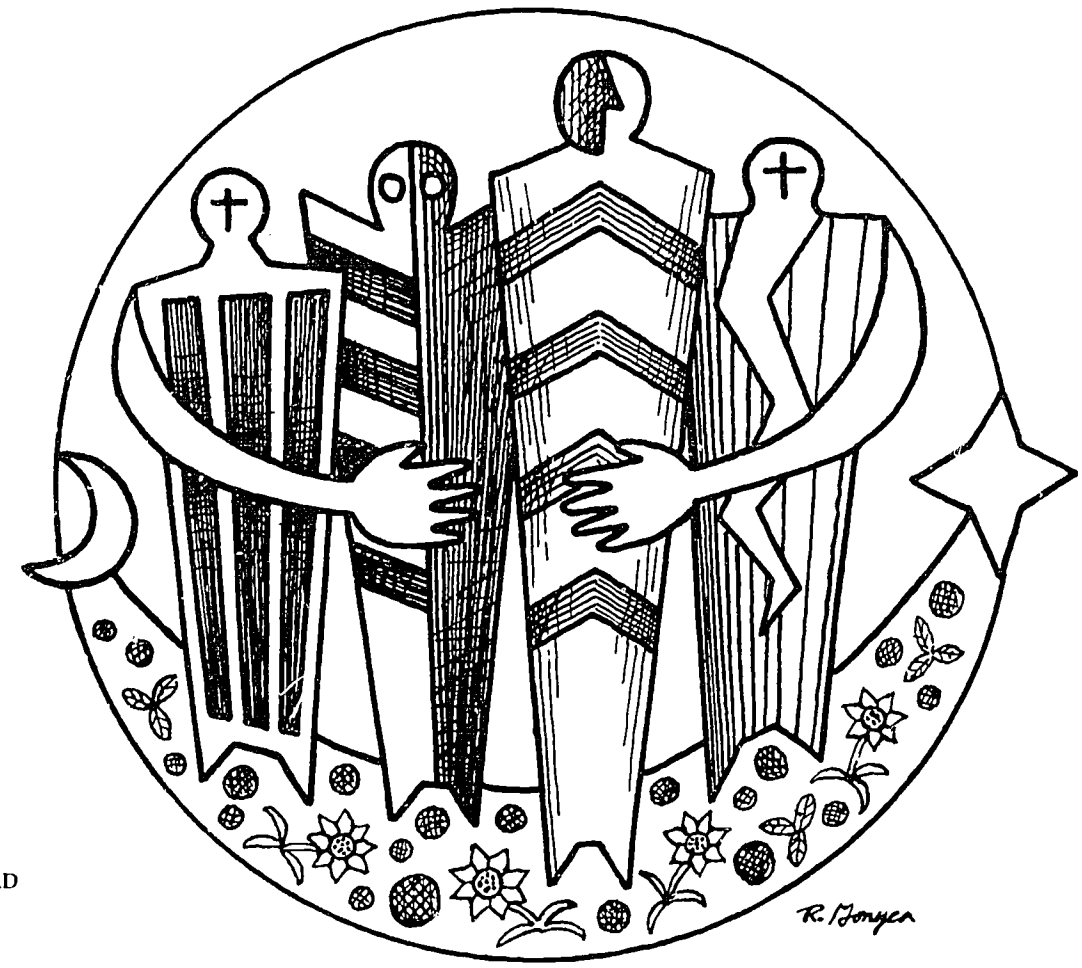
The Hero Stories

The heroic legends, such as the Chippewa stories of Manabozho (Nanabozho) the creator-magician and the Scarface legend, tell of young people overcoming great obstacles by cooperating with nature and the spiritual forces. They show that, alone and despite great hardship and deprivation, young people can achieve their goals and win their place in the world. Such tales show the journey, stage by stage, through the crises that must be met in order to live a full and useful life.

In these stories, the hero must often proceed alone. He is helped by being in touch with the spirit world and with nature—the sun, the wind, the animals. Often outcast and abandoned, he searches and finds that his life is guided by a larger spiritual force and that help is there when it is needed. As the ancient tales show, the struggle against severe difficulties in life is unavoidable, but if one steadfastly meets unexpected and often unjust hardships, one masters the obstacles and wins. The stories teach young people that they can make a place for themselves by following their own right path. They *show* what happens when one does right or wrong, and can help the listener to make responsible choices by their example.

The Trickster Stories

The humorous "trickster" stories view life from another perspective. Coyote, always hungry and on the move, doing mischief, is there to be laughed at. However, this tricky animal, whether called Coyote, Napi, or Old Man, also gets credit for having helped to make the world a good place to live. In other parts of the country, the same "person" may be a raven or a rabbit, but is always a mischief maker, and a reminder to all of us not to take life too seriously. The light humor of these trickster stories balances the awe-inspiring myths. Both deal with good and evil but on two very different levels.



ON THE
POLLEN ROAD
OF LIFE

IV. Why the Stories Are Prevention Tools

> *Education is the process by which man uses his innate capacities to acquire knowledge of, respect for, and kinship with the life-sustaining elements of the universe. It is this which gives man his strength, his wisdom, his maturity, and his well-being. In this way, one is united with the life-sustaining and beauty-radiating elements of the universe and continues on the path of pollen.*
>
> *The Navajo's Philosophy of Education*

In "Alternatives to Drugs: A New Approach to Drug Education," Dr. Alton Dohner of the Indian Health Service suggests several characteristics of a successful approach to providing alternatives to drugs.

Such alternatives should:

- be realistic, attainable, and meaningful;
- assist people to find self-understanding, improved self-image, feeling of significance, expanded awareness or new experience which they seek through drugs;
- contribute to individual identity and independence;
- offer active participation and involvement;
- provide a feeling of identification with some larger body of experience; and,
- touch one's feeling, emotions, and spirit.

The tribal legends and stories touch the heart and spirit as well as the mind. They give examples, both humorous and heroic, of ways to deal with problems. They help develop self-awareness and self-esteem as they provide a sense of one's place in the world. In addition, the stories can be the basis for many activities which offer active participation, meaningful involvement, and the chance for commitment.

- For the *individual*, the tribal stories provide examples of personal struggle, problem solving, understanding, and cooperation, as well as a sense of place in the universe. They guide the individual, stage by stage, through the inevitable psychological crises of a useful life.
- For the *family*, the stories can provide a chance to come together, to share and learn. Just a few stories, repeated often in the family circle, can create warm memories and teach lessons that last a lifetime. Telling the stories gives parents and grandparents the chance to pass on cultural and personal values and to educate the children in a way that they can accept and enjoy.

- In the *community*, whether around a traditional campfire, in school, or at the community center, coming together for storytelling is a time for listening and sharing, rekindling the sense of kinship of the group and reinforcing its values. In telling of the glories of the past, the stories keep them alive.

V. Specific Ways to Use the Stories

One of the most important aspects of the role of the stories in the prevention of drug abuse is the many alternative activities that can grow from them. Generally, younger children are quite content simply to listen to the stories. Many older youngsters may prefer being more actively involved with the stories telling them to younger children, dramatizing them, collecting them from the elders, recording and illustrating them before they are lost.

As discussed earlier, activities which provide meaningful involvement for young people, while increasing their confidence, their skills, and their sense of who they are, are essential to developing mature adults.

The particular strategies chosen depend on the needs and the resources of the particular reservation, urban center, or tribal group. However, included here are several suggestions of ways to use the stories.

LET US SPEAK
THE DREAMS
OF OUR PEOPLE

Storytelling

. . . Come closer around the fire
Let us speak the dreams of our people
Tell the tales of love and longing
And sing the songs of the yet unborn.
Manitongquat

Storytelling is as old as the human race, but the art of storytelling, the stillness, the reverence for the tribal elders, and the ceremony that surrounded the telling of the stories are harder and harder to find.

However, storytelling is an art that can be rekindled, in urban Indian centers as well as on the reservation. This is already happening in more and more places. The Morning Star Lodge in Kansas City, for example, has pow-wows every Friday night, with the traditional dances, music, and stories, and people from many tribes coming together to share in this experience. The elders of the Mescalero Apache are recording and teaching their stories to the young people of the tribe.

Ideally, of course, the stories will continue to be told by the elders. The value of hearing the stories directly from them cannot be equaled. However, where this is not possible, others such as parents, teachers, librarians, youth leaders, and counselors as well as our young people themselves can practice the art of storytelling. Young people have been trained to tell stories to younger children in many communities. At schools in Washington, D.C., sixth graders told fairy tales to the younger children during lunch hours on rainy days. Other programs have had young people who travel from school to school spreading the magic of old folktales through their skillful telling. Whoever tells the stories, there are certain techniques used by storytellers around the world. Some of the basic guides for storytelling include the following:

- Honor tradition and taboos: "Winter-telling stories" in the winter, for example.
- Choose a few stories with great care and repeat them, rather than telling many different stories. The listener will gain more of the meaning from each telling.
- Saturate yourself with the story beforehand. Read it again and again, but without memorizing it. Visualize the story in your mind incident by incident, not word by word.
- Let the story speak for itself without stating the moral or drawing conclusions for the listener. Let the listener learn by its examples and draw his/her own conclusions.

- If a few words need to be explained, do so *before* starting to tell the story.
- Stay with the story's natural flow, without side-stories.
- Save questions for the end.
- Pause or lower voice at important points to heighten suspense.
- A story well told is very special. However, a story well read is better than a story poorly told.
- Choose a quiet, comfortable place without too many distractions, if possible.
- The listening time for older children and adults is usually best limited to half an hour or 45 minutes; for small children, 15 minutes.
- If someone seems restless or is not paying attention, tell the story directly to him/her for a few minutes.

In selecting stories for a specific audience, established tradition should be followed. However, in urban centers where there may be no such tradition, the following guidelines may be useful.

Each person can get something from almost any of the stories, yet certain kinds of stories or interpretations of them are, of course, particularly useful for certain ages. For example:

- for small children, stories may be used to instill appropriate fear of real dangers; or to instill obedience to parents, elders, and tribal rules;
- for the older children, who are developing a sense of humor, the trickster stories (including the modern version of Coyote and Roadrunner on TV) show the cost of naughty ways in a lighthearted way, but what is good and what is bad is clearly defined;
- for children of all ages, the "how it came to be stories" explain things in ways that make sense of the world, and provide a sense of security (with respect) about nature and the world;
- for teenagers, who are thinking much more deeply about themselves, the world and their place in it, the heroic myths (such as *Scarface* in this booklet) can be most meaningful—stories of love, war, marriage, self-knowledge, acceptance by the tribe—"the rites of passage" to adulthood;
- for the adults, especially the elders who have lived with the stories and told them for so many years, the depth and the "truth" of the stories is even more apparent, and this increased awareness adds to the richness of their storytelling.

Whether the storyteller is a tribal elder, a staff member of a community center, or a young person, it is the careful choosing of the story, getting completely involved with it, and telling it again and again that brings its magic to the listeners.

Dramatizing the Stories

Dramatics and acting provide an opportunity for young people to express themselves in a relaxed, fun atmosphere. They can try on different roles and develop their own style for those roles. They can use their imagination, expand their sense of themselves and their ability to speak out. At the same time, they can become involved in the technical side of producing a play (writing the scripts, making the sets, managing production, publicizing, and selling tickets). They can photograph, film, videotape, or record the performances, developing still other skills.

The simplicity of the legends and stories makes them easy to dramatize. The characters are few and simply drawn. They speak just enough to carry the story along. They also represent good and evil in their clearest forms as the heroes/heroines or villains, whether in the lighthearted trickster stories or in the heroic legends.

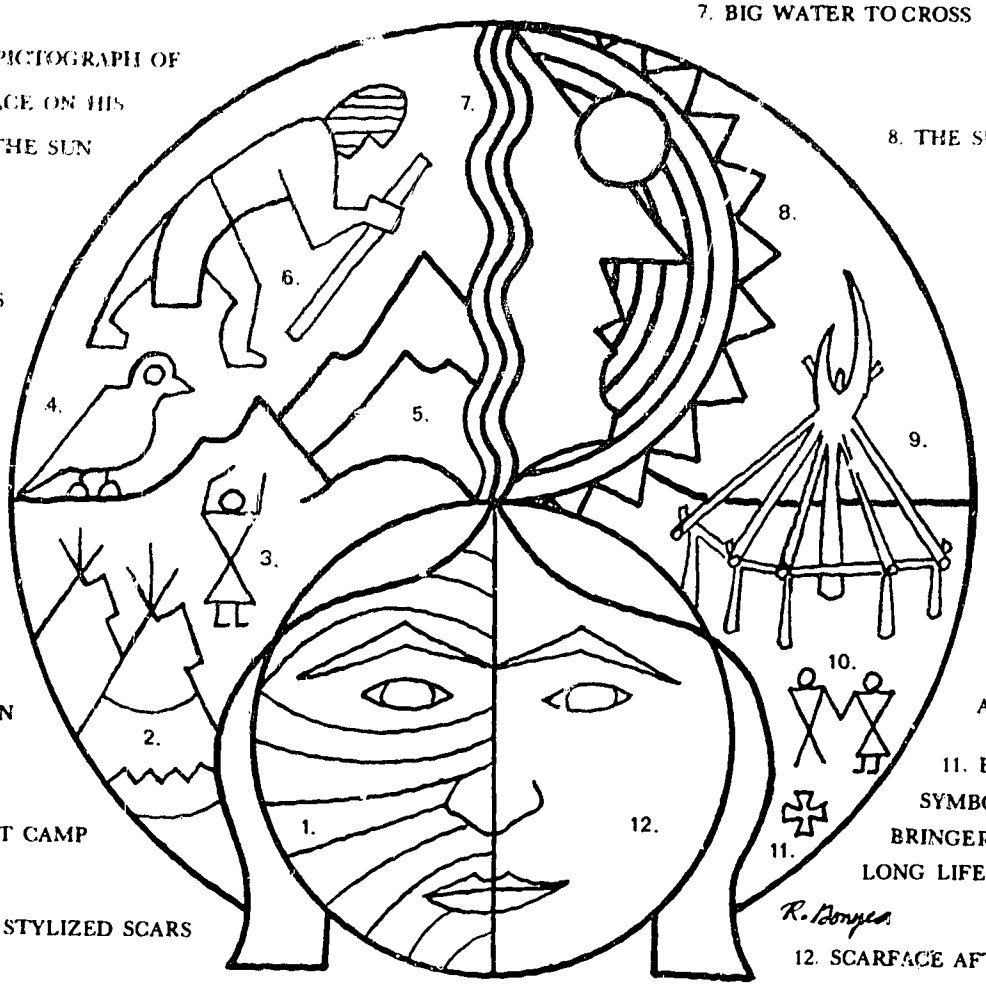
All ages can enjoy watching these stories dramatized and enjoy participating in their production, whether at the community center, school, or church.

Collecting the Stories

The actual collecting of stories from tribal elders, parents, or grandparents is a way to develop our young people's respect for their heritage and for their elders. It is through the youngster's *own* findings that he or she gains pride in his culture. This is especially important for teenagers, who think seriously about their lives and about their futures but who do not want to be told what is good for them. They need experiences that help them discover themselves as worthy, healthy, self-reliant, caring, and contributing members of the community

In collecting and recording the stories, they learn about their culture at the same time they develop skills in listening, writing and editing. If they publish the stories, they can also learn layout, photography, and fundraising—a whole range of both academic and practical skills.

Examples of "cultural journalism" projects in which young people have interviewed elders of the community, recorded, and preserved the old stories and other folklore include *Nanih Waiya*, a publication of Choctaw students in Mississippi seeking to preserve their cultural


7. BIG WATER TO CROSS
6. PICTOGRAPH OF SCARFACE ON HIS JOURNEY TO THE SUN
8. THE SUN
5. MOUNTAINS OF THE WEST
9. BLACKFEET MEDICINE LODGE (SUN DANCE)
4. THE RAVEN
3. BLACKFEET PICTOGRAPH OF WOMEN WORSHIPPING THE SUN
10. BLACKFEET PICTOGRAPH OF MAN AND WIFE
11. BLACKFEET PICTOGRAPH SYMBOL FOR MORNING STAR, BRINGER OF WISDOM AND LONG LIFE
2. BLACKFEET CAMP
1. STYLIZED SCARS
12. SCARFACE AFTER SUN REMOVED HIS SCARS
12

heritage, the *Tsa' Aszi* magazine of Navajo students in Utah; the *Hoye Kija* magazine of the Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota; and *Dosetal*, of the Flathead Reservation in Montana. Collecting the stories provides young people with a chance to meet some remarkable people, and to catch and preserve the stories before they are lost. It is meaningful work in the finest sense.

Illustrating the Stories

Illustrations of the stories by young people in journals and booklets can add greatly to the narrative. The stories can also be depicted in a variety of art forms such as murals, posters, graphics, and sculptures, as well as masks and puppets. The pictographs Ramon Gonyea used for this book are an example of one way to illustrate the stories, as the picture of *Scarface* shows.

The sides of buildings, walls of community centers, libraries, classrooms, or churches can all be used to show the legends and myths in a permanent way. An example of community involvement in such a mural painting project is at a library in Ft. Worth, Texas, where the members of the Mexican American Youth Organization produced a mural that showed their cultural heritage, using paint and supplies donated by local merchants.

Conclusion

The tribal stories and the many ways in which they can be used make them ideal tools for drug abuse prevention programs whether they are told, dramatized, collected in journals, illustrated, or filmed. The stories can be used with any group of any age, the particular method depending on the resources and interests of that group. Just one good storyteller with a very few stories, polished by much telling, can enchant and instruct again and again.

VI. Four Stories

The following four stories, typical of the large number of tribal myths and legends that exist, have been selected to illustrate the value and uses of the stories.

How the Raccoon Got Rings on His Tail is a very simple Cherokee "how it came to be" story and a trickster story. It is very short and easily learned for storytelling, amusing to listeners of any age.

Coyote Breaks the Fish Dam at Celilo is a Nez Perce legend of the Northwest, with one of the most famous tricksters in the world as its central character. It can be told, dramatized, and illustrated, and it shows how one story can combine several elements. It is a fine

example of a trickster story, a "how it came to be" story, and a geography lesson as well.

The Blackfeet myth of **Scarface** is a complex story. It is a heroic tale of the "rite of passage" of a boy into manhood. Scarface is a poor outcast of his tribe; but, by meeting the challenges that confront him, and by cooperating with nature and with the spiritual forces, he finds a meaningful place for himself, both in his tribe and with the spirits.

This story entertains and instructs at many levels, making it a good one for families and communities to share. It has special meaning for teenagers, however, who are thinking seriously about themselves, their place in the community, and in the larger world.

The Invisible Hunter is a Micmac story. It is a feminine version of the Scarface legend. It is much simpler, but with the same central lesson: that it is one's inner spirit that is most important. Both *Scarface* and *The Invisible Hunter* can be told, dramatized, and illustrated.

These four stories are "starters." The best stories are, of course, the ones belonging to one's own group, directly shared with one another.

HOW THE RACCOON GOT RINGS ON HIS TAIL

One summer morning when I was seven, I went to a higher peak above Grandfather's house to dream up a new song. As I was lying on a boulder, humming to myself, a raccoon came out of her den in a red-oak tree above me and watched and listened. In a while, she came down the tree and walked out a little way in front of me and began singing also:

U'na ko la ti e la wo ge quu
I go gwo du u hi do ti gwa la sgu
Gu wa du hnu u hi i gu gwo du u hi

A translation goes like this:

I am beautiful!
Like the yellow Rainbow,
From my feet up,
I am beautiful.

One day the Raccoon met the Terrapin, who was wearing some pretty yellow rings around his neck, and the Raccoon wanted them. But he didn't know how he was going to get them away from the Terrapin. Then the Raccoon began thinking—he thought of a plan. The Raccoon said, "Those rings sure look funny on your short neck. Let me show you how to wear them."

"You might run off with them," the Terrapin said.

"No, I won't. You can stay here and watch me," said the Raccoon.

"Well, I guess it'll be all right," the Terrapin said.

So the Terrapin took off the seven small yellow rings on his neck and gave them to the Raccoon, who put them on his tail.

"Now I'm going to walk over there so you can see how these rings look on my tail," the Raccoon said.

The Raccoon walked a small distance from the Terrapin, and turned around swinging his tail back and forth and up and down. Then he asked, "How do they look on me?"

"Just fine. They look good on your tail," the Terrapin said.

Then the Raccoon began to dance and swing his tail. He danced faster and faster and farther and farther away from the Terrapin.

The terrapin hurried to catch up with the Raccoon and called out, "You thief! Bring my rings back to me!"

But the Raccoon broke into a run and ran up a tall oak tree that had a hollow, leaving the Terrapin on the ground.

That is how the Raccoon got yellow rings on his tail and why he lives in a hollow of a tree to this day.

Reprinted with permission from *The Path to Snowbird Mountain*, by Traveller Bird. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1972. pp. 51-53.

COYOTE BREAKS THE FISH DAM AT CELILO

Coyote's purpose was to free salmon so that other people upriver could have some too. Coyote had to be crafty to outwit his opponents, the Maidens. This story has many lessons about the geography of the region and explains why there are now salmon.

Once, Coyote was walking along on a hot day. Then he saw a river and said, "Oh, let me cool myself in the water." And he swam down the swift river. After a while, he came ashore and mosquitoes just swarmed all over him; so he named the place by saying, "This will be Mosquito-Place." He swam down the river a little farther, then got out again. "Oh, this is a nice sunny slope; they will call this place *E-la-kaht Pot-kene-ka* (Sunny Slope). He went a little farther until he came to the waterfall, near where the Wasco people live. Five Maidens had dwelt there from ancient times. This was the place where the great dam kept the fish from passing up the stream.

Then, suddenly, he saw a Maiden. Quickly he went back upstream a ways and said, "Let me look like a little baby, floating down the river on a raft in a Flathead-type baby board, all laced up." And it became so.

As Coyote was drifting down, he cried, "Awaaa, awaaaa." The Maidens, hearing this, quickly swam over, thinking that a baby might be drowning. The eldest Maiden caught it first and said, "Oh, what a cute baby."

But the youngest Maiden said, "That is no baby. That is Coyote."

The others answered, "Stop saying that. You will hurt the baby's feelings." The Coyote put out his bottom lip as if he were about to cry.

The Maidens took the baby home and cared for it and fed it. He grew very fast. When he was crawling around one day, he spilled some water on purpose. "Oh, Mothers," he said. "Will you get me some more water?"

The youngest sister said, "Why don't you make him go and get it himself. The river is nearby." So the Maidens told Coyote to get the water himself.

He began to crawl toward the river, but when he was out of sight, he jumped up and began to run. The oldest sister turned around and said, "He is out of sight already. He certainly can move fast."

"That is because he is Coyote," the youngest sister said.

When Coyote reached the river, he swam to the fish dam and tore it down, pulling out the stones so that all the water rushed free.

Then he crawled up on the rocks and shouted gleefully, "Mothers, your fish dam has broken down!" The sisters ran down and saw that it was true.

The youngest Maiden just said, "I told you he was Coyote."

Coyote said, "You have kept all the people from having salmon for such a long time by keeping them from going upstream. Now the people will be happy because they will get salmon. Now salmon will go straight upriver and spawn."

This is how Celilo (Oregon) came to be, where the Wasco people are today. Because Coyote tore down those fish dams, salmon come up river to this day to spawn on the upper reaches of the Great Columbia River and its tributaries.

Reprinted with permission from *Nu-Mee-Poom-Tit-Wah-Tit* (Nez Perce Legends), by A.P. Slickpoo, Sr. Idaho: Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee, Box 305, Lapwai, Idaho 83504. pp. 99-101.

SCARFACE

SCARFACE

Origin of the Medicine Lodge

In the earliest times there was no war. All the tribes were at peace. In those days there was a man who had a daughter, a very beautiful girl. Many young men wanted to marry her, but every time she was asked, she only shook her head and said she did not want a husband.

"How is this?" asked her father. "Some of these young men are rich, handsome, and brave."

"Why should I marry?" replied the girl. "I have a rich father and mother. Our lodge is good. The parfleches are never empty. There are plenty of tanned robes and soft furs for winter. Why worry me, then?"

The Raven Bearers held a dance; they all dressed carefully and wore their ornaments, and each one tried to dance the best. Afterwards some of them asked for this girl, but still she said no. Then the Bulls, the Kit-foxes, and others of the *I-kun-un'-kah-tsi* held their dances, and all those who were rich, many great warriors, asked this man for his daughter, but to every one of them she said no. Then her father was angry, and said: "Why, now, this way? All the best men have asked for you, and still you say no. I believe you have a secret lover."

"Ah!" said her mother. "What shame for us should a child be born and our daughter still unmarried!" "Father! mother!" replied the girl, "pity me. I have no secret lover, but now hear the truth. That Above Person, the Sun, told me, 'Do not marry any of those men, for you are mine; thus you shall be happy, and live to great age'; and again he said, 'Take heed. You must not marry. You are mine.'"

"Ah!" replied her father. "It must always be as he says." And they talked no more about it.

There was a poor young man, very poor. His father, mother, all his relations, had gone to the Sand Hills. He had no lodge, no wife to tan his robes or sew his moccasins. He stopped in one lodge to-day, and to-morrow he ate and slept in another; thus he lived. He was a good-looking young man, except that on his cheek he had a scar, and his clothes were always old and poor.

After those dances some of the young men met this poor Scarface, and they laughed at him, and said: "Why don't you ask that girl to marry you? You are so rich and handsome!" Scarface did not laugh; he replied "Ah! I will do as you say. I will go and ask her." All the young men thought this was funny. They laughed a great deal. But Scarface went down by the river. He waited by the river, where the women came to get water, and by and by the girl came along. "Girl," he said, "wait. I want to speak with you. Not as a designing person do I ask you, but openly where the Sun looks down, and all may see."

"Speak then," said the girl.

"I have seen the days," continued the young man. "You have refused those who are young, and rich, and brave. Now, to-day, they laughed and said to me, 'Why do you not ask her? I am poor, very poor. I have no lodge, no food, no clothes, no robes and warm furs. I have no relations; all have gone to the Sand Hills; yet, now, to-day, I ask you, take pity, be my wife."

The girl hid her face in her robe and brushed the ground with the point of her moccasin, back and forth, back and forth; for she was thinking. After a time she said: "True. I have refused all those rich young men, yet now the poor one asks me, and I am glad. I will be your wife, and my people will be happy. You are poor, but it does not matter. My father will give you dogs. My mother will make us a lodge. My people will give us robes and furs. You will be poor no longer."

Then the young man was happy, and he started to kiss her, but she held him back, and said: "Wait! The Sun has spoken to me. He says I may not marry; that I belong to him. He says if I listen to him, I shall live to great age. But now I say: Go to the Sun. Tell him 'She whom you spoke with heeds your words. She has never done wrong, but now she wants to marry. I want her for my wife.' Ask him to take that scar from your face. That will be his sign. I will know he is pleased. But if he refuses, or if you fail to find his lodge, then do not return to me."

"Oh!" cried the young man, "at first your words were good. I was glad. But now it is dark. My heart is dead. Where is that far-off lodge? Where the trail, which no one yet has travelled?"

"Take courage, take courage!" said the girl; and she went to her lodge.

Scarface was very sad. He sat down and covered his head with his robe and tried to think what to do. After a while he got up, and went to an old woman who had been kind to him. "Pity me," he said. "I am very poor. I am going away now on a long journey. Make me some moccasins."

"Where are you going?" asked the old woman. "There is no war; we are very peaceful here."

"I do not know where I shall go," replied Scarface. "I am in trouble, but I cannot tell you now what it is."

So the old woman made him some moccasins, seven pairs, with parfleche soles, and also she gave him a sack of food—pemmican of berries, pounded meat, and dried back fat; for this old woman had a good heart. She liked the young man.

All alone, and with a sad heart, he climbed the bluffs and stopped to take a last look at the camp. He wondered if he would ever see his sweetheart and the people again. "*Hai'-yu!* Pity me, O Sun," he prayed, and turning, he

started to find the trail.

For many days he travelled on, over great prairies, along timbered rivers and among the mountains, and every day his sack of food grew lighter; but he saved it as much as he could, and ate berries, and roots, and sometimes he killed an animal of some kind. One night he stopped by the home of a wolf. "*Hai-yah!*" said that one; "what is my brother doing so far from home?"

"Ah!" replied Scarface, "I seek the place where the Sun lives; I am sent to speak with him."

"I have travelled far," said the wolf. "I know all the prairies, the valleys, and the mountains, but I have never seen the Sun's home. Wait; I know one who is very wise. Ask the bear. He may tell you."

The next day the man travelled on again, stopping now and then to pick a few berries, and when night came he arrived at the bear's lodge.

"Where is your home?" asked the bear. "Why are you travelling alone, my brother?"

"Help me! Pity me!" replied the young man; "because of her words! I seek the Sun. I go to ask him for her."

"I know not where he stops," replied the bear. "I have travelled by many rivers, and I know the mountains, yet I have never seen his lodge. There is some one beyond, that striped-face, who is very smart. Go and ask him."

The badger was in his hole. Stooping over, the young man shouted: "Oh, cunning striped-face! Oh, generous animal! I wish to speak with you."

"What do you want?" said the badger, poking his head out of the hole.

"I want to find the Sun's home," replied Scarface. "I want to speak with him."

"I do not know where he lives," replied the badger. "I never travel very far. Over there in the timber is a wolverine. He is always travelling around, and is of much knowledge. Maybe he can tell you."

Then Scarface went to the woods and looked all around for the wolverine, but could not find him. So he sat down to rest. "*Hai'-yu! Hai'-yu!*" he cried. "Wolverine, take pity on me. My food is gone, my moccasins worn out. Now I must die."

"What is it, my brother?" he heard, and looking around, he saw the animal sitting near.

"She whom I would marry," said Scarface, "belongs to the Sun; I am trying to find where he lives, to ask him for her."

"Ah!" said the wolverine. "I know where he lives. Wait; it is nearly night. To-morrow I will show you the trail to the big water. He lives on the other side of it."

Early in the morning, the wolverine showed him the trail, and Scarface followed it until he came to the water's edge. He looked out over it, and his heart almost

stopped. Never before had any one seen such a big water. The other side could not be seen, and there was no end to it. Scarface sat down on the shore. His food was all gone, his moccasins worn out. His heart was sick. "I cannot cross this big water," he said. "I cannot return to the people. Here, by this water, I shall die."

Not so. His Helpers were there. Two swans came swimming up to the shore. "Why have you come here?" they asked him. "What are you doing? It is very far to the place where your people live."

"I am here," replied Scarface, "to die. Far away, in my country, is a beautiful girl. I want to marry her, but she belongs to the Sun. So I started to find him and ask for her. I have travelled many days. My food is gone. I cannot go back. I cannot cross this big water, so I am going to die."

"No," said the swans, "it shall not be so. Across this water is the home of that Above Person. Get on our backs, and we will take you there."

Scarface quickly arose. He felt strong again. He waded out into the water and lay down on the swans' backs, and they started off. Very deep and black is that fearful water. Strange people live there, mighty animals which often seize and drown a person. The swans carried him safely, and took him to the other side. Here was a broad hard trail leading back from the water's edge.

"Ayt," said the swans. "You are now close to the Sun's lodge. Follow that trail, and you will soon see it."

Scarface started up the trail, and pretty soon he came to some beautiful things, lying in it. There was a war shirt, a shield, and a bow and arrows. He had never seen such pretty weapons; but he did not touch them. He walked carefully around them, and travelled on. A little way further on, he met a young man, the handsomest person he had ever seen. His hair was very long, and he wore clothing made of strange skins. His moccasins were sewn with bright colored feathers. The young man said to him, "Did you see some weapons lying on the trail?"

"Yes," replied Scarface; "I saw them."

"But did you not touch them?" asked the young man.

"No; I thought some one had left them there, so I did not take them."

"You are not a thief," said the young man. "What is your name?"

"Scarface."

"Where are you going?"

"To the Sun."

"My name," said the young man, "is A-pi-su'-ahts.[2] The Sun is my father; come, I will take you to our lodge. My father is not now at home, but he will come in at night."

Soon they came to the lodge. It was very large and

handsome, strange medicine animals were painted on it. Behind, on a tripod, were strange weapons and beautiful clothes—the Sun's. Scarface was ashamed to go in, but Morning Star said, "Do not be afraid, my friend; we are glad you have come."

They entered. One person was sitting there, Ko-ko-mik'-e-is,' the Sun's wife, Morning Star's mother. She spoke to Scarface kindly, and gave him something to eat. "Why have you come so far from your people?" she asked.

Then Scarface told her about the beautiful girl he wanted to marry. "She belongs to the Sun," he said. "I have come to ask him for her."

When it was time for the Sun to come home, the Moon hid Scarface under a pile of robes. As soon as the Sun got to the doorway, he stopped, and said, "I smell a person."

"Yes, father," said Morning Star; "a good young man has come to see you. I know he is good, for he found some of my things on the trail and did not touch them."

Then Scarface came out from under the robes, and the Sun entered and sat down. "I am glad you have come to our lodge," he said. "Stay with us as long as you think best. My son is lonesome sometimes; be his friend."

The next day the Moon called Scarface out of the lodge, and said to him: "Go with Morning Star where you please, but never hunt near that big water; do not let him go there. It is the home of great birds which have long sharp bills; they kill people. I have had many sons, but these birds have killed them all. Morning Star is the only one left."

So Scarface stayed there a long time and hunted with Morning Star. One day they came near the water, and saw the big birds.

"Come," said Morning Star; "let us go and kill those birds."

"No, no!" replied Scarface; "we must not go there. Those are very terrible birds; they will kill us."

Morning Star would not listen. He ran towards the water, and Scarface followed. He knew that he must kill the birds and save the boy. If not, the Sun would be angry and might kill him. He ran ahead and met the birds, which were coming towards him to fight, and killed every one of them with his spear: not one was left. Then the young men cut off their heads, and carried them to me. Morning Star's mother was glad when they told her what they had done, and showed her the birds' heads. She cried, and called Scarface "my son." When the Sun came home at night, she told him about it, and he too was glad. "My son," he said to Scarface, "I will not forget what you have this day done for me. Tell me now, what can I do for you?"

"*Hai'-yu*," replied Scarface. "*Hai'-yu*, pity me. I am here to ask you for that girl. I want to marry her.

I asked her, and she was glad; but she says you own her, that you told her not to marry."

"What you say is true," said the Sun. "I have watched the days, so I know it. Now, then, I give her to you; she is yours. I am glad she has been wise. I know she has never done wrong. The Sun pities good women. They shall live a long time. So shall their husbands and children. Now you will soon go home. Let me tell you something. Be wise and listen: I am the only chief. Everything is mine. I made the earth, the mountains, prairies, rivers, and forests. I made the people and all the animals. This is why I say I alone am the chief. I can never die. True, the winter makes me old and weak, but every summer I grow young again."

Then said the Sun: "What one of all animals is smartest? The raven is, for he always finds food. He is never hungry. Which one of all the animals is most *Nat-o'-ye*? The buffalo is. Of all animals, I like him best. He is for the people. He is your food and your shelter. What part of his body is sacred? The tongue is. That is mine. What else is sacred? Berries are. They are mine too. Come with me and see the world." He took Scarface to the edge of the sky, and they looked down and saw it. It is round and flat, and all around the edge is the jumping-off place for walls straight down! Then said the Sun: "When any man is sick or in danger, his wife may promise to build me a lodge, if he recovers. If the woman is pure and true, then I will be pleased and help the man. But if she is bad, if she lies, then I will be angry. You shall build the lodge like the world, round, with walls, but first you must build a sweat house of a hundred sticks. It shall be like the sky [a hemisphere], and half of it shall be painted red. That is me. The other half you will paint black. That is the night."

Further said the Sun: "Which is the best, the heart or the brain? The brain is. The heart often lies, the brain never." Then he told Scarface everything about making the Medicine Lodge, and when he had finished, he rubbed a powerful medicine on his face, and the scar disappeared. Then he gave him two raven feathers, saying: "These are the sign for the girl, that I give her to you. They must always be worn by the husband of the woman who builds a Medicine Lodge."

The young man was now ready to return home. Morning Star and the Sun gave him many beautiful presents. The Moon cried and kissed him, and called him "my son." Then the Sun showed him the short trail. It was the Wolf Road (Milky Way). He followed it, and soon reached the ground.

It was a very hot day. All the lodge skins were raised, and the people sat in the shade. There was a chief, a very generous man, and all day long people kept coming to his lodge to feast and smoke with him. Early in the morning this chief saw a person sitting out on a butte

near by, close wrapped in his robe. The chief's friends came and went, the sun reached the middle, and passed on, down towards the mountains. Still this person did not move. When it was almost night, the chief said: "Why does that person sit there so long? The heat has been strong, but he has never eaten nor drunk. He may be a stranger; go and ask him in."

So some young men went up to him, and said: "Why do you sit here in the great heat all day? Come to the shade of the lodges. The chief asks you to feast with him."

Then the person arose and threw off his robe, and they were surprised. He wore beautiful clothes. His bow, shield, and other weapons were of strange make. But they knew his face, although the scar was gone, and they ran ahead, shouting, "The scarface poor young man has come. He is poor no longer. The scar on his face is gone."

All the people rushed out to see him. "Where did you get all these pretty things?" He did not answer. There in the crowd stood that young woman; and taking the two raven feathers from his head, he gave them to her, and said: "The trail was very long, and I nearly died, but by those Helpers, I found his lodge. He is glad. He sends these feathers to you. They are the sign."

Great was her gladness then. They were married, and made the first Medicine Lodge, as the Sun had said. The Sun was glad. He gave them great age. They were never sick. When they were very old, one morning, their children said: "Awake! Rise and eat." They did not move. In the night, in sleep, without pain, their shadows had departed for the Sand Hills.

Reprinted with permission from *Blackfoot Lodge Tales*, by G.B. Grinnell. New York: Scribners, 1916. pp 93-103.

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[1] A Blackfoot often talks of what this or that person said, without mentioning names.

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[2] Early Riser, *i.e.* The Morning Star. [3] Night red light, the Moon.

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[4] This word may be translated as "of the Sun," "having Sun power," or more properly, something sacred.

THE INVISIBLE HUNTER

On the shores of a lake, near the village, lived an Invisible Hunter. Many strange tales were told about him, about his prowess as a hunter and how he looked, but no one ever saw him, no one could prove his tale. Many went to his wigwam and sat by his fire, and ate the food his sister gave them. They saw his moccasins when he drew them from his feet, and his coat when he hung it on a peg in the wigwam; but they never saw him. So many girls begged for a glimpse of him, that he at last said he would marry the first one who could see him.

All the girls in the village flocked to his wigwam to try their luck. They were greeted kindly by his sister and invited to sit by the fire. In the evening she asked them to walk with her along the shores of the lake and, as they walked, she asked, "Do you see my brother on the farther shore?"

Some said that they did; others answered truthfully.

Those who said they could see him, she asked, "Of what is my brother's shoulder strap made?"

Some answered, "It is made from the skin of a young moose." Others said, "It is a withe of the willow." Or, "It is a skin of beaver covered with shining wampum."

As they answered, she invited them back to the wigwam. When her brother entered the girls saw his moccasins when he dropped them on the floor of the wigwam; but they never saw him.

In the far end of the village lived three sisters who had the care of their father's wigwam. The two elder sisters were rough with the youngest, especially the eldest, who made her do all the heavy work and often beat her and pushed her into the fire. When they heard that the Invisible Hunter would marry the first girl who could see him, the two elder sisters hurried across the village to his wigwam. In the evening they walked along the shore of the lake, and the sister of the Invisible Hunter asked them, "Do you see my brother?"

The elder sister answered, "I can see him on the farther shore like a dark shadow among the trees."

The other sister said, "There are only trees on the farther shore."

The sister of the Invisible Hunter turned to the elder sister and asked, "Of what is my brother's shoulder strap made?"

She answered lightly with a toss of her head.

"It is a strap of rawhide."

"Come then," said the sister of the Invisible Hunter, "let us hurry to the wigwam and cook food for my brother."

They hurried to the wigwam, and when the Invisible Hunter entered the sisters saw his moccasins and his

hunting pack when he dropped them to the floor; but they could not see him.

The sisters went home pouting and were cross because they could not see the Invisible Hunter. When the younger sister asked for some of the shells their father had brought them to make wampum, the eldest sister slapped her and pushed her into the fire and shouted at her,

"Why should any one as ugly and as covered with scars and sores as you are want wampum?"

But the younger sister gave her a few shells and she made them into wampum and sewed them on an old pair of her father's moccasins. Then she went into the woods and gathered pieces of birch bark and made a dress, and with a charred stick she decorated it with the ancient symbols of her people. She made a cap and leggings, and dressed in these and her father's moccasins and her dress of bark, she walked across the village to the wigwam of the Invisible Hunter. The Indians laughed and jeered, "Look at Scars and Sores going to the wigwam of the Invisible Hunter." But the sister of the Invisible Hunter greeted her kindly and invited her into the wigwam. In the evening she walked with her along the shores of the lake, and asked her as she had asked all the girls,

"Do you see my brother?"

The girl answered, "Yes, I see your brother."

The sister asked again as she had asked all the others, "What is his shoulder strap made of?"

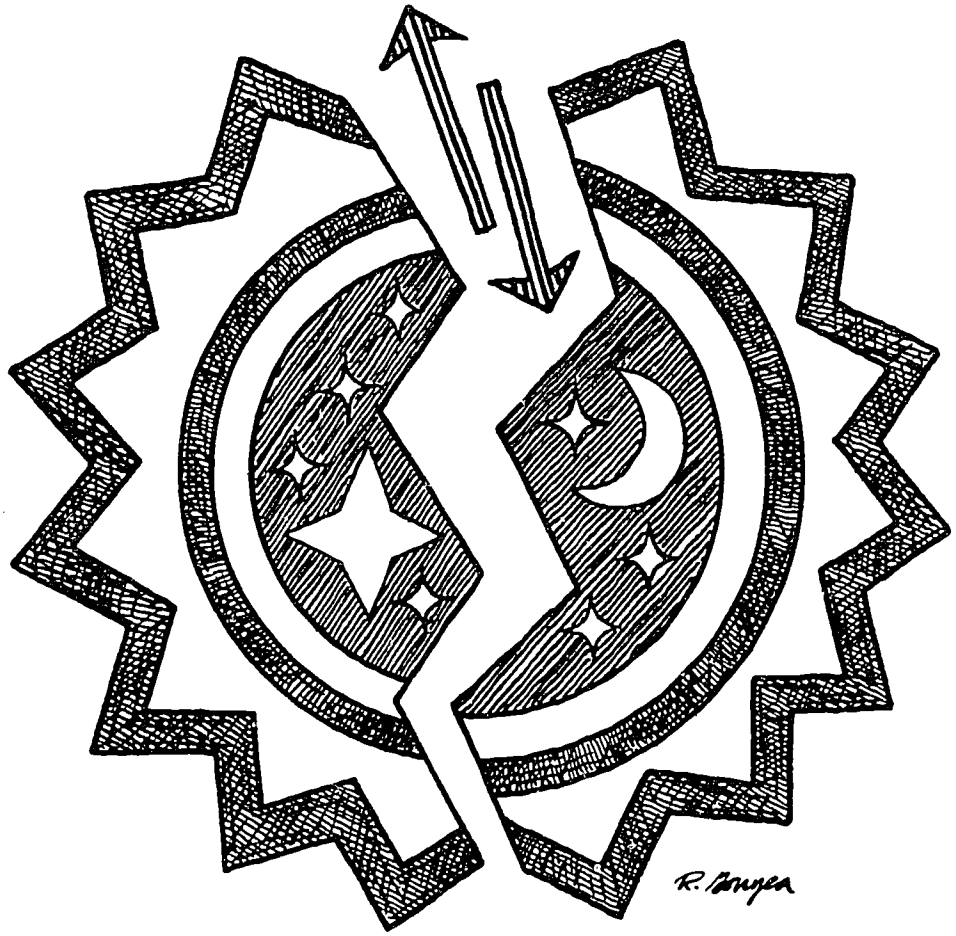
The girl answered, "His shoulder strap is a rainbow."

The sister of the Invisible Hunter laughed and drew her back to the wigwam. She dressed her in soft skins, rubbed her scars with an oil that left her skin without blemish, and combed her stringy hair until it shone and was long and straight and black.

"Go, now, sit on my brother's side of the wigwam, nearest the door where the wife of the wigwam sits."

She who had been ugly and covered with scars sat in the place of the wife of the wigwam; and when the Invisible Hunter came, he sat beside her and made her his bride.

Reprinted with permission from *Red Earth—Tales of the Micmacs*, by Marion Robertson. Nova Scotia: The Nova Scotia Museum, Halifax, 1969. pp. 55-57.



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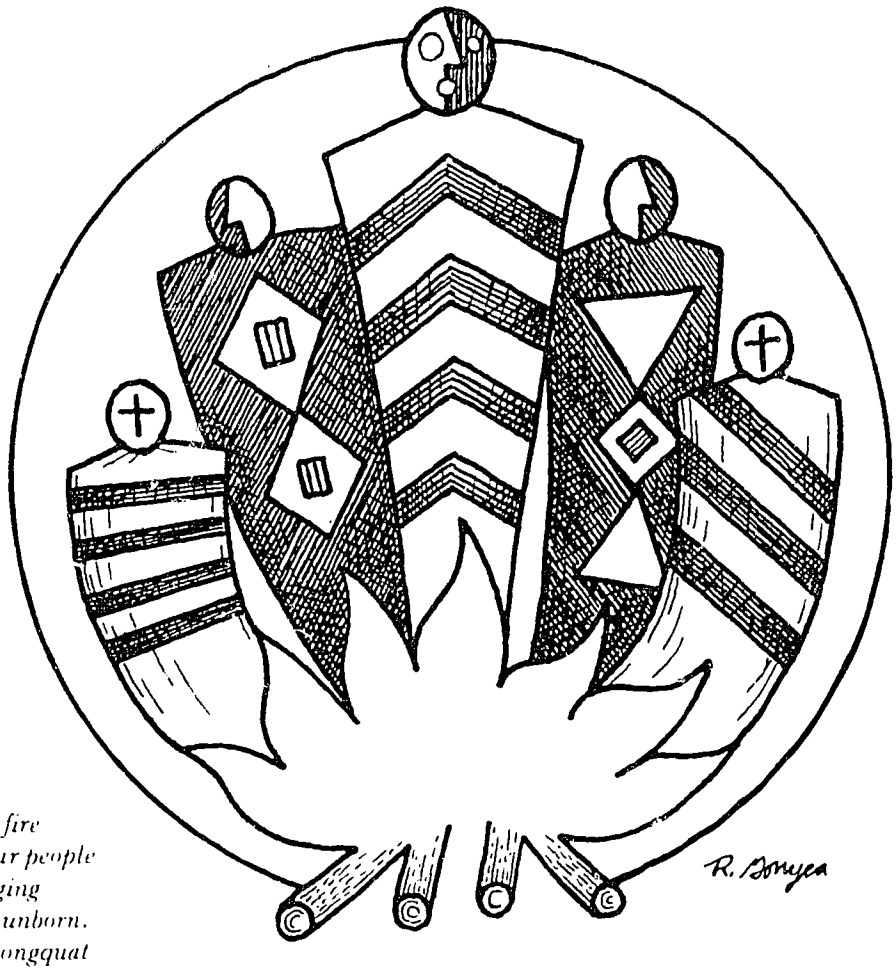

. . . Come closer around the fire
Let us speak the dreams of our people
Tell the tales of love and longing
And sing the songs of the yet unborn.
Manitongquat