



# Chapter 12: Stories

There's nothing like listening to a good story. Storytelling can be a favorite part of each tribal meeting. Read the tips below on improving your storytelling talent. This chapter is full of good interesting stories that kids of all ages will enjoy.

## How to Tell a Good Story

- Ideally, father and child should find a way to tell each story together. All stories should be tailored to the children. If they enjoy it, then automatically the dads will too.
- The first step in telling a good story is to find the proper story. Keep in mind the audience to whom you will tell the story. Their age and interests are important factors. Avoid morbid or overly sentimental stories. Your story may be taken from history, literature, the Bible legends or even a contemporary news item.
- After finding the story, the storyteller should know the story.
- Reading from a book is ineffective in captivating an audience. It is impossible to have personal contact with the audience when reading aloud to them. Read and reread the story until you can visualize each character and each scene in relation to the climax.
- When telling a story, try to tell it as dramatically as possible. Use your head, your hands and your feet in telling your yarn. Don't be embarrassed at changing your voice to fit the character or mood of your story. Children do not listen to a story told in monotone. Watch your audience; if they become restless or lose interest, change your voice, speed up action - anything to liven the story and their interest.
- Start your story dramatically. Better to say: "'Twas a dark and stormy night. There were four of us about the campfire..." than to say: "I'm going to tell you about..." Avoid lengthy, long-winded introductions. Get to the point and get there fast.
- Your story may have a moral, but it is not necessary to explain or point out the moral. If it is a good story, well told, the children will figure out the meaning for themselves.
- The setting is important. Be as close as possible physically to your audience. Have them close together; elbow to elbow is the rule. Avoid any unnecessary outside noise, confusion or interruption. If you are interrupted, treat the incident lightly, and proceed with the story. Whenever possible, get down on your audience's level; sit on the floor with them.
- End your story with a punch line. Leave the climax for the last paragraph....sentence....or even the last word. When the story has ended, let it be. Do not rehash, review, explain or moralize.
- Never tell a story when they do not want to hear one. Make a story one of the treats of the meeting.
- Never tell a story that you do not enjoy telling!

*Every job is a self portrait of the person who did it.*



## Coyote and the Fox

One day Coyote was going out hunting, so he picked up his bow and quiver. In his quiver he put five arrows; then he started out. The day was hot, and, because Coyote was always lazy, when he came to a nice, large shade tree, he thought he would lie down awhile. He threw down his bow and quiver and stretched out under the tree. Coyote was lying there looking up through the branches, and what do you think he saw? A great big fox!

"Oh!" said Coyote, "but I am lucky I did not have to go hunting. I just came out here and lay under a tree, and there is my supper right over my head. Indeed I am lucky. Besides a good supper there is a fine fox skin up there for me."

"Oh, well, I guess I am just about the luckiest one in our tribe besides being the best marksman, too. When I aim my arrows, I never miss. Just to prove it, I am going to take my five arrows and I will put the best arrow right here in the ground beside me, then I'll shoot one to the north, one to the south, one to the east, and one to the west"

So he did. He shot all his arrows away but one. He picked up the arrow he had put in the ground and said, "Now this is the arrow I am going to kill the fox with. But really, I am so good at shooting I don't even have to shoot with my hands. I am going to shoot this arrow with my toes."

All this time the poor fox was sitting up in the tree listening to Coyote tell how good he was at shooting, and he was nearly frightened to death. In fact, he was trembling so much he nearly fell out of the tree.

Coyote picked up his arrow, placed it between his toes, aimed it very carefully through the branches, and let it fly. But something happened and the arrow did not hit the fox. So, when the fox discovered he had not been shot, he jumped out of the tree and gleefully ran away. When he had reached a safe distance he called back, "Next time, Coyote, don't be so sure of yourself and don't be so boastful!"

## Dead or Alive

(From Twenty Teepee Tales by M Lotz & D Monahan, Association Press, 1950)

Many years ago there lived a very famous Indian medicine man. He was famous because of his wisdom. For many years he had helped the members of his tribe by answering their questions and giving them wise advice. However, because he was so very old, many of the young braves of the tribe felt that he ought to give up his position as medicine man and allow a younger brave to have the honor.

Several times the young braves of the tribe had attempted to remove him by asking him questions and posing problems that they hoped he would not be able to answer. If only they could cause him to make a mistake or catch him with a question he could not answer, they were sure they could replace him with a younger man. Each time, however, that they made an attempt to do this, they had failed. His answers were always right and his advice always trustworthy.

*Nobody knows how much they can do unless they try.*



One day, while a group of younger braves was on the hunt, one of the young men turned to the group and said: "Tonight I will ask the old medicine man a question that he will not be able to answer. Gather all our tribesmen before his teepee tonight, and you will see."

The other braves remembered their past failures and wanted to know what he planned to do. The younger brave replied: "I will catch a bird, take it to him holding it in my hands so that the feathers show through my fingers; and I will say to him, 'What do I have in my hands?' Seeing the feathers he will reply, 'A bird.' Then I will say, 'That is correct, but tell me Wise One, is it dead or is it alive?' If he says it is dead, I will smother it and drop it, dead at his feet. So you see regardless of his answer, he will be wrong and we will be able to replace him with a younger man."

This pleased the braves because they were certain it could not fail. When they returned from the hunt, they spread word around the tribe of the test which the medicine man would face. At sundown the space before the ancient Indian's teepee was crowded with Indians eager for the test.

The young man answered: "It is said that you can answer all questions correctly. If this be so, Father, tell what I have in my hand."

The old man looked and replied: 'A bird, my son.'

"That is correct," the young brave responded. "But tell me, is it dead or is it alive?"

This was the challenge! Every Indian present held his breath, for the medicine man's answer. The old man paused, then looking deep into the young man's eyes, he responded: "That, my son, depends on you."

### A Friend In Need

"Tell us a story! Please, Wise Father, tell us another of your legends!"

Eagerly the boys sat at his feet to listen and to learn. Grey Fox, the Chief, smiled at the memory of the story he had chosen to tell and then began:

"Many moons ago two hunters were traveling the trail together. Suddenly they came face to face with a huge bear. One, in great fear and without thought for his companion, climbed a tree as fast as he could and hid himself in the branches.

The gruff old bear lumbered toward him, his huge paws slapping the ground with spine chilling thumps. Soon the shaggy beast stood directly over the man, sniffing at the Indian's nose and ears; but the man, with great control, held his breath and lay still.

Presently the bear turned and walked slowly away. As the ponderous animal disappeared from sight, the first hunter came down from his hiding place in the tree and asked his companion what it was the bear had said to him. 'For,' he said, 'I saw that the bear put his mouth very close to your ear and whispered something to you.'

*One of the great arts of living is the art of forgetting.*



Grey Fox's eyes twinkled with humor as he ended his story. "What lesson do you find in this tale of the hunting trail, little braves?" he asked.

### How the Indians Received Fire

Once long ago the Indians had no fire. The only bit of fire on earth was owned by two old witches who guarded their treasure day and night. No matter how the Indians begged them to share just an ember, the witches would not give even a spark.

When winter came, the Indians suffered from the cold. "The witches will not give us fire," they said. "Let us ask the animals to try to get it for us."

The animals gladly came to the meeting which the Indians called. And when the Indians told them about the need for warmth, the animals thought of a plan to help. Coyote was chosen their leader.

"Do as I tell you," he said to the other animals, "and our friends shall be warm before sunset. I'll get a spark of fire from the witches. Each of you, in turn, must help carry it to the Indians."

As soon as the animals were all in their places, Coyote went to the witches' cottage.

"The Indians need fire," he said "Can you not let me take them one small ember?"

"The fire has been left in our care," said the two together. "No one shall have even a spark of it!"

Then Coyote went to the window and signaled to his helpers. They knew what he wanted them to do. In a moment Lion began to roar, Wolf began to howl, Bear began to growl, and Fox began to bark. All the animals joined in to make a great noise. Even Squirrel chattered and Frog croaked.

Frightened half out of their wits, the witches ran out of their cottage to see what was the matter.

Coyote had his chance. Taking one end of a small stick in his mouth, he lighted the other end in the fire. Then he fled with the burning stick clutched tightly in his mouth. When the witches caught sight of the burning stick, they started to chase Coyote. Like the wind they flew after him. In this way, one after another, each of the animals helped to carry the fire, and all the while the witches kept up their chase. At last it was Squirrel's turn. He picked up the burning stick and ran with it. When he saw the witches were gaining on him, he was so frightened that he almost dropped the bit of fire. As he turned a corner of stumps and rocks, his tail caught fire and scorched a black place on his back. To this day you can see that dark spot between his shoulders.

When Squirrel started to lose his strength, he tossed the fire to frog, the last animal on the road. Frog picked up the burning stick and hopped away. He was terribly afraid when he saw how close the witches were. The next moment the witches were up with him and caught him by the tail (for frogs then had a tail) and held him fast. The poor Frog was so frightened that his eyes bulged almost out of his head. "One big jump," he thought, "and I'll get away."

*The trouble with stretching the truth is that it's apt to snap back.*



With all of his might Frog gave a big jump. Then he was free! Away he hopped, carrying the fire right into the Indians' village. That is how the Indians got a bit of fire, but the frog's eyes have been bulged ever since. He lost his tail, too, for he left it in the witches' hands when he gave that last big jump!

### How The Milky Way Came To Be

A Cherokee Legend

When the Cherokee people discovered that something had been stealing their meal at night, they were surprised to find giant dog prints around the house.

After much discussion over what to do about the thief, an old Cherokee man suggested that everyone bring noise makers that night, and they would hide beside the meal beaters and wait for the giant dog.

That night a huge dog appeared from the West, shining with a silver sheen in the moonlight. He was so big that the old man was afraid at first to give the signal, and the dog began to eat great gulps of the meal.

Finally the old man gave the signal and everyone beat drums, shook their rattles, and shouted loudly.

The dog was so scared that he ran around the circle and then gave a giant leap into the sky, and the meal pouring out of his mouth made a white trail across the sky. This is what we call the Milky Way, and what the Cherokee call to this day Gil'LiUtsun" Stanun'yi, meaning "Where the dog ran."

### The Indian and the Cricket

(From Twenty Teepee Tales, by M Lotz & D Monahan, Association Press, 1950)

One day an Indian left his home to visit a white man with whom he had become friendly. Being in a city, with its noises and its crowds, was a new experience for the Indian, and he was fascinated by it.

The Indian and the white man were walking down the street when suddenly the red man touched his friend's shoulder and said quietly: "Stop! Do you hear what I hear?"

His white friend paused, listened, smiled, and said: "All I hear is the tooting of car horns, the noise of the streetcars, and the voices of people. Just the regular noises of the city. What is it you hear?"

The Indian replied: "I hear a cricket chirping somewhere nearby."

Again the white man listened, but shook his head. "You must be mistaken," he said, "I hear no cricket. And even if there were a cricket nearby, his chirping would be drowned out by all these other noises."

*It is more blessed to give than to receive.*



The Indian would not be persuaded. After a moment he motioned to his friend, and walking a few steps along the sidewalk they came to a vine growing on the outside of one of the buildings. He pushed the leaves aside, and there, to the amazement of the white man, a tiny cricket was revealed, chirping its loudest. Now that he saw the cricket and was close to it, the white man could hear its call.

As they proceeded on their way, he said to his Indian friend: "Of course, you heard the cricket because your hearing is much better than mine. All Indians can hear better than white people."

The Indian smiled, shook his head, and replied: "No, that is not true. The Indian's hearing is no better than that of the white man. Watch! I'll prove it to you."

He reached into his pocket and found a fifty-cent piece, which he tossed to the sidewalk. As it clinked against the cement, people from several yards around stopped, turned, and looked. Finally, one of them picked up the piece, pocketed it, and went on his way.

"You see," said the Indian, "the noise made by the fifty-cent piece was no louder than that made by the cricket, yet many of your white people heard the noise the money made, stopped, and paid attention to it, although they paid no heed to the noise made by the cricket. The reason is not a difference in our hearing. It is a difference in the things we turn our attention toward."

(Many things are said and done to us and by us as we journey in life, and the things that will count are the things that we have our minds and hearts turned toward. Living will be better and happier if we learn to tune our minds and our hearts to see, hear, and know the good things rather than the bad. We can carry only so much. Let's be sure that the things we carry are good and not evil.)

### **Looking For the Good**

(From Program Resource Book, YMCAs of St. Paul & Minneapolis)

Chief Silver Maple called together the members of his tribe. They seated themselves in a circle. In the center of the circle, the Medicine Man was making an Indian sand painting. Most Indian sand paintings are very colorful. They are made during the daytime and all traces of them must be destroyed before the sun sets. This time, the picture was different. The braves watched in surprise as the Medicine Man made a square out of white sand and in the center of the square poured a large circle of black sand.

The braves whispered to each other, "I wonder what this is."

The Chief heard them talking and then he asked for silence. The Chief asked, "Braves, what do you see here?"

The first brave said, "I see a black spot." The second brave replied, "That is what I see, too," and so said each brave around the circle, each agreeing that that was what the Medicine Man had painted.

*Blessed is the peacemaker.*



When each had reported, the Chief said, "Braves, why is it that none of you noticed that this is a white square with a black spot on it? Many of us, as we think about other tribes and as we think about our fellow braves, look for the black spots and fail to see the rest of the picture - the white. Too often we look for what is bad and do not see what is good. Let us look for the good things in our fellow tribes and in our fellow braves from now on."

### The Music Stopped

This is a story of three people: A singer, an organist and a little boy. They all worked together. The singer sang and the organist accompanied her, while the little boy was behind the scenes pumping air into the organ, for it was an old-fashioned organ with a pump handle that someone had to work in order to give the organ the necessary air power. One day these three got to discussing how important they were, that is, two of them did. The singer said: "It is because of my beautiful singing that our concerts are so successful."

"That is true," the organist agreed, "but without my organ playing, you wouldn't be able to sing so beautifully." The little boy said nothing; but that night at the concert, he looked unusually wise.

The number was announced, the organ started to play, and soon the beautiful voice of the singer was thrilling the audience. Suddenly the music from the organ stopped; and, in surprise, the singer also stopped. Frantically, the organist tried to play, but there was no power. Then a quiet little voice said: "I have stopped pumping, and there's no air for the organ. The concert can't go on. Who would you say is important now?"

(Who would you say was the most important in this group? Do you think any one of these people was more important than the others? What makes a person important?)

### The Other Fellow's Moccasins

(From Twenty Teepee Tales, by M Lotz & D Monahan, Association Press, 1950)

Many snows ago - there are those who still remember - it was a custom among many Indian tribes to appoint judges, who went from village to village to try those Indians who had broken the Indian law. This is a story of the wisdom displayed by one of those Indian judges.

A young brave was being tried for a very serious offense. While a neighboring warrior was away on a hunting trip, the Indian on trial had stolen his neighbor's ponies and valuable furs, and had sold them to a wandering trapper.

When the hunter returned to his teepee and found his furs and ponies gone, he was sad indeed. He had worked hard to gather the furs, and the ponies had been his prized possession. He knew not what to do. In desperation, he confided in several other Indians, one of whom had witnessed the theft but, not knowing what to do, had remained silent. Now, however, when he saw the sadness brought to his friend, he told of witnessing the crime, and the thief was apprehended.

*Do everything without complaining or arguing.*



The thief was soon brought to trial. A large crowd gathered to witness the trial, and there was a great deal of speculation as to what punishment the judge would decree. When all who were concerned had testified, the Indian judge felt that he had all the information that was necessary, and he asked for time to make his decision.

He withdrew from the crowd and entered the dense forest behind the village. With uplifted hands he prayed: "Great Spirit, help me to judge wisely."

### **The Princess of the Mist**

Few visitors leave the Canadian Lakehead without viewing the beautiful "Kakabeka Falls." This remarkable work of nature is truly something to marvel at, but the story of the heroism of a lovely Indian princess is still more enchanting than the rushing, swirling water and the crystal-studded mist rising endlessly from the great gorge.

Interested only in the welfare of his people, peace-loving chieftain White Bear, grand old leader of the Ojibway encampment situated at the mouth of the Kaministiquia River, was greatly vexed one day to learn that large numbers of fierce warlike Sioux were approaching the river bent on the destruction of his tribe. Being too old to go to battle himself and not knowing how to ward off the enemy, the old chief was greatly distressed. Seeing her father's dilemma, Princess Green Mantle devised a plan.

Bidding her father farewell, she hurriedly left the camp and paddled swiftly up the Kaministiquia. Many times before she had gone for long canoe rides with her brother, and she well knew of the Great White Falls. Leaving her canoe at the foot of the falls, she ran swiftly along the bank until she reached a point above the waterfall.

Soon she came within sight of the Sioux camp. Boldly the young maiden walked into the camp of her tribe's bitter enemies. At once they pounced upon her and captured her. Pretending to have lost her way, she led them to believe she was very frightened. Beginning with them, she followed through with her plan and told them that if they would spare her life, she would lead them to her father's camp. The Sioux chiefs were elated, thinking that they had indeed been blessed by the gods.

The following morning the young princess was placed in the lead canoe, and the great band of warriors in their war canoes followed, tied as Green Mantle had suggested one behind the other so that they would not be lost. However, she had not told them about the falls, and as they turned the bend of the swiftly flowing river they plunged headlong into the great gorge, drowning them all.

Princess Green Mantle of course lost her life also, but her tribe was saved from the vengeful hands of the most dreaded of all Indian tribes.

The Great Spirit looked kindly upon the brave little Indian girl, and if one takes the trouble to walk down the river bank to a point where the falls are visible, the figure of Green Mantle can be observed in the mist, standing as a monument to the memory of the princess who gave her life for her people.

*The best vitamin for making friends is B-1.*



## The Quail

Ages ago a flock of more than a thousand quail lived together in a forest in India. They would have been happy, but they were in great dread of their enemy, the quail-catcher. He used to imitate the call of the quail, and when they gathered together in answer to it, he threw a great net over them, stuffed them into his basket, and carried them away to be sold.

Now one of these quail was very wise, and he said: "Brothers, I've thought of a good plan. In the future, as soon as the fowler throws his net over us, let each one of us put his head through a mesh in the net and then all lift it up together and fly away with it. When we have flown far enough we can let the net drop on a thorn bush and escape from under it."

All agreed to the plan, and the next day when the fowler threw his net, the birds all lifted it together in the very way that the wise quail had told them, threw it on a thorn bush, and escaped. While the fowler tried to free his net from the thorns, it grew dark, and he had to go home. This happened many days, until at last the fowler's wife grew angry and asked her husband, "Why is it that you never catch any more quail?" The fowler said: "The trouble is that all the birds work together and help one another. If they would only quarrel, I could catch them fast enough."

A few days later, one of the quail accidentally stepped on the head of one of his brothers as they landed on the feeding ground. "Who stepped on my head?" angrily inquired the quail who was hurt. "Don't be angry. I didn't mean to step on you." said the first quail. But the brother quail went on quarreling and pretty soon he said, "I lifted up all the weight of the net; you didn't help at all." That made the first quail angry, and before long all were drawn into the argument. The fowler saw his chance. He imitated the cry of the quail and cast his net over those who came together. They were still boasting and quarreling, and they did not help one another lift the net. So the hunter lifted the net himself and crammed them into his basket. But the wise quail gathered his friends together and flew far away, for he knew that quarrels are the root of misfortune.

### Stretching the Truth

(From Program Resource Book, YMCAs of St. Paul & Minneapolis)

One night Little Otter rushed into the tepee and said excitedly, "Mother, I just saw a thousand deer in the meadow." Mother said, "Are you sure? Did you count them?" "It was so dark, I couldn't count them I think there were a hundred." Mother said, "Are you sure, my son?" "Well, I know there were at least ten," said the little brave. Then his mother patiently said, "Little Otter, if you did not count the deer, how do you know?" Little Otter became impatient and said, "Well, I know there were two deer anyway, a big buck and a small one."

The Chief of the tribe had listened to the conversation. He now said, "Little Otter, I want to tell you a story. When I was a young brave I was in the habit of stretching the truth because I had not learned the importance of being accurate. In my tribe, the Okeewa, I was responsible for keeping track of the food. As animal meats, herbs, roots, berries, and other foods were brought to me, I would store them in the ground and cover them well. One day old Chief Kiyi came to me and asked if there was plenty of food for a big tribal feast and ceremony.

*Well done is better than well said.*



In haste, I took a quick glance at the food which was stored away in the ground. I did not take time to count the number of carcasses of deer, or any of the other food supplies. Instead, I became careless and took a chance in reporting what I saw at a quick glance. I reported to the Chief that there was plenty of food. When the day of the big feast came, I was very much embarrassed to find there was a shortage of food, and that many of the mothers, little braves and babies, and even warriors would not have enough to eat. The Chief was very angry, as were many of the braves. Had it not been for the quick thinking of Watosa, we would all have been disappointed in the amount of food at the feast. Watosa got on his pinto horse and galloped away in a cloud of dust. Soon he returned with his arms loaded with food as well as large bags of food thrown over the back of his horse. He had borrowed much food from a nearby tribe, promising to pay back what he borrowed. To teach me a lesson, the Chief required me to hunt many days for deer as well as other foods to pay back the borrowed food from the other tribe. From that time on I made up my mind to be more accurate and never to stretch the truth or exaggerate."

### Twigs

(From The Tales of Running Deer, by D Monahan, Association Press, 1970)

"What lesson do you have for us tonight, Running Deer?" Little Bear and Red Fox voiced the question at the same moment. Other Indian boys gathered around Running Deer's fire waiting for the answer. They gathered as was the custom, around the wise man's fire to listen and to learn.

"I would speak this night," responded Running Deer, "of a matter that affects us all - the importance of good habits. We all have habits. We must be sure, then, that our habits are good friends that help us live better lives and not enemies that bring unhappiness and problems."

"What are some good habits, Running Deer?" asked Red Fox.

Running Deer looked into the young faces before him and replied: "It is better for you to answer this question than for me to give the answer. Tell me, what habits do you think are your good companions on the trail of life?"

"Honesty is one, I think," answered a young brave sitting across the campfire circle. Soon a chorus of voices offered other answers.

"We have made for ourselves this night a good list of habits that can be counted on as friends to help us live good lives. You have done very well," Running Deer spoke with appreciation.

"Running Deer, the twigs you have beside you there - what are they for?" questioned the ever-curious Red Fox.

"They are part of tonight's lesson. Watch and listen. I hope you will allow them to teach you more about habits good and bad." Running Deer picked up the first of the twigs. "Each of these twigs we shall give the name of a habit. What shall the first one be called?"

"Anger," suggested a young voice.

*Be kind, one to another.*



"Anger it is then," Running Deer announced. With this he easily snapped the twig into two pieces. "You see how a single habit can be broken with only a small effort?" he said. Picking up two twigs, and with more effort, he broke them. "You see, two combined are harder to break. Watch closely now," he continued; this time picking up three twigs. Breaking the three together proved more difficult. Continuing, Running Deer added another twig and this time four twigs were broken together. Each time he kept adding another twig until he came to a number that he could not break despite his hardest effort. "You see," Running Deer continued, "I have now combined so many twigs that I can no longer break them. This is true of habits also. A combination of several habits for instance, anger, dishonesty, impatience, laziness, untruthfulness can become too strong for a brave to break all at once. Be sure that your habits are good ones that need no breaking," Running Deer challenged the young braves.

"Running Deer," the voice was that of Little Bear. "By breaking one at a time, the entire bundle can be broken, can it not?"

"True, my friend," answered Running Deer. "This is another lesson we can learn from our twigs. If you have bad habits to break, work on them one at a time until all are conquered. It is also true that good habits can best be achieved one by one"

### The Unknown Woman

(From Southern Indian Myths and Legends, Beechwood Books, 1985)

Two Choctaw hunters camped for the night on a bend in the Alabama River. They were tired and discouraged, having hunted for two days and killed only one black hawk. They had no game to take back to their village.

While they were roasting the hawk on a campfire for their supper, they heard a low plaintive sound like the call of a dove. The sad notes broke the deep night silence again and again. As the full moon rose across the river, the strange sound became more distinct.

The men looked up and down the river but saw only the sandy shore in the moonlight. Then they looked in the opposite direction and to their astonishment saw a beautiful woman dressed in white, standing on a mound. She beckoned to the hunters.

"I'm very hungry," the woman said.

One of the hunters ran to the campfire and brought the roasted hawk to the woman. After she had eaten some, she gave the rest back to them. "You have saved me from death. I will not forget your kindness. One full moon from now, in midsummer, return to the mound where I am standing."

Suddenly a gentle breeze came up, and the woman disappeared as mysteriously as she had come.

The hunters knew they had seen Unknown Woman, the daughter of the Great Spirit. They returned to their village, but kept secret the strange meeting with the woman.

*All I have seen teaches me to trust the Creator for all I have not seen.*



One month later, when the moon was full, the hunters came back to the place where Unknown Woman had spoken to them. As the moon rose over the opposite bank, they stood at the foot of the mound, waiting. But Unknown Woman was nowhere to be seen.

"She has not come as she promised," they said to each other.

Then one hunter remembered "She told us to come to the very spot where she stood." So the men climbed the mound. They could not believe what they saw; the mound was covered with a plant they had never seen before. It was a tall plant with leaves like knives and delicate tassels emerging from the spike-like fruit or ears. Inside the ears was a delicious food.

So it was that the Choctaws received the gift of corn. They cultivated corn ever afterward and never again were hungry.

### The Voice from The Forest

Little Elk stumbled into the tepee. "I'm so angry I could do something awful," he shouted at his Big Brave. "What is it, my son, that makes you snarl like a cub bear?" he asked him patiently. "It's that boy in the forest. I don't like him. I think I'll go out and shoot an arrow at him." "Just what has he done? How has he made you feel this way?"

Little Elk took his father's hand, and, leading him to the edge of the forest he pointed and answered: "A little while ago I was playing here, and I stumbled and fell. I shouted 'Hey!' and someone in the forest there hollered back, 'Hey.' When I heard this, I shouted, 'What's your name?' and he just mocked me by shouting in return, 'What's your name?' Then I cried, 'Come out and let me see you.' Again he repeated what I said. Every time I said anything he just mocked me back. Finally I got real angry and said to him, 'Come out and fight!', and he shouted back, 'Come out and fight!'"

Little Elk's father looked at him for a moment. "Would you like to try an experiment, son?" he asked quietly. "Sure, Father. What is it?" he replied. Under his breath Little Elk muttered: "I'd certainly like to get hold of that sassy fellow in the forest."

"Now, son, suppose you go to the edge of the forest and shout, "I like you" and see what happens. Little Elk looked questioningly at his father, hesitated for a moment, then peering into the forest, he shouted, "I like you!" A look of amazement spread over his face as the voice from the forest replied, "I like you!" Little Elk followed with, "Let's be friends."

Little Elk's father put his arm around his shoulder. "You have been fighting with your echo, Little Elk," he said. "There is a real reason in what you have done today. When you were angry with your echo, he was angry with you. When you were friendly with him, he was friendly with you. May this teach you that the best way to have friends is to be a good friend."

*To love someone means to see him as God intended him.*