

Star. Before you came up here with the Star, the snake and the Star were man and wife." The young lady was surprised and she asked if that were really true. "Anything I say has to be true," said the old woman.

From that time on the young lady was unhappy in the sky world. She wished that she had not said anything about the Star while she was down on the earth. She began to feel lonesome for her mother, her father, her sister, and her other relatives. She did not think of anything but how to get down to the earth.

One day the Star told her that everything she had dug was good, but he said, "Don't ever dig this kind of plant; the top of this root looks pretty, as if it would be good to eat, but it is not good. When you come to this kind of plant, do not bother it, leave it alone." But one day when she was out digging roots, she happened to come to the kind of plant her husband had told her about. The boy asked his mother to dig the root for him. So she began to dig up the plant. It had a long root and she had quite a time digging it up. While she was working, she broke through the sky floor. She took out the root, but she kept on digging to make the hole bigger so that she could look down. At first she did not see anything. She knew that she was away up with the stars where there was too much light for her eyes, but she kept looking down for a long while because she thought that her eyes would get used to the light. Sure enough, she soon saw things moving far down beneath her. Finally she was able to see tepees and some people moving around. She supposed that it was the place which she came from. She covered the hole very lightly. Then she began to cry and to feel lonesome, wishing again that she had not come to the sky. She did not want to stay with the Star any longer.

She went back home later in the evening. The Star thought that something was wrong. He kept watching his wife as she was working. Her face showed that she had been crying. The Star asked his wife, "Have you been crying?" "Yes," she said, and then he asked, "Why did you cry?" The young lady answered, "Because my boy was crying. I could not stop him from crying. He made me feel sad and so I cried too."

And time went on. Soon she was out again digging roots, again crying. While she was crying she heard a voice nearby.

She looked around and saw an old woman sitting in the brush. The old woman called to her, "Come over here." She went to the old woman, who looked at her and said, "You look pitiful. I am sorry for you." She then asked if there were anything she could do to help the young lady. The young lady answered, "I dug the earth through, I looked down, and I have seen the place where I came from. My parents and my sister are living down there, and my relatives." She asked the old woman if there would be any way for her to return to the earth. The old woman answered, "I would like to help you, but I want you to remember this. Bear in mind that you have to bring me a hundred sinews. Be sure to count these sinews over and over. Make sure there are enough, no less, no more. When you bring the sinews, I am not going to count them. I will set to work and make a rope out of them. When I have it ready, I will dry it. The rope will hold you and your son without breaking."

Shortly after that the rope was ready. Then one day the Star went out to hunt. The young lady was ready to return to earth, and her son was anxious to go. When they came to the sky hole, they found the old woman there. She had already wrapped the rope around a wooden spool which was not supposed to break. She laid the spool across the hole. The young lady tied the rope around her waist and put the boy on her back. When she was sitting half way in the hole with her feet hanging down, the old woman told her that she should keep her eyes shut and not look around. Then they began to go down. In a short while the lady felt that they had stopped. She opened her eyes and looked around to see where they were. Beneath her she saw grass as tall as a person. She began to wonder whether she had counted the sinews correctly. The old woman spoke from above, talking through the rope, "You made a mistake in your counting. Just one more sinew and you would be on your feet on the earth. I am sorry, but I cannot do any more." Her voice came down along the rope and the young lady heard every word she said. So the young lady and her boy were hanging there, waiting for somebody to come near them.

At that time the Star Husband came back from hunting and found his wife and son gone. He wondered where they were. He waited awhile, expecting them to come home. When they did not come, he began to look for them. He came to the

hole and saw the stick lying across it and the rope going down. He looked down along the rope as far as he could, but he did not see anything. But he kept looking and at last he could see a little black thing hanging on the rope, not touching the earth. Finally he recognized a person. He knew that it was his wife. He was very angry. He looked around and picked up a rock which was about the size of a head. Then, squatting beside the hole, he held the rock close against the rope. Before he released the rock he said, "My wife will die—my boy will be saved." When he thought he had the rock straight, he released it. The rock went down along the rope. As he was holding his ear against the rope, he heard a roaring sound as the rock fell. He kept the rope to his ear until the rock struck. He heard a crack; the rope broke. His wife fell to the ground dead, but the boy was saved.

II

There was no one around. When night came, the boy crawled into his mother's blanket and slept next to her body. The next morning he felt very hungry. He walked toward the brush and found a stream of water. While he was drinking, he looked around the banks and saw some grass roots. He found that they tasted like beef grease. He lived on the roots for several days and stayed near the body of his mother.

One day he heard noises nearby. Although the boy could not see anyone, he heard people talking as they put up their tepees. He was afraid, and so he left the body of his mother and crawled into the thick grass where no one could see him. Soon some of the people were moving around near him as they cut timber. The little boy watched them. When they had cut all they needed, they went back to the camp. Sometime later a very old woman came close to the boy's hiding place. He did not move, although the old woman was very near him. She began to cut the grass close by. She saw him in his hiding place, but she pretended not to notice him. She kept on cutting grass while she made sure that it was really a boy she had seen. She wondered to whom the boy belonged, and then suddenly she walked to him. She took his hand and said, "My grandson,⁵ Star Boy, get up and come

⁵ Implies age difference rather than kinship.—*Informant's note.*

with me. I will take you to my home." She must have known that his mother had gone to the sky.

The old woman then took the boy to her tepee, fed him, washed him, combed his hair, and made him feel at home. The boy came to be known as Star Boy. Time went on, and in those times people grew up fast. He soon became a young man.

Whenever Star Boy had an opportunity, he would put away some food against the inside wall of the tepee so that when he came back from playing with other boys he would have some food to eat. One day when he came home hungry he discovered that the food was gone. When he asked the old woman, she seemed to know nothing about it. Star Boy decided to put away some food and then watch it to see what would happen. Sometime during the night he noticed something outside trying to come in. He saw a head and a long body with four legs. The head was very wide and had horns. He thought that it must be some kind of water animal. The animal found the food, and while it was eating the boy stabbed and killed it. The next morning he told the old woman what he had done. She did not say anything.

At times the old woman would go out to gather wood and Star Boy would play with other boys. Once when she came back from the woods he noticed that she was sad and had been crying. He asked, "Grandmother,⁶ what makes you so sad? You have been crying. Is anything wrong?" She answered, "Nothing is wrong. I am not sad." But he knew that she was.

Soon other people heard about his killing an animal. One night when the people were all in the camp, an old man announced that they would have to move away and leave behind the old woman and the boy. He explained that Star Boy had committed a crime in killing the strange animal, who was really the old woman's husband. The old man went on to say that the people did not want the crime to be on their heads. So the people went away, and the old woman and Star Boy were left to live by themselves.

After quite a length of time, the chief of the people sent some young men back to see if the old woman and the boy were still living. He thought that they might have already

⁶ Cf. the preceding footnote.

starved to death. So the young men went back to where they had left the two. Just before they reached the place, they smelled something good, like meat cooking on an open fire. When they came to the tepee, they saw that smoke was coming from the top of it. All around the tepee sliced meat was hanging on the trees to dry. The young men wondered where the meat had come from. They went into the tepee and found the old woman and the boy eating dinner. They both looked fat and well-fed. The young men were hungry and they asked the old woman if she would give them food. She let them eat until they were filled up and then she asked them why they had come back. They answered, "The chief sent us to see how you were getting along. And now we see that you have plenty to eat and are getting along all right. But the group back there are having a hard time—no game, no meat. They are all hungry." The old woman gave them some dried meat to take back to their homes. When some of the older men, the leaders of the tribe, had seen the meat, they gathered together to talk over what they should do. They decided that there was no crime committed by Star Boy. When he killed the dragon, he did not kill a person. So they decided to move back to where the old woman and the boy were living. They camped all around the old woman's tepee. She gave them meat, and they were glad to have something to eat.

One night Star Boy asked the old woman to bring the announcer to him. When he came to their tepee, Star Boy asked him to tell the people that early the next morning he would go to the hills to see if he could find a buffalo. Soon everyone had heard what Star Boy was going to do. Before daybreak Star Boy was far in the hills, but he did not see any buffalo. So he went back to the camp and told the people that the buffalo had left those grounds. They all became very downhearted at this news, as they did not know where else to get meat. Then Star Boy asked the old man to announce that he wanted to talk to the men of the camp. All the men quickly gathered at Star Boy's tepee to hear what he had to say. He told them, "I want some of you men to make me a frame something like a wheel; then weave the inside of it. We will call it the buffalo wheel." One of the men volunteered to make the wheel. Then Star Boy asked for some sticks about the length of an arrow which could be used for throwing. The next day the men made ready all the things

and took them to Star Boy, who was very pleased with the way they were made. The following day he told everyone to come to his tepee so that he could tell them what he was going to do. He said that they should take the wheel and stand some distance away from him. He would stand by himself holding the arrows. One of the men was to throw the wheel so that it would roll toward Star Boy, and as he threw it he should shout, "Here comes a big buffalo bull toward you, Star Boy. Look out!"

So just as the wheel hits the ground, the people see a living buffalo. Star Boy holds his arrow, and when the buffalo comes close to him he throws the arrow and kills the animal. When the buffalo falls down dead, the wheel lies right next to it. So another man picks up the wheel and throws it. This time he says, "Here comes a buffalo cow toward you, Star Boy. Look out!" And when the wheel hits the ground, a living cow runs. Star Boy kills it also.

He kept doing this until he had killed a young bull and a few calves. Then he thought there was enough meat for the people, so he took the wheel and the arrows and kept them.

The people honored Star Boy with a big feast and made him their chief. So he took his place as the leader of his people, lived happily with them, and protected them against anything that seemed dangerous or harmful. This is the end of the story.

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