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WHY THE TRIBE WAS NAMED CROW

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In the state of what is now Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota, there once lived a tribe of Indians that had no name like other Indians. They were a fine people and known for their kindness.

In this tribe there were two pretty orphan girls—so pretty that the women of the tribe were jealous of them and would not allow them to enter their tepees.

These girls had to provide their clothing and shelter. They tanned buffalo hides and made beads and other beautiful things that the women of the tribe could make. It was a fortunate thing that they had two friends, that are called sweethearts to-day. These friends went hunting and found them their food.

They were poor and sad. They spent their nights crying. The younger of the two was very pretty. She was fair with beautiful shiny black hair. Therefore she was called Beautiful White Bird, or White Bird the Beautiful. The other one who was not so pretty and was known as Singing Pine.

The women of the tribe were so jealous that they never allowed these orphans to come near the camp. Yet they would follow and put their tents as near as they dared to do.

Their friends would come every day at sunrise and bring them food. No other men of the camp offered to help them because they knew they were not welcome.

One morning their food was brought to them as usual and while the two were feasting they heard footsteps outside, but no one looked up from the feast. The innocent girls, not knowing they were being deceived, never raised their eyes.

When the friends came that morning and were about to enter the tepee, they saw the two rogues eating. They became angry and left, never to return.

Soon the girls found out that they were being cheated. These were not their real friends but two who looked very much like them. They became very much troubled and wondered what they would do if left alone.

As time went on the new friends changed in appearance. White Bird's hair, especially, grew very black and glossy. Before it had been like any ordinary hair. The other one was not so handsome. His hair was short, black and wavy.

Before this time when the girls followed the camp they always borrowed horses. But after they changed friends no one would let them have horses and they were compelled to live at one place and not follow.

Early one morning, their friends came and found them crying because they were outcasts. They tried to comfort them by saying, "We have a question to ask you, but we will ask it some other time." The girls coaxed, but they refused.

It was early spring. The birds were singing, and the leaves were getting big. The blossoms on the wild cherry and wild plum trees were in bloom. The deceitful friends came at this lovely time of the year to show these innocent girls that they were not friends, but enemies—a crow and a dragon. They were now enemies to each other. When the dragon in a human form would talk to the girls in the tepee the crow would perch on top and listen.

One day crow heard dragon boasting that he was greater. This so angered the crow that he flew down and dared the dragon to a duel. The dragon accepted the challenge and the crow instead of keeping his word flew to the top of a tree and caused a blizzard which hurt the dragon, but did not seem to touch the girls. The dragon fought to save his life. The crow flapped his wings in delight and cawed loudly as he saw the poor dragon writhing toward the river to save himself beneath the bank. When he got there the river was frozen over. He tried to drill a hole in the ice with his tail but froze to death.

The blizzard was soon over. The sun came out, a warm breeze blew and all about was beautiful. The crow flew down to White Bird and kept his promise.

He asked her the question. It was "will you live in my tepee and cook my food?" White Bird accepted.

The crow man decided to take White Bird and go back to the rest of the Indians, who took them into the tribe.

In due time a brave young warrior was recognized by the tribe. In honor of his father, the crow, and his lovely mother, White Bird the Beautiful, the tribe became his name sake, and was called Crow. We still are known by that. The tribe is located in the southern part of Montana.