

Makooshi and Tonka's Last Rain

The rain was falling steadily and an elderly Indian woman, Makooshi*, knew she must tend to her horse, Tonka Wakan*, before nightfall; it was dusk then.

Quickly she donned her buckskin shawl and lit a buffalo grease lamp. With lamp and cane in hand, she stepped out into the wet rain.

Makooshi didn't realize how quickly the rain was coming and how swiftly the wind was blowing. Why, just a few minutes ago it was only sprinkling.

Along came Chasmuyabee*, her little dog she had raised since a pup. He was full of spirit, but the old lady had no time for play.

The rain was falling harder now, as she made her way into the poorly-fenced pasture, and the soft dirt was beginning to get mushy.

"Here Tonka," the old one called in her native tongue. She could not see too far ahead. It was later than she thought. "Tonka, where are you?" she called again, but her spotted horse was nowhere to be seen. The old woman quickly remembered where the fence that led into the dense wooded area needed repairing, and she knew where Tonka must have wandered.

The rain was pouring now; the wind was howling; lightning and thunder had joined in.

The fragile woman was intent on retrieving her horse; it was all she had.

Into the trees she ventured, eyes peering for her precious horse, but at that moment, a bolt of lightning flashed and she saw the form of her horse lying in the wet, soft earth.

Quickly Makooshi hurried to Tonka, only to find he had a broken leg.... The rain continued through the night, to bring a dry dawn on a sad picture.

Some Indian Braves approached the little woman's dwelling and soon discovered her gone. Since she had a reputation of being a sort of hermit since her husband died, they quickly searched the area, and then they approached Tonka's pasture. From there, they heard the small bark of Chasmuyabee and they rushed to it.

Makooshi was in a slouched position, as if asleep, but Tonka's head was in her lap. The little dog was licking his mistress' hand as if waiting for her to go, but the old woman had seen her last rain. During the night, too old to withstand nature's torrents and too loyal to leave her animal to die, she had passed away.

Together Makooshi and Tonka left, and if the Indian Braves would have glanced into the sky, they would have seen the faint outline of an old woman on her spotted horse, riding into the clouds on their way to the Happy Hunting Grounds.

--Charlene Bearcub

*Makooshi--a Sioux word for "Grandmother"

*Tonka Wakan--a Sioux word meaning "Big Medicine"

*Chasmuyabee--meaning sugar or something sweet

More Than Dead

I came in late. I can't remember anything that happened last night. Well, I remember the car going off the road. Anyway, I went into the washroom to wash up. As I was washing, I looked into the mirror.

I had several gashes on my face and on my head. My body was all bruised up. My ribs felt as if they were caved in. My shirt was all torn. My pants were torn at spots and were bloody.

I searched my drawers and closet for some clean clothes, but none were to be found. Mom must have thought my clothes were awfully dirty to have washed them all.

The house seemed to be empty. There wasn't a living soul. I went downstairs and looked for notes or anything that Mom might have left behind for me to find.

I walked outside. There was a note on the door. It wasn't for me. It was for Mom's best friends. It was for them to go to our family church.

The church wasn't very far. I decided to walk. When I arrived, everyone was mourning. I thought one of Mom's friends must have died. I walked up to her and asked her who it was. She seemed not to notice me. I walked up to the coffin and looked in. It was me.

-- Wayne Pinkham

An Indian Story

There once was a coyote who was taking a walk through the woods. As he was walking along, he felt something funny behind him. He looked and saw a big rock that was bouncing itself behind him. The coyote started to get scared, so he took off a little bit faster, but the rock was catching up to the coyote.

The coyote was running and saw the nighthawk. So the coyote ran behind the nighthawk and the coyote asked the nighthawk to save him. The nighthawk told the coyote to get behind him, but the coyote kept on running. Then the rock smashed the woodtick; that is why the woodtick is flat.

Finally the coyote really started to get tired, and the rock was getting closer. The coyote was scared because the rock was going to kill him. Then the coyote saw the chickenhawk, ran behind him and asked the chickenhawk to save him because the rock was going to smash him. The chickenhawk told the coyote to get behind him. So the coyote did, but this time he stayed because he was too tired to run. The rock came bouncing into the air, but then the chickenhawk gave a loud cry, so that the rock broke into many pieces. That is why the rocks are high and sharp.

-- Patty Simpson