

Slí:m [sleem] Sandhill Crane

Stó:lō Legend

In early times, there lived a young maiden who turned away many young men because they weren't handsome enough to please her. A young man took interest in the maiden and did many things the young woman told him to do that would make him handsome enough.

The young man went to see a spirit-woman far in the mountains who he had heard could change faces. He told the spirit woman of his situation and asked her to change his face. He fancied a face on the spirit woman's wall that had freckles, but she handed him a different one without freckles. He refused every face until she went to another room, and came back with the freckled face. After removing his face, and putting the new one on, the spirit woman advised the young man to follow the same path home.

The young man got lost and came across a Cinnamon bear. She insisted that he stay overnight with her and her beautiful sister, black bear. They cooked for him and in the morning the young man had to escape from cinnamon bear sister as she was up to mischief and planned to keep him to herself.

The young man didn't make it far when he was overtaken by the mischevious Cinnamon bear, she attacked and swallowed him. Cinnamon bear began to groan in pain, her stomach was in terrible pain. When she got home she laid by the fire and told her sister to call grandfather crane. Crane came, laid an ear next to Cinnamon bear's stomach and said "this is a very serious matter, it sounds as though you have a human being inside you".

Thinking that he was mocking her, Cinnamon bear angrily caught up some ashes and threw them in his face.

They scattered all over him. So Crane, heretofore black, became grey; and he has remained grey to this day.

Now he laid his nose to Cinnamon bear and sniffed; but the young man reached out and grabbed the crane's nose. Crane screamed and flapped his wings, as cranes are accustomed to flap them today. The young man maintained his grip until crane's nose had stretched into a long beak, then he suddenly let go and Cinnamon bear went sprawling back. Sadly, crane picked himself up and went away.

When the young man returned home after his adventures, he was marvelously handsome and the young maiden was fascinated by his changed face. He told her that he had gone to see the spirit woman. The maiden set off on the same path the young man took to find the face changer. She barged in on the face changer, but the old woman sensed her coming and had hid all the faces.

The young maiden asked if she could have a more beautiful face than the one she currently had, and the old spirit woman agreed to help. But the new face the spirit woman put on the maiden was terribly lopsided. The maiden ran out the door with her new face, not even thanking the old woman, she ran to the young man and asked what he thought of her new face. He replied that the new face was dreadful and told her to leave him.

The maiden was forever left with the dreadful face, as she could never again find her way to the path that led to the house of the old spirit woman that changed faces.



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