

Raven Stories

The Legend of Raven

This is an ancient story told on Puget Sound and includes how Raven helped to bring the Sun, Moon, Stars, Fresh Water, and Fire to the world.

Long ago, near the beginning of the world, Gray Eagle was the guardian of the sun and moon and stars, of fresh water, and of fire. Gray Eagle hated people so much that he kept these things hidden. People lived in darkness, without fire and without fresh water.

Gray Eagle had a beautiful daughter, and Raven fell in love with her. At that time Raven was a handsome young man. He changed himself into a snow-white bird, and as a snow-white bird he pleased Gray Eagles daughter. She invited him to her fathers longhouse.

When Raven saw the sun and the moon and the stars and fresh water hanging on the sides of Eagles lodge, he knew what he should do. He watched for his chance to seize them when no one was looking. He stole all of them, and a brand of fire also, and flew out of the longhouse through the smoke hole.

As soon as Raven got outside he hung the sun up in the sky. It made so much light that he was able to fly far out to an island in the middle of the ocean. When the sun set, he fastened the moon up in the sky and hung the stars around in different places. By this new light he kept on flying, carrying with him the fresh water and the brand of fire he had stolen.

He flew back over the land. When he had reached the right place, he dropped all the water he had stolen. It fell to the ground and there became the source of all the fresh-water streams and lakes in the world.

Then Raven flew on, holding the brand of fire in his bill. The smoke from the fire blew back over his white feathers and made them black. When his bill began to burn, he had to drop the firebrand. It struck rocks and went into the rocks. That is why, if you strike two stone together, fire will drop out.

Ravens feathers never became white again after they were blackened by the smoke from the firebrand. That is why Raven is now a black bird.

http://members.shaw.ca/nyjack/steilacoom/the_raven_&_the_moon.htm

HOW RAVEN STOLE THE SUN

Once upon a time, a mean old chief hoarded the only light in the world. He did not want to share it. Raven decided that he could no longer tolerate this after growing tired of flying in the dark. He turned himself into a cedar leaf and fell into the chief's dwelling.

Raven, as the cedar leaf, fluttered into a drink that the chief's daughter was drinking. She unwittingly swallowed raven down with a gulp of her drink. She immediately became pregnant and gave birth. Her baby had hair as black as a raven's, dark glowing eyes, and an awfully short temper. If the baby was bored, it would shriek. The chief ordered that the baby was to receive anything it wanted. One gift the baby got was a bag of shining stars. It liked the stars very much, until it accidentally threw them up through the smoke hole in the ceiling. The stars then scattered across the sky.

The baby grew bored yet again. It gave out more violent shrieks. It finally received a bag containing the Moon, and played with it happily. It remained pacified with the Moon until the Moon bounced out of the dwelling through the smoke hole.

The baby was angrier than it had ever been. Everyone searched desperately for anything to occupy the screaming child. All the gifts it received were rejected, as it pointed to the bag with the sun in it. The household finally gave the baby what it wanted, but did it reluctantly. But instead of opening the bag, the baby turned back into Raven, who flew through the smoke hole with the bag of light in his beak.. This was how Raven stole the Sun. Raven spread the light of the Sun throughout the world.

From <http://library.thinkquest.org/O3oct/01010/raven.html>



How Raven Stole the Sun

Long, long ago the world was completely dark. Raven, a very clever bird, knew that a family had taken the sun. They hid it in their lodge, in a bentwood box.

Raven had a plan to steal the sun back. He became a baby! When the family saw this cute little baby, they brought him into their home. But Raven began to cry all the time. He drove the family crazy with his strange wild screams. "What does he want?" they asked each other. Raven pointed to a beautifully carved cedar box in the corner of the lodge. Unable to bear his screaming, the family gave it to him.

As soon as no one was watching, Raven turned himself back into a bird. With a loud "Ca-aw!" he snatched up the box and flew out through the smoke-hole of the lodge. As he flew, Raven opened the cedar sun-box, and sunlight flooded the world.

- A Native American legend from the Pacific Northwest Coast, available at <http://members.aol.com/Art1234567/Raven.html>