



STORY NUMBER 5

A Child Lost

It was springtime in an area close to Rae in the Northwest Territories. A large group of people had a spring hunting camp along a river. The spring hunt was over. The leaves were turning green. The bushes were all green. As usual, the kids played all the time while the adults visited their rabbit snares and fishnets. Everyone lived off the land.

An incident happened involving a boy named Joe, who was ten years old. Joe was playing by himself in the bush one evening. He spotted a butterfly and he wanted to catch it. He was just about to catch it when it flew away. Joe kept on chasing the butterfly. Possibly Joe was receiving some kind of medicine power. Therefore, he was not normal. He was in a trance-like state,

appearing not to know what he was doing. He kept running and chasing the butterfly. He became completely lost.

Joe became very tired and fell asleep under a tree. That is where he had a vision which revealed to him that he would have medicine power for dancing. Three birds – a ptarmigan, a spruce grouse and a robin – appeared in the vision. They all wanted to give Joe medicine power for dancing. All three birds urged Joe to dance with them, so he danced with the birds.

The spruce grouse is the best dancer amongst the birds. Joe danced with that bird for a long time. All three birds gave Joe medicine power for dancing. That was part of the vision. Joe slept for a long time under that tree.

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In the meantime, Joe's relatives were worried. They could not find him anywhere. Everybody was out looking for him and calling his name. Joe woke up and sat up. He did not know where he was. He thought he heard some yelling. It was people calling his name. He was found.

Joe said nothing about what he had experienced or how he became lost. He had received medicine power for dancing, but he kept that information to himself. He never talked about it. He thought that it was not a good or useful power for hunting or fishing, so he just kept on living as he was and said nothing about the power that he had.

As life went on, Joe became famous as the best dancer in the country. He could dance any kind of dance and do it well. It did not matter what kind of dance. He could jig to a fiddle very well. He could dance all kinds of dances because he was given medicine power for dancing. That was his gift. This gift came in handy for him during times of celebration like Christmas, New Years, Easter and during Treaty time.

When the Dogrib people celebrated, there was usually a lot of drum dancing. Sometimes, people danced for a long time without taking a break. It is known that a drum dance might last for up to two or three nights. People get tired towards the end. The drummers hit the drum but nobody gets up to dance.

Joe is old now, but when he gives a yell and begins to sing his own drum song, the people get re-energized and start to dance. Joe does not do that a lot, but people recognize that he has medicine power for dancing. The end.

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