

The Orphaned Siblings by Taylor Leal Gibson - June 2018

Long ago, when people lived differently than they do today, there was a Brother and Sister who lived together alone. They had lost their entire family, Mother, Father, and Grandparents. They only had themselves to rely on. However, they managed to live comfortably. The Brother took it upon himself to learn how to hunt. The Sister who was quite capable of hunting and looking after herself, learned to cook, to plant, and to know the plants and medicines. The two lived well together and were always kind to each other. Since they have never seen anyone else, they thought they were alone in the world. This did not seem to bother them, as they got along with each other so well. One night, the sister had a dream, she dreamt she was walking in a field and saw a fawn which she started to follow. As she was following the fawn, it came to the end of a trail where she saw a pit of black snakes coiled up together. This extremely frightened the girl. In the morning, the dream was on the girl's mind. The brother noticed something was wrong and asked, so she told him about the dream.

Later in the day, a group of warriors was seen at a far distance and shortly arrived at their home. The shock from seeing more humans caused some excitement. When the group of warriors appeared, they did not appear friendly and made hostile gestures. They were snarling, showing their teeth and hissing like serpents. They were painted to look fierce. Their tongues appeared to be split in the middle like a serpent. The leader of the group said, "My Niece, I found you!" "I have been looking for you everywhere!" "I will take you home with me!" The sister became frightened as she did not want to leave. The brother spoke, "This is my sister! You are my uncle too! You can't take her!" The head man looked at the boy, pointed and then hissed! The warriors all attacked the boy and beat him unconscious. When the brother regained consciousness, he could only see through one eye as the other had been closed over and was painful to touch. He could only see the flames and smoke coming from the house and the crops. The brother could barely move and dragged himself away from the fire before he passed out.

In the morning, the brother woke up to find no one around. He could only hear silence. The deafening sound of silence. His sister was gone. The brother got up and walked around in wide circles, hoping to find a trail or some hint of the direction the warriors had taken. After spending half the day looking for any sign of their movements, he could find none. They had covered their tracks well. He sat down and began to think of his sister. He began to cry. He cried loudly, only thinking of how much he missed her. Suddenly he heard movement, his hunter eyes caught quickly the movement. It was a fawn. It came close and when the boy stood up the fawn ran away. He sat down again, crying. The Fawn came back and came closer. It appeared as though it wanted the boy to follow it. The brother got up and slowly followed the fawn. He began walking in a westerly direction following the fawn. After he had gone a good distance, he began seeing broken branches on saplings. He would go a few yards and find another and then another. This reminded him of a time when he was younger, teaching his sister how not to get lost in the woods.

He said to her, "Remember, if you ever go into the bush alone, break branches like this, so that you can remember how to get out."

She said, "Brother, thank you. I will."

Then, the memory left him, leaving him even more determined to find her. He thought of his sister's dream about the fawn leading to the pile of snakes. He left immediately, tracing the broken branches. He travelled for the entire day and made camp at night. He did this for six nights, walking each day and

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camping at night, still following the trail of broken branches. He began to worry, that he might not see her again and thought to himself, "Will I ever see her again?" "What if I don't find her?" He had to cast away his self-doubt and continue onwards. He never stopped or turned around on his journey.

On the seventh day, as he was counting the nights that he had travelled, the branches stopped. He began to think something had happened to his sister. "What has happened to my sister?" He said. His eyes began to water, but suddenly he could smell smoke, the smell of wood burning. He looked above the trees and saw smoke rising. He raced in that direction. He came out to an opening and saw a large village that had walls around it. He could not see inside, so he looked for the tallest tree and climbed it. From its height, the brother could see into the village. He scanned for a glimpse of his sister but could not find her. He did see the same group of painted warriors standing around in the village. The boy knew he had found the right place. He climbed down from the tree and went to work collecting hickory bark innards and twisting a rope to climb the fence. The boy worked fast and was able to finish a long enough rope by dark.

The boy waited until it was so dark a person could barely see and in the middle of the night climbed the fence. He ran looking and peeking into the longhouses but could not see her. He also was careful to not wake anyone. The boy couldn't find his sister, so he found an abandoned longhouse and went to sleep under the bed.

In the morning, the boy woke up forgetting where he was. He could hear people speaking outside but could not hear what they were saying. He got up carefully scanning the longhouse, making sure he was alone. He looked around and found an old deer hide that was dirty and had lots of holes. He found a cord and tied it around his waist, he put ashes on his face and hair and gave himself a limp. He walked outside. This was a big village, even bigger when he began to walk around, carefully scanning the faces and hoping to catch a glimpse of his sister. He walked and stumbled as he went. One of the warriors passed by him and said, "You poor wretched thing!" "Have something to eat!" and he threw a snake at him. The boy brushed it off and kept searching. As the boy was passing through the crowd, he saw his sister's face. He couldn't believe it and had to look twice. When he was sure it was her, he pulled her aside and spoke to her. He showed her that he was indeed her brother. When she was convinced that he was her brother she cried.

She said, "I am so happy to see you!" "I thought they had killed you and I would never see you again."

The boy said, "The same can be said about you. We have to leave this place."

The sister agreed, she said, "They gave me to a family, who treats me badly and I wish to leave."

The boy said, "I have a plan on how we can escape. I'll sneak back over the fence at night and find a suitable log to carve a likeness of you to distract them when we escape."

The sister said, "I know where they keep their food and I'll grab us some to take with us."

At night, the brother slipped over the fence unnoticed by the sentries. He began looking for a suitable piece of wood and when he found it, started carving. The next day, the sister woke up and cooked her adopted family a meal and began collecting the food to take when she escaped the village. Just before sunset, the boy came back over the fence with the wooden figure. He told his sister, "You put that under the blankets before you lay down and leave immediately."

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At night, the girl told her adopted family that she was going to lay down. She pulled out the carving and placed it on the bed under the blankets. It looked like she was still sleeping. She grabbed her bag of food and ran towards the fence. There was a rope there and, when she got over, her brother was waiting for her. They took off running. They ran all through the night into the morning. They continued running.

At the village, the sister's adopted family began to awake and someone told her to get up. When she did not answer, one of the woman was going to strike her, saying, "You lazy dog! Get up! Cook!" But when she touched the body, it was cold and stiff. She screamed. This woke everyone up including the warriors and everyone came to see. When they finally pulled the blankets over, they saw it was only a wooden statue with a smile on its face. The people hollered in anger. The warriors all hissed angrily at being fooled. The warriors began searching for tracks, first in a wide circle around the village and, when that yielded no results, they increased the circle trying to find a trail. Presently, one of the warriors found a fresh trail and hissed, all the warriors came to him and they all pursued the trail. Later that afternoon the boy and girl were travelling still scared at what would be following them as they were sure they had been found out by now. As they were travelling along they both saw smoke rising. This meant a house was nearby. They didn't know if they could trust the person, so they crept up along the bush line bordering the house. They waited and watched to see who lived there.

They saw a little old man come out of the house with a little dog. He talked kindly to the dog and then he said, "I see you two over there, Boy and Girl. I see you, I know you are there watching me. It's okay, I will not hurt you."

The brother and sister began walking toward the old man. They told him everything that had happened to them. He smiled and said, "I once had a family, they were killed by those snake warriors. I also had family that lived near where you said you came from." At this moment they realized that they were related. They were all so happy to find each other. The man said that they could stay with him.

The boy asked the old man, "What about those warriors that will be here soon? Surely they have found our trail now."

The old man said, "I can be convincing. Give me your moccasins. Now go hide in the woods and come out when I tell you to."

The old man was a powerful wizard and knew exactly what to do. He took some tobacco and spoke to the shoes and then threw them saying, "Hanyoh!" The shoes began to run in a westerly direction.

When the warriors arrived, they began talking to the old man very harshly and used strong words towards him.

The old man said, "I am just an old man. You need not bother me. I have no reason to lie to you. I saw those children. I sent them away because I knew you all would be here coming after them." He pointed to where the moccasins went and said "Look! There's their trail!"

The warriors all hissed and began running after the moccasins' trail. The old man and the brother and sister got along well and eventually were able to find more of their people. The warriors continued to chase the moccasins, day and night, week after week, month after month, year after year. One day, one of the warriors did not wake up and was found dead. A few days later, another one did not wake. After a while, more and more warriors began to die. They died until there was only the head warrior chasing after the trail. I think he's still chasing after them yet!