

Raven Releases the Sun

In the beginning there was no moon or stars at night. Raven was the most powerful being. He made all of the animals, fish, trees, and men. He had made all living creatures. But they were all living in darkness because he had not made the sun either.

One day, Raven learned that there was a chief living on the banks of the Nass River who had a very wonderful daughter who possessed the sun, the moon, and the stars in carved cedar boxes. The chief guarded her and the treasure well.

Raven knew that he must trick the villagers to steal their treasure, so he decided to turn himself into a grandchild of the great chief. Raven flew up on a tall tree over their house and turned himself into a hemlock needle. Then, as the needle, he fell into the daughter's drinking cup and when she filled it with water, she drank the needle. Inside the chief's daughter, Raven became a baby and the young woman bore a son who was dearly loved by the chief and was given whatever he asked for.

The stars and moon were each in a beautifully carved cedar box which sat on the wood floor of the house. The grandchild, who was actually Raven, wanted to play with them and wouldn't stop crying until the grandfather gave them to him. As soon as he had them Raven threw them up through the smoke hole. Instantly, they scattered across the sky. Although the grandfather was unhappy, he loved his grandson too much to punish him for what he had done.

Now that he had tossed the stars and moon out of the smoke hole, the little grandson began crying for the box containing the sunlight. He cried and cried and would not stop. He was actually making himself sick because he was crying so much. Finally, the grandfather gave him the box.

Raven played with the box for a long time. Suddenly, he turned himself back into a bird and flew up through the smoke hole with the box.

Once he was far away from the village on the Nass River he heard people speaking in the darkness and approached them.

"Who are you and would you like to have light?" he asked them. They said that he was a liar and that no one could give light. To show them that he was telling the truth, Raven opened the ornately carved box and let sunlight into the world. The people were so frightened by it that they fled to every corner of the world. This is why there is Raven's people everywhere.

Now there are stars, the moon and daylight, and it is no longer dark all of the time.