

The Boy Who Stayed With Fish  
By Angela Sidney  
Tagish Version

# MY STORIES ARE MY WEALTH

Mrs. Angela Sidney

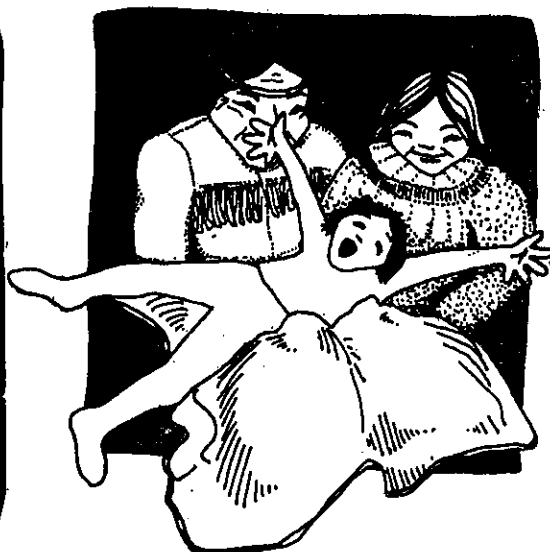
Mrs. Kitty Smith

Mrs. Rachel Dawson



as told to Julie Cruikshank

drawings by Suzannah B. McCallum



hear something." People get up, everybody. Sing. "Oh...., Ah..."

"Take me down," he say.

Gee, big boy inside. He's big doctor, that boy.

They're gone back, those fish. The dry fish they cut up all go back home. They got boat, I guess. I don't know. Which way, I don't know.

But he come back person. He's doctor. He know everything. He don't eat fish, though.

*Chunatla* they call him. Mouldy head.



## The Boy who Stayed with Fish

told by Mrs. Angela Sidney, Tagish

One time there was a little boy who lived with his mother and father. People dry fish - that's how they wrestle for food. That's why winter they don't have much hard time when it's hard to wrestle for game.

And so this little boy, always cry for food in evening, before he goes to bed. His mother always gives him dry salmon, headpart. Here he tell his mother, "How come it's always mouldy?" He gets disappointed, he throw it away. "*U de tla*" he says. "It's mouldy." Anyway, his mother gave him another one again, always. Every now and then like that, it's mouldy. He said something wrong against the fish spirit, *hut kwani* that means "fish spirit."

So the next year, they go same place, that's where they dry fish. They were there again. Here his mother was cutting fish. And you know seagulls always want fishguts all the time. Here he

set out snare for that seagull. Set out snare to catch him. Anyway that toggle wasn't very strong or very big or very heavy. And seagull start to drag it out. And that little boy started running after it. He run in the water, try to catch it. Pretty soon he fell in a hole and he catch him, I guess, but they couldn't save him.

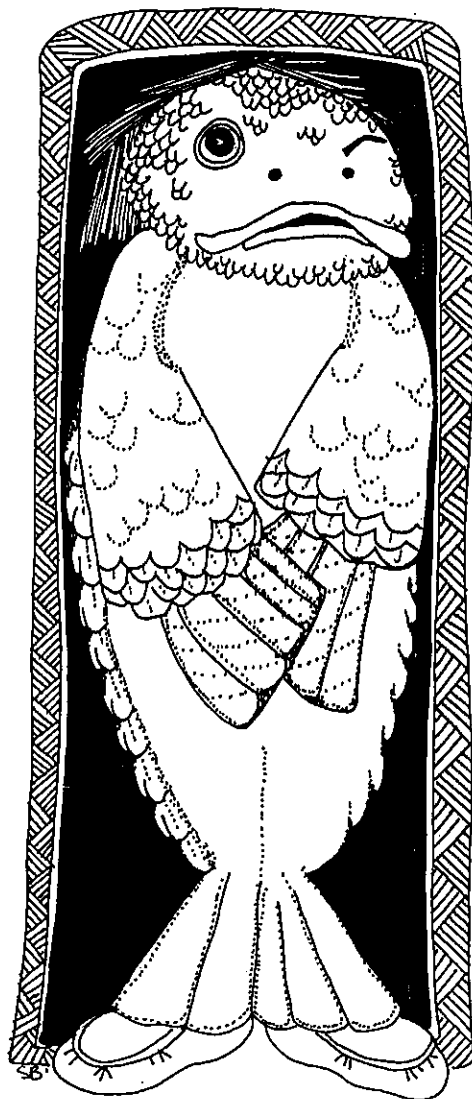
And here right away the fish spirit, *hut kwani*, they grabbed him. They saved him. And when the fish went back to the ocean they took him. And for him, right away he was amongst people. They got big boat and they took him with them down to the fish country. They come to big city, big town. Oh, lots of people run around, kids playing around.

One time they're playing outside and the little boy see fish eggs, and he start to eat some. He don't know what those people eat, he never see them eat anything. Here he start to eat fish eggs.

Here someone call out "*Chunatla*" "Mouldy Head." They call him that because he used to call fish "mouldy". "Mouldy Head eat someone's poop," they said. Here it was fish egg. Oh by gosh right away he gets shame. When kids come home they tell older people about it, "Mouldy Head eats people's poop."



Next morning adults tell them. "Why don't you kids go play around that point, play ball. While you play you catch fish. But when you eat it and when you cook it don't let anything fall in the hole, that cooking stick hole, where they put the stick in to roast fish. So they make fire and she see fish and club it and cook it for him. Now and then when he get hungry, they do that for him. In the evening when they come him, here that boy never come home until last. They told them, "Throw the bone and skin and everything in the water, but don't let everything fall in cooking stick hole." They throw everything in the water, except that one eye, it fell in the cooking stick hole. They didn't see it, the lost eye. So when they come home, that boy got one eye missing. He come back to life again, and he's missing one eye.



The parents tell him to go back, look in that cooking stick hole, see if there's anything there. So they went to the playground and sure enough, there is fish eye there. They pick it up and they throw it in the water. And when they come back, all of a sudden, that boy has got both of his eyes back.

Finally, springtime start to come. Everybody start to get ready to go up the river again. That boy stays with those people that adopted him first. All go up the river again.

They come to the same place. "Hee hut, hee hut" they pole upriver. That's how come they know where to go. They say when the fish go up the river, their great great grandmother is at the head of the creek. And that's why they go up to visit the great great grandmother, that fish. They come to same place.

Here he sees his mother. His mother cutting fish. He goes close to his mother. Just the same his mother never pay attention to him. It was a fish to her. Don't know how many times she try to club that fish, it always take off.

So finally she tell her husband about it. "How come that one fish always come to me and just stay right there all the time? But after when I go back to see him, that fish is always gone. Why is that?"

"Don't know why is that. Let's try to kill it," he said. "You know we lost our son last year. Could be something. Must be something. Let's try to catch it, okay." So they did. Anyway, they got it.

And here she start to cut that fish. And here that fish had copper around his neck. Just like the one that boy he used to wear it all the time. And that's the one when that lady start to cut his head off, she couldn't cut the head off. So she look at it good, and she saw this copper ring on his head. So she told her husband right away, "Look at that. What's this here?"

And her husband said, "Well you know, our son used to wear copper ring all the time around his neck." Yes they remembered.

So they washed it good and then they took it home. There's an Indian doctor there too. And the Indian doctor said, "Put it in nice clean white skin." Old people used to have lots of that. They put it in nice clean skin, cover it with down feathers.

Then they tie it way up to where the smoke go up, you know, smoke hole. That Indian doctor tell them to go fast for eight days, so the people fast for eight days.

That Indian doctor said, "If you see those feathers blow up, then you take down quick."

So they put the body up there, fast for eight days. That Indian doctor sing all the time. They were too, I guess, got to help the doctor sing. Finally on the eighth day, here they see the feathers blow up. They take it down quick. Here that little boy come to life again, in human's body. They brought him back to life.

That's how they know about fish. That's why kids are told not to insult fish. And kids are not to play with seagull, 'cause that happened.