

The Boy Who Stayed with Fish
by Kitty Smith,

MY STORIES ARE MY WEALTH

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as told to Julie Cruikshank

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Boy who Stayed with Fish

told by Mrs. Kitty Smith, Whitehorse

Two years, one boy get drowned, stay with fish. But he don't marry fish, nothing. He just stay.

He's just a little kid. Want to snare seagull. Same size as my little grandchild.

His mother give him fish one winter. "What for you give me this fish? It's mouldy, right here." That boy throw away that fish. Something wrong.

Next summer, when fish coming, that's the time he set snare for seagull. Got it! "You got seagull! Quick, quick, it's deep place. It's going to go." Just as he's going to grab him, that boy fall in. That seagull, he hold him.



He fall in. He drown? They don't know. Goes down. He can't do nothing, don't know where his home is now. That seagull there is just like his partner. He hold him. Go down, down that river. Klukshu River.

He's with those fish now, they go down, past another city. Talk about how they break that warehouse, that's his people's fishtrap. "We broke them already. We fight already." That's what they say. Other people coming, other fish. All going same place. That's dogfish, I guess, last fish - tluk fish they call them, coast Indian. They go back now.

Go by city. Lots of people, lots of kids. They got nothing to eat. They got nothing.

That seagull, though, he eat lots of fish eggs. That boy want eat too. Seagull stomach full. That boy take some, but he's ashamed. He hide them someplace. But someone see him. "Ahhhh, that boy, he eat dirty thing." That's the time he throw them away, that dry fish. They tell him that's bad and he throw them away. He get shame.

One of them come to him, "You starve?"

He tell them, "Since I go away, eat nothing, just drink water."

"Come, I'll show you." He took him. "See that little kid? You push him. Then take him and cook him. But be careful how you stick him, or he'll cry, that kid."

"All right." That little boy, he push him. Gee, little King Salmon fall in! He hide him. Seagull with him. He make fire, eat him. He's full now! Then he come back. That little kid he play yet! "See those people over there?" that kid tell him, "they dry fish. (When people do it right) those fish come back. They don't kill them."

One man there look like a chief. That boy lonesome sometimes. That man tries to take him to that lake. Sit down with him, put his hand on his neck that way.

"Come on, go with us." That seagull with him too, all time. That big man sit with him beside fish lake, hold his hand on that boy's neck. Finally, he forgot it (home). Worry no more. He eat now, all time. Forgot it. He stay there.

One year, he stay there.

Those boys tell him, "We're going to go with the people. You come with us."

"Yes, I want to go."

"We're going to teach you."

They wait for right time. "Some people going now, some people going now. We go now," they said. They got grub. They feed him to. He eat.

They go..go..go..go..camp some place..go..go. Lots of people meet them, you know.

Already they cut'em, make them dry, when they come down.

"Don't know what is that they make," he think about it. He sit on the boat. He no work, just the four boys work. Got their own boat. That seagull with him - his partner all time.

One place, water go this way. They're fishing here too, you know, old people.

"Oh, we're going to throw some hook, we're going to heave it.

Have you got hook?" (People say)

"Don't sit this way. If you do they're going to catch you, tail side. They're not going to get you. They're not going to kill you." That's what they tell him.

"Yes," he said, "that's what I'll do."

He go himself, I guess. Along there. Right there...sees hook...yes...It goes across him.

Pretty soon, fishtrap. Pretty soon, that house. They don't say "fishtrap" say "warehouse."

"Just in the morning, we're going to try it," they said. (Try to get past it.)

In the morning, just sun come out. Up high. "We're going to see now, going to see that house!" My goodness, right there he see his mamma sitting down. She cutting fish. His mamma. He know that someone sitting down at creek, at that fish water there. They cut fish, sit down there. He don't get worried. He just stay there. Them boys, they're gone. They're gone that house of war.

He stay there. That lady holler for her husband, you know. "Hah. King Salmon here. Try to get it!" she tell her husband. He come down, his daddy. He hook him. He club him. He's on the ground now.

He got some kind of wire. Copper wire, he got it, you know. That boy. It used to be all the time on his neck.

"Quick, cut him," he tell his wife. "What's the matter?" He look around. That's the one his son got it used to be. He run home, that man, his daddy. Skin. Moose skin. Tanned one. They put that fish inside that moose blanket. They take him home. Go to his uncle place. He run there his daddy.

"My brother-in-law! That your boy (who) get drowned one. He got a copper wire, that fish in there. We got him home."

"Bring him here," he said.

His daddy bring him there. They put him some place up high and leave him there. They call all his people, that man, young people. "We'll try not going to eat. We're not going to eat, we're not going to drink water. Four days like that. We try to save that boy. Might be come back again." That's what he say that man.

"All right."

Everybody now in there. Man, some woman. Don't eat. His mother too don't eat. No. He know, him, that he's in that blanket. He don't know he's fish. Three days they don't eat those people. Sometimes they put stick that way, just like Indian doctor.

Four days, they hear noise in the morning. "Ah...." he say that. Everybody wake up. That man his uncle (say) "Get up, get up, I



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