

The Iroquois Legend of the Corn Husk Doll

Character List:

Cornelia
Mom
Corn Spirit
Creator
Townspeople
Owl

MOM

Alright Cornelia, it's almost bedtime. You've got to get up for school tomorrow.

CORNELIA

(begging) Can I just have five more minutes to look at myself?

MOM

No, Cornelia. It's time to go to bed.

CORNELIA

All right, but I'm not tired yet. Maybe if you told me a story, I might be able to fall asleep.

MOM

Okay. What kind of story do you want me to tell?

CORNELIA

Tell the one about the doll without a face.

MOM

Oh, Cornelia. I always tell that one.

CORNELIA

Please Mom. Please.

MOM

(sighs) Okay. Once upon a time, there was a tribe of American Indians called the Iroquois people. They lived in the northeastern United States and ate a lot of the plants that grow from the ground like beans, squash, and, of course, corn. Together beans, squash, and corn were referred to as the Three Sisters. The Iroquois people made very beautiful things, and for the little Iroquois girls, they made dolls

(Corn Spirit enters). The Iroquois made their dolls out corn husk which is the green part of the plant that surrounds the kernels that we eat.

CORNELIA

And the dolls were so pretty. Weren't they Mom?

MOM

Yes. They were beautiful.

CORNELIA

But they did not have faces.

MOM

No. They did not.

CORNELIA

Why didn't they have faces?

MOM

Don't get ahead of the story, Cornelia.

CORNELIA

Sorry, Mom.

MOM

Well, the Iroquois people believed that the Three Sisters, which were corn, beans, and squash, each had a spirit given to them by the Creator (Creator enters).

CORN SPIRIT

I am so grateful for being a part of the food that people eat everyday. Thank you Creator for making me this way.

CREATOR

You are very welcome Corn Spirit. I am so glad that you are humble.

CORN SPIRIT

I know that because of you I am a wonderful food source for the people, but is there any other way that I could be of use?

CREATOR

Hmmm... let me think. I will call for you when I have thought of something. (Corn Spirit exits)

MOM

The Creator thought and thought for days (the Creator paces back and forth), and finally called for the Corn Spirit (Corn Spirit enters).

CREATOR

I have thought and thought about what other use that you could be, and I think that I have an answer.

CORN SPIRIT

(Corn Spirit jumps up and down) Oh Creator! What is it?

CREATOR

I believe that your husk can be turned into a beautiful doll to be played with by little boys and girls.

CORN SPIRIT

I would love that, Creator! Please make a doll from my husk. (Creator exits)

MOM

The Creator then made a beautiful doll from the husk of the Corn Spirit (Corn Spirit holds up a doll). (The Townspeople enter) The doll traveled all around into many of the villages to play with the little boys and girls, and wherever she went, people told her how beautiful that she was.

TOWNSPEOPLE

(Corn Spirit walks by) You are so pretty. You are so lovely. You are so beautiful.

CORN SPIRIT

(Corn Spirit looks at Townspeople) Thank you very much. (Corn Spirit exits)

MOM

However, over time, the Corn Spirit that used to be very humble became very vain.

TOWNSPEOPLE

(Corn Spirit enters) You are so pretty.

CORN SPIRIT

(Corn Spirit does not look back) Oh, I know. (Corn Spirit exits)

MOM

(Creator enters) When the Creator heard about the Corn Spirit's vanity, he summoned the Corn Spirit.

CORN SPIRIT

(Corn Spirit enters) You summoned me, Creator?

CREATOR

Yes, Corn Spirit, I did. I have heard that you have become very vain. I am tempted to punish you, because you have lost the humbleness that you used to have.

MOM

The Corn Spirit then began to cry.

CORN SPIRIT

Please, oh great Creator, give me one more chance. (Corn Spirit begins to cry) I promise that I will no longer be vain.

CREATOR

(Pauses and thinks over whether or not he will forgive her) Alright Corn Spirit. I will give you one more chance.

CORN SPIRIT

Thank you so much, oh great Creator. (Creator exits)

MOM

For a while, the Corn Spirit remained humble. However, her humbleness did not last long. One day, she was walking next to a creek and stopped to admire her reflection in the creek. (Corn Spirit sits) She thought to herself....

CORN SPIRIT

I am so beautiful. I am the prettiest thing in the whole world.

MOM

(Enter Owl) When the Creator heard the Corn Spirit say this, he sent down a large owl to the creek to the place where the Corn Spirit was admiring herself. The owl dove down and snatched up the Corn Spirit's reflection (Owl exits). When the Corn Spirit realized what had happened, she recognized her fault.

CORN SPIRIT

I have been very vain.

MOM

The Corn Spirit was then forced to roam around faceless due to her pride. (Corn Spirit exits)

CORNELIA

And this is why the corn husk doll does not have a face.

MOM

Yes. That is correct. It does not have a face in order to remind little boys and girls to remember that appearance is not what life is about. Each person has their own gift and is beautiful in his or her own way.

CORNELIA

Thank you Mom for that wonderful story and reminder that I should not spend so much time looking in the mirror.

MOM

Good night, Cornelia.

CORNELIA

Good night.