

Jack Hudson

Raven and Salmon Woman

When Txamsem (Raven) recovered from his sickness, he went on, very hungry and distressed. He went down to the beach and built a small house, made a canoe and a spear. One day he went out to try to spear something to eat. It was a calm day. Txamsem took up his spear, when a fog arose. It lay on the surface of the water. After a while the fog cleared away, and Txamsem beheld a bright and fair woman sitting in the bow of his canoe. Txamsem smiled at her, and she also smiled at him. Txamsem said to the bright and fair woman, "I wish to marry you." Thus spoke Txamsem to her. The woman said at once, "Just take care, Giant! I am the Salmon. Do not do me any harm." Thus said Bright-Cloud Woman to him.

Txamsem replied to her, who was now his wife, "Come, mistress, let us go home to our house!" They went ashore, and came to the beach in front of Txamsem's house. As soon as they had gone in, Txamsem begged Bright-Cloud Woman to cause the salmon to appear in the brook that was at the right side of Txamsem's little house. Bright-Cloud Woman declined. Early the following morning Bright-Cloud Woman arose quietly, went down to the creek, and put her toes into the water. At once a great many spring salmon jumped in the water. Then she woke her husband and said, "See how the salmon are jumping at the mouth of the creek!" He arose and saw the spring salmon near the mouth of the creek. Txamsem was glad. Then Bright-Cloud Woman called her husband to comb his hair. Txamsem's hair was very ugly. His wife combed it way down his back, and she changed Txamsem's hair into blonde hair. She also made his rough skin soft and white. Txamsem loved his wife very much. Soon the spring salmon were coming up the river. Txamsem went down and clubbed them, and Bright-Cloud Woman went and got them, and Txamsem got poles and hung the salmon on them to dry. Early the following morning Bright-Cloud Woman went down to the creek again. She went into the water, and let the water come up to her knees. At once there were salmon jumping. She came out of the water, went to her husband, and awakened him. She said, "The creek is full of silver salmon." Txamsem arose, went down, and saw the silver salmon. The river was almost dried up, so full was it of salmon.

On the following day Txamsem went to his canoe to get wood to smoke his wife's salmon. He took along some salmon which he was going to eat while he was getting wood. When he came to a place where he was going to get wood, ravens were flying over him, because they noticed the salmon in Txamsem's canoe, and Txamsem had nothing to cover his salmon with. Many ravens assembled, and Txamsem did not want to leave his salmon in the canoe, and he also wanted very much to get wood to smoke all his wife's salmon. So finally he took out one of his eyes to watch the salmon in the canoe and he commanded his eye, "If any ravens

should come to the canoe, call me, and I will come and drive them away. I don't want them to eat my salmon. I am going to cut wood a little farther out there. If they come to the canoe, then call me; and when I call you from out there, you shall answer so that I know that you are still in my canoe." Then he went.

As soon as he had gone, the ravens came into the canoe, and his eye shouted, "My eye, my eye! these ravens are about to devour me!" Txamsem replied, "Hide under the stern-board!" His eye replied, "I have done so, yet the ravens are about to devour me." Txamsem went back quickly, and called to his eye while he was going back, "My eye, my eye! hide under the stern-board! Oh, my eye!" Soon he came down to the canoe, but both his eye and his salmon were gone. He had lost everything. He stood there on the shore, and he had not a chip of wood; so he went aboard his canoe and went home, very sad. Soon he reached his camp. His beautiful wife came down to meet him on the beach. She asked him, "Why do you look so sad, my dear?" Txamsem said to her, "A raven took away my salmon and also my eye, and so I did not get any wood." Then his wife said, "I will make a new eye for you, better than the old one." Txamsem went up to his house with his sore eye. His wife went up to the place where he lay, and said, "I will wash your eye-socket." She took water, washed his eye, and made a new one for him, so that it was better than before. Txamsem was very glad, for he had a new eye, and he loved his wife very much. The woman loved him really until their salmon was all dried.

Then Txamsem went into the river and clubbed all the salmon. He built two large houses, and filled them with good dried salmon. Now Txamsem's food became plentiful, for his wife was drying salmon, and she was roasting some of them. Their three houses were full, and there was no place where Txamsem did not put away the dried salmon. Bright-Cloud Woman did thus so many times throughout the year, that there was no room for any more dried salmon. All the storehouses of Txamsem were full of bundles of good dried salmon. Therefore they ceased to make more dried salmon. On the following day he went and took a walk on the sandy beach next to the house. Bright-Cloud Woman stayed at home. In the afternoon Txamsem came home, and his wife stepped up to him and asked him whether he wanted his supper. When Txamsem said "Yes," Bright-Cloud Woman gave him to eat. The following morning he went out very early, and came back in the evening. His kind wife was ready to give him supper. For four days they acted this way. Then Txamsem became proud because he had so much food. He spoke angrily to his wife when he came home late in the evening. Finally he asked his wife, "Did any one visit you while I was away?" Thus spoke Txamsem to his fair wife. Then his good wife spoke with kindly words. "O master, what do you think! Who should visit me in this lonely place?" But Txamsem was angry. Bright-Cloud

Woman said to her husband, "Have pity on me, my dear! No stranger has done any mischief to me. I love you most." Thus said Bright-Cloud Woman to her husband.

Then Txamsem said, "I have been gambling every day, and at one time I was always gaining; but now I am losing everything I have. So I know that some man is visiting you." Thus spoke Txamsem to his wife. The good woman wept. Txamsem arose, went out, and his wife followed him secretly. Txamsem had gone to the first point where he sat down and was gambling with a stump. Bright-Cloud Woman came secretly to where he was, and saw her husband gambling with the large stump. She went away secretly. In the evening Txamsem came home to his kind wife in a rage.

One day Txamsem dressed up. He was going to take a walk. His wife combed his hair as she used to do every morning. He arose, and tried to go out; but the backbone of the spring salmon caught in his hair, and he scolded it. He took it and threw it into the corner of the house, saying, "You come from the naked body of a woman, and you catch my hair!" Bright-Cloud Woman just hung her head and cried, but Txamsem laughed at his wife and went out. Just before evening Txamsem came in, and again the backbone of the spring salmon caught in his long blond hair. Txamsem was very angry, and threw it into the corner of the house. He said again, "You come from the naked body of a woman, and you catch my long blond hair!" Bright-Cloud Woman arose at once. She said to the dried Salmon, "Come, my tribe, let us go back!" Thus she said to them. She stood up and whistled. Then all the dried Salmon flew out of the house; and while the dried Salmon were flying away, Txamsem's blond hair became scorched and turned back to its own natural color, and his own rough skin came back again. And while his blond hair was being scorched, he tried to take hold of its end, and said, "You should not do that, hair;" and he was uglier than before. Then Bright-Cloud Woman started, and led her tribe, the dried Salmon, and they all went into the water. Txamsem tried to put his arms around his wife, but her body was like smoke, and his arms went through her, for she was a cloud. Txamsem came to be very poor, and had nothing to eat and was very hungry. He was there all alone, no one to comfort him. He had lost all his provisions, and his beautiful wife had gone. His blond hair was scorched, and his soft white skin had become rough again. He sat down in the house, weeping and sorrowful on account of the things he had lost.

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