

Stories from Different Cultures

Read both of the stories and then answer the questions.

The Fox and the Raven (An ancient Chinese story)

The fox knows how to flatter, and how to play many cunning tricks. Once upon a time he saw a raven, who alighted on a tree with a piece of meat in his beak. The fox seated himself beneath the tree, looked up at him, and began to praise him.

“Your color,” he began, “is pure black. This proves to me that you possess all the wisdom of Laotzse, who knows how to shroud his learning in darkness. The manner in which you manage to feed your mother shows that your filial affection equals that which the Master Dsong had for his parents. Your voice is rough and strong. It proves that you have the courage with which King Hiang once drove his foes to flight by the mere sound of his voice. In truth, you are the king of birds!”

The raven, hearing this, was filled with joy and said: “I thank you! I thank you!”

And before he knew it, the meat fell to earth from his opened beak.

The fox caught it up, devoured it and then said, laughing: “Make note of this, my dear sir: if someone praises you without occasion, he is sure to have a reason for doing so.”

The Boy in the Moon (A Native American story)

Do you see the mark in the middle of the Moon, that looks like a man? Well, that is really a little Indian boy. It happened this way—

Many years ago, there lived a Vuntakutchin boy. One Winter when he saw that his people had nothing to eat, he dreamed they killed a lot of Caribou. He told his dream in the morning, and the braves set out to hunt.

But before they went, the boy made his uncle promise that he would give him the meat of the leader Caribou. The uncle killed the leader, but when he came back from the hunt, he gave the boy the wrong meat, and kept the right meat for himself.

Well, the boy felt so badly that he cried for two nights. And on the third night he disappeared. He wore Marten-skin pants, and in the morning his uncle saw the left leg of the pants, hanging to the tent pole in the hole where the smoke goes out. And when the uncle went outside the tent, he found that all the Caribou, which had been killed the day before, had come to life again, and run away.

As for the boy, he had gone up to the Moon, and there he is now, with one leg bigger than the other, because the right leg has pants on it. From his hand hangs a little bag full of the wrong Caribou meat, and during the Autumn and Winter, when the sky is clear, you may see him standing in the Moon.

1. What is the lesson of The Fox and The Raven? _____

2. What is the lesson of The Boy in the Moon? _____

3. What do both stories have in common? _____

4. How do you think these stories were used in these cultures? _____
