

How the Crow Came to be Black.

A long time ago crow used to be white, truly white. He was a tell-tale. He always told the animals, "run, run, that man is going to kill you, run, run!" He frightened all the animals away. He kept the *knowe* hungry, that crow. They tell Sindy "You help us, Sindy, he keep us hungry that crow." Sindy thought a long while then he said, "Yes, I see something wise, I help you." Sindy went away out on the prairie laid down and turned himself into a dead elk with an opening made in his ribs. After awhile crow saw him - flew down and stood at a distance. Crow is very clever, very wise and he was afraid of the elk. After a while he called out. "Caw, I know you, Sindy, I know you." Sindy did not move - then the crow got nearer and nearer - he pecked Sindy hard on the bridge of his nose. Sindy did not move although it hurt him very much. Crow pecked again and again, and after a while crow was satisfied; he thought "that elk is truly dead." He lit on Sindy's side at the opening and began to peck at it. Sindy let him peck a long time. Crow's toes were driven in the hole in the ribs - then Sindy closed down his fore leg suddenly and shut the ribs together and caught crow; he took him to the camp and called out to everybody "come look at him!" "Crow that did those mean things." Sindy told them to decide how to punish crow for those mean things. They built a fire there. Some said "roast him in the fire" - others said "kill him in different ways." An old spider woman said, "give me that crow I tie him a prisoner; she tied him with a spider's web the others did not see, and crow could not feel; she let crow loose, he flew up and laughed at them; he said "now I will treat you worse." The people were very angry, they said, "kill that old woman!" The crow got very high, and the old woman began to pull him back hand over hand in the spider's web. Crow was again very much frightened, he said "let me go! I did not mean that, I was only joking" but they pulled him down and threw him into the fire - he was burned black in the fire; he hopped out black. Crow has been black ever since.

## Another Version

Spider woman took crow to her lodge and tied him at the smoke opening - she kept him there to punish him and he got smoked black. Compare.

## Note 1. History.

The crow it is said, was once of the purest white, but was changed for tale bearing to its present color. A fit punishment for such a fault.

"The raven once in snowy plumes was dressed,  
White as the whitest dove unsullied breast  
Fair as the guardian of the Capitol  
Soft as the swan, a large and lovely fowl.  
His tongue, his prating tongue, had changed him quite  
To sooty blackness from the purest white."

E.G. Burnett, "Geography of the Heavens."  
W. B. Smith & Co., Cincinnati, 1862 p. 79

The crow of Egypt and Russia is slate colored on the back and upper surface of wings.