

The Story of the Boy and the Sun

A Folktale from the Hopi Tribe



Long ago, a boy lived with his mother. He did not have a father. The boy wanted to know about his father.

His grandmother told him to ask the Sun. "He is sure to know," she said.

The boy made a special flour. It was made of ground tortoise shell, coral, seashells, and cornmeal. He threw the flour into the sky. It created a path. Today, this path is known as the Milky Way.

The boy climbed this path all the way to the Sun. "Who is my father," he asked the Sun.

The Sun said, "You have a lot to learn." He sent the boy back down to the earth below.

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The boy did not want to give up. He built a box out of cottonwood. He put the box on the river and sealed himself inside. The river carried the boy west, toward the Sun.

The box washed up on the shore between two rivers.

“Is someone inside this box,” hissed a voice.

“Yes,” cried the boy. “Please let me out!”

The side of the box fell open. Outside lay a rattlesnake. She was looking up at him. Her tongue flicked in and out of her mouth.

The rattlesnake asked to join the boy on his quest. Together they traveled west toward the Sun. Soon, they saw a meteor falling toward the sea. The meteor was on its way to the Sun’s house. They asked the meteor for a ride. The meteor agreed.

When they arrived, they met the Moon. The moon was the Sun’s mother. She was working on a piece of jewelry. She told them to wait with her for the Sun to come home.

The Sun came home from work at the end of the day. He found that he had two visitors.

Again, the boy asked the Sun, “Who is my father?”

The Sun took a deep breath and replied, “I think I am your father.”

