
13. The Cormorants
(Told by Herman James, September, 1958)

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1. At one time they lived there. Cormorants lived across the ocean from them. Their stepfather [ = father's younger brother] was staying there with their mother. One time the children wanted fish. While they had never fed the children any. He acted that way for a long time. Their mother pleaded, "Let's give them fish." "No," he kept saying. He gave them other kinds of food.
2. When they had grown big, they found out that he was not their father; he turned out to be their stepfather. Then they asked their mother, "Is this really our father?" After a long time their mother spoke, saying, "He is not your father." 3. When they had grown big and found this out, they said that they intended to go away. They took leave of their mother. Their mother felt very sad when they said that they were going to leave. "Where could you go?" she asked. "We intend to go to our uncle's place," they replied. "There he catches lots of fish. When he does so, he will give us lots of those fish." "I don't like to see you leave," their mother said anyway. "No, how can we stay here; the food that we want we can't have to eat—fish," they said.
4. When they had spoken, they made all their things ready and left, heading for the ocean. They sailed off over the water. They sailed in an oak ball boat. It is called an "oak ball" boat because it is light; the boat was woven that way to sail in. They sailed out in that.

5. Having done so, they sailed up at their uncle's place. Their uncle was happy at first when he saw them. Then the children said, "We have come to your place here to eat fish." "There isn't any fish," said he. "Don't you even have any dried fish?" they asked. "No, nothing," he replied. "But we've been told that you are always catching a lot of fish here," they said.

6. It turned out that whenever there was fish, he would hide it. He did not let them see it. After a while they found it out. Just as [their stepfather] had been, their uncle was too; he was stingy in sharing his fish with them. Then [the older brother] told his younger brother, "Fetch a white rock—from over there in the water." The younger brother brought one like that. Then [the uncle] built a big fire. Their uncle was now cooking food there. [The older brother] tossed the rock into [the fire]—the white rock. After a while the rock heated up and suddenly exploded. The hot fragments flew down into the eyes of the cormorant. When they did so, they burned his eyes up.

7. Having done that, [the brothers] left. They went elsewhere; again they sailed for some other place intending to stay there alone. This is the reason we now see the cormorant with white eyes; they were burnt. So they say. They tell it that way. With that rock the eyes were all burned up. Then, having landed at another place, they stayed there. Now they caught their own fish themselves.

8. They continued to live there for a long long time. This is the end of the story. This story about the cormorant was also told to me by my grandmother. This is the end.
15. The Yellowjackets and the Fleas

(Told by Essie Parrish, August, 1957)


6. she said while crying for her husband.

10. The relatives were also beating themselves up with things. But still he never returned. Heron, knowing that that person was dead, said, "Let me marry you. Don't feel too bad about your husband. I am a good woodman too; I am a good man too." When he had said that, she replied, "No. I hate you. I know that you killed him. I don't want you. I don't like you." Cricket Woman replied.

11. This is all.

15. The Yellowjackets and the Fleas

(Told by Essie Parrish, August, 1957)

1. This is a story about yellowjackets and fleas.
2. They say that a lot of yellowjackets were together in a big group. And every night the flea people just kept eating them up. They always just kept eating them up. Then [the yellowjackets] said, "What are we going to do; I wonder what we're going to do about those fleas." "Sting the fleas. Sting them." But they couldn't sting them all; there were so many fleas.
3. "Perhaps the only thing for us to do is to move away. But I wonder where we could go. Let us go way over across the river and up there on the hill and start living there somewhere," they said. They kept on and on discussing like that.
4. Then, while night was falling, the flea people were just eating them up. Then they said, "Let's move today; let's move in the daytime while they are sleeping." Then everyone—not one of those yellowjacket women was without children—slung a cradle on her back and set out. They went off toward the river in that fashion.
5. And then, when they arrived at the water, they stopped here and there on the sand; they stopped to eat. And they were doing things like swimming. They were intending to go across towards evening. They say that there were so many of them there that naturally different ones had to defecate here and there. Then towards evening they went across. On the other side they went way up on the hill and settled down somewhere.
6. Meanwhile, the flea people, as evening was approaching, woke up and ran around intending to bite them. There was nobody to bite; the yellowjackets had gone. "I wonder what we're going to do now that the yellowjackets have evidently left us," they said. "I wonder what we're going to eat," they were saying while running around all over the place. But they couldn't find them.

7. "Maybe they moved away," they said. "We'll find them anyway." They were tracking them by scent. Having found their trail, they were sniffing along the tracks. And then by the water where the others had been, there they arrived. "Those bad people must have gone across the river, but we can't swim," they said. They were sniffing around all over there on the sand but they didn't find them.

8. They only found their droppings. Then, "Let us ask this one," they said. "You dropping, where did they go?" one said. It didn't answer; it wasn't alive you know. Then, "You stinkers, where did they go?" one said; they didn't answer. When different ones said, "You stinkers, you stinkers, where did they go?" they didn't answer anything.

9. While they were staying around there, while they were wandering around on the sand, across the river the yellowjackets were saying, "Let us go back down to the river and see if [the fleas] are looking for us or not. Then some of them got up, put their children on their backs and went back to the river.

10. "There is a song we must sing in order to go back where we have been; we must sing a song that has been handed down," they said. Then they sang the song.

11. While they were staying around there, while they were wandering around on the sand, across the river the yellowjackets were saying, "Let us go back down to the river and see if [the fleas] are looking for us or not. Then some of them got up, put their children on their backs and went back to the river.

12. That, they say, is the end.