

A Bird in Search of a Mate

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Native AmericanNorth American

Easy
3 min read

A young woman lived alone on the bank of a large river. One day she thought, "I am old enough to have a husband. It is lonely here by myself."

She oiled her hair, painted her face red, put on her best clothes and went to a spring. She dipped up a bucket of water and looking in it said, "I am nice enough for any man."

Then she started off along the bank of the river that ran through a forest. Toward midday she came to a place where she saw signs of people living near, and, seating herself on a log she began to sing, "I wonder if any man around here wants a wife. I wonder if any man around here wants a wife."

Soon some one far off in the forest answered, "I want a wife. I want a wife."

Then the woman sang back, "What will we live on? What will we live on when we live together?"

And he sang, "We will live on moss."

And she, singing, answered, "I couldn't live on moss. I am too good for such coarse food; I'm a nice looking girl."

Again she traveled along the bank of the river. It was near sunset when the young woman came to a place where she saw signs of people living near. She seated herself on a log and sang, "I wonder if any man around here wants a wife. I wonder if any man around here wants a wife."

Some one, not far off, answered, singing, "I want a wife. I want a wife."

Then she sang, "What will we live on? What will live on? What will we live on when we live together?"

And he, singing, answered, "We will live on hawthorn berries and roots."

She sang, "I cannot live on hawthorn berries and roots. I am too good for such food; I'm a nice looking girl."

The young woman traveled on till dusk then, seeing signs of some one having been along a short time before, she seated herself on a log and sang, "I wonder if any man around here wants a wife. I wonder if any man around here wants a wife."

Close by some one sang, "I want a wife. I want a wife."

And she, singing, asked, "What will we live on? What will we live on when we live together?"

And he sang back, "When we live together we will live on seeds."

Singing, she answered, "That is the food I like; seeds are nice and soft."

The singer, hearing her answer, was pleased. He came and sat on a log by her side, and, singing, asked, "Did you understand my song when you asked what we would live on when we lived together?"

She, singing, answered, “Yes, seeds. I love seeds, they are sweet and soft.”

Then the two flew off along the bank of the river, and ever since have lived happily together—The first birds of Spring.

The first man to answer the young woman’s call was a deer—the second was a bear; the third was a bird like herself.

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