

The Spirit of the Singing House

A Treasury Of Eskimo Tales
North American

*Easy
2 min read*

The singing house of an Eskimo village is used also for feasting and dancing, and always has a spirit owner who is supposed to remain in it all the time. Once a woman was curious about this spirit and wanted to see it. For a long time she had wanted to know more about this spirit of the singing house, but the villagers warned her that she would meet with a terrible fate if she persisted in trying to see it.

One night she could wait no longer, and went into the house when it was quite dark so the villagers would not see her go. When she had entered she said:

“If you are in the house, come here.”

As she could see and hear nothing, she cried, “No spirit is here; he will not come.”

“Here I am; there I am,” said a hoarse whisper.

“Where are your feet?” she asked, for she could not see him.

“Here they are; there they are,” said the voice.

“Where are your shins?” she asked.

“Here they are; there they are,” it whispered.

As she could not see anything, she felt of him with her hands to make sure he was there, and when she touched his knees she found that he was a bandy-legged man with knees bent outward and forward. She kept on asking, “Where are your hips? Where are your shoulders? Where is your neck?” And each time the voice answered, “Here it is; there it is.”

At last she asked, “Where is your head?”

“Here it is; there it is,” the spirit whispered, hoarsely.

But as the woman touched the head, all of a sudden she fell dead. It had no bones and no hair.

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