



# *Skinwalker and the Princess*

Madeline Nielsen

Retold Fairy Tales

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Once there was a mighty chief who had a noble and beautiful wife and together they had an even more beautiful daughter, known as the Raven Princess, because of her long black hair and nobility of spirit. Now it happened that the chief's wife went to bathe in the forest and didn't notice a strange owl following her. This owl was actually an evil skin walker who had desired to become chieftess herself. When the chief's wife arrived at the lake, the skinwalker woman changed into her human self and said to the wife, "How beautiful you are, noble one. Please allow me to help you get ready." The good woman agreed but as soon as she turned her back the witch threw a deer hide on her back and the wife immediately turned into a deer with black hair and ran off into the woods. The chief missed his wife sorely since she didn't return and after some time passed his people encouraged him to take a new wife since his first wife ran away, especially for the sake of Raven Princess. The skin-walker consulted her sisters and brothers what she should pick as the next chief's wife. Her eldest brother said to her, "Take 3 drops of your blood, a cactus plant, and a lock of your hair and bake it into a bread. Feed this to the chief and he will fall in love with you and make you his wife." The witch did just this and offered her dish to the chief. He ate it and started to feel deep love for the strange yet beautiful woman. So they were married, but the Raven princess was afraid of her new mother because of her hateful stare. The chief saw this and put his daughter under the care of the shamaness of the village. The little girl was happy, because her father loved her and was taught by the good shaman woman, knowing the language of animals and asking their aid. A year went by, and the skin-walker chieftess bore the chief another daughter, but her eyes were big and wide, and had shape instincts so this girl was known as Owl Girl. Owl Girl took after her mother greatly, she was cruel and selfish and was jealous of Raven Princess because she was more beautiful and the people loved her, especially the chief. So Owl Girl would pick on her half sister, ripping her dresses, pinching and pushing her, shoving her into the mud, calling Raven Princess names. Raven Princess told of this aggression to

her father and begged mercy for her sister, but the chief whipped owl girl and stayed more time with Raven Princess than Owl Girl. This drove his wife and Owl Girl with rage and thought of ways to injure her. The Shamaness took Raven Princess and showed a lovely deer to her. The deer spoke, "hello my daughter, I am your mother and I am always here to watch over you." Raven Princess was happy now because she could see her mother. Owl Girl begged the Shamaness to take her along as well, and Raven Princess allowed it. After witnessing the strange deer, Owl Girl told her mother all about it. The wicked woman knew this was the chief's first wife and demanded her husband to hunt for a deer with black hair. Raven Princess heard this and ran to her mother, crying, but the deer said, "Daughter this is my destiny, every creature dies but it's spirit never leaves. Let me give you my present to you before I am killed." The deer bowed and beautiful clothes and jewelry and boots, the very boots the mother wore when the witch turned her into a deer. "These shoes will only fit any child of my blood. When you are in danger, throw the necklace down and then the boot, they will save your life." Raven Princess said goodbye to her mother for the last time and ran back home with the gift. The deer was killed and there was a feast. But Raven Princess and the Shamaness did not partake in the feast. The chief was now away more frequently to protect his people from warring enemy tribes and the Shamaness was called to cure a mysterious illness of the people. These misfortunes were, of course, because of the skinwalker chieftess. Now Raven Princess was even more tormented and made to work when her father's back was turned. She never told anyone anymore, because Raven Princess knew the abuse would be worse from her stepmother and sister. One day word was received that the chief had returned victorious from the last of his battles and a great feast was planned for his return. Raven Princess' heart leapt but Owl Girl put a stop to that as she grabbed Raven Princess' clothes and threw ashes and mud on them to make them unsuitable to be seen. Owl Girl laughed as did her mother and the stepmother mixed ash and corn and ordered Raven Princess to sort it out. "You won't see your father or go to that feast until this been sorted entirely." With that the witch and her daughter dressed themselves to welcome the chief. Raven Princess called on the eagles and a coyote to help sort the corn and gave them bread and food as thanks. Then she went to go get her mother's gift of the beautiful clothes and jewelry which Owl Girl could not stain. She dressed and ran to join the celebration. Her heart was filled with joy as she sat next to her father at the place of honor. The people admired her and had a good time. When they needed to gather berries for the children, Raven Princess gladly offered. The skinwalker was delighted, for now she could corner her and kill her once and for all. When they were some way out, Raven Princess saw her stepmother with a knife and ran for her life and threw down the necklace she wore, it was magic and its light nearly blinded the witch, then Raven Princess tossed a shoe and it released a horde of bees which stung the witch painfully and her goal was foiled. So the feast had ended in joy and peace. The eldest son

of a neighboring chief known as Noble Eagle had come asking for Raven Princess in marriage when he suddenly noticed the sparkling necklace and the beautiful boot. He decided to find the woman who owned these things and take her instead as a bride. He came to the village and asked if anyone recognized it. The skinwalker immediately interfered and said "That is my daughter's, she lost them in the wood." So Owl Girl was summoned and put the boot on with ease and the necklace on. Noble Eagle escorted her but then noticed her foot was bleeding and she couldn't move. "I can't walk! It is so heavy!" The prince knew these were magic and this was not the girl. The Shamaness woman came and spoke, "you take a cursed one for wife, the one you seek is the one you wanted" Noble Eagle understood immediately and went to Raven Princess and saw she had a partner to the boot and was beautiful inside and out. A marriage feast was planned and the stepmother and Owl Girl had a wicked plan in mind. Owl Girl said to her sister, "My sister. It is an honor to be part of this ceremony. Please allow me one favor before you marry: allow me to bathe and prepare you." Raven Princess agreed and together the three went to the lake as Raven Princess undressed the witch threw Raven feathers over her and immediately became a beautiful bird and flew away. "Now we are rid of her and my beloved Owl Girl will become the bride in her stead." The two went back to the village and showed Raven Princess was carried away by the waters showing her wet clothes. All wept at this bitter loss as so many years ago, but Noble Eagle was forced to take Owl Girl as a bride. The Shamaness went with them back to the young prince's village and saw a Raven flying overhead and the woman gave this as a present to the prince. "Keep this between us" she said. The prince grew depressed at Raven Princess' death while Owl Girl tried her best to win his affections. She noticed the attention he lavished upon the bird and went to it immediately bit its head off and gobbled the body. But it made Owl Girl sick and she threw up the feathers. The prince wondered at the bird's disappearance then noticed the feathers lying nearby. The Shamaness said, "prince if you want your sweet wife back, take that necklace she wore and the boots. Place the boots in a cross and put the necklace on top of the feathers. She will come back to life." The prince did just this and immediately Raven princess appeared as she did on the day of the feast. Raven Princess returned and ordered Owl Girl to be bound and an entourage prepared to travel to her father's village. The witch grew frightened as she saw Raven Princess approaching. The chief had his people imprison his witch wife. Raven Princess took her necklace and put it around her stepmother's neck, and it tightened and Raven Princess forced her to tell the truth. She confessed to the terrible murder of his first wife and the harm caused to his daughter. He had a great pyre prepared for the both of them and burned Owl Girl and her mother on it and as for the skinwalker's brothers and sisters Noble Eagle and his men hunted them down and stabbed them till not a trace was left. The villages were safe again and finally Raven Princess and her mother were at peace. Then she went with Noble Eagle to be married and

remained happy, and may we all be happy

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