Indian Love Story
narrated by George Shields, Sr.
This is a true story. It happened hundreds of years ago, back in the days of the buffalo when the Indians roamed this country as freely as they pleased.

In those days Indian people of different tribes did not understand each other’s language. They fought each other some of the time. The fighting brought honor to the victor. An Indian that earned many coups from his enemy was considered a chief. What the whiteman calls a horse thief, long ago was considered honorable in the Indian society. The Indians made horse raids and advised the younger people that had horses not to be sleepy heads. “If you sleep late and don’t wake up at night, you are going to go around by foot. You won’t have any horses if you sleep too long. You will be easy prey for enemies.”
There was a young Indian man who was the only child of a married couple. He met a young Indian girl who was one of two children. The young man fell in love with this young girl and they talked of love, but they didn't touch each other. They would stand many feet apart, just close enough to hear what was being said to each other.

Time went on and there was to be a war party. The young man wanted to see his sweetheart before he left. After the sun went down he went to his girlfriend’s camp. He went near her tepee and the girl came out. It was early dusk and she saw the young man standing there so she went close enough to hear what he had to say. The young man said, "I came to tell you that tomorrow night a war party is leaving. I want to go. I want to make something of myself. When I come back we will talk to our parents. I will talk to my parents and you talk to your mother and father and perhaps we can marry."

While the man was talking the girl never said anything. She just bowed her head.

After he stopped talking the girl said, "Is that all you wanted to tell me?" The young man said, "Yes."

"Listen," she said, "you are suggesting that you want honor so people will recognize you, maybe as a chief. Why do you want that? Your father is a great chief, a respected man in his prime. Your people respect you as much as they respect your father. You don’t have to go. Some people who go on war parties never come back. What if that happens to you? What's going to happen to me? My heart is for you. My beliefs are for you. My love is for you. If I lose you I'm nothing. I don’t think I will go on living. I love you that much. I don’t want you to go. You don’t need anything else than what you have now. You are respected already. You ride good horses. You wear good clothes. You have plenty to eat. You live in a good tepee with your father and your mother. What more do you want?"
The man said, "I know all that but that isn't enough for me. I want a name for myself before I ask for a wife. I just have to go."

They argued back and forth. Finally, the girl gave up. She never said anything. She just stood there and hung her head. It was night so the young man could not see if the girl was crying.
He went back to his tepee and got a good robe fixed with porcupine quill work. It was fancy, one of the best robes. He took the robe back to the girl. "I'm going to go," he said. "While I'm gone I want you to keep this. When I come back I want to see this blanket and you. You and I will get married if our parents consent."

He left. He didn't even kiss her because they didn't do that in those days. The girl just stood there while he disappeared into the darkness.
The next night the war party went looking for their enemy. They found them and fought. The young man killed an enemy and took his scalp and other things for coups. They won the fight and started back. The return trip took many days.
One day they came to an old camp ground, the same ground which they left some long days before. The young man began looking around the campsite. He walked to the river and came back saying, "I found something. While we were gone someone must have died. The person was buried in the tepee in the woods over there."
The young man felt uneasy about saying somebody passed away. "I'll go over there and look," he said. When he came to the side of the tepee his heart fell but he didn't cry. The tepee was staked down solid all around. The doorway was entwined with sticks so that wolves, or coyotes could not get into that tepee and eat the dead person. He undid all the twigs and sticks and peeked inside. Just as soon as he stuck his head inside the doorway he recognized his blanket. There his sweetheart lay dead, covered with the blanket. When he saw this he wanted to make sure. He went over to the body and uncovered the face. Sure enough, it was his sweetheart. He went back to his war party.
He said, "That dead person is the girl that told me not to go on the war party. It is the girl I promised to marry when I came back. She told me that if I didn't listen to her and stay, she would die of loneliness. She told the truth. She died because of me. I'm the one that caused it so I'm going to stay here with her. She's a woman and she's out here all by herself. I'm a man and I should be with her."

Another wiser man said, "No, don't do that. She's been gone for a long time. Come back to our people with us. These are things that happen. If you stay here you can't bring her back. It's just going to be harder on you."

But the young man just wouldn't accept it.

Finally, the wise man said, "All right then. You stay but don't do any harm to yourself because of her. She's in the happy hunting grounds with the rest of her relatives that have gone before her."

"No, I won't do anything. I just want to stay with her for four days." the man said. "Take the horses and the scalp that I have and give them to my father. Tell him what I am doing and that I'm going to come back." The rest of the men left him and he went back to the camp, the burial grounds. He went inside the tepee and crawled in along side his sweetheart, right along side of her dead body. The man's body touched her dead body and he lay there. The first night he didn't sleep a wink. He knew he was laying beside a dead body. The second night he was able to sleep a little and the third night he slept well. The fourth night he slept very soundly. That morning it was just as if he were dreaming. He heard movement inside the tepee and a fire was burning. The wood of the burning fire was crackling. He just lay there because he thought he was dreaming. Suddenly, he heard a woman's voice. "Get up. You're going to eat." she said. But still he just lay there. He still thought he was dreaming. Again the woman spoke and the fourth time he opened his eyes. There was a fire inside the tepee, right in the middle, the way they used to make fires. There also was food cooking. His sweetheart was sitting there by the fire.
She said, “My folks sent me some food and we are going to eat. But before we eat I want to tell you this. I told you this was going to happen. Now you sleep by me. You don’t fear me. You don’t hate me. I pitied you again. After we eat we’re going to go home to your people, my people.” She looked like she did when she was alive. She had good clothes and nice combed hair. After they ate she said, “When we go out, fix this doorway the way you found it. Fix it so that no animal can get in there.”
They went to find their families. They traveled day after day. Finally the girl asked, "Are you hungry?" The young man said, "Yes, I'm hungry now." "Well, do you see that herd of buffalo over there? Go over there and kill that young fat buffalo. They won't see you because I will give you my power," she said. He killed the buffalo. The girl came over and they butchered the young buffalo. They cut out the best parts of it and cooked it.

They continued on towards home day after day. This was during the summer. The sky was clear. The grass was green. The trees by the river were covered with green leaves. Every now and then they saw a herd of buffalo. The buffalo would not pay any attention to them. They could not see them because the young woman gave the man that power.
They continued to travel until one day they came upon a high ridge. Far below by a river there was a large camp and the girl said, "Here are our people. Our parents live in this camp. We are going to go down there but I want you to go to your parent's place. That is where you belong anyway." They started down the ridge to the camp. As soon as they came close to the encampment all the dogs barked and barked. They smelled something and ran in the opposite direction. The dogs knew a soul was coming alongside the young man. That was why they were barking. The people felt strange. A man was coming and the dogs were barking at him. The dogs had not done that before.
The young man went to his parent's camp. His mother was very glad to see him. She cried and cried hanging onto her son. She said, "My son, I'm glad you came back. We heard what you did and we were scared. Our enemies are still near that place. I'm glad you came back. Sit down and drink this water. I will feed you." He sat down on his bed. His parents had fixed it just like he had been sleeping on it.

He sat down and his sweetheart sat down beside him. The people could not see her because a soul cannot be seen by a living person. The man's mother began to feed him. "I'm going to feed you. Your father just killed a young buffalo and we have good meat." she said. She fed him and put some water beside the food. Before he ate the food he took the water and the food and put it beside him, right in front of the girl. He continued talking to his parents and after awhile he took the food and ate it. Everytime they fed him he did that. He wouldn't touch the food and water until he took it and put it on his left side. Finally, his mother noticed the strange way he was acting.

One day, after the young man went outside his father came in. The mother said to him, "My son has been acting very strangely. He never acted like this before. I have noticed his strange ways since he came back." The father said, "I'm going to visit somebody and ask why our son is acting so strangely. Something must be bothering him. I don't know what it is." The father left to visit another camp.
After awhile the young man came back to his mother’s tepee. The girl’s soul went wherever he went. His mother said, “My son, you’ve been acting very strangely. Tell the truth. Why are you acting like this?” The young man said, “Mother, the girl that passed away at the old camp is with me. She’s right here.” When he said that the girl smiled. After that his mother set two places, one for the girl’s soul and one for her son. When his mother did that the girl was very happy.
The young man would eat everything, but the girl's food was always left uneaten. Time went on until a war party was getting ready to leave. The girl said to the young man, "You have to make a name for yourself so we must go along. You said you liked horses. It is time to get some." They went in broad daylight and took horses from the enemy. It was like the horses strayed off by themselves. No one could see the man because the girl gave him the power to be invisible. He made many horse raids, each time getting many horses. He became a big chief.
The soul of the girl stayed with the young man for four years. One day the girl said to the young man, "I have been living with you for four years. I promised that. Now four years are up and everything that you have been wishing for on this earth you have with my help. I cannot stay longer than what I have promised so this is the end. I have a sister. She is a very beautiful woman. I want you to marry my sister and always be good to her. She will take my place. I want you to love my sister as much as you have loved me. You and she are going to have a very good life from this day on. Take my sister as your wife. Always respect her and love her." The young man told his mother what this girl said. The man's mother went to the girl's parents and told them what her son said. They were willing and happy. "These are our departed daughter's words and we cannot refuse them. We will do as she wishes." They had a big gathering among the man's relatives and friends, as well as the bride-to-be's relatives and friends. In those days they exchanged gifts on both sides. The couple was married by an old warrior who performed the marriage ceremony and they lived happily ever after.
Booklets available in the Level IV sequence are listed below. Numbers refer to the Planned Sequence of use in the Teacher’s Manual. Materials developed by these tribes and others in the Northwest are included in the Levels I, II and III sequences.

1. **Warm Springs Animal Stories**  
The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon

2. **Snail Women at Squ'a'le**  
The Suquamish Tribe of the Port Madison Reservation

3. **Blue Jay - Star Child/ Basket Woman**  
Muckleshoot Tribe

4. **Assiniboine Woman Making Grease**  
Assiniboine Tribe of the Fort Peck Reservation

5. **Coyote**  
The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon

6. **How the Summer Season Came**  
Assiniboine Tribe of the Fort Belknap Reservation

7. **Little Weasel’s Dream**  
Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation

8. **Fort Hall Stories**  
Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall Reservation

9. **The Bear Tepee**  
Northern Cheyenne Tribe

10. **Sioux Stories and Legends**  
Sioux Tribe of the Fort Peck Reservation

11. **Kootenai Stories**  
Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation

12. **Chief Mountain’s Medicine**  
Gros Ventre Tribe from the Fort Belknap Reservation

13. **Coyote the Trickster**  
Burns Paiute Reservation

14. **Running Free**  
Shoalwater Bay

15. **Salish Coyote Stories**  
Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation

16. **Coyote and the Cowboys**  
Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall Reservation

17. **Napi’s Journey**  
Blackfeet Tribe

18. **Warm Springs Stories**  
The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon

19. **Tepee Making**  
Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation

20. **Baskets and Canoes**  
Skokomish Tribe

21. **Warrior People**  
Blackfeet Tribe
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