

Making a Wish

As told by Nora Thompson Dean

and retold by Delaware storyteller Mike Pace at a storytelling event

This story I'm going to tell you is a very old story among the Delawares. This is a story that has a moral to it. The story is about a young hunter who was out one day and he was hunting for a deer to bring back to his family. And as he walked through the forest he came upon a strange sight and he saw some bones that were exposed on the ground. As he looked at those bones he circled around them. It was a very strange sight and he thought maybe I should not touch these bones but I should go back and have one of our medicine men come and help out. He went back to the village and got a medicine man and as they approached where those bones were the medicine man also circled around them. He said to the young man, "These bones have a lot of power. There is great medicine here and I can sense it."

So they picked those bones up and they took them back to the village and when they returned to the village the medicine man laid the bones out. And all the other people in the village gathered around and the medicine man said, "These bones have great power. What I'm going to do since these bones have great power and you can gather a great wish from these bones I'm going to crack them up and I'm going to give a piece to each one of you and you can make a wish." And he told the people as he gave each of them a piece of the bone, "Think very hard about what you were going to wish for. Make sure and make the right decision. As you make that decision you drop that piece of bone in the fire and your wish will come true."

As each villager came by and took a piece of the bone they approached the fire and thought about what they wanted to wish for and dropped the piece of bone into the fire. Now some people wished to be great hunters and some people wished that they could be great leaders. And as each person came by there was one strange man who was standing off to one side and he came up and he picked up one of those pieces of bone and he approached the fire and just before he threw

that in the fire his wish was that he wanted all the women to love him and he threw it in the fire.

And the very next day many of those wishes that had been made were coming true. The men when they were celebrating went to hunt and as they left the village they didn't get too far away and all at once they heard screaming and yelling, people yelling as loud as they could, and they thought something had attacked the village. And as they returned to the village all of these women were standing around in a circle and as they cleared away that man who wanted every woman to want him had been torn to pieces and each woman had a piece of him. So the moral of this story is if you get a chance to make a wish make sure you think long and hard about what you wish for because it may not turn out the way you want it to.

Wanishi. (Thank you)