

## Rock-Shut-Up

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Oklahoma

One time long ago there was a fellow going out hunting with his wife and a little boy, his nephew. After they got a ways, the woman decides she does not like this boy, because it is not hers or her man's, although it is his nephew. When they eat, they give the boy the skimmings from the soup and nothing else. After a while, the woman hated the boy.

And finally the man took the boy away from the camp to where there was a hole in the ground, not far from where they camped. He told the boy, a little bit of a boy, "You go into that hole as far as you can go, into the ground." So the boy went in there, and this man picked up the biggest rock he can carry and set it upon the hole so the boy can't get out. And he went back to the camp and left the boy there.

Not very long after that, the animals found there was a boy shut up in that hole. The buffalo tried to push the rock to one side so that the boy can get out. But he can't move the rock. A bear came along and told the buffalo, "I can take that rock away with just one hand." So the bear threw the rock away from that hole. The boy in there was pretty near starved.

The buffalo told the bear, "You are the only one who could take care of him and raise him up." The bear took the boy to a she-bear who had young ones. The boy thought they were children and never knew the difference -- where they lived, in a hollow tree, the boy never knew any difference -- he thought they were his folks sure enough.

In the fall of the year, all these bears went out pecan hunting, and while they were picking them up -- there would be a lot of old ones in a bunch -- they heard some hounds and someone whooping, following the dogs. So the bears ran -- every one -- towards their home, and this human boy and a girl bear and a boy bear ran to their tree and ran into the hole. The mother bear had told the kid they were his brother and sister. There they lived. Finally the boy was pretty good sized.

One time, when they were running into their house, they saw a little light at the door. And this mother bear went up and licked that light off, and went back to her bed again. She looked up again, and there is that little light again at the door. She went up and licked it off again and told the young ones, "They will not find us now."

In the fall again, they went out pecan hunting again. The bear-brother says, "Let's play a trick on these old fellows. When they have a lot of pecans, let's go way off from the crowd." They did this. And the bear said, "I'll bark like a dog and you can whoop." So they did that.

All the bears who had been pecan hunting ran to their holes where they lived, and the boys went back to the place where they had been gathering the pecans. When they got there, they found big piles of pecans, which the big bears had gathered. They took all they could carry, up to where they lived.

When they got there, the mother asked them, "Did you hear those dogs barking?" The boys said, "Yes. We did that to get the pecans these old grandpas had gathered and give them a scare." She said, "You go and tell those grandpas that you did it, so they can get their pecans. And take these back where you got them. The boys did that.

And finally they went out pecan hunting again, and they got all they wanted and went to where they lived. When they got home, the old mother saw the light again on the door. She went and licked it off and went back to bed. But when she looked up again, there was another light which she jumped up and licked off. She did that from morning until noon. She told the young ones, "They will find us now. I can't rub that light off that door."

She said the man who was to find them wore owl feathers on his head. So she told the boy, "When they call us 'Come out,' I want you to get out first. Take your little bow and arrow and stick that out with your hand first, so they won't kill us. If you don't do that, they'll sure kill us."

That afternoon, that man came up there and knocked on that tree, and said, "There are bears in there." So he made a whoop. So the people began coming from every direction. He said, "There are two or three bears in here." And they got up there and told them to get out.

The mother bear told the boy, "Now, go out, so they won't kill us. You go first." But nobody wants to get out. And they heard them say outside, they are going to build a fire and throw some down that hole. And the mother bear told the boy, "Get out! They will throw fire in here. Hold your bow and arrow first." But he would not go. So they threw fire in there, and the mother bear got out, but she said, "They will sure kill me." Then she got out, and they shot and killed her.

The other boy, the bear, got out. And they shot him. Then there were only the sister-bear and the boy. She said, "I am not going out. They can burn us up in here, but I am not going." So they threw more fire in, and the sister-bear put it out. But she said, "I am not going to put it out anymore. You must go now." And the boy got out.

He took his bow and arrow and stuck them out the hole first, before he came himself. When he got out, they told him to get off the tree, which he did. They told him, "We never would have killed the others if you had come out first." They asked him if there was another in there. He said, "Yes, my sister is back in there." So they called her out.

She got out. And they made her get off the tree. Before she did so, one fellow got tobacco and tied it on this young bear's neck. They talked to her, and told her, "We would never have killed your mother if the boy had got out first." And they took the boy with them.

When they got home where he used to live, he knew his uncle's name. He now had the power to kill any game, for he knew where they stayed. These bears called the boy Ahsënkèphùnt, "Rock-shut-up." That was his name.