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**Version 7, told by Charley Stevens**

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**The Narrator**

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Charley Stevens is in his seventies. Born near Fort Selkirk, he originally spoke a Northern Tutchone dialect but now uses Southern Tutchone, since he has long travelled and lived with his wife's people. His wife who was, as noted, a younger sister of Albert Isaac (Version 6), died in early 1970.

Charley and his wife were the last people to leave Aishihik. They had spent the winter of 1967 absolutely alone in the isolated village, which is about eighty miles from the Alaska Highway. Supplies were flown into them by the Indian Agent but they were forced to come out to the Highway in the summer. Significantly enough, Charley and his wife chose to settle in a place away from his two brothers-in-law. Since Charley has been badly crippled for several years and is almost blind, he had to rely on the two men during the last years when the three couples formed the nucleus of Aishihik. Now he is not so dependent on them. As noted, there has been trouble between Charley's children and those of his brothers-in-law but the crucial events had not yet occurred when Charley told me the bear story in April 1963.

During the fall of 1962 I had seen

relatively little of Charley. He was ailing and could not get about easily in the extreme cold; nor was he particularly communicative when I visited him. He knew that I was seeing a good deal of Chief, and he was probably sulking a bit as well as feeling sick. However, by spring his improved health and growing interest and pride in his own ability to sing and tell stories had led him to call on me increasingly often. Also I had by then done him a good many favours.

As explained in the main text, like Chief, Charley had been a first-rate hunter, but he was being plagued in his old age by guilt over his over-killing of animals and the fact that he had not always given animal corpses the proper ritual observances. He attributed almost every ill that had befallen him to the malevolence of animals.

In his native tongue, Charley is perhaps a better singer and raconteur than Chief, although I have more difficulty following his English. He is an excellent mime, with a very mobile face, and he throws himself into his story-telling with gusto. As noted earlier [Version 6], the Chief and his wife, and Charley's own wife were all present when he told the story.

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**The Story**

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Old time, if an Indian kills too many bears, he puts feathers all over his head and burns his head. That makes the bear a good friend, you see. And old times, they sing a song. I heard the song when I was a little boy. If they don't do that and fill the head with feathers, he will fight you and kill you. That is why the Indians make good friends with the bear. The bear is an Indian first time, you know. [I commented that I had

heard that a girl had married a bear long ago.]

That song for the bear is a dance song. He used to dance too.

...When he has killed his tenth bear, then he makes good friends with the bear. He puts the bear eyes in the place where the sun hits in the morning, in a crack in the tree stump on the side hill. . . .

The Indians are drying king salmon,

and that girl picks berries. The women go out to get blueberries. The girl goes with the bunch of old ladies. She is *tsatcAn* [lit. hat person, i.e., a girl at puberty, who wears a hat or hood].

She picks fast. A bear wants to cheat and take her away. The bear helps the girl [pick berries].

After a while the girl learns that that man is really a bear. He tells her,

"We are going to go away. I'll marry you! "

That girl leaves all her clothes behind at the place where the bear takes her away. Maybe at that time right then the bear gives her [some of] his own clothes. He just gives her a little fur, they say.

That winter and fall, they hunt and fish. The Indians dry king salmon. They did that [too?]. The girl sleeps. Nothing is left. The bear takes it away. He eats it. He caches it right in his body [indicates right under his arms].

They had hunted gopher, too, and killed lots. The Indian girl skinned them out and hung them up. She gets up in the morning and there is nothing to show for it.

After a while she asks, "What are you doing with those gophers? I am working for nothing! They never show up! "

"We are going to use them for winter time—use them for winter! "

I don't savvy [know] how the bear saves them.

Every moon that is coming, they turn around and get up. He goes this way [reaches into his armpit], and he gives some gophers to his wife. And from this one [indicates the other armpit—the left one (?)], he eats himself. All kinds of food. King salmon—dry ones too. Blueberries too. [Charley added the 'blueberries' when I read the story back to him at his request.]

"Now we are going to make camp and go in." Now they make camp.

Still she thinks about it Indian way. She misses her family.

The first place is a bushy place, and her husband wants to make camp.

She says, "Gee! I don't like it here. It has to be an open place where the sun hits. That's the place I like," she tells him. Her oldest brother hunts sheep all the time in the mountains in the open places—in good open places on the hillsides.

She says, "I like it here now."

"All right."

"Well, all right. You dig the grass. We'll stay inside."

The bear takes the grass out and makes a big hole. And the girl rolls like a ball out of grass and hard berries. She takes grass about that long [two feet], and she hangs it [the ball?] out on her brother's trail, so he will get it quickly.

They stay half the winter. A moon comes, and they turn around. And they have to eat. They sleep again.

All winter they stay inside the hole. The people hunt. Her brother hunts. He's got a dog. The dog chases sheep. And the sheep goes on a high rock, so the dog can't get up. And the sheep butts [at the dog], and the Indian kills him.

That bear, he dreams.

"You, you showed us up! So they have got to find us now! You showed us up! "

Q. How did the bear know?

A. He dreamed it. Maybe he is a good doctor.

The bear's brother-in-law, his own brother-in-law caught the bear. The dog was going to watch.

The bear dreams. He gets up.

"What are you going to do if I get killed?" he asks his wife.

"I don't know. I don't savvy. Maybe they are going to kill me too," she tells him.

Early in the morning he dreams bad.

## The Girl Who Married the Bear

He tries to hide, but it's like [somebody?] shows the trail.

"No, you've shown the trail. That's why we got found out," he tells his wife.

Well, after a while he feels as if he was being watched. That dog barks. He comes to the hole and barks. The bear grabs the dog and pulls it inside and gives it to his wife. "You hold it!" he tells her. She holds it. Maybe she talks. She just grabs the dog and pulls it in. It doesn't bite.

The people know the dog will get killed. Well, the bear tries. They say that he used to hang his teeth up. When the bear tries to get away, he goes back and takes those teeth. He hears somebody talking, that girl.

"Hey! What are you doing? I hear you telling my brother-in-law to talk!"

[I evidently asked Charley why the bear threw away his teeth.]

He tells his wife he doesn't want to kill his brother-in-law. He tells her,

"When he kills me, cover my head with feathers. Make *k'owakan!*" [i.e., *gowakan*, deer, Tlingit, the term used for a peace hostage. See McClellan n.d. b: Chapter 16.]

I forgot the song. [Charlie turns to his wife questioningly.] I know it, but I forgot it. Maybe Albert knows. [No sign from Albert, who is listening closely.]

Well, he gets up. He doesn't bother [to protect himself?]. He walks easy. They have bows and arrows like that. [Charley indicates a drawn bow.] Gee! Like that on both sides. He rolls down. [Charley pantomimes the shooting of the bear and the bear's death.]

She holds the dog yet.

Well, they take the bear to the bottom, and they want to make a fire. That's the time he comes—the dog. She turns it loose, lets it go. He gets away.

Her brothers talk, "That's funny. How come the bear doesn't kill it?"

When they shoot their bows and arrows, the shafts of the arrows fall. The other brothers tell the youngest brother, "Go get the arrow shafts."

That girl comes out. She picks up all the arrow shafts and ties them together and throws them down where her brother will find them.

So the younger brother finds them and takes them, so he can take them back down.

"Don't touch anything," she says, "Go back."

"Brother, is that you, eh? You look like my brother!" the girl says. She stays inside. She has no clothes.

"Does my mother still stay there?"

"Yes."

"You tell her to bring my clothes. You come with my clothes tomorrow!" No, the same night, I think.

That's the time she tells her brother. "You have killed your own brother-in-law," she told them. "You guys are going to make *k'owakan*, so there is no trouble." That's what she says. She tells it right to her brother.

And the oldest brothers are down there—the three of them. And the youngest brother packs down the bundle of arrow shafts and gives it to them.

"Why do you carry them that way?"

"I didn't do that myself. I see them just like that in the bear hole. I take them out that way."

They think about their sister. "My God! That's the one!"

"My sister says, 'That's your own brother-in-law you killed. You must make *k'owakan*' she tells me."

[When I read the story to Charley, at this point he said: "That girl has fur around her feet, and on her arms, and some on her legs." In A. to Q. he said: "She never got rid of it. She can't take it off."]

And they make a fire and put

feathers on the bear's head. And they leave it for a while. They don't touch it. They cut the head off.

[Charley turns to Bessie and again asks her if she knows the song.]

They sing a song, and they throw the head in the fire. And they stand around the fire and sing—no—talk Chilkat. They don't eat it. They throw it away. They are sorry they killed their brother-in-law. That's why they don't eat it.

That same night the mother runs out there. She takes her own clothes and gives them to the girl. But she doesn't go into the hole; that girl is [part?] bear.

"Throw them this way," she tells her mother. "My mother, you go back pretty quick. I smell you too strong!"

[When I read the story back to Charley, he added here: "She turns different. She turns bear. That's why."]

She tells her mother, "You go home pretty quick. Tomorrow make a camp a little further [towards home?]."

The camp was about a quarter of a mile away [from where the people stayed], on top of the hill. She stayed there a little while—two nights. Her mother stands near her, and the girl says,

"Gee! My mother! You are too strong! It's pretty hard on me smelling you. Stand a little further from me. It's too hard for me, when I'm just learning [to be human]."

She stays two [more?] nights.

The next day they make a camp a little closer. She tells her mother to give her some things, a blanket. She stays inside and sleeps. Two times she stays alone.

[Then] she comes into a house alongside the camp. She makes a little camp. After a while she learns [how to live with humans again?]. She learns. Now no more [is she partly bear]. It's all right. She stays on the other side, in

a brush camp. The camp-fire is in the middle.

Next, in the spring time, she has two boys. They have fur on the front and back. They are young ones. Their grandma pulls the hair and throws it all away. [This does not jibe with Charley's earlier statement.] She pulls it. She gets it all out and throws it away. They don't want to be bears. She puts Indian clothes, little clothes on them.

After they killed the bear, maybe people went for moose or caribou killing. Nobody is in camp. They go to get meat. Just the girl and her kids and her own brothers are there.

They say, "Let's make little bows and arrows."

They have a bearskin, and they tell their sister,

"Sister, can we shoot at you like a bear? We are going to shoot with bows and arrows."

"No! No! I am going to turn to bear for good! I can't do it!"

They bring the bearskin. She gets tired. All day they do it [i.e., beg her to put it on].

She takes the skin and puts it on, and just then she turns to a grizzly bear. And the two young ones come and walk like bears. And they are two bears too.

And the two brothers say, "Ha, ha, ha!" Then just she bites them [on their necks], and she throws them in her arms. She kills them all.

She goes away. She'll no more turn to Indian now. Now she is a grizzly bear and mean all of the time. If her brothers hadn't done that, she would have been all right.

Now that's all.

Well, her own brothers try to catch her. They fool. But they can't get her. She goes way up high, but not on the glacier. She can't become an Indian any more. That's why the bear is mean to Indians now. That's all now.