



Victoria Bouvier
Calgary, AB
Metis Nation of Alberta Zone III Calgary
29 yrs.

Nipin and the Rocks

Many moons ago, in a Cree Village, an elder sat amongst children, some small, others getting to the age of adolescence. This elder, who was called Mosom by all, told stories each day just after mid day meal time when the tummies of the smallest of kin were fullest. These stories were passed down from his Mosom, who heard the stories from his Mosom, until they could be traced back to gifts that were given from the spirit world. For each story that Mosom was told by his Mosom, he received a rock to signify the existence and the importance of the stories that belong to the Cree people.

One day as Mosom told the creation story, a young boy called Nipin, sat close by. Nipin was not listening to the story, but yet admiring the rocks. He was bewildered and mesmerized as he gazed at the array of colors that permeated the surface, as well as the smoothness and shine from the rocks' perfect formation. Becoming entranced with the appearance of the story rocks, this young boy could only conceive of one thought; those rocks must become his.

As Mosom finished telling the story, Nipin was conjuring up a plan to take the rocks and have them for his very own. That night, as the village slept, the young boy, crept out of his tee pee to that of where Mosom slept. Sneaking into the tee pee, the boy searched for the rocks, until finally coming across a soft buffalo hide pouch that of which contained the story rocks. As he set his eyes upon the pouch his mouth formed into a snide smile, indicating his instant gratification and the greed that he felt deeply within. With the pouch tucked tightly under his arm, Nipin slowly and carefully retreated back to his tee pee, making sure not to be seen. After Nipin returned back to bed, he unwrapped the precious rocks. While looking upon them, he knew that in his hands he held magnificent gifts that he was happy to now call his own.

The next day after the mid day meal, when the children's bellies were full, they gathered around Mosom to sit and listen to the story of the day. With all of the children's eyes set upon him, Mosom looked onto the children and said with sadness, "My children, I have no stories to tell you today." With visible disbelief the children replied, "Why not Mosom?" As Mosom used his walking stick to push himself up from his seat on the ground, he answered, "Because the rocks are gone, and when they are gone, so are the stories. Maybe tomorrow they will return." The children looked at each other unsure what to do; slowly each child wandered off to find something to occupy their time.

Passing a group of children playing on the banks of the river, Nipin asked "Why are you not at story time?" A small girl replied, "The rocks are gone, and so there are no more stories." Nipin smugly walked away from the children because he knew that those rocks were now his, and therefore could take in their essence at anytime. Becoming excited with this thought, he ran back to his tee pee to admire the exquisite stones that lay in the buffalo hide pouch. As he pulled the rocks out from the pouch, he noticed that something had changed. The rocks that he held in

his hands were now jagged, rough and grey. The smile that previously existed had now left his small mouth, and was replaced with a slight frown. Nipin questioned himself on why the rocks' formations were changing. The young boy became slightly angry, and with disgruntlement, he shoved the stones back into the pouch and left the tee pee. As he stormed away, Nipin secretly hoped that when he looked upon the magnificent gifts again, they would be restored to their previous forms.

The next day, when the children returned to hear the stories, again they were turned away. Mosom sat by the tree that is used for shade during story time, and watched the children as they walked away with their heads hung low enough to touch their chins. The heart of the humble elder was filled with great despair, so much so, that he wondered if he would ever tell the stories of his people again. Mosom feared that if the rocks were to never be returned to their rightful place the stories would be lost forever.

As Nipin looked over to the tree that provided shade to his dismayed Mosom, he became aware that the atmosphere in the village had changed dramatically. The children were not playing with great excitement as usual, and the adults in the tribe, became more concerned with the loss of the stories. Noticing that sadness was becoming of Mosom, Nipin returned to the buffalo hide pouch that was hidden beneath his blankets. Reaching into the pouch for the second time, Nipin's fingertips felt the shattered pieces of the rocks. Pulling out the remnants of the once beautiful stones, Nipin became angrier with what he saw. The rocks that he wanted to call his own were not the same. They were becoming blackened, fractured, and unsightly. The young boy longing to have the exquisite stones reappear, dropped the minute pieces back into the pouch and hid it once again under his blanket.

The next day, after Nipin had finished his chores for the morning, he returned to the tee pee, to inspect the pouch one last time. Nipin retrieved the buffalo hide pouch from beneath the blanket. As he gazed upon the hide, he hoped that the treasured items would have returned to their original state. He opened the pouch and peered inside. Nipin's eyes became wide, and his mouth let out a gasp of air in disbelief. The rocks had deteriorated even more. The once exquisite items were now merely a pile of black sand that had settled into the bottom crevices of the pouch. His excitement that encased the idea of the items had now disintegrated along with the rocks. Nipin did not want to have these rocks in his possession any longer! When the village went to sleep for the night, Nipin would sneak back to Mosom's tee pee and return the pouch to the place where he had once found it. When the moon was highest in the sky, Nipin slipped away and returned the buffalo hide pouch to their rightful place.

The morning after the pouch was replaced, the sun rose and the village continued in their usual ways. Mosom returned to his seat under the tree and waited for the children. When all of the children were seated, Nipin included, Mosom pulled from his lap the buffalo hide pouch that once contained the stunning rocks. Mosom reached inside the pouch and pulled out the most eye-catching rock of all. This rock shone as bright as the sun, and was filled with the deepest blue of the sky. Nipin, filled with shock, stood quickly and shrieked "This can't be!" Looking upon Nipin with the gentlest nature Mosom replied, "But it is my boy." After several moments passed, Mosom spoke, "These rocks are gifts from the universe, and only when they are in their rightful spot do they reveal their power. Do not be fooled, these are not my rocks, but all of ours. I am only the story teller, the stones tell me the stories that I then relate to you." Nipin, now sunken in his stance replied, "Mosom, but I saw them turn to sand, how can this be of the same ones?" The elder took a moment, glancing out across the field to the village, and back again to the children, he responded, "My boy, these rocks are meant to be shared with the community, not just one

person. Their appearance yes is beautiful, but the stories that need to be told hold more significance and beauty.” “I am sorry, I took the rocks” Nipin said. “I know you are, come now, sit with me, hold this rock and help me tell the story.”

The children sat with Mosom and Nipin that day and listened with more reverence than ever. The children never forgot the day the rocks were returned, nor did the children that came after.