



Once Upon A Time When There Were Stories

Since ancient times, storytelling has been the bridge that connected people, cultures, nations, and more. It brought comfort to the ailing, laughter to the downtrodden, and news that the king was dead. There were no radios, televisions, Internet or cell phones. There were just fascinating (albeit somewhat eccentric) people on mules known as Storytellers.

Sometimes storytelling is perceived strictly as a children's event or as being just entertainment. That's a misnomer. While it certainly *can* be entertaining, it is so much more. It's how we can learn, how we can connect as human beings, how we can perceive the world and our role within it. Storytelling is life at its finest, because around the Fire of Story we come into Sacred Space where we are accepted and loved just on the grounds of being. Nothing is asked of you by the storyteller beyond your listening with open hearts and minds.

Sometimes people ask me, "Will I be changed by the story?" and I just smile because in my heart I am whooping "Yes! Yes! If you are lucky you will be changed forever!"

Story is a verb. Story is active. Story is participatory and will quietly make its way into your presence and follow you forever.

Story returns unexpectedly. Even if you pay no attention to a teller, the story goes into your heart and returns at the precise moment you need it most. People just don't realize Story claims them even when they are preoccupied.

Often the question arises "When did you become a storyteller" and I reply, "When I was born." It is a gift. It is a need. And it is innate to the very makeup of being a human.

And it is in all of us.

I firmly believe everyone—men, women, children, and selected wolves—are storytellers. It's in everything we do regardless what we call it. Monday morning in the office is spent discussing what happened over the weekend. Dating is just mutual storytelling until it catches fire. Families talking about "when I was your age" or "whatever happened to your crazy Aunt Ethel" demonstrate the very core of oral tradition. There's not a culture (past or present) that doesn't exhibit storytelling as essential. There's not a spiritual belief system that doesn't embrace storytelling as its foundation.

So come join us in Story. You are invited and welcomed into this ancient tradition. Who knows? You just might end up telling stories yourself!

May each of you live happily ever after.

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