

The Boy in the Moon

Kay Spitzer

(Note from Professor DeLeon: For this assignment, I introduced students to the concept of the oral griot, who was the storyteller for the villages. Then, students read several folktales and had to discern what the lessons and morals were within each tale. After having done that exercise, they had to create their own folktale. This wonderful tale was thereby created.)

Long ago, there was a boy. This boy had inexplicably white skin, platinum blonde hair, and grey eyes. He had no home, and no family to call his own. Due to his complexion, soft tone, and gentle nature, he was ostracized by the villagers. They ridiculed him just because he was different. During the day he would hide from those who antagonized him. But in the darkness of the moonless nights (for there was no moon) when the village was asleep, he would sit upon the beach, feeling the tides pull at him, and was soothed by the gentle breezes washing over him.

With each setting of the sun, he would offer up his hardships and forgive the cruelty of the villagers. He would become one with the ocean, his breath rising and falling with the rhythm of the waves. The creatures of the ocean had no fear of this gentle boy. Seagulls would land on his shoulder, and share their catches with him. Dolphins would beach themselves just to say hello, and he would gently guide them back into the waves.

But his best friend was the matronly sea turtle. She would come up and sit with him listening to the sad story of his life. And with each dawn, as she swam away, she took his anguish with her. As the sun rose, he would rise, brush the sand off of his garments, and return to his hidden shelter.

One year, the village had a particularly poor harvest, and being the arrogant humans that they are, the villagers decided it could not possibly be their fault, so they looked for someone else to blame. Of course, their ire fell upon the boy. They drew their weapons and went in search of him. He hid as best as he could, but in the waning light of the twilight, one of the other boys from the village spotted him. As he ran through the forest, tears streaming down his face, he sought the only place he ever felt safe: the ocean.

Expecting another comfortable evening with their friend, the sea creatures were surprised at the distress that their young friend was in. Without a second thought, they came to his defense as he waded deeper into the surf. The sea turtle came up to meet him where the shore dropped into the ocean. "Grab onto my shell," she said. When he did as she instructed, she started to glow. The light brighter and brighter, until it was so intensely bright, the villagers were forced to look away. And in a flash, they were gone.

The next night, and forever since, when you look up into the sky, you can see the forgiving face of the white-haired boy. He will listen to your tales of woe and give you heartfelt sympathy. Oooh - and wherever his tears touched the earth grew a flower that blooms only in the darkness of the moonlit night.

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