

Ayvanga, another well known story that was never written

Nome, Alaska
April 23, 1976

Dear Editor:

Too bad, I should have send this famous Eskimo story sooner. I especially was putting in writing, so Howard could read it.

But here it is, it is another one of well-known stories here, but was never written.

Hope you can put in paper like Howard Rock use to.

Sincerely yours,
Grace Slwooko

Ayvanga

Once upon a time there was an Eskimo girl who was taken into the sea, by some supernatural power and was found when her brothers went on a search for her. And they got her back after going through many hard experiences.

At first a bunch of kids were playing outdoors in summer time. Each girl chose a boy partner and one girl, whose brother's name was Ayvanga, was left out without one. All came even, so the girl jumped and sat on a large walrus skull and said, "This will be mine." And the girl after setting there a while started getting up, but couldn't. She got stuck setting there and couldn't get up. All the other kids pulled, but the walrus skull came off with her, even the earth around it, too. And it started rolling down to the sea with the girl stuck to it. And the girl was taken by the skull and was gone.

And the girl's brothers started right away asking for people that do things supernaturally. And there was a girl and her grandfather that knew how to find the girl. So Ayvanga, the girl's eldest brother, came to the girl and her grandfather and was urgently asking to know, if they would tell him how to find his sister. So they told him, what to do in order to find his sister. "You have to find a kind of wood that will be fit to make a boat, that can out go the ducks," they told Ayvanga. (There are certain kind of ducks that go very swiftly. So that was the kind of wood they were to find, in order to make a boat that would go fast enough to pass the place to get to their sister, only way.)

So, Ayvanga and his four younger brothers got busy, on boat making. They would find one kind of wood and make a boat. When they try them at the shore and when it is slower than the ducks, they would break it to pieces and throw it away and would try another kind of wood. They did several boats this way, every time one didn't beat the ducks in flight, they would break it into pieces and throw it away. But then finally they found one kind of wood when made for a boat that beat the ducks in flight. So the brothers got ready to go out to the sea with this boat and taking the girl that show them along, but not the grandfather. And the men rowed and rowed out at the sea. Then pretty soon they came to the sea where many dead seals and birds were seen. And they soon found out, it was the two cliffs that really move back and then forth and clash. So, to pass them, the men strove and push in as soon as the cliffs took their journey back, the men pressed forward, rowing with their paddles furiously. When they were just about half ways the cliffs started coming back, furiously they rowed. And they were at the other end when they

clashed, and they barely pass, the end of their skin boat break off. So they got beyond the clashing cliffs. And that was why the boat that fast was needed, without this they never would have seen their sister. And they rowed on to the mainland. At the mainland they landed and looked around. When they found out that there was no one around, they put their boat upside down and stayed under it overnight and watched. And during this time they saw a man walking nearby. So one of them ran to him. When he got to him, he asked if he has anything in his ears. That was an expression for asking if anyone know if any new happening. The man answered right away, "No, nothing." When the man seem to not want to tell, the stranger offered, to give him his sword. The swords or knives were of great value. So the man told him right away, that their chief has brought a new girl at the village close by. And he told all about their cruel king. He told how the cruel chief treated his women. Right away the stranger killed the man and hid him under the sand, in fear of him getting them known.

So the men were on spying knowledge where the village was and the girl. In darkness they climbed the nengloo at the village, the largest one, thinking it to be his, when getting there. So they looked in through the opening at the top, they saw their sister with other people and she was cutting some meat like seals or some big catch. Then they tried getting her to know them. But she just didn't know for a while but was, saying that she sure were having ears ringing, like if some new thing was going to happen and was throwing pretend sacrifices to it like they do for custom or it was the custom.

But she soon found them out and very shakingly told them, that they sure are going to be in trouble as the chief was very dangerous man. The men told her that they were ready to meet anything on her behalf or to get her back. And the men were hiding, without seen in the village for some time. And the girl started to be very much troubled, she won't even eat at meals at times. Then the cruel chief was wondering what was happening to her. Then he asked if she has seen her brothers anywhere, if this might be the cause. In answer the girl told him, saying, "How can I be seeing my brothers, I am taken. far, far away, how can they be seen anywhere, as you have taken me so cruelly. Now I cry, because I'm tired of the food I eat, my brothers have me eat the food, I don't get here, you being mighty, has been getting me nothing new, all I eat is same meat all the time, the reason I cry." He would answer, "Oh, I'll be getting you some new things now, since I know."

So the cruel chief was out long ways to reach for new and rare food for the girl, when the brothers were known.

When he got home, he was told of the brothers, but not Ayvanga the eldest. And the chief asked if the girl was welcoming them in. She told him that she was in fear of him being so loud.

"Oh, bring my brother-in-laws. I should have something for them," he said. So the brothers were brought in.

In meantime, Ayvanga has been doing his scheme in getting there. He came to the little igloo of an old woman,

(and I just hate some parts of those Eskimo stories, but that Ayvanga has killed the old woman and put on her clothes and pretended to be here.)

So, it happened that the chief was holding some gathering for competing with his brother-in-laws in his large nengloo or his igloo, as they say it in other places. And the great crowd was beginning to see the competing done by the chief and the brothers, they were boys, the youngest being only a child or very young, might have been 13 or 14 years old. And of course the eldest, which is Ayvanga was getting to be very mighty by doing many things to meet the enemy.

So, when everyone was aware of the gathering then, someone didn't want for the old woman at the end of the village to miss the sight, so the young men of the village were sent to bring her with the sled. And very excitedly the young men hurried there and called to her. And there she was, still in her favorite place sitting quietly. And the young men ran in to help her out. And they had to lift her since she could stand up for only a little bit. Oh, the excited young men struggled to lift the old woman and would exclaim, "Oh, you sure got heavy! And he pretended to be one answer, "Yes, the meat from the bones really got me heavy not the rich meat, but the remnants." What he had on her hands and feet was fish egg, smeared all over to make him look old and wrinkled. He was so heavy the young men barely got her on the sled, the sled broke down, so they had to bring another one, they finally got her or him in. "My, she got so large!" everyone exclaimed. He would pretend to be her, nodding his head to everyone saying, "Yes, it is from the remnant foods, I got this heavy."

Then the competing took place, a mighty cruel chief stood in the middle of the room with all the crowd around on looking. And he challenged, calling the eldest one of the brothers one next to Ayvanga. And the pretty sturdy young man went to answer the challenge for wrestling. Very shortly he was thrown down dead, and with one mighty arm the chief threw the young man to one corner of the nengloo. The girl started crying, but hold her place in fear of the chief. And he called to the next, the next one fearfully got down to meet him. And very shortly he was thrown down dead. And was thrown to the other dead brother. And he called for the next, very fearfully the young man got out, and he, too was thrown to the pile of dead right soon. And he called to the youngest. Everyone was in tears, at the sight of a boy, trodding along slowly to the mighty cruel chief shivering and in tears, saying, "If only my Ayvanga see me now." And the mighty chief yelled out, "Where is his Ayvanga, get him to the guy." At this, the old woman was seen to be tearing his parky off of him, and there stood Ayvanga himself, going down to meet the chief. Everyone was silent at the sight, taking place. A big and young man going down to the strong looking warrior, with his mighty shoulders so broad and hard. The chief started, yelled out, "Oh, why don't you come sooner." Ayvanga's little brother returned to his place all in comfort and relieved of great fear. And the competing took

place. In a very short wrestle the chief was thrown down dead and was tossed over to the pile of dead men, with this, the crowd yelled in great relief. The chief was so cruel, that there was great relief at the sight of Ayvanga.

Ayvanga was getting to be very powerful that he brought back his brothers to life. Just as all were ready to go on, Ayvanga thought it was too short. So he said, "I'm lonesome, I shouldn't do this too soon," so he walked over to the dead chief and some way brought him to life again. At this the chief breathed and laughed out, "Oops, I fall asleep for a while." And he asked if the girl has given dinner to the men, saying, "Did you give my brother-in-laws food?"

"No," she answered. "How can I, you are so dangerous," she said on.

Next day it was said that the chief was going to do competing again with his brother-in-laws. This time, he was going to see what he would do in the fire. So Ayvanga was put in a deep pit in the ground and the fire was started on it. The fire burned very furiously, so the wood, fuel fire and all dropped into the pit, where Ayvanga was in. But Ayvanga know what to do, he felt around the pit right away to find anything that be as a shelter. And sure enough he found a whale shoulder blade bone put up on the wall. Right away he made room behind it, and he got in and pulled the bone as a shield. So when the blaze, fell it was not on him. As soon as it die down some he got out from behind there and put it right in the middle and put himself there right in the dying down of the fire and called for a rope. Oh, his voice really cheered everyone up there. Everyone ran for a rope. As soon as he put the rope around his body and they pulled him out, not burned. Everyone was so happy.

Getting up he called to the chief, "Now it is your turn."

"I've done that many times, so there is no use for me to do it again," he said.

I did it first time, and I

came through it, so you should do it now, Ayvanga told him.

Everyone ran around and got the chief in, even he was scared. And poor guy, he burned to death there.

So, Ayvanga wanted to get going, when he was ready to go back. He and his crew of brothers and two girls got all down to the shore, getting ready to go. But there were something else, a little old couple, ran to them with a stick and five little figures or carvings of little men. Putting them on the stick, they would hit one figure saying it was one of the brothers, when it falls, one brother would fall dead, until all four were dead and quickly Ayvanga grabbed the stick from them and put only two carvings and hit them saying, they were either one of the couple, and two were dead with this. And Ayvanga got his brothers alive and were on their way, in their boat. And they went past the clashing cliffs victoriously and were speeding toward home, when they saw a whale speeding after them. When it gets close to them, they would throw one piece from the girl's clothing. And the whale would stay with the piece a little longer, but soon will be coming pretty, close to them again. They did this over and over until all of the girl was thrown in! Bad men, they got their sister back alright, but they have thrown the girl that showed them how to find their sister to the whale. And that was the end of that terrible story, were they happy? But the brothers really fought to find their sister and they got her back.

No wonder the Eskimos are happy to know the love of God in the Bible.

Grace Slwooko

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