

A Rainbow In My Pocket

A long time ago, in the far away land of the Navajo, there was a small village. A favorite time in the village was evening. The time when work was finished, fires had been lit, and the families gathered around the Hogan of the village story-teller. Have you ever seen a Hogan? It is a small, almost round, house made of adobe and wood. The door always faces east and catches the early morning sunlight as a new day begins.

This is a story told one evening to the children who had gathered at the story-tellers' Hogan. The story was about Charlie Blue Feather, a young Navajo boy.

Morning was a time of adventure for Charlie. He would be out of bed by the time the first ray's of sun touched the edge of the towering cliffs that surrounded his desert home. Charlie would swing open the door and let the new day into his house, then out he would run in the still cool air of dawn—and just run. Perhaps he would see a lizard sleeping under a rock ledge or run with a Jack-Rabbit across a high ridge. He may even see a snake warming itself beside the shaggy bark of a Juniper tree. All these things lived in the harsh, yet beautiful desert that was Charlie's home.

Charlie would run until he was out of breath, then throw himself down

on the warm sand, feeling all tingling and laugh because it felt so good. He laughed for such

for such a long time a tear started running down his cheek. Charlie caught the tear on his finger, the sunlight touched it. It glistened and sparkled, and for just a moment he saw a rainbow in the shining drop. It was so beautiful he wanted to keep it to show to his mother, but it slid from his finger into the sand and was gone.

All the running and laughing had made Charlie hungry, he started home. His mother was frying bread on a fire outside their Hogan when he arrived. His father was helping his sisters gather their sheep together so they could be taken to a place where there was grass for the sheep to eat. The earth around their village was very dry, grass could not grow there. His sisters traveled far with the sheep, they would be gone all day. Charlie looked at his sisters in their long colorful shining skirts and soft velvet blouses with silver buttons. They were so bright in the sunlight it reminded him to tell his mother about the rainbow he had caught and how he had lost it in the sand. His mother smiled as she pointed all around them and said “See all the color on our land, - - in the rocks—on the cliffs, - - the blue of the sky— the green of the Juniper tree, and all the golden light of the early morning. Their color comes from the many rainbows caught in tear drops

that have fallen here”.

Charlie thought about what his mother had said as he ate his bread, still warm from the fire. It was true, there was beauty all around them, but Charlie

did know of a place that was not beautiful, it was gray and ugly and colorless. The more he thought about it the more sure he was that he could change it. “I will bring the next rainbow I catch to that place” said Charlie. Now his mind was made up, he decided to see what needed to be done.

After looking around Charlie knew it would be useless to bring a rainbow here. Who would be able to see the beautiful colors if it was hidden by old broken wagons and wheels, bottles, cans and worn-out hides, all the things the village people no longer wanted and had been scattered about, it was ugly. Charlie sat for a long time thinking, he knew it would take him many days to clear away the mess village people had thrown there. Perhaps he could ask the other children of the village to help. He told them what he was going to do, and asked them to help, but no one was interested. Charlie started alone. The children watched him leave early each morning, and they would see him come home late in the afternoon. Gradually, one by one, they joined to watch him, not so much because they wanted to help, but because they were curious and really didn't think Charlie could change the ugly

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