

AMERICAN INDIAN FAIRY TALES

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American Indian fairy tales by Margaret Compton

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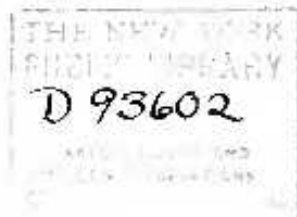
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MARGARET COMPTON

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FAIRY TALES**

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ANDY WEN
ALVIN
WASH

Printed in U. S. A.

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TO
MY SISTER,
WHO STILL "LOVES FAIRY TALES,"
THIS VOLUME IS
AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

THROUGH the courtesy of the librarian of the Smithsonian Institute, the author has had access to government reports of Indian life. Upon these and the folk-lore contained in the standard works of Schoolcraft, Copway, and Catlin these stories are founded.

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THE STORY-TELLER HIMSELF



IAGOO, the story-teller of the Indians, is a little, old man with a face as black as the shell of the butternut and a body like a twisted stick. His eyes are twice as large as other men's, so that when a bird flies past him he sees twice as many feathers on it, and all the little colors underneath are bright to him. His ears are twice as large as other men's, so that what seems to them but a tiny sound is to him like the roll of thunder. His legs are supple and his arms are strong, so that he can run faster and further, and can lift and carry twice as much as others.

No one believes him, yet every one is eager to listen to him. He tells of things of which no one else ever saw the like; but the stories are pleasant to hear, and Iagoo says they are true. When the rivers and lakes are frozen so that the Indian cannot fish, and the snow has drifted many feet in thickness so that he cannot hunt, then he goes into his wigwam, cowers under his heaviest bear-skin wrapper or

crouches by the fire, and longs for Iagoo to appear. When the Storm-fool dances about the wigwam and throws the snow-flakes, hard and dry as sand, in at the doorway, then Iagoo is most likely to visit him.

He vanishes for many moons and comes back with new and wonderful tales. He has met bears with eyes of fire and claws of steel, mosquitoes whose wings were large enough for a sail for his canoe and serpents with manes like horses.

Once he found a water-lily with a leaf so broad that it made a petticoat for his wife. At another time he saw a bush so large that it took him half a day to walk round it.

As he sat in his doorway one summer evening he shot an arrow without taking direct aim. It killed a swan and twenty brace of ducks that were swimming on the river, then passed on and mortally wounded two loons on the bank, bounded back and, as it touched the water, killed an enormous fish.

He remembers when the oldest oak was an acorn. He says that he will be alive long after the white man has disappeared from the land.

These are his tales written down for the little Pale-faces. They are of the fairies, the giants, the dwarfs, the witches and the magicians of our own land, America.