



KOYOUE TUKADU:
PYRAMID LAKE PAIUTE KIT



◆ WE ARE ALL PEOPLE OF THIS EARTH

“The Stone Mother”

Interpretive Skit

Outline

Characters:

- Elder (narrator)/Father
- Mother
- Child 1
- Child 2
- Child 3

- Elder enters, talks about stories, Pyramid Lake, and introduces family. Explains how he was once a bear spirit who took on a human form because he fell in love with the mother.
- family basically great basin care bears
 - scene showing the family working/living in harmony, organized, happy
- Narrator talks about how one brother was violent and disruptive
- scene showing the brother quarreling and arguing with siblings (remember, young audience, maybe slapstick?) the parents do their best to keep the children from fighting
- explains what happened, how the children were sent away.
- scene depicting the parents splitting the children up and sending them away (mother very sad). The father, disgusted by humans, returns to bear form (continues narrating).
- Narrator explains how/why he left, and that he returned ONLY to tell the story to these kids.
- back to scene, mother is heartbroken about her loss of family, mourns constantly, eventually cries the lake and turns to stone.
- Narrator closes “and that’s how Pyramid lake was formed blah blah blah.....”

Questions

The Stone Mother Skit





KOYOUE TUKADU:
PYRAMID LAKE PAIUTE KIT



◆ WE ARE ALL PEOPLE OF THIS EARTH

Elder: (Speaking to Audience): Good morning/afternoon. My name is _____. I am a member of the Native American tribe known as the Paiutes, or, in our language, Numu meaning The People. I am here to tell you a story. Storytelling in my culture is very important; many things can be taught and learned through a story. Many tribes kept their cultures alive because these were not just ordinary bedtime stories, but they were the tribe's beliefs, their ways, and their lives. Many legends are still told, some are old some are new; some explain the sky and the stars, some explain how you are sitting here today! But one of my personal favorites is the one that I am going to share with you today...

There once was a family, who lived peacefully in the land of the Great Basin. This family called themselves Numu, now you know them as the Northern Paiute. They were made up of a mother, father and 2 brothers, one of which was very quarrelsome.

Scene opens on family seated around fire, father telling a story on why skunk has stripes and raccoon has black eyes.

Father: So boys, did I ever tell you about the skunk and the raccoon?

Child Two: Yes... as I recall you tell it to us almost every night!!

Child One: But tell us again, Father...!!!

Father: Ok, Ok. Long ago the skunk and the raccoon, both very different today, were very similar. One day the skunk suggested to his friend the raccoon that they go fishing together. As the day progressed, the raccoon began to catch more fish than the skunk. The skunk started feeling frustrated, but continued on fishing. The raccoon, noticing his friend's frustration, proposed that they stop.

The raccoon suggested to the skunk that he start to clean the fish while he went and collected some more fire wood. The skunk was so angry at the raccoon that he started to bat around and beat his fish against some nearby rocks. The raccoon came back from collecting fire wood and noticed what the skunk had been up to. The raccoon walked up and asked his friend what was wrong. In a blind fury the skunk reached out and punched the raccoon right in the face. In defense the raccoon pushed the skunk into the fire... and to this day my sons the raccoon has black eyes, and the skunk has a burn mark down his back and has a fowl odor.

Child One: Thanks Father, I love that story!!

Child Two: Yea, yea but what about the other stories about war heroes & bravery &...

Father: We can hear those another night my son

The Stone Mother Skit



KOYOUE TUKADU:
PYRAMID LAKE PAIUTE KIT



◆ WE ARE ALL PEOPLE OF THIS EARTH

Mother: Yes, right now, time for bed... off we go!

Children go off to bed

Father: Does it seem like our older son is becoming more irritable to you?

Mother: He is just at that age... You were the same way. It's just a phase.

Elder: The father hoped for the best, as fathers tend to do. But as the years went on, things only got worse between the brothers.

Mother: Children... come in here!

Children: Yes Mother?!

Mother: Can you help me finish up some of these chores while I prepare the food for dinner?

Child Two: But we were out there playing with the other kids!! They don't ever have to help their mothers with the chores. I don't think that we should have to.

Second child interrupts

Child One: Mother, it's no problem, leave it to us. Go outside and finish with the food.

The mother leaves the children, with a pained and stressed look on her face.

The second child looks over to the first - throwing him a hand bound "broom".

Child One: I don't understand why you have to cause such a scene every time mother asks us to do something! It's not as if she is asking us to clean the whole village!

Child Two: Everyday! Everyday she does this to us...you would think that she would have a little courtesy and give us the day off...

Child One: To what - do nothing all day? I was doing the same thing as you ten minutes ago, and the quicker we get through these chores the quicker we can get back to doing nothing.

The Stone Mother Skit





KOYOUE TUKADU:
PYRAMID LAKE PAIUTE KIT



◆ WE ARE ALL PEOPLE OF THIS EARTH

Elder: Tensions began to build in the household. The brothers, who once got along so well, now did not see eye to eye. The mother began to grow weak with stress from watching her precious children argue.

Mother: I am beginning to think that you were right about our son causing troubles in this family. He no longer listens to me, and is always arguing with his brother.

Father: I too have been taking notice of our son's actions, and fear that they will only get worse with time.

Mother: There must be a way that we prove he has some good inside of him. Maybe the Pine Nut Harvest will lighten his spirits; he has family and friends there that he has not seen in a long time.

Father: We will travel to the Harvest together as a family, but if things do not take a turn for the better, I fear something will have to be done. e

Elder: The family gathered their things and began the day's journey to the Pine Nut Harvest. The Mother tried the best she could to keep conversation light in hopes that the harvest would bring her family close once again.

Mother: Don't walk so heavy children... we are almost there! And when we get there, you will get to see your cousins, and see those nice kids you met at the last harvest.

Child Two: [*SARCASTICALLY*] Oh, THAT sounds fun.

Mother: What? That is not exciting? I thought you enjoyed the harvest?!

Child Two: Well, I think I am getting too old for this... running around with the little children from the tribes every year! I am getting older and I deserve to be with the men of the group.

Child One: C'mon now, why do you always have to be disagreeing with everything everybody says to you? Why can't you just go along?

Father: Now, now, that's ok. If he feels like he deserves to go along with the men let's let him prove himself a man by playing the stick game.

The Stone Mother Skit





KOYOUE TUKADU:
PYRAMID LAKE PAIUTE KIT



◆ WE ARE ALL PEOPLE OF THIS EARTH

Elder: What the father is doing here is showing his son a traditional betting game men would get together and play involving two sticks, one painted and one not. There were teams that sat on opposite sides of each other where one person would hold both sticks. The object of this game was to guess which person was holding the painted stick. Teams would bang their hands and objects together, and sing loudly as a distraction to the opposing team to try to get them to guess incorrectly

Although there were specific ceremonies in the Paiute culture that celebrated a boy becoming a man, the stick game was typically played by the older men, and allowing the boys to play along helped them feel a little more included with the men, even though they were still looked at as boys.

Mother: I don't see how any good can come of this.

Father: It's just a game... and it will be a good break from the long walk. They need it!

Child One: Father, am I old enough for this game yet?

Father: Well, I don't see why you can't join us for this one.

Child Two: But he's not old enough Father!

Father: Well neither of you are men yet, so I think for this game both of you can play.

They go on playing the game; the Father hiding the sticks in his hand, modifying the game for his two children.

Father: So my young son, which hand do you guess?

Child One: Um... [*hit the left hand*] this one!

Child Two: No! You are wrong... It's this one!! Can't you tell!!

Father: Actually my son, your brother here was right! It was my left hand! It is just a guessing game, a game of trusting your gut.

Child Two: Oh come on... You cheated!! The both of you!! You are trying to make a fool of me!!



KOYOUE TUKADU:
PYRAMID LAKE PAIUTE KIT



◆ WE ARE ALL PEOPLE OF THIS EARTH

Mother: Oh come now son! No one is making a fool of you but yourself.

Child Two: This never would have happened if he hadn't been allowed to play!

Child One: If you weren't so eager to grow up and full of pride then we wouldn't have had to play that stupid game in the first place!!

Mother: That is enough! What happened to my darling children?! This fighting has gone on for too long, if it continues you leave us no choice but to punish you.

Father: Your Mother is right!! If you two can not learn to get along, then we must do something to teach you to do so!! Gather your things!! We are losing time, and must get to the harvest! I do not want any nonsense when we get there!! We will deal with this matter later.

Elder: The family went on with their journey to the harvest and tried to go on as though nothing had happened. They met with their friends and family from other tribes, and enjoyed themselves, while collecting pine nuts for the winter harvest.

Let me explain a little about the pine nut harvest festival. Scouts were sent out every year to find the most plentiful grove of pine nuts. The one who returned with a branch that had the most pine nuts led others to that area, where bands from across the land would meet and celebrate their good luck with the harvest. These nuts are cooked over a fire and tribe members would dance by the fire and play games at night. The next day all tribe members worked together to gather nuts. After the harvest the family ventured back toward their village to resume their normal day to day life as a family.

Father: Do not stress my dear, we are home again, and we have each other. The harvest was a good break from everything that has been happening. I have nothing but good faith in our sons.

Mother: I do stress... I fear that something is going to happen that will take you and my children away from me forever, leaving me alone, with nothing but my own thoughts of guilt for not being able to help our sons get along better.

Father: I can not bear to see you worry day and night about your children. I believe we should send them into the mountains in order for them to seek the goodness that hides within their hearts.

Mother: I do not think that is a good idea. Not now. I don't think they have done anything so horrible it demands that punishment! Give them time to show that they truly are the good boys you and I both know they can be.

The Stone Mother Skit





KOYOUE TUKADU:
PYRAMID LAKE PAIUTE KIT



◆ WE ARE ALL PEOPLE OF THIS EARTH

Father: Ok, but at the next shed of doubt...

Elder: The Mother was not the only one who was feeling stress from her eldest son. The younger son was feeling pressure from his brother. His older brother was a big influence in his younger brother's life, and it began to show in his everyday activities.

Mother: Darling, do you think you could head down to the river and fill up my basket with some water for this evening?

Child One: *[with hesitation]* Yah... I guess so

*Younger child grabs the basket and sluggishly walks out the door
As the child returns with the basket*

Mother: There, was that so hard?

Child One: No! I am just tired of doing petty tasks around here... "Will you, do this for me honey", "can you do this for me please?" I am almost as old as my brother... I would like to get to do older boy stuff too.

Mother: Well, I will see what I can do about that...

Child One: *[on his way out, turns around to face his mother]* I am sorry for being so testy Mother, it is just my brother. Lately I feel as though he has no patience for me.

Mother: Please try not to allow your brother to influence you in this manner. You are a good boy, and you will grow up to be a fine man.

Elder: The Mother began to grow concerned about the effect their son was having on the family, and may soon have on the rest of the band.

Father: Does it seem to you that our youngest is beginning to take on some of his brother's less desirable attributes? I fear that our oldest child is starting to corrupt our other son. Something must be done.

Mother: But what is there to be done? None of our counseling is having any affect, it's as though we are no longer his parents.



KOYOUE TUKADU:
PYRAMID LAKE PAIUTE KIT



◆ WE ARE ALL PEOPLE OF THIS EARTH

Father: Don't fret my dear. Let us try one last time to speak with our children. If it does no good, we will be forced to take more drastic actions.

Mother: Alright, well it is almost time for dinner, let's discuss it with them tonight.

The brothers skulk into the room

Child Two: Is it time to eat yet?

Mother: It will be as soon as the pine nut soup has been over the fire just a little longer. Would you mind helping your father skin the rabbits he caught today so that I may hang them out to dry after we eat?

Child One: But I'm hungry now, why can't you clean the rabbits after we eat?

Father: Boys that's no way to speak to your mother, especially after all the work she has put into your dinner tonight, those are some of the pine nuts we brought back from the harvest.

The family sits for dinner, and the father decides to tell the children that they will be parting them in the morning.

Father: I have been agonizing over this problem for days. I feel there is no other choice. The fighting has been going on for far too long... and there seems to be no end in sight!! You make your mother weak with sadness, and you leave me with no pride of calling you my sons. Tonight you will gather your things and tomorrow you will head for the mountains.

Elder: The Mother was less than pleased with this decision, but the Father saw no other solution. The next morning the two brothers gathered their things, and were accompanied by their parents as they walked to the outskirts of the village. Once there, they said their goodbyes.

Mother: It's painful to have to watch you leave. I do wish that you could have been good boys.

Child One: I was good... It was he who was not.

Child Two: What are you talking about?! You were the one who was always trying to get their attention!! I always spoke what I felt.



KOYOUE TUKADU:
PYRAMID LAKE PAIUTE KIT



◆ WE ARE ALL PEOPLE OF THIS EARTH

Father: Enough! This is what your mother and I are talking about!! Now my younger son, you go to the north... light a fire every night, that way we will know that you are ok. My other son, you to the west and light a fire as well. I wish you safe travels and hope you discover the good men within yourselves.

The sons nod to their father, scowl at each other, and walk off in separate directions.

Elder: As days passed the Mother became brokenhearted. She couldn't decide what was worse; the pain of seeing her precious children fighting, or the pain caused by their absence.

Mother: I think sending them away was a bad idea.

Father: It's hard for me too, but we are going to have to get through these first few days in order to get on with the rest of our lives. We need to continue on just as we were before.

Mother: The more I think about it the more I believe sending them out there was the wrong way to solve their problems.

Father: They would never have solved these problems without figuring it out on their own.

Mother: But sending them away won't let them figure it out for themselves. They'll just leave me feeling sad and alone, without two boys to take care of.

Father: Oh, you'll get used to it. The boys will mature away from each other, and they would have left someday anyway. Let's not worry so much right now.

Mother: I am worried for our younger son. I haven't seen his flame from the North for two days. I fear for him.

Father: I don't think our son is in peril. Why don't we give it a little more time before we start to worry?

Mother: I am afraid that he does not know how to take care of himself. He is still a boy.

Father: Even though I am sure everything is okay, if it will make you feel better I will go to the North and check on our son.



KOYOUE TUKADU:
PYRAMID LAKE PAIUTE KIT



◆ WE ARE ALL PEOPLE OF THIS EARTH

Mother: *[grab father]* Please make sure you find him, and let me know he's okay. And make sure you return quickly. I've already lost so much; it pains me to think of losing anyone else from my life.

Father: I shall do my best to return. Just remember to carry on with your life.

Elder: So the father packed up a few belongings and left towards the North, seeking his youngest son. The mother tried to go about doing her everyday chores.

Mother walks around stage holding basket and pretending to do chores.

Elder: The Mother grew weaker after each day her husband did not return. When her eldest son's light finally faded to the West, she felt as though she had nothing left to believe in. All hope of ever seeing her family again was lost.

Mother: *[on her knees, basket to her side]* I don't see the point in doing these chores; I have no one to provide for... my role as a mother is lost. Those boys were all that I had; agreeing to send them away was condemning myself to misery.

Elder: As the story goes, the mother was so overwhelmed with grief that she stayed in this one spot for the rest of her life, and cried. Her tears became so great that they soon created the body of water known today as Pyramid Lake. The woman turned to stone, and remains located at the base of the pyramid. With her she carries her basket of burden. Legend has it that the descendents of the pale skin brother who was sent to the North returned as the settlers, and the descendents of the dark skin brother who was sent to the West became the Pitt River Native American Tribe.