**Age suitability 8 Plus.**

**Bull Society.**

**From Blackfeet Indian Stories by George Bird. Grinnell.**

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**It was long, long ago, very far back, that this happened. In those days the people used to kill the buffalo by driving them over a steep place near the river, down which they fell into a great pen built at the foot of the cliff, where the buffalo that had not been killed by the fall were shot with arrows by the men. Then the people went into the pen and skinned the buffalo and cut them up and carried the meat away to their camp. This pen they called piskun. In those days the people had built a great piskun with high, strong walls. No buffalo could jump over it; not even if a great crowd of them ran against it, could they push it down. The young men kept going out, as they always did, to try to bring the buffalo to the edge of the cliff, but somehow they would not jump over into the piskun. When they had come almost to the edge, they would turn off to one side or the other and run down the sloping hills and away over the prairie. So the people could get no food, and they began to be hungry, and at last to starve.**

**Early one morning a young woman, the daughter of a brave man, was going from her lodge down to the stream to get water, and as she went along she saw a herd of buffalo feeding on the prairie, close to the edge of the cliff above the great piskun. "Oh," she called out, "if you will only jump off into the piskun I will marry one of you." She did not mean this, but said it just in fun, and as soon as she had said it, she wondered greatly when she saw the buffalo come jumping over the edge, falling down the cliff. A moment later a big bull jumped high over the wall of the piskun and came toward her, and now truly she was frightened. "Come," he said, taking hold of her arm. "No, no," she answered, trying to pull herself away. "But you said if the buffalo would only jump over, you would marry one of them. Look, the piskun is full." She did not answer, and without saying anything more he led her up over the bluff and out on the prairie.**

**After the people had finished killing the buffalo and cutting up the meat, they missed this young woman. No one knew where she had gone, and her relations were frightened and very sad because they could not find her. So her father took his bow and quiver and put them on his back and said, "I will go and find her"; and he climbed the bluff and set out over the prairie. He travelled some distance, but saw nothing of his daughter. The sun was hot, and at length he came to a buffalo wallow in which some water was standing, and drank and sat down to rest. A little way off on the prairie he saw a herd of buffalo. As the man sat there by the wallow, trying to think what he might do to find his daughter, a magpie came up and alighted on the ground near him. The man spoke to it, saying, "M[)a]m-[=i]-[)a]t´s[=i]-k[)i]m[)i]--Magpie--you are a beautiful bird; help me, for I am very unhappy. As you travel about over the prairie, look everywhere, and if you see my daughter say to her, 'Your father is waiting by the wallow.'" Soon the magpie flew away, and as he passed near the herd of buffalo he saw the young woman there, and alighting on the ground near her, he began to pick at things, turning his head this way and that, and seeming to look for food. When he was close to the girl he said to her, "Your father is waiting by the wallow."**

**"Sh-h-h! Sh-h-h!" replied the girl in a whisper, looking about her very much frightened, for her bull husband was sleeping close by. "Do not speak so loud. Go back and tell him to wait." "Your daughter is over there with the buffalo. She says 'Wait,'" said the magpie when he had flown back to the poor father. After a little time the bull awoke and said to his wife, "Go and bring me some water." Then the woman was glad, and she took a horn from her husband's head and went to the wallow for water. "Oh, why did you come?" she said to her father. "They will surely kill you." "I came to take my daughter back to my lodge. Come, let us go." "No," said the girl, "not now. They will surely chase us and kill us. Wait until he sleeps again and I will try to get away." Then she filled the horn with water and went back to the buffalo. Her husband drank a swallow of the water, and when he took the horn it made a noise. "Ah," he said, as he looked about, "a person is somewhere close by."**

**"No one," replied the girl, but her heart stood still. The bull drank again. Then he stood up on his feet and moaned and grunted, "M-m-ah-oo! Bu-u-u!" Fearful was the sound. Up rose the other bulls, raised their tails in the air, tossed their heads and bellowed back to him. Then they pawed the earth, thrust their horns into it, rushed here and there, and presently, coming to the wallow, found there the poor man. They rushed over him, trampling him with their great hoofs, thrust their horns into his body and tore him to pieces, and trampled him again. Soon not even a piece of his body could be seen--only the wet earth cut up by their hoofs. Then his daughter mourned in sorrow. "\_Oh! Ah! Ni-nah-ah! Oh! Ah! Ni-nah-ah!\_"--Ah, my father, my father. "Ah," said her bull husband; "now you understand how it is that we feel. You mourn for your father; but we have seen our fathers, mothers, and many of our relations fall over the high cliffs, to be killed for food by your people. But now I will pity you, I will give you one chance. If you can bring your father to life, you and he may go back to your camp." Then said the woman, "Ah, magpie, pity me, help me; for now I need help. Look in the trampled mud of the wallow and see if you can find even a little piece of my father's body and bring it to me."**

**Swiftly the magpie flew to the wallow, and alighting there, walked all about, looking in every hole and even tearing up the mud with his sharp beak. Presently he uncovered something white, and as he picked the mud from about it, he saw it was a bone, and pulling hard, he dragged it from the mud--the joint of a man's backbone. Then gladly he flew back with it to the woman. The girl put the bone on the ground and covered it with her robe and began to sing. After she had sung she took the robe away, and there under it lay her father's body, as if he had just died. Once again she covered the body with the robe and sang, and this time when she took the robe away the body was breathing. A third time she covered the body with the robe and sang, and when she again took away the robe, the body moved its arms and legs a little. A fourth time she covered it and sang, and when she took away the robe her father stood up. The buffalo were surprised and the magpie was glad, and flew about making a great noise. "Now this day we have seen a strange thing," said her bull husband. "The people's medicine is strong. He whom we trampled to death, whom our hoofs cut to pieces and mixed all up with the soil, is alive again. Now you shall go to your home, but before you go we will teach you our dance and our song. Do not forget them."**

**The buffalo showed the man and his daughter their dance and taught them the songs, and then the bull said to them, "Now you are to go back to your home, but do not forget what you have seen. Teach the people this dance and these songs, and while they are dancing it let them wear a bull's head and a robe. Those who are to be of the Bulls Society shall wear them." When the poor man returned with his daughter, all the people were glad. Then after a time he called a council of the chiefs and told them the things that had happened. The chiefs chose certain young men to be Bulls, and the man taught them the dance and the song, and told them everything that they should do. So began the Bull Society.**

**The End.**