# The Little Boy and Girl in the Clouds

THE PEOPLE OF THE MIWOK TRIBE in northern California tell a story about a magical hill called Tutokanula. Other mountains and hills were formed many years ago when the earth was young, but this hill magically appeared overnight. One day it was an ordinary rock, but overnight it rose and stretched until it poked through the clouds above the tallest treetops. The story began years ago when one late summer afternoon, a boy and girl were playing in a stream that crossed through their valley. Toward the end of the day they climbed out of the water and shivered in the cool air. "Look!" said the boy to his sister. "The sun's shining on top of that rock." "Let's go," said the sister. "The moss on top looks as soft like a blanket." So they climbed on top of the rock, stretched out on the thick green moss, and fell asleep under the warm sun. While they slept - no one knows how or why - but the rock inched upward, bit by bit. Their sleep was so deep the children didn't stir at all, and all that night the rock rose upward more and more. When the villagers awoke, they noticed a rocky hill taller than the highest tree that had mysteriously appeared overnight. Meanwhile, the parents were searching everywhere for their children, but in vain. No one had seen them playing in the stream, and no one knew they were on top of the rock that had risen overnight. The parents asked Antelope, Jack Rabbit, Raccoon, and many other animals to help, but everyone had been quite busy the afternoon before and none had any idea where the children might be. It was Coyote, cleverest of all, who sniffed the ground around the stream, then followed the scent to the mysterious new high hill. "Your children must be on top," he announced. The villagers and animals gathered around. How did the rock rise overnight? And more important - how to get the children down? "Antelope," said the father, "you are the best jumper of all. Can you jump to the top?" "I will try," said Antelope. She jumped as high as she could but could only reach a small distance up the side of the rock. The mother turned. "Grizzly Bear," she said, "you are the strongest of the animals. Surely you can climb to the top!" "I will try," said Grizzly Bear. But as strong as Grizzle Bear was, the rock was too wide for him to stretch his arms around it like a tree, and so he could not lift his weight up the sides. One animal after another tried. Mountain Lion went a long way off to get a good start, ran toward the rock with great leaps, sprang straight up - and fell and rolled over on his back. He had made a higher jump than any of them, but it was not nearly high enough. "Let me try," said a small voice in the back. The villagers and animals looked around. Who had spoken? "Don't step on me, please!" said an offended voice, who coming through the crowd turned out to be Measuring Worm. "Really!" said Antelope. "You can't possibly expect us to believe you could do what we could not." "What nerve!" whispered Raccoon with contempt to Jack Rabbit, who shook his ears scornfully in agreement. Yet all the other villagers and animals were exhausted from trying and no one else had any new ideas, so finally the parents said, "Go ahead, Measuring Worm, give it a try." With his nose in the air, Measuring Worm started up the side of the high rock, and before long had passed the point where Antelope had reached, and Bear, and Mountain Lion, and then only Eagle was left who could see where Measuring Worm was. For one whole snow Measuring Worm climbed the rock and at last he reached the top. The children were as deep asleep as they had been the moment they had fallen to the magic of the mossy rock, but Measuring Worm crawled across their arms and face till they awoke. "Where are we?" they said sleepily. Looking around with alarm they saw clouds and birds surrounding them on all sides. Measuring Worm assured the children they would be fine, and urged them to follow him down a path through the ridges in the rock. Soon the girl and boy safely reached to the ground. And so with great joy the children and their parents were re-united. Ever since, the Miwok people called the magic rock Tutokanula, their word for Measuring Worm, in honor of the smallest of creatures who had managed the greatest of deeds.

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