

Mr Story

by Eydie McDaniel

Once upon a time a dedicated communicator chipped away on a big stone wall. All the people around walked over and over to see his story unfold. They gave him the name Mr Story because that's who he really was. When lightning took out the big tree that had bridged the river, folks stopped coming to see what he had chipped. In time the leaves fell on the mighty stream. But all the tall trees along the bank stood strong through early chill and drifting snow. Alas Mr Story would wait alone till another bridge tree would fall with the spring thaw. The story inside Mr Story would not wait. He worked at home, chipping into the walls of his own sweet little cave. The fire lit up his walls and simmered broth and brew. All came and enjoyed, but only for a little while. Their litany echoed: "The path to your place is too icy now." "I already saw all that you have chipped." "I can make that brew in my own."

Mr Story felt sad. He drank all of his brew and fell into dreams of slumber. With the dawn he wondered from pine thicket to pine thickets and carried home as many flat stones as he could lift. His tale continued chip after thumping chip. Every stone soon filled with something new to behold. What fun! Eager to share, Mr Story climbed over the hill to invite his closest neighbor to come and see. The close neighbor, Mr Neighbor, would not go over the hill to his cave to see his story. So he hurried home to load up all his flat stones and returned when the sun was high.

The two laughed loudly at the chips in stone but only for a little while. They stacked the stones in order and turned them over one by one to see the story unfold once more. When Mrs Neighbor came home she carried some flat, dry, tan, leaves and set them on the table next to the stack of stones.

As she opened the door to go our again, a breeze made the leaves flip over and stand on edge against the stones, *except for one*. That leaf landed by the fire. Mr Neighbor reached to catch it with an ashen stick in his hand. A black line fell against the big tan leaf. Mr Story leaped for joy. He took the ashen stick and drew another bold line across the first line. A picture of the mighty stream and a fallen tree bridge took shape before their eyes. When Mrs Neighbor returned all her leaves were filled with parts of a long tale about the mighty stream. She had planned to make a leaf blanket but got involved turning the leaves to see the tale before her. She forgot about the blanket and fell asleep by the glowing fire next to her snoring husband.

Mr Story wrapped his story into a simple bundle and climbed to his home cave in no time and without the slightest fatigue. He stashed his story on leaves and returned to the Neighbor cave. He put another log on their fire and covered them both with his own bear skin blanket. What a wonderful trade he had made.

Mr Story rose to the hill top and sang a thank you song to bright happy moon. With the Neighbors' help his name has forever been known every time anyone made a STORY book.

