



THE LEGEND OF THE TEXAS BLUEBONNETS

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BLUEBONNETS are the state flower of Texas. Every spring the hills and plains of the state are covered with these beautiful flowers. This story is adapted from the Indian legend of the beginning of these flowers.

MORNING STAR opened her eyes, jumped up from her bed and ran outside. She saw the people of her tribe looking at the sky. Already the sun burned bright and hot. There were no clouds.

"Oh, Mother, it did not rain," cried Morning Star, with tears in her voice.

"No, my little dove," replied her mother gently. "It did not rain. The fire of sacrifice last night did not please the Great Spirit. The wise men of the tribe thought that if someone was willing to give up his most loved possession for a sacrifice to the Great Spirit, He would give us rain."

"But Mother, didn't the eldest son of the chief offer his fastest and most beautiful horse to the Great Spirit? Certainly that was a most loved possession; it was his favorite," said Morning Star.

"Perhaps," said her mother, "he really did

not love it deeply enough."

"What can we do now?" asked Morning Star. "The rivers are all dry and we have to travel so far to the spring. Soon even the spring will be dry. It is hard for us to find anything to eat or animals to hunt."

"We may have to move north to new lands, Morning Star. It will be a hard trip for us. The sun is hot and we may not find water for many days. I do not know what else we can do," sighed her mother.

Just then the chief called his people together and told them, "The Great Spirit was not pleased with my son's offer last night. Tonight we must try again. We must try harder. Someone must give up that which he prizes above all else."

That night at the ceremonial fire, the leading hunter of the tribe came forward and said, "I would like to offer to the Great Spirit my largest and most prized bow. It was with this bow that I killed more animals than any other hunter in the history of our tribe."

Morning Star and her mother and father returned home happy after the fire of sacrifice. Surely the Great Spirit was pleased now and would send them rain.

But in the morning the sky was clear and there was not a cloud in sight.

The village was very sad and very quiet that morning. The spring was getting dry. There was only enough water for one more day. The chief called all the people together once more. "Perhaps we do not have anything with which to please the Great Spirit. Tomorrow morning we will leave this place. We will travel to the north in search of greener lands."

Morning Star was sad. She loved this land and did not want to leave. As she sat playing with her doll, she had an idea. Maybe she could help her people after all. No one loved anything more dearly than she loved her doll. If she could give her beautiful

doll as a sacrifice . . . She looked at her doll again and remembered her grandfather who had made it for her. It was dressed in a beautiful blue ceremonial gown just like the chief wore, and on its head was a bonnet of blue jay feathers. The doll had a very white face and two little black bead eyes.

Then Morning Star knew what she must do. She waited until it was very dark and all the people were asleep. She reached for the doll that was lying beside her. She hugged it tightly and kissed it. Then she quietly carried the doll outside.

Tears welled in her eyes as Morning Star gathered some twigs and built a small fire. As she hugged her doll for the last time, Morning Star looked up, saying, "Please, Great Spirit, take good care of my doll, for I love it so." Then bravely she put the doll into the flame and sat back to watch until the last glow died away. Then she went to bed and, because it was late and she was tired, she quickly fell asleep.

That night large clouds rolled above the little Indian village. The Great Spirit was so pleased with Morning Star's doll that He broke these clouds and spilled the rain down on the village.

The smell of fresh rain awoke the tribe. Everyone ran out to feel the freshness of the morning. As the Indians looked around, they stared in amazement. The plains and hills around their village were covered with beautiful blue flowers. The Great Spirit had sent back Morning Star's doll in the form of these flowers. They had white faces and black eyes, and on every head there was a blue bonnet. When the wind blew them, they looked like many dolls running across the plains.

These are the same flowers which cover Texas today. They are called bluebonnets in memory of a brave little Indian girl who was willing to give up the thing she loved most to help her people.