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THE NEW KID

Bobby felt so lonely. Looking around the lunchroom, he realized the only place to sit was at a table where a group of boys were sitting. He didn't know any of them, but they were busily talking and had not noticed him.

When his dad had announced that he was taking the job near the Navajo reservation, Bobby had thought it would be exciting to see so many Indians. So far, the only ones he had seen that looked like Indians were the old man that lived next door and a couple of women he'd seen in town. He hadn't met any kids until this morning when he came to school.

Still feeling lonely, Bobby took the empty seat and began to eat. The boys were talking in another language, which he suspected was Navajo. Since he didn't understand what they were saying, he felt even more like an outsider.

“Áshííh shanikah”, someone said.

Bobby looked up to see all the boys looking at him. “What?” he asked, feeling really dumb.

“Áshííh shanikah” one of the boys repeated.

Bobby stared at them and all the boys began to laugh at his expression.

“That means pass the salt” one of the boys said. “We wondered if you knew any Navajo. My name is Joe.” Taking the salt Bobby handed him, he turned to the boy next to him and said “na”.

“Ahéhee”, the other boy said. “My name is Sam. What’s your name?”

“My name is Bobby. We just moved from St. Louis, Missouri. My Dad just got a job at the Administration office. Was that Navajo?”

“Yes. Áshííh means salt. Shanikah means give it to me” explained Joe.

“What did you say to him?”

“Oh. Na’ means here or take it. He said, ahéhee’, or thank you.”

“The old man who lives next door can’t talk English. I’d like to learn some Navajo so I can talk to him. I bet he knows lots of interesting things.”

“What’s his name?”

“I don’t know, but he’s really old.”

“Ask him, Haash yinílyé?”

“What’s that mean?”

“What are you called?”

“How would I say, My name is?”

Sam smiled, saying “Sam yinishyé. That guy over there, wearing the blue shirt, Tim wolyé.”

“Would you say haash wolyé about your milk?”

“Aoo’, yeah. Abe’ wolyé. The potatoes, nimasi wolyé.”

“The meat, atsí’ wolyé”, said Tim. “And the corn, nadaa’ wolyé.”

“It’s almost time for class, you better hurry,” Joe warned.

All the boys quickly finished their lunch.

“Thanks”, Bobby said, “Uh, I mean ahéhee’.”

“Hágoshijj”, Sam said as the bell rang. “Hagoónee’.”

“That means ‘okay, goodbye’,” said Joe. “We better go. Mrs. Smith, our bá’ólta’í is waiting for us.”

AFTER SCHOOL

Walking out of school, Bobby was excited to see Joe heading in the same direction. When Joe looked toward him and smiled, he smiled back and walked toward him.

“Would you like to play ball with us?” Joe asked. “We’re going to the park after we drop off our books.”

“I’ll ask my mom. I think she’ll let me go. The park is just around the corner from my house.”

“Where do you live?” asked Tim, who’d just arrived with Sam.

“507 Grant Avenue.”

“My chei lives at 509 Grant. He must be the old man you were talking about,” exclaimed Tim.

“Your what?” Bobby didn’t know what to think.

“Shichei, my mother’s father.”

“You mean he’s your grandfather?”

“Aoo’, but in Navajo, your maternal grandfather is shichei, while your father’s father is shináí. I’m going to his house to leave my books. We can go together. Hey, is that blue one nighan, your house?”

As Tim went next door, Bobby dashed into bighan, his house, to ask permission to go to the park. After asking a few questions, his mom gave her permission and Bobby hurried away with Tim to meet the others. Joe and Sam were already shooting baskets when they arrived.

“Na’.” Sam tossed the jooł, ball, to Bobby, who caught it and dribbled toward the basket. Joe and Tim rushed to block his shot. “Shaa ní’aah, give it to me,” Sam called.

Bobby passed the jooł to him for an easy lay-up.

After that, the game became intense. Bobby realized the guys were better players than most of the boys he'd played with in Missouri. He was trying to keep Joe from scoring when someone yelled "yeigo Joe, yeigo". Joe feinted left and scored with a jump shot.

Bobby looked around and saw two small children watching the game. "What did they say?"

"Yeigo, harder", Sam said. "They're his little sister and brother."

"Joe, Mom said to tell you that the 'atoo' is ready and you need to come home and eat."

"Shighangóó déyá", Joe said. "I have to go home. Hągoónee'."

"What's 'atoo'?" asked Bobby.

"Stew", laughed Tim. "You know, atsi', nimási dóo nadaą. I guess I'd better go too. Nighangóó diniyá? Shichei bighangóó déyá. I'll walk with you. Hagoosh diniyá, Sam?"

"Shighangóó déyá, hagoónee'."

"Aoo', hagoónee'."

"Bye, Sam."

"That was fun", Bobby said. "I'm glad you invited me. Ahéhee'."

"Hągoshíı. I'll see you 'ólta'di tomorrow. Hągoónee'."

GOING TO JOE'S HOUSE

“Hey Bobby, could you come with shí after school? I'd like you to meet shizhé'é dóó shimá.”

Bobby looked up to see Joe coming toward his table. “I'll have to ask my Mom.”

“I know, I'll go with you to ask nimá, then we can walk to shighan if she says you can go.”

When the last bell rang, Bobby hurried into the hall to meet Joe. Excitedly the boys went to Bobby bighan. Arriving at the house, Bobby opened the door and invited Joe in, then went looking for his Mom. “May I go with Joe to his house and meet his parents? He's waiting for me to find out. Would you like to meet him?”

Mrs. Fuller went with Bobby to meet Joe. “Joe, this is Shimá. Mom, this is my friend Joe. May I go to his house to meet his family?”

“What did you call me?”

“He called you Shimá”, Joe said. “It means ‘my mother’ in Navajo.”

“Bobby told me you were teaching him Navajo,” Mrs. Fuller said. “He can go to your house, but he must be back by six o'clock for supper.”

“Thanks Mom. I'll be on time.”

Quickly, the boys walked to Joe bighan. Joe and bimá met them in the living room and Joe introduced Bobby to his mother.

Mrs. Nelson told Bobby he was welcome and that she was glad he wanted to learn Navajo. “Háadish naniná? Where do you live?”

“I live at 507 Maple.”

You could say, “507 Maple di naashá”, Mrs. Nelson said.

A few minutes later the boys went outside to play basket ball. Joe’s older sister Karen and his younger brother Billy came out to play as well.

“This is Shádí, Karen wolyé, dóó sitsilí, Billy wolyé. They want to play too.”

“Na””, Bobby said, passing the ball to Karen.

Billy tried to steal the ball, but Karen passed the ball back to Bobby. Joe quickly blocked his shot. A quick pass and Karen went in to score. Fired up, Joe and Billy responded with a score of their own. The lead went back and forth until all the kids were thirsty. As they stopped for a drink, A car pulled into the drive.

“Dad, this is sikis. Bobby wolyé. Bobby, this is shizhé’é.

“Yá’át’éeéh, Bobby”, Mr. Nelson said. “Is Dave Fuller nizhé’é?”

“Aoo’, he’s my Dad.”

“I met him at Naalyéhé bá hooghan”, explained Mr. Nelson. “He told me ni were interested in learning Navajo while we were

waiting to check out. I'm glad you want to learn. He asked us to come over this weekend."

"Good, you will get to see my new puppy." said Bobby. "He's so clumsy you can't help but laugh at him."

"You have a Łééçhą'í yazhí? I have a mósí. Would you like to see him?" asked Billy. He ran into the other room and returned with a small gray kitten. "See! Mósí yazhí."

"Many people say gídí," said Mr. Nelson "It comes from the word kitty."

"That's a pretty gídí. May I hold him?"

"Aoo', shigídí is nizhóní. Na'."

"Ahéhee'. What time is it?"

"Ten to six."

"I've got to go. Hagoónee'."

"Hagoónee'. We'll see you this weekend."

THE BARBEQUE

The Nelsons were coming to supper. Bobby couldn't wait. When the bell rang, he hurried from 'olta'í as quickly as possible, pausing only to say hagoónee' to bíkis Sam dóo Tim. When he arrived baghandi, bimá put him to setting the table dóo

moving things around. Bizhé'é called to say he would be a little late and to go ahead without him.

When the Nelsons arrived, Bobby introduced them to bimá, then took Joe dóó bitsilí, Billy wolyé, to see his dalmation lééchaá'í yazhí. Billy thought the lééchaá'í líkizhígíí was really neat.

Bobby bimá asked Mr. Nelson to help the boys start the grill. They took a bag of t'eesh out to the grill. After arranging the t'eesh and pouring on starting fluid, Mr. Nelson lit the kq' and closed the lid. Before long, the kq' was sido. They put foil wrapped nadáá' dóó béégashi bitsí' on the grill while bimá left nimasi in the oven. When the beef was ready to turn, they added azeedích'íí'. The chili would be ready when the other food was.

"I hear a chidí in the driveway", Mr. Nelson said. "I hope nizhé'é át'é." A moment later, Bobby bizhé'é walked into the back yard. At the same time, Joe bideezhí came to ask if the ch'iyáán was ready.

"Hágo", Karen, Joe badí, called. "We're ready to eat."

The boys began removing the ch'iyáán from the grill, although the lid made their eyes burn. They took it to the table quickly. Soon everyone was busily eating.

"Mr. Nelson," Bobby asked, "why don't Navajos have names like other Indians?"

"What do you mean, Bobby?"

"The books we use in Missouri all talked about Indians with names like Little Beaver or Grey Wolf. All the Navajos I know

have names like Nelson or Kee or Yazzie. You know, They don't mean anything. They're just names."

Mr. Nelson laughed. "Your last name is Fuller. Do you know what a fuller did?"

"What do you mean? Fuller is just our name."

"Most names refer to something in the family's background. A fuller was a person who took cloth a weaver had woven and prepared it for sale. He would cut off loose threads. Bleach the material. Brush the surface to make it look smoother, and anything else the cloth might need to make it look better. Apparently, at one time that was your family trade. A smith was a person who hammered things into different shapes. Names like Weaver or Carpenter mean just what they say.

Many people, including writers assume all Indians do things the same way. There is as much difference between tribes as between Germans and French people. Generalizations about all Native Americans lead to major complications. Navajos received their names in many different ways.

Many times, when a child was sent to boarding school, the staff didn't know how to spell his or her name. Sometimes their attempts were not very accurate. Others simply assigned a different name rather than trying to spell the Navajo name. Occasionally, the Navajo name was translated into English. Sometimes a family or individual would adopt the name of a person they respected. Others might change their name to avoid arrest or Government programs. The name Bia seems to have originated from employees signing as being from the Bureau of

Indian Affairs. Inter-marriage with other peoples led to these names being introduced into the tribe as well.

Yazzie comes from the Navajo word for small, and Kee is from the word ashkíí or boy. Atcitty and Etcitty are attempts to spell 'atsidí, meaning to hammer or pound. It is the Navajo version of Smith. Hatathli comes from hataa'í, a singer or medicine man.

Naakaii is the name for the Mexican People clan and means 'they walk around'. Some families have been given or adopted their clan name as the family name."

"How did you get the Nelson name?"

"I don't know. Shinalí never told us how he got it."

"That's really interesting. Would you care for some coffee?" asked Bobby bizhé'é.

"Doo nisini da. I don't care for any. Gowééh keeps me awake when I drink it late. I have to work tomorrow, so I better not."

"Where do you work?"

"Navajo minedi nashnish. I drive one of the giant haul trucks hauling łeejin. We probably better go so I can wake up in time yiskáago. Hagóonee'."

"Hagoshíí', hagoónee'. Come see us again."

SHIMÁSÁNÍ BIGHAN

Bobby was eating lunch Friday when Joe sat down at the table.

“Yiskaągo, would you like to go with us to Shichei dóó Shimásání bighan? They live near Crystal, New Mexico on a ranch. They raise dibé dóó béégashii. They have some łíí too.”

“They have what?”

“They have sheep, cows, and horses.”

“How can I ever remember which is which?”

“Sheep dibé wolyé. They baa. Cows béégashii wolyé. They beg for a girl ‘beg a she’. Łíí sounds sort of like flea. You ride a flea. Its easy to remember that way. Try it with other words to see if it helps. Funny pictures are easier to remember.”

“I’d really like to meet your grandparents. I’ll call you if Shimá says I can go.”

After asking bimá if he could go the next day, Bobby called Joe. “Shimá said I can go with you yiskaągo.”

Early the next abiní, Joe, dóó bizh’é’é dóó badí dóó bitsílí came in the chidí to pick up Bobby. After a long time driving, they turned north at Window Rock. Bobby was impressed by the huge red rocks beside the highway. To the west was a long ridge of mountains and more to the north.

“Do you think the tse are nizhoni?” asked Joe bizh’é’é. That dził behind the rocks is dził ditłoi or fuzzy mountain.” As they passed through Navajo, he pointed out the tse łizhin called Frog Rock because, when seen from the dził to the west, it looks like a giant black ch’ał. Just past Navajo was a tóniteel called Red

Lake. Beside it was a huge green tree. A little later they turned onto a dirt trail that was pretty rough.

There were piñon trees interspersed with junipers and sage along side the trail. Joe was looking at the ch'ol. He explained that the piñon nuts would be ripe soon and they'd come to pick them. The resin from the juniper was best for cooking because it didn't burn one's eyes as bad as other kinds of smoke.

Coming to a small wash, they drove alongside it for a ways, then drove into it. When they drove out of the ch'ask'eh, they could see the ranch ahead. There was a nice house, a log hogan, some sheds and two large corrals.

"My great grand mother lives in the hogan," Joe explained. "Shichó is very old and doesn't like the house or some of the modern things."

They knocked on the door and a woman's voice called "Woshdée". Opening the ch'é'etíin, they entered the house and Joe introduced Bobby. "Díí Shimásání át'é, Mary wolyé. Shichei Alfred dóó shidá'í Wilfred. Shimá bitsíli át'é."

"Ya'át'ééh Bobby. Dah nídaah", said Bimásání, pushing a chair toward him.

Bobby sat down and listened as the others talked. As he looked around the room, he realized it was much like any other home. Then he noticed a nice yé'ii bichei rug hanging on the wall.

Wilfred saw him looking at it. "Dah iistl'ó nizhoni isn't it? Shimá made it. She won a prize at the fair with it."

“Aoo’, nizhóní.”

“Joe, Nichó needs some firewood. Could you gather up some of those dead chá’ol branches and bring them to the wood pile for her? Wilfred and I will cut some of the trees for her in a few days”, bichei said.

“Aoo’. Shíká anilyeed, Billy?”

“Aoo’. I will help you.”

“I will, too”, said Bobby.

The three boys rushed out along the cháshk’eh where they found a lot of dead branches. Gathering as many íł as they could carry, the boys took them to the chizh pile. After several trips, Joe said they had enough for a few days so the boys went back to the kin to see what was happening. Mr. Nelson was preparing to leave.

“Come see us again, Bobby”, Mary invited.

“I will. Ahéhee’. Hagoónee’.”

“Aoo’. Hagoónee’.”

GLOSSARY

abe’ milk

abiní morning

‘aoo’ yes

ahéhee’ thank you

áshíí salt

ashkíí boy

át’é it is

atiin road or trail

‘atoo’ stew

atsí’ meat

azeedích’íí’ chili

badí his, her older sister

bá’ólta’í teacher

bee atsidí hammer

béégashi cow

bideezhí his, her little sister

biq his, hers, or its

bighan his, her, it’s, their house

bighangóó to his house

bikis his, her friend

bimá his, her, it’s, their mother

bimásání his maternal grandmother

bitsilí his, her younger brother

bitsí' his meat

bizhé'é his, her father

ch'ał frog

chá'ol piñ on tree

cháshk'eh wash or gully

ch'é'étiin door

chidí car

ch'iyáán food

chizh firewood

dah nídaah you sit

dah iistł'ó rug, weaving

q déé' from

déyá I am going

q di at

dibé sheep

díí this

diniyá you are going

dóó and

dooda no, not

doo .. da negates what is between the two parts

dził mountain

Dził ditłoi Fuzzy Mountain

gad juniper

gídí kitten

q góó to

gowééh coffee

háadish where

haash what

hágo come here

hagoónee' goodbye

hagoosh where

hágoshíí okay

hataaí singer, chanter, medicine man

hoghan Hogan or home

ił branch

kin house, store

kq' fire

łéechaa'í dog

leejin coal

łid smoke

łíí horses

łikizhígíí spotted one

łizhin black

mósí cat

na' here, take it

naadáá' corn

nakaii Mexican, they walk around

naniná you walk around or about, dwell

naashá I am walking around, dwelling

naalyéhé bá hooghan store

nashnish I work

niq your

nighan your house

nimá your mother

nimasi potato

nisin I think, want, or need

nizhé'é your father

nizhóní beautiful

'olta'í school

'olta'di at school

sido it is hot Í an object Ó

sha ní'aah give it to meÍ a solid rounded objectÓ

shádí my older sister

shanikah give it to meÍ things in a containerÓ

shi my

shichei my maternal grandfather

shichó my maternal great grand mother

shidá'í my maternal uncle

shighan my home

shighangóó to my house

shigídí my kitten

shiká anilyeed you will help me?

shimá mother

shimásání my maternal grandmother

shinálí my paternal grandfather

shizhé'é my father

sikis my friend

sitilí my younger brother

t'eesh charcoal

tónteel lake

tse rock

tsin wood

wolyé he, she, it is called

wóshdée' this way, come in

yá'át'ééh it is good, hello

yazhi small, little

yeigo harder

yé'ii bicheii gods

yinílyé you are called

yinishyé I am called

yiskáago tomorrow