



The Rough-Face Girl

By Rafe Martin

Narrator 1	Narrator 2	Narrator	Rough-Face Girl
Sister	Father	Patient One	Hidden One
Boy	Young Man	Old Woman	Young Woman

NARRATOR 1: A long time ago, in a village by a lake, there lived a great hunter who was invisible. He was called the Hidden One. It was known that any young woman who could see him would become his bride.

NARRATOR 2: Many were the hopeful young women who visited his wigwam at the far end of the village. Each was tested by the hunter's sister, who was called the Patient One. But years passed, and none succeeded.

NARRATOR 3: In the same village lived two sisters who had lost their mother. The younger sister had a good heart, but the older one was jealous and cruel.

NARRATOR 1: While their father was out hunting, the older sister would torment the younger one, holding her down and burning her arms and face with sticks from the fire. Then she would tell her,

SISTER: Don't you dare tell our father, or next time will be worse!

NARRATOR 2: When the father came home, he would ask in dismay,

FATHER: Why is she burnt again?

NARRATOR 3: The older sister would answer,

SISTER: The stupid, clumsy thing! She was playing with the fire, just like you told her not to!

NARRATOR 2: The father would turn to the younger.

FATHER: (incredulously) Is this true?

NARRATOR 3: But she only bit her lip and said nothing.

NARRATOR 1: After a while she had so many scars, she was called Rough-Face Girl. She lost her long braids too, when her sister singed them off.

NARRATOR 3: And she had to go barefoot and wear rags, for her sister would not allow her any animal skins to make moccasins or new clothes.

NARRATOR 2: Of course, the sister made up all different reasons to tell their father.

NARRATOR 3: And he would shake his head in sorrow and disappointment.

NARRATOR 1: One day, the older sister put on her finest clothes and many shiny strings of shell beads. She asked Rough-Face Girl,

SISTER: (snootily) Do you know what I'm doing? I'm going to marry the Hidden One. Of course, that's something you could never dream of.

NARRATOR 1: Rough-Face Girl bowed her head.

NARRATOR 2: When the older sister reached the wigwam at the edge of the village, she was greeted by the sister of the hunter. The Patient One told her,

PATIENT ONE: You are welcome. My brother will return soon from the hunt. Come help me prepare the evening meal.

NARRATOR 3: The two of them worked awhile, till the sun was nearly down. Then the Patient One led the young woman to the lake.

NARRATOR 1: She pointed along the shore.

PATIENT ONE: (pointing past the sister) My brother comes. Do you see him?

NARRATOR 3: The young woman saw no one, but she had decided to pretend.

SISTER: Of course. (pointing) There he is now!

NARRATOR 2: The eyes of the Patient One narrowed.

PATIENT ONE: (suspiciously) And what is his shoulder strap?

SISTER: A strip of rawhide.

NARRATOR 3: . . . said the young woman, thinking it a safe guess.

NARRATOR 1: The Patient One frowned.

PATIENT ONE: Let us return to the wigwam.

NARRATOR 1: They had just finished making the meal when a deep voice said,

HIDDEN ONE: Greetings, my sister.

NARRATOR 2: The young woman jumped in surprise.

NARRATOR 3: She stared at the entrance but saw no one.

PATIENT ONE: Greetings, my brother.

NARRATOR 1: As the young woman watched with wide eyes, a moccasin appeared in mid-air and dropped to the floor, followed by another.

NARRATOR 3: A moment later, bits of food were rising from a birch-bark tray near the fire and vanishing into an invisible mouth.

NARRATOR 2: The young woman turned to the Patient One.

SISTER: (cheerily) When will our wedding take place?

PATIENT ONE: (turning on her angrily) What wedding? Do you think my brother would marry a liar and a fool?

NARRATOR 3: The young woman ran crying from the wigwam.

NARRATOR 1: All the next morning she stayed in bed, weeping and sobbing.

NARRATOR 2: Then Rough-Face Girl came to her.

ROUGH-FACE GIRL: (softly) Sister, let me have skins to make moccasins and new clothes. It is my turn to visit the Hidden One.

SISTER: (screaming) How dare you!

NARRATOR 2: The sister jumped up and slapped Rough-Face Girl, knocking her to the floor.

SISTER: Are you so stupid to think you can do what I couldn't? Even if you saw him, do you think he'd marry a pathetic thing like you?

NARRATOR 3: She sank back to the bed in tears.

NARRATOR 1 Rough-Face Girl sat huddled for a long time, listening to her sister howl and sob. Then she rose and said again,

ROUGH-FACE GIRL: (still softly) It is my turn to visit the Hidden One.

NARRATOR 1: Her sister stopped crying and stared in amazement.

NARRATOR 2: Rough-Face Girl went to her father's chest and took out an old pair of moccasins. She put them on her own small feet.

NARRATOR 3: Then she went out into the woods. She chose a birch tree and carefully stripped off the bark in a single sheet. From this she made a suit of clothes, which she put on in place of her rags. Then she started back through the village.

BOY: (pointing) Look at Rough-Face Girl!

NARRATOR 1: . . . yelled a boy.

BOY: She's dressed like a tree!

YOUNG MAN: Hey, Rough-Face Girl!

NARRATOR 2: . . . a young man called.

YOUNG MAN: Are those moccasins big enough for you?

OLD WOMAN: I don't believe it! She's on her way to the Hidden One!

YOUNG WOMAN: Oh, Rough-Face Girl, did you burn yourself and cut off your hair to look pretty for him?

NARRATOR 1: Ignoring their taunts and laughter, Rough-Face Girl walked on till she reached the wigwam at the village edge.

NARRATOR 3: The Patient One regarded the young woman with surprise but told her,

PATIENT ONE: You are welcome.

NARRATOR 2: Rough-Face Girl helped prepare the evening meal. When the sun was nearly down, the Patient One led her to the lake. She told her,

PATIENT ONE: (pointing) My brother comes. Do you see him?

NARRATOR 3: Rough-Face Girl gazed along the shore.

ROUGH-FACE GIRL: (looking hard) I'm not sure. . . .

NARRATOR 1: Then her eyes lit in wonder.

ROUGH-FACE GIRL: Yes, I see him! But how can there be such a one?

NARRATOR 3: The Patient One looked at her curiously.

PATIENT ONE: What is his shoulder strap?

ROUGH-FACE GIRL: His shoulder strap is . . . is the Rainbow!

NARRATOR 2: The Patient One's eyes grew wide.

PATIENT ONE: And his bowstring?

ROUGH-FACE GIRL: His bowstring is . . . the Milky Way!

NARRATOR 3: The Patient One smiled.

PATIENT ONE: Let us return.

NARRATOR 1: When they reached the wigwam, the Patient One took the strange clothes off Rough-Face Girl and washed her with water from a special jar.

NARRATOR 4: The young woman's scars disappeared, leaving her skin shining and smooth.

NARRATOR 2: A magic comb made the young woman's hair grow quickly to her waist, ready for braiding.

NARRATOR 3: Then the Patient One opened a chest and took out a beautiful wedding outfit. Rough-Face Girl had just put it on when a deep voice said,

HIDDEN ONE: Greetings, my sister.

NARRATOR 1: Rough-Face Girl turned to the entrance and stared at the magnificent young hunter.

NARRATOR 4: As their eyes met, she saw the surprise in his.

PATIENT ONE: (smiling) Greetings, my brother. You are discovered!

NARRATOR 2: The Hidden One walked over to Rough-Face Girl and took her hands in his.

HIDDEN ONE: (with deep feeling) For years I have waited to find a woman of pure heart and brave spirit. Only such a one could see me. And now you shall be my bride.

NARRATOR 3: So they were married.

NARRATOR 1: And from then on, Rough-Face Girl had a new name—

NARRATOR 4: the Lovely One.

NARRATOR 2: For she too had been hidden,

NARRATOR 3: and now was hidden no more.