

“Great Spirits, the land is dying. Your People are dying, too,” the long line of dancers sang. “Tell us what we have done to anger you. End this drought. Save your People tell us what we must do so you will send the rain that will bring back life.”

Introduction: Sierra Expedition today my Princess Rising Sun and I will share with you the **Legend of the Blue Bonnet. A story of Sacrifice, Love and Caring for all around us.**

For three days, the dancers danced to the sound of the drums, and for three days, the People called Comanche watched and waited. And even though the hard winter was over, no healing rains came.

Drought and famine are hardest on the very young and the very old.

Among the few children left was a small girl named She-Who-Is-Alone. She sat by herself watching the dancers. In her lap was a doll made from buckskin—a warrior doll. The eyes, nose and mouth were painted on with the juice of berries. It wore beaded leggings and a belt of polished bone. On its head were brilliant blue feathers from the bird who cries “Jay-jay.” She loved her doll very much.

Zayra: “The Medicine Man will go off alone to the top of the hill to listen for the words of the Great Spirits. Then, we will know what to do so that once more the rains will come and the Earth will be green and alive. The buffalo will be plentiful and the People will be rich again.”

AL: as she talked, she thought of the mother who made the doll, of the father who brought the blue feathers. She thought of the grandfather and the grandmother she had never known. They were all like shadows. It seemed long ago that they had died from the famine. The People had named her and cared for her. The warrior doll was the only thing she had left from those distant days.

“The sun is setting,” the runner called as he ran through the camp. “The Medicine Man is returning.” The People gathered in a circle and the Medicine Man spoke. “I have heard the words of the Great Spirits,” he said. “The People have become selfish. For years, they have taken from the Earth without giving anything back. The Great Spirits say the People must sacrifice. We must make a burnt offering of the most valued possession among us. The ashes of this offering shall then be scattered to the four points of the Earth, the Home of the Winds. When this sacrifice is made, drought and famine will cease. Life will be restored to the Earth and to the People!”

The People sang a song of thanks to the Great Spirits for telling them what they must do. “I’m sure it is not my new bow that the Great Spirits want,” a warrior said. “Or my special blanket,” a woman added, as everyone went to their tipis to talk and think over what the Great Spirits had asked. Everyone, that is, except She-Who-Is-Alone. She held her doll tightly to her heart.

Zayra: “You,” she said, looking at the doll. “You are my most valued possession. It is you the Great Spirits, want.” And she knew what she must do.

As the council fires died out and the tipi flaps began to close, the small girl returned to the tipi where she slept, to wait. The night outside was still except for the distant sound of the night bird with red wings. Soon everyone in the tipi was asleep, except She-Who-Is-Alone. Under the ashes of the tipi fire one stick still glowed. She took it and quietly crept out into the night. She went to the place on the hill where the Great Spirits had spoken to the Medicine Man. Stars filled the sky, but there was no moon.

Zayra: “O Great Spirits,” “here is my warrior doll. It is the only thing I have from my family who died in this famine. It is my most valued possession. Please accept it.”

AL: She started a fire with the glowing fire stick. As she watched the fire, she thought of the grandmother and grandfather, her mother and father and all the People—their suffering, their hunger. And before she could change her mind, she thrust the doll into the fire. She watched until the flames died down and the ashes had grown cold. Then, scooping up a handful, She-Who-Is-Alone scattered the ashes to the Home of the Winds, the North and the East, the South and the West. She then fell asleep until the first light of the morning sun woke her.

She looked out over the hill, and there stretching out from all sides, where the ashes had fallen, the ground was covered with flowers—beautiful flowers, as blue as the feather in the hair of the doll, as blue as the feathers of the bird who cries “Jay-jay.” When the People came out of their tipis, they could scarcely believe their eyes. They gathered on the hill with She-Who-is-Alone to look at the miraculous sight. There was no doubt about it, the flowers were a sign of forgiveness from the Great Spirits, And as the People sang, and danced their thanks to the Great Spirits, a warm rain began to fall and the land began to live again. From that day on, the little girl was known by another name—“One-Who-Dearly-Loved-Her-People.” And every spring, the Great Spirits remember the sacrifice of a little girl and fill the hills and valleys of the land, now called Texas, with the beautiful blue flowers.

Even to this very day.