



Why Corn Dolls Have No Features

Long after the Maker of All Things created the Iroquois, he placed upon Earth Mother plants and animals for their use. Among these were three kindly sisters, Corn, Beans, and Squash known as O-ness-ta (Sustainers of Life). One day gracious Corn Spirit, looking up to the Maker of All Things, asked if there was still more she could do for the Indian people. Pleased by her request, Maker of All Things gave to certain human beings the skill to make a doll people from her husks.

Among the first dolls was one beautiful corn husk doll, lovely and graceful. People traveled many arrow flights simply to look at her. Corn husk doll became vain. "No one is as beautiful as I," she would say as she gazed at her reflection in the Sacred Pool's still waters.

In great displeasure Maker of All Things thought about this vain doll. He feared other corn husk dolls and even Iroquois children might imitate this foolish one. Then would come envy, discontent and much trouble. Sky Sachem (chief) decided to end the evil before it spread too far. He summoned his Owl Messenger (Gwa-Oh) who obediently left his perch upon the Great Celestial Tree that brushed the Sky Ceiling and flew down vast spaces through the Cloud Sea finally stopping upon a Spruce Tree above Sacred Pool of Water.

There the messenger found the handsome doll kneeling as usual before the mirror-like pool arranging many colored flowers in her silky hair. She was so involved in combing her hair she did not see her visitor. The Owl, Gwa-Oh, looked at the conceited figure and scolded, "You see, I am a wise bird, so listen closely. You were intended by Maker of All Things to spread joy, companionship, and friendliness among his children. Instead, because of your vanity, you have aroused envy and distress in their hearts. This must stop before sorrow and sadness spread throughout the Iroquois lodges." The bird ruffled his feathers as he said, "Look hard into the Sacred Pool vain one. Vain people are soulless. Soulless creatures should have no faces. Your beautiful face I now wipe away." "No, no," begged the terrified doll. She tried to leave, but Owl's eyes stopped her. As she pleaded, a sound of a high bird's song was heard and suddenly her pretty face disappeared. Gwa-Oh told the crying doll, "So that others may not be hurt by your vainness, you must walk Earth Mother without a face though you may still see and hear as before. You may continue to speak with the Spirits of our Brothers of Woods and Fields and Streams. But with the Iroquois, save for certain chosen ones, you may talk only through dreams.

"It has pleased our Maker of All Things to make differences among people, only it is wrong for one person to hold himself better; you are as good as I am, but no better. Go now, foolish one, and perform the task which is your right and should be your joy. Go and learn to be humble and content. Go and make Earth Mother's children happy."



Corn Husk Doll

Directions

Materials Needed:

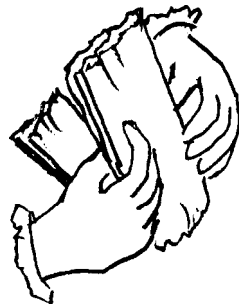
dry corn husks
string or yarn
corn silk
bowl of water

cloth scraps
glue
cotton balls

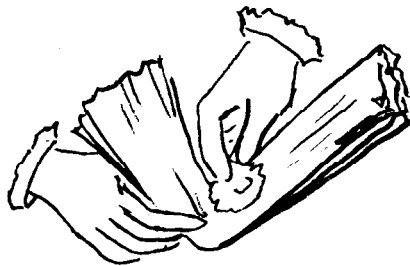


Directions:

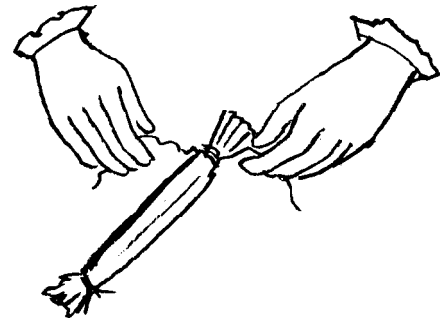
1.
Soak the husks in water for one hour.



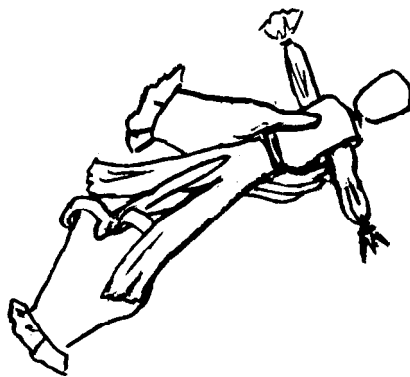
2.
To make the body, fold 3 corn husks of equal length in half.



3.
For the head, place a cotton ball inside the fold and tie a piece of string just below.



5.
For legs, cut the corn husk body lengthwise to just below the waist. Tie a piece of string about 1/2" from each end to make feet.



4.
For the arms and hands, cut 2 corn husks into 5" lengths. Then tie a piece of string about 1/2" from each end. Put the arms through the husk body. Tie a piece of string around the body just below the arms to make the waist and to hold the arms in place.

6.
Glue on corn silk for hair.

