



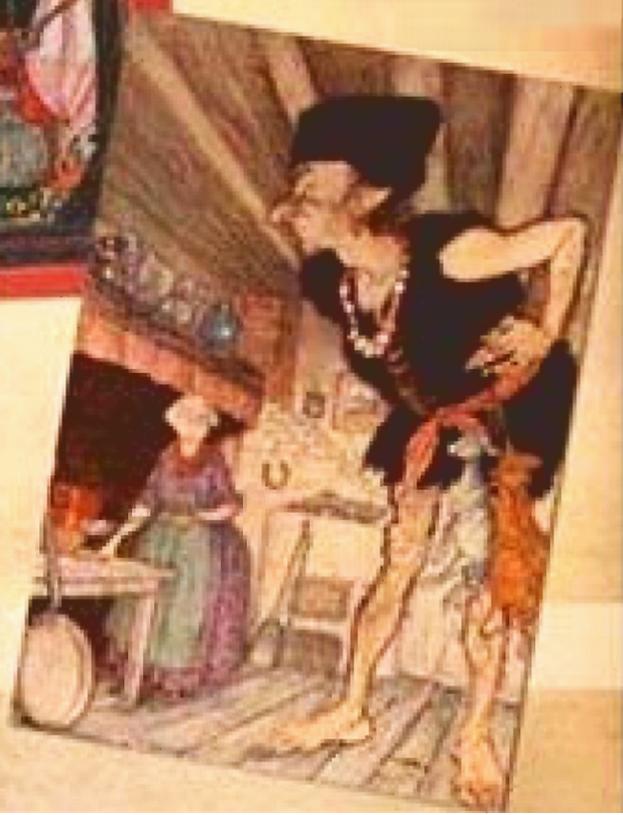
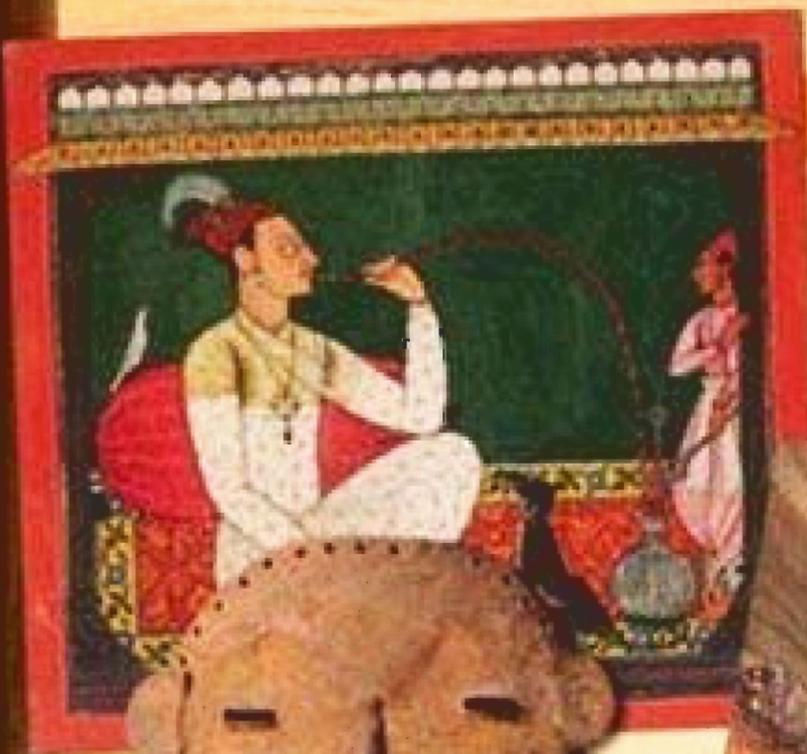
The Greenwood Library of

world folktales

STORIES FROM THE GREAT COLLECTIONS

volume four

**North and
South America**



EDITED BY THOMAS A. GREEN

The
Greenwood Library
of
World Folktales

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Stories from the Great Collections

VOLUME 4

North and South America

Edited by Thomas A. Green

Jack Zipes, Advisory Editor



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Introduction to Volume 4

North America encompasses the United States and Canada. The vast territorial scope, ecological variety, and ethnic diversity of the continent compel selective rather than comprehensive coverage of narrative traditions. The two primary divisions utilized for North America are Native American and non-Native American.

Native American cultures from which narratives are drawn are arranged alphabetically. They are politically, socially, and economically diverse. Among the indigenous North American cultures are hunters and gathers, agriculturalists, mariners, small band societies, and theocracies with elaborate hierarchies. The major regions of the Northeast, the South, the Plains, the Southwest, the West, and the Northwest Coast are represented, and the locations of the groups and the lifestyles developed within these regions are presented in the headnotes to individual tales.

Non-Native American tales are classified as either ethnic or regional traditions. The former are labeled according to an ascribed ethnic affiliation, which may or may not exist within exclusively racial parameters. The latter traditions find a focus in social contexts and lifestyles that are peculiar to a given geographic location.

Ethnic traditions in North America are represented in this volume by the **African American** and the **Cajun** traditions. Both groups have maintained strong ethnic bonds while influencing and responding to the lore of their cultural neighbors.

Although by no means did all people of African descent in the Americas arrive as a result of slavery, the enslavement and importation of Africans into the American hemisphere provided a major African influence. This was especially true in the coastal states of the South with the development of a plantation economy. A similar expansion of the commerce in African slaves in the Caribbean had a similar impact as discussed later in this volume (page xvii). In spite of skewed social relationships, however, African and European expressive

culture met and produced new products that bore the marks of both worlds. See, for example, “How Brer Rabbit Bring Dust Out of the Rock” (page 187), a tale in which European and European American “Jack tale” motifs and plot structures converge with the African American trickster Brer Rabbit.

Cajuns are the descendents of Europeans of French ancestry who were exiled from Acadia (now Nova Scotia, Canada) when the British began a systematic program of deportation in 1755. Some of this population sought refuge in the French Caribbean. Others settled in territory inhabited primarily by Native Americans, which may account for the shared tales among the Cajun corpus and the repertoires of Native Americans in the southeastern United States. The largest and historically the most identifiable Cajun population, however, settled in what was then the Louisiana Territory. Maintaining a separate identity, these southern Cajuns held on to French narratives featuring Jean Sot (Foolish John) as in “Jean Sot Feeds Cows Needles” (page 217) and “Jean Sot Kills the Duck” (page 218). The preservation of identity, however, does not entail neither insulation from neighbors occupying the same region nor stagnation of the tale repertoire. The tales of Lapin and Bouqui provide particularly useful examples of borrowing between the Cajun and the African American communities. Particular tales such as “The Wine, the Farm, the Princess and the Tarbaby” (page 209) survived in both ethnic traditions. Moreover, the name given to the comic foil for trickster Lapin (rabbit), Bouqui, in the Cajun cycle of trickster tales owes a debt to Africa. The accepted origin of the name Bouqui lies in the Wolof (West African) word for hyena, and this character under a variety of spellings is found not only in the United States, but in the Caribbean as well. See, for example, “Brother Rabbit, Brother Booky, and Brother Cow” (page 418). Moreover, ample evidence of sharing among Cajun and African Americans is provided by a comparison of the Cajun tale “On Horseback” (page 214) to the African American “Mr. Deer’s My Riding Horse” (page 173).

Regional traditions provide a further means of classifying North American folktales. Ecology, history, and social conditions of a given locale often give rise to narrative responses to these factors. Conversely, ethnic and regional identities are not hermetically from each other. They often interact.

Pennsylvania German traditions, in fact, are on the cusp of the ethnic and the regional. The so-called Pennsylvania Dutch (actually the Pennsylvania Germans) are descendants of German-speaking immigrants who came to Pennsylvania from various parts of southwest Germany, Alsace, and Switzerland. Their migrations took them into several colonies in addition to Pennsylvania as early as the seventeenth century, although by 1776 they composed a third of the population of that state. Most eventually came to live in the southeastern region of the state. This population concentration notwithstanding, there were infusions from related Old World traditions and colonial settlements.

For example, the Dutch East India Company established trading posts on the Hudson River, claiming to the territory between the Connecticut and

Delaware Rivers, an area including the contemporary Connecticut, New York, and part of Pennsylvania. Between 1609 and 1664, 8,000 Dutch settlers inhabited the New Netherlands (contemporary New York and New Jersey). Among the areas populated early on by the Dutch was modern Schoharie County, a sub-region in which both Dutch and German immigrants came to live as neighbors. With time, distinctions as to national origin of tales became blurred. Migration between the two areas further blended the folklore of the communities. In one instance, in 1723, some thirty-three Palatine families migrated from Schoharie, New York, to Tulpehocken, Berks County, Pennsylvania, where other Palatines had settled previously. For purposes of the present collection, the German-descended traditions that developed within the coastal states mentioned above and Pennsylvania constitute a regional folk tradition.

Appalachian culture, similarly, displays both regional and ethnic allegiances. The southern Appalachian region encompasses West Virginia, large areas of North and South Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia, and portions of Alabama, Georgia, and Mississippi. The European ethnic makeup of the region is historically northern English and Scottish Irish who had been settled in Ulster during the early seventeenth century. By the late eighteenth century, many had immigrated to the American colonies and pushed westward into the Appalachian region from 1718–1775. Later, settlers from the southern Appalachian region moved on to the Ozarks, limited here to the northern Arkansas-southern Missouri area. These immigrants, though not the first of European descent to settle there eventually became the largest faction. As a result, they became the dominant influence on traditional narratives in the area. The relative isolation of the rural communities in the southern highlands encouraged the preservation of archaic British dialect features as well as various genres of folklore and folk-life. For example, localized versions of English folktales such as “The Brave Tailor” (AT 1640) and “The Lion and the Unicorn” (page 232) were collected in the early decades of the twentieth century along with personal experience narratives and legends of witchcraft and hauntings, as in “The Mysterious Deer” (page 228) and “The Witch and the Boiler” (page 226).

The **Southwest** as a regional tradition is limited, for the purpose of this collection, to Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. The landscape of these states varies from thickly forested areas of East Texas to cedar and oak as one moves further into the state or into the mountains of New Mexico. The Gulf Coast of Texas is contrasted with the deserts to New Mexico and Arizona. With its dramatic extremes of blasting heat, which can range as high as 125 degrees Fahrenheit in the Sonoran desert and bitter cold in the higher elevations of the Rocky Mountains in Arizona and New Mexico, the climate itself has inspired the folk imagination—particularly tall tales. The southwestern region’s ecology has given rise in turn to a variety of occupations and the lifestyles attendant upon them. Farming, commercial and subsistence fishing, gathering, ranching, mining, subsistence hunting, and—before the virtual extermination of the great bison

herds—hide hunting were supported by fertile flatlands and river bottoms, the coasts, the open plains, and mountain ranges. Each of these vocations has left its trail in oral tradition. Although it is an extreme oversimplification, particularly in the twenty-first century, to ignore the presence and contributions of an extraordinary range of cultures to the Southwest region, two non-Native cultures, the Hispanic and the Anglo American, traditionally have been recognized as having exerted early and profound influence on the region.

South America extends from Venezuela in the north to Chile and Argentina in the south. As has been noted for most of the other continents whose traditions are covered in *The Greenwood Library of World Folktales*, the geographic and cultural diversity of the region make generalizations impossible. The continent is noteworthy as the home of some of the earliest and most highly developed of the indigenous civilizations in the Americas. By the end of the fifteenth century, the continent became the object of colonial struggles, introducing first Spanish and Portuguese influences into the area and later, to a lesser degree, other European traditions. European mercantilism also introduced a profound and enduring African presence in the wake of the slave trade. Brazil, alone, imported almost 40 percent of the African slaves that were brought into the Americas. In the twenty-first century, many South American nations continue to sustain a significant African American population. Suriname, for example, is home to the largest Maroon population (see Suriname Maroon, pages 324–331) in the Western hemisphere; these people have preserved and disseminated their culture throughout the region. The folktales of Native South Americans are categorized under the indigenous name for each group (for example, Aymara, Inca) or, in the case of those tales that have been perpetuated within a European-descended tradition, under the name of the nation that provided the most immediate source for the narrative (for example, Chile). This principle applies to the tales from Mexico and Central America and the Caribbean.

Mexico and Central America comprises the region extending from the southern border of the United States through Mexico, into Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama. Historically, certain native cultures of the region such as the Aztecs, the Olmecs, and the Maya were noted for the development of societies that created sophisticated aesthetic, theological, and scientific systems. Simultaneously, there existed in the region groups who based their subsistence on hunting and gathering, fishing, and small-scale horticulture. A significant number of the latter ethnic groups, many of whom were related culturally and linguistically to the empire builders, persist into the twenty-first century. Early in the sixteenth century, Spain invaded the area and established three centuries of Spanish rule. The effects on the culture of Mexico and Central America appear in the folktales in the form of a strong current of Roman Catholicism as well as in the persistence of European tale types and motifs.

Caribbean indigenous cultures, as is the case elsewhere in the Western hemisphere, provided the baseline in the area. At the time of European contact, the Caribbean was inhabited by cultures that had migrated from the South American mainland. The primary groups at the time of European contact were identified as the Taino, and the Carib from whom the name for the area was derived. A combination of military action beginning in the late fifteenth century and diseases brought first from Europe and later from Africa via the slave trade decimated the native population of the islands. As a result, the impact of Native Caribbean oral traditions on the folktale corpus was minimal compared with either the European or African traditions. Spanish influence arrived in the late fifteenth century, and the British established their Caribbean colonies in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and in the Caribbean during the same period. The French became a factor in the Caribbean in the middle of the seventeenth century. The enslavement and importation of Africans into the Caribbean beginning in the late sixteenth century eventually resulted in a major African influence throughout the islands.

NORTH AMERICA

Native North American

ACOMA

ORIGIN OF ACOMA

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Stirling, Matthew W. *Origin Myth of Acoma and Other Records*. Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 135. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1942, 1–10.

Date: 1928

Original Source: Acoma Pueblo, New Mexico

National Origin: Native American

As with all **myths** of origin, this one from Acoma Pueblo details the ways in which the orderly universe develops from primal chaos. The physical environment and its life forms are created, as are technology, religious practice, and elements of the social structure. The residents of Acoma were traditionally farmers who relied on the meager New Mexico rainfall rather than on irrigation as did the Pueblos further to the east. The image used to depict the development of the current order suggests maturation and emergence from an underground world and, as such, is derived from the model of the growing corn plant, the primary Acoma crop, and, therefore, the basis of traditional subsistence. The central place of the plant in practical and ceremonial life and the role of the Sun in nurturing the plant is given charter in the myth. The kiva, the underground site of Pueblo religious life, recreates Shipapu, which is identified in this narrative as the original source of life. The primacy of the sacred number “four” is reflected in four directions, four kinds of pine trees, four seeds, and four mountains, for example. The Acoma, like the rest of the Western Pueblos, emphasize clans related through the female line and both houses and gardens are owned by women. The female gender of the primal pair establishes these kinship and ownership

patterns. The two sisters embody messages concerning traditional ethics and morality as well. Iatiku's altruistic behavior is regarded as more appropriately Pueblo than is Nautsiti's self-absorption and hoarding. Thus, in a later myth, Nautsiti—whose behavior becomes increasingly less appropriate by Western Pueblo standards—eventually “disappears into the East,” while Iatiku remains to establish clans, ceremonies, and other features of Acoma culture.

In the beginning two female human beings were born. These two children were born underground at a place called Shipapu. As they grew up, they began to be aware of each other. There was no light and they could only feel each other. Being in the dark they grew slowly. After they had grown considerably, a Spirit whom they afterward called Tsichtinako spoke to them, and they found that it would give them nourishment. After they had grown large enough to think for themselves, they spoke to the Spirit when it had come to them one day and asked it to make itself known to them and to say whether it was male or female, but it replied only that it was not allowed to meet with them. They then asked why they were living in the dark without knowing each other by name, but the Spirit answered that they were nuk'timi (under the earth); but they were to be patient in waiting until everything was ready for them to go up into the light. So they waited a long time, and as they grew they learned their language from Tsichtinako. When all was ready, they found a present from Tsichtinako, two baskets of seeds and little images of all the different animals (there were to be) in the world. The Spirit said they were sent by their father. They asked who was meant by their father, and Tsichtinako replied that his name was Ūch'tsiti and that he wished them to take their baskets out into the light, when the time came. Tsichtinako instructed them, “You will find the seeds of four kinds of pine trees, lā'khok, gēi'etsu (dyai'its), wanūka, and lā'nye, in your baskets. You are to plant these seeds and will use the trees to get up into the light.” They could not see the things in their baskets but feeling each object in turn they asked, “Is this it?” until the seeds were found. They then planted the seeds as Tsichtinako instructed. All of the four seeds sprouted, but in the darkness the trees grew very slowly and the two sisters became very anxious to reach the light as they waited this long time. They slept for many years as they had no use for eyes. Each time they awoke they would feel the trees to see how they were growing. The tree lanye grew faster than the others and after a very long time pushed a hole through the earth for them and let in a very little light. The others stopped growing, at various heights, when this happened.

The hole that the tree lanye made was not large enough for them to pass through, so Tsichtinako advised them to look again in their baskets where they would find the image of an animal called dyu'pi (badger) and tell it to become alive. They told it to live, and it did so as they spoke, exclaiming, “A'uha! Why

have you given me life?" They told it not to be afraid nor to worry about coming to life. "We have brought you to life because you are to be useful." Tsichtinako spoke to them again, instructing them to tell Badger to climb the pine tree, to bore a hole large enough for them to crawl up, cautioning him not to go out into the light, but to return, when the hole was finished. Badger climbed the tree and after he had dug a hole large enough, returned saying that he had done his work. They thanked him and said, "As a reward you will come up with us to the light and thereafter you will live happily. You will always know how to dig and your home will be in the ground where you will be neither too hot nor too cold."

Tsichtinako now spoke again, telling them to look in the basket for Tāwāi'nū (locust), giving it life and asking it to smooth the hole by plastering. It too was to be cautioned to return. This they did and Locust smoothed the hole but, having finished, went out into the light. When it returned reporting that it had done its work, they asked it if it had gone out. Locust said no, and every time he was asked he replied no, until the fourth time when he admitted that he had gone out. They asked Locust what it was like outside. Locust replied that it was just tsī'īī (laid out flat). They said, "From now on you will be known as Tsi:k'ā. You will also come up with us, but you will be punished for disobedience by being allowed out only a short time. Your home will be in the ground and you will have to return when the weather is bad. You will soon die but you will be reborn each season."

The hole now let light into the place where the two sisters were, and Tsichtinako spoke to them, "Now is the time you are to go out. You are able to take your baskets with you. In them you will find pollen and sacred corn meal. When you reach the top, you will wait for the sun to come up and that direction will be called ha'nami (east). With the pollen and the sacred corn meal you will pray to the Sun. You will thank the Sun for bringing you to light, ask for a long life and happiness, and for success in the purpose for which you were created." Tsichtinako then taught them the prayers and the creation song, which they were to sing. This took a long while, but finally the sisters followed by Badger and Locust, went out into the light, climbing the pine tree. Badger was very strong and skillful and helped them. On reaching the earth, they set down their baskets and saw for the first time what they had. The earth was soft and spongy under their feet as they walked, and they said, "This is not ripe." They stood waiting for the sun, not knowing where it would appear. Gradually it grew lighter and finally the sun came up. Before they began to pray, Tsichtinako told them they were facing east and that their right side, the side their best aim was on, would be known as kū'āimē (south) and the left ti dyami (north) while behind at their backs was the direction pūna'me (west) where the sun would go down. They had already learned while underground the direction nūk'ūmi (down) and later, when they asked where their father was, they were told tyunami (four skies above).

And as they waited to pray to the Sun, the girl on the right moved her best hand and was named *Iatiku* which meant “bringing to life.” *Tsichtinako* then told her to name her sister, but it took a long time. Finally *Tsichtinako* noticed that the other had more in her basket, so *Tsichtinako* told *Iatiku* to name her thus, and *Iatiku* called her *Nautsiti* which meant “more of everything in the basket.”

They now prayed to the Sun as they had been taught by *Tsichtinako*, and sang the creation song. Their eyes hurt for they were not accustomed to the strong light. For the first time they asked *Tsichtinako* why they were on earth and why they were created. *Tsichtinako* replied, “I did not make you. Your father, *Uchtsiti* made you, and it is he who has made the world, the sun which you have seen, the sky, and many other things which you will see. But *Uchtsiti* says the world is not yet completed, not yet satisfactory, as he wants it. This is the reason he has made you. You will rule and bring to life the rest of the things he has given you in the baskets.” The sisters then asked how they themselves had come into being. *Tsichtinako* answered saying, “*Uchtsiti* first made the world. He threw a clot of his own blood into space and by his power it grew and grew until it became the earth. Then *Uchtsiti* planted you in this and by it you were nourished as you developed. Now that you have emerged from within the earth, you will have to provide nourishment for yourselves. I will instruct you in this.” They then asked where their father lived and *Tsichtinako* replied, “You will never see your father, he lives four skies above, and has made you to live in this world. He has made you in the image of himself.” So they asked why *Tsichtinako* did not become visible to them, but *Tsichtinako* replied, “I don’t know how to live like a human being. I have been asked by *Uchtsiti* to look after you and to teach you. I will always guide you.” And they asked again how they were to live, whether they could go down once more under the ground, for they were afraid of the winds and rains and their eyes were hurt by the light. *Tsichtinako* replied that *Uchtsiti* would take care of that and would furnish them means to keep warm and change the atmosphere so that they would get used to it.

At the end of the first day, when it became dark they were much frightened, for they had not understood that the sun would set and thought that *Tsichtinako* had betrayed them. “*Tsichtinako!* *Tsichtinako!* You told us we were to come into the light,” they cried, “why, then, is it dark?” So *Tsichtinako* explained, “This is the way it will always be. The sun will go down and the next day come up anew in the east. When it is dark you are to rest and sleep as you slept when all was dark.” So they were satisfied and slept. They rose to meet the sun, praying to it as they had been told, and were happy when it came up again, for they were warm and their faith in *Tsichtinako* was restored.

Tsichtinako next said to them, “Now that you have your names, you will pray with your names and your clan names so that the Sun will know you and recognize you.” *Tsichtinako* asked *Nautsiti* which clan she wished to belong to.

Nautsiti answered, "I wish to see the sun, that is the clan I will be." The spirit told Nautsiti to ask Iatiku what clan she wanted. Iatiku thought for a long time but finally she noticed that she had the seed from which sacred meal was made in her basket and no other kind of seeds. She thought, "With this name I shall be very proud, for it has been chosen for nourishment and it is sacred." So she said, "I will be Corn clan." They then waited for the sun to come up. When it appeared, Tsichtinako once more advised them to sing the first song and to pray, not forgetting their name and their clan name in starting their prayer. After the prayer they were to sing the second song.

When the sun appeared it was too bright for Iatiku and it hurt her eyes. She wondered if Nautsiti's eyes hurt her, too, so she put her head down and sideways, letting her hair fall, and looked at Nautsiti. By doing this the light did not strike her squarely in the face and her hair cast a shade. Tsichtinako said, "Iatiku, the sun has not appeared for you. Look at Nautsiti, see how strongly the light is striking her. Notice how white she looks." And although Iatiku turned to the sun, it did not make her as white as Nautsiti, and Iatiku's mind was slowed up while Nautsiti's mind was made fast. But both of them remembered everything and did everything as they were taught.

When they had completed their prayers to the sun, Tsichtinako said, "You have done everything well and now you are both to take up your baskets and you must look to the north, west, south, and east, for you are now to pray to the Earth to accept the things in the basket and to give them life. First you must pray to the north, at the same time lift up your baskets in that direction. You will then do the same to the west, then to the south and east." They did as they were told and did it well. And Tsichtinako, said to them, "From now on you will rule in every direction, north, west, south, and east."

They now questioned Tsichtinako again so that they would understand more clearly why they were given the baskets and their contents, and Tsichtinako, replied, "Everything in the baskets is to be created by your word, for you are made in the image of Uchtsiti and your word will be as powerful as his word. He has created you to help him complete the world. You are to plant the seeds of the different plants to be used when anything is needed. I shall always be ready to point out to you the various plants and animals."

The sisters did not realize that they were not taking food and did not understand when Tsichtinako told them they were to plant seeds to give them nourishment. But they were always ready to do as Tsichtinako, asked, and she told them to plant first that which would maintain life, grains of corn. "When this plant grows," said Tsichtinako, "it will produce a part which I will point out to you. This will be taken as food." Everything in the basket was in pairs and the sisters planted two of each kind of corn.

The corn grew very slowly so Tsichtinako told them to plant ısthě (the earliest plant to come up in the spring; gray with a small white flower; dies quickly) and to transmit its power of early ripening to the corn.

They were very interested in the corn and watched it every day as it grew. Tsichtinako showed them where the pollen came out. “That you will call *kū’āch’tīmu*,” she said, “there the pollen will appear. When the pollen is plentiful, you will gather it, and with it and corn meal you will pray to the rising sun each morning.” This they did always, but Nautsiti was sometimes a little lazy. After some time the corn ripened. Tsichtinako told them to look at it and to gather some. They saw that the corn was hard and they picked four ears. Iatiku took two ears carefully without hurting the plant, but Nautsiti jerked hers off roughly. Iatiku noticed this and cautioned her sister not to ruin the plants. They took the ears of corn to Tsichtinako saying, “We have brought the corn, it is ripe.” Tsichtinako agreed and explained that the corn ears when cooked would be their food. They did not understand this and asked what they would cook with. Tsichtinako then told them that Uchtsiti would give them fire. That night as they sat around they saw a red light drop from the sky. After they had seen it, Tsichtinako told them it was fire, and that they were to go over and get some of it. They asked with what, and she told them to get it with a flat rock because it was very hot and they could not take it in their hands. After getting it with a rock, they asked what they were to do with it, and were told they were to make a fire, to go to the pine tree they had planted, to break off some of the branches and put them in the fire. They went to the tree and broke some of the twigs from it. When they got back to the fire, they were told to throw the twigs down. They did so and a large pile of wood appeared there. Tsichtinako told them this wood would last many years till there was time for trees to grow, and showed them how to build a fire. She told them that with the flames from the fire they would keep warm and would cook their food.

Tsichtinako next taught them how to roast the corn. “When it is cooked,” she explained, “you are to eat it. This will be the first time you have eaten, for you have been fasting for a long time and Uchtsiti has been nourishing you. You will find salt in your baskets; with this you will season the corn.” They began to look for this and Tsichtinako pointed it out to them. As soon as they were told this, Nautsiti grabbed some corn and salt. She was the first to taste them and exclaimed that they were very good, but Iatiku was slower. After Nautsiti had eaten part, she gave it to Iatiku to taste. When both had eaten, Tsichtinako told them that this was the way they were going to live, and be nourished. They were very thankful, saying, “You have treated us well,” They asked if this would be their only food. Tsichtinako said, “No, you have many other things in your baskets; many seeds and images of animals, all in pairs. Some will be eaten and taken for nourishment by you.” After they had used the salt, they were asked by Tsichtinako to give life to this salt by praying to the Earth, first in the North direction, then in the West, then in the South, and then in the East. And when they did so, salt appeared in each of these directions. Tsichtinako then instructed them to take always the husks from the corn carefully and to dry them. They were then instructed to plant *hā’mi* (tobacco).

When the plant matured, they were taught how to roll the leaves in corn husks and to smoke it. (Even now in ceremonies the corn husks must be torn with the fingers and tied in the center with a little strip of corn husk. It may not be cut by artificial means. You smoke in order to make your prayers merge into the minds of the gods to whom prayer is addressed. This will also compel obedience. If a man smokes when a request is made of him, he must obey that request.) They were then told to place the tobacco with the pollen and the corn meal and to remember that these three were always to be together, and to be used in making prayers.

Now they were told that they were to give life to an animal whose flesh they were going to use for food. Tsichtinako named this animal as Ba'shya (kangaroo mouse) and also taught them the first song to be sung to animals. She told them to sing this song in order to make the images alive, and pointed out the images to them in the basket.

They did everything as they were taught. They sang the song to the image and with the word, "Come to life, Bashya," it came to life. As it did so it asked, "Why have I come to life?" Tsichtinako told it not to ask any questions because, "It is you that is going to give life to other life." After this was done, Nautsiti and Iatiku, told this animal that it was going to live on the ground and said to it, "Go now and increase." After the animal increased, Tsichtinako told the sisters to kill one of the animals. "Now eat the two together, the corn and the field mouse, and also the salt to see how it tastes." She had already told them never to let out the fire which had been given to them. They acted according to Tsichtinako's instructions. They roasted their corn and roasted the flesh of the field mouse with some salt on it. After it was cooked, Tsichtinako told them to pray with the food, not with all of it, but with little pieces from each—corn, flesh, and salt. Each sister did this and prayed to Uchtsiti, the creator of the world, who lives up in the fourth sky. Tsichtinako told them they were to do this always before eating. After this they ate the food. There was not very much of the meat, but it was good. They did not know that there were to be bones but these were not hard and they broke them with their teeth. They liked the flesh so well that they asked Tsichtinako if they might have something larger that would yield more flesh. Tsichtinako answered that they would find other things in their baskets. They went back to them, and Tsichtinako said they would find Tsū'na (rat) and another animal Katsa (mole) and also Nite (prairie dog). "Go, make these images alive," said Tsichtinako, pointing them out according to their names. They were to do this in the same way as with Bashya. Tsichtinako also told them that these animals were to be used as food and that they must tell each of these animals to live in the ground because as yet there was no shade on earth to live in. "But before you give life to them," said Tsichtinako, "it is necessary that you plant seeds of grass which will be the food for them." Tsichtinako pointed out the seeds they were to plant, and they took the seeds of the grasses and scattered them first to the North, next to the West,

then some to the South, and then to the East. And immediately grass covered the ground. They then took the images and prayed to the cardinal points, and, according to the instructions of Tsichtinako, gave life to all of these animals, giving them names as they came to life. Each one as it came to life asked why it had come to life but Tsichtinako told them not to ask questions, that they would give life to other life. As before, the sisters told the animals to increase. After all of this was done, they proceeded to eat the new animals after praying with them, doing just as they did before. The two sisters were now very happy, they had plenty and some to spare. "It is not yet time for the larger animals to be given life," said Tsichtinako, "first the world must have sufficient plants and small animals to feed them."

After a long time, Tsichtinako spoke to them, "What we are going to do now concerns the earth. We are going to make the mountains." She told them to remember the words she was going to say. They were to say, "Kaweshtima kōti (North Mountain), appear in the north, and we will always know you to be in that direction." Tsichtinako also pointed out an article in the basket that she named ya'ōni (stone) and instructed them to throw the stone to the North direction as they spoke the words. When they did so, a big mountain appeared in the North. After they had done this, Tsichtinako instructed them to do the same thing in the West, but to name this mountain Tsipīna koti, and in the South, naming it Da'ōtyuma koti, and in the East, naming it G'ūchana koti.

After all this was done, Tsichtinako spoke again and told them, "Now that you have all the mountains around you with plains, mesas, and canyons, you must make the growing things of these places." Tsichtinako told them to go back to the trees which they had planted underground, lakhok, geietsu, wanuka, and lanye. She told them to take the seeds from these trees, and they did so. Following her instructions they spread some to each of the four directions, naming the mountains in each direction, and saying, "Grow in North Mountain, grow in West Mountain, etc." Tsichtinako said to them, "These are going to be tall trees; from them you will get logs. Later you will build houses and will use these." They asked if that was all that was going to grow on the mountains, and Tsichtinako said, "No, there are many other seeds left in your baskets. You have seeds of trees which are going to yield food. You will find dyai'its (pinon tree), sē'isha (kind of cedar), hapani (oak, acorn) and maka'yawi (walnut)." She again instructed them what to do and taught them the prayer to use, which was, "From now on, grow in this mountain and yield fruit which will be used as food. Your places are to be in the mountains. You will grow and be useful." When everything had been done well, Tsichtinako told (them) that there were many smaller seeds left in the baskets and she gave a name to each, telling them to fill the rest of the land. These seeds were planted on every one of the four mountains and in the rest of the world. Tsichtinako spoke to the sisters again and told them, "You still have seeds in your baskets which you will know as scuts'ōibewi (wild fruits). These trees you will grow around you and care for." But they

mistook the instructions and instead of instructing them to grow nearby, they named the mountains, and that is where they grew. But there were also some that grew close around. It is not known how long they had to wait for these things to happen, but it was a very long time. They noticed that the wild plants grew very fast and produced much fruit, but Tsichtinako had not told them whether or not to eat these, so they left them alone.

They saw that there were still seeds and images in their baskets, and asked Tsichtinako how many more kinds there were. Tsichtinako, said there were yet many other seeds which would also be important food. They would grow quickly and easily and she named them squash and beans. They were instructed to act with them as with the other seeds, and these also grew into plants. After a time, when they were ripe, Tsichtinako pointed out the parts of the plants which they, were to use as food.

Iatiku later asked Tsichtinako, "What remains in my basket?" and she was answered, "You have still many animals; these will be multiplied to populate the mountains." And as the two grew larger, they required more food. Tsichtinako saw this and told them that they were now to bring to life larger animals. She said they would find in their baskets cottontails, jack rabbits, antelope, and water deer. They were told to give life to these animals and to send them into the open plains. Everything was done as before, and when they killed the animals for food they were always careful to pray to their father as before. As they again asked Tsichtinako what remained in their baskets, Tsichtinako said, "You have images of the still bigger game. You will find deer, elk, mountain sheep, and bison." Iatiku asked where these animals were to be told to live and Tsichtinako told them that the elk and deer were to live in the lower mountains and the mountain sheep higher and in the rougher places. The bison, however, were to live on the plains. They followed the instructions and gave life to these animals and told them to go to these places to live and multiply. They again tried all these different animals for food. Their flesh was very good and always they prayed to Uchtsiti before tasting them.

In Nautsiti's basket there were many more things left than in Iatiku's. Nautsiti was selfish and hoarded her images, but Iatiku was ready to let her seeds and images be used. She was more interested in seeing things grow. They again asked what remained, and Tsichtinako replied, "You will find lion, wolf, wildcat and bear. These are strong beasts; they are going to use as food the same game that you also use. There is now game enough for them." When all these had been selected they were brought to life in the same manner as before.

The sisters again asked what was in their baskets, and they were told, "You will find birds which will fly in the air. These birds will also use small game for their food. You will find in the basket the eagles and the hawks." Tsichtinako pointed these out to them and they brought them to life. The birds flew up into the high mountains and over the plains. The sisters told the birds to use small game for food, and again Iatiku asked what was in the basket. Tsichtinako

pointed out smaller birds which would populate the country, each living in a different kind of region. They were then given life, as the animals before them. The birds were of many and bright colors, some were blue. The wild turkey was among them and they were instructed to tell it not to fly easily like the others. They were told to tell these birds that their food was to be the different seeds on the mountains and the plains. And all these, animals were sampled for food after they had been given life. Again Iatiku asked what remained in the baskets, because she found things there that were thorny. Tsichtinako told them their names. They were the various cacti and were said to be very good for food. But Tsichtinako explained that most were intended for animals to eat. All these were planted as before and tried for food, and they found that some tasted good. After they asked again what was left, Tsichtinako pointed out to them that there were still fish, water snakes, and turtles, of which there were many kinds of each. They gave life to them as before and told them all to live in the water as instructed. Tsichtinako pointed out several that were to be used for food. They tried them all for food, and they found that some were good, and others poor, but offered prayers to all and gave thanks to Uchtsiti. So it happened that many animals came alive in the world and they all increased.

ALABAMA

ORIGIN OF THE ALABAMA INDIANS

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Swanton, John R. *Myths and Tales of the Southeastern Indians*. Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 88. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1929, 118–121.

Date: 1929

Original Source: Alabama

National Origin: Native American

Initially, the following narrative has traits of **myth** in its **motifs** of migration across a great ocean and the invention of weapons and the means to make fire. For the most part, however, plausible events are set in the historical past leading to the tale's classification as a **legend**. Actual events and names are used in the narrative. The Alabama and the Coushatti with whom they eventually became affiliated were members of the Creek Confederacy in what eventually became Alabama. At this time in their history, they fought the Choctaw mentioned in the "Origin of the Alabama Indians." The berdache mentioned in the narrative was a male transvestite who acted socially as a woman; the role was neither uncommon nor maligned in many Native American cultures. By the early nineteenth century, they had moved to Texas and established several villages, the most prominent of which was Peach Tree Village, where they relied primarily on hunting and gathering and horticulture. The episode in which the Alabama befriended and fed white refugees seems based on the "Runaway Scrape" and other events of the Texas Revolution of 1836.

Formerly the ocean was not as large as it is today, and at that time the Alabama Indians, who lived upon the other side, came westward across it in canoes. When they had gotten about halfway over they came upon an island where they rested and fished. Then they resumed their journey and presently reached this land.

At first they lived upon acorns, and they also roasted and ate cane sprouts. Later they made bows and arrows with which to kill deer, and having nothing with which to cut up the meat they used sharp rocks. They also had to learn how to kindle a fire. To accomplish this they used as a drill the stem of a weed called “plant-with-which-to-make-fire” which is like sassafras and the wood of a tree called bass for a base stick.

Traveling inland, they established their village near a river and lived there for a long time. Presently they came in contact with the Choctaw and warred against them, almost destroying one Choctaw town, so that the Choctaw became disheartened and wanted to make peace. For this purpose they selected a poor man, promising that, if he were successful, they would give him the two daughters of a certain prominent woman. They gave him a white deerskin shirt and white deerskin leggings and moccasins, put a string of white beads about his neck and a rattle in his hand.

Thus provided, the man crossed to the first Alabama village shaking his rattle and singing as he went. When the Alabama heard him they came out, took hold of him, and accompanied him back. On coming near the town they raised him on their backs and entered the place in this manner, singing continually. They set him down and he talked to them for a long time, laying down one string of white beads as he did so. Then he set out for another village, accompanied as before. On the way one of them seized a gun and shot under him. Another ran toward him and discharged a gun near his ear. At the next village he made another long talk and laid out a second string of white beads. He did the same at the third village. Then he returned to his people and they gave him the girls as they had promised, but soon afterwards he lay down and died.

One summer a man said he wanted to go west and several wished to accompany him, but a berdache (“half-man”) tried to stop them. “Why are you going?” he said. “I am going in order to kill and eat turkey, deer, and other game animals; after that I will return.”

“There are plenty of turkey and deer here,” said the berdache, but the other persisted in his plan and after they had disputed for some time the berdache said, “You are a man but you want to run away. I will not run. I will not run, although my grandfather used to say that the English, *Aláta*, and French are all hard fighters. When they come, I will take a knife, lie down under the bed, and keep striking at them until they kill me.”

Nevertheless the man and his friends started off. They came to a river, made canoes, and proceeded along it a great distance until they finally reached a Choctaw settlement. They stopped for a while, thinking that these people were

friends, but presently they observed that they were making arrows, so they became frightened and reentered their canoes.

Following the river, they came upon many bear swimming across and some wanted to kill them, but others said, "Don't shoot," and they kept on. Presently they heard the sound of firearms behind and said to one another, "People are following us." Not long afterwards they came upon a creek emptying into the river, its mouth almost obscured by canes, and they shoved their canoes into it and waited. After a while they heard the Choctaw canoes pass on up, so they remained where they were all that night. When it was nearly day they heard the sound of returning paddles and after they had died away they continued their journey.

After they had gone on for some time the Alabama came to the house of a white man. He exchanged corn for venison and told them that the route by the river which they had intended to take was very long, so he tied oxen to their canoes and dragged them across a narrow place. Then they paddled along for some time and reached a trading house belonging to a white blacksmith. They procured from him old knives and axes in exchange for venison. Some Choctaw lived there who said to them, "There is no war here. There is peace. We are friends of the Alabama." Afterwards, however, some of both tribes got drunk on whisky obtained at the store and wanted to fight. But the Alabama who had remained sober took their friends down to the canoes, put them in, and started along.

As they pushed off the Choctaw stood near the shore and shot at them until they got out into the middle of the river. Later they went back to the store and found that the Choctaw were all gone, so they had the blacksmith make knives for them and sharpen their old axes.

The white people came from the other side of the ocean long after the Alabama had crossed and tried to buy land from them. They would get the Indians drunk, and when they had become sober they would find bags of money hung to their necks in payment for land. It was after they had sold their lands in this way that they came westward.

After leaving the blacksmith the Alabama came to Bayou Boeuf. Later they moved to Opelousas, Louisiana, and still later to Tyler County, Texas. Afterwards they settled Peach-tree village. There were many Alabama at that time and they separated into a number of villages. One was north of North Woodville and was called "Cane Island" and afterwards simply island, because some canes were found near the creek. They were living in these towns when the Mexican War broke out.

When the Mexicans were here the white men came and built a town, putting up stores. After a while they heard that the Mexicans and whites were coming to fight with each other, and the people all ran off. They left their stores and went away. While they were moving on without stopping, it rained and the white girls walked along with their dresses half soaked. Some were weeping. Continuing on in this way they passed through Peach-tree village. Some of

them were perishing with hunger and asked the Indians for food. Then they gave them milk, but instead of drinking it they gave it to the children.

Just after the whites had left, the Mexicans came to this town, and their soldiers opened the stores which they had abandoned and used the goods. By and by they wanted to cross a big river there and threw bales of cotton into the water and crossed upon them. When they got over they found that the Indians had a camp on this side. They did not like them and wanted to kill them. But instead of killing them they drove them back and made them stay on the other side of the river. The Indians walked while two Mexicans rode on each horse.

After that the white people came to fight. Some of them went round the town and broke down a bridge over a bad creek, so that when the Mexicans arrived they could not cross and all were killed.

Their general Santa Anna, escaped alone on his horse. He fell down in a swampy place but got up and ran on and lay down in a thicket. While he lay there two deer whistled, and the whites came up and captured him. Then they demanded his land of him, and he left the people, got into a boat, and went away.

Another party of whites reached that town and the Mexicans all ran off. Some Mexicans who were drunk remained walking about holding each other up, and the whites throw them down and stabbed them. When the Mexicans ran off they had just been cooking and left earthen pots full of peas mixed with red peppers on the fire. When the white men saw the Indians there they recognized them and had them recross the river. "Hang up something white and stay by it," they said, "lest those coming after us make trouble." So they hung up a white cloth and remained by it.

RABBIT KILLS BIG MAN-EATER

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Swanton, John R. *Myths and Tales of the Southeastern Indians*. Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 88. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1929, 161.

Date: 1929

Original Source: Alabama

National Origin: Native American

Big Man-eater appears in a number of traditional tales from the Native American Southeast. The cannibal figure strikes at a particularly fearful element in the human psyche and is found in such widely dispersed forms as the Windigo figure of the subarctic, the giant at the top of Jack's beanstalk (see "Jack and the Bean-Pole," page 189), Hansel and Gretel's witch, and the Fire Dragaman of the southern highlands ("Jack and the Fire Dragaman," page 236). Rabbit exercises his deceptions in

this narrative to play the role of **culture hero**, the life-enhancing persona of **trickster**. Although the culture hero brings technology and social order in many traditions, his role as monster slayer who cleanses the natural order making the universe safe for humanity is well-represented as well. In typical fashion, rabbit changes shapes and even gender to gain the advantage over his monstrous adversary.

Big Man-eater lived with his wife at a certain place and wanted to kill human beings. People heard of it and said, “They want to kill us,” and all were afraid.

Then Rabbit said, “Give me an old dress,” and they gave it to him. He said, “Give me an old blanket,” and they gave that to him. Then he put on the dress, wrapped up his head in the old blanket, and started off.

When he reached the place and stood in the yard Big Man-eater’s wife saw him and came out, and asked who he was. “I am your youngest aunt who has traveled to this place,” he said. “Come in,” said Big Man-eater’s wife, so he started to go in. “Sit down,” she said, and down he sat. Then they gave the supposed aunt some hard deer meat to eat, but he said, “I can’t eat that, because I have no teeth. I need a hatchet, for I can’t eat that [as it is].” So they gave him a hatchet and he chopped the dry venison into small pieces and ate them. Then he said, “That is the way I always eat it.”

Now Big Man-eater lay down but the two women sat still by the fire. Rabbit said to Big Man-eater’s wife, “When your husband is asleep what kind of noise does he make?”

“When he is not sleeping very soundly he makes a noise like ‘sololon sololon.’ When he makes a noise like ‘soloñ soloñ’ he is very sound asleep.”

“I will stay all night with you; in the morning I will start on,” said Rabbit. So Big Man-eater’s wife lay down and Rabbit lay down close to the fire. As he lay there he listened to the noises Big Man-eater was making. Then he slept and made a noise like “sololon sololon.” After some time he made a noise like “soloñ soloñ.” Then Rabbit took the hatchet and, after he had sat close to Big Man-eater for a while listening, he struck him with it in the neck and cut his head off. Then he threw off his old dress and blanket, shouted, jumped up and down several times, went out of the house, and ran off.

RABBIT AND BIG MAN-EATER

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Swanton, John R. *Myths and Tales of the Southeastern Indians*. Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 88. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1929, 160.

Date: 1929

Original Source: Alabama

National Origin: Native American

The following **myth** is another in the **cycle** of adventures of rabbit and Big Man-eater (see the introductory remarks to the preceding narrative “Rabbit Kills Big Man-eater”).

Big Man-eater traveled along until he came to a town where he killed and ate all of the people. On the way to another town he met Rabbit, who said, “At this town all the people have run off. I kill and eat people and here are their bones.” When he met Big Man-eater he carried over his shoulder a child with a stick run through it. Then they sat down beside the trail to defecate. Both shut their eyes, and when they defecated Big Man-eater evacuated bones while Rabbit passed only grass. Rabbit opened his eyes, picked up Big Man-eater’s excrement and put it under himself and took his own and placed it under Big Man-eater. When both finally opened their eyes, Big Man-eater said, “I never passed anything like this before.” The next time both defecated with their eyes open and Rabbit passed nothing but grass while Big Man-eater defecated bones.

After that they struck up a friendship. Rabbit said, “Let us go to Tree-falling-down Camp.” So they set out. When they arrived Rabbit said, “Wait right here while I hunt for a good camping place.” He went on until he saw a tree that shook and was ready to fall, when he called his companion. “Over here there is a good place,” he said and Big Man-eater went there.

When night came, both lay down, and, while Big Man-eater slept, Rabbit awoke and pushed the tree down upon him. Then he threw small limbs upon himself and made a noise as if he had been hurt. Big Man-eater pushed the tree away and woke up. “This camp is always like that,” said Rabbit.

Next time Rabbit said, “Let us go to Ashes-thrown-on Camp,” and they started off. When they got there and had made camp Rabbit picked up a quantity of wood, kindled it, and made a big fire. But after the two had lain down Rabbit awoke, gathered up a lot of hot ashes on some bark with which he had provided himself, and threw them on Big Man-eater. On himself he threw cold ashes. Big Man-eater was badly hurt.

In the morning Rabbit said, “Let us go to Jumping-bluff Creek,” and they started on. After they had traveled for a while they reached the place and went down the creek. “Let us jump across it and back four times,” said Rabbit. Rabbit jumped first four times. When Big Man-eater prepared to jump Rabbit held for him the bag he was carrying. Before Big Man-eater had jumped four times he fell from the bluff into the water. The water rose and Big Man-eater went down into it. “My friend is gone; he is going far out into the sea,” said Rabbit. Rabbit, however, took Big Man-eater’s bag and started home.

ALEUT

THE WOMAN WHO WAS FOND OF INTESTINES

Tradition Bearer: Mrs. C. A. Anderson

Source: Golder, F. A. "Aleutian Stories." *Journal of American Folklore* 18 (1905): 215–220.

Date: 1905

Original Source: Aleut

National Origin: Native American

Historically, law among the Inuit (or Eskimo), Aleuts, and many other societies was customary law; it rested on custom, tradition, and taboo. The society at large would not move to settle grievances, rather it was the parties involved who sought justice. Just as the society would not act to ensure justice, neither would it come between disputants. In the case of murder, the family of the victim sought revenge, as in the following narrative. While the avengers in this tale use supernatural power to convert themselves into wild animals, the major focus of the plot is on social justice for the wronged wife.

Once there lived an Aleut with his wife and little boy. The wife was very fond of intestines, and early each morning the husband would go out in his bidark (kayak) hunting, and return in the evening with a boat full of intestines which he gave to his wife, telling her to keep what she wanted for herself, and distribute the rest among her neighbors.

The wife was somewhat puzzled by the husband's actions; she could not understand why he went so early in the morning, where he got so many intestines, or his reasons for wishing to have them distributed among the villagers.

She, of course, did not know that her husband had a mistress in the village whom he went to see while his wife was asleep, and that he desired the intestines distributed in order that his wife's rival might have a share.

All of a sudden, without explanations, the man ceased going out early, and when he did go, he came back but lightly loaded. This did not in the least clear up the mystery to the wife. But one day, when he had gone somewhat later than usually, his mistress called on his wife, whom she found busy sewing a kamalayka [waterproof shirt] out of the intestines her husband brought. The two got into a conversation, and, among other questions, the mistress asked, "Does your husband love you?"

"Yes."

"Do you love him?"

"Yes."

"Do you know where he gets all the intestines?"

"No."

"Can you guess why he has them distributed over the village?"

"No."

"I will tell you," said the mistress, "but you must not tell him I told you. Every day your husband goes to the village where your parents and relatives live and where you lived before your marriage, and kills the people there and brings their intestines to you. Yesterday there were but five people remaining in the village: your mother, your two sisters, and two brothers. He killed your mother and sisters yesterday, and today he went to bring the intestines of your brothers. He is in love with another woman of this village, whom he visits nightly when you have fallen asleep."

With this parting shot she left the house, leaving the poor wife weeping so bitterly that the kamalayka was hot from her tears. For the rest of the day she did not stir from the house, but sat lamenting and sewing. Towards evening her little boy rushed in announcing the approach of his father, which she generally anticipated with pleasure, and always went down to the beach to meet him; but this time she neither answered nor made the least motion. A few minutes later the little son came again saying, "Father is here," but all the reply he got was a new outburst of weeping.

Missing the usual meeting and greeting of his wife, the father asked the little boy where his mother was, and when told of the state she was in, he hastened to the house, where he found her on the floor shedding bitter tears and sewing the kamalayka.

"Why do you weep? has some one offended you?"

"No one has offended me."

"Why then this lamentation?"

"I was thinking of my mother, sisters, and brothers, and my other relatives in my native village, and I wondered how they were getting along, and this made me weep."

He did not attempt to cheer her, but after a pause he said, "I did not kill many animals today—two only."

This enraged her so that she jumped up from the floor, picked up the little boy, who was near her, and threw him at him, saying, "If my two brothers do not satisfy you, take him also." The boy's forehead came in contact with the edge of a sharp knife on the father's breast, making quite a gash from which the blood flowed freely. This the mother noticed before escaping out of the house.

Putting aside the boy, the man made a dash for the woman, but she got out of his reach, and being the better runner of the two he did not succeed in laying hands on her. She would let him come up quite close to her, and then dash away again until he saw the hopelessness of the chase and gave it up.

In a short time the boy's wound healed, but it left a very noticeable scar. Now that his mother was gone, his father placed him in the care of his sister, with instructions that he should under no circumstances be allowed to go very far from home. In this manner he passed a few years longer, until he became the proud possessor of a bow and arrows, with which he often amused himself.

One day, while indulging in his favorite sport, he began to wonder why his father and aunt forbade his going far from the house; and the more he thought about it the more anxious did he become to go, until he finally concluded "to go just a little distance beyond that hill to see what is there." On the way he noticed a hillock just ahead of him, at which he discharged his arrow, then ran and got it, aimed at another and another, and became so absorbed in this amusement that he did not observe how far from home it was taking him.

One hillock somewhat different from the others especially attracted his attention as offering a good mark. He took aim and sent his arrow flying right into the center of it; but what was his surprise on approaching the supposed hillock to discover that it was a barrabara [dwelling], and that the arrow had gone inside through the hole in the top. When he peeped in, he was frightened at the sight of a very wild-looking woman who stared at him, and he began to cry.

"Why do you cry?" the woman asked.

"I want my arrow."

"Come in and get it," the woman invited. But he was too scared to do that; he however got up courage enough to stick his foot in, hoping to draw it out that way, and he had nearly succeeded when he heard the woman move. At this he ran away in tears.

The woman called him back, saying, "Do not be afraid of me. I am your mother. It is I who threw you at your father, making the scar on your forehead. Come in, I will not harm you." When he saw that it was really his mother, he went to her and remained with her two days. During that time she told him his father's wicked deeds, how he mistreated and neglected her for another, and finally wrought on him so that he swore he would revenge her wrongs. She bade him go home, but attempt nothing for the present, and make no mention of what he had seen and heard.

During the boy's absence the father was away hunting, but the aunt was quite worked up over the long absence, and ran about the fields looking for him. When he returned she asked him all sorts of questions as to his whereabouts, but all the satisfaction she got from him was that he had lost his way and could not get back. She offered him food, which he refused to touch, and finally refused to answer her when spoken to.

Toward evening of the same day his father returned, and, when told that the boy would neither eat nor drink, asked what was the matter with him; but for an answer the boy turned his back on him and went to sleep. The father then inquired of the aunt whether anything unusual had occurred and whether the boy had been far from home, and to all this she replied that all during his (father's) absence the boy's life had gone on as ordinarily, and that he was not out of sight of the house the whole time.

As the boy grew older he avoided his father more and more, and when he reached early manhood the father lost control over him and actually feared him. One day, while the older man was away hunting, the young man took his bow and arrows, some food and water, and set out to see his mother. Before going, he told his aunt that he intended going quite a distance from home, and not to be, therefore, uneasy over his long absence. He went to the place where he had last seen his mother, and, as she was not there, he wandered on until on the following day he came in sight of some barrabaras [native dwellings] and two men. They answered him when he spoke to them, but when he wished to enter into one of the barrabaras they barred his way. While they were thus disputing, his mother appeared on the scene and motioned to the men to let him pass.

When he came inside he was greatly surprised at the quantity of furs that was lying about in great disorder, and at the abundance of meats and other eatables that he found there. He was certain he had never seen anything like it before. After eating, his mother told him to spend the night there, and in the morning take as many of the best furs as he could carry and go back to the village of his father, in order to tempt him and his relatives to come hunting in this neighborhood, which would offer an opportunity to repay him for what he had done. The boy did as he was told, took with him a heavy load of precious furs, and started back.

In his absence, the mother and the people with whom she was living made elaborate and crafty preparations for the reception of the expected guests. In the large barrabara, where the feasts and dances were always held and where visitors were generally received, quantities of oil were sprinkled about and covered up with grass. Along the walls seal-bladders full of oil were concealed, and screened with straw mats. And in this place the visitors were to be received. The young man's father was home on his return, and received the present of furs which his son made him with much pleasure, for the boy seemed so kindly disposed that the father hoped that his natural affection for his parent had returned. He inquired the whereabouts of the hunting grounds where the son had secured

these skins, and the latter told him that it was not very far, and that it was very rich, and that he planned to go back the next day to the same place, and if he and his men cared to accompany him, he would be glad to show them the way. His offer was accepted, and the following morning a large party left the village for the hunting ground. Some of the people of the mother's village had been on the look-out, and when they saw the large party approaching, they changed themselves into wild beasts: bears, wolves, foxes, etc. The hunters marked them and shot at them, but it had no other result than to drive the beasts nearer and nearer to the village. These tactics the men-beasts repeated until the hunters were decoyed into the village. Seeing so many barrabaras, the men asked the boy who the people were that lived in them.

"They are friendly people," he replied, "with whom I spent the night the last time I was in this neighborhood. Tomorrow morning we will go to the other side of the village, where there is a great deal of game."

The people of the village greeted them very cordially, and assigned a place for the night to each one of them; the father and son were given the barrabara where the latter had been entertained on his previous visit. Although the mother was in the same room with them they were not aware of it, for she had concealed herself. Everywhere about them were scattered the richest furs, and the food before them was the choicest and best, and so much of it that it rather made the older man uneasy, for, though an old hunter, he had never seen anything like it before.

In the evening all the people of the village, including the guests, went to the large dance-hall, where the formal reception was held and the guests entertained as was customary. One by one they descended through the hole in the roof, the only entrance there was. The interior was lighted up by two rows of stone lamps filled with oil, and grass wicks. On one side of the room sat the local men, while the visitors faced them from the other; the center was occupied by the women, and on the two sides sat seven or eight men with drums in their hands, on which they played and accompanied their singing. They would take turns; first the local men would sing their local songs, and then the visitors sang theirs. To this music the women danced with men whom they invited from either side.

Everything moved along smoothly and joyfully until the father recognized his wife among the women. She was dancing and moving towards him. At this sight he turned pale and looked for away to get out, but the ladder had been removed. The woman moved up to him, grasped his hand, and dragged him to dance, but he resisted. The boy, who sat near, urged him and pushed him on, but all in vain.

Then the woman began to sing him a song in which she went over all his misdeeds, his unfaithfulness, his cruelties, his falsehoods, as well as many of his other shortcomings, and concluded with these words, "You and your men shall never leave this place alive."

When she had said this, all the local people, including the mother and son, were turned into birds or flying insects and flew out through the hole in the roof. The visitors, unable to follow them, remained behind.

On the outside grass and wood were ignited and thrown in, which set on fire the grass and oil inside. Then the smoke hole was stopped up, and in this way all those who were inside were smothered to death. A few days later the son went to his father's village, destroying it as completely as his father had destroyed his mother's. He spared, however, his aunt, whom he brought back with him.

APACHE

ORIGIN OF THE APACHES

Tradition Bearer: Laforia

Source: Russell, Frank. "Myths of the Jicarilla Apaches." *Journal of American Folklore* 11 (1898): 253–254.

Date: ca. 1898

Original Source: Jicarilla Apache (New Mexico)

National Origin: Native American

Although this narrative references physical features of the Jicarilla world and the deification of wind, the primary concern of this narrative is on human relations, ranging from the evil caused by witchcraft to the scattering of the original people into the various Apache bands and the distinct languages associated with each. The emergence of the people from an underground world may result from the influence of the neighboring Pueblo cultures (compare this **myth** to "Origin of Acoma," page 3).

In the under-world, *Un-go-ya-yen-ni*, there was no sun, moon, or light of any kind, except that emanating from large eagle feathers which the people carried about with them. This method of lighting proved unsatisfactory, and the head men of the tribe gathered in council to devise some plan for lighting the world more brightly.

One of the chiefs suggested that they make a sun and a moon. A great disk of yellow paint was made upon the ground, and then placed in the sky. Although this miniature creation was too small to give much light, it was allowed to make one circuit of the heavens ere it was taken down and made larger. Four times the sun set and rose, and four times it was enlarged, before it was "as large as the earth and gave plenty of light."

In the underworld dwelt a wizard and a witch, who were much incensed at man's presumption, and made such attempts to destroy the new luminaries that both the sun and the moon fled from the lower world, leaving it again in darkness, and made their escape to this earth, where they have never been molested, so that, until the present time, they continue to shine by night and by day.

The loss of the sun and moon brought the people together, that they might take council concerning the means of restoring the lost light. Long they danced and sang, and made medicine. At length it was decided that they should go in search of the sun.

The Indian medicine-men caused four mountains to spring up, which grew by night with great noise, and rested by day. The mountains increased in size until the fourth night, when they nearly reached the sky.

Four boys were sent to seek the cause of the failure of the mountains to reach the opening in the sky, through which the sun and moon had disappeared. The boys followed the tracks of two girls who had caused the mountains to stop growing, until they reached some burrows in the side of the mountain, where all trace of the two females disappeared.

When their story was told to the people, the medicine-men said, "You who have injured us shall be transformed into rabbits, that you may be of some use to mankind; your bodies shall be eaten," and the rabbit has been used for food by the human race down to the present day.

All then journeyed to the tops of the mountains, where a ladder was built which reached the aperture in the sky or roof of the under-world. The badger was then sent out to explore the earth above; the messenger soon returned, and reported water everywhere except around the margin of the opening. The legs of the badger were covered with mud, which accounts for their dark color at the present day. Four days later, the turkey was sent to see if the waters had subsided. The turkey reported no land yet to be seen above. As the turkey came in contact with the foam of the flood surrounding the opening, his tail became wet and heavy; in shaking this he scattered filmy drops upon his wings, and that is why the feathers of the turkey to the present day present an iridescent play of colors.

Then the Wind came to the anxious people and said, "If you will ask me to help you, I will drive back the water for you." Thus the first prayers came to be addressed to the Wind, which yet remains a powerful deity.

When the Wind had rolled back the waters to the limits of the present ocean, the Indians began to ascend the ladder; four times the ladder broke with them, and four times it was replaced by a new one.

All the people reached the new world except one old woman, too old and infirm to climb the ladder, who said to them, "I do not wish to leave the land of my youth. Go your way and leave me here; you will come back to join me when you die. You have forgotten one thing; you will soon discover what it is."

For four days after their emergence no one could sleep; then the people remembered the warning of the old woman, and two boys were sent down to the under-world to learn what it was that had been forgotten.

The old woman said in reply to their question, “You forgot to take lice with you; without them you cannot sleep.” She took two black ones from her hair and two white ones from her body, saying, “These will be all you will need, for they will increase night and day.” So it has happened that the Apaches sleep well to this day because they harbor these parasites upon their bodies.

So well had the Wind performed his task of drying up the waters, that none remained for the people to drink; but prayers addressed to that deity were answered by the appearance of the present springs and rivers. The few lakes that occur in the Apache country are remnants of the primeval ocean. All the inhabitants of the earth were then Apaches, but the Cheyennes and Utes were soon created from willows.

The supreme god, Yi-na-yes-gon-i, directed the people westward; as they journeyed, small parties became separated, and settled by the wayside. These were given different names and languages.

ORIGIN OF FIRE

Tradition Bearer: Laforia

Source: Russell, Frank. “Myths of the Jicarilla Apaches.” *Journal of American Folklore* 11 (1898): 261–262.

Date: ca. 1898

Original Source: Jicarilla Apache (New Mexico)

National Origin: Native American

Fox is given the role of **culture hero** in the following **myth**. In contrast to some manifestations of the culture hero, the fox maintains more of the qualities of **trickster**. He tries to acquire the cry and flying ability of the geese, but he is unable to exercise sufficient restraint to do so. This inventiveness, coupled with deceit fueled by curiosity that is a cross-cultural combination in trickster figures, allows him to successfully steal fire. His theft, however, seems little more than a prank, particularly in contrast to other mythological fire-stealers such as the Greek Prometheus.

At that early day the trees could talk, but the people could not burn them, as they were without fire. Fire was at length obtained through the instrumentality of the Fox.

One day Fox went to visit the geese whose cry he wished to learn. They promised to teach him, but it would be necessary for him to accompany them in their flights, in order to receive instruction. They gave him wings with which to fly, but cautioned him not to open his eyes while using them.

When the geese rose in flight Fox flew with them. As darkness came on, they passed over the enclosure where the fire-flies lived. Some gleams from their flickering fires penetrated the eyelids of Fox, causing him to open his eyes.

His wings at once failed to support him, and he fell within the walls of the corral in which were pitched the tents of the fireflies. Two flies went to see the fallen Fox, who gave each a necklace of juniper berries to induce them to tell him where he could pass the wall which surrounded them.

The fireflies showed Fox a cedar tree which would bend down at command and assist any one to pass over the wall. In the evening Fox went to the spring where the fireflies obtained water, and found colored earths suitable for paint, with which he gave himself a coat of white.

Returning to the camp, he told the fireflies that they ought to have a feast; they should dance and make merry, and he would give them a new musical instrument. They agreed to his proposal, and gathered wood for a great camp-fire, which they ignited by their own glow.

Before the ceremonies began, Fox tied shreds of cedar bark to his tail, and then made a drum, the first ever constructed, which he beat for some time. Tired of beating the drum, he gave it to one of the fireflies and moved nearer the fire, into which he thrust his tail, in opposition to the advice of those about him, who said it would surely burn.

“I am a medicine-man,” said Fox, “and my tail will not burn.” However, he kept a close watch upon it, and when the bark was burning well he said, “It is too warm for me here; stand aside and let me go where it is cooler.”

Fox ran away with tail blazing, followed by the fireflies, who cried, “Stop, you do not know the road; come back.”

Straight to the cedar tree Fox ran, and called, “Bend down to me, my tree, bend down.” The tree lifted him out of the enclosure, and on he ran, still pursued by the fire-flies. As he passed along, the brush and wood on either side was ignited by the sparks which fell from the burning cedar, and fire was widely spread over the earth.

Fox became fatigued from running, and gave the firebrand to the hawk, which carried it on, and finally delivered it to the brown crane. This bird flew far southward, but not so far but that one tree was not reached, and it will not burn to this day.

The fireflies pursued Fox to his burrow and informed him that, as punishment for having stolen fire from them and spread it abroad over the land, he should never be permitted to use it himself.

TALES OF FOX

Tradition Bearer: Laforia

Source: Russell, Frank. "Myths of the Jicarilla Apaches." *Journal of American Folklore* 11 (1898): 265–268.

Date: ca. 1898

Original Source: Jicarilla Apache (New Mexico)

National Origin: Native American

Fox is the Jicarilla **trickster**. His reputation as a trickster with potentially fatal weaknesses precedes him, leading both deer and rabbit to exploit his foolish nature. The cruel results of their pranks may seem unmotivated, but practical jokes with sadistic results are common in trickster tales. So, too, are explanations of features such as the fox's characteristic cry and eye color. "Fox and Kingfisher" portrays coyote trying to play the host in an episode reminiscent of "The Coyote and the Woodpecker" (page 110). Fox's invitations and imitations, in that episode and in "Fox and Mountain Lion," are motivated more by the desire to impress than to be hospitable. The final "tar baby" episode is only the most obvious of many borrowed features in the tale.

Fox and Deer

As Fox was going along he met a Deer with two spotted fawns beside her. "What have you done," said he, "to make your children spotted like that?"

"I made a big fire of cedar wood and placed them before it. The sparks thrown off burned the spots which you see," answered the Deer.

Fox was pleased with the color of the fawns, so he went home and told his children to gather cedar wood for a large fire. When the fire was burning well, he put the young foxes in a row before the fire, as he supposed the Deer had done. When he found that they did not change color, he pushed them into the fire and covered them with ashes, thinking he had not applied sufficient heat at first.

As the fire went out, he saw their white teeth gleaming where the skin had shriveled away and exposed them. "Ah, you will be very pretty now," said he. Fox pulled his offspring from the ashes, expecting to find them much changed in color, and so they were—black, shriveled, and dead.

Fox next thought of revenge upon the Deer, which he found in a grove of cottonwoods. He built a fire around them, but they ran through it and escaped. Fox was so disappointed that he set up a cry of woe, a means of expression which he has retained from that day to this.

Fox and Kingfisher

As Fox went on his way he met Kingfisher, whom he accompanied to his home. Kingfisher said that he had no food to offer his visitor, so he would go and catch some fish for Fox. He broke through six inches of ice on the river and caught two fish, which he cooked and set before his guest. Fox was pleased with his entertainment, and invited the Kingfisher to return the call.

In due time the Kingfisher came to the home of the Fox, who said, "I have no food to offer you"; then he went down to the river, thinking to secure fish in the same manner as the Kingfisher had done.

Fox leaped from the high bank, but instead of breaking through the ice he broke his head and killed himself. Kingfisher went to him, caught him up by the tail, and swung Fox around to the right four times, thereby restoring him to life. Kingfisher caught some fish, and they ate together. "I am a medicine-man," said Kingfisher; "that is why I can do these things. You must never try to catch fish in that way again."

After the departure of Kingfisher, Fox paid a visit to the home of Prairie-dog, where he was cordially received. Prairie-dog put four sticks, each about a foot in length, in the ashes of the camp-fire; when these were removed, they proved to be four nicely roasted prairie-dogs, which were served for Fox's dinner.

Fox invited the Prairie-dog to return the visit, which in a short time the latter did. Fox placed four sticks in the fire to roast, but they were consumed by it, and instead of palatable food to set before his guest he had nothing but ashes.

Prairie-dog said to Fox, "You must not attempt to do that. I am a medicine-man; that is why I can transform the wood to flesh." Prairie-dog then prepared a meal as he done before, and they dined.

Fox went to visit Buffalo, who exclaimed, "What shall I do? I have no food to offer you." Buffalo was equal to the emergency, however; he shot an arrow upward, which struck in his own back as it returned. When he pulled this out, a kidney and the fat surrounding it came out also. This he cooked for Fox, and added a choice morsel from his own nose. As usual, Fox extended an invitation to his host to return the visit.

When Buffalo came to call upon Fox, the latter covered his head with weeds in imitation of the head of the Buffalo. Fox thought he could provide food for their dinner as the Buffalo had done, so fired an arrow into the air; but when it came close to him on its return flight, he became frightened and ran away. Buffalo then furnished meat for their meal as on the previous occasion. "You must not try this," said he; "I am a medicine-man; that is why I have the power."

Some time afterward, as Fox was journeying along, he met an Elk, lying beside the trail. He was frightened when he saw the antlers of the Elk moving, and jumped to avoid what seemed to be a falling tree. "Sit down beside me," said the Elk. "Don't be afraid."

“The tree will fall on us,” replied Fox. “Oh, sit down; it won’t fall. I have no food to offer you, but I will provide some.” The Elk cut steaks from his own quarter, which the Fox ate, and before leaving Fox invited the Elk to return the visit.

When Elk came to see Fox, the latter tried unsuccessfully to cut flesh from his own meager flanks; then he drove sharpened sticks into his nose, and allowed the blood to run out upon the grass. This he tried in vain to transform into meat, and again he was indebted to his guest for a meal.

“I am a medicine-man; that is why I can do this,” said Elk.

Fox and Mountain Lion

Fox could find nothing to eat for a long time, so that he grew weak and thin. While on a journey in search of food he met the Mountain Lion, who, taking pity upon his unhappy condition, said, “I will hunt for you, and you shall grow fat again.”

The Fox agreed to this, and they went on together to a much frequented spring. Mountain Lion told Fox to keep watch while he slept if a cloud of dust was to be seen arising from the approach of animals Fox was to waken him. Fox presently beheld the dust caused by the approach of a drove of horses.

Fox wakened Mountain Lion, who said, “Just observe how I catch horses.” As one of the animals went down to the spring to drink, he sprang upon it, and fastened his fangs in its throat, clawing its legs and shoulders until it fell dying at the water’s edge. Mountain Lion brought the horse up to the rock, and laid it before the Fox. Stay here, eat, drink, and grow fat,” said he.

Fox thought he had learned how to kill horses, so when the Coyote came along he volunteered to secure one for him. Fox jumped upon the neck of the horse, as Mountain Lion had done, but became entangled in its mane and was killed.

Fox and Rabbit

Fox one day met a Rabbit who was sewing a sack. “What do you intend to do with that sack?” asked he.

“I am making this coat to protect myself from being killed by the hard hail which we are going to have today,” replied Rabbit.

“My friend, you know how to make them; give me this coat and make another for your-self.” Rabbit agreed to this, and Fox put on the sack over his head.

Rabbit then hung him on a limb and pelted him with stones, while Fox, thinking it was hail striking him, endured the punishment as long as he could, but finally fell nearly dead from the tree, and looked out, to see no signs of hail, but discovered the Rabbit running away.

Fox wished to avenge himself by killing Rabbit, and set off in pursuit of him. When overtaken Rabbit was chewing soft gum with which to make spectacles.

Fox's curiosity was stronger than his passion for revenge. "What are you making those for?" said he.

"It is going to be very hot, and I am making them to protect my eyes," answered Rabbit.

"Let me have this pair; you know how to make them and can make yourself another pair."

"Very well," said Rabbit, and he put the eye-shields on Fox, who could then see nothing, as the gum was soft and filled his eyes. Rabbit set fire to the brush all around Fox, who was badly singed in running through it. The gum melted in the fire, and yet remains as the dark rings around his eyes.

Fox again started on the trail of Rabbit, with the determination of eating him as soon as he saw him. He found Rabbit sitting beside the opening of a beehive. "I am going to eat you," said Fox; "you have tried to kill me."

"You must not kill me," replied Rabbit. "I am teaching these children," and he closed the opening of the hive, so that Fox could not see what was inside. Fox desired very much to see what was in the hive making such a noise.

"If you wish to see, stay here and teach them while I rest. When it is dinner time, strike them with a club," said Rabbit, who then ran away.

Fox patiently awaited the dinner hour, and then struck the hive with such force that he broke into it. The bees poured out and stung him until he rolled in agony. "When I see you again, I will kill you before you can say a word," declared he, as he started after Rabbit again.

Fox tracked the Rabbit to a small hole in the fence around a field of watermelons belonging to a Mexican. The Rabbit had entered to steal, and was angered at sight of the gum figure of a man which the owner of the field had placed beside the path. "What do you desire from me?" he cried, as he struck at the figure with his fore-foot, which stuck fast in the soft gum. He struck at the gum with every foot, and even his head was soon stuck in the gum.

Thus Fox found him. "What are you doing here?" he asked.

"They put me in here because I would not eat chicken for them," said Rabbit.

"I will take your place," said Fox; "I know how to eat chicken."

The Mexican found him in the morning and skinned him, and then let him go, still on the trail of the Rabbit, who had so frequently outwitted him.

CHEROKEE

KANATI AND SELU: THE ORIGIN OF CORN AND GAME

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Mooney, James. "Myths of the Cherokees." *Journal of American Folklore* 1 (1888): 98–106.

Date: 1887

Original Source: Cherokee

National Origin: Native American

The Cherokee, along with the Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminoles, were one of the "Five Civilized Tribes." At various points in their history, the Cherokee resided in Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, North and South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. The Cherokee were the most numerous native culture in the southeastern part of the United States and ultimately the most influential. They created a nation modeled on the governmental structure of the United States. They adopted a syllabary for writing their language created by Sequoia. The following **myth** required anyone who heard it to fast and take a ritual bath presided over by a holy man. Connected to this myth is a series of events occurring later in the first age of the Cherokee in which the people, starving from a lack of game, sent for the brothers who returned and gave them the rituals to use for calling game. This myth alludes to a range of esoteric knowledge shared by the traditional Cherokee. For example, the myth establishes the intimate relationship between Kanati (representative of hunters in general) and the wolf, thus establishing the animal's protected status among any Cherokee desiring a successful hunt. Similar narratives focused on two brothers—one who is "tame" and the other who is "wild" and lives on the margins of society and at the edge

of the social order—are distributed widely in Native American tradition. “The Story of Lodge Boy, After-Birth Boy and Double-Face” among the Omaha is one such closely related example. As other examples of the twin **motif**, see “Origin of Acoma” (page 3) and “The Two Boys Who Slew the Monsters and Became Stars” (page 148) in this volume.

When I was a boy, this is what the old men told me they had heard when they were boys.

Long ages ago, soon after the world was made, a hunter and his wife lived at Looking-glass Mountain, with their only child, a little boy. The father’s name was Kanati, “The Lucky Hunter,” and his wife was called Selu, “Corn.” No matter when Kanati went into the woods, he never failed to bring back a load of game, which his wife cut up and prepared, washing the blood from the meat in the river near the house. The little boy used to play down by the river every day, and one morning the old people thought they heard laughing and talking in the bushes, as though there were two children there. When the boy came home at night, his parents asked who had been playing with him all day. “He comes out of the water,” said the boy, and he calls himself my elder brother. He says his mother was cruel to him, and threw him into the river.” Then they knew that the strange boy had sprung from the blood of the game which Selu had washed off at the river’s edge.

Every day, when the little boy went out to play, the other would join him; but, as he always went back into the water, the old people never had a chance to see him. At last, one evening, Kanati said to his son, “Tomorrow, when the other boy comes to play with you, get him to wrestle with you, and when you have your arms around him hold on to him and call for us.” The boy promised to do as he was told; so the next day, as soon as his playmate appeared, he challenged him to a wrestling-match. The other agreed at once, but as soon as they had their arms around each other Kanati’s boy began to scream for his father. The old folks at once came running down, and when the wild boy saw them he struggled to free himself, and cried out, “Let me go! You threw me away!” But his brother held on until his parents reached the spot, when they seized the wild boy and took him home with them. They kept him in the house until they had tamed him, but he was always wild and artful in his disposition, and was the leader of his brother in every mischief. Before long the old people discovered that he was one of those persons endowed with magic powers, and they called him, “He who grew up Wild.”

Whenever Kanati went into the mountains he always brought back a fat buck or doe, or may be a couple of turkeys. One day the wild boy said to his brother, “I wonder where our father gets all that game; let’s follow him next time, and find out.” A few days afterward, Kanati took a bow and some feathers

in his hand, and started off. The boys waited a little while, and then started after him, keeping out of sight, until they saw their father go into a swamp where there were a great many of the reeds that hunters use to make arrow-shafts. Then the wild boy changed himself into a puff of bird's down, which the wind took up and carried until it alighted upon Kanati's shoulder just as he entered the swamp, but Kanati knew nothing about it. The hunter then cut reeds, fitted the feathers to them, and made some arrows, and the wild boy—in his other shape—thought, "I wonder what those things are for." When Kanati had his arrows finished, he came out of the swamp and went on again. The wind blew the down from his shoulder; it fell in the woods, when the wild boy took his right shape again, and went back and told his brother what he had seen. Keeping out of sight of their father, they followed him up the mountain until he stopped at a certain place and lifted up a large rock. At once a buck came running out, which Kanati shot, and then, lifting it upon his back, he started home again. "Oho!" said the boys, "he keeps all the deer shut up in that hole, and whenever he wants venison he just lets one out, and kills it with those things he made in the swamp." They hurried and reached home before their father, who had the heavy deer to carry, so that he did not know they had followed him.

A few days after, the boys went back to the swamp, cut some reeds and made seven arrows, and then started up the mountain to where their father kept the game. When they got to the place they lifted up the rock, and a deer came running out. Just as they drew back to shoot it, another came out, and then another, and another, until the boys got confused and forgot what they were about. In those days all the deer had their tails hanging down, like other animals, but, as a buck was running past, the wild boy struck its tail with his arrow so that it stood straight out behind. This pleased the boys, and when the next one ran by, the other brother struck his tail so that it pointed upward. The boys thought this was good sport, and when the next one ran past, the wild boy struck his tail so that it stood straight up, and his brother struck the next one so hard with his arrow that the deer's tail was curled over his back. The boys thought this was very pretty, and ever since the deer has carried his tail over his back.

The deer continued to pass until the last one had come out of the hole and escaped into the forest. Then followed droves of raccoons, rabbits, and all the other four-footed animals. Last came great flocks of turkeys, pigeons, and partridges that darkened the air like a cloud, and made such a noise with their wings that Kanati, sitting at home, heard the sound like distant thunder on the mountains, and said to himself, "My bad boys have got into trouble. I must go and see what they are doing."

So Kanati went up the mountain, and when he came to the place where he kept the game he found the two boys standing by the rock, and all the birds and animals were gone. He was furious, but, without saying a word, he went down into the cave and kicked the covers off four jars in one corner, when out swarmed bed-bugs, fleas, lice, and gnats, and got all over the boys. They

screamed with pain and terror, and tried to beat off the insects; but the thousands of insects crawled over them, and bit and stung them, until both dropped down nearly dead from exhaustion. Kanati stood looking on until he thought they had been punished enough, when he brushed off the vermin, and proceeded to give the boys a lecture. "Now, you rascals," said he, "you have always had plenty to eat, and never had to work for it. Whenever you were hungry, all I had to do was to come up here and get a deer or a turkey, and bring it home for your mother to cook. But now you have let out all the animals, and after this, when you want a deer to eat, you will have to hunt all over the woods for it, and then may be not find one. Go home now to your mother, while I see if I can find something to eat for supper."

When the boys reached home again they were very tired and hungry, and asked their mother for something to eat. "There is no meat," said Selu, "but wait a little while, and I will get you some-thing." So she took a basket and started out to the provision-house.... This provision-house was built upon poles high up from the ground, to keep it out of the reach of animals, and had a ladder to climb up by, and one door, but no other opening. Every day, when Selu got ready to cook the dinner, she would go out to the provision-house with a basket, and bring it back full of corn and beans. The boys had never been inside the provision-house, and wondered where all the corn and beans could come from, as the house was not a very large one; so, as soon as Selu went out of the door, the wild boy said to his brother, "Let's go and see what she does." They ran around and climbed up at the back of the provision-house, and pulled out a piece of clay from between the logs, so that they could look in. There they saw Selu standing in the middle of the room, with the basket in front of her on the floor. Leaning over the basket, she rubbed her stomach—so—and the basket was half-full of corn. Then she rubbed under her armpits—so—and the basket was full to the top with beans. The brothers looked at each other, and said, "This will never do; our mother is a witch. If we eat any of that it will poison us. We must kill her."

When the boys came back into the house, Selu knew their thoughts before they spoke? "So you are going to kill me!" said Selu. "Yes," said the boys; "you are a witch."

"Well," said their mother, "when you have killed me, clear a large piece of ground in front of the house, and drag my body seven times around the circle.

"Then drag me seven times over the ground inside the circle, and stay up all night and watch, and in the morning you will have plenty of corn." Then the boys killed her with their clubs, and cut off her head, and put it up on the roof of the house, and told it to look for her husband. Then they set to work to clear the ground in front of the house, but, instead of clearing the whole piece, they cleared only seven little spots. This is the reason why corn now grows only in a few places instead of over the whole world. Then they dragged the body of Selu around the circles, and wherever her blood fell on the ground the corn

sprang up. But, instead of dragging her body seven times across the ground, they did this only twice, which is the reason why the Indians still work their crop but twice. The two brothers sat up and watched their corn all night, and in the morning it was fully grown and ripe.

When Kanati came home at last, he looked around, but could not see Selu anywhere, so he asked the boys where their mother was. "She was a witch, and we killed her," said the boys; "there is her head up there on top of the house." When Kanati saw his wife's head on the roof he was very angry, and said, "I won't stay with you any longer. I am going to the ... [Wolf] people." So he started off, but, before he had gone far, the wild boy changed himself again to a tuft of down, which fell on Kanati's shoulder.

When Kanati reached the settlement of the Wolf people, they were holding a council in the town-house. He went in and sat down, with the tuft of bird's down on his shoulder. When the Wolf chief asked him his business, he said, "I have two bad boys at home, and I want you to go in seven days from now and play against them." Kanati spoke as though he wanted them to play a game of ball, but the wolves knew that he meant for them to come and kill the two boys. The wolves promised to go. Then the bird's down blew off from Kanati's shoulder, and the smoke carried it up through the hole in the roof of the town-house. When it came down on the ground outside, the wild boy took his right shape again, and went home and told his brother all that he had heard in the town-house. When Kanati left the Wolf people, he did not return home, but went on farther.

The boys then began to get ready for the wolves, and the wild boy—the magician—told his brother what to do. They ran around the house in a wide circle until they had made a trail all around it, excepting on the side from which the wolves would come, where they left a small open space. Then they made four large bundles of arrows, and placed them at four different points on the outside of the circle, after which they hid themselves in the woods and waited for the wolves. On the appointed day a whole army of wolves came and surrounded the house, to kill the boys. The wolves did not notice the trail around the house, because they came in where the boys had left the opening, but the moment they were inside the circle the trail changed to a high fence, and shut them in. Then the boys on the outside took their arrows and began shooting them down, and, as the wolves could not jump over the fence, they were all killed excepting a few, which escaped through the opening into a great swamp close by. Then the boys ran around the swamp, and a circle of fire sprang up in their tracks, and set fire to the grass and bushes, and burned up nearly all the other wolves. Only two or three got away, and these were all the wolves which were left in the whole world.

Soon afterward some strangers from a distance, who heard that the brothers had a wonderful grain from which they made bread, came to ask for some; for none but Selu and her family had ever known corn before. The boys gave them

seven grains of corn, which they told them to plant the next night on their way home, sitting up all night to watch the corn, which would have seven ripe ears in the morning. These they were to plant the next night, and watch in the same way; and so on every night until they reached home, when they would have corn enough to supply the whole people. The strangers lived seven days' journey away. They took the seven grains of corn, and started home again. That night they planted the seven grains, and watched all through the darkness until morning, when they saw seven tall stalks, each stalk bearing a ripened ear. They gathered the ears with gladness, and went on their way. The next night they planted all their corn, and guarded it with wakeful care until daybreak, when they found an abundant increase. But the way was long and the sun was hot, and the people grew tired. On the last night before reaching home they fell asleep, and in the morning the corn they had planted had not even sprouted. They brought with them to their settlement what corn they had left, and planted it, and with care and attention were able to raise a crop. But ever since the corn must be watched and tended through half the year, which before would grow and ripen in a night.

As Kanati did not return, the boys at last concluded to go and see if they could find him. The wild boy got a wheel and rolled it toward the direction where it is always night? In a little while the wheel came rolling back, and the boys knew their father was not there. Then the wild boy rolled it to the south and to the north, and each time the wheel came back to him, and they knew their father was not there. Then he rolled it toward the Sun Land, and it did not return.

"Our father is there," said the wild boy, "let us go and find him." So the two brothers set off toward the east, and after traveling a long time they came upon Kanati, walking along, with a little dog by his side. "You bad boys," said their father, "have you come here?"

"Yes," they answered; "we always accomplish what we start out to do, we are men!"

"This dog overtook me four days ago," then said Kanati; but the boys knew that the dog was the wheel which they had sent after him to find him. "Well," said Kanati, "as you have found me, we may as well travel together, but I will take the lead."

Soon they came to a swamp, and Kanati told them there was a dangerous thing there, and they must keep away from it. Then he went on ahead, but as soon as he was out of sight the wild boy said to his brother, "Come and let us see what is in the swamp." They went in together, and in the middle of the swamp they found a large panther, asleep. The wild boy got out an arrow, and shot the panther in the side of the head. The panther turned his head, and the other boy shot him on that side. He turned his head away again, and the two brothers shot together ... But the panther was not hurt by the arrows, and paid no more attention to the boys. They came out of the swamp, and soon overtook Kanati, waiting for them. "Did you find it?" asked Kanati. "Yes," said the boys,

“we found it, but it never hurt us. We are men” Kanati was surprised, but said nothing, and they went on again.

After a while Kanati turned to them, and said, “Now you must be careful. We are coming to a tribe called the ‘Cookers’ [that is, Cannibals], and if they get you they will put you in a pot and feast on you.” Then he went on ahead. Soon the boys came to a tree which had been struck by lightning, and the wild boy directed his brother to gather some of the splinters from the tree, and told him what to do with them. In a little while they came to the settlement of the cannibals, who, as soon as they saw the boys, came running out, crying, and “Good! Here are two nice, fat strangers. Now we’ll have a grand feast!” They caught the boys and dragged them into the town-house, and sent word to all the people of the settlement to come to the feast. They made up a great fire, filled a large pot with water and set it to boiling, and then seized the wild boy and threw him into the pot, and put the lid on it. His brother was not frightened in the least, and made no attempt to escape, but quietly knelt down and began putting the splinters into the fire, as if to make it burn better. When the cannibals thought the meat was about ready, they lifted the lid from the pot, and that instant a blinding light filled the town-house, and the lightning began to dart from one side to the other, beating down the cannibals until not one of them was left alive. Then the lightning went up through the smoke-hole, and the next moment there were the two boys standing outside the town-house as though nothing had happened. They went on, and soon met Kanati, who seemed much surprised to see them, and said, “What! Are you here again?”

“Oh, yes, we never give up. We are great men!”

“What did the cannibals do to you?”

“We met them, and they brought us to their town-house, but they never hurt us.” Kanati said nothing more, and they went on. Kanati soon got out of sight of the boys, but they kept on until they came to the end of the world, where the sun comes out. The sky was just coming down when they got there, but they waited until it went up again, and then they went through and climbed up on the other side.

There they found Kanati and Selu sitting together. The old folks received them kindly, and were glad to see them, and told them they might stay there a while, but then they must go to live where the sun goes down. The boys stayed with their parents seven days, and then went on toward the sunset land, where they are still living.

ORIGIN OF THE BEAR: THE BEAR SONGS

Tradition Bearer: Ayûn'inî (Swimmer)

Source: Mooney, James. *Myths of the Cherokee*. Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 1897–1898, Part I. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1900, 325–326.

Date: 1897–1898

Original Source: Cherokee

National Origin: Native American

In the Cherokee worldview, the bear maintained a kinship to humans by virtue of having been descended from one of their clans during the mythic period. The widely held Native American belief that animals grant success to hunters who follow the proper rituals of respect is apparent in this **myth** of the origin of bears and the songs used to call them forth to be hunted. Like Cherokee sung incantations in general, the Bear Songs, when repeated precisely, have an ability to focus supernatural power and bring about a desired end. This myth explaining the origin of the bear and the sacred **formulas** used to appeal to bears are especially valuable by virtue of the fact that they were transcribed by Cherokee ritual expert Swimmer using the syllabary invented by Sequoia. Thus, there is far less of an opportunity for “interference” (extrapolation and reinterpretation) from the collector than was usually the case in the fieldwork context.

Long ago there was a Cherokee clan called the Ani'-Tsâ'gûhî, and in one family of this clan was a boy who used to leave home and be gone all day in the mountains. After a while he went oftener and stayed longer, until at last he would not eat in the house at all, but started off at daybreak and did not come back until night. His parents scolded, but that did no good, and the boy, still went every day until they noticed that long brown hair was beginning to grow out all over his body. Then they wondered and asked him why it was that he wanted to be so much in the woods that he would not even eat at home. Said the boy, “I find plenty to eat there, and it is better than the corn and beans we have in the settlements, and pretty soon I am going into the woods to stay all the time.” His parents were worried and begged him not to leave them, but he said, “It is better there than here, and you see I am beginning to be different already, so that I can not live here any longer. If you will come with me, there is plenty for all of us and you will never have to work for it; but if you want to come you must first fast seven days.”

The father and mother talked it over and then told the headmen of the clan. They held a council about the matter and after everything had been said they decided, “Here we must work hard and have not always enough. There he says there is always plenty without work. We will go with him.” So they fasted seven days, and on the seventh morning all the Ani'-Tsâ'gûhî left the settlement and started for the mountains as the boy led the way.

When the people of the other towns heard of it they were very sorry and sent their headmen to persuade the Ani'-Tsâ'gûhî to stay at home and not go

into the woods to live. The messengers found them already on the way, and were surprised to notice that their bodies were beginning to be covered with hair like that of animals, because for seven days they had not taken human food and their nature was changing. The Ani'-Tsâ'gûhî would not come back, but said, "We are going where there is always plenty to eat. Hereafter we shall be called bears, and when you yourselves are hungry come into the woods and call us and we shall come to give you our own flesh. You need not be afraid to kill us, for we shall live always." Then they taught the messengers the songs with which to call them, and the bear hunters have these songs still. When they had finished the songs the Ani'-Tsâ'gûhî started on again and the messengers turned back to the settlements, but after going a little way they looked back and saw a drove of bears going into the woods.

First Bear Song

He-e! Ani'-Tsâ'gûhî, Ani'-Tsâ'gûhî, akwandu'li e'lanti' ginûn'ti,
 Ani'-Tsâ'gûhî, Ani'-Tsâ'gûhî, akwandu'li e'lanti' ginûn'ti—Yû!
 He-e! The Ani'-Tsâ'gûhî, the Ani'-Tsâ'gûhî, I want to lay them low on
 the ground,
 The Ani'-Tsâ'gûhî, the Ani'-Tsâ'gûhî, I want to lay them low on the
 ground—Yû!

The bear hunter starts out each morning fasting and does not eat until near evening. He sings this song as he leaves camp, and again the next morning, but never twice the same day.

Second Bear Song

This song also is sung by the bear hunter, in order to attract the bears, while on his way from the camp to the place where he expects to hunt during the day. The melody is simple and plaintive.

He-e! Hayuya'haniwä', hayuya'haniwä', hayuya'haniwä', hayuya'haniwä',
 Tsistuyi' nehandu'yanû', Tsistuyi' nehandu'yanû'—Yoho-o!
 He-e! Hayuya'haniwä', hayuya'haniwä', hayuya'haniwä', hayuya'haniwä',
 Kuwâhi' nehandu'yanû', Kuwâhi' nehandu'yanû'—Yoho-o!
 He-e! Hayuya'haniwä', hayuya'haniwä', hayuya'haniwä', hayuya'haniwä',
 Uyâhye' nehandu'yanû', Uyâhye' nehandu'yanû'—Yoho-o!
 He-e! Hayuya'haniwä', hayuya'haniwä', hayuya'haniwä', hayuya'haniwä',
 Gâte'gwâ' nehandu'yanû', Gâte'gwâ' nehandu'yanû'—Yoho-o!
 (Recited) Ûlë-nû' asêhî' tadeyâ'statakûhî' gûñ'näge astû' tsîkî'
 He! Hayuya'haniwä' (four times),
 In Tsistu'yî you were conceived (two times)—Yoho!
 He! Hayuya'haniwä' (four times),

In Kuwâ'hî you were conceived (two times)—Yoho!
He! Hayuya'haniwâ' (four times),
In Uyâ'hye you were conceived (two times)—Yoho!
He! Hayuya'haniwâ' (four times),
In Gâte'gwâ you were conceived (two times)—Yoho!

And now surely we and the good black things, the best of all, shall see each other.

THE RATTLESNAKE'S VENGEANCE

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable (perhaps Swimmer, see page 39)

Source: Mooney, James. *Myths of the Cherokee*. Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 1897–1898, Part I. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1900, 306.

Date: 1898

Original Source: Cherokee

National Origin: Native American

According to Cherokee tradition, snakes were supernatural beings possessing power over meteorological phenomena as well as over other plant and animal life. The narrative traditions contain an extensive selection of **myths** and **legends** devoted to natural and mythic snakes. Snakes are the focus of prayers and rituals, and rattlesnakes are invested with particular power. While killing them is an invitation to disaster as in the following myth, holy persons who are trained in the appropriate rites, songs, and prayers may kill them to obtain teeth, rattles, flesh, or oil for medicinal or religious purposes. “The Rattlesnake’s Vengeance” reveals the character of this animal and relates the origin of one of the ritual songs associated with the feared and venerated rattlesnake.

One day in the old times when we could still talk with other creatures, while some children were playing about the house, their mother inside heard them scream. Running out she found that a rattlesnake had crawled from the grass, and taking up a stick she killed it. The father was out hunting in the mountains, and that evening when coming home after dark through the gap he heard a strange wailing sound. Looking about he found that he had come into the midst of a whole company of rattlesnakes, which all had their mouths open and seemed to be crying. He asked them the reason of their trouble, and they told him that his own wife had that day killed their chief, the Yellow Rattlesnake, and they were just now about to send the Black Rattlesnake to take revenge.

The hunter said he was very sorry, but they told him that if he spoke the truth he must be ready to make satisfaction and give his wife as a sacrifice for the life of their chief. Not knowing what might happen otherwise, he consented. They then told him that the Black Rattlesnake would go home with him and coil up just outside the door in the dark. He must go inside, where he would find his wife awaiting him, and ask her to get him a drink of fresh water from the spring. That was all.

He went home and knew that the Black Rattlesnake was following. It was night when he arrived and very dark, but he found his wife waiting with his supper ready. He sat down and asked for a drink of water. She handed him a gourd full from the jar, but he said he wanted it fresh from the spring, so she took a bowl and went out of the door. The next moment he heard a cry, and going out he found that the Black Rattlesnake had bitten her and that she was already dying. He stayed with her until she was dead, when the Black Rattlesnake came out from the grass again and said his tribe was now satisfied.

He then taught the hunter a prayer song, and said, "When you meet any of us hereafter sing this song and we will not hurt you; but if by accident one of us should bite one of your people then sing this song over him and he will recover." And the Cherokee have kept the song to this day.

THE SPIRIT DEFENDERS OF NĪKWÄSĪ'

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Mooney, James. *Myths of the Cherokee*. Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 1897–1898, Part I. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1900, 336–337.

Date: 1898

Original Source: Cherokee

National Origin: Native American

The Nūñnē'hī ("the immortals"), in Cherokee belief, were a spirit race who lived much as humans did. They were invisible, except when they wanted to be seen. In traditional narrative, they are depicted as benevolent protectors of the Cherokee.

Long ago a powerful unknown tribe invaded the country from the southeast, killing people and destroying settlements wherever they went. No leader could stand against them, and in a little while they had wasted all the lower settlements and advanced into the mountains. The warriors of the old town of Nĭkwäsi', on the head of Little Tennessee, gathered their wives and

children into the townhouse and kept scouts constantly on the lookout for the presence of danger. One morning just before daybreak the spies saw the enemy approaching and at once gave the alarm. The Nīkwāsī' men seized their arms and rushed out to meet the attack, but after a long, hard fight they found themselves overpowered and began to retreat, when suddenly a stranger stood among them and shouted to the chief to call off his men and he himself would drive back the enemy. From the dress and language of the stranger the Nīkwāsī' people thought him a chief who had come with reinforcements from the Overhill settlements in Tennessee. They fell back along the trail, and as they came near the townhouse they saw a great company of warriors coming out from the side of the mound as through an open doorway. Then they knew that their friends were the Nūñnē'hī, the Immortals, although no one had ever heard before that they lived under Nīkwāsī' mound.

The Nūñnē'hī poured out by hundreds, armed and painted for the fight, and the most curious thing about it all was that they became invisible as soon as they were fairly outside of the settlement, so that although the enemy saw the glancing arrow or the rushing tomahawk, and felt the stroke, he could not see who sent it. Before such invisible foes the invaders soon had to retreat, going first south along the ridge to where joins the main ridge which separates the French Broad from the Tuckasegee, and then turning with it to the northeast. As they retreated they tried to shield themselves behind rocks and trees, but the Nūñnē'hī arrows went around the rocks and killed them from the other side, and they could find no hiding place. All along the ridge they fell, until when they reached the head of Tuckasegee not more than half a dozen were left alive, and in despair they sat down and cried out for mercy.

Ever since then the Cherokee have called the place Dayûlsûñ'yï, "Where they cried." Then the Nūñnē'hī chief told them they had deserved their punishment for attacking a peaceful tribe, and he spared their lives and told them to go home and take the news to their people. This was the Indian custom, always to spare a few to carry back the news of defeat. They went home toward the north and the Nūñnē'hī went back to the mound.

And they are still there, because, in the last war, when a strong party of Federal troops came to surprise a handful of Confederates posted there they saw so many soldiers guarding the town that they were afraid and went away without making an attack.

There is another story, that once while all the warriors of a certain town were off on a hunt, or at a dance in another settlement, one old man was chopping wood on the side of the ridge when suddenly a party of the enemy came upon him—Shawano, Seneca, or some other tribe. Throwing his hatchet at the nearest one, he turned and ran for the house to get his gun and make the best defense that he might. On coming out at once with the gun he was surprised to find a large body of strange warriors driving back the enemy. It was no time for

questions, and taking his place with the others, they fought hard until the enemy was pressed back up the creek and finally broke and retreated across the mountain.

When it was over and there was time to breathe again, the old man turned to thank his new friends, but found that he was alone—they had disappeared as though the mountain had swallowed them. Then he knew that they were the Nūññē'hī, who had come to help their friends, the Cherokee.

HOW THE DEER OBTAINED HIS HORNS

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Mooney, James. "Myths of the Cherokees" *Journal of American Folklore* 1 (1888): 106–108.

Date: 1887

Original Source: Cherokee

National Origin: Native American

In this **myth** from the Cherokee, rabbit plays his familiar role of **trickster**. The myth of "Kanati and Selu" (page 33) focused on sacred features of the Cherokee world. In these narratives, however, the origins of the animals' attributes and the phenomena of the physical universe are at times overshadowed by the amusement value attending the escapades of characters such as rabbit. Therefore, the tales invite comparison to the African American tales of Brer Rabbit and the Cajun Comrade Lapin. These narrative similarities comprise an interesting continuity across the South.

In the old days the animals were fond of amusement, and were constantly getting up grand meetings and contests of various kinds, with prizes for the winner. On one occasion a prize was offered to the animal with the finest coat, and although the otter deserved to win it, the rabbit stole his coat, and nearly got the prize for himself. After a while the animals got together again, and made a large pair of horns, to be given to the best runner. The race was to be through a thicket, and the one who made the best time, with the horns on his head, was to get them. Everybody knew from the first that either the deer or the rabbit would be the winner, but bets were high on the rabbit, who was a great runner and a general favorite. But the rabbit had no tail, and always went by jumps, and his friends were afraid that the horns would make him fall over in the bushes unless he had something to balance them, so they fixed up a tail for him with a stick and some bird's down.

“Now,” says the rabbit, “let me look over the ground where I am to run.”

So he went into the thicket, and was gone so long that at last one of the animals went to see what had become of him, and there he found the rabbit hard at work gnawing down bushes and cutting off the hanging limbs of the trees, and making a road for himself clear through to the other side of the swamp. The messenger did not let the rabbit see him, but came back quietly and told his story to the others. Pretty soon the rabbit came out again, ready to put on the horns and begin the race, but several of the animals said that he had been gone so long that it looked as if he must have been cutting a road through the bushes. The rabbit denied it up and down, but they all went into the thicket, and there was the open road, sure enough. Then the chief got very angry, and said to the rabbit, “Since you are so fond of the business, you may spend the rest of your life gnawing twigs and bushes,” and so the rabbit does to this day. The other animals would not allow the rabbit to run at all now, so they put the horns on the deer, who plunged into the worst part of the thicket, and made his way out to the other side, then turned round and came back again on a different track, in such fine style that every one said he had won the horns. But the rabbit felt sore about it, and resolved to get even with him.

One day, soon after the contest for the horns, the rabbit stretched a large grape-vine across the trail, and gnawed it nearly in two in the middle. Then he went back a piece, took a good run, and jumped up at the vine. He kept on running and jumping up at the vine, until the deer came along and asked him what he was doing.

“Don’t you see?” says the rabbit. “I’m so strong that I can bite through that grape-vine at one jump.”

The deer could hardly believe this, and wanted to see it done. So the rabbit ran back, made a tremendous spring, and bit through the vine where he had gnawed it before. The deer, when he saw that, said, “Well; I can do it if you can.” So the rabbit stretched a larger grape-vine across the trail, but without gnawing it in the middle. Then the deer ran back as he had seen the rabbit do, made a powerful spring, and struck the grape-vine right in the center; but it only flew back, and threw him over on his head. He tried again and again, until he was all bruised and bleeding.

“Let me see your teeth,” at last said the rabbit. So the deer showed him his teeth, which were long and sharp, like a wolf’s teeth.

“No wonder you can’t do it,” says the rabbit; “your teeth are too blunt to bite anything. Let me sharpen them for you, like mine. My teeth are so sharp that I can cut through a stick just like a knife.” And he showed him a black-locust twig, of which rabbits gnaw the young shoots, which he had shaved off as well as a knife could do it, just in rabbit fashion.

The deer thought that was just the thing. So the rabbit got a hard stone, with rough edges, and filed and filed away at the deer’s teeth, until they were filed down almost to the gums.

“Now try it,” says the rabbit. So the deer tried again, but this time he couldn’t bite at all.

“Now you’ve paid for your horns,” said the rabbit, as he laughed and started home through the bushes. Ever since then the deer’s teeth are so blunt that he cannot chew anything but grass and leaves.

THE RAVEN MOCKER

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Mooney, James. *Myths of the Cherokee*. Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 1897–1898, Part I. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1900, 401–403.

Date: 1898

Original Source: Cherokee

National Origin: Native American

In traditional Cherokee theories of disease causation and cure, death is caused by a personal attack. This attack may come from a nonhuman, supernatural source or from a human agent such as a witch. The witch, in general, carries out his or her mischief under cover of darkness. Therefore, the Cherokee term translates as “night-goer.” In his analysis of Cherokee sacred **formulas**, James Mooney discusses ravens as agents who never fail to take disease away from the afflicted individual and then hide these afflictions in mountain crevices at the cardinal points on the Cherokee compass.

Of all the Cherokee wizards or witches the most dreaded is the Raven Mocker, the one that robs the dying man of life. They are of either sex and there is no sure way to know one, though they usually look withered and old, because they have added so many lives to their own.

At night, when some one is sick or dying in the settlement, the Raven Mocker goes to the place to take the life. He flies through the air in fiery shape, with arms outstretched like wings, and sparks trailing behind, and a rushing sound like the noise of a strong wind. Every little while as he flies he makes a cry like the cry of a raven when it “dives” in the air—not like the common raven cry—and those who hear are afraid, because they know that some man’s life will soon go out. When the Raven Mocker comes to the house he finds others of his kind waiting there, and unless there is a doctor on guard who knows how to drive them away they go inside, all invisible, and frighten and torment the sick man until they kill him. Sometimes to do this they even lift him

from the bed and throw him on the floor, but his friends who are with him think he is only struggling for breath.

After the witches kill him they take out his heart and eat it, and so add to their own lives as many days or years as they have taken from his. No one in the room can see them, and there is no sear where they take out the heart, but yet there is no heart left in the body. Only one who has the right medicine can recognize a Raven Mocker, and if such a man stays in the room with the sick person these witches are afraid to come in, and retreat as soon as they see him, because when one of them is recognized in his right shape he must die within seven days. There was once a man who had this medicine and used to hunt for Raven Mockers, and killed several. When the friends of a dying person know that there is no more hope they always try to have one of these medicine men stay in the house and watch the body until it is buried, because after burial the witches do not steal the heart.

The other witches are jealous of the Raven Mockers and afraid to come into the same house with one. Once a man who had the witch medicine was watching by a sick man and saw these other witches outside trying to get in. All at once they heard a Raven Mocker cry overhead and the others scattered "like a flock of pigeons when the hawk swoops." When at last a Raven Mocker dies these other witches sometimes take revenge by digging up the body and abusing it.

The following is told on the reservation as an actual happening:

A young man had been out on a hunting trip and was on his way home when night came on while he was still a long distance from the settlement. He knew of a house not far off the trail where an old man and his wife lived, so he turned in that direction to look for a place to sleep until morning. When he got to the house there was nobody in it. He looked into the sweatlodge and found no one there either. He thought maybe they had gone after water, and so stretched himself out in the farther corner to sleep. Very soon he heard a raven cry outside, and in a little while afterwards the old man came into the sweat lodge and sat down by the fire without noticing the young man, who kept still in the dark corner. Soon there was another raven cry outside, and the old man said to himself, "Now my wife is coming," and sure enough in a little while the old woman came in and sat down by her husband. Then the young man knew they were Raven Mockers and he was frightened and kept very quiet.

Said the old man to his wife, "Well, what luck did you have?"

"None," said the old woman, "there were too many doctors watching. What luck did you have?"

"I got what I went for," said the old man, "there is no reason to fail, but you never have luck. Take this and cook it and lees have something to eat." She fixed the fire and then the young man smelled meat roasting and thought it smelled sweeter than any meat he had ever tasted. He peeped out from one eye, and it looked like a man's heart roasting on a stick.

Suddenly the old woman said to her husband, "Who is over in the corner?"

“Nobody,” said the old man. “Yes, there is,” said the old woman, “I hear him snoring,” and she stirred the fire until it blazed and lighted up the whole place, and there was the young man lying in the corner. He kept quiet and pretended to be asleep. The old man made a noise at the fire to wake him, but still he pretended to sleep. Then the old man came over and shook him, and he sat up and rubbed his eyes as if he had been asleep all the time.

Now it was near daylight and the old woman was out in the other house getting breakfast ready, but the hunter could hear her crying to herself. “Why is your wife crying?” he asked the old man. “Oh, she has lost some of her friends lately and feels lonesome,” said her husband; but the young man knew that she was crying because he had heard them talking.

When they came out to breakfast the old man put a bowl of corn mush before him and said, “This is all we have—we have had no meat for a long time.” After breakfast the young man started on again, but when he had gone a little way the old man ran after him with a fine piece of beadwork and gave it to him, saying, “Take this, and don’t tell anybody what you heard last night, because my wife and I are always quarreling that way.” The young man took the piece, but when he came to the first creek he threw it into the water and then went on to the settlement. There he told the whole story, and a party of warriors started back with him to kill the Raven Mockers. When they reached the place it was seven days after the first night. They found the old man and his wife lying dead in the house, so they set fire to it and burned it and the witches together.

CHEYENNE

YOUNG MEN WHO KILLED THE HORNED SERPENT AND RELEASED THE BUFFALO

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Kroeber, A. L. "Cheyenne Tales." *Journal of American Folklore* 13 (1900): 179–181.

Date: 1899

Original Source: Cheyenne

National Origin: Native American

The original lifestyle of hunting and gathering cultures on the Plains used dogs for traction. As a result, small tepees were used that could be transported by dogs who could not travel far in a day, and bands had to remain close to timber and water. There was buffalo hunting on the Plains before the acquisition of the horse, but in the pre-horse culture, this was a seasonal activity only. This is the stage of Cheyenne culture described in the following **myth**. The communal hunt required careful preparation and close supervision to ensure that as much meat as possible would be taken. The **cautionary tale** about controlling dogs and proper actions and words in the following narrative alludes to these precautions.

Far away there was a large camp-circle. Food was very scarce, and some persons had starved. One day one of the old men went about inquiring whether the people wanted to travel to a large lake, where ducks and game abounded. They moved camp, packing their goods on dogs.

Two young men were sent ahead, but they returned with the news that they had found no game whatever. The children were all crying for food, and the

misery was extreme. The people selected two strong young men able to travel four days without food, and told them that they must find something for the whole tribe, and bring back good news.

The young men set out and traveled steadily for two days, until they were worn out and slept from the middle of the night until the morning star rose. Then they went on northward again.

Finally they came near a large river, and beyond it they saw a blue mountain. The river was slow, smooth, wide, and sandy on both sides, but beyond it rose bluffs, and close behind these the mountain. The two scouts put their clothes on their heads, and entered the river. In the center, one of them got stuck fast. He shouted that some powerful thing under water was taking him; and he asked his friend to tell his parents not to weep too much for him. The other man crossed in safety. Then his friend called to him to come back and touch him as a farewell. So the other went back into the river, and touched him.

Then he went out again, and cried all day, wandering about. A person came to the top of the bank above the river, and asked him why he cried, and whether he could do anything for him. The young man replied that a powerful animal was holding fast his friend in the river, and pointed to him.

The person who had come was powerful; he wore a wolfskin, painted red, on his back; it was tied around his neck and waist, so that he looked like a wolf; and he carried a large knife. He dived into the river, and the water moved and waved, and finally an immense snake with black horns came up, and he cut its throat. The man who had been held fast was already cold and stiff in his legs, but the two others dragged him off, and floated him ashore, and laid him in the sun.

The rescuer told the other young man, "Go to the mountain, to its stone door, and tell your grandmother that I have killed the animal that I have been after so long."

The young man ran to the foot of the mountain, stood before a flat stone door, and called as he had been told, telling the woman to bring a rope with her. The old woman was glad that the animal had at last been killed.

The young man ran back, and was told by the man to help him butcher the snake; then they would carry his friend to his house. They dragged the snake on shore by its horns, and cut it in two, and then into many smaller pieces. They made many trips to the mountain, carrying the meat.

Inside, the mountain was like the interior of a tepee, with tent-poles, beds, and so on. Then the young man carried his friend to the mountain, taking him on his back, and holding his hands. The woman made a sweat-house, and he was put into it. The woman told him to try to move. The second time they poured water on the hot rocks he moved a little, the third time more, and after the fourth time he was perfectly well.

Then they went into the mountain, and the man told his daughter to cook food—corn and buffalo meat. This was the first time the young men had seen the daughter, who was very handsome. They ate all the food given them, and

were well satisfied. Then the woman asked them why they had come. They told her that they were looking for game for their starving people.

The woman said, "It is well, you will have something for your tribe." Then she asked them what kin they would be to the girl; whether they would be her brothers. While they conferred, she said that they could marry her. The other young man proposed to the one that had been fast that he should marry her; and the latter agreed. They were then all very grateful to each other, and the young man married the girl.

The woman told her daughter to take the two young men to the herd of buffalo, and the girl showed them large herds of buffalo, and on the other side wide fields of corn. Then the woman told them to cross the river in the same place as before, and not to look backwards, and to rest four times on their way home. So they traveled for four days.

Then an old man cried through the village that they were coming. All their relatives and many others came forward; but when they saw that there were three persons, they held somewhat aloof. They entered a tent, and the new husband told an old man to cry to the people to come to shake hands with his wife and embrace her. This was done, and then the young man said that he brought good news, and that that same night his wife's herd would come from the mountain.

At night long strings of buffalo came, and the people heard them on all sides. Early in the morning they saw the buffalo, as far as they could look. It was announced that the dogs were not to disturb the game. Then the hunt commenced. The buffalo ran when pursued, but always came back. As many were killed as could be used, and there was abundance of meat. The chiefs gathered, and resolved that they were thankful to the girl for her kindness, and every family was to bring her a present, the best that they had; and they asked her to take the presents to her parents. So all gave to her, and she started back to her parents with her husband and his friend.

When they arrived at the mountain, the man stood there, calling to his wife to come out, for their son-in-law had returned. She embraced the two young men from joy and gratitude. When they returned, the tribe was still hunting successfully, and they were again given presents to bring to the girl's parents.

When they brought presents a second time, the man was still more grateful, and asked his daughter to take a few ears of corn to the tribe. But she, thinking that they had enough with the buffalo, was silent. When her parents asked her why she did not answer, she told them the reason. So they returned, after her parents had warned her not to feel sorry for any buffalo killed in her sight. Soon after, the children drove a young calf toward the village, and the boys shot at it, and it died in front of her tent.

As she came out, she said to herself that she pitied the calf. But as she said it, the herd ran back toward the mountain, and nothing could be seen but dust. A crier went about, saying that presents must again be sent to the old man in

the mountain. After prayer and with blessings, the two young men and the girl started once more. After four days they arrived.

At once the old man told his daughter that she ought to have been careful. But he would not let them return to the tribe. The parents of the young men and their relatives felt lonely at the long absence, and went out alone to cry. But the young men never returned.

TWO-FACES

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Kroeber, A. L. "Cheyenne Tales." *Journal of American Folklore* 13 (1900): 184.

Date: 1899

Original Source: Cheyenne

National Origin: Native American

The character known by various names such as "Two Faces" or "Double Face" appears among Native American Plains cultures other than the Algonquian Cheyenne (see, for example, the Wichita **myth**, "The Two Boys Who Slew the Monsters and Became Stars," page 148). The protagonist in this tale uses the cleverness and imitative skills reminiscent of a **trickster** to overcome the monster.

Nearly every night a child disappeared from a camp. A young man wondered who stole the babies. One dark night he said to himself, "I will watch tonight. I will watch every tent where the people are sleeping. If any one takes a child tonight, I may hear it cry out." So he watched the whole village, and looked outside.

He found that the thief was Two-Faces, who had one face in front and one at the back of his head, so that he could look on both sides of him. The young man found him fast asleep. Near him were many dead babies that he had stolen. Most of them had their ears cut off, and Two-Faces had a long string of ears on a line, for he lived on human ears.

The young man ran to the river and looked for shells. He gathered a great number of shells, which looked almost like human ears, and strung them, and bloodied them. Then he cut a piece of meat, and shaped it like an ear. When Two-Faces awoke, he saw a person sitting near him eating an ear. It was this young man eating the meat. Two-Faces asked him where he learned to eat ears.

The man said to him, "I live on ears. I always steal children and cut off their ears. The only thing that I am afraid of is that if I eat salt, it will kill me."

Then Two-Faces said, "I should at once die if any one beat a gourd and fat was thrown in the fire."

When night came, they both went to the camp. The young man then told Two-Faces to wait for him; he would go ahead. Then he went to his friends and told them to prepare. He was bringing Two-Faces, who had stolen all the children.

He directed that a gourd be beaten and fat meat thrown at the fire. So at last they succeeded in killing Two-Faces. Then he was burned.

HOW THE WHITES BECAME RICH

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Kroeber, A. L. "Cheyenne Tales." *Journal of American Folklore* 13 (1900): 177–179.

Date: 1899

Original Source: Cheyenne

National Origin: Native American

The Cheyenne were a nomadic Northern Plains culture who based their way of life on the horse for mobility (after Europeans introduced the modern horse to the Americas) and the buffalo for subsistence. Originally from the northeast, this Algonquian nation was pushed west where they settled in the area of the Black Hills in the modern Dakotas and Wyoming. Anthropologist A. L. Kroeber notes concerning this narrative that it "seems probable that we have not a case of adaptation and corruption of a European original, but a native story which for some reason has attracted European additions, perhaps because [the plot is] exceptionally European in spirit" (177).

There was a great medicine-man, who was powerful and did injury, but who had a good daughter. He lived near a geyser, in an earth-lodge. Several young men lived with him, and went out hunting for him. He had great quantities of dried buffalo meat hanging all around his lodge. When meat was scarce in a village near by, he sent his young men to summon the people to him, and then he gave a feast to the various companies.

Then this great man told the companies to dress, and dance before him. When the dance was almost over, he announced that he would pick out a young man to be his son-in-law.

So he selected a young man, but after the marriage he sent the village away again. He was malicious and did not treat his son-in-law rightly. Every night he

had a fire, and slept close by his son-in-law and daughter. When they moved, he raised his head, and said, "Don't stir! Sleep!" When they talked, or even whispered, he made them be quiet, and ordered them to sleep. Even when they were outside, and spoke against him, he was so powerful that he knew it. The first morning he sent his son-in-law out to cut arrows. He told him that if he brought no smooth, straight sticks, he need not come back.

The young man wandered through the woods, but he found only rough sticks, and he was discouraged, and tired, and cried. A person called to him, and asked him why he wept.

The young man related his trouble, and the person told him to cut bulrushes of the right length. So he got as many bulrushes as he could carry, and they turned to smooth sticks. Then he went on up a mountain, and cried again.

The birds heard him, and asked him why he cried. He said that he could not get the eagle-feathers that his father-in-law wanted for feathering the arrows. So the eagle shook himself, and feathers flew out, and he got as many as he could use. Then he returned, carrying the sticks and feathers.

His father-in-law had four men who could make bows and arrows, and they began to make the arrows for him. Then he sent his son-in-law to get plums for the arrow-makers. It was nearly winter, and there was no fruit of any sort left, but he told him to get fresh plums, and bring none that were rotten or dried. He knew this was impossible.

The young man took a bag, and went out, crying. Again a person asked him why he wept. The young man said it was because he was to get plums for the arrow-makers of his father-in-law.

The person told him to go to a plum-bush, and that contains foreign elements, these are not the same in different tribes the tree would shake itself, and only fresh plums would fall from it. All this happened.

When the great medicine-man saw his son-in-law returning well loaded, he was pleased and went to meet him. So they made the arrows, and ate the plums. Next morning the great man wanted to play at throwing arrows at a hoop with his son-in-law. They played near the geyser, and the medicine-man pushed his son-in-law into it. Only his bones came out again.

Three times the great man had selected a son-in-law, and all this had happened. His daughter did not like his acts; but even when she went far off to tell her husband of his danger, the great man could hear by the wind or the earth what she said.

The fourth time he got a very fine young man for son-in-law. He sent him out to drive a buffalo of good age immediately in front of his house, so that he could shoot him with his new arrows. The son-in-law went far off, crying. Seven buffalo were about him, and one asked him what he wanted.

The young man told him, but they said they were power-less against this great man, and told him to go farther south. He went on, and met four buffalo, who asked him what he wished. But they also were powerless, and sent him

farther south. He went on and came to two buffalo. With them the same happened. As he again went on southward, he was so discouraged that he walked with his head down, and when he met a single buffalo, did not stop even when the bull asked him what he wished. Finally he turned around, and told his story. He was hopeless, for the great man could not be cut or burnt or wounded in any way. "He is like this rock," he said, and pointed to a large black stone.

Then the buffalo said, "I will try on this whether I can do anything to him." He went off east, and charged against the stone, but did not injure it. He charged from the south, from the west, from the north—all vainly. The fifth time he went toward the northeast, and this time he broke a piece out of the rock.

Then he told the young man to drive him toward his father-in-law's house. They arrived there, both seeming completely tired out; the buffalo pretended to be trying to escape, while the young man headed him off. At last, after a long chase, he drove him near his father-in-law's door. The medicine-man came out with his new arrows, and shot at the bull. When the arrows neared the buffalo, they turned to reeds again, and did not injure him; but to the medicine-man they appeared to enter the bull, and disappear in him. The bull staggered and seemed nearly dead, and the man approached him. The bull staggered farther and farther away from the house, leading the medicine-man with him, so that he might not escape. Then he turned, charged, and tossed him. As the man fell, he tossed him again and again, so that he never touched the ground. Thus he tossed him until he was completely bruised and unable to move.

Then they put him in his lodge, covered him with brush and wood, and lit it. The flames burnt higher and higher, but they only heard the medicine-man inside the fire cursing and threatening them with death when he should come out. Then suddenly there were poppings, and explosions, and beads, diamonds, and precious stones flew out of the fire.

They were afraid to touch these, for fear the man might then come to life again, and put them back into the fire. But the whites to whom some of them flew kept them, and thus became richer.

CREE

LITTLE ONE LEFT ALIVE (CHE-CHE-PUY-EW-TIS)

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Bell, Robert. "The History of the Che-che-puy-ew-tis. A Legend of the Northern Crees." *Journal of American Folklore* 10 (1897): 2–8.

Date: ca. 1897

Original Source: Northern Cree

National Origin: Native American (Canada)

At the time of the collection of the following **myth**, author Robert Bell notes that the "Northern Crees have extended themselves from the north-west territories of the Dominion eastward around the head of James Bay, up the east main coast of Hudson Bay, and far into the Labrador peninsula, also southward towards the watershed of the St. Lawrence, a few of them having been met with on the Bell River, just north of the Ottawa" (2). **Variants** of the narrative have been found across the breadth of the Canadian Cree homeland. In the historical period, trapping and fur trading (especially beaver pelts) was a particularly important means of livelihood for the Cree. This tale develops from that central focus. The plot of the sons of a mother murdered by a monster and the creative power of the "thrown away" twin is widely distributed in Native North American myth (see, for example, the Cheyenne "Two Faces," page 53, and the Wichita "The Two Boys Who Slew the Monsters and Became Stars," page 148).

Once upon a time there lived an Indian, his wife, and their only son. The period had nearly arrived for the woman to be delivered of her second child. The husband had a presentiment that some-thing was going

to happen to his wife, for he repeatedly warned her when he went off hunting to take care of herself, and that if any sign of danger arose she was to hide their son under the brush flooring of the wigwam.

One day, while the man was away from the wigwam hunting, a Toosh, or devil, came, and finding only the woman in the tent, cruelly killed and disemboweled her, throwing aside the womb containing the unborn child. The Indian returned from his hunt and found the mutilated corpse of his wife, but he was in time to catch the Toosh, which he put to an ignominious death. His son he found alive, as his wife had taken the precaution to hide him under the brush of the wigwam floor, as she had been told. For a number of days the man remained in his tent, mourning the death of his wife.

It happened that just after the womb had been thrown aside, an A-pook-a-shish (mouse) chanced to hunt in that direction, and saw what she thought to be food, but on nibbling at it she was surprised to find it quivering, and on further examination she saw what proved to be a living child. Being of a kind disposition, she took it home and nursed it tenderly, and called it Che-che-puy-ew-tis (the little one that moves or quivers). The Indian and his son now moved their wigwam (which is an universal custom among these people when a death has occurred).

When the son had almost arrived at manhood he became a keen hunter, but was very unfortunate in losing his arrows. So frequently did this happen that at last he told his father of it.

“Come now,” said the old man, “shoot an arrow a short distance from where we stand, and we cannot fail to see what will become of it.” The boy did as he was told, and was surprised to see an A-pook-a-shish run away with it. “This is how my arrows are lost,” he said. “I will follow and see where she takes them.” He did so, and came to the wigwam of the A-pook-a-shish. On entering he saw all the arrows he had lost, but they were in possession of a young boy, who was amusing himself with them. The A-pook-a-shish now told the young man that this child was his brother, and related exactly the manner in which she had saved him, but cautioned him not to tell his father when he returned, as the old man might not be pleased. The lad did as the A-pook-a-shish told him, and after that he often went and visited his brother. Occasionally, when they thought the father was absent, they returned home together.

The father at last noticed that there were footprints of two sizes about the tent, and questioned his son regarding them. But the boy, still wishing to keep secret the identity of his brother, gave a misleading answer. The A-pook-a-shish having heard about it, said it would be much better for them to go to the wigwam together, for sooner or later their father would be certain to find them out. So Che-che-puy-ew-tis took his little brother home to their father’s wigwam.

When the Indian returned in the evening with his hunt, he noticed the boy in the tent, and asked his son who the little stranger was, and where he had found him. The lad told him it was his young brother, and related how the

A-pook-a-shish had discovered him after the murder of his mother, and gave him full particulars, which satisfied the man that this was really his child. He pre-tended to be very glad, and told his sons to go at once to the A-pooka-shish's wigwam with the meat of a whole beaver, and thank her for having rescued his son. But all the time he was meditating on a scheme to get rid of both the boys, as he intended taking a second wife. Still, for some time after this they all lived together in harmony with one another. Whilst the father was off hunting, the sons always used to remain about the wigwam, but they noticed that he always went to hunt in one direction, and wondered why he did this. So they made up their minds to follow his path when an opportunity should occur, and find out the reason for his strange behavior.

The next day the old man did not go hunting as usual, so the boys took advantage of this chance to investigate, and they followed up his tracks until they stopped at the margin of a deep lake, and further pursuit seemed impossible. But Che-che-puy-ew-tis was equal to the occasion. He said to his brother, "Pull up some strong spruce-roots fasten them around my waist, then take hold of the other end and I will go under the water. When you feel the roots shake, be sure and pull me out again." Che-che-puy-ew-tis then went into the water and found, as he expected, a large wigwam in the bottom of the lake. At the door were two Pishews (lynxes). He took hold of both of them, shook the roots, and his brother pulled him to the surface again. They killed the Pishews, and returning presented them to their father; but the old man, instead of being pleased, wept bitterly, and told his sons that hereafter it would be better for them to live separate; so going out of the tent, he left them together.

Che-che-puy-ew-tis, knowing their father was angry, said to his brother, "Our father will certainly come again in the morning, so let us make a number of arrows and be prepared. They did so, and, as the elder brother said, their father appeared in the morning, in company with a number of Pishews, who began to attack the boys; but the arrows they had made the night before played havoc among the Pishews, so that not one of them escaped. The following morning the attack was repeated with a fresh lot of Pishews, but Che-che-puy-ew-tis this time, after the animals were all slaughtered, shot an arrow at his father and slew him also.

The two boys now lived together and were very happy, hunting in company and killing all kinds of game.

Years had passed when one night Che-che-puy-ew-tis was awakened by his brother talking to some person, as he thought, and wondered who it could be. In the morning, when his brother went out, Che-che-puy-ew-tis looked into his robe, but found only some rotten wood. He threw it out of the wigwam, saying, "Why do you soil my brother's robe?" The next night he again heard his brother in conversation with some unknown person, and in the morning, on looking into his robe, found this time an Atik (frog), which he threw outside with the same exclamation.

Then Che-che-puy-ew-tis said to himself, "I will find wives for my brother," and he did find them, bringing home two young squaws, whom he presented to him. Thus they lived for some time, the younger brother having two wives and the elder not even one. At length one of the wives became discontented and said to the other, "I will remove to the left side of the wigwam, where our brother-in-law sits. He has no mate, and besides I find it inconvenient for both of us to be staying with one man." The other wife consented, and the next time the young men returned they found only the oldest of the wives sitting in her usual place on the right side of the wigwam, the youngest having gone over to the left side, where Che-che-puy-ew-tis generally sat.

When the men laid down their day's hunt at the door, as is customary, the youngest of the women pulled Che-che-puy-ew-tis's share to the side she had taken possession of, which clearly showed that she wanted this hunter for herself. But Che-che-puy-ew-tis did not agree with the arrangement which had been made by the women, and he also knew that his brother would be displeased with it. Besides, he wanted a wife of his own choosing. He therefore left the tent secretly.

After Che-che-puy-ew-tis had walked a considerable distance, he met with an Atik (deer). They conversed together for some time, and then he told her to find a suitable spot on which to erect a wigwam whilst he went hunting for some food for their supper. He returned in the evening and stayed with Atik one night, but would not remain another, as he thought Atik's legs were too long. So he departed in the morning.

He next met a Muskwa (black bear), but only remained with her one night as he had done with the Atik, her claws being too long and sharp to suit him.

Then he fell in with Kak (porcupine), but again one night was sufficient for him to remain with her. She could not look him straight in the face, her neck being too short and her sharp quills were also very disagreeable. So he left her, as he had done the others, and went on his journey, still determined to find a suitable mate.

The next creature Che-che-puy-ew-tis fell in with was a Wes-ku-chan ("whiskey-jack," the Canada jay). They made a wigwam for the night, as usual, and Che-che-puy-ew-tis provided a beaver for their supper, leaving it, Indian fashion, at the door. But it proved too heavy for poor Wes-ku-chan to manage, and she broke both her legs in trying to haul the carcass into the tent. Che-che-puy-ew-tis was equal to the occasion, and, taking the string off his bow, he bound the legs up nicely and the little bones soon grew together again, but to this day the marks of the bowstring can be seen on the legs of all Wes-ku-chan's descendants. Che-che-puy-ew-tis did, not remain more than one night with her, she being altogether too inquisitive. So he proceeded on his way again.

All at once an Amisk (beaver) met him, and without waiting to be asked she said to him, "If you want a mate, I will go and live with you." She appeared more to his taste than the others, so he answered, "Yes, but you must not be

lazy. You will always require to work hard; and one thing which I shall insist upon is, that when-ever we come upon a creek you must lay brush or sticks for me to walk upon. If you fail once in doing this, the creek will turn into a river and we will be lost to each other." So the Amisk agreed to the terms and they lived happily together. One day, unfortunately, Amisk (who was supposed to know a creek when she came to one) made a mistake. She was not certain that what she saw was a creek or not, and did not lay sticks or brush for her husband as usual.

Che-che-puy-ew-tis, when he returned to his mate in the evening, was horrified to find that the water at which he had left her had now turned into a large river. He only now found out that Amisk had made a mistake, and he bewailed the loss of his mate for a long time.

Walking one day along the bank of this large river, he saw to his surprise his wife swimming and diving about in the water, evidently enjoying herself. Che-che-puy-ew-tis called out, "Come ashore; you must not leave me." But Amisk said, "I cannot live ashore any longer; I find this water more to my liking; you had better come to me instead; see how easy it is to swim and dive. Throw me one of your mittens and I will show you that the water is not even wet." This she said in order to entice Che-che-puy-ew-tis to go to her. He threw one of his mittens to her as she had requested, and Amisk, diving down, brought it to the surface quite dry, having secretly anointed it with her oil. She threw it to Che-che-puy-ew-tis, saying, "Have I not told you that the water will not even wet you, just as it does not wet your mitten?"

Che-che-puy-ew-tis was now convinced, so he jumped into the water and was astonished to find that he was quite at home therein, and he stayed with his mate and lived as the beavers live.

Towards the autumn they started to build a house, but Che-che-puy-ew-tis was not at all satisfied with the way Amisk set about it, which was after the manner of the old-time beavers. He knew that, if they did not make it better than that, the Indian hunters would surely be able to kill them, as they had killed so many beavers already, if they should find their house. So he showed Amisk how to fasten large sticks, knit together the smaller ones, and mix them with stones, and how to plaster it with mud which would freeze solid, till at length they had made quite a secure abode. They lived happily together there for a time, but after a while something happened which broke the harmony, and one day Che-che-puy-ew-tis said to Amisk, "As I left my brother's wigwam without his knowledge, and as I know he has a great regard for me, I am certain, it being now winter, that he will look everywhere till he finds me, and if he discovers us here he will be sure to kill you. Come, let us make holes along the bank, so that, should the house be broken into, you will be able to escape."

Several months had passed, and the elder brother (Mejigwis) was very much annoyed at Che-che-puy-ew-tis for having left him without giving any warning, and was displeased with his youngest wife, who had been the cause of his

departure. Whilst hunting this winter it had seemed to him that the character of the Westa (beaver houses) had changed, that the Amisks had constructed them differently from those of former years. In consequence of this he now found it difficult enough to keep his family in beaver meat. At last it dawned upon him that there must be some one wiser than the Amisks themselves guiding and directing them, and who could this person be but his brother Che-che-puy-ew-tis. He therefore redoubled his efforts to find him, and, acting on the idea he had formed, he directed his attention to the beaver-houses. One day, while out hunting, a larger Westa than he had been accustomed to see attracted his attention, and cautiously approaching he broke into it and was rewarded by finding his long-lost brother; but the Amisk escaped to the holes they had made in the bank.

Che-che-puy-ew-tis was brought back to his brother's wigwam, and the best of everything was given to him, but one thing he stipulated was, that when any of the party brought home a Pay-uko Amisk (a solitary beaver), he was to be sure and mention it, as he was afraid that some day his brother might kill his mate, and he did not wish to eat her, as he knew that something would happen to himself if he did so.

His brother obeyed his wish as long as there were plenty of Amisks to kill, but frequently he was able to bring home only barely sufficient meat to feed the party, and one day he came back to the wigwam with only one beaver, and it was a Pay-uko Amisk. But he did not let Che-che-puy-ew-tis know about it, as they did not like to see him take no part in the meal. So they cooked the Amisk, and first offered Che-che-puy-ew-tis some of the liquid it had been boiled in; but he refused it, saying he feared that, as his brother had killed only one, it might be a Pay-uko Amisk. "Oh, no," said his brother; "there were quite a number of Amisks along with this one, only all the rest escaped." So Che-che-puy-ew-tis, believing his brother, drank of the liquor and ate of the flesh; but immediately after he had done so, he was transformed into a real Amisk, and jumping into the creek, on the bank of which the wigwam stood, he dived under the water and was lost forever to his brother. But he still lives as a Kitche-kisaimisk (a great old beaver), and it is his wisdom to this day that prevents the Indians from entirely exterminating the Amisk tribe, of which he is the great chief and counselor.

CREEK

RABBIT GETS A TURKEY FOR WILDCAT

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Swanton, John R. *Myths and Tales of the Southeastern Indians*. Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 88. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1929, 47–48.

Date: 1929

Original Source: Creek

National Origin: Native American

The Creek Nation was a confederation of tribes in the “deep” southern states of Georgia and Alabama, and the contiguous areas. Prior to their removal to “Indian Territory” (Oklahoma), the Creeks developed close ties with African Americans, including offering refuge to runaway slaves. This undoubtedly influenced the **animal tales** that were collected from their descendants in later centuries. The following narrative is one such tale. In it, rabbit as **trickster** reveals his willingness to sacrifice his neighbors to save himself. Typically, he couples his guile with the character flaws of his victims to attain his ends.

A Rabbit was overtaken by a Wildcat, who threatened to kill and eat him. The Rabbit said, “Do not kill me; I will bring you a turkey.” The Wildcat consented to let Rabbit try, so he ran into the woods to find the turkey, first telling the Wildcat to lie down and pretend he was dead.

Rabbit soon found some Turkeys and told them the Wildcat was dead and proposed that they all go and dance and sing around his body. The Turkeys agreed and went with Rabbit and when they saw the Wildcat’s body stretched

on the ground and his mouth and eyes looking white as if he were flyblown (for Rabbit had rubbed rotten wood on the edges of his eyes and mouth) they were satisfied that he was really dead.

Rabbit took his place at the head of the Wildcat and began to beat his drum and to sing while the Turkeys danced around him.

After the song and dance had continued a while they heard Rabbit sing, “Jump up and catch the red leg, Jump up and catch the red leg.”

“Why, he is dead and cannot jump,” they said, but since they objected, he promised not to say that any more.

So Rabbit sang and drummed away and the Turkeys again danced around their enemy’s body; but soon Rabbit sang in a low tone:

“Jump up and catch the biggest, Jump up and catch the biggest.”

The Turkeys stopped their dance, but too late, for the Wildcat jumped up and caught the biggest gobbler. Rabbit ran away to the woods and the Turkeys pursued him, threatening to kill him for his trickery. They chased him round and round the trees till at last one of the Turkeys bit at his long tail and bit it off, and ever since that time all rabbits have had short tails.

RABBIT STEALS FIRE

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Swanton, John R. *Myths and Tales of the Southeastern Indians*. Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 88. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1929, 47–48.

Date: 1929

Original Source: Creek

National Origin: Native American

In this **myth**, fire symbolizes technology in general, and one of the common exploits of the **culture hero** is the theft of fire. In the overwhelming majority of cases, the bringer of fire in other narratives serves as a **trickster** figure. Although there is an innate irony in the coupling of the wily exploiter and the clever culture bearer, the combination is appropriate. Innovation must deviate from the norm, by definition, and who deviates better than the trickster? In the following myth, rabbit turns his guile to the service of humanity rather than to his own selfish ends.

All the people came together and said, “How shall we obtain fire?” It was agreed that Rabbit should try to obtain fire for the people.
He went across the great water to the east. He was received gladly,

and a great dance was arranged. Then Rabbit entered the dancing circle, gaily dressed, and wearing a peculiar cap on his head into which he had stuck four sticks of rosin.

As the people danced they approached nearer and nearer the sacred fire in the center of the circle. The Rabbit also danced nearer and nearer the fire. The dancers began to bow to the sacred fire, lower and lower. Rabbit also bowed to the fire, lower and lower. Suddenly, as he bowed very low, the sticks of rosin caught fire and his head was a blaze of flame.

The people were amazed at the impious stranger who had dared to touch the sacred fire. They ran at him in anger, and away ran Rabbit, the people pursuing him. He ran to the great water and plunged in, while the people stopped on the shore.

Rabbit swam across the great water, with the flames blazing from his cap. He returned to his people, who thus obtained fire from the east.

RABBIT FOOLS ALLIGATOR

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Swanton, John R. *Myths and Tales of the Southeastern Indians*. Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 88. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1929, 52–53.

Date: 1929

Original Source: Creek

National Origin: Native American

Rabbit in the following Creek tale exemplifies **trickster** in his malicious persona. The narrative is of particular interest for the variety of cultural influences it displays. The devil is an obvious European introduction to the tale, while rabbit is an indigenous trickster in African (as hare), African American, and Native American traditions. Rabbit's strategy of asking an apparently innocent question designed to victimize Alligator by means of his own vanity, however, could be classified as "signifying," the African American rhetorical strategy of directing by indirection.

The Alligator was sunning himself on a log when the Rabbit said to him, "Mr. Alligator, did you ever see the devil?"

"No, Mr. Rabbit, but I am not afraid to see him," replied the Alligator.

"Well, I saw the devil, and he said you were afraid to look at him," said the Rabbit. "I'm not afraid of him, and you tell him so," bravely responded the Alligator.

“Are you willing to crawl up the hill tomorrow and let me show you the devil?” asked the Rabbit. “Yes, I am willing,” said the Alligator. The Rabbit spoke up and said, “Now Mr. Alligator, when you see smoke rising don’t be afraid, the devil will be just starting out.”

“You need not be so particular about me. I am not afraid,” said he. “Now when you see birds flying and deer running past you don’t get scared.”

“I shall not get scared.”

“When you hear fire crackling close to you and the grass burning all around you, don’t get scared. The devil will come along and you can get a good look at him,” and with this advice the Rabbit left.

The next day he returned and told Alligator to crawl out and lie in the high grass and wait until the devil came. So out crawled the Alligator and took his position in the grass as directed by the Rabbit.

When he saw the Alligator so far from the water the Rabbit laughed to himself. He ran across the prairie till he reached a burning stump, got a chunk of fire, and returned to a spot near his confiding friend, where he kindled the grass and soon had the pleasure of seeing a blaze all around the Alligator. Then, running to a sandy place where there was no grass, he sat down to see the fun. He had not long to wait, for when the smoke rose in clouds and the birds flew by, and the animals ran for life over the prairie, the Alligator cried out, “Oh, Mr. Rabbit, what’s that?”

The Rabbit answered, “Oh, you lie still; that’s nothing but the devil starting out.”

Soon the fire began to crackle and roar, and the flames swept over the prairie, and the Alligator called, “Oh, Mr. Rabbit, what’s that?”

“Oh, that’s the devil’s breath. Don’t be scared. You will see him directly.” The Rabbit rolled over in the sand and kicked his heels in the air. The fire came nearer and nearer and began to burn the grass all around the Alligator, and under him, till he rolled and twisted in pain. “Don’t be scared, Mr. Alligator. Just lie still a little longer and the devil will be right there and you can get a good look at him,” cried out the Rabbit, as he saw the movements of the Alligator. But the latter could stand it no longer and started down the hill to the water through the burning grass, snapping his teeth and rolling over in pain, while the Rabbit laughed and jumped in delight, saying, “Wait, Mr. Alligator, don’t be in such a hurry. You are not afraid of the devil.” But the Alligator tumbled into the water to cool his roasted skin, and wondered how the Rabbit could stand such awful scenes.

CROW

FAMINE

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Hoffman, W. J. "An Absaroka Myth." *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 10 (1881): 239–240.

Date: 1880

Original Source: Crow (Absaroka)

National Origin: Native American

The Absaroka (popularly known as the Crow) shared the same nomadic lifestyle as the Cheyenne (pages 50–56) and the Lakota (pages 112–120) discussed elsewhere in this anthology. The Fool Dog of this **myth** refers to a member of a Plains fraternity often called the Contraries, or among the Crow "Crazy-Dogs-Wishing-to-Die." The Contraries did things opposite to the norm, including such acts as riding a horse backward into battle or rolling in the snow and then complaining of the heat. They were pledged to what might be labeled self-destructive madness during war. The bravery that was expected of the young men in general was carried to extremes by the Fool Dogs. Thus, in spite of the suicidal appearance of many of their actions, they served the needs of the group. This theme is echoed in the following narrative.

A long time ago, before we had either guns or horses, and lived in a country where the snow never fell, there dwelt among us a beautiful maiden whom the sun saw and fell in love with. The maiden was the pride of the Absaroka, and every warrior tried to excel the others in making her presents of the finest robes. She was surrounded with every comfort, and lived in the best

lodge in the village. The sun came here to visit her every night, and in time a child was born, which, as it grew older would amuse itself by sliding down the rays of sunlight that entered the lodge. After a while, Fool Dog also saw this woman and fell in love with her, but finding his love was not returned, he ravished her. The next time the sun visited her, she related all that had happened, whereupon the sun became very angry and threatened to destroy the Absaroka.

There came a great famine; the snow fell, and the buffalo did not return to the hunting grounds. The weather continued so cold during the following summer that the corn did not grow and the Absaroka were rapidly dying off from starvation and disease. Then the chief men met in council, where it was decided that it were better for them to seek a new home. It happened that while the Absaroka were moving, that Fool Dog was obliged to fall behind on the trail, as he was weak, sick, and starving; then White Wolf, the servant of the sun, appeared to him and said that the Absaroka might yet be saved if his directions were followed: Fool Dog must hasten on to overtake the party at their next camp, where an offering must be made to the sun; he must gather a large pile of dry wood and grass for kindling; also some corn and the fat of the buffalo, of which he must make ten balls, to be thrown upon the pile, when the fire would instantly appear.

When White Wolf had finished talking he disappeared, and Fool Dog started on the trail, though he had great difficulty in reaching the party who had already encamped at some distance for the night. He began to search in the various lodges for the corn and buffalo fat, but meeting only with disappointment, he strolled away from camp to meditate. Here he observed a solitary lodge, occupied by an old woman who, upon seeing the distress of Fool Dog, inquired the cause. Fool Dog told her of his meeting with White Wolf, and the instructions he had received, but said he was unable to complete the offering to the sun, necessary for the preservation of the tribe. The old woman replied that she had a little corn left that had been laid by for planting in the country to which they were going, but was willing to part with some of it for the purpose required; also, that her son had a necklace to which was attached a small buckskin sack containing buffalo fat, which he always carried about with him as "medicine"; this, said the old woman, she would also give with the corn. The old woman then left, but soon returned again with the promised articles, of which Fool Dog at once made ten balls, and hastening back to camp, he threw them upon the pile of wood, which was immediately ignited.

Then White Wolf came again and told Fool Dog that he must take a "buffalo chip" (dried bit of bison dung), pulverize it and sprinkle it upon the snow, and that upon the following morning he would find ten buffalo there, of which the Absaroka must not permit any to escape. Fool Dog followed these instructions, and all the warriors who were strong enough turned out the next morning, surrounded the buffalo which they found, and killed them.

As there was scarcely enough meat to satisfy the starving people, they began to fear that they should yet perish, when White Wolf came a third time, and told Fool Dog that he must take another "buffalo chip," pulverize it, and sprinkle it upon the snow as he had done the other, when he would find one hundred buffalo at that place upon the following morning, but the Absaroka must be careful to kill every one, and not allow a single animal to escape. Fool Dog again did as he was told, and next morning the buffalo were found as promised, when the slaughter began. It happened that one young bull escaped, who immediately ran to the sun and complained. Then the sun cursed the buffalo, and told him he would no longer protect the herds. He next called White Wolf and cursed him, saying he was no longer a servant of the sun, but would be obliged to subsist upon such offal as the Absaroka chose to leave him. The sun no longer tried to destroy the Absaroka, but remained neutral, and since that time he has had no children with an Absaroka woman.

ESKIMO

THE BEWITCHED WIVES

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Burrows, Elizabeth. "Eskimo Tales." *Journal of American Folklore* 39 (1926): 79–80.

Date: 1926

Original Source: Eskimo

National Origin: Native American

In this and the following narratives, the name "Eskimo" is used for the native people of the northern regions of North America. These groups are more accurately classified by other labels, for example, Inuit or Yupik. The more widely known though less precise term was chosen to preserve a user-friendly category for the collection. The cure for supernatural assault among the Eskimo is by recourse to a shaman, an individual who through personal power (as distinct from divine intervention) is able to discover the source of evil influence and remove it. In many cases, the shaman then sends the malevolent force from the victim to the original aggressor. This is the case in the following narrative when the ferns used to remove the girl's bewitchment are then used as the instrument of attacking the evil woman-spirit.

A little girl, who lived alone with her grandmother, followed tracks along the river till at a water-hole she found a house where a man was making arrows. He gave her no greeting, but warned her to be careful lest the door close upon her. She got away safely to the ceremonial house near-by, but here the door in closing upon her bit off a piece of her dress. On her return home her grandmother suspected her adventure from the torn garment, but the girl claimed that the rent was made by a fall on the ice.

Early next morning she returned to the Arrow-maker's with a plate of fish-heads. The house was empty. She lifted up the grass-mat on the wall and discovered another door. She went through it into a passage where she commenced sliding, first on her feet till her moccasins were worn out, then on one side, then on the other, then on her breasts, and then on her back, in each position wearing out the dress on that side. She held on to her plate of fish-heads, and at last came to a high cliff overlooking the water. She heard some one singing.

It was the Arrow-maker she had seen the previous day; he was sealing in his kayak. When he had speared the seal, lifted it on his raft, cut it up, and put it into the kayak, he came in close to the cliff, and told the girl to jump into the boat. She was afraid, but he pointed out that the place where she was covered with the bones of people who had starved to death there, and warned her that unless she obeyed, she would meet the same fate. The girl jumped, and the man took her home, warning her not to look behind at anyone who called to her. She heard people crying out, and he told her it was his wives making a great racket.

Finally they came to his home where there were two houses. He told her to go to the smaller one, where were the head-man and the head-woman who welcomed her with gifts of clothing, and sent food to the ceremonial house for the man. Several times the girl heard someone calling, but each time she refused to look in the direction of the call.

In the course of a year, the girl married the Arrow-maker. One day as she carried his food to him at the ceremonial house, she at last looked behind her at the person whom she heard calling. At once she was in the power of this evil woman-spirit, and followed her to her house. There this evil spirit gave her snow-and-oil to eat, and immediately she began to cry out continuously like the other wives. Thereupon the evil woman threw her out of the house, where her husband found her and put her into the house with the other wives.

In the large village across the river an old woman lived with her grandson, and the girl had been accustomed to give them food. When the old woman knew that the girl had been bewitched, she sent her grandson to get her. She put her on a grass-mat, removed her clothes, and with a bunch of ferns whipped her from the feet to the face, until at last the girl sat up and asked why she had been awakened.

Then the old woman directed her to take the ferns and use them in the same way on the face of the evil woman-spirit. When she had done so, the bad woman began to call out continuously as she had made others do. In the same way the girl transformed also the evil woman's father and mother, and then took them all by the hair and threw them out of the house.

Meanwhile her husband searched for her, and when he found her cured in the house of the old woman, he took her home where they lived together and had children. He always took care of the old woman who had saved her life, but the rest of the villagers all died.

THE ORIGIN OF THE NARWHAL

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Kroeber, A. L. "Tales of the Smith Sound Eskimo." *Journal of American Folklore* 12 (1899): 169–170.

Date: ca. 1897

Original Source: Eskimo

National Origin: Native American

The Arctic can be a land of meager resources. The neglect and even abandonment of those who are not able to contribute to community survival was a matter of course in the traditional culture. The cannibalistic Adlet appear in this tale (see "Origin of the Adlet and the Whiteman," page 73) as one of the trials the siblings must endure in their quest for community. This tale is widely distributed not only among the Eskimo but also among Athabascans and the Bella Bella of the Northwest Coast.

There was a blind boy who lived with his mother and sister. They went to a place where there was no one and lived alone. One day, when they were in their tent, a bear came up to it.

Though the boy was blind he had a bow, and the woman aimed it at the bear for him. The arrow struck the bear and killed it. The mother, however, deceived her son and told him he had missed it. She cut it up and then cooked it. The young man now smelled the bear-meat, and asked his mother whether it was not bear he was smelling. She, however, told him he was mistaken. Then she and her daughter ate it, but she would give him nothing. His sister, however, put half her food in her dress secretly, to give him later.

When her mother asked her why she was eating so much (noticing that she seemed to eat an unusual quantity), the girl answered that she was hungry. Later, when her mother was away, she gave the meat to her brother. In this way he discovered that his mother had deceived him. Then he wished for another chance to kill something, when he might not be thus deceived by his mother.

One day, when he was out of doors, a large loon came down to him and told him to sit on its head. The loon then flew with him toward its nest, and finally brought him to it, on a large cliff. After they had reached this, it began to fly again, and took him to a pond [the ocean].

The loon then dived with him, in order to make him recover his eyesight. It would dive and ask him whether he was smothering; when he answered that he was, it took him above the surface to regain his breath. Thus they dived, until the blind boy could see again. His eyesight was now very strong; he could

see as far as the loon, and could even see where his mother was, and what she was doing. Then he returned. When he came back, his mother was afraid, and tried to excuse herself, and treated him with much consideration.

One day he went narwhal-hunting, using his mother to hold the line. "Spear a small narwhal," his mother said, for she feared a large one would drag her into the water by the line fastened around her. He speared a small one, and she pulled it ashore. Then they ate its blubber.

The next time two appeared together, a small white whale and a large narwhal. "Spear the small one again," she told him. But he speared the large one, and when it began to pull, he let go the line, so that his mother was dragged along, and forced to run, and pulled into the water.

"My knife," she cried, in order to cut the rope. She kept calling for her knife, but he did not throw it to her, and she was drawn away and drowned. She became a narwhal herself, her hair, which she wore twisted to a point, becoming the tusk.

After this, the man who had recovered his sight, and his sister, went away. Finally they came to a house. The brother was thirsty, and wanted water. He asked his sister for some, telling her to go to the house for it. She went up to it, but was at first afraid to go in.

"Come in, come in!" cried the people inside, who were murderous Adlet. When she entered, they seized her and ate her. She had stayed away a long time, and finally her brother went to look for her.

He entered the house, but could not find her. An old man there, after having eaten of her, tried to say he did not have her, and did not know where she was. The brother, however, kept stabbing the inmates of the house with a tusk he had, trying to make them confess, but vainly, and finally killed them.

Then her brother put her bones together and went away, carrying them on his back. Then the flesh grew on the bones again, and soon she spoke, "Let me get up!"

But he said to her, "Don't get up!"

At last she got up, however. Then they saw a great many people, and soon reached them. By this time his sister had quite recovered; she ate, and went into a house. She married there, and soon had a child. Her brother also married.

ORIGIN OF THE ADLET AND THE WHITEMAN

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Rink, H., and Franz Boas. "Eskimo Tales and Songs." *Journal of American Folklore* 2 (1889): 125.

Date: 1889

Original Source: Eskimo

National Origin: Native American

It is erroneous to think of the Eskimo habitat as barren land. As their north-south range is great, there is variation in topography and land form, climate, vegetation, and the availability of fish and game. The arctic is a desert in truest sense of the world. The cold reduces the amount of moisture in the air so that some areas receive as little as four inches of precipitation a year, so it is a difficult task to obtain fresh water. Summers are short and defined when temperatures above freezing. Streams begin to flow. Water travel becomes possible, but walking becomes virtually impossible over the swampy tundra because of melting surface areas. At the onset of winter and freezing temperatures, the people begin to settle down. Nuclear families are often organized into bands. Band leadership is personal or charismatic: family allegiance, personality qualities, or physical strength. An episode in the following **myth** of the origin of the Adlet and the Whiteman recalls the a central figure in Eskimo myth, the female sea spirit called various names—including, for example, Takanakapsaluk, Nuliajuk, and Sedna. She is a terrifying presence living in a house at the bottom of the sea. Often the shamans traveled on spirit journeys to confront her and her entourage of monsters in times of famine or danger to win her help for the people, such help as asking her to provide seals and other sea mammals, which according to myth grew from the severed parts of he own body.

Saviqong (that is, the knifeman), an old man, lived alone with his daughter. Her name was Niviarsiang (that is, the girl), but as she did not want to take a husband she was also called Uinigumissuitung (that is, she who did not want to take a husband).

She refused all her suitors, but at last a dog, spotted white and red, whose name was Ijiqang (that is the powerful eye), won her affection and she married him. They had ten children, five of whom were Adlet and five dogs.

The legs of the Adlet were like those of dogs, and hairy all over, the soles excepted, while the upper part of their bodies was human. When the children grew up they became very voracious, and as the dog Ijiqang did not go hunting at all, but let his father-in-law provide for the whole family, Saviqong found great difficulty in feeding them. Moreover, the children were very clamorous and noisy; so at last their grandfather, being tired of their manifold demands and the trouble they gave him, put the whole family into his boat and carried them to a small island. He told Ijiqang to come every day and fetch meat.

Niviarsiang hung a pair of boots on his neck and he swam across the narrow channel separating the island from the mainland. But Saviqong, instead of giving him meat, filled the boots with heavy stones which drowned Ijiqang when he attempted to return to the island.

Niviarsiang thought of revenging the death of her husband. She sent the young dogs to her father's hut and let them gnaw off his feet and hands. In return Saviqong, when his daughter happened to be in his boat, threw her overboard, and cut off her fingers when she clung to the gunwale. As they fell into the sea they were transformed into seals and whales. At last he allowed her to climb again into the boat.

As she feared that her father might think of killing or maiming her children, she ordered the Adlet to go inland, where they became the ancestors of a numerous people. She made a boat for the young dogs, setting up two sticks for masts in the sole of one of her boots, and sent the puppies across the ocean. She sang, "Angnaijaja. When you will have arrived on the other side, you will make many little things. Angnaija."

WHEN RAVEN WANTED TO MARRY SNOWBIRD AND FLY WITH THE GEESE

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Kroeber, A. L. "Tales of the Smith Sound Eskimo." *Journal of American Folklore* 12 (1899): 173–174.

Date: 1897–1898

Original Source: Eskimo

National Origin: Native American

Raven served as **trickster** and **culture hero** for both the Eskimo and for many other native cultures along the Northwest Coast. Despite his gift of fire, the tales of raven also depict him with the common flaws of trickster figures—in this case lying, to satisfy his selfish impulses and intruding where his company is not wanted.

A small snowbird was crying because she had lost her husband. While she was crying, the raven, who had no wife, came along. When the raven reached her he said, "Why are you crying?"

"I am crying for my husband, because he has been away so long a time," said the snowbird. "My husband went out to look for food for me, and has not come back."

The raven told her that her husband was dead; that he had been sitting on a rock, when this became loosened and fell through the ice, and that he had fallen with it. "I will marry you," he said. "You can sleep here under my armpit. Take me for a husband; I have a pretty bill; I have a pretty chin I have good enough nostrils and eyes; my wings are good and large, and so are my whiskers."

But the little snowbird said, “I don’t want you for my husband.” Then the raven went away, because the snowbird did not want to marry him.

After a while the raven, who was still without a wife, came to some geese who had become persons. The geese were just going away. The raven said, “I too, I who have no wife, I am going.” The geese, because they were about to leave, now became birds again. One of them said, “It is very far away that we are going. You (meaning the raven) had better not go with us. Don’t come with us.”

The raven said, “I am not afraid to go. When I am tired, I shall sleep by whirling up.” Then they started, the raven going with them. They flew a great distance (having now become birds), passing over a large expanse of water, where there was no land to be seen. Finally, when the geese wanted to sleep, they settled and swam on the water, and there they went to sleep. The raven also grew very tired, and wanted to sleep, but of course could not swim. So he whirled upwards towards the sky. But as soon as he went to sleep, he began to drop from up there.

When he fell into the water he woke up and said, “Get together, so that I can climb on your backs and go to sleep there.” The geese did as he told them, and he was soon asleep on their backs.

Then one of the geese said, “He is not light at all. Let us shake him off, because he is so heavy.” Then they shook him off their backs into the water.

“Get together,” cried the raven. But they did not do so, and thus the raven was drowned.

RECOVERING THE SUN

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Boas, Franz. “Notes on the Eskimo of Port Clarence, Alaska.” *Journal of American Folklore* 7 (1894): 205–206.

Date: ca. 1894

Original Source: Eskimo

National Origin: Native American

Many Eskimo live in an environment in which the land is mostly tundra that remains permanently frozen except for the few inches of surface that thaw during the brief summers and the nights of winter darken until there is twilight at noon in the northernmost areas. A **myth** such as the following gives voice to the anxiety that this lack of light can generate. In the course of the search for the sun, the party covers a territory filled with monsters and approaches the edge of a world that Eskimo tradition maintained was flat and balanced on wooden pillars. The party succeeds because of a **motif** that has appeared in other Eskimo narratives: a young woman defying a parent.

Once upon a time the people were assembled in a singing house. While they were dancing the sun disappeared, and nobody knew what had become of it. The people were unable to go hunting, and soon all their provisions were exhausted. Then they told the women to mend their clothing carefully, and to make as many boots as possible.

These they put into bags and set out in search of the sun. It was dark all the time. They followed the seacoast, and went so long that they wore out their boots. Then they took new ones from their traveling-bags.

After many days they came to a country which swarmed with seals, walrus, and deer. There they found a people whose language they did not understand. After some time, however, they learned to converse with them. They asked these people if they had seen the sun.

The latter replied that they would come to five places. At the fifth place there lived a woman who had both the sun and the moon in her house. Then they went on. It was very cold, and they ran as fast as they could in order to keep warm. When their provisions began to run short, they reached another country which swarmed with game.

They found a people whose language they did not understand, but after some time they were able to converse with each other. There they obtained the same information as before, and went on.

It was very cold, and they ran as fast as they could, in order to keep warm. When their provisions began to run short, they reached a third country which swarmed with game.

They met a people whose language they did not understand. After some time they were able to converse, and upon their inquiries they were told that at the second place which they would reach there lived a woman named Itudlu'g-piaq, who had both sun and moon, but that it was very doubtful if they would be able to obtain it.

Then they went on. It was very cold, and they ran as fast as they could, in order to keep warm. When their provisions began to run low, they reached a country which swarmed with game. There they found dwarfs, who tried to escape when they saw the strong men coming. They caught them, however, and learned that at the next place they would find the house of Itudlu'g-piaq, who had both sun and moon.

They went on. On their way they found ice and driftwood obstructing their way, but they kicked it aside. At that time the people were very strong and able to lift heavy stones. After they had gone a long time they saw a singing house. When they came near, they went very slowly, because they were afraid.

At last one of the men tied his jacket around his waist and tied his pants around his knees. Then he crept cautiously through the entrance and put his head through the door in the bottom of the floor. He saw a young woman, Itudlu'g-piaq, sitting in the middle of the rear of the house. Her father was sitting in the middle of the right-hand side of the house, her mother in the middle of the

left-hand side. In each of the rear corners a ball was hanging from the roof. At the right-hand side was a large ball, and at the left-hand side a smaller one.

Then he whispered, "Itudlu'gpiag, we came to ask you for some light."

Then her mother said, "Give them the small ball."

The man, however, refused and asked for the large ball. Then Itudlu'gpiag took it down and gave it a kick. It fell right into the entrance hole. The people took it and ran outside. Then they tore the ball to pieces and the daylight came out of it. It was not warm at once, but it grew warmer day after day. If they had taken the small ball it would have been light, but it would have remained cold.

HAIDA

STORY OF THE FIN-BACK CREST

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Deans, James. "Legend of the Fin-Back Whale Crest of the Haidas, Queen Charlotte's Island, B.C." *Journal of American Folklore* 5 (1892): 44-46.

Date: ca. 1890

Original Source: Haida

National Origin: Native American (Canada)

Because of the predictability of sources of subsistence, Northwest Coast cultures such as the Haida were able to develop stable settlements and devote less time to the business of staying alive. As a result, the Northwest Coast societies were highly stratified with hereditary chiefs and lineages ranging from commoners to the nobility. In any consideration of the social structure on the Northwest Coast, the references to rank and status must at some point turn to the consideration of crests. These crests were the outward symbols of rank and ancestry. They operated like coats-of-arms and parallel the crests painted on shields in medieval Europe where a similar type of art was used to reflect rank and position among European nobility. According to James Deans, "As a people, the Haidas were divided into a number of crests, or clans, each having for its crest some animal, bird, or fish. There were formerly two principal crests, or as some people style them, phratries, each being divided into a number of smaller ones. Each of these crests had a **legend**" (43). The following narrative is the **myth** of the fin-back whale, often called the killer whale.

It has long been related among the Haidas that at Quilcah, where the oil-works stand, about three miles west from the village of Skidegat's Town, lived, long ago, a boy, who dwelt with his aged grandmother. He was the youngest of a family of eleven sons, both his parents being dead, and also his brothers, of whom I shall say more by and by. Excepting himself and the old woman, no other person lived in that place, all the other Indians in that quarter being on Mand Island. Our hero and his grandmother belonged to a different crest from the others. Close to the spot where they lived were three stone boats or canoes. What is meant by these I do not know, unless it be canoes made entirely by hot stones and stone hammers, as used to be the case in by-gone ages. This boy, it seems, was so weak and sickly that he could neither stand upright nor walk. His weakest parts were from the knees down.

One day he said, "Granny, put me into one of these three canoes," and this she did. After sitting in the canoe for a considerable length of time he became quite strong, and was able to walk like any other person.

After becoming strong, he used to swim about in the bay. One day, instead of a swim, he concluded to have a sail, and with this idea got his grandmother's aid to put one of them into the water. While this was being done, two of them broke, but they were successful with the third. After this, instead of swimming, he used to sail about on the bay, gradually venturing farther and farther from the shore.

One day, making a further venture than usual, he sailed up the Hunnah River, a mountain stream emptying its waters into Skidegat channel, four or five miles west of the place where he lived.

Tradition says that this river in olden times was three times larger than it now is. At present there is seldom water enough to float a canoe. It is also related that the waters of the sea came higher up on the land than is now the case. (Of the rise of the land evidence is everywhere to be found.)

After pulling up the river, he became tired, so in order to rest he pulled ashore and lay down. In those days at the place where he went ashore, in the bed of the river, were a number of large boulders, while on both sides of the stream were many trees.

While resting by the river, he heard a dreadful noise, up stream, coming toward him. Looking to see what it was, he was surprised to behold all the stones in the river bed coming down towards him. The movement of these frightened him so much that he jumped to his feet and ran into the timber.

He found he had made a mistake, because all the trees were cracking and groaning, and all seemed to him to say, "Go back, go back at once to the river, and run as fast as you can." This he lost no time in doing. When again at the river, led by his curiosity, he went to see what was pushing the stones and breaking the trees; on reaching them he found that a large body of ice was coming down, pushing everything before it. Seeing this, he took his canoe and fled towards home.

Some time after this adventure with the ice, *Scanna gan Nuncus* [the Fin-back Whale Boy] took his trusty bow and quiver filled with arrows and went out in order to shoot a few birds.

Walking along the shore, he saw at a distance what seemed to be a man, standing on shore at the edge of the bushes, looking at him. Wondering who the stranger could be, he walked over toward him and hailed him. Receiving no answer, he went up to him, and was surprised to find only a stump with a curving dome resembling a man's head. Turning to go away, a voice which seemed to come from the head said, "Don't go away; take me down, take me down." Hearing these words, he took the stump in his arms, pulling him down at the same time. I say him, because it was a man under enchantment. Taking him down broke the spell, and he instantly became himself again.

When thus restored, he told our hero that long ago he had been taking liberties with the Cowgans [wood spirits], who as a punishment had cast upon him a spell, under the influence of which he was to remain as a stump until a young man who lived with his grandmother would come and set him free, and he, our hero, was the person predicted. The Cowgans, or wood nymphs (literally, wood mice), were said to be a number of beautiful young women whose homes were in the woods and among the mountains. At the head of these was a queen who was remarkable for her beauty, and who also lived in a magnificent palace in some unknown locality.

In order to discover the palace, and to see the queen, a thing permitted to none except those who could show some act of kindness done, the young man used to go to the woods and mountains, from which quest many never returned, and of this number were the ten brothers of our hero. These nymphs, it also appears, used to seek the company of young men, and lead them to take liberties with them, and when tired of their services would turn them into stumps.

The stump man asked our hero if he would like to see the queen and her palace, to which he answered yes.

"Well, then, go your way until you find a lame mouse trying to run on a big log, be kind to it, and it will show you what to do, and where to go."

After leaving the stump man, our hero did not go far until he saw a poor lame mouse trying to run along a large log of wood; he watched it for a while, and saw that it would run a little way and then fall off. Seeing this, he went and picked it up, put it on the log and set it going again; this he did several times. At last it stopped trying, and told our hero, "You are a good man and a kind one. Instead of killing me, every time I fell off the log you picked me up and put me on again. Many a one would have chased me and tried to kill me, but you did neither. I am not lame; I only feigned lameness in order to try you. You are *Scanna gan Nuncus*, and you would like to see the queen of the Cowgans. Your ten brothers also wished to see her. They could not because they were bad men; they ran after me and tried to kill me. No bad man can try to kill me and see the queen and live. That was why they all disappeared so mysteriously. By trying

to put me out of the way, they all met the same fate. Now, come follow me, and I will show you the queen and her palace.”

The mouse led and our hero followed, through long grass bushes and timber, until they reached a beautiful country, where everything was fair and young. After traveling across this region for some time, they came to the palace. Anything so beautiful Scanna gan Nuncus never saw, nor ever could picture in his imagination.

“Now,” said the mouse, “let us go inside, and I will introduce you to the queen of the Cowgans.” This it did, telling her that he was a good and kindly man who, unlike his brothers, did not run after it to kill it.

When they found the queen, she was sitting spinning with a wheel. She was so pretty and fair to look on that our hero nearly forgot himself. The queen made him welcome, left her spinning, and came and sat beside him, telling him that as he was a good man he should be always welcome to her palace, and whenever he decided to visit her he had only to come to the log, and he would find her servant, the mouse, who would show him the way. How long he stayed with her I have as yet been unable to learn. Thus much I can say, that his grandmother asked him where he had lived so long. He replied that while absent he had been where few or none had ever been before; he had visited the queen of the Cowgans.

Hopi

HOW THE TWINS VISITED THE SUN

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Fewkes, J. Walter. "The Destruction of the Tusayan Monsters." *Journal of American Folklore* 8 (1895): 136–137.

Date: ca. 1895

Original Source: Hopi (Arizona)

National Origin: Native American

The Hopi were a farming culture that relied on rainfall to grow their crops of corn, beans, and squash. Given the fact that they are at the mercy of forces of nature, great energy was devoted to religious ceremonies that literally caused natural acts such as rainfall to occur. Religious life was developed through the religious societies and clans that were headed by strong females. Spider-Woman, the mother of the Twins, was an especially powerful female figure. Hopi witches, who were believed to be possessed of "two hearts," were traced back to mythic times. Spider-Woman (or Grandmother Spider as she is sometimes called) brought both death and witchcraft into the lives of the people.

The Twins lived with Spider-Woman, their mother, on the west side of Mt. Taylor, and desired to see the home of their father. Spider-Woman gave them as a charm a kind of meal, and directed that when they met the guardians of the home of the Sun, to chew a little and spurt it upon them.

The Twins journeyed far to the sunrise where the Sun's home is entered through a canon in the sky. There Bear, Mountain Lion, Snake, and "Canyon Closing" keep watch. The sky is solid in this place, and the walls of the entrance

are constantly opening and closing, and would crush any unauthorized person who attempted passing through.

As the Twins approached the ever fierce watchers, the trail lay along a narrow way; they found it led them to a place on one side of which was the face of a vertical cliff, and on the other a precipice which sunk sheer to the Below (Underworld). An old man sat there, with his back against the wall and his knees drawn up close to his chin.

When they attempted to pass, the old man suddenly thrust out his legs, trying to knock the passers over the cliff. But they leaped back and saved themselves, and in reply to a protest the old man said his legs were cramped and he simply extended them for relief. Whereupon the hero remembered the charm which he had for the southwest direction, and spurted it upon the old man and forced the malignant old fellow to remain quite still with legs drawn up, until the Twins had passed.

They then went on to the watchers, guardians of the entrance to the Sun's house, whom they subdued in the same manner. They also spurted the charm on the sides of the cliff, so that it ceased its oscillation and remained open until they had passed.

These dangers being past, they entered the Sun's house and were greeted by the Sun's wife, who laid them on a bed of mats. Soon Sun came home from his trip through the underworld, saying, "I smell strange children here; when men go away their wives receive the embraces of strangers. Where are the children whom you have?" So she brought the Twins to him, and he put them in a flint oven and made a hot fire. After a while, when he opened the door of the oven, the Twins capered out laughing and dancing about his knees, and he knew that they were his sons.

HOW THE TWINS KILLED THE GIANT ELK

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Fewkes, J. Walter. "The Destruction of the Tusayan Monsters." *Journal of American Folklore* 8 (1895): 135–136.

Date: ca. 1895

Original Source: Hopi (Arizona)

National Origin: Native American

Moving beyond the role of mischievous young **tricksters** that is given to them in Hopi mythology, the twins mature into **culture heroes** in this **myth**. They do so by cleansing the land of a monster and giving chipmunk its distinctive markings.

Great Elk was one day lying down in a valley near Mount Taylor (one of the San Francisco mountains), and the Twins went out against him. Mole met them and said, “Do not encounter him, for he is mighty, and may kill you; wait here, and I will help you.” Mole then excavated four chambers in the earth, one below the other, and made the Twins remain in the upper one.

He dug a long tunnel, and coming up under Elk, plucked a little soft hair from over his heart, at which Elk turned his head and looked down, but Mole said, “Be not angry, I only want a little soft down to make a bed for my children.” So Elk allowed him to continue the plucking. But Mole took away enough fur to leave the skin quite bare over the heart. He returned to the Twins and told them what he had done.

Then each Twin threw his lightning, and wounded Elk, who sprang to his feet, and charged them, but the Twins concealed themselves in the upper chamber, and when Elk tried to gore them. His horns were not long enough; again he charged, and thrust his horns downward, but the Twins had safely retreated to the second chamber; again he tried to reach them, but they were safe in the third room. They retreated to the fourth chamber, and when Elk made another attempt he fell dead.

Chipmunk hurried to them, and after thanking the Twins said he had come to show them how to cut up the monster’s body, which with his sharp teeth he soon accomplished. One of the Twins thanked Chipmunk, and stooping he dipped the tips of the first two fingers of his right hand in Elk’s blood, and, drawing them along the body of Chipmunk, made on it the marks which he still bears.

HOW TIYO PUNISHED MAN-EAGLE

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Fewkes, J. Walter. “The Destruction of the Tusayan Monsters.” *Journal of American Folklore* 8 (1895): 132–137.

Date: ca. 1895

Original Source: Hopi (Arizona)

National Origin: Native American

Tiyo, in the following Hopi **myth**, is not a **culture hero** as were the twins. Although he serves one of the functions associated with the culture hero by destroying the monster Man-Eagle, he does so because he has enlisted powerful allies. The familiar figure Spider-Woman shows her abilities as a shape-shifter (a trait associated with witches) as well as her knowledge of medicines such as “charm flour” (bewitched corn

meal). In contrast to his role in European culture, mole has been shown to be an important character in Pueblo mythology. He is an underground hunter who demonstrates talents as a **trickster** as he works behind the scenes in Tiyo's physical contests against Man-Eagle.

The ravages of Man-Eagle extended over the whole earth, afflicting all people. He carried off their women and maids, and took them to his home in the sky, where he was accustomed to sleep with such as he wished, during four nights, and then devour them.

The Youth, while on his way to the San Francisco mountains, met at the foothills the Pinon Maids, dressed in mantles of pinon bark and grass. There likewise he found Spider-Woman and Mole. After they had greeted him and bade him be seated, they inquired where he was going. He replied that Man-Eagle had carried off his bride, and that he sought to bring her back.

"I will aid you," said Spider-Woman, and told the Pinon Maids to gather pinon gum, wash it, and make a garment in exact imitation of the flint arrow-head armor which Man-Eagle is said to wear. The Pinon Maids bathed themselves, gathered and washed the gum, and made the desired garment for Spider-Woman, who gave it with charm flour to the Youth. Then she changed herself into a spider, so small as to be invisible, and perched on the Youth's right ear, that she might whisper her advice.

Mole led the way to the top of the mountains, but the Pinon Maids remained behind. When they reached the summit, Eagle swooped down; they got on his back, and he soared aloft with them until he was tired; Hawk came close by, they were transferred to his back, and he carried them still higher in the sky. When he was weary, Gray Hawk took them and mounted the heavens with them, until he could go no farther, and Red Hawk received the burden; thus for an immense distance upward they flew, until the adventurers reached a passageway through which the Youth, Spider-Woman, and Mole passed, and saw the white house in which Man-Eagle lived.

Spider-Woman advised the Youth, before mounting the ladder which led into this house, to pluck a handful of sumac berries and give them to Lizard, who received them with thanks, chewed them, and gave him back the cud. The ladder of the house had for each rung a sharp stone like a knife, which would lacerate the hands and feet of any one who attempted to climb it. The Youth rubbed these sharp edges with the chewed berries and instantly they became dull, and he was able to climb the ladder without cutting himself.

Upon entering the house of Man-Eagle, one of the first objects which met his eye was the fabulous flint arrow-head garment hanging on a peg in a recess, and he at once exchanged it for his own, the imitation which the Pinon Maids had manufactured. Glancing into another recess, he saw Man-Eagle and his lost wife. He called out to her that he had come to rescue her from the monster,

and she replied that she was glad, but that he could not do so as no one ever left the place alive. Youth replied, "Have no fear; you will soon be mine again."

So powerful was Spider-Woman's charm that it prevented Man-Eagle from hearing the conversation, but he soon awoke and put on the imitation flint garment without detecting the fraud. He then for the first time became aware of the Youth's presence, and demanded what he wished.

"I have come to take my wife home," responded the hero.

Man-Eagle said, "We must gamble to decide that, and you must abide the consequences, for if you lose I shall slay you," to which the Youth agreed. Man-Eagle brought out a huge pipe, larger than a man's head, and having filled it with tobacco gave it to the hero, saying, "you must smoke this entirely out, and if you become dizzy or nauseated, you lose." So the Youth lit the pipe and smoked but exhaled nothing. He kept the pipe aglow and swallowed all the smoke, and felt no ill effect, for he passed it through his body into an underground passageway that Mole had dug. Man-Eagle was amazed, and asked what had become of the smoke. The Youth going to the door showed him great clouds of dense smoke issuing from the four cardinal points, and the monster saw that he had lost.

But Man-Eagle tried a second time with the hero. He brought out two deer antlers, saying, "We will each choose one and he who fails to break the one he has chosen loses." The antler which he laid down on the northwest side was a real antler, but that on the southeast was an imitation made of brittle wood. Spider-Woman prompted the Youth to demand the first choice, but Man-Eagle refused him that right. After the Youth had insisted four times, Man-Eagle yielded, and the hero chose the brittle antler and tore its prongs asunder, but Man-Eagle could not break the real antler, and thus lost a second time.

Man-Eagle had two fine large pine trees growing near his house, and said to the hero, "You choose one of these trees and I will take the other, and whoever plucks one up by the roots shall win." Now Mole had burrowed under one of them, and had gnawed through all its roots, cutting them off, and had run through his tunnel and was sitting at its mouth, peering through the grass anxious to see Youth win. The hero, with the help of his grandmother, chose the tree that Mole had prepared, and plucked it up, and threw it over the cliff, but Man-Eagle struggled with the other tree and could not move it, so he was unhappy in his third defeat.

Then Man-Eagle spread a great supply of food on the floor and said to Youth that he must eat all at one sitting. Tiyo (the Youth) sat and ate all the meat, bread, and porridge, emptying one food basin after another, and showed no sign of being satisfied before all was consumed; for Mole had again assisted him, and dug a large hole below to receive it, and the Youth was a winner the fourth time.

Man-Eagle then made a great wood-pile and directed Tiyo to sit upon it, saying he would ignite it, and that if the Youth were unharmed he would submit

himself to the same test. The Youth took his allotted place, and Man-Eagle set fire to the pile of wood at the four cardinal points, and it speedily was ablaze. The arrow-heads of which the flint armor was made were coated with ice, which melted so that water trickled down and prevented Youth from being burnt, and all the wood-pile was consumed, leaving Tiyo unharmed.

The monster was filled with wonder, and grieved very much when he saw Youth making another great pile of wood. Still, thinking that he wore his fire-proof suit, he mounted the wood-pile, which Youth lit at the four cardinal points. The fuel blazed up, and as soon as the fire caught the imitation garment of gum, it ignited with a flash and the monster was consumed. At the prompting of Spider-Woman Tiyo approached the ashes, took the charm in his mouth and spurted it over them, when suddenly a handsome man arose. Then Spider-Woman said to him, "Will you refrain from killing people, will you forsake your evil habits?"

Man-Eagle assented with a fervent promise, and the Youth rejoicing ran to his wife, embraced her and set free all the captive women wives of the Hopi and other peoples, of whom there were many. Eagle and Hawk carried them to the earth.

IROQUOIS

GRANDMOTHER O-NE-HA-TAH, MOTHER OO-KWA-E, AND THE LOST BOY

Tradition Bearer: Albert Cusick

Source: Beauchamp, W. M. "Onondaga Tales." *Journal of American Folklore* 6 (1893): 173–178.

Date: 1893

Original Source: Onondaga

National Origin: Native American

This tale is from the Onondaga whose ancestral home is in New York and who were one of the original nations of the Iroquois League. The narrative shares the qualities of a folktale by virtue of taking place in a universe that has already formed, unlike the world of **myth**. Conversely, the narrator's final comment seems to situate the events in the very recent past giving it at least some elements of **legend**. The obvious irony of the plot is that an animal, especially the porcupine that in the traditions of this culture area is rarely regarded as benevolent, should be kinder than the boy's peers. It is significant that the other animals in the tale are among the clan totems of the traditional Onandaga. Bear, in many Native American traditions, is regarded as the most anthropomorphic of the animals. Some mythologies, in fact, maintain that bears were once human. This makes Oo-kwa-e the logical guardian for the lost boy. Inevitably, however, the tale seems to argue that the established boundaries (in this case, the dividing line between human and nonhuman) cannot be violated.

A long time ago, among the Onondaga Indians, were several families who went off to camp near the wildwood streams, where fish, deer, bear, otter, beaver, and other like game could be caught for winter use.

These Onondagas, or People of the Hill, journeyed several days, and finally came to the hunting-grounds. The hunting-ground where they stopped was a very beautiful place, with its little hills and the river with high banks. Not far from their camp was a beautiful lake, with high rocky banks, and with little islands full of cedar trees. When they came there it was in the moon or month of Clzut-ho-wa-ah, or October.

Some of these Indians made their camps near the river, and some near the lake. As it was quite early in the season for hunting, some of the Indians amused themselves by making birch-bark canoes. With these they could go up and down the river and on the lakes, fishing and trapping, or making deadfalls for smaller game.

In the party were five little boys, who had their own bows and arrows, and would go hunting, imitating their fathers and uncles. Among them was one much smaller than the rest, who was greatly teased by the older boys. Sometimes they would run away from him and hide themselves in the woods, leaving him crying; then they would come back and show themselves, and have a great laugh over the little boy's distress. Sometimes they would run for the camp, and would tell him that a bear or a wolf was chasing them, leaving the little boy far behind, crying with all his might. Many a time he sought his father's camp alone, when the other boys would leave him and hide themselves in the woods.

One day these little Indians found a great hollow log lying on the ground. One of them said, "Maybe there is a Ta-hone-tah-na-ken [rabbit] or a Hi-sen [red squirrel] in this hollow log. Let us shoot into it, and see if there is any Ta-hone-tah-na-ken in it."

All agreed to this, and they began to take the little boy's arrows from him and shoot them into the hole; then the larger boys said to him, "Now go into the hollow log, and get your arrows."

The little boy said, "No; I am afraid something might catch me." Then he began to cry, and was not at all willing to go into the log.

The others coaxed him to do so, and one said he would get his uncle to make him a new bow and arrows if he would go into the hollow log, and get the arrows they had shot there. At last this tempted the little boy. He stopped crying, got down on his hands and knees, and crawled into the log. When he had gone in a little way, he found one of his arrows, and handed it out. This gave him courage to go in a little farther.

When he had advanced some distance in the log, one of the larger boys said, "Let's stop up the log, and trap that boy in it, so that he can't get out." This was soon agreed to, and the boys began to fetch old rotten wood and old limbs, stopping up the hollow, and trapping the little boy in it. When this mischief was done, the four boys ran to their camp, not saying a word about the little boy who was trapped in the log.

It was two days before the mother and father began to notice the absence of their boy, for they thought he must have stayed over night with one of the others, as very often he had done, but the second day a search was begun, and the other four boys were asked whereabouts they had left him.

They all said that they did not know, and that the last time they were out the little boy did not go with them. Then the entire camp turned out to join in the search, as now they knew that the boy must be lost. After they had hunted a long time he could not be found, and they ceased to look for him; they thought he must have been killed and eaten by a wolf or a bear.

When he was first shut up in the log the little boy tried to get out, but could not do it, as the chunks of rotten wood were too large for him to move. He could not kick or push them out.

Then he cried for help, but no one came. There he was for three days and three nights, crying loudly for help, and now and then falling asleep.

But on the fourth night, while he was in the hollow log, he thought he heard some one coming. He listened, and was sure he heard the crying of a very old woman and the noise of the tramping of human feet. The crying and the tramping came nearer and nearer to the log where he was. At last the crying came very close to him, and then he heard a noise, as though some one sat down on the log.

Now he heard the old woman cry in earnest, and now and then she would say, "Oh, how tired I am! How tired I am! and yet I may have come too late, for I do not hear my grandchild cry. He may be dead! He may be dead!" Then the old woman would cry in earnest again.

At last he heard a rap on the log and his own name called, "Ha-yah-noo! Ha-yah-noo! are you still alive?"

Ha-yah-noo, or Footprints under the Water (for this was the name of the little lost boy), answered the old woman, and said that he still lived.

The old woman said, "Oh, how glad I am to find my grandchild still alive!"

Then she asked Ha-yah-noo if he could not get out, but he said he could not, for he had already tried.

Then said the old woman, "I will try to get you out of this log." He heard her pull at the chunks of old wood, but at last she said she could not get him out, as she was too old and tired. She had heard him crying three days before, and had journeyed three days and nights to come and help her grandchild out of his trouble. Now this old woman was an O-ne-ha-tah, or Porcupine. She lived in an old hemlock tree near the spot where the boy was shut up in the log.

When Grandmother O-ne-ha-tah had said that she had to journey three days and nights, and now she could not help Ha-yah-noo out of the log, she was very sorry, and began to cry again. Finally she said that she had three children, who were very strong, and that she would get them to help her; so she went after them.

It was almost daylight when they came, and then Ha-yah-noo heard them pull out the chunks which stopped up the log. At last Grandmother

O-ne-ha-tah said to Ha-yah-noo, "Come out now. My children have got the chunks out of the log. You can come out."

When Ha-yah-noo came out, he saw four wild animals around him. There was Grandmother O-ne-ha-tah and her three children, as she called them. They were Oo-kwa-e, the Bear; Sken-no-doh, the Deer; and Tah-you-ne, the Wolf. "Now," said O-ne-ha-tah, "I want one of you to take care of this boy, and love him as your own child. You all know that I have got to be very, very old. If I were younger I would take care of him myself."

Tah-you-ne, the Wolf, was the first one to speak. She said she could take care of the boy, as she lived on the same meat on which he fed.

"No," said Grandmother O-ne-ha-tah, "you are too greedy. You would eat up the boy as soon as he is left with you alone." The Wolf was very angry. She showed her teeth, and snapped them at the boy, who was very much afraid, and wanted no such mother.

The next that spoke was Sken-no-doh, the Deer. She said that she and her husband would take care of the boy, as they lived on corn and other things which they knew the boy liked. Her husband would carry him on his back wherever they went.

But Grandmother O-ne-ha-tah said, "No, you can't take care of the boy, for you are always traveling, and never stay in one place. The boy cannot do the traveling that you do, for you run very fast and make very long journeys. The boy cannot stand it, and you have no home for him for the winter. Boys like this have homes." Then the Deer ran away, very happy, as though she were glad to be rid of the boy.

Then Oo-kwa-e, the Bear, said that she knew she could take care of the boy, as she lived in a large stone house and had plenty to eat. She lived on meats and fishes, and all kinds of nuts and berries, and even wild honey, all of which the boy would like. She had a good warm bed for him to sleep on through the winter, and she was a loving mother to her children. She would rather die than see them abused.

Then O-ne-ha-tah said, "You are just the right one to take care of this boy. Take him and carry him home." So the Bear, like a loving mother, took the boy and brought him to her home.

When they got there, Oo-kwa-e said to her two children, the Oo-tutch-ha, or Young Bears, "Don't play with him roughly, and he will be your kind little brother." Then she gave him some berries to eat, and they were all happy together.

The stone house was a cave in the rocks, but to the little boy it seemed to have rooms like any other house, and the little bears seemed to him like human children. They did not tease him, but lived in the most friendly way, and the old Oo-kwa-e was a very kind mother to the boy.

It was now quite late in the fall, and the days became short and dark. Then Mother Oo-kwa-e said, "It is late and dark now. We had better go to bed." The nights were cold, but the bed was warm, and they slept until the spring.

One evening it thundered; for the bears do not wake up until the thunder is heard. It made such a noise that they thought the walls were coming down. Then the old Oo-kwa-e said, "Why, it's getting light. We had better get up." So they lived happily together for a very long time. She went out in the woods, going to and fro for food, and the children amused themselves at home.

Every now and then, through the summer, the Bear people would come in and say, "In such a place are plenty of berries." These would be strawberries, raspberries, or others, according to the season. Later they told of chestnuts and other kinds of nuts, of which they were fond. Then they would say, "Let us go and gather them."

So the Mother Bear and the little Bears went, taking the little boy along with them; for they always expected a good time. The other bears knew nothing about the little boy. When they came near the spot, and he was seen, these would be frightened, and say, "There is a human being! Let us run! let us run!" So they would scamper off as fast as bears can, leaving their heaps of nuts or berries behind them. Then the old Oo-kwa-e would gather these up, she and her children, and take them home, which was a very easy way of getting plenty of food. Thus the boy became very useful to Mother Bear.

The boy lived with them thus for about three years, and the same things happened every year. In the third year Mother Bear said, "Some one is coming to kill us." Then all looked out, and saw a man coming through the woods, with his bow and arrows in his hand, and his dog running all around looking for game. Then Mother Bear said, "I must see what I can do." So she took a forked stick, and pointed the open fork towards the man. It seemed to come near him, and appeared to him like a line of thick brush that he did not wish to break through. So he turned aside, and went another way, and they were safe that time.

Another day she again said, "Someone is coming towards us again, and we shall be killed." She put forth the forked stick again; but the man did not mind it, and came straight towards her stone house. The stick itself split, and there was nothing in the way. Then she took a bag of feathers and threw these outside. They flew up and down, and around and around, and seemed like a flock of partridges. The dog ran after them, through the bushes and trees, supposing them to be birds, and so the second man went away.

The days went by, and the third time Mother Bear saw a man coming. This time she said, "Now we certainly are all going to die."

Then she said to the boy, "Your father is coming now, and he is too good a hunter to be fooled. There is his dog, with his four eyes, and he, too, is one of the best of hunters." Now when a dog has light spots over each eye, the Indians say that he has four eyes. So the man came nearer, and she tried the forked stick, but it split; and still the man and dog came on. Then she scattered the feathers, and they flew around as before; but the hunter and dog paid no attention to them, and still they both came on. At last the dog reached

the door and barked, and the man drew his bow to shoot at anything that came out.

When the Mother Oo-kwa-e saw the man standing there, she said, "Now, children, we must all take our bundles and go." So each of the Bears took a small bundle and laid it on its back, but there was no bundle at all for the boy. When all were ready, Mother Oo-kwa-e said, "I will go first, whatever may happen." So she opened the door, and as she went out the man shot, and she was killed.

Then the oldest of the Oo-tutch-ha said, "I will go next"; and as he went he also was killed.

The last little Bear was afraid, and said to the boy, "You go first." But the little boy was afraid, too, and said, "No; you go first. I have no bundle." For all the Bears tried to get their bundles between them and the man. So the little Bear and the boy at last went out together; but though the Bear tried to keep behind, the man shot at him first, and he was killed. As the hunter was about to shoot again, the boy called out, "Don't shoot me! Don't shoot me! I am not a bear!"

His father dropped his arrow, for he knew his voice at once, and said, "Why did you not call out before? Then I would not have killed the Oo-kwa-e and Oo-tutch-ha. I am very sorry for what I have done, for the Bears have been good to you."

But the boy said, "You did not kill the Bears, though you thought so. You only shot the bundles. I saw them thrown down, and the spirits of the Bears run off from behind them." Still, the man was sorry he had shot at the Bears, for he wished to be kind to them, as they had been to his boy.

Then the father began to look at his boy more closely, to see how he had grown and how he had changed. Then he saw that long hairs were growing between his fingers, for, living so long with them, he had already begun to turn into a Bear. He was very glad when he took the boy back to his home, and his friends and relatives, and the whole town, rejoiced with him. All day they had a great feast, and all night they danced, and they were still dancing when I came away.

GA'NA'A'S ADVENTURES AMONG THE CHEROKEE

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Mooney, James. *Myths of the Cherokee*. Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 1897–1898, Part I. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1900, 367–370.

Date: 1883

Original Source: Iroquois (Seneca)

National Origin: Native American

The linking of athletic endeavors, dance, warfare, and spirituality in this **legend** is found not only in the Northeast but throughout Native America cultures and in myriad other warrior cultures globally. Dance and games (in this case what came to be called “lacrosse”) are used for training warrior attributes and for displaying these attributes both within one’s own group and to the enemy. For example, peace terms are accepted by the Cherokee after the Seneca (like the Mohawk, also members of the Iroquois League) vigorously demonstrate their physical prowess through dance. Conversely, the Seoqgwageono (possibly an indigenous name for either the Catawba or Tuscarora) decide to wage war on the Cherokee after defeating their representative in a foot race. Furthermore, warfare and athletic competition both are seen as activities that must be supported by supernatural power. Strengthening and purification rituals, taboos, and amulets all figure into the preparation for both. Often success at one of these enterprises is evidence of the spiritual superiority of oneself or one’s spiritual support system. It is probably in the light of such supernatural strength that the Seoqgwageono’s assertion of being a “double man” should be interpreted.

Ga'na'a was a Seneca war chief. He called a council and said, “We must go to the Cherokee and see if we can’t agree to be friendly together and live in peace hereafter.” The people consented, and the chief said, “We must go to water first before we start.” So they went, a great party of warriors, far away into the deep forest by the river side. There were no women with them. For ten days they drank medicine every morning to make them vomit and washed and bathed in the river each day.

Then the chief said, “Now we must get the eagle feathers.” They went to the top of a high hill and dug a trench there the length of a man’s body, and put a man into it, with boughs over the top so that he could not be seen, and above that they put the whole body of a deer. Then the people went off out of sight, and said the words to invite the Great Eagle that lives in the clouds, to come down.

The man under the brushwood heard a noise, and a common eagle came and ate a little and flew away again. Soon it came back, ate a little more, and flew off in another direction. It told the other birds and they came, but the man seared them away, because he did not want common birds to eat the meat. After a while he heard a great noise coming through the air, and he knew it was the bird he wanted. The Great Eagle is very cautious, and looked around in every direction for some time before he began to eat the meat. As soon as he was eating the man put his hand up cautiously and caught hold of the bird’s tail and held on to it. The Great Eagle rose up and flew away, and the man had pulled

out one feather. They had to trap a good many eagles in this way, and it was two years before they could get enough feathers to make a full tail, and were ready to start for the Cherokee country.

They were many days on the road, and when they got to the first Cherokee town they found there was a stockade around it so that no enemy could enter. They waited until the gate was open, and then two Seneca dancers went forward, carrying the eagle feathers and shouting the signal yell.

When the Cherokee heard the noise they came out and saw the two men singing and dancing, and the chief said, "These men must have come upon some errand." The Seneca messengers came up and said, "Call a council; we have come to talk on important business." All turned and went toward the townhouse, the rest of the Seneca following the two who were dancing. The townhouse was crowded, and the Seneca sang and danced until they were tired before they stopped. The Cherokee did not dance.

After the dance the Seneca chief said, "Now I will tell you why we have come so far through the forest to see you. We have thought among ourselves that it is time to stop fighting. Your people and ours are always on the lookout to kill each other, and we think it is time for this to stop. Here is a belt of wampum to show that I speak the truth. If your people are willing to be friendly, take it," and he held up the belt.

The Cherokee chief stepped forward and said, "I will hold it in my hand, and tomorrow we will tell you what we decide." He then turned and said to the people, "Go home and bring food." They went and brought so much food that it made a great pile across the house, and all of both tribes ate together, but could not finish it.

Next day they ate together again, and when all were done the Cherokee chief said to the Seneca, "We have decided to be friendly and to bury our weapons, these knives and hatchets, so that no man may take them up again."

The Seneca chief replied, "We are glad you have accepted our offer, and now we have all thrown our weapons in a pile together, and the white wampum hangs between us, and the belt shall be as long as a man and hang down to the ground."

Then the Cherokee chief said to his people, "Now is the time for any of you that wishes to adopt a relative from among the Seneca to do so."

So some Cherokee women went and picked out one man and said, "You shall be our uncle," and some more took another for their brother, and so on until only Ga'na'a, the chief, was left, but the Cherokee chief said, "No one must take Ga'na'a for a young man is here to claim him as his father."

Then the young man came up to Ga'na'a and said, "Father, I am glad to see you. Father, we will go home," and he led Ga'na'a to his own mother's house, the house where Ga'na'a had spent the first night. The young man was really his son, and when Ga'na'a came to the house he recognized the woman as his wife who had been carried off long ago by the Cherokee.

While they were there a messenger came from the Seoqgwageono tribe, that lived near the great salt water in the east, to challenge the Cherokee to a ball play. He was dressed in skins which were so long that they touched the ground. He said that his people were already on the way and would arrive in a certain number of days. They came on the appointed day and the next morning began to make the bets with the Cherokee. The Seneca were still there.

The strangers bet two very heavy and costly robes, besides other things. They began to play, and the Cherokee lost the game. Then the Seneca said, "We will try this time." Both sides bet heavily again, and the game began, but after a little running the Seneca carried the ball to their goal and made a point. Before long they made all the points and won the game. Then the bets were doubled, and the Seneca won again. When they won a third game also the Seoqgwageono said, "Let us try a race," and the Seneca agreed.

The course was level, and the open space was very wide. The Cherokee selected the Seneca runner, and it was agreed that they would run the first race without betting and then make their bets on the second race. They ran the first race, and when they reached the post the Seneca runner was just the measure of his body behind the other. His people asked him if he had done his best, but he said, "No; I have not," so they made their bets, and the second race—the real race—began. When they got to the middle the Seneca runner said to the other, "Do your best now, for I am going to do mine," and as he said it he pulled out and left the other far behind and won the race.

Then the Seoqgwageono said, "There is one more race yet—the long race," and they got ready for it, but the Cherokee chief said to his own men, "We have won everything from these people. I think it will be best to let them have one race, for if they lose all, they may make trouble." They selected a Cherokee to run, and he was beaten, and the Seoqgwageono went home.

In a few days they sent a messenger to challenge the Cherokee to meet them halfway for a battle. When the Cherokee heard this they said to the Seneca, "There are so few of you here that we don't want to have you killed. It is better for you to go home." So the Seneca went back to their own country.

Three years later they came again to visit the Cherokee, who told them that the Seoqgwageono had won the battle, and that the chief of the enemy had said afterward, "I should like to fight the Seneca, for I am a double man." Before long the enemy heard that the Seneca were there and sent them a challenge to come and fight.

The Seneca said, "We must try to satisfy them," so with Cherokee guides they set out for the country of the Seoqgwageono. They went on until they came to an opening in the woods within one day's journey of the first village. Then they stopped and got ready to send two messengers to notify the enemy, but the Cherokee said, "You must send them so as to arrive about sundown." They did this, and when the messengers arrived near the town they saw all the people out playing ball.

The two Seneca went around on the other side, and began throwing sumac darts as they approached, so that the others would think they were some of their own men at play. In this way they got near enough to kill a man who was standing alone. They scalped him, and then raising the scalp yell they rushed off through the woods, saying to each other as they ran, “Be strong—Be strong.”

Soon they saw the Seoqgwageono coming on horses, but managed to reach a dry creek and to bide under the bank, so that the enemy passed on without seeing them.

The next morning they came out and started on, but the enemy was still on the watch, and before long the two men saw the dust of the horses behind them. The others came up until they were almost upon them and began to shoot arrows at them, but by this time the two Seneca were near the opening where their own friends were hiding, drawn up on each side of the pass. As the pursuers dashed in the two lines of the Seneca closed in and every man of the Seoqgwageono was either killed or taken.

The Seneca went back to the Cherokee country and after about a month they returned to their own homes. Afterward the Cherokee told them, “We hear the Seoqgwageono think you dangerous people. They themselves are conjurers and can tell what other people are going to do, but they cannot tell what the Seneca are going to do. The Seneca medicine is stronger.”

THE UNSEEN HELPERS

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Mooney, James. *Myths of the Cherokee*. Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 1897–1898, Part I. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1900, 360–362.

Date: 1883

Original Source: Iroquois (Seneca)

National Origin: Native American

The Seneca of this **legend** were one of the nations of the Iroquois League. Although no particular clan membership was specified for Ganogwioeoñ, the Wolf Clan was one of the eight traditional Seneca clans. If he was, in fact, one of the Wolf Clan, this might explain the behavior of his “unseen helpers.” A more likely bond, however, would be that the wolf was his guardian spirit animal. As such, the wolf taught and protected its protégée, and the man would be obliged to pay homage in various ways to the guardian. This may be the reason that, as the wolf says in this supernatural legend, he always gave the best part of his hunt to them.

Ganogwioeñ, a war chief of the Seneca, led a party against the Cherokee. When they came near the first town he left his men outside and went in alone. At the first house he found an old woman and her granddaughter. They did not see him, and he went into the sweatlodge and hid himself under some wood.

When darkness came on he heard the old woman say, "Maybe Ganogwioeñ is near; I'll close the door." After a while he heard them going to bed. When he thought they were asleep he went into the house. The fire had burned down low, but the girl was still awake and saw him. She was about to scream, when he said, "I am Ganogwioeñ. If you scream I'll kill you. If you keep quiet I'll not hurt you." They talked together, and he told her that in the morning she must bring the chief's daughter to him. She promised to do it, and told him where he should wait. Just before daylight he left the house.

In the morning the girl went to the chief's house and said to his daughter, "Let's go out together for wood." The chief's daughter got ready and went with her, and when they came to the place where Ganogwioeñ was hiding he sprang out and killed her, but did not hurt the other girl. He pulled off the scalp and gave such a loud scalp yell that all the warriors in the town heard it and came running out after him. He shook the scalp at them and then turned and ran. He killed the first one that came up, but when he tried to shoot the next one the bow broke and the Cherokee got him.

They tied him and carried him to the two women of the tribe who had the power to decide what should be done with him. Each of these women had two snakes tattooed on her lips, with their heads opposite each other, in such a way that when she opened her mouth the two snakes opened their mouths also. They decided to burn the soles of his feet until they were blistered, then to put grains of corn under the skin and to chase him with clubs until they had beaten him to death.

They stripped him and burnt his feet. Then they tied a bark rope around his waist, with an old man to hold the other end, and made him run between two lines of people, and with clubs in their hands. When they gave the word to start Ganogwioeñ pulled the rope away from the old man and broke through the line and ran until he had left them all out of sight. When night came he crawled into a hollow log. He was naked and unarmed, with his feet in a pitiful condition, and thought he could never get away.

He heard footsteps on the leaves outside and thought his enemies were upon him. The footsteps came up to the log and someone said to another, "This is our friend." Then the stranger said to Ganogwioeñ, "You think you are the same as dead, but it is not so. We will take care of you. Stick out your feet." He put out his feet from the log and felt something licking them.

After awhile the voice said, "I think we have licked his feet enough. Now we must crawl inside the log and lie on each side of him to keep him warm." They crawled in beside him. In the morning they crawled out and told him to stick out his feet again.

They licked them again and then said to him, "Now we have done all we can do this time. Go on until you come to the place where you made a bark shelter a long time ago, and under the bark you will find something to help you." Ganogwioeñ crawled out of the log, but they were gone. His feet were better now and he could walk comfortably. He went on until about noon, when he came to the bark shelter, and under it he found a knife, an awl, and a flint, that his men had hidden there two years before. He took them and started on again.

Toward evening he looked around until he found another hollow tree and crawled into it to sleep. At night he heard the footsteps and voices again. When he put out his feet again, as the strangers told him to do, they licked his feet as before and then crawled in and lay down on each side of him to keep him warm. Still he could not see them. In the morning after they went out they licked his feet again and said to him, "At noon you will find food." Then they went away.

Ganogwioeñ crawled out of the tree and went on. At noon he came to a burning log, and near it was a dead bear, which was still warm, as if it had been killed only a short time before. He skinned the bear and found it very fat. He cut up the meat and roasted as much as he could eat or carry. While it was roasting he scraped the skin and rubbed rotten wood dust on it to clean it until he was tired. When night came: he lay down to sleep. He heard the steps and the voices again and one said, "Well, our friend is lying down. He has plenty to eat, and it does not seem as if he is going to die. Let us lick his feet again." When they had finished they said to him, "You need not worry anymore now. You will get home all right." Before it was day they left him.

When morning came he put the bearskin around him like a shirt, with the hair outside, and started on again, taking as much of the meat as he could carry. That night his friends came to him again. They said, "Your feet are well, but you will be cold," so they lay again on each side of him. Before daylight they left, saying, "About noon you will find something to wear." He went on and about midday he came to two young bears just killed. He skinned them and dressed the skins, then roasted as much meat as he wanted and lay down to sleep. In the morning he made leggings of the skins, took some of the meat, and started on.

His friends came again the next night and told him that in the morning he would come upon something else to wear. As they said, about noon he found two fawns just killed. He turned the skins and made himself a pair of moccasins, then cut some of the meat, and traveled on until evening, when he made a fire and had supper.

That night again he heard the steps and voices, and one said, "My friend, very soon now you will reach home safely and find your friends all well. Now we will tell you why we have helped you. Whenever you went hunting you always gave the best part of the meat to us and kept only the smallest part for

yourself. For that we are thankful and help you. In the morning you will see us and know who we are.”

In the morning when he woke up they were still there—two men as he thought—but after he had said the last words to them and started on, he turned again to look, and one was a white wolf and the other a black wolf. That day he reached home.

ISLETA

THE ANTELOPE BOY

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Lummis, Charles. *Pueblo Indian Folk-Stories*. New York: Century, 1910, 12–21.

Date: 1910

Original Source: Isleta Pueblo, New Mexico

National Origin: Native American

The Tiwa of Isleta, like the Acoma (see “Origin of Acoma,” page 3), developed an agricultural way of life based on raising corn, beans, and squash. The diet provided by these crops was supplemented by hunting, as was the case with Acoma. Eastern, or Rio Grande, Pueblos such as Isleta, unlike the Western Pueblo of Acoma, relied on irrigation for their crops and thus developed a strong village identity and loyalty. The village was divided into halves, called moieties, the Summer People and the Winter People. Each of the moieties had a Cacique (principal religious authority) who governed the village’s religious life for half of the year. The Caciques were elders who were chosen for wisdom, even temperament, and their ability to maintain village harmony. They stood in polar opposition to the witches who play so prominent a role in the following **myth**. The cigarettes smoked by Antelope Boy to create rain clouds are the equivalent to the pipe that is familiar to other Native American traditions. The power of Antelope Boy comes from both his animal spirit helpers and from his marginal status as a human who was raised by antelopes. This marginality is also an attribute of **trickster**.

Once upon a time there were two towns of the Tiwa, called White Village and Yellow Village. A man of White village and his wife were attacked by Apaches while out on the plains one day, and took refuge in a cave, where they were besieged. And there a boy was born to them. The father was killed in an attempt to return to his village for help; and starvation finally forced the mother to crawl forth by night seeking roots to eat. Chased by the Apaches, she escaped to her own village, and it was several days before she could return to the cave-only to find it empty.

The baby had begun to cry soon after her departure. Just then a Coyote was passing, and heard. Taking pity on the child, he picked it up and carried it across the plain until he came to a herd of antelopes. Among them was a Mother-Antelope that had lost her fawn; and going to her the Coyote said, "Here is a poor thing that is left by its people. Will you take care of it?"

The Mother Antelope, remembering her own baby, with tears said "Yes," and at once adopted the tiny stranger, while the Coyote thanked her and went home.

So the boy became as one of the antelopes, and grew up among them until he was about twelve years old. Then it happened that a hunter came out from White village for antelopes, and found this herd. Stalking them carefully, he shot one with an arrow. The rest started off, running like the wind; but ahead of them all, as long as they were in sight, he saw a boy!

The hunter was much surprised, and, shouldering his game, walked back to the village, deep in thought. Here he told the Cacique what he had seen. Next day the crier was sent out to call upon all the people to prepare for a great hunt, in four days, to capture the Indian boy who lived with the antelopes.

While preparations were going on in the village, the antelopes in some way heard of the intended hunt and its purpose. The Mother-Antelope was very sad when she heard it, and at first would say nothing. But at last she called her adopted son to her and said, "Son, you have heard that the people of White village are coming to hunt. But they will not kill us; all they wish is to take you. They will surround us, intending to let all the antelopes escape from the circle. You must follow me where I break through the line, and your real mother will be coming on the northeast side in a white *manta* (robe). I will pass close to her, and you must stagger and fall where she can catch you."

On the fourth day all the people went out upon the plains. They found and surrounded the herd of antelopes, which ran about in a circle when the hunters closed upon them. The circle grew smaller, and the antelopes began to break through; but the hunters paid no attention to them, keeping their eyes upon the boy. At last he and his antelope mother were the only ones left, and when she broke through the line on the northeast he followed her and fell at the feet of his own human mother, who sprang forward and clasped him in her arms.

Amid great rejoicing he was taken to White village, and there he told the *principales* (Council of advisors) how he had been left in the cave, how the

Coyote had pitied him, and how the Mother-Antelope had reared him as her own son.

It was not long before all the country round about heard of the Antelope Boy and of his marvelous fleetness of foot. You must know that the antelopes never comb their hair, and while among them the boy's head had grown very bushy. So the people called him *Pée-hleh-o-wah-wée-deh* (big-headed little boy).

Among the other villages that heard of his prowess was Yellow Village, all of whose people "had the bad road." They had a wonderful runner named *Pée-k'hoo* (Deer-foot), and very soon they sent a challenge to White village for a championship race. Four days were to be given for preparation, to make bets, and the like. The race was to be around the world. Each village was to stake all its property and the lives of all its people on the result of the race. So powerful were the witches of Yellow Village that they felt safe in proposing so serious a stake; and the people of White village were ashamed to decline the challenge.

The day came, and the starting-point was surrounded by all the people of the two villages, dressed in their best. On each side were huge piles of ornaments and dresses, stores of grain, and all the other property of the people. The runner for the Yellow Village was a tall, sinewy athlete, strong in his early manhood; and when the Antelope Boy appeared for the other side, the witches set up a howl of derision, and began to strike their rivals and jeer at them, saying, "We might as well begin to kill you now! What can that little thing do?"

At the word "*Hái-ko!*" ("Go!") the two runners started toward the east like the wind. The Antelope Boy soon forged ahead; but Deer-foot, by his witchcraft, changed himself into a hawk and flew lightly over the lad, saying, "We do this way to each other!" The Antelope Boy kept running, but his heart was very heavy, for he knew that no feet could equal the swift flight of the hawk.

But just as he came halfway to the east, a Mole came up from its burrow and said: "My son, where are you going so fast with a sad face?"

The lad explained that the race was for the property and lives of all his people; and that the witch-runner had turned to a hawk and left him far behind.

"Then, my son," said the Mole, "I will be he that shall help you. Only sit down here a little while, and I will give you something to carry."

The boy sat down, and the Mole dived into the hole, but soon came back with four cigarettes. Holding them out, the Mole said, "Now, my son, when you have reached the east and turned north, smoke one; when you have reached the north and turn west, smoke another; when you turn south, another, and when you turn east again, another. Go!"

The boy ran on, and soon reached the east. Turning his face to the north he smoked the first cigarette. No sooner was it finished than he became a young antelope; and at the same instant a furious rain began. Refreshed by the cool drops, he started like an arrow from the bow. Halfway to the north he came to a

large tree; and there sat the hawk, drenched and chilled, unable to fly, and crying piteously.

“Now, friend, we too do this to each other,” called the boy-antelope as he dashed past. But just as he reached the north, the hawk—which had become dry after the short rain—caught up and passed him, saying, “We too do this to each other!”

The boy-antelope turned westward, and smoked the second cigarette; and at once another terrific rain began. Halfway to the west he again passed the hawk shivering and crying in a tree, and unable to fly; but as he was about to turn to the south, the hawk passed him with the customary taunt. The smoking of the third cigarette brought another storm, and again the antelope passed the wet hawk halfway, and again the hawk dried its feathers in time to catch up and pass him as he was turning to the east for the home-stretch. Here again the boy-antelope stopped and smoked a cigarette—the fourth and last. Again a short, hard rain came, and again he passed the water-bound hawk halfway.

Knowing the witchcraft of their neighbors, the people of White village had made the condition that, in whatever shape the racers might run the rest of the course, they must resume human form upon arrival at a certain hill upon the fourth turn, which was in sight of the goal. The last wetting of the hawk’s feathers delayed it so that the antelope reached the hill just ahead; and there, resuming their natural shapes, the two runners came sweeping down the home-stretch, straining every nerve. But the Antelope Boy gained at each stride. When they saw him, the witch-people felt confident that he was their champion, and again began to push, and taunt, and jeer at the others. But when the little Antelope Boy sprang lightly across the line, far ahead of Deer-foot, their joy turned to mourning.

The people of White village burned all the witches upon the spot, in a great pile of corn; but somehow one escaped, and from him come all the witches that trouble us to this day.

The property of the witches was taken to White village; and as it was more than that village could hold, the surplus was sent to Isleta, where we enjoy it to this day; and later the people themselves moved here. And even now, when we dig in that little hill on the other side of the pool, we find charred corn-cobs, where our forefathers burned the witch-people of the Yellow Village.

THE HERO TWINS

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Lummis, Charles. *Pueblo Indian Folk-Stories*. New York: Century, 1910, 206–214.

Date: 1910

Original Source: Isleta Pueblo, New Mexico

National Origin: Native American

According to Charles Lummis who collected the following **myth** at Isleta Pueblo, the narrative was imported into the Tiwa village by Keres (Quères) speakers from the villages of Laguna and Acoma who were given refuge from crop failure brought on by a drought and stayed to become residents of Isleta. The Hero Twins are prominent figures in Pueblo **myth** as **tricksters** and **culture heroes**. Similar twin figures, in fact, are found throughout Native North America (see, for example, the Wichita “The Two Boys Who Slew the Monsters and Became Stars,” page 148).

Máw-Sahv and Oó-yah-wee, as the Hero Twins are named in Quères, had the Sun for a father. Their mother died when they were born, and lay lifeless upon the hot plain. But the two wonderful boys, as soon as they were a minute old, were big and strong, and began playing.

There chanced to be in a cliff to the southward a nest of white crows; and presently the young crows said, “Nana, what is that over there? Isn’t it two babies?”

“Yes,” replied the Mother-Crow, when she had taken a look. “Wait and I will bring them.” So she brought the boys safely, and then their dead mother; and, rubbing a magic herb on the body of the latter, soon brought her to life.

By this time Máw-Sahv and Oó-yah-wee were sizable boys, and the mother started homeward with them. “Now,” said she when they reached the edge of the valley and could look across to that wondrous rock whereon stands Acoma, “go to yonder town, my sons, for that is where live your grandfather and grandmother, my parents; and I will wait here. Go ye in at the west end of the town and stand at the south end of the council-grounds until some one speaks to you; and ask them to take you to the Cacique, for he is your grandfather. You will know his house, for the ladder to it has three uprights instead of two. When you go in and tell your story, he will ask you a question to see if you are really his grandchildren, and will give you four chances to answer what he has in a bag in the corner. No one has ever been able to guess what is in it, but there are birds.”

The Twins did as they were bidden, and presently came to Acoma and found the house of the old Cacique. When they entered and told their story, he said, “Now I will try you. What is in yonder bag?”

“A rattlesnake,” said the boys.

“No,” said the Cacique, “it is not a rattlesnake. Try again.”

“Birds,” said the boys.

“Yes, they are birds. Now I know that you are truly my grandchildren, for no one else could ever guess.” And he welcomed them gladly, and sent them back with new dresses and jewelry to bring their mother.

When she was about to arrive, the Twins ran ahead to the house and told her father, mother, and sister to leave the house until she should enter; but not knowing what was to come, they would not go out. When she had climbed the big ladder to the roof and started down through the trap-door by the room-ladder, her sister cried out with joy at seeing her, and she was so startled that she fell from the ladder and broke her neck, and never could be brought to life again.

Máw-Sahv and Oó-yah-wee grew up to astounding adventures and achievements. While still very young in years, they did very remarkable things; for they had a miraculously rapid growth, and at an age when other boys were toddling about home, these Hero Twins had already become very famous hunters and warriors. They were very fond of stories of adventure, like less precocious lads; and after the death of their mother they kept their grandmother busy telling them strange tales. She had a great many anecdotes of a certain ogre-giantess who lived in the dark gorges of the mountains to the South, and so much did Máw-Sahv and Oó-yah-wee hear of this wonderful personage—who was the terror of all that country—that their boyish ambition was fired.

One day when their grandmother was busy they stole away from home with their bows and arrows, and walked miles and miles, till they came to a great forest at the foot of the mountain. In the edge of it sat the old Giant-woman, dozing in the sun, with a huge basket beside her. She was so enormous and looked so fierce that the boys' hearts stood still, and they would have hidden, but just then she caught sight of them, and called, "Come, little boys, and get into this basket of mine, and I will take you to my house."

"Very well," said Máw-Sahv, bravely hiding his alarm. "If you will take us through this big forest, which we would like to see, we will go with you."

The Giant-woman promised, and the lads clambered into her basket, which she took upon her back and started off. As she passed through the woods, the boys grabbed lumps of pitch from the tall pines and smeared it all over her head and back so softly that she did not notice it. Once she sat down to rest, and the boys slyly put a lot of big stones in the basket, set fire to her pitched hair, and hurriedly climbed a tall pine.

Presently the Giant-woman got up and started on toward home; but in a minute or two her head and manta were all of a blaze. With a howl that shook the earth, she dropped the basket and rolled on the ground, grinding her great head into the sand until she at last got the fire extinguished. But she was badly scorched and very angry, and still angrier when she looked in the basket and found only a lot of stones. She retraced her steps until she found the boys hidden in the pine tree, and said to them, "Come down, children, and get into my basket, that I may take you to my house, for now we are almost there."

The boys, knowing that she could easily break down the tree if they refused, came down. They got into the basket, and soon she brought them to her home in the mountain. She set them down upon the ground and said, "Now, boys, go

and bring me a lot of wood, that I may make a fire in the oven and bake you some sweet cakes.”

The boys gathered a big pile of wood, with which she built a roaring fire in the adobe oven outside the house. Then she took them and washed them very carefully, and taking them by the necks, thrust them into the glowing oven and sealed the door with a great, flat rock, and left them there to be roasted.

But the Trues were friends of the Hero Twins, and did not let the heat harm them at all. When the old Giant-woman had gone into the house, Máv-Sahv and Oó-yah-wee broke the smaller stone that closed the smoke-hole of the oven, and crawled out from their fiery prison unsigned. They ran around and caught snakes and toads and gathered up dirt and dropped them down into the oven through the smoke-hole; and then, watching when the Giant-woman's back was turned, they sneaked into the house and hid in a huge clay jar on the shelf.

Very early in the morning the Giant-woman's baby began to cry for some boy-meat. “Wait till it is well cooked,” said the mother; and hushed the child till the sun was well up. Then she went out and unsealed the oven, and brought in the sad mess the boys had put there. “They have cooked away to almost nothing,” she said; and she and the Giant-baby sat down to eat. “Isn't this nice?” said the baby; and Máv-Sahv could not help saying, “You nasty things, to like that!”

“Eh? Who is that?” cried the Giant-woman, looking around till she found the boys hidden in the jar. So she told them to come down, and gave them some sweet cakes, and then sent them out to bring her some more wood.

It was evening when they returned with a big load of wood, which Máv-Sahv had taken pains to get green. He had also picked up in the mountains a long, sharp splinter of quartz. The evening was cool, and they built a big fire in the fireplace. But immediately, as the boys had planned, the green wood began to smoke at a dreadful rate, and soon the room was so dense with it that they all began to cough and strangle. The Giant-woman got up and opened the window and put her head out for a breath of fresh air; and Máv-Sahv, pulling out the white-hot splinter of quartz from the fire, stabbed her in the back so that she died. Then they killed the Giant-baby, and at last felt that they were safe.

Now the Giant-woman's house was a very large one, and ran far back into the very heart of the mountain. Having got rid of their enemies, the Hero Twins decided to explore the house; and, taking their bows and arrows, started boldly down into the deep, dark rooms. After traveling a long way in the dark, they came to a huge room in which corn and melons and pumpkins were growing abundantly. On and on they went, till at last they heard the growl of distant thunder. Following the sound, they came presently to a room in the solid rock, wherein the lightning was stored. Going in, they took the lightning and played with it awhile, throwing it from one to the other, and at last started home, carrying their strange toy with them.

When they reached Acoma and told their grandmother of their wonderful adventures, she held up her withered old hands in amazement. And she was nearly scared to death when they began to play with the lightning, throwing it around the house as though it had been a harmless ball, while the thunder rumbled till it shook the great rock of Acoma. They had the blue lightning which belongs in the West; and the yellow lightning of the North; and the red lightning of the East; and the white lightning of the South; and with all these they played merrily.

But it was not very long till Shée-wo-nah, the Storm-King, had occasion to use the lightning; and when he looked in the room where he was wont to keep it, and found it gone, his wrath knew no bounds. He started out to find who had stolen it; and passing by Acoma he heard the thunder as the Hero Twins were playing ball with the lightning. He pounded on the door and ordered them to give him his lightning, but the boys refused. Then he summoned the storm, and it began to rain and blow fearfully outside; while within the boys rattled their thunder in loud defiance, regardless of their grandmother's entreaties to give the Storm-King his lightning.

It kept raining violently, however, and the water came pouring down the chimney until the room was nearly full, and they were in great danger of drowning. But luckily for them, the Trues were still mindful of them; and just in the nick of time sent their servant, Tee-oh-pee, the Badger, who is the best of diggers, to dig a hole up through the floor; all the water ran out, and they were saved. And so the Hero Twins outwitted the Storm-King.

South of Acoma, in the pine-clad gorges and mesas, the world was full of Bears. There was one old She-Bear in particular, so huge and fierce that all men feared her; and not even the boldest hunter dared go to the south—for there she had her home with her two sons.

Máw-sahv and Oó-yah-wee were famous hunters, and always wished to go south; but their grandmother always forbade them. One day, however, they stole away from the house, and got into the cañon. At last they came to the She-Bear's house; and there was old Quéé-ah asleep in front of the door. Máw-sahv crept up very carefully and threw in her face a lot of ground chili, and ran. At that the She-Bear began to sneeze, ah-húтч! ah-húтч! She could not stop, and kept making ah-húтч until she sneezed herself to death.

Then the Twins took their thunder-knives and skinned her. They stuffed the great hide with grass, so that it looked like a Bear again, and tied a buckskin rope around its neck.

"Now," said Máw-sahv, "We will give our grandma a trick!"

So, taking hold of the rope, they ran toward Acoma, and the Bear came behind them as if leaping. Their grandmother was going for water; and from the top of the cliff she saw them running so in the valley, and the Bear jumping behind them. She ran to her house and painted one side of her face black with charcoal, and the other side red with the blood of an animal; and, taking a bag

of ashes, ran down the cliff and out at the Bear, to make it leave the boys and come after her.

But when she saw the trick, she reproved the boys for their rashness—but in her heart she was very proud of them.

THE COYOTE AND THE WOODPECKER

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Lummis, Charles. *Pueblo Indian Folk-Stories*. New York: Century, 1910, 49–52.

Date: 1910

Original Source: Isleta Pueblo, New Mexico

National Origin: Native American

This story of the **trickster** trying to imitate another occurs in other **variants** in the Southwest (see, for example, the Jicarilla Apache “Tales of Fox: Fox and Kingfisher,” page 30). As in the **tale types** designated by folklorist Stith Thompson as **animal tales**, “The Coyote and the Woodpecker” offers a moral lesson. The philosophy of acceptance and non-competitiveness is consistent with general Pueblo worldview and morality.

Well, once upon a time a Coyote and his family lived near the edge of a wood. There was a big hollow tree there, and in it lived an old Woodpecker and his wife and children. One day as the Coyote-father was strolling along the edge of the forest he met the Woodpecker-father.

“Good evening,” said the Coyote; how do you do today, friend?”

“Very well, thank you; and how are you, friend?”

So they stopped and talked together awhile; and when they were about to go apart the Coyote said, “Friend Woodpecker, why do you not come as friends to see us? Come to our house to supper this evening, and bring your family.”

“Thank you, friend Coyote,” said the Woodpecker; “we will come with joy.”

So that evening, when the Coyote-mother had made supper ready, there came the Woodpecker-father and the Woodpecker-mother with their three children. When they had come in, all five of the Woodpeckers stretched themselves as they do after flying, and by that showed their pretty feathers—for the Woodpecker has yellow and red marks under its wings. While, they were eating supper, too, they sometimes spread their wings, and displayed their bright underside. They praised the supper highly, and said the Coyote-mother was a perfect housekeeper.

When it was time to go, they thanked the Coyotes very kindly and invited them to come to supper at their house the following evening. But when they were gone, the Coyote-father could hold himself no longer, and he said, "Did you see what airs those Woodpeckers put on? Always showing off their bright feathers? But I want them to know that the Coyotes are equal to them. I'll show them!"

Next day, the Coyote-father had all his family at work bringing wood, and built a great fire in front of his house. When it was time to go to the house of the Woodpeckers he called his wife and children to the fire, and lashed a burning stick under each of their arms, with the burning end pointing forward; and then he fixed himself in the same way.

"Now," said he, "we will show them! When we get there, you must lift up your arms now and then, to show them that we are as good as the Woodpeckers."

When they came to the house of the Woodpeckers and went in, all the Coyotes kept lifting their arms often, to show the bright coals underneath. But as they sat down to supper, one Coyote-girl gave a shriek and said:

"Oh, papa! My fire is burning me!"

"Be patient, my daughter," said the Coyote-father, severely, "and do not cry about little things."

"Ow!" cried the other Coyote-girl in a moment, "my fire has gone out!"

This was more than the Coyote-father could stand, and he reproved her angrily.

"But how is it, friend Coyote," said the Woodpecker, politely, "that your colors are so bright at first, but very soon become black?"

"Oh, that is the beauty of our colors," replied the Coyote, smothering his rage; "that they are not always the same—like other people's—but turn all shades."

But the Coyotes were very uncomfortable, and made an excuse to hurry home as soon as they could. When they got there, the Coyote-father whipped them all for exposing him to be laughed at.

But the Woodpecker-father gathered his children around him, and said, "Now, my children, you see what the Coyotes have done. Never in your life try to appear what you are not. Be just what you really are, and put on no false colors."

LAKOTA

THE STONE BOY

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Wissler, Clark. "Some Dakota Myths II." *Journal of American Folklore* 20 (1907): 199–202.

Date: ca. 1900

Original Source: Ogalala Lakota (Sioux)

National Origin: Native American

The Lakota (popularly labeled the Sioux by outsiders) like the Cheyenne (page 50) and Crow (page 67) were a nomadic northern Plains bison-hunting culture that depended on the horse for their migrations in pursuit of the herds. The sweat lodge that plays a central role in the following narrative is used for healing and ritual purification. These lodges are found throughout Native North America and, according to some sources, are likely to have been brought across the Bering Strait during migrations of the ancestors of the Native Americans into the New World. As described in the **myth** of the **culture hero** Stone Boy, heated stones (regarded as the "bones" of Mother Earth) are piled inside a covered structure and water is poured over them to produce steam. The emergence from the lodge can be symbolically interpreted as a rebirth, reflecting the literal birth of Stone Boy and rebirth of three brothers and four uncles in the course of the following narrative.

Four brothers lived together in the same tepee. One day a strange woman came and stood outside. They sent the youngest brother out to see what it was that stood outside. The youngest brother went out to see, and came

back with the information that a woman was standing there. Then the eldest brother said to the youngest, "Call her your sister and invite her inside."

When she was invited she hesitated. She kept her face hidden in her robe. The brothers were cooking buffalo tongues for their meal. They gave some of these to the woman, but she turned her back while eating them so as not to show her face.

After a while the three older brothers went out to hunt. The youngest brother was curious to see the face of the woman. So he went to the top of a high hill and sat down. Then he left his robe on the hill and changed himself into a bird. He flew to the tepee and sat upon the poles at the top. He began to sing and to peck upon a pole, looking down at the woman.

Now she had her face exposed, and he saw that it was covered with hair. Spread out before her was a robe with a row of scalps half way around it. The woman heard the bird pecking on the poles above, and looking up said, "You bad bird, go away."

Then she began to count the scalps in the row, and, talking to herself, said, "I will take the scalps of these four brothers and fill out this row with them in the order of their ages, beginning with the oldest."

Now when the little bird heard this he returned to the hill, resumed his former shape, and waited for his three brothers. When he saw them coming he went out to meet them. He related what he had seen. Then they planned to take a pack strap and boil it so as to make it weak and soft. When this was done they gave it to the woman and sent her out for wood. Now when the woman had gone they took up the bundle she had brought with her and in which she kept the robe with the scalps and tossed it into the fire. Then the brothers went away.

The woman gathered together some wood, but every time she tried to tie it up with the pack strap the strap broke. At last she became very angry and said, "I will kill the brothers." So she returned to the tepee, but found the brothers gone and her bundle burned up. She was very angry.

She thrust her hands into the fire and pulled out the robe. Then she took up a large knife, tied an eagle feather on her hair, and started in pursuit of the brothers. As she was very swift, she soon over-took them, and, shaking the knife at them, said, "I will kill you."

All of the brothers shot arrows at her, but could not hit her. She came up, knocked down the oldest, then the second in order, and then the third. The youngest brother stood far off, with a bow and arrows in his hands.

The woman ran at him, but a crow that was flying around over his head said, "Young man shoot her in the head where the feather is."

The young man did as directed, and killed the woman. He beheaded her and buried the body. Then he made a fire, heated some stones, and made a sweat house. When this was done, he dragged his three dead brothers into the sweat house, where he began to sing a song and beat with a rattle. Then he poured water

upon the heated stones, and as the steam began to rise one of the brothers began to sigh. Then all of them sighed. When the youngest brother poured more water upon the stones, the three brothers came to life again. They all returned to their tepee. One day another young woman came and stood outside of the tepee as before. The youngest brother looked out and said, "My sister, come in."

This woman did not hide her face. After a time she said, "Have you any brothers?" The youngest brother told her that he had.

The youngest brother cooked some buffalo tongues and gave one to the woman. She thanked him for this and they talked pleasantly together.

Now the brothers were out hunting for buffalo as before, and the youngest went out to the top of a high hill and left his robe, became a bird, and sat upon the poles on the top of the tepee. He pecked at the poles.

The woman looked up and said, "Get away from here. You will spoil my brother's poles." Looking down the bird saw a row of moccasins laid out in front of the woman. She put her hand upon one pair saying to herself, "These are for the oldest." Then she took up another pair, saying, "These are for the next of age." So she went on until all were provided for.

Then the bird flew back to the hill and became a boy again. When he met his brothers, he related to them what he had seen. They were all happy. They had as much buffalo meat as they could carry, and when they came into the tepee the woman said, "Oh my, you are good." At once she began to dry and cook meat.

One day the oldest brother went out to hunt, but did not return. The following day the next in order of age went out to search for him, but he never came back. Then the next went out, but he also failed to come back. Then the youngest went out to look for his brothers, and as he did not come back the woman began to cry. She went out to the top of a hill and found a nice smooth round pebble there. So she slept at that place one night and then swallowed the pebble. When she reached the tepee her abdomen had become very much distended. After a little while she gave birth to a child. It was a boy.

As this boy grew up he always wanted a bow and arrows. And when he got them he was always shooting at birds and small animals. At last he became a tall man. Some of his uncles' arrows were still in the tepee, and one day, as he took them down, his mother related the fate of his four uncles. When the young man heard this story he said to his mother, "I shall find them."

"No, you are too young," said his mother.

"No, I am old enough," said the young man.

So the young man started out to search for his uncles. After a time he came to a high hill, from the top of which he saw a little old tepee. He went up to it and looked in at the door. He saw a very old woman in-side.

When the old woman saw him she said, "Come in, my grandchild; come in and break my ribs."

As the young man entered, the old woman stooped over toward the ground, and the young man kicked her with his foot until all her ribs were broken. At last, as he kicked, one of the ribs turned inward and pierced the old woman's heart. This killed her. Looking around inside the tepee, the young man saw the skeletons of many people. These were killed when breaking the old woman's ribs, because the last rib when broken turned outward and pierced the heart of the kicker. But this young man, who was called the Stone Boy, could not be killed in that way.

Among the skeletons in the tepee were those of the four uncles of the Stone Boy. He looked over the bones, then went outside, made a sweat house, and heated some stones. Then he took the bones into the sweat house, sang some songs, and beat with a rattle as his uncle had done. When he poured water on the stones and the steam began to rise, the dead all came to life. The Stone Boy addressed his uncles and said to them, "You are my four uncles who went away and never came back. Now I shall take you home with me."

One day Stone Boy said to his mother, "I am going out in this direction" (pointing to the left).

"No," said she, "you must not go that way, for it is dangerous."

"Yes, but I am going that way," said he. This was in the winter. He came to a very high hill where four girls were sliding down on the snow.

"Come chase us," said they. Stone Boy sat down behind them on the piece of raw hide they were sliding with. At the bottom of the hill they ran against a bank and Stone Boy bumped the girls so hard that they were killed. Then he went home.

After a time he went out on another journey, and saw an old buffalo bull hooking at a rock. Stone Boy stood watching him for a while and then said, "What are you doing there?"

The buffalo replied, "A man named Stone Boy killed four girls. These girls were four white buffalo, and now all the buffalo are hunting for Stone Boy. So I am practicing my horns on this rock, because Stone Boy is very hard to kill. When winter comes, we shall go out to hunt for Stone Boy."

"I am the one you are looking for," said Stone Boy to the buffalo, as he shot an arrow into his heart.

Then Stone Boy went home, and told his four uncles that they should gather together a lot of brush, because the buffalo were coming, and they would cover the earth. With the brush they built four fences around their tepee. Then the buffalo came. Stone Boy and his uncles shot down many of them with their arrows, but the buffalo tore down one fence after the other until just one remained. But so many buffalo had been killed by this time that the leader of the herd called the others away, and Stone Boy and his uncles were left to live in peace.

COYOTE AND THE BUFFALO

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Wissler, Clark. "Some Dakota Myths I." *Journal of American Folklore* 20 (1907): 124–126.

Date: ca. 1900

Original Source: Ogalala Lakota (Sioux)

National Origin: Native American

The following **myth** illustrates a typical introduction of coyote tales, "Once Coyote was walking along." Coyote's behavior throughout the narrative is also typical of this **trickster** role. He is motivated by petty passions such as hunger, fear, and curiosity. He attempts to use objects and powers that he does not comprehend and, as a result, ends up in no better condition than he was at the beginning of the adventure.

Once Coyote was walking along. He had nothing to eat for a long time and was thin and weak. Finally he came to a deserted camp, but could find nothing save the remains of the fire. While he was looking around for food, he came upon a knife and an arrow. He carried them away with him, and when he came to the top of a high hill he saw many buffalo grazing in the valley below. He crept up close to the crest of the hill and looked over. Then he said to himself as he looked at the arrow and the knife, "Now those people kill buffalo with these things." So he took up the arrow and threw it toward the buffalo, saying, "Now, go and kill the buffalo. Go, hit that one."

The arrow fell down upon the ground and said, "You must take a piece of wood and a string before I can go and kill the buffalo."

Then Coyote went up to a tree, took the knife and cut off one of the branches, trimmed it and peeled off the bark. He twisted the bark into a cord and tied it to the stick. Then he went back, laid the bow on the ground, picked up the arrow, put it on the stick, and said, "Now, go."

The arrow said to him, "No, that is not the way. You must pull on the string."

Then Coyote put the arrow down, took hold of the string, and dragged the bow along the ground.

"No, no!" said the arrow, "that is not the way. You must hold me against the stick with one hand and hold the string with the other." Coyote did so.

"Now," said the arrow, "pull with all your might and then let loose."

The arrow flew towards the buffalo, struck one of them in the side, but did not bring it down. Coyote picked up the knife and ran after the wounded buffalo as fast as he could. He shouted so loud that the wounded buffalo soon fell over

from fright. Coyote stopped at once to lick up the blood from his wounds. Then he took up the knife and got ready to butcher the buffalo. Just then he looked up and saw a bear sitting on the other side.

“Come on,” said Coyote, “I will give you some.” But the bear did not move.

Coyote invited him again. Then he came over and helped Coyote to butcher. Now, Coyote was afraid of the bear and so kept on the other side of the buffalo from him. After a while the blood in Coyote’s stomach began to roll. The bear heard the noise. He stopped and said, “What’s that?”

Then Coyote struck his stomach, and said in a loud voice, “Keep quiet, my brother.”

“What did your brother say?” said the bear.

“Well,” said Coyote, “my brother just said that he eats bear.”

The bear was puzzled by this, and started to go away.

“Where are you going?” said Coyote.

“Oh,” said the bear, “I am just going over the hill.”

As soon as the bear was out of sight, Coyote went up on the hill to look, and saw the bear running off as fast as he could. So he called out to the bear, “Come back, come back. I thought you were going to help me with my butchering.”

Then Coyote went back to the buffalo, and as there were many leaves upon the ground he covered the meat up with them. Then he went on with his butchering and a magpie flew by.

Coyote threw a piece of fat to the bird, saying, “Eat this, and then fly all around the world and tell the people to come here (all the birds and animals). There will be a great feast.”

The magpie went out and flew all around the country, inviting all the animals to come to the feast. They soon arrived, and gathered around in a circle. Then Coyote sat down to have a talk with them. As soon as he sat down the night hawk began to fly around over his head and make a noise.

“Oh, you get away, you jealous woman,” said Coyote. “I am going to talk now.” Then he tried to get up to begin his speech, but he could not rise. The night hawk had defecated around him, causing him to stick fast to his seat. Then all of the animals sprang up, ran to the carcass, and began to eat. Some of them soon found the meat hidden in the leaves, scratched it out, and ate it. Just as the meat was gone, Coyote got loose, but the animals ran away and left him. Then he sat down and cried.

After a time he started on his journey again and saw four buffalo. Now he had lost his knife and the arrow. The buffalo were in a hole among some tall grass. “Now, how can I get them,” said Coyote to himself. He went close up to them, and, when the buffalo looked at him, he said, “Brothers, turn me into a buffalo so that I can eat grass.”

“Well,” said a bull, “you stand over to one side and do not move.”

“Now,” said the buffalo, “get down and roll in the dust.”

When Coyote arose, the buffalo charged upon him, but Coyote was afraid and stepped to one side. The buffalo reproved him for this, and reminded him of the injunction to stand still. So they tried it again, but when the buffalo charged, Coyote stepped to one side as before. The buffalo reproved him, but said he would try again. The third time Coyote stepped aside as before. Now the buffalo was very angry, and he told Coyote he would try once more, and that, if he did not stand still, he would kill him.

This time Coyote stood still when the buffalo charged. The buffalo tossed him up into the air and as he came down he became a buffalo. At once Coyote began to eat grass. He was very hungry. The buffalo started to go, but Coyote lingered behind eating grass. Finally, he refused to follow altogether, and the herd left him.

Coyote saw a wolf, and called out to him, "Here, brother, let me turn you into a buffalo." Then Coyote instructed the wolf to stand to one side and not to move. Then he told the wolf to roll in the dust as before. When Coyote charged upon the wolf, the latter stepped to one side. This he did three times, but the fourth time he stood still. Coyote said, "Now, I will make you eat grass."

Then he tossed the wolf into the air, but he did not change. Coyote, himself, became a coyote again. Then the wolf began to fight him. Coyote was angry and said, "Now, you have spoiled all my fun, and I will punish you." So Coyote bit the wolf.

THE WOMAN WITH A BEAR LOVER

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Wissler, Clark. "Some Dakota Myths II." *Journal of American Folklore* 20 (1907): 195–196.

Date: ca. 1900

Original Source: Ogalala Lakota

National Origin: Native American

In the "Obstacle Flight" (AT 313 and 314), victims throw objects (in this case, a whetstone) behind them that are magically transformed into obstacles (here, a mountain). This narrative is cross-culturally distributed.

Once there was a man who lived alone with his three children and his young wife. One day, when the man returned from deer hunting, he found the children cooking bear's flesh. The next day, when he returned, he found them again cooking bear. Then he thought to him-self,

“I wonder how they kill these bears. The next time I shall watch.” So the next day he made ready as if to go deer hunting, but as soon as he got into the brush he concealed himself and waited.

In a little while he saw his young wife come out of the tepee with an axe on her back and walk toward the woods. As she went along, she struck the trees with her axe until she came to one that sounded hollow. When she struck on this a bear came out of the top, sprang to the ground, and after caressing the woman had sexual relations with her. Then the woman arose from the ground and killed him with the axe.

After the man saw what had happened, he went on with his hunting. When he returned he found his children cooking bear as before. He told the children not to eat any of the meat. His purpose was to make the woman eat all of it. Then he told his wife to eat.

At last she said, “I have enough now.” The man did not listen to her but took up the meat and forced it all down her throat until she died.

Then the man said, “Now children, you are to go back to your father [the bear].”

He gave them the skin of an oriole and a whetstone. Then he sent them out to look for their father. “Go home,” he said, “you do not belong here.”

So the children started on their way. While they were going they heard a little thing coming after them. They looked around and saw their mother’s head rolling along. “Where are you going?” said the head to the children.

The children were afraid and made no reply, but went on as fast as they could. They cried when the head was about to overtake them.

One of the children threw down the whetstone, and it turned into a very high mountain. This mountain separated the children from their mother’s head. When the head came to the foot of the mountain, a snake came along and the head said to it, “Grandfather, make a hole through this mountain for me. If you will make a hole through this mountain for me I will give you some scrapings from a buffalo-hide.”

So the snake bored a hole through the mountain. When the head had rolled through to the other side, it turned upon the snake and said, “No, I will not give you anything.”

Then the head took the snake and pulled it in two. Then the head went on in pursuit of the children, who were very tired. At last they went up into a tree to rest. The head came to the foot of the tree, looked up and saw the children at the top.

The head called to them, “My children, I have very hard times; come down and go home with me.” The children did not come down. The head waited a while at the foot of the tree, and then said angrily, “If you do not come down I will punish you. I will crush you, I will pound you up fine.”

Then the head began to shake the tree, and when the tree began to tremble a voice from above said to the children, “Take the bird’s nest you see near you

and sit on it.” Just as the children got into the nest, the tree began to fall, but the wind carried the nest far off. At last the nest came to the ground, and the children got out and hurried on their way. Finally they came to a very large river.

They looked back and saw the head still following them. Out in the river they saw something black moving along.

When the head saw the children, it called out, “Now, I shall get you. You will drown.”

The black object in the water was a boat with a man in it. When the man saw the children on the shore and the head pursuing, he called out to them, “My children, come here. I will kill your mother.”

The children sprang into the water and swam to the boat. When they neared it, the man put out his oar and raised the children into the boat one after the other. The head rolled into the water and swam toward the boat also.

The head said to the man, “Take me, too.” So the man put out his oar, and the head rolled up on it, but instead of lifting the head into the boat, the man swung the oar with all his might, and the head fell far out into the stream. Then he rowed out to where the head was floating and beat it under with his oar.

NATCHEZ

THE TAR BABY

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Swanton, John R. *Myths and Tales of the Southeastern Indians*. Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 88. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1929, 258–259.

Date: 1929

Original Source: Natchez

National Origin: Native American

By the earliest period of European contact, the Natchez had developed along the eastern bank of the Mississippi River a culture of such complexity that it was unrivaled north of Mexico. By the middle of the eighteenth century, however, the Natchez had been destroyed as a distinct cultural entity, although individuals survived passing along oral traditions such as the following tale. Influences from neighboring non-native cultures are readily apparent in tales such as “The Tar Baby.” The following narrative offers another version of a widely spread **tale type** (AT 175), known not only in the Americas but also in the Old World. There are many similarities among versions. For example, the “Briar Patch Punishment for Rabbit” (AT 1310A) is included in the Caribbean “Brother Rabbit an’ Brother Tar-Baby” (page 414). In the Natchez version of the tale, however, the **trickster** hero rabbit plays the role of shape-shifter. He does this by literally donning the skin of gray squirrel to gain initial access to the well. Taking on the shape of another being by donning its skin is commonly associated with witchcraft, but does not seem to do so in this case. Also, no apparent significance can be found for gray squirrel’s being the shape adopted by rabbit. Therefore, the similarity may indicate an exchange of **motifs** among neighboring groups that share a common

environment and way of life in the same region. There is an irony in rabbit who is seen to be the master of disguise in most narratives being trapped by a similarly false image.

All of the wild animals appointed a time to dig for water and when the time came assembled and began digging. But presently Rabbit gave up digging, and the others went on digging without him. They found water. Then they stationed two people to watch it. But Rabbit became very thirsty. He killed a gray squirrel, stripped off its hide, got into it, and came to the watchers. It was Rabbit who did it, but in the form of the gray squirrel he said that he had become very thirsty for lack of water. "You may drink water because you are just a gray squirrel," they said to him, and he drank. He drank all he wanted and went away. Then he pulled off the hide.

But when he thought of going back to drink again the hide had become hard and he could not get it on, so when he became thirsty he dipped up the water at night. But when he set out water for his visitors they said to him, "Where did you find it?" and he answered, "I got it from the dew." Then, following the tracks by the water, they saw signs of Rabbit, made an image of a person out of pitch and set it up near the place where they had dug the well.

The next night Rabbit came and stood there. "Who are you?" he said. There was no reply and he continued, "If you do not speak I will strike you." Rabbit struck it with one hand and his hand stuck to it. "Let me go. If you do not let me go I will strike you with my other hand," he said, and he struck it with that hand. When he hit it that hand also stuck. "Let me go. Stop holding me. If you do not let me go I will kick you," he said, and he kicked it. When he kicked it his foot stuck. "If you do not let go I will kick you with my other foot," he said, and he kicked it with that foot. When he did so his other foot stuck. "Let me go," he said, "I have my head left, and if you do not let me go I will butt you." He pulled back and forth to get free and butted it with his head and his head stuck. Then he hung there all doubled up.

While he was hanging there day came. And when it was light the water watchers came and found Rabbit hanging there. They picked him up, made a prisoner of him, and carried him off. They assembled together to kill him. "Let us throw him into the fire," they said, but Rabbit laughed and replied, "Nothing can happen to me there. That is where I travel around."

"If that is the case we must kill him some other way," they said, and after they had debated a long time concluded, "Let us tie a rock around his neck and throw him into the water," but Rabbit laughed and called out, "I live all the time in water. Nothing can happen to me there."

"Well," they said, "he will be hard to kill. How can we kill him?" After all had conferred for a while, they said, "I wonder what would become of him if we threw him into a brier patch?" At that Rabbit cried out loudly. "Now you have

killed me,” he said. “Now we have killed him,” they replied. “If we had known that at first we would have had him killed already,” so they carried him to a brier thicket, Rabbit weeping unceasingly as he was dragged along. Then they threw him into the brier thicket with all their strength, and he fell down, got up, and ran off at once, whooping.

NAVAJO

NOQOÏLPI, THE GAMBLER: A NAVAJO MYTH

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Matthews, Washington. "Noqoilpi, the Gambler: A Navajo Myth." *Journal of American Folklore* 2 (1889): 89–94.

Date: ca. 1889

Original Source: Navajo (New Mexico)

National Origin: Native American

According to folklorist Washington Matthews, "In the cañon of the Chaco, in northern New Mexico, there are many ruins of ancient pueblos which are still in a fair state of preservation, in some of them entire apartments being yet, it is said, intact. One of the largest of these is called by the Navajos Kintyèl or Kintyèli, which signifies 'Broad-house.' It figures frequently in their legends" (89). These are ruins of dwellings built by the Anasazi who occupied the area from about 1 C.E. to 1300 C.E. farming corn, beans, and squash. There are varied opinions concerning the reasons for the abandonment of the cliff dwellings and the fragmenting of the Anasazi culture; their descendants are probably the modern Zuni Pueblo. Some scholars contend that the Navajo migrated to the area as early as 1000 C.E., which would place them in the area before the Anasazi abandonment. At the time of their arrival, the Navajo, like the Apache, were hunters and gatherers. They were strongly influenced by the sedentary Pueblo farmers, which wrought changes in areas such as their means of obtaining subsistence and their religious life. The formulaic use of the number four is common not only in Navajo tradition, but among the majority of Native American groups. The story of "Noqoilpi, the Gambler" is a single episode in the Navajo myth of the creation and their migration to the Southwest.

Some time before, there had descended among the Pueblos, from the heavens, a divine gambler or gambling-god, named *Noqoilpi*, or He-who-wins-men (at play); his talisman was a great piece of turquoise. When he came, he challenged the people to all sorts of games and contests, and in all of these he was successful. He won from them, first their property, then their women and children, and finally some of the men themselves.

Then he told them he would give them part of their property back in payment if they would build a great house; so when the Navajos came, the Pueblos were busy building in order that they might release their enthralled relatives and their property. They were also busy making a race-track, and preparing for all kinds of games of chance and skill.

When all was ready, and four days notice had been given, twelve men came from the neighboring pueblo of *Kinçolij* (Blue-house) to compete with the great gambler. They bet their own persons, and after a brief contest they lost themselves to *Noqoilpi*. Again a notice of four days was given, and again twelve men of *Kinçolij*—relatives of the former twelve—came to play, and these also lost themselves. For the third time an announcement, four days in advance of a game, was given; this time some women were among the twelve contestants, and they too lost themselves. All were put to work on the building of *Kintyèl* as soon as they forfeited their liberty. At the end of another four days the children of these men and women came to try to win back their parents, but they succeeded only in adding themselves to the number of the gambler's slaves. On a fifth trial, after four days' warning, twelve leading men of Blue-house were lost, among them the chief of the pueblo. On a sixth duly announced gambling-day twelve more men, all important persons, staked their liberty and lost it. Up to this time the Navajos had kept count of the winnings of *Noqoilpi*, but afterwards people from other pueblos came in such numbers to play and lose that they could keep count no longer. In addition to their own persons the later victims brought in beads, shells, turquoise, and all sorts of valuables, and gambled them away. With the labor of all these slaves it was not long until the great *Kintyèl* was finished.

But all this time the Navajos had been merely spectators, and had taken no part in the games. One day the voice of the beneficent god *Qastcèyalçi* was heard faintly in the distance crying his usual call "hu'hu'hu'hu'." His voice was heard, as it is always heard, four times, each time nearer and nearer, and immediately after the last call, which was loud and clear, *Qastcèyalçi* appeared at the door of a hut where dwelt a young couple who had no children, and with them he communicated by means of signs.

He told them that the people of *Kinçolij* had lost at game with *Noqoilpi* two great shells, the greatest treasures of the pueblo; that the Sun had coveted these shells, and had begged them from the gambler; that the latter had refused the request of the Sun and the Sun was angry. In consequence of all this, as *Qastcèyalçi* related, in twelve days from his visit certain divine personages would

meet in the mountains, in a place which he designated, to hold a great ceremony. He invited the young man to be present at the ceremony, and disappeared.

The Navajo kept count of the passing days; on the twelfth day he repaired to the appointed place, and there he found a great assemblage of the gods. There were *Qastcèyalçi*, *Qastcèqogan* and his son, *Niltci*, the Wind, *Tcalyèl*, the Darkness, *Tcàapani*, the Bat, *Klictsò*, the Great Snake, *Tsilkkàli* (a little bird), *Nasísi*, the Gopher, and many others. Beside these, there were present a number of pets or domesticated animals belonging to the gambler, who were dissatisfied with their lot, were anxious to be free, and would gladly obtain their share of the spoils in case their master was ruined. *Niltci*, the Wind, had spoken to them, and they had come to enter into the plot against *Noqoilpi*.

All night the gods danced and sang, and performed their mystic rites, for the purpose of giving to the son of *Qastcèqogan* powers as a gambler equal to those of *Noqoilpi*. When the morning came they washed the young neophyte all over, dried him with corn meal, dressed him in clothes exactly like those the gambler wore, and in every way made him look as much like the gambler as possible, and then they counseled as to what other means they should take to outwit *Noqoilpi*.

In the first place, they desired to find out how he felt about having refused to his father, the Sun, the two great shells.

"I will do this," said *Niltci*, the Wind, "for I can penetrate everywhere, and no one can see me"; but the others said, "No, you can go everywhere, but you cannot travel without making a noise and disturbing people. Let *Tcalyèl*, the Darkness, go on this errand, for he also goes wherever he wills, yet he makes no noise."

So *Tcalyèl* went to the gambler's house, entered his room, went all through his body while he slept, and searched well his mind, and he came back saying, "*Noqoilpi* is sorry for what he has done."

Niltci, however, did not believe this; so, although his services had been before refused, he repaired to the chamber where the gambler slept, and went all through his body and searched well his mind; but he too came back saying *Noqoilpi* was sorry that he had refused to give the great shells to his father.

One of the games they proposed to play is called *çàka-çqadsàç*, or the thirteen chips; it is played with thirteen thin flat pieces of wood, which are colored red on one side and left white or uncolored on the other side. Success depends on the number of chips, which, being thrown upward, fall with their white sides up.

"Leave the game to me," said the Bat; "I have made thirteen chips that are white on both sides. I will hide myself in the ceiling, and when our champion throws up his chips I will grasp them and throw down my chips instead."

Another game they were to play is called *nanjoj*; it is played with two long sticks or poles, of peculiar shape and construction (one marked with red and the other with black), and a single hoop. A long many-tailed string, called the "turkey-claw," is secured to the center of each pole.

“Leave *nanjoj* to me,” said the Great Snake; “I will hide myself in the hoop and make it fall where I please.”

Another game was one called *tsínbetsil*, or push-on-the-wood; in this the contestants push against a tree until it is torn from its roots and falls.

“I will see that this game is won,” said *Nasísi*, the Gopher; “I will gnaw the roots of the tree, so that he who shoves it may easily make it fall.”

In the game of *tol*, or ball, the object was to hit the ball so that it would fall beyond a certain line.

“I will win this game for you,” said the little bird, *Tsilkáli*, “for I will hide within the ball, and fly with it wherever I want to go. Do not hit the ball hard; give it only a light tap, and depend on me to carry it.”

The pets of the gambler begged the Wind to blow hard, so that they might have an excuse to give their master for not keeping due watch when he was in danger, and in the morning the Wind blew for them a strong gale. At dawn the whole party of conspirators left the mountain, and came down to the brow of the *cañon* to watch until sunrise.

Noqoilpi had two wives, who were the prettiest women in the whole land. Wherever she went, each carried in her hand a stick with something tied on the end of it, as a sign that she was the wife of the great gambler.

It was their custom for one of them to go every morning at sunrise to a neighboring spring to get water. So at sunrise the watchers on the brow of the cliff saw one of the wives coming out of the gambler’s house with a water jar on her head, whereupon the son of *Qastcèqogan* descended into the *cañon*, and followed her to the spring. She was not aware of his presence until she had filled her water-jar; then she supposed it to be her own husband, whom the youth was dressed and adorned to represent, and she allowed him to approach her. She soon discovered her error, however, but deeming it prudent to say nothing, she suffered him to follow her into the house. As he entered, he observed that many of the slaves had already assembled; perhaps they were aware that some trouble was in store for their master. The latter looked up with an angry face; he felt jealous when he saw the stranger entering immediately after his wife.

He said nothing of this, however, but asked at once the important question, “Have you come to gamble with me?” This he repeated four times, and each time the young *Qastcèqogan* said “No.” Thinking the stranger feared to play with him, Noqoilpi went on challenging him recklessly.

“I’ll bet myself against yourself”;

“I’ll bet my feet against your feet”;

“I’ll bet my legs against your legs”; and so on he offered to bet every and any part of his body against the same part of his adversary, ending by mentioning his hair.

In the mean time the party of divine ones, who had been watching from above, came down, and people from the neighboring pueblos came in, and among these were two boys, who were dressed in costumes similar to those worn

by the wives of the gambler. The young *Qastcèqogan* pointed to these and said, "I will bet my wives my against your wives."

The great gambler accepted the wager, and the four persons, two women and two mock women, were placed sitting in a row near the wall. First they played the game of thirteen chips. The Bat assisted, as he had promised the son of *Qastcèqogan*, and the latter soon won the game, and with it the wives of *Noqòilpi*.

This was the only game played inside the house; then all went out of doors, and games of various kinds were played. First they tried *nanjoj*. The track already prepared lay east and west, but, prompted by the wind god, the stranger insisted on having a track made from north to south, and again, at the bidding of the Wind, he chose the red stick. The son of *Qastcèqogan* threw the wheel: at first it seemed about to fall on the gambler's pole, in the "turkey-claw" of which it was entangled; but to the great surprise of the gambler it extricated itself, rolled farther on, and fell on the pole of his opponent. The latter ran to pick up the ring, lest *Noqòilpi* in doing so might hurt the Snake inside; but the gambler was so angry that he threw his stick away and gave up the game, hoping to do better in the next contest, which was that of pushing down trees.

For this the great gambler pointed out two small trees, but his opponent insisted that larger trees must be found. After some search they agreed upon two of good size, which grew close together, and of these the wind-god told the youth which one he must select. The gambler strained with all his might at his tree, but could not move it, while his opponent, when his turn came, shoved the other tree prostrate with little effort, for its roots had all been severed by the Gopher.

Then followed a variety of games, on which *Noqòilpi* staked his wealth in shells and precious stones, his houses, and many of his slaves, and lost all.

The last game was that of the ball. On the line over which the ball was to be knocked all the people were assembled: on one side were those who still remained slaves; on the other side were the freedmen and those who had come to wager themselves, hoping to rescue their kinsmen. *Noqòilpi* bet on this game the last of his slaves and his own person. The gambler struck his ball a heavy blow, but it did not reach the line; the stranger gave his but a light tap, and the ball within it flew with it far beyond the line, where at the released captives jumped over the line and joined their people.

The victor ordered all the shell beads and precious stones and the great shells to be brought forth. He gave the beads and shells to *Qastèyalçi*, that they might be distributed among the gods; the two great shells were given to the Sun.

In the mean time *Noqòilpi* sat to one side saying bitter things, bemoaning his fate, and cursing and threatening his enemies, "I will kill you all with the lightning. I will send war and disease among you. May the cold freeze you! May the fire burn you! May the waters drown you!" he cried.

“He has cursed enough,” whispered *Niltci* to the son of *Qastcèqogan*. “Put an end to his angry words.”

So the young victor called Noqoilpi to him, and said, “You have bet yourself and have lost; you are now my slave and must do my bidding. You are not a god, for my power has prevailed against yours.”

The victor had a bow of magic power named the Bow of Darkness; he bent this upwards, and placing the string on the ground, he bade his illustrious slave stand on the string; then he shot Noqoilpi up into the sky as if he had been an arrow. Up and up he went, growing smaller and smaller to the sight till he faded to a mere speck, and finally disappeared altogether. As he flew upwards he was heard to mutter in the angry tones of abuse and imprecation, until he was too far away to be heard; but no one could distinguish anything he said as he ascended.

He flew up in the sky until he came to the home of *Bekotcic-e*, the god who carries the moon, and who is supposed by the Navajos to be identical with the god of the Americans. He is very old, and dwells in a long row of stone houses. When Noqoilpi arrived at the house of *Bekotcic-e*, he related to the latter all his misadventures in the lower world and said, “Now I am poor, and this is why I have come to see you.”

“You need be poor no longer,” said *Bekotcic-e*. “I will provide for you.”

So he made for the gambler pets or domestic animals of new kinds, different to those which he had in the Chaco valley; he made for him sheep, asses, horses, swine, goats, and fowls. He also gave him *bayeta*, and other cloths of bright colors, more beautiful than those woven by his slaves at *Kintyèli*. He made, too, a new people, the Mexicans, for the gambler to rule over, and then he sent him back to this world again, but he descended far to the south of his former abode, and reached the earth in old Mexico.

Noqoilpi’s people increased greatly in Mexico, and after a while they began to move toward the north, and build towns along the Rio Grande. Noqoilpi came with them until they arrived at a place north of Santa Fé. There they ceased building, and he returned to old Mexico, where he still lives, and where he is now the *Nakàì C-igíni*, or God of the Mexicans.

OJIBWA

THE FLOOD

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Radin, Paul, and A. B. Reagan. "Ojibwa Myths and Tales: The Manabozho Cycle." *Journal of American Folklore* 41 (1928): 71–76.

Date: 1911–1914

Original Source: Ojibwa

National Origin: Native American

Manabozho is the preeminent **trickster** in the Algonquin cultures of the North and Northeastern Woodlands. In this **myth**, however, his primary role is that of **culture hero** who cleanses the environment of monstrous sea-lions and snakes, making the world safe for human life. His supernatural power is demonstrated further by powers of prophesy, restoring life to the dead and shape-shifting.

Manabozho, as he is known to the Indians, is the Eastern God. When he was a boy he lived with his grandmother. His father and mother had been killed in war. When he became of age, he prepared to go to war.

The enemy (the sea lion) that had killed his parents lived on an island surrounded by water. Surrounding this island and extending to a distance of a mile and a half from shore was floating pitch-like ice, such that a canoe could not get ashore over it. He asked his grandmother for advice but she told him it was futile for him to fight with the sea-lion that lived on that island. However, Manabozho was determined. He made a large canoe and covered it with tallow so that it would float and go through the pitch that surrounded the island. The purpose of the pitch was to catch the canoe in it; after which the sea-lion would

come out and devour the canoe and its occupants. When Manabozho had completed his canoe, he made a good bow and prepared plenty of arrows to fight with. After everything was ready, he started on the war path.

When he had launched his canoe, he told his grandmother to go ahead of him with another canoe in a zigzag course up the channel for a little way. (This custom of having the women precede a war party for a little way on its start was long afterwards followed by the Chippewas in starting on the war path against the Sioux.) So Manabozho started on his war expedition.

After considerable labor in paddling and pushing his canoe through and over the pitch-like ice, he landed safely on the island in the night. There on the shore he stayed till the break of day. At dawn, he gave a war-whoop and ran toward the chief's house, the sea-monster's home. Upon hearing the war-whoop, the chief jumped from his bed and got his bow and arrows.

The two powerful beings started to fight in accordance with the powers with which they were endowed by their superior givers. The fight was terrible. They fought two days continually without killing each other, and rested on their arms, with the contest undecided. But Manabozho had advisors at hand.

On the evening following the second day's battle, Batter, the bird called Bluejay, accosted Manabozho and said, "You can not kill the Sea-lion by shooting him in the body. His heart and vital parts are not in his body. I will tell you where his heart is if you will promise to give me some meat from his dead carcass."

With open mouth and wide eyes, Manabozho listened to Batter's statements and advice until he was through, then replied, "My brother, if you will tell me where the chief Sea-lion's heart is, I will give you the meat and make you chief of the Blue jays and all carnivorous birds."

"In truth," spoke up Batter, as he flew to a limb over Manabozho so as to be heard more easily without talking loud enough to be heard by anyone else, "this monster's heart is in his little toe. Aim for the little toe the next time you go into battle with him, and you will succeed in killing him."

The morning of the third day, Manabozho started again to fight after giving a war-whoop. The chief Sea-lion came out with his full equipment for another battle. The fight had begun. Manabozho aimed for the little toe of his adversary. The arrow struck the mark squarely and penetrated the vital organs. The chief Sea-lion keeled over and died. Seeing him fall, Manabozho ran towards him, pulled his knife out and cut the chief's scalp off.

He then set out for his canoe and sailed across to the place where he had left his grandmother, singing his song of victory as he went, as the Indians used to sing when returning from the battle field.

When the grandmother heard Manabozho coming, singing his song of victory, she started out to meet him in her canoe, and nearing the canoe of her grandson she took the scalp from him and set out ahead toward the shore.

Landing, she called the village neighbors, and all began to have the war dance around the scalp in the middle of the dance hall, as it was the custom of the Indians to dance the war dance in the past. Thus they danced till they had completed the ceremony. Then they smoked the pipe of peace.

After the close of the four-days dance over the scalp of the chief Sea-lion, Manabozho bid his grandmother good-bye, and started west over the earth. After four days of journeying, he met four wolves. One of the four was a chief.

Meeting him, they then accompanied him for four days. As he thus journeyed west with them, he noticed every evening when they camped for the night that they would pile sticks in a heap and the chief wolf would jump over the pile four times. Then the wood would catch fire without the aid of any fire-starter. So Manabozho learned this manner of starting fires from the chief. As they traveled about, young wolves came along behind and chased down the moose and deer and killed them as they were needed. Then they would dress and cook them and all would eat to their satisfaction. So all were happy.

After journeying four days with the wolf pack, Manabozho took one of the young wolves to accompany him, and leaving the rest of the wolves, he continued on his way west. He called the young wolf his nephew. The first night after they had parted company with the rest of the wolves, Manabozho had a bad dream.

The next morning he told his nephew to be careful, as he was to chase a moose that morning, a moose which they had tracked the evening before, and he warned his nephew on account of his dream. This he told his nephew as he was about to start, for the hunt. He continued, "In chasing this moose you are tracking whenever you come to a little stream always cut a tree down and walk across on it. Don't jump over. Be careful, I had a bad dream about you in connection with this chase."

The nephew started out on the chase, and Manabozho, followed his tracks. Soon the nephew came to a little stream. He felled a tree across the stream as he had been instructed by his uncle Manabozho. Over this he crossed safely. After a while he came to another very small stream. This he thought he would jump over, as it seemed much too small to take time to cut a tree down on which to cross. In addition he could see the moose only just a little way farther on staggering with fatigue, and by crossing immediately, he could soon overtake it. He could even taste fresh meat, he imagined, so sure was he of the moose.

So he jumped. As he jumped, the stream swelled instantly into a raging torrent and swept him away; it became a large river through the power of the great snake god living a little way off from the outlet near a point that projected into the open lake. It was on an island just beyond this sand-point that the Snake God and other snakes and bears lived, animals that live in the water. Here to this island home the wolf was taken a prisoner, killed and skinned and his hide used to cover the door-way of the lodge where the snakes go in and out.

Manabozho, following along behind, tracked his nephew to this second stream, now a big river. He found that his nephew's tracks ended there. He knew at once that he had disobeyed his orders of the morning, to cut a tree and place it across every stream he came to. He had cut one tree down and had crossed the stream there safely; but now he had disobeyed orders. He had tried to jump the stream but had been caught by the current, and the stream getting larger and swifter as it passed on toward the lake, had taken him out with it to the residence of the Chief Snake God, who had then killed him and placed his hide as a door cover for the snake-passage.

Finding that his nephew's tracks ended at the stream crossing and that he had undoubtedly been swept out into the lake by the stream, Manabozho started down its winding course, hoping that he might find his nephew stranded and alive yet, or that he might be lucky enough to find his body, if dead. As he neared the stream's mouth he saw a bird looking down into the water. He sneaked slowly up to it. When it was within reach, he made a grab for its head, but unfortunately he just missed his hold and merely ruffled the feathers on the back of its head and neck. (The bird was a kingfisher; the top bunch of feathers on his head became a pompadour.) Having escaped the bird flew away a short distance and lit.

Then looking back and seeing Manabozho he said, "I would have told you where your nephew was had you not grabbed me by the head as you did."

But Manabozho was equal to the occasion, for he knew the vanity of living beings. So he said to the bird, "Come over and tell me and I will make you a pretty bird." Then the bird flew near to Manabozho and told him that his nephew had been killed by the Chief Snake who lived near the sand point yonder. He told him further that the snakes and bears and other water beasts came out to sun themselves about noon on the sand point each nice day and that the Chief Snake would be the last to come ashore to sun himself and take a nap. Manabozho thanked the bird for the information and made a nice bird of him, rubbed his breast with white clay and painted his back blue.

Having completed his conversation with the bird, Manabozho started for the sand point, after he had made a strong bow and had prepared bullrush tops for arrows. When he got near the sand beach he said to himself, "I will be a tree-stump." So he turned into a stump of a poplar tree.

After a while, as the sun ascended the heavens, the snakes came out to sun themselves on the sandy beach as they were wont to do, the white bears coming last. Then the Chief Snake came. The others had noticed nothing; but the Chief Snake at once noticed the tree-stump.

"What is that?" he exclaimed instantly. On scanning it further, he said, "I believe that is Manabozho standing there." Then he turned to another of the snakes and said, "You go and coil around that stump and squeeze it hard."

So the snake did as he was bidden. He went to the stump, coiled himself around it and squeezed it; but Manabozho never moved. After the snake had

tried this for a considerable time, he gave it up and went back to where the Chief Snake was, saying, "That can't be Manabozho."

But the chief Snake was not satisfied. He turned to the white bear and commanded him also to examine the supposed stump, saying to him, "You go and climb on that stump to the top and slide down so as to scratch it as you come down."

The bear did as he was told and Manabozho nearly squealed, but he never moved. Going back to his master, the bear then said, "That can't be Manabozho."

So the chief Snake was satisfied. He came ashore and stretched himself on the sand to sun himself. Then after all the reptiles were fast asleep, Manabozho turned into a man again, took out his bow and arrows and went near the chief snake and shot him in the body; but the chief Snake never moved.

Then Manabozho remembered what the kingfisher had told him, that to injure the chief Snake he must shoot his shadow. This time Manabozho shot the chief Snake's shadow. Instantly he stretched out and gasped in awful pain.

Seeing this, Manabozho started to run back to get a few logs together to make a raft. The kingfisher had told him that if he wounded the chief Snake, he would flood the world as high as the topmost tree; that then the water would go down again; but that if he killed him, the dying reptile would destroy the whole world with a mighty flood. The water had already begun to rise. So Manabozho got on the little raft he had succeeded in making and floated about, as he watched the water rise until the trees all disappeared. Then the water went slowly down again.

After it was dry on the earth, Manabozho went back to tell the chief wolf what had happened. After narrating this to the wolf tribe, he went back to the lake where he had the encounter with the chief Snake. He knew by the fact that the world was not destroyed completely that the chief Snake had only been wounded, and he had it in his mind to kill him, whatever the consequence might be.

As he was walking along the shore of the lake, he heard something rattling. Looking ahead, he saw a large frog-like old lady jumping along. She had a rattle which she used in doctoring. She also had a pack of basswood bark on her back. "Hello, grandma," shouted Manabozho to her, "where are you going?"

"I am going to the chief Snake's house to doctor him," answered the frog-lady.

"Why, what is the matter with the chief Snake, grandma?"

"Why, a great god Manabozho, shot the chief Snake for revenge."

"Grandma, teach me your medicine song," broke in Manabozho, "I will pay you."

So, tempted with the promised pay, the old medicine-frog-lady told Manabozho all about her doctoring and medicine songs. Then Manabozho, after he had learned all she could impart to him, killed her, skinned her, then put the

skin on himself, took the rattle and the pack of basswood bark and started for the village where the chief Snake lived. On the way, he stopped where the old frog-lady lived and there he made himself at home and waited.

That evening a messenger came saying, "Grandma, you are invited again to come and doctor the chief."

"All right," answered Manabozho. Then imitating the old frog-lady, he started to finish his killing of the chief Snake. As he journeyed toward the home of the King Snake he got a lot of trees together for a raft, in case he should need them. Getting everything ready, he continued on his journey to the chief Snake's house.

As he neared the door, he noticed his nephew's skin hanging as a curtain in the doorway. The sight of it made him feel so bad that he almost cried. They, thinking he was the old medicine-frog-lady, invited him into the house, and he entered.

They led him to the room where the chief Snake lay very sick. On entering the room, Manabozho took his rattles and started to sing the medicine songs he had learned from the aged frog-lady. As he sang he crawled nearer and nearer to the chief's side. As he did so, he saw that the arrow that he had shot that previous time was still imbedded in his flesh with the broken end sticking out. He waited.

At the opportune moment, he pushed the arrow completely in and instantly killed the chief, as he had intended. Immediately he fled from the house, singing to cover his tracks and to prevent suspicion. He knew the consequence of his act, and set out with all speed for his raft arriving there none too soon.

While Manabozho was still running, the water began to rise, and by the time he reached his raft it was knee-deep. He got on top of the raft just as it began to float away. The whole world was immediately submerged.

In this catastrophe the animals began to swim around the raft trying to get somewhere safe from the raging waters. Some succeeded in getting up on the raft—all that could; others hung on. For three days they were floating as if it were an ocean and they were in the middle of it; there was no land to be seen anywhere. The whole land surface had been swallowed up.

One thing Manabozho had forgotten before he got aboard his raft: he had forgotten to get a handful of dirt from the earth. So on the morning of the fourth day of the flood, he called a council, saying, "We must do something. We can not stay here on this raft for all time. We must get some dirt." So he chose four divers: Beaver, Otter, Loon, and Muskrat. These were to try to secure some earth from the bottom of the sea so as to be able to start land again.

Beaver first dove down; but died before he reached the bottom of the waters. The Otter dove likewise but died and floated lifeless on the water. Then the loon went down and down and returned again without anything. He had seen it but had lost his life just as he was nearing the green land and the trees. He floated dead near the raft and Manabozho brought him back to life by

blowing his breath into his face. The Muskrat then started to dive downward. For two days nothing was seen of him. At last, however, he floated again on the waters' surface near the raft, dead and all doubled up. They pulled him aboard. Then Manabozho blew life into him again and examined him to see what he had found.

In the Muskrat's hands he found a little earth and sand, also in his feet and mouth, also a leaf and some seed. Having obtained the coveted gifts of earth, Manabozho dried them in his hands and caused them to increase till he had a hand full of them. The re-creation of the world was at hand.

Being all ready for the great work before him, Manabozho held his hand filled with dirt, sand, and seed up to his face, palm up. At once he began to blow his breath strongly over the lump and blow particles of it off around the raft. In this way he formed an island. At once the animals left the raft and began to roam around on the land surface, but Manabozho kept on blowing the particles from his hand out further and further, thus extending the land area. He kept on blowing till the "land extended beyond human sight." He then sent the raven to fly around the earth (land) to see how big it was.

He was gone for two days, then returned. Manabozho said, "That's too small." So he blew more and more sand. Then he sent the dove to see how large the earth was. But it was so large that the dove never came back. Manabozho was satisfied that the world was big enough. Then he started to plant things, including the great forest of the Northwest. Having completed his re-creation of the earth, he departed for his home.

Manabozho now lives down East, the great chief of all spirits of the Indians. He conquered and killed the great enemy of mankind, the Chief-Snake God. If Indians live good lives, according to the teachings of the Grand Medicine lodge, they will be guided to the happy hunting ground when they die, there to be forever happy, happy throughout all eternity with Manabozho, their elder brother.

BEAR MAIDEN

Tradition Bearer: Pa-skin

Source: Jenks, Albert Ernest. "The Bear Maiden: An Ojibwa Folk-Tale from Lac Courte Oreille Reservation, Wisconsin." *Journal of American Folklore* 15 (1902): 33–35.

Date: 1899

Original Source: Ojibwa

National Origin: Native American

According to the author, Albert Ernest Jenks, the narrator Pa-skin, was an elderly woman more than one hundred years old. Jenks goes on to suggest that the only European influence in this **ordinary folktale** enters

with the horse, the bells, and the dishes at the end of the narrative. However, elements such as the pervasive patterns of threes, the success of the devalued younger of three siblings, and the winning of a spouse by performing extraordinary tasks for a chief (king) suggest more extensive European impact.

There was an old man and woman who had three daughters, two older ones, and a younger one who was a little bear. The father and mother got very old and could not work any longer, so the two older daughters started away to find work in order to support themselves. They did not want their little sister to go with them, so they left her at home.

After a time they looked around, and saw the little Bear running to overtake them. They took her back home, and tied her to the door-posts of the wigwam, and again started away to find work; and again they heard something behind them, and saw the little Bear running toward them with the posts on her back. The sisters untied her from them and tied her to a large pine tree.

Then they continued on their journey. They heard a noise behind them once more, and turned around to find their younger sister, the little Bear, running to them with the pine tree on her back. They did not want her to go with them, so they untied her from the pine tree and fastened her to a huge rock, and continued on in search of work.

Soon they came to a wide river which they could not get across. As they sat there on the shore wondering how they could cross the river, they heard a noise coming toward them. They looked up and saw their younger sister running to them with the huge rock on her back. They untied the rock, threw it into the middle of the river, laid a pine tree on it, and walked across. This time the little Bear went with them.

After a short journey they came to a wigwam where an old woman lived with her two daughters. This old woman asked them where they were going. They told her that their parents were old, and that they were seeking work in order to support themselves. She invited them in, gave them all supper, and after supper the two older sisters and the two daughters of the old woman went to sleep in the same bed.

The old woman and the little Bear sat up, and the little Bear told many stories to the old woman. At last they both appeared to fall asleep. The little Bear pinched the old woman, and finding her asleep, went to the bed and changed the places of the four sleeping girls. She put the daughters of the old woman on the outside and her own sisters in the middle. Then she lay down as though asleep. After a short time the old woman awoke and pinched the little Bear to see whether she slept. She sharpened her knife and went to the bed and cut off the heads of the two girls at the outer edges of the bed. The old woman lay down and soon was sleeping. The little Bear awoke her sisters, and they all three crept away.

In the morning when the old woman got up and found that she had killed her two daughters, she was very angry. She jumped up into the sky, and tore down the sun and hid it in her wigwam, so that the little Bear and her sisters would get lost in the dark. They passed on and on, and at last met a man carrying a light. He said he was searching for the sun. They passed on, and soon came to a large village where all of the men were going around with lights. Their chief was sick because the sun had vanished.

He asked the little Bear whether she could bring back the sun. She said, "Yes, give me two hands full of maple-sugar and your oldest son." With the maple-sugar she went to the wigwam of the old woman, and, climbing up to the top, threw the sugar into a kettle of wild rice which the old woman was cooking.

When the old woman tasted the rice she found it too sweet, so she went away to get some water to put in the kettle, and the little Bear jumped down, ran into the wigwam, grabbed up the hidden sun, and threw it into the sky. When the little Bear returned to the village, she gave the oldest son of the chief to her oldest sister for a husband.

The old woman was angry, very angry, to find that the sun was again up in the sky, so she jumped up and tore down the moon. The good old chief again became sick because the nights were all dark. He asked the little Bear whether she could bring back the moon.

She said, "Yes, if you give me two handfuls of salt and your next oldest son." She took the salt, climbed on top of the wigwam of the old woman, and threw it into her boiling kettle. Again the old woman had to go away for water. The little Bear then ran into the wigwam, and, catching up the moon, tossed it into the sky. The little Bear returned to the village and gave the chief's second son to her other sister.

Again the old chief got sick, and he asked the little Bear whether she could get him his lost horse which was all covered with bells. She answered, "Yes, give me two handfuls of maple-sugar and your youngest son." The little Bear went to the old woman's wigwam, and, doing as she had done before, she made the old woman go away for water.

She then slipped into the wigwam and began taking the bells from the horse which was there. She led the horse outside, but she had neglected to take off one bell. The old woman heard the bell, and ran and caught the little Bear. She put the bells all back onto the horse, and put the little Bear into a bag and tied the bag to a limb of a tree. When this was done she went far away to get a large club with which to break the little Bear's neck.

While she was gone the little Bear bit a hole in the bag and got down. This time she took all of the bells from the horse, and then she caught all of the dogs and pet animals of the old woman, and put them and her dishes into the bag, and tied it to the limb. Pretty soon the old woman returned with her large club, and she began to beat the bag furiously. The little Bear could see from her

hiding-place, and could hear the animals and hear the dishes breaking as the old woman struck the bag.

When the little Bear took the horse to the chief, he gave her his youngest son. They lived close to the other two brothers and sisters. The little Bear's husband would not sleep with her, so she became very angry, and told him to throw her into the fire.

Her sisters heard the noise, and came in to see what the matter was. The young man told them what their sister had ordered him to do. When they went away he turned toward the fire, and a beautiful, very beautiful maiden sprang out from the flames. Then this beautiful maiden would not sleep with her husband.

Tlingit

EL: THE MYTH OF RAVEN

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Golder, F. A. "Tlingit Myths." *Journal of American Folklore* 20 (1907): 290–294.

Date: ca. 1907

Original Source: Tlingit

National Origin: Native American

The Tlingit are the northern neighbors of the Haida (see "Story of the Fin-Back Crest," page 79, for background on the Northwest Coast cultures) residing along the west coast where northwestern Canada meets southwestern Alaska. As the following **myth** reveals, raven (or El as he is called in this **variant**) is the divine creator, **culture hero**, and **trickster** for the Tlingit. Raven figures prominently and in many of the same roles for other Northwest Coast cultures, including the Eskimo (see, for example, "When Raven Wanted to Marry Snowbird and Fly with the Geese," page 75). While the tales of raven's exploits, in general, are shared among the people regardless of clan membership, other myths are regarded as the property of individual clans. Such is the case with the final episode of this narrative, which describes raven's encounter with Kanu, the clan ancestor of the wolf lineage. As might be expected, the wolf myth asserts that their clan ancestor is even older and more powerful than raven.

There was a time, say the followers of El [Raven], when there was no light, and all the people lived and moved in the darkness. At that time lived a certain man who had a wife and a sister. He loved his wife to such an extent that he would not allow her to do any kind of work; and she spent the

day either sitting in the house, or sunning herself on the hillock outside. She had eight little red birds, four on each side of her, who were always near her, and who would instantly leave her if there was any familiarity between her and any man except her husband. Of such a jealous disposition was her husband, that, whenever he went away, he locked her in a chest. Every day he went to the forest, where he made boats and canoes, being very proficient in such work.

His sister, who was called Kitchuginsi (daughter of a sea-swallow), had several sons (it is not known by whom); but the jealous uncle, so soon as they reached manhood, destroyed them. Some say that he took them out to sea and drowned them; but others say that he sealed them up in a hollow log. The helpless mother could only weep for her children. One day when she was sitting on the beach, mourning over a son, who disappeared in the usual way, she saw a school of small whales passing by, and one of them coming in closer, stopped and started a conversation with her. When he had learned the cause of her grief, he told her to throw herself into the sea and from the bottom bring up a pebble, swallow it, and wash it down with a little sea-water. So soon as the whale departed, Kitchuginsi went down to the bottom of the sea, fetched up a small pebble, swallowed it, and drank some sea-water. The effect of this extraordinary dose was that she conceived, and in eight months gave birth to a son, whom she considered an ordinary mortal, but he was El. Kitchuginsi, before giving birth to El, hid herself away from her brother in a secret place.

When El began to grow up, his mother made him a bow and arrows and instructed him in the use of them. El liked this kind of exercise, and soon became such an excellent shot that not a bird could fly by him; and from the hummingbirds alone that he killed his mother made herself a parka; and to fully indulge his passion for the chase he made a hunting-barrabara. Sitting there one morning in the early dawn, he saw that directly in front of his door sat a large bird resembling a magpie, with a long tail and a long and thin bill, bright and strong as iron. El killed her instantly and carefully skinned her, as is usually done for stuffing, and put the skin on himself. He had no sooner done this when he felt the desire and ability to fly, and immediately flew up, and soared so high and with such a force that his bill pierced into the clouds, and he was held there so strongly that with difficulty he extricated him-self. After that he flew back to his barrabara, took off his skin and hid it. At another time and in the same manner he killed a duck, and, taking off her skin, put it on his mother, who instantly received the ability to swim.

When El reached full growth, his mother told him of all his uncle's doings. El, so soon as he heard about them, went to his uncle's, and at the time when he is usually at his work. Going into the barrabara, he opened the chest in which his uncle's wife was kept, and debauched her; the birds instantly deserted her. The uncle, returning from his work and seeing all that happened, became extremely angry; but El sat very quietly and did not even move from his place. Then the uncle, calling him outside, seated himself with him in a canoe, and

went with him to a place where many sea-monsters gathered; there he threw him into the sea, and thought that he had again got rid of a rival. But El walked on the bottom of the sea till he came to the shore, and reappeared before his uncle.

The uncle, seeing that he could not destroy his nephew in the usual way, said, in his anger, "Let there be a flood." The sea began to overflow its banks and rose higher and higher. El put on his magpie skin and flew up into the clouds, and, as before, pierced them with his bill, and hung there suspended until the water, which had covered all the mountains, even reaching so high that his tail and wings were wet, subsided entirely. He then began to descend as lightly as a feather, and thinking, "Ah, if I could only drop on some good place," and he dropped there where the sun goes down. But he fell not on land, but into the sea, on the kelp; from there a sea-otter brought him safely away. Others say that he fell on the Queen Charlotte Islands, and, taking in his bill chips of the fir tree, flew away to other islands, and where he dropped the chips there trees grow; and where he did not there they are not.

On coming to land again after the flood, El went towards the east, and in one place finding some dead boys, brought them to life by tickling them in the nose with hair which he had pulled out from a certain woman; in another place he set the sea-gull and heron to quarrel, and in this manner obtained a smelt fish which he afterwards exchanged for a canoe and other things. But of all his adventures and doings, which are so numerous that it is impossible for one man to know them all, the most remarkable is the way he obtained the light.

At the time when the above-mentioned wonders were worked there was no light on the earth; it was in the possession of a rich and powerful chief, being kept in three small boxes, which he guarded jealously and did not permit any one even to touch them. El, learning this, wished above all things to obtain the light, and he obtained it.

That chief had an only daughter, a virgin, whom he loved dearly, indulged, and tended, even to the extent of carefully examining her food and drink before she used it. There was no other way to obtain the light from the chief except by becoming his grandson, and El concluded to be born of his daughter. To accomplish his end was not difficult for him; since he could assume the shape of any object that he desired, birds, fish, grass, etc., appearing as crow the oftenest, however. In this case he changed himself into a tiny piece of grass, and stuck to the side of the cup out of which the chief's daughter drank, and when she, after the usual examination, began drinking, it slid down her throat. Small though it was, she felt that she had swallowed something, and she tried hard but unsuccessfully to bring it up. The result, of all this was that she conceived; and, when the time came around for her to give birth, the chief ordered to be placed under her sea-otter skins and other valuable things. But the woman could not give birth, although her father and others assisted her in every known way. Finally a very old woman took her into the forest, where she made a bed of moss for her

under a tree and laid her on it; and just as soon as she lay on it she gave birth to a son.

No one even suspected that the new-born child was El; the grandfather was delighted with his grandson, and loved him even more than his daughter. One day, after El commenced to understand a little, he set up a loud bawl and no one nor anything could quiet him. No matter what was given him, he threw it away and cried louder than before, and kept reaching out and pointing to the three little boxes which contained the heavenly lights. They could not be given to him without the permission of the chief, and he would not for a long time consent; at last he was obliged to give the boy one of the boxes. He immediately became quiet and happy, and began playing with it. A little later he took it out-of-doors, and, when unobserved, opened it and instantly stars appeared in the sky. Seeing this, the chief regretted the loss of his treasure, but he did not reprove the boy. In the same cunning manner El obtained the second box, in which the moon was kept, and opened it; he even cried for the last and most precious box, containing the sun. The chief would not indulge him any longer; El did not leave off crying and bawling, refused to eat and drink, and consequently became ill. To humor him, the tender grandfather gave him the last box too, and ordered that he be watched and prevented from opening it; but El, so soon as he came outside, changed himself into a crow, flew away with the box, and appeared on the earth.

In passing over one place, El heard human voices, but could see no one; for the sun was not yet. El asked them, "Who are you; and would you like to have light?"

"You are deceiving us," they said; "you are not El, who is the only one that can make light." To convince the unbelievers, El opened the box, and at once the sun in all his splendor appeared in the sky. At this sight the people scattered themselves in all directions, some to the forests and became beasts, others to the trees and became birds, still others to the waters and became fishes. There was no fire on the earth, but on an island in the mid-sea. Thither El, dressed in his magpie skin, flew, and snatching a live brand, he hastened back. But the distance was so great that by the time the mainland was reached the brand and half of his bill were nearly consumed. Near the shore he dropped the brand, and the sparks were blown on to the rocks and trees. This explains why fire is found in these substances.

Until El's time there was no fresh water on the mainland and islands, with one exception. On this island, situated not far from Cape Ommaney, was a small well of fresh water guarded by Kanuk, the hero and ancestor of the Wolf tribe of the Tlingit. El (the details will be told later in connection with Kanuk) went over there, and taking in his bill as much water as it would hold, and after suffering racking tortures, flew back to the mainland of America. While flying over the earth, the water dripped on the land; where small drops fell springs and creeks appeared, and the larger drops formed lakes and rivers.

At last El, providing the people with all the necessities, went to his home, Nasshakiel, which is inaccessible both to men and spirits, as is shown from the following. One daring spirit undertook to go there, and as a punishment had his left side turned to stone; for in flying forward he looked on the left side where El's palace was. The left side of the spirit's mask, which was at the time in possession of the shaman at Chilkat, also became stone.

Once upon a time Kanuk lived on a treeless island, Tikenum, "sea-fortress," not far from Cape Ommaney. On that island is a small, square, stone well of fresh water, covered with a stone. Inside the well, on the stone, is a narrow horizontal line of a different color than the rest. This mark dates from the time, and indicates the quantity of water El drank and stole out of the well. The well is known as Kanuk's Well, because formerly, when there was no fresh water elsewhere on the earth, Kanuk kept it in the well and guarded it jealously; he even built a barrabara [small dwelling used in the Northwest Coast culture area] over it and slept on the cover of the well. One time Kanuk, while out at sea in his canoe, met El there in his canoe and asked him, "Have you been living long in this world?"

"I was born," said El, "before the earth was in its present place; and have you been living here long?"

"Since the time when the liver came out from below," answered Kanuk.

"Yes," said El, "you are older than I."

While continuing their conversation, they went farther and farther from the shore, and Kanuk, thinking it a good time to demonstrate his strength and superiority, took off his hat and put it behind himself; instantly such a thick fog appeared that one, sitting in one end of a canoe, could not see the other end. During that time Kanuk paddled away from his companion. El, unable to see Kanuk, and not knowing which way to go, began to cry to him, "Achkani, Achkani," but Kanuk made no answer; he called many times with the same result; finally, El, weeping, implored Kanuk to come to him. Kanuk then coming up to him, said, "What are you crying about?" Saying this, he put on his hat and the fog raised.

"Nu Achkani (my father-in-law and brother-in-law), you are stronger than I," said El.

After this Kanuk invited El to go home with him to his island; there they refreshed themselves, and fresh water was one of the many things that El had. It tasted so sweet and good that he could not get enough to satisfy him, and he was too bashful to ask for more. When dinner was over, El commenced to tell about his origin and the history of the world. At first Kanuk listened attentively, then drowsily, and at last fell into a sound sleep in his usual place on the cover of the well. While he was sleeping El quietly placed some dung under and around Kanuk, and then going outside, called, "Achkani, wake up, look around you; you are, it seems, not well."

Kanuk woke up and felt around, and believing what El said, ran to the beach to wash himself. In the mean time El pushed the cover off the well, and

drank all the water he could, and, changing to a crow, filled his bill with water and started to fly out by way of the chimney, but was mysteriously held back when almost at the top. Kanuk, re-turning from his wash, made a fire, and began smoking his guest until he turned black. This explains why the crow, who was formerly white, is now black. Finally Kanuk, pitying El, let him go, and he (El) flew away to his earth, and dripped the water on it, as was mentioned before.

THE DOOM OF THE KATT-A-QUINS

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Deans, James. "The Doom of the Katt-a-quins: From the Aboriginal Folk-lore of Southern Alaska." *Journal of American Folklore* 5 (1892): 233–235.

Date: 1862

Original Source: Tlingit

National Origin: Native American

The Tlingit, like the other cultures of the Northwest Coast, attained an extremely high level of cultural complexity because of the abundance and dependability of food resources and because of the presence of thick jungle-like forests that provided building materials. The Tlingit were able to develop stable settlements and devote less time to the business of staying alive. Raven, who acts as an agent of justice in the following **myth**, was the **culture hero** of many Northwest Coast Native Americans, including the Tlingit.

Katt-a-quin was a chief among the Tlingit. He lived very long ago, our fathers tell us, so long that no man can count the time by moons nor by snows, but by generations.

He was a bad man, the worst that ever lived among our people. Not only were he himself and his wife bad, but the whole family were like him. They were feared and shunned by every one, even by little children, who would run away screaming when any of the family came near.

Nothing seemed to give them so much pleasure as the suffering of other people. Dogs they delighted to torture, and tore their young ones to pieces. Most persons love and fondle a nice, fat little puppy, but not so the Katt-a-quin family; when they got a nice puppy it was soon destroyed by hunger and ill-usage.

When the people met their neighbors from above, at Shakes-heit, if Katt-a-quin came there, he generally spoiled the market, and if he could not get what he wanted by fair means, he would take it by force. The people, seeing this, would pack up and leave.

So tired had they grown of the family, that the rest of the tribe had decided to make them all leave the village, or, failing in that, endeavor to get clear of them by some other means. But before doing anything of that sort, they were delivered in a way terrible and unthought of. From old versions of the story, it appears that the people had become so disgusted with the family that when they wished to go hunting, or to gather wild fruit, they would strictly conceal their object and the direction of their journey from those whom they disliked.

One morning, while all were staying at Shakes-heit, they made up their minds to go to the large flat where these rocks stand, and lay in a stock of wild fruits for winter use. So in order that none of the Katt-a-quin might come, they all left early and quietly. When the others got up, which was far from early, as they were a lazy lot, and found that they were left alone, they were displeased at not being asked to go along with the others. After a time they all got into a canoe, and went up the river in order to find the rest, which after a while they did, by finding their canoes hauled up on shore.

After this they also landed, and began to pluck berries, but finding that the people who preceded them had got the best of the fruit, they gave up picking in disgust, and were seated on the shore when the others returned, having, as might be expected, plenty of fine fruit. Seeing that the rest had a fine supply, and they themselves nothing but sour, unripe stuff, they asked for a few, which the others gave them; at the same time saying that they should not be so lazy, as they might also have got their share of good ones. After a while, the old fellow demanded more of the best fruit; this the people flatly refused, saying that the late comers ought to go picking for themselves.

Just then a number of the first party, who had gone in another direction, returned with baskets full of nice, large, and ripe fruit. Seeing this, the whole family of the Katt-a-quins went and demanded the whole; this the others refused, saying they had no idea of toiling all day gathering fruit for such a worthless, lazy set as they were. A scuffle began, which ended in the family upsetting all the fruit, and trampling it under foot in the sand, thus destroying the proceeds of a long and hard day's work.

Seeing all this, the people made a rush, some for their bows and arrows, others arming themselves with whatever came to hand, all determined to wreak vengeance on those who had caused the destruction of their day's labor, and whom all disliked.

Seeing this turn of affairs, and the determination of the people, the offenders knew that their only safety lay in getting aboard their canoe, and going down the river before the others could follow them. This they did, leaving in their hurry one or two of their children behind them. But a new and terrible retribution awaited them. When they reached the middle, Yehl (Raven), who had been watching their conduct, turned them in an instant to these stones, and placed them where they now stand, to be an eternal warning to evil-doers. The largest one is Katt-a-quin. The next is his wife, and the small stones in the

land and in the water, his children. What is seen is only their bodies; their souls, which can never die, went to Seewuck-cow, there to remain for ages, or until such time as they have made reparation for the evil done while in the body. After this they will ascend to Kee-wuck-cow, a better land. Such was the doom of the Katt-a-quins. As our fathers told the story to us, said the Tlingit, so I tell it to you.

WICHITA

THE TWO BOYS WHO SLEW THE MONSTERS AND BECAME STARS

Tradition Bearer: Ahahe

Source: Dorsey, George A. "The Two Boys Who Slew the Monsters and Became Stars."
Journal of American Folklore 17 (1904): 153–160.

Date: 1904

Original Source: Wichita

National Origin: Native American

The Wichita, proper, were one band of the Wichita Confederacy who at various historical periods occupied territory on the southern plains in modern Kansas, Oklahoma, and northern Texas. They lived in dome-shaped dwellings and built their villages along streams. They grew crops of corn, melons, and tobacco and engaged in a seasonal buffalo hunt. The village divided by a street and governed by two different chiefs is a common **motif** in Wichita **myth**. The following narrative is a Native American example of the Twin Hero category, and as is the case in many similar tales, the more extraordinary and marginal of the two brothers has gifts that allow the boys to accomplish their marvelous deeds of cleansing the world by killing the monsters that reside in each of the cardinal directions (that is, the entire universe was dangerous and in need of taming). The transformation into stars is common not only in Native American myth, but worldwide, as in the Greek Heracles cycle, for example.

There was once a village where there were two chiefs. The village was divided by a street, so that each chief had his part of the village. Each chief had a child. The child of the chief living in the west village was a

boy; the child of the chief living in the east village was a girl. The boy and the girl remained single and were not acquainted with each other. In these times, children of prominent families were shown the same respect as was shown to their parents, and they were protected from danger. The chief's son had a sort of scaffold fixed up for his bed, which was so high that he had to use a ladder to get upon it. When he came down from the bed the ladder was taken away.

Once upon a time the young man set out to visit the young woman, to find out what sort of a looking woman she was. He started in the night. At the very same time, the girl set out to visit the young man, to see what sort of looking man he was. They both came into the street-like place, and when they saw one another the girl asked the young man where he was going. The young man replied that he was going to see the chief's daughter, and he asked her where she was going. She replied that she was going to see the chief's son. The young man said that he was the chief's son, and the girl said that she was the chief's daughter. They were undecided whether to go to the young man's home or to the girl's home. They finally decided to go to the young man's home.

The next morning, the young man's people wondered why he was not up as early as usual. It was the custom of all the family to rise early and sit up late, for the people of the village came around to the chief's place at all times. They generally woke the young man by tapping on the ladder, so they tapped on the ladder to have him come down. When they could not arouse the young man they sent the old mother up to wake him. When she got there she found her son sleeping with another person. She came down and told the others about it. She was sent back to ask them to come down from the bed and have breakfast. When they came down it was found that the son's companion was the other chief's daughter.

Meanwhile, the other chief wondered why his daughter did not rise as early as usual. It was her custom to rise early and do work inside the lodge. In the village where the girl was from, there lived the Coyote. Since the girl was not to be found, the chief called the men and sent them out to find her. The Coyote was there when the father sent the men in search of his daughter. The Coyote went all through his own side of the village, and then went to the side of the other chief, where he found the girl living with the chief's son. He went back immediately to the girl's father and told where he had found her. After she was found, the chief was angry and sent word that she was never to come back to her home; and the young man's father did not like the way his son had acted.

The time came when the young man decided to leave the village. He told his wife to get what she needed to take along for the journey. They started at midnight, and went towards the south. They went a long way and then stopped for rest and fell asleep. On the next day they continued their journey in search of a new home. They traveled for three days, then they found a good place where there was timber and water, and there they made their home. The man went out daily to hunt, so that they might have all the meat they wanted. The

woman fixed up a home, building a grass-lodge, and there they resided for a long while.

One time, when the man was about to go out hunting, he cut a stick and put some meat on it and set it by the fire to cook. He told his wife that the meat was for some one who would come to visit the place; and that she must not look at him; that when she should hear him talking she should get up in bed and cover her head with a robe. The man left to go hunting that day, and the woman stayed and remembered what she had been told. After her husband had gone the woman heard some one talking, saying that he was coming to get something to eat. When she heard him she went to her bed and covered her head. The visitor came in, took down the meat that the woman's husband had placed by the fire, and ate it.

Before leaving, he spoke and said, "I have eaten the meat and will go back home." When the visitor had gone, the woman got up again, for she had her morning work to do. It was late in the evening when her husband returned from his hunting trip. Every time he went hunting he put the meat up before leaving, and when the visitor came the wife would get in her bed so as not to see who he was. Every time he came in and ate she would listen, and it would sound like two persons eating together.

One morning, after her husband had left, the woman made a hole in her robe and took a piece of straw that had a hole in it. When the visitor came she got in her bed and put the robe over her, with the hole over her eye, having the straw in her hand. As soon as the person came in he commenced to eat. After he had finished eating and was starting out, the woman quickly placed the straw in the hole in the robe, looked through it and saw the person. She saw that he had two faces, one face on the front and one on the back side of his head.

When she looked at him he turned back, telling the woman that she had disobeyed her husband's orders and that she would be killed. Thereupon the Double-Faced-Man (Witschatska) took hold of the woman and cut her open. She was pregnant, so that when the Double-Faced-Man cut her open, he took out a young child, which he wrapped with some pieces of a robe and put on the back of some timber in the grass-lodge, and covered the woman again with her robe. Then he took the afterbirth and threw it into the water.

When the husband returned, he found that his wife was dead. He was there alone and so he spoke out, saying, "Now you have done wrong, disobeying my orders. I told you never to run any risk, but you made up your mind to look and see what sort of a person that was who came here, and he has killed you." The man took his wife's body to the south, laid her on the ground, and covered her with buffalo robes.

When he came back he heard a baby crying, and he looked around inside of the lodge, then outside, but he could not find the child. He finally heard the baby crying again and the sound came from behind one of the lodge poles. He looked there and found the child. He cooked some rare meat and had the child

suck the juice. In this way the man nourished his child. He stayed with it most of the time, and when hunting, he took the child on his back.

Whenever he killed any game he would not hunt any more until all of his meat was gone. This child was a boy, and it was not very long before he began to walk, though his father would still take him on his back when he went hunting. When the child was old enough the father made him a bow and arrows, and left him at home when he went hunting.

One day when the boy had been left he heard some one saying, "My brother, come out and let us have an arrow game." When he turned around he saw a boy about his own age standing at the entrance of the grass-lodge. The little boy ran out to see his little visitor, who told him that he was his brother. They fixed up a place and had a game of arrows, which is often played to this day. When Double-Faced-Man had killed the woman, he had taken a stick that she had used for a poker and he thrust it into the afterbirth and threw it in the water. This stick was still fastened in the visiting boy. The boy wondered what this stick was there for. They commenced to play. The visiting boy promised not to tell their father about winning the arrows, and the other boy promised not to tell that he had had company. When the visiting boy left he went towards the river and jumped into the water.

When the father came home he asked his boy what had become of his arrows. The boy replied that he had lost all his arrows shooting at birds. His father tried to get him to go where he had been shooting at birds, to see if he could not find the arrows, but the boy said that he could not find the arrows. Next day, the father made other arrows for the boy and then went out hunting again.

As soon as the father left, the visiting boy came, calling his brother to come and have another game. They played all day, until the visiting boy won all the arrows, then he left the place, going toward the river. When the man came back from his hunting trip he found the boy with no arrows, and he asked him what had become of them. The boy said that he had lost his arrows by shooting birds. His father asked him to go out and look around for the arrows, but the boy refused, and said that the arrows could not be found. Again the father made more arrows for his boy.

After a long time the boy told his father of his brother's visits. The father undertook to capture the visiting boy one day, and so he postponed his hunting trip until another time. About the time the boy was accustomed to make his appearance, the father hid himself and turned himself into a piece of stick that they used for a poker. The father instructed his son to invite his brother to come in and have something to eat before they should play. As soon as the visiting boy came and called his brother, his brother invited him to come in, but he refused, because he was afraid that the old man might be inside. He looked all around, and when he saw the poker he knew at once that it was the old man, and he went off. The father stayed still all that day, intending

to capture the boy. On the next day he again postponed and instructed his boy as before about capturing the visiting boy. About the time for the boy to make his appearance the father hid himself behind the side of the entrance and turned into a piece of straw. When the visiting boy arrived, he called, and his brother invited him in again. He looked around in the grass-lodge, but not seeing anything this time, he entered and ate with his brother. The father had told his boy that when his brother came he should get him to look into his hair for lice; then the boy was to look into the visiting boy's hair, and while he was looking he was to tie his hair so that the father could get a good hold on it. Then he was to call his father. After eating, they both went out to begin their game. They played until the visiting boy won all his brother's arrows.

When they stopped, the boy asked his brother if they might not look into each other's hair for lice. The visiting boy agreed and looked into his brother's hair first, then allowed his brother to look into his hair. While the boy was looking into his hair the visiting boy would ask him what he was doing; and he would say that he was having a hard time to part his hair.

When he got a good hold of the visiting boy's hair he called his father. The visiting boy dragged him a good ways before their father reached them. When the old man got hold, the boy was so strong that he dragged both the father and brother toward the river, but the father begged him to stop. They finally released the visiting boy and he jumped in the water and came out again with his arms full of arrows. They started back toward their home. This boy was named Afterbirth-Boy.

After that, Afterbirth-Boy began to dwell with his father and brother. When their father would go out hunting the boys would go out and shoot birds. When the father was home he forbid his boys to go to four certain places: one on the north, where there lived a woman; on the east, where there was the Thunderbird that had a nest up in a high tree; on the south, where there lived the Double-Faced-Man.

The father made his boys a hoop and commanded them not to roll it toward the west. It was a long time before the boys felt inclined to lengthen their journeys; but after a time, during their father's absence, Afterbirth-Boy asked his brother to go with him to visit the place at the north, where they were forbidden to go. The brother agreed, and they at once started for the place. On their way, they shot a good many birds, which they carried along with them.

When they arrived they saw smoke. The woman who lived there was glad to see the little boys and asked them to her place. They gave her their birds, and went in. The old woman was pleased to get the birds, and said that she always liked to eat birds; then she asked the boys to go to the creek and bring her a pot full of water. She told the boys that she must put the birds in the water and boil them before she could eat them, so the boys went to the creek and brought the pot full of water.

When they returned with the pot of water the woman hung it over the fire, snatched the boys and threw them in, instead of the birds. The water began to boil and Afterbirth-Boy got on the side where the water was bubbling. He told his brother to make a quick leap, while he did the same. They at once made a quick jump and poured the boiling water upon the old woman and scalded her to death.

When they had done this they started back home. They reached home before their father. On their father's arrival they told him that they had visited the place he had warned them against, and what dangers they had met while visiting the woman, who was the Little-Spider-Woman.

The next day they started to visit the Thunderbird. When they came to the place they saw a high tree where was the nest of the Thunderbird. Afterbirth-Boy spoke to his brother, saying, "Well, brother, take my arrows and I will climb the tree and see what sort of looking young ones these Thunderbirds have." He began to climb the tree and all at once he heard thundering and saw a streak of lightning, which struck him and took off his left leg. Afterbirth-Boy told his brother to take care of his leg while he kept on climbing. When he began to climb higher the bird came again. The thundering began and the streak of lightning came down and took off his left arm. Still he kept on, for he was anxious to get to the nest. He was near the nest when his right leg was taken off, so that he had just one arm left when he reached the nest.

Now the Thunderbirds did not bother him any more. He picked up one of the young ones and asked whose child he was. The young one replied that he was the child of the Weather-Followed-by-hard-Winds, and that sometimes he appeared in thunder and lightning. When the boy heard this he threw the bird down, saying that he was not the right kind of a child, and he asked his brother to destroy him.

Afterbirth-Boy took another bird and asked him the same question. The young one replied that he was the child of Clear-Weather-with Sun-rising-slowly. He put the bird back in the nest, telling him that he was a pretty good child.

He took up another, asking whose child he was, and the bird said that he was the child of Cold-Weather-following-Wind-and-Snow. Afterbirth-Boy dropped him down and said that he was the child of a bad being, and he ordered his brother to put the bird to death.

He then picked up the last one and asked whose child he was. The young one answered that he was the child of Foggy-Day-followed-by-small-Showers. This child Afterbirth-Boy put back into the nest, telling him that he was the right kind of a child.

He then started to climb down with his one arm. When he reached the ground his brother put his right leg on him, and he jumped around to see if it was on all right. His brother then put his left arm on him, and he swung it around to see if it was all right. Then the brother put on the left leg, and he felt just as good as he did when he first began to climb the tree.

The two boys returned home before their father came back from the chase. When their father came back, Afterbirth-Boy began to tell what they had done while visiting the Thunderbirds and how his limbs were taken off, and the boys laughed to think how Afterbirth-Boy looked with one arm and both legs gone. The father began to think that his boy must have great powers, and he did not say much more to the boys about not going to dangerous places.

Some time after, the boys went out again and came to the place where their mother was put after her death. They saw a stone in the shape of a human being, and they both lay on the stone. When they started to get up they found that they were stuck to it, and they both made an effort and got up with the stone. They took it home for their father to use for sharpening his stone knife. When they reached home the old man told them to take the stone back where they had found it. He told them that that was their mother, for she had turned into stone after her death. They took the stone back where they had found it.

Some time after, Afterbirth-Boy and his brother started out to the forbidden place where Double-Faced-Man lived who had killed their mother. These creatures were living in a cave. When the boys arrived at the cave they both went in and the Double-Faced-Man's children came forward and scratched the boys. If there was any blood on their fingers they would put them in their mouths. Afterbirth-Boy took the string of his bow and slew the young ones. He caught the old Double-Faced-Man and tied his bow-string around his neck so that he could take him home to his father to have in the place of a dog. When they returned home the old man walked out, and seeing the old Double-Faced-Man, told his boys to take him off and kill him, and they obeyed.

Every day they played, the same as they had always done before, going out shooting birds and playing with their hoop. Afterbirth-Boy said to his brother, "Let us roll the hoop toward the west and see what will happen."

They rolled it toward the west, and it began going faster and faster. The boys kept running after it until they were going so fast that they could not stop. They kept going faster, until they ran into the water where the hoop rolled. When they went into the water they fell in the mouth of a water-monster called, "Kidiarkat," and he swallowed them.

It appeared to them as though they were in a tepee, for the ribs of the monster reminded them of tepee poles. They wondered how they could get out. Afterbirth-Boy took his bow-string with his right hand, drew it through his left hand to stretch it, then swung it round and round. When he first swung it, the monster moved. He swung the string the second time, and the monster began to move more. He swung it the third time, and the monster began to move still more. At this time Afterbirth-Boy told his brother that their father was getting uneasy about them and that they must get out of the place at once, for they had been away from home a long time. Again he swung his bow-string, and the monster jumped so high that he fell on the dry land. He opened his mouth and the boys quickly stepped out and started for home.

When the boys arrived at the lodge they found no one. Their father had gone off somewhere, but they could not find out where he had gone. Afterbirth-Boy looked all around for his trail, but could find no trace of him. At last he grew weary and decided to wait until night to look for their father.

When darkness came, Afterbirth-Boy again looked around to see where his father had gone. He finally found his trail and he followed it with his eye until he found the place where his father had stopped.

He called his brother and told him to bring his arrows and to shoot up right straight overhead. The boy brought his arrows and shot one up into the sky. Then he waited for a while and finally saw a drop of blood come down. It was the blood of their father.

When the boys did not return, he gave up all hope of ever seeing them again, and so he went up into the sky and became a star. They knew that this blood belonged to their father, and in this way they found out where he had gone. They at once shot up two arrows and then caught hold of them and went up in the sky with the arrows. Now the two brothers stand by their father in the sky.

NON-NATIVE CULTURES

Ethnic

AFRICAN AMERICAN

GRANDFATHER'S ESCAPE TO FREE HAVEN

Tradition Bearer: Mary Thomas

Source: Hubert, Levi C. *Interview of Mary Thomas. American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936–1940.* Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. *American Memory.* Library of Congress, Washington, DC. <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wpaintro/wpahome.html> (October 12, 2005).

Date: 1938

Original Source: New Jersey

National Origin: African American

In this segment of her **family saga**, Mary Thomas provides precise details dating back a century at the time of the telling. While various historical elements may be lost or altered during the process of oral transmission, narratives such as the following fill in crucial gaps in our historical knowledge.

As a child I remember hearing the old folks telling me of their terrible life which they led on the large farms of Maryland before the Emancipation.

My grandfather had been a chieftain's son [in Africa], and he remembered the time when he was a little fellow, playing with some other boys on the banks of the sea, and a band of men swooped down on them and carried them from their own people. My grandfather remembered the heavy gold bracelets and armlets of his rank and those slave-stealers took the gold ornaments from him.

My grandfather had a black mark about an inch wide running down his forehead to the tip of his nose. This mark was the sign of his tribe. He was tall and very much respected by the other slaves and the slave-holder down in

Maryland. He married, raised a family and grew old. Even in his old age he was a valuable piece of property, but soon he became useless in the fields and his master agreed to give him his freedom.

But the old man, my grandfather, asked for the freedom of his youngest son, who was my father. This the master refused to do at first but at the earnest insistence of my grandfather, he agreed ... upon condition that the son, who was a great swimmer and diver, should dive into the Chesapeake Bay where a ship had sunk years before with a load of iron. If the son were successful in bringing to the surface this load of iron, then my grandfather and his son, my father, should go free.

My grandfather tied a rope around my father's waist and for over three months the two of them brought the pieces of iron to the shore for old master. They say that sometimes the son stayed under the water so long that my grandfather had to drag him up from the wreck and lay him on the ground and work over him like you'd work over a drowned person.

Day after day the two worked hard and finally there wasn't no more iron down there and they told the master so and he came down to the wreck and found out they was telling the truth ... but still he wouldn't let them go. The old man, yes, but not the son who was handy around the place, an' everything.

But my grandfather kept asking for his son and the old master said that if the two of them brought up the sound timbers of the old wreck, then he would keep his word and let them go. So my grandfather and his son, my father, between them brought up all the sound timber that was part of the wreck. It was cheaper to get this wood and iron from the wreck than to buy it, so the master wanted it.

The wreck had stayed down on the bottom of the Chesapeake Bay for over twenty years but nobody except my father had been able to dive that deep. So you see it was just like trading off some of the young slaves on the farm to be able to get the iron and wood.

When the two finished that chore, and it was a mighty big chore, too, they went up to the big house and asked for their freedom.

The master sent them back to their cabin and said that since the old man wasn't no good any more, and it just cost the master money to feed him, he could go whenever he pleased, but the son was going to stay on the farm and if he tried any foolishness, he would sell him south. Selling a slave south meant that the slave would be taken to one of the slave trader's jails and put on the block and be sold to some plantation way down south. And no worsen thing could happen. Many a family was separated like that, mothers from their children, fathers from their children, wives from their husbands, and the old folks say that a pretty girl fetched (brought) a higher price and didn't have to work in the fields. These young girls, with no one to protect them, were used by their masters and bore children for them. These white masters were the ones who didn't respect our women and all the mixing up today in the south is the result of this power the law gave over our women.

Well, when the old man and his son knew it was no use, that their master did not intend to let them go, they began to plot an escape. They knew of the Underground Railroad, they knew that if they could get to Baltimore, they would meet friends who would see them to Philadelphia and there the Friends (Quakers) would either let them settle there or send them to other people who would get them safely over the border into Canada.

Well, one night my grandfather and my father made up their minds and my grandfather could read and write so he wrote hisself out a pass. Any slave who went off the farm had to have a pass signed by the master or he would be picked up by a sheriff and put in jail and be whipped.

So my grandfather had this pass and got safely through to Baltimore. There they hid for several days and waited for an agent of the Underground Railroad.

One night they were dressed in some calico homespun like a woman and rode to Philadelphia on the back seat of a wagon loaded with fish. In Philadelphia, the town was being searched by slave-holders looking for runaway slaves, so the people where they were supposed to stay in Philadelphia hurried them across the river about ten miles.

My grandfather and my father stayed across the Delaware from Philadelphia, helping a farmer harvest his crops, and they built a cabin and soon other escaped slaves from among their former neighbors slipped into New Jersey where they were.

Finally there was almost a hundred escaped slaves in the one spot and because they were free at last and this place was a haven just like the Bible talked about, they decided to stay there and so they got together and called the place Free Haven.

My uncle says that he reached there by hiding in the woods all day and walking at night. So many people came from Maryland that they changed the name of the little village to Snow Hill, which was the name of the town nearest the farms from which all or most of the people had run away from. The post office people made them change the name again and now it is Lawnside, but I was born there sixty-four years ago and I still think of it as Free Haven.

HOW COME BRER BEAR SLEEP IN THE WINTER

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Backus, Emma M. "Animal Tales from North Carolina." *Journal of American Folklore* 11 (1898): 287–288.

Date: 1898

Original Source: North Carolina

National Origin: African American

The exploits of a **trickster** or **culture hero** are commonly celebrated in the animal **fables** and the origin tales that arise not only in African

American repertoires, but also in the traditional narratives of many of the world's cultures. Despite the role played by rabbit, in most cases the master trickster, this narrative deviates from that model and instead celebrates cooperation and community action. In concert, the group bands together to manage the behavior of a larger and more powerful tyrant. As such, the tale offers alternative strategies to trickster's wily deviance or the outlaw hero's bold frontal attacks for dealing with a common threat. The threat is simply diminished, however, rather than eliminated because of individual frailties—"a meddlesomeness to move them rocks." Thus the narrative simultaneously praises cooperation and warns against potential pitfalls to community action. Neither message would have been lost on the African American audiences for whom the tale originally was performed.

When the animals was young, Brer Bar, he never sleep in the winter, no more'n the rest. The way it was in them days, old man Bar was flying roun' more same than the other creeters, and he was the meanest one in the lot, and 'cause he the biggest he get in he mind that he king of the country, and the way he put on the animals was scand'lous, that it was.

Well, the animals was all crossways wid the old man a long time, but they bound to step up when he tell 'em, cause you kin see in these times old Brer Bar ain't a powerful man, but he just on the onery side, was what he was in the old times. 'Pears like all the animals is getting mighty low down these here times, 'cept old Sis Coon, and sure you born she get more heady every year.

Well, they talk it over 'twixt themselves many and many a day, how they going to take down Mr. Bar. They know he mighty fond of sleepin' in the dark, and one day Brer Rabbit 'low that they stop the old man up when he sleep in a dark tree; he take a mighty long nap, and they get a little comfort.

So they all watch out, and when the old man sleep that night in a hollow tree they all turn in and tote rocks and brush, and stop up the hole.

And sure 'nough, when morning come, Brer Bar don't know it, and he just sleep on; when he wake up he see it all dark, and he say day ain't break yet, and he turn over and go sleep, and there the old man sleep just that a way till the leaves turn out the trees, and I 'spect the old man been sleeping there to this day; but the animals, they all hold the old man dead for sure, and they just feel a meddlesomness to move them rocks; and when they let the light in, old Brer Bar he just crack he eye and stretch hissself and come out, and when he see the spring done come he say, the old man did, that he done had a mighty comfortable winter, and from that time every year, when the cold come, old Brer Bar go to sleep.

HOW COME MR. BUZZARD TO HAVE A BALD HEAD

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Backus, Emma M. "Animal Tales from North Carolina." *Journal of American Folklore* 11 (1898): 288–289.

Date: 1898

Original Source: North Carolina

National Origin: African American

Ann Nancy, the protagonist of this tale, is a North American incarnation of the familiar West African and Caribbean **trickster** Anansi given an alternative name that is more comprehensible in nineteenth-century North Carolina. With this name change, comes a change in gender from male to female, which is in keeping with the name shift. Like her Caribbean and Continental African counterpart, however, Ann Nancy is an anthropomorphic spider with a penchant for pranks and an insatiable appetite. As with other trickster figures, Ann Nancy lives by her wits—usually at the expense of her neighbors, employing subterfuge to gain her selfish ends and to extricate herself from the trouble to which her schemes inevitably lead. Ann Nancy, as noted by the narrator, is particularly mean-spirited and unforgiving. Her “sour” mind and temper not only fulfills her desire for revenge, but alters forever buzzard’s appearance and appetite.

One day, in the old times, Ann Nancy started out to find a good place for to build her house; she walk on till she find a break in a nice damp rock, and she set down to rest, and take ‘servation of the points to throw her threads.

Presently, she hear a great floppin’ of wings, and the old Mr. Buzzard come flying down and light on the rock, with a big piece of meat in he mouth. Ann Nancy, she scroon in the rock and look out, and she hear Mr. Buzzard say, “Good safe, good safe, come down, come down,” and sure ‘nough, when he say it three times, a safe come down, and Mr. Buzzard, he open the door and put in he meat and say, “Good safe, good safe, go up, go up,” and it go up aright, and Mr. Buzzard fly away.

Then Ann Nancy, she set and study ‘bout it, ‘cause she done see the safe was full of all the good things she ever hear of, and it come across her mind to call it and see if it come down; so she say, like Mr. Buzzard, “Good safe, good safe, come down, come down,” and sure ‘nough, when she say it three times, down it come, and she open the door and step in, and she say, “Good safe, good safe, go up, go up,” and up she go, and she eat her fill, and have a fine time.

Directly she hear a voice say, “Good safe, good safe, come down, come down,” and the safe start down, and Ann Nancy, she so scared, she don’t know what to do, but she say soft and quickly, “Good safe, go up,” and it stop, and go up a little, but Mr. Buzzard say, “Good safe, come down, come down,” and down it start, and poor Ann Nancy whisper quick, “Go up, good safe, go up,” and it go back. And so they go for a long time, only Mr. Buzzard can’t hear Ann Nancy, ‘cause she whisper soft to the safe, and he cock he eye in ‘stonishment to see the old safe bob up and down, like it gone ‘stracted [distracted, crazy].

So they keep on, “Good safe, good safe, come down.”

“Good safe, good safe, go up,” till poor Ann Nancy’s brain get ‘fused [confused], and she make a slip and say, “Good safe, come down,” and down it come.

Mr. Buzzard, he open the do’, and there he find Ann Nancy, and he say, “Oh you poor mis’rable creeter,” and he just ‘bout to eat her up, when poor Ann Nancy, she begged so hard, and compliment his fine presence, and compare how he sail in the clouds while she ‘bliged [is obliged] to crawl in the dirt, till he that proudful and set up he feel mighty pardoning spirit, and he let her go.

But Ann Nancy ain’t got no gratitude in her mind; she feel she looked down on by all the creeters, and it sour her mind and temper. She ain’t gwine forget anybody what cross her path, no, that she don’t, and while she spin her house she just study constant how she gwine get the best of every creeter.

She knew Mr. Buzzard’s weak point am he stomach, and one day she make it out dat she make a dining, and ‘vite Mr. Buzzard and Miss Buzzard and the children. Ann Nancy, she know how to set out a-dining for sure, and when they all done got sot down to the table, and she mighty busy passing the hot coffee to Mr. Buzzard and the little Buzzards, she have a powerful big pot of scalding water ready, and she slop it all over poor old Mr. Buzzard’s head, and the poor old man go bald-headed from that day. And he don’t forget it on Ann Nancy, ‘cause you see she de onliest creeter on the top side the earth what Mr. Buzzard don’t eat.

PLAYING GODFATHER

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Fauset, Arthur Huff. “Negro Folk Tales from the South. (Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana).” *Journal of American Folklore* 40 (1927): 237–238.

Date: 1927

Original Source: Mississippi

National Origin: African American

This tale type, “Theft of Butter (Honey) by Playing Godfather” (AT 15), is distributed widely throughout the South and the Caribbean.

Typically, the **trickster**, rabbit, shifts the blame for the theft onto one of the dupes. The slow-witted possum appears as rabbit's victim elsewhere in "How Brer Fox Dream He Eat Brer Possum" (page 177).

Rabbit an' Fox make a proposition once to start farmin'. Dey bought lot of groceries for the year, butter, coffee, everything you could mention. So the butter was the most important. So they all went out in the field to work.

Rabbit studied a plan to leave Possum an' Fox in the field an' make believe that some one was callin' him away. So he let on some one callin' him, "Yoo-hoo-yoo-hoo-yoo-hoo!"

So Fox an' Possum said, "What's that?"

Rabbit said, "Aw, I can't work here for bein' bothered by these people. I'm goin' this time but I won't go no more." So Rabbit goes to the house an' sees the bucket o' butter. He ate some of the butter. Pretty soon he come back.

Pretty soon somebody callin', "Yoo-hoo-yoo-hoo-yoo-hoo!"

So they all said, "What's the matter, Brother Rabbit?"

Rabbit said, "Aw, they want me to christen another baby. These people are botherin' me too much. I'm not goin'."

So they all said, "You better go ahead. Hurry on." So he went an' got another stomach full o' butter. So when he come back they said, "Well, what did you name the baby?"

He said, "Just begun." So pretty soon they heard somebody callin', "Yoo-hoo-yoo-hoo-yoo-hoo."

So they all said, "What's the matter, Brother Rabbit?"

Rabbit said, "Aw, those people just won't let me alone. They want me to christen another child. I'm not goin' this time, tho, deed I'm not."

But they all said, "You better go ahead." So he went an' got some more butter. So he come back an' they asked him what name the baby had. He said, "Pretty Well On The Way." He comes back an' works a little while an' somebody yells, "Yoo-hoo-yoo-hoo-yoo-hoo."

They all said, "What's that?"

So Rabbit said, "Aw, it's them same people want me to come christen another baby. I'm not goin', I tell you."

They said, "You better go ahead." So he went off an' eat some more butter. When he come back they asked him what the baby's name was.

He said, "About Quarter Gone." So he went on workin' some more an' somebody yelled, "Yoo-hoo-yoo-hoo-yoo-hoo."

They said, "What's that?"

He said, "It's those same people again. I tell you I just won't go an' christen any more of their children."

But they said, "You better go on ahead." So he went off an' eat some more of the butter. When he returned they asked him what was the child's name.

He said, "Half Gone." So he went on back to work. This time somebody yelled, "Yoo-hoo-yoo-hoo-yoo-hoo."

So they all said, "What's that?"

He said, "Doggone the luck, you know that's rotten. A fellow can't work here for those people callin' on you to christen their children."

So they all said, "You better go on ahead." He went on an' eat some more of the butter.

When he come back he said, "Well I christened another child."

They said, "What you name him?"

He said, "Quarter Left." So he come on back, work awhile, an' pretty soon somebody cry, "Heh-h-h-h-h-h-h-h." Rabbit say, "Doggone the luck. I ain't goin' this time. By God they want to run a fellow to death."

So they all said, "You better go on ahead." So he went this time an' eat all the butter.

When he come back they said, "What happened this time?"

He said, "I had another child to christen."

They said, "What did you name him?"

He said, "All Gone." Well about the middle o' June they was gonna open the keg of butter. The crops were half grown. So when they got there the butter was all gone.

They all said, "Who stole the butter?" Rabbit didn't know; Fox didn't know; Possum didn't know.

So Rabbit say, "I tell you, Possum, he been layin' around dat house all time. I believe he must o' done it." So he said, "bet's build a big fire. Then all three of us will lay aroun' the fire, an' whoever et the butter the grease will come out o' his stomach." So they made a big fire an' everybody went to sleep but Rabbit. So he peeped. Everybody sound asleep. So Rabbit say, "All right, I got him now." So he took his tail an' greased it an' his belly right good. He oiled Fox up too. So pretty soon Fox woke up.

He spied Possum an' cried, "Dah, dah, I tot' you, Possum done it!" Possum woke up an' looked aroun'. He say, "Hey there, Fox, you had some too; look at your belly." Fox made for Rabbit but Rabbit got away. So Fox struck Possum a lick an' Possum went through the blaze of fire. That's why his tail is bare of hair today.

WHEN BRER RABBIT WAS PRESIDIN' ELDER

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Backus, Emma M. "Folk-Tales from Georgia." *Journal of American Folklore* 13 (1900): 20–21.

Date: 1900

Original Source: Georgia

National Origin: African American

In the African American folktale corpus, the **stock character** of preacher, like rabbit, appears as a figure that creates a façade to exploit gullible members of the community with the power of wit and words. This critique of preacher puts Brer Rabbit in the role of self-appointed presiding elder (in this case, a traveling preacher). At first offended to the point of “churching” (evicting from membership) Brer Rabbit, the congregation demonstrates similar greed by finally taking such a “good-paying member” back into the fold.

Now Brer Rabbit he never get to be no sure ‘nough presidin’ elder. Brer Rabbit he always been a meeting going man, but it all along [alongside] of his trifling ways that he never get no higher than a steward in the church. Brer Rabbit he never get to be a preacher, not to say a sure ‘nough presidin’ elder.

But one year Brer Rabbit he get powerful ambitious. He see all his neighbors building fine houses, and Brer Rabbit he say to his-self he going to have a fine house. So Brer Rabbit he study and he study how he going get the money for his house, and one day he say to Miss Rabbit, You bresh up my meeting clothes.

So Miss Rabbit she get out Brer Rabbit’s meeting clothes, and bresh em up, and take a few stitches, and make the buttons fast.

One Saturday Brer Rabbit he put on all his meeting clothes, and his church hat, and take his bible and hymn-book, and cut hisself a fine walking cane, and Brer Rabbit he start off.

Brer Rabbit he take the circuit, and he preach in every church, and Brer Rabbit he say how he be the presiding elder of the district, and how he taking up a collection to build anew parsonage; and being as Brer Rabbit am a powerful preacher when he aim to try hisself, and preach in the spirit, the people they give with a free hand.

Brer Rabbit he know what he doing, Brer Rabbit do, and he ride the circuit just before Christmas, and they tells how nigh ‘bout the lastest one enduring the whole circuit done rob his Christmas for Brer Rabbit’s parsonage.

Well, when they see Brer Rabbit’s fine house going up and hear how Brer Rabbit done used they alls money, well, there was a time, you may be sure, and they church Brer Rabbit; but Brer Rabbit he don’t trouble hisself, he just go on and build his fine house. But bless you, the last shingle ain’t laid before here they come begging Brer Rabbit to come back in the church, ‘cause Brer Rabbit be a good paying member. So Brer Rabbit he go back in the church and he live in his fine house and hold his head powerful high, and what the people done say they done say, but you may be sure they don’ say a word when Brer Rabbit listen.

HOW BRER RABBIT PRACTICE MEDICINE

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Backus, Emma M. "Tales of the Rabbit from Georgia Negroes." *Journal of American Folklore* 12 (1899): 108–109.

Date: 1899

Original Source: Georgia

National Origin: African American

The following tale of Brer Rabbit has at its heart messages concerning why rabbit and perhaps all conmen for that matter can make their way so successfully in society. Poor judgment leads Brer Wolf to take him on as a partner despite his "bad name for a partner." Then, gullibility and avarice set up wolf for the "fool's bargain" rabbit proposes. When Brer Rabbit's ploy is discovered and a jury is being selected to decide the disposition of the money from their venture, Sheriff 'Coon is given the job of finding bigger fools than the plaintiff and defendant to sit on the jury. When 'Coon is successful, the judge, plaintiff, jury, and spectators become so caught up in the courtroom drama that rabbit is able to win the day by keeping his wits about him and putting his ethics on hold. Compare this tale to "Playing Godfather" (page 164).

Ole Brer Rabbit had a bad name for a partner, but one time he get Mr. Wolf to work a crop on shares with him, and they have a 'greement writ out on paper, how in the harvest they goin' to divide half and half. Mr. Rabbit know Ole Mr. Wolf mighty good hand in the field, and sure to make a good crop. But when Ole Brer Rabbit set in to work, he get mighty tired, and the corn rows, they look so mighty long, and he 'gin to lag behind and work he brain.

Presen'ly he jump to the work, and make he hoe cut the air, and soon catch up with Mr. Wolf, and he open the subject of the education in medicine, and he tell how he am a reg'lar doctor, and got his 'plomy in a frame to home, but he say he don't know how all the patients goin' get on now he turn over the farming, and Ole Mr. Wolf ask how much money he get for he doctoring, and when he hear so much, he tell Mr. Rabbit to go when he have a call, and put by the money, and in the fall put in the crop money and then divide. So that night Mr. Rabbit, he instruct his children how they got for to run and call him frequent, and how they got to tell Mr. Wolf they wants the doctor.

And sure 'nough, Mr. Rabbit ain't more'n in the front row next day, when here come little Rab all out of breath and say, "Some-body send in great 'stress for the doctor." Mr. Rabbit make out like he can't go and leave Mr. Wolf to do

all the work, but Mr. Wolf studying 'bout that big fee Brer Rabbit goin' turn in to the company, and he tell him, "Go 'long, he can get on with the work."

So Mr. Rabbit clips off in great haste, and he just go down on the edge of the woods, and what you 'spect he do? Well, sir, he just stretch hisself out in the shade of a swamp maple and take a nap, while Ole Mr. Wolf was working in the corn rows in the hot sun. When Mr. Rabbit sleep he nap out, he set up and rub he eyes, then he mosey off down by the spring for a drink, then he come running and puffing like he been running a mile, and tell Mr. Wolf what a mighty sick patient he got, and make out like he that wore out he can't more'n move the hoe.

Well, when they come back from dinner, Mr. Rabbit, he strike and make he hoe fly, but directly here come little Rab for the doctor, and Ole Mr. Rabbit, he take hisself off for 'nother nap, and matters goes on just dis here way all summer. Ole Mr. Wolf, he have to do all the work, but he comfort himself with the reflection, that he have half them big fees what Brer Rabbit turning in to the company money.

Well, when the fodder done pulled, and all the crop done sold, and they go for to count the money, Mr. Wolf ask Brer Rabbit where the doctor's fees what he goin' turn in. Brer Rabbit say they all such slow pay, he can't collect it. Then they fell out, and Mr. Wolf that mad, he say he goin' eat Brer Rabbit right there, and make an end of he tricks. But Mr. Rabbit beg that they take the trouble up to the court-house to Judge Bar.

So they mosey off to the court-house, and the old judge say it were a jury case, and he send Sheriff Coon out to fetch the jurymans, and he say, "Don' you fetch no mans here, 'cepter they be more fool than the parties in the case." But Sheriff Coon 'low he don' know where he goin' find any man what's more fool than Brer Wolf's in dis here case, but he take out down the county, and by and by he seed a man rolling a wheelbarrow what ain't got nothing in it round the house and round the house, and he ask him what he doing that for? And he say, he trying to wheel some sunshine in the house. Sheriff Coon say, "You is the man I wants to come with me and sot on the jury."

They go 'long, and directly they see a man pulling a long rope up a tall tree that stand 'longside a house; they ask him what he goin' do? He say he goin' to haul a bull up on top of the house to eat the moss off the roof, and Sheriff Coon say, "I'll be bound you is my man for the jury, and you must go long with we all to the court." So they take their way back to the court-house, then they have a great time taking evidence and argufying.

Ole Brer Wolf, he set up there, and 'sider every word of the evidence, but Ole Brer Rabbit he lean back and shut he eye, and work he brain on he own account. He settin' right close to the door; when the lawyer done get everybody worked up so they take no noticement, Brer Rabbit just slip softly out the back door, and he creep 'round the side of the cabin back to where Ole Judge Bar set wid de bag of money on the floor, and what you 'spect? When they all talking,

Ole Brer Rabbit just slide he hand in the crack, and softly slip out the bag of money, and take out home, and leave the case in the care of the court. That just like Ole man Rabbit.

BRER RABBIT'S COOL AIR SWING

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Backus, Emma M. "Tales of the Rabbit from Georgia Negroes." *Journal of American Folklore* 12 (1899): 22–24.

Date: 1900

Original Source: Georgia

National Origin: African American

In this narrative, Brer Rabbit plays the **trickster** to its fullest extent. He deceives the powerful Brer Wolf with an outright lie. To get Brer Squirrel to release him from the knots tied by Mr. Man, he uses the African American rhetorical device of indirect direction. In describing his situation to Brer Squirrel, Brer Rabbit is not bound and seeking a means of escape. He is enjoying a "cool air swing." The deception is so convincing that squirrel begs to take his place, unties the knots, and takes rabbit's place. The **motif** of trickster as shape-shifter is evident in Mr. Man's observation that "I done hear of many and many your fine tricks, but I never done hear you turn yourself into a squirrel before."

Mr. Man he have a fine garden. Brer Rabbit he visit Mr. Man's garden every day and destroy the everything in it, 'til Mr. Man plum wore out with old Brer Rabbit. Mr. Man he set a trap for old Brer Rabbit down 'longside the big road.

One day when Mr. Man going down to the crossroads, he look in his trap, and sure 'nough, there old Brer Rabbit. Mr. Man he say, "Oh, so old man, here you is. Now I'll have you for my dinner."

Mr. Man he take a cord from his pocket, and tie Brer Rabbit high on a limb of a sweet gum tree, and he leave Brer Rabbit swinging there 'til he come back from the crossroads, when he aim to fetch Brer Rabbit home and cook him for his dinner.

Brer Rabbit he swing this away in the wind and that away in the wind, and he swing this away in the wind and that away in the wind, and he think he time done come. Poor old Brer Rabbit don't know where he's at.

Presently here come Brer Wolf loping down the big road. When Brer Wolf see old Brer Rabbit swinging this away and that away in the wind, Brer Wolf he

stop short and he say, "God a' mighty, man! what you doing up there? "Brer Rabbit he say, "This just my cool air swing. I just taking a swing this morning."

But Brer Rabbit he just know Brer Wolf going to make way with him. Brer Rabbit he just turn it over in his mind which way he going to get to. The wind it swing poor Brer Rabbit way out this-away and way out that away. While Brer Rabbit swinging, he work his brain, too.

Brer Wolf he say, "Brer Rabbit, I got you fast; now I going eat you up." Brer Rabbit he say, "Brer Wolf, open your mouth and shut your eyes, and I'll jump plum in your mouth." So Brer Wolf turn his head up and shut his eyes. Brer Rabbit he feel in his pocket and take out some pepper, and Brer Rabbit he throw it plum down Brer Wolf's throat. Brer Wolf he nigh 'bout 'stracted with the misery. He cough and he roll in the dirt, and he get up and he strike out for home, coughing to beat all. And Brer Rabbit he swing this away and that away in the wind.

Presently here come Brer Squirrel. When Brer Squirrel he see the wind swing Brer Rabbit way out this away and way out that away, Brer Squirrel he that 'stonished, he stop short. Brer Squirrel he say, "Fore the Lord, Brer Rabbit, what you done done to yourself this here time?"

Brer Rabbit he say, "This here is my cool air swing, Brer Squirrel. I taking a fine swing this morning." And the wind it swing Brer Rabbit way out this away and way back that away.

Brer Rabbit he fold his hands, and look mighty restful and happy, like he settin' back fanning hisself on his front porch.

Brer Squirrel he say, "Please sir, Brer Rabbit, let me try your swing one time."

Brer Rabbit he say, "Certainly, Brer Squirrel, you do me proud," and Brer Rabbit he make like he make haste to turn hisself loose. Presently Brer Rabbit he say, "Come up here, Brer Squirrel, and give me a hand with *this* knot," and Brer Squirrel he make haste to go up and turn Brer Rabbit loose, and Brer Rabbit he make Brer Squirrel fast to the cord. The wind it swing Brer Squirrel way out this away and way out that away, and Brer Squirrel he think it fine.

Brer Rabbit he say, "I go down to the spring to get a fresh drink. You can swing 'til I come back."

Brer Squirrel he say, "Take your time, Brer Rabbit, take your time." Brer Rabbit he take his time, and scratch out for home fast as he can go, and he ain't caring how long Brer Squirrel swing.

Brer Squirrel he swing this away and he swing that away, and he think it fine.

Presently here come Mr. Man. When Mr. Man he see Brer Squirrel, he plum 'stonished. He say, "Oh, so old man, I done hear of many and many your fine tricks, but I never done hear you turn yourself into a squirrel before. Powerful kind of you, Brer Rabbit, to give me fine squirrel dinner." Mr. Man he take Brer Squirrel home and cook him for dinner.

WHY THE PEOPLE TOTE BRER RABBIT FOOT IN THEIR POCKET

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Backus, Emma M. "Tales of the Rabbit from Georgia Negroes." *Journal of American Folklore* 12 (1899): 109–111.

Date: 1900

Original Source: Georgia

National Origin: African American

Rabbit as **trickster** figure in African American folklore at times acts in the community interest. In this tale, Brer Rabbit uses more than his wits to overcome Ole Mammy Witch Wise. He turns to his knowledge of the occult practices of the shape-shifting witches who slip off their skins to cause nocturnal mischief, thus revealing himself to be "wise" as well. In other tales, Brer Rabbit betrays skills at conjuration and hoodoo. This knowledge allows him to save the community from Mammy Wise Witch and marks his foot as a powerful protective amulet.

Why do people tote Brer Rabbit's foot in their pocket? Well, sir, that's cause Ole Brer Rabbit done killed the last witch what ever live. They tells how they done hang some of 'em, and burn some, till they get mighty scarce, but there was one ole witch what was risin' on five hundred years old, and 'cause she keep clear of all the folks what try to catch her, they done name her Ole Mammy Witch Wise.

Well, she do carry on to beat all them times, she 'witch all the folks, and she 'witch all the animals, and when they go to get their meal out some of the gardens, she just witch them animals, and they can't get in to save 'em, and they all nigh 'bout starved out, that they was, and they all hold a big consultation and talk over what they gwine do.

They was a mighty ornery lookin' set, just nigh 'bout skin an' bone, but when Ole Brer Rabbit come in, they observe how he mighty plump and in fine order, and they ask him, however he so mighty prosp'rous and they all in such powerful trouble. And then he allow, Brer Rabbit did, dat Ole Mammy Witch Wise can't 'witch him, and he go in the gardens more same as ever.

Why, Ole Mammy Wise don't 'low the animals get in the garden, she just want the pick of 'em herself, cause she don't have no garden that year; but when she set her mind on some Major Brayton's peas, she just put the pot on the fire, an' when the water bile smart, she just talk in the pot and say, "Bile peas, bile peas," and there they come, sure 'nough, for dinner; but you see if the animals

done been troubling them peas, and there ain't no peas on the vine, then she call 'em in the pot.

So she just keep the creeters out till they nigh 'bout broke down, and they ask Brer Rabbit, can't he help 'em? Brer Rabbit scratch he head, but he don't say nothin', 'cause I tell you, when Ole Brer Rabbit tell what he gwine do, then you just well know that just what he ain' gwine do, 'case he's a man what don't tell what he mind set on.

So he don't make no promise, but he study constant how he gwine kill Ole Mammy Witch Wise. He know all 'bout how the old woman slip her skin every night, and all the folks done try all the plans to keep her out till the rooster crow in the morning, 'cause every witch, what's out the skin when the roosters crow, can't never get in the skin no mo'; but they never get the best of the Ole Witch Wise, and she rising five hundred years old. Brer Rabbit he go off hisself, and set in the sun on the sand bed and rum'nate.

And you may be sure, when you see the old man set all to hisself on the sand bed, he mind just working. Well, sir, that night, he go in the garden and take a good turn of peppers, and tote them up to Ole Mammy Witch Wise house, and just he 'spect, there he find her skin in the porch, just where she slip it off to go on her tricks, and what you 'spect he do? Well, sir, he just mash them peppers to a mush, and rub 'em all inside the Ole Witch Wise skin, and then he set hisself under the porch for to watch.

Just 'fore crowing time, sure 'nough, there come the ole woman, sailing along in a hurry, 'cause she know she ain't got long, but when she go for to put on her skin, it certainly do bite her, and she say, "Skinnie, skinnie, don't you know me, skinnie?" But it bite more same than before, and while she fooling with it, sure 'nough the rooster done crow, and the ole woman just fall over in a fit. And in the morning Brer Rabbit notify the animals, and they gravel a place and burn her. And the people, they find out how Brer Rabbit get the best of the Mammy Witch Wise, and then they tell the white folks, and that why nigh 'bout all the rich white folks totes a rabbit foot in their pocket, 'cause it keeps off all the bad luck, and it do that, sure's yo' born.

MR. DEER'S MY RIDING HORSE

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Johnston, Mrs. William Preston. "Two Negro Folktales." *Journal of American Folklore* 9 (1896): 195–196.

Date: 1896

Original Source: Louisiana

National Origin: African American

The following tale of rabbit's feigning illness to humiliate a gullible romantic rival enjoys wide distribution throughout the South. In some

versions, fox or another animal rather than deer becomes rabbit's steed and, thus, the butt of his joke. In fact, the plot is labeled as "Rabbit Rides Fox A-Courting" in AT 72. The tale is not exclusive to African American communities. Extensive borrowing occurs between the various European-descended and Native American ethnic groups inhabiting the region. In all versions, however, rabbit exploits a personality trait, such as deer's kind heart, to defeat a romantic rival and, in the process, humiliates him.

Well, once upon a time, when Mr. Rabbit was young and frisky, he went a courting Miss Fox, who lived way far back in the thick woods. Mr. Fox an' his family was very skeery, an' they very seldom come outer the wood 'cept for a little walk in the clearin' near the big house, sometimes when the moon shine bright; so they did n' know many people 'sides Mr. Rabbit and Mr. Deer.

Mr. Deer he had his eyes set on Miss Fox, too. But he didn't suspicion Mr. Rabbit was a lookin' that way, but kept' on being jus' as friendly with Mr. Rabbit as he ever been.

One day Mr. Rabbit call on Miss Fox, and wile they was talkin', Miss Fox she tells him what a fine gentle-man she thinks Mr. Deer is. Mr. Rabbit jes threw back his head and he laugh and he laugh.

"What you laughing 'bout?" Miss Fox says; and Mr. Rabbit he jes laugh on an' won't tell her, an' Miss Fox she jes kept' on pestering Mr. Rabbit to tell her what he's laughing 'bout, an' at las' Mr. Rabbit stop laughing an' say, "Miss Fox, you bear me witness I didn't want to tell you, but you jes made me. Miss Fox, you call Mr. Deer a fine gentleman; Miss Fox, Mr. Deer is my riding horse!"

Miss Fox she nearly fell over in a fainting' fit, and she say she don't believe it, and she will not till Mr. Rabbit give her the proof.

An' Mr. Rabbit he says, "Will you believe it if you sees me riding pass you' door?" and Miss Fox says she will, and she won't have nothing' to do with Mr. Deer if the story is true. Now, Mr. Rabbit is been fixing up a plan for some time to git Mr. Deer outer his way; so he says good evening' to Miss Fox, and clips it off to Mr. Deer's house, and Mr. Rabbit he so friendly with Mr. Deer he don't suspect' nothing'. Presently Mr. Rabbit jes fall over double in his chair and groan and moan, and Mr. Deer he says, "What's the matter, Mr. Rabbit, is you sick?" But Mr. Rabbit he jes groan; then Mr. Rabbit fall off the cheer and roll on the floor, and Mr. Deer says, "What ails you, Mr. Rabbit, is you sick?" And Mr. Rabbit he jes groans out, "Oh, Mr. Deer, I'm dying; take me home, take me home."

An' Mr. Deer he's mighty kindhearted, and he says, "Get up on my back, and I'll tote you home"; but Mr. Rabbit says, "Oh, Mr. Deer, I'm so sick, I can't set on your back 'less you put a saddle on." So Mr. Deer put on a saddle.

Mr. Rabbit says, "can't steady myself 'less you put my feets in the stirrups." So he put his feets in the stirrups.

"Oh, Mr. Deer, I can't hold on 'less you put on a bridle." So he put on a bridle.

"Oh, Mr. Deer, I don't feel all right 'less I had a whip in my hand." So Mr. Deer puts the whip in his hand.

"Now I'm ready, Mr. Deer," says Mr. Rabbit, "but go mighty easy, for I'm likely to die any minute. Please take the shortcut through the wood, Mr. Deer, so I kin get home soon."

So Mr. Deer took the short cut, an' forgot that it took him pass Miss Fox's house. Jes as he 'membered it, an' was 'bout to turn back, Mr. Rabbit, who had slipped a pair of spurs on unbeknownst to him, stuck 'em into his sides, and at the same time laid the whip on so that po' Mr. Deer was crazy with the pain, and ran as fas' as his legs could carry him right by where Miss Fox was standin' on the gallery, and Mr. Rabbit a standin' up in his stirrups and hollerin', "Didn't I tell you Mr. Deer was my riding horse!"

But after a while Miss Fox she found out 'bout Mr. Rabbit's trick on Mr. Deer, and she wouldn't have nothing' more to do with him.

WHEN BRER RABBIT SAW BRER DOG'S MOUTH SO BRER DOG CAN WHISTLE

Tradition Bearer: Unknown

Source: Backus, Emma M., and Ethel Hatton Leitner. "Negro Tales from Georgia." *Journal of American Folklore* 25 (1912): 125–126.

Date: 1912

Original Source: Georgia

National Origin: African American

The behavior of Brer Rabbit in the following tale is more representative of his usual nature in the African American tradition than was his altruism in "Why the People Tote a Rabbit Foot in Their Pocket." Brer Rabbit, despite "know[ing] in his own mind Brer Dog ain' going to whistle" saws Brer Dog's mouth anyway. As in many of his escapades, **trickster's** motivations are simply to stir up trouble. Typical as well is the fact that both Brer Rabbit and the butt of his trick, Brer Dog, suffer injuries that mark them and set up their social relationship from that day forward.

In the ole times, when Brer Dog a-roaming through the woods, he come up with Brer Rabbit, Brer Dog do. Brer Rabbit he set on the sand just a-whistling, and a-picking of the banjo.

Now, in them times Brer Rabbit was a master-hand with the banjo. These here hard times 'pears like Brer Rabbit done forget how to whistle, and you don' hear him pick the banjo no more; but in the ole times Brer Rabbit he whistle and frolic, and frolic and whistle, from morning til night.

Well, Brer Dog he mighty envious of Brer Rabbit, 'cause Brer Dog he can't whistle, and he can't sing, Brer Dog can't. Brer Dog he think he give anything in reason if he could whistle like Brer Rabbit, so Brer Dog he beg Brer Rabbit to learn hisself to whistle.

Now, Brer Dog he called the most reliable man in the county; and he have some standing, Brer Dog do; and he have right smart of sense, Brer Dog have; but bless you, Sir, Brer Dog he can't conjure 'longside that Ole Brer Rabbit, that he can't.

Well, when Brer Dog beg Brer Rabbit will he learn hisself to whistle, Brer Rabbit he say, "Brer Dog, your mouth ain't shape for whistling." Brer Rabbit he say, "Name of goodness, Brer Dog, how come you studying 'bout whistling with that mouth? Now, Brer Dog, you just watch my mouth and try yourself"; and Brer Rabbit he just corner up his mouth and whistle to beat all.

Brer Dog he try his best to corner up his mouth like Brer Rabbit; but he can't do it, Brer Dog can't. But the more Brer Dog watch Brer Rabbit whistle, the more envious Brer Dog get to whistle hisself.

Now, Brer Dog he know how Brer Rabbit are a doctor; so Brer Dog he ask Brer Rabbit can he fix his mouth so he can whistle?

Brer Rabbit, he 'low as how he might fix Brer Dog's mouth so he can whistle just tolerable, but Brer Rabbit he 'low how he have to saw the corners of Brer Dog's mouth right smart; and he 'low, Brer Rabbit do, how "it be mighty worrisome for Brer Dog."

Now, Brer Dog, he that envious to whistle like Brer Rabbit, Brer Dog he 'clare he let Brer Rabbit saw his mouth.

Brer Rabbit he say as how he don' want deceive Brer Dog; and he say, Brer Rabbit do, as how he ain' gwine promise to make Brer Dog whistle more same as hisself, but he say he "make Brer Dog whistle tolerable."

So Brer Rabbit he get his saw, and he saw a slit in the corners Brer Dog's mouth. It nateraly just nigh 'bout kill Ole Brer Dog; but Brer Dog he are a thorough-going man, and what Brer Dog say he going to do, he going to do, he sure is.

So Brer Dog he just hold hisself together, and let Brer Rabbit saw his mouth.

Now, Brer Rabbit he know in his own mind Brer Dog ain' going to whistle sure 'nough, but Brer Rabbit he don' know just what Brer Dog going to say; so when Brer Rabbit get through a-sawing of Brer Dog's mouth, Brer Rabbit he say, "Now try if you can whistle!" Brer Dog he open his mouth, and he try to whistle; and he say, "Bow, wow, wow!" Brer Dog do say that for a fact.

Well, when Brer Rabbit hear Brer Dog whistle that there way, Brer Rabbit he that scared he just turn and fly for home; but Brer Dog he that mad, when

he hears hisself whistle that there way, he say he going to finish Ole Brer Rabbit: so Brer Dog he put out after Brer Rabbit just a-hollering, “Bow wow, bow wow, bow wow!”

Now, in them times, Brer Rabbit he have a long bushy tail. Brer Rabbit he mighty proud of his tail in the ole times.

Well, Brer Rabbit he do his best, and he just burn the wind through the woods; but Brer Dog he just going on the jump, “Bow wow, bow wow!”

Presently Brer Dog he see Brer Rabbit, and he think he got him; and Brer Dog he open his mouth and jump for Brer Rabbit, and Brer Dog he just bite Brer Rabbit’s fine tail plum off.

That how come Brer Rabbit have such little no-count tail these here times; and Brer Dog he that mad with ole Brer Rabbit ‘cause he saw his mouth, when he run Brer Rabbit through the woods, he still holler, “Bow wow, bow wow!” and you take noticement how, when Brer Rabbit hear Brer Dog say that, Brer Rabbit he just pick up his foots and fly, ‘cause Brer Rabbit done remember how he done saw Brer Dog’s mouth.

HOW BRER FOX DREAM HE EAT BRER POSSUM

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Backus, Emma M., and Ethel Hatton Leitner. “Negro Tales from Georgia.” *Journal of American Folklore* 25 (1912): 132–133.

Date: 1912

Original Source: Georgia

National Origin: African American

This narrative pairs two traditional adversaries, Brer Fox (the clever) and Brer Rabbit (the tricky), in an uneasy alliance. While the tale does deal with the origins of Brer Possum’s hairless tail, the major focus is on the fragile nature of the social bonds between members of the community. Brer Rabbit, as usual, is ruled by his appetites, and Brer Fox is betrayed by a “fatal” flaw. Given the number of loopholes in the social contract, vigilance must be the order of the day. Trust may be betrayed by self-interest, and even the power of the law is no match for the guile of the **trickster**.

In the old times Brer ‘Possum he have a long, wide, bushy tail like Brer Fox. Well, one day Brer Rabbit and Brer Fox get a mighty honein’ to set er tooth in some fresh meat, and they both start off for to find some, and directly they find Brer ‘Possum up a black gum tree. Now, in them times Brer Rabbit he

can climb well as any other of the creatures, 'case he has sharp claws like a cat; and he don't set down to nobody on climbing, Brer Rabbit don't. So when they find Brer 'Possum way up in the top of the gum tree, Brer Rabbit he jest climb up after Brer 'Possum, Brer Rabbit do; and jest before he reach him, Brer 'Possum he wind his tail on the limb, an' hang wid he head down, an' swing hisself out.

Brer Rabbit he standing on the limb; an' he reach out, and he grab Brer 'Possum's tail nigh the stump, Brer Rabbit do; and Brer 'Possum he swing hisself out, and try to reach another limb with he hand; and every time Brer 'Possum swing out, Brer Rabbit's hand slip a little on Brer 'Possum's tail; and next time Brer 'Possum swing and reach out, Brer Rabbit he hand slip a little more, til Brer Rabbit he done skin the whole of Brer 'Possum's tail; an' Brer 'Possum fall to the ground, where Brer Fox done wait for him, and Brer Fox done caught him and kill him; but since that day Brer 'Possum he never have no hair on his tail. Then Brer Rabbit he come down, Brer Rabbit did, and they study how's der bestest and soonest way to cook Brer 'Possum, 'cause dey both jes a-droolin' for some fresh meat.

Brer Fox he say "he take Brer 'Possum home and cook him," and he invite Brer Rabbit to come and dine with him. Brer Rabbit agrees to that, so Brer Fox he takes Brer 'Possum home and he fly round to beat all, Brer Fox do; and he gets some nice fat bacon and yams, and he just cooks dat 'Possum up fine and brown.

Then Brer Fox he get mighty tired, and he say, "I 'clare, I plum too tired out to eat. I don't know if I better eat that 'Possum now, and go to sleep and dream about him, or whether I better go to sleep and dream about him first, and then wake up and eat him"; and he lay down on the bed to study a minute, and first thing Brer Fox knowed he fast asleep.

Directly here come Brer Rabbit, he knock on the door, but he ain't get no answer; but he smell dat 'Possum, and the bacon and the yams, and the sage, and he most 'stracted [distracted] to set he tooth in it. He crack the door softly, and he find Brer Fox fast asleep on the bed, an' the nice dinner all smoking hot on the table.

Brer Rabbit he just draw up and set to, Brer Rabbit do. He eat one hind-leg; and it so fine, he say to hisself he bound to try a fore-leg, and then Brer Rabbit 'low [allows] he bound to try the other hind-leg.

Well, sir, dat old man Rabbit he set there and eat til the lastest mouthful of that 'Possum done gone. Then he just turn to wonderin', Brer Rabbit did, what Brer Fox gwine to say when he done wake up and find the bestest bits of that 'Possum gone.

Brer Rabbit he find hisself in a right delicate situation, and was disturbed, Brer Rabbit was; but he say to hisself he gwine fool Brer Fox; and Brer Rabbit he take all the bones, and he put them on the floor in a row round Brer Fox's head; and he take the marrow-grease, and he rub it softly on the whiskers round

Brer Fox's mouth; then he go out softly and close the door, and put he eye to the key-hole.

Directly Brer Fox he yawn and stretch hisself and wake up; and course his mind turn to that 'Possum, and he rise up; and shorely he most powerful astonished when he see the dish empty, and the bones all 'bout hisself on the floor.

Directly here come Brer Rabbit's knock. Brer Fox say, "Come in!" and Brer Rabbit say, "Brer Fox, I come for my share of that 'Possum." Brer Fox say, "Fore de Lord, Brer Rabbit, where that 'Possum gone?" and he fling he hand at the bones on the floor.

Brer Rabbit he snap he eye, like he most mighty got a way with [upset]; and he say, "Brer Fox, I heard the creatures tell heap a powerful hard tales on yourself, but I 'clare, I never think you treat a friend dis here way."

Then Brer Fox he swear and kiss the book [swear on the Bible] he ain't set a tooth in that 'Possum. Then Brer Rabbit he look most mighty puzzled; and at last he say, "Brer Fox, I tell you what you done done, you just eat the lastest mouthful of that 'Possum in your sleep." Brer Fox he rare and charge, and swear he ain't "even got the taste of 'Possum in he mouth."

Then Brer Rabbit he take Brer Fox to the glass, and make Brer Fox look at hisself; and he say, Brer Rabbit did, "Brer Fox, how come all that fresh marrow-grease on your whiskers?" and Brer Fox he look mighty set down on; and he say, "Well, all I 'low dat the most unsatisfying 'Possum I ever set a tooth in."

TROUBLE (RABBIT LOSES HIS TAIL)

Tradition Bearer: Ella Anderson

Source: Bacon, A. M., and E. C. Parsons. "Folk-Lore from Elizabeth City County, Virginia." *Journal of American Folklore* 35 (1922): 272.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Virginia

National Origin: African American

The plot of this tale apparently arises from Brer Turkey's taking offense at Brer Rabbit's pointing out turkey's red eyes. Turning the tables on the **trickster**, turkey lures rabbit into trouble by a play on words.

The turkey and the rabbit were once going through an old field, and the rabbit asked the turkey what made his eyes so red. Brer Turkey told him it was trouble. Then Brer Rabbit asked him what trouble was.

Brer Turkey said, "Come with me into the field, and I will show you trouble." Brer Turkey made believe he was after water, but he was only setting the field a-fire in different places.

By and by Brer Rabbit heard the fire begin to roar. “Brer Turkey! Brer Turkey!” he cried, “how are you going to get out of this field?”

Brer Turkey said he was going to fly out.

“Take me with you, Brer Turkey!” said the rabbit.

But Brer Turkey said he could hardly get himself out.

Brer Rabbit ran through the fire, and that is how he lost his tail. The fire caught it and burned it off.

And Brer Rabbit has never had a tail since.

WHEN BRER RABBIT HELP BRER TERRAPIN

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Backus, Emma M., and Ethel Hatton Leitner. “Negro Tales from Georgia.” *Journal of American Folklore* 25 (1912): 128–130.

Date: 1912

Original Source: Georgia

National Origin: African American

Brer Rabbit, in this tale, relies both on his wits and on his reputation as a conjurer, a practitioner of hoodoo (traditional African-descended magical techniques used to influence events and persons or cure disease). This talent appears from time to time in the traditional narratives, and Brer Rabbit may be portrayed as a genuine hoodoo doctor or may simply take on this persona to carry out his schemes. Relying on his powers to terrorize his neighbors, Brer Wolf attempts to enlist rabbit’s aid in his plan to destroy Brer Terrapin. Instead, Brer Rabbit uses his deceptive abilities to put the fear of conjuration into wolf. The power of the left eye to enact supernatural work is an authentic touch added by the narrator.

In the old days Brer Wolf he have a mighty grudge against Brer Terrapin, Brer Wolf do; and one day Brer Wolf come up with old Brer Terrapin in the woods; and he say, Brer Wolf do, how he just going to make a end of Old Brer Terrapin.

But Brer Terrapin he just draw in his foots and shut the door; and he draw in his arms and shut the door; and then if the old man don’t bodaciously draw in his head and shut the door right in Brer Wolf’s face.

That make ole Brer Wolf mighty angry, sure it naturally do; but he bound he ain’t going to be outdone that way, and he study ‘bout how he going smash Brer Terrapin’s house in; but there aim’ no rock there, and he feared to leave

the ole man, 'cause he know directly he leave him the ole chap going open the doors of his house and tote hisself off.

Well, while Brer Wolf study 'bout it, here come Brer Rabbit; but he make like he don't see Brer Wolf, 'case they ain't the bestest of friends in them days, Brer Wolf and Brer Rabbit ain't, no, that they ain't.

But Brer Wolf he call out, he do, "O Brer Rabbit, Brer Rabbit, come here!"

So Brer Rabbit he draw up, and he see Old Brer Terrapin's house with the doors all shut; and he say, "Morning, Brer Terrapin!" but Brer Terrapin never crack his door; so Brer Wolf say, he do, "Brer Rabbit, you stay here and watch the ole man, while I go and fetch a rock to smash his house!" and Brer Wolf he take hisself off.

Directly Brer Wolf gone, ole Brer Terrapin he open his door and peek out. Now, Brer Rabbit and Brer Terrapin was the best friends in the ole time; and Brer Rabbit, he say, he do, "Now, Brer Terrapin, Brer Wolf done gone for to tote a rock to smash your house"; and Brer Terrapin say he going move on.

Then Brer Rabbit know if Brer Wolf come back and find he let Brer Terrapin make off with his house, Brer Wolf going fault hisself; and Brer Wolf are a strong man, and he are a bad man; and poor old Brer Rabbit he take his hindermost hand and he scratch his head, and clip off right smart. Brer Rabbit was a pert man them days.

Directly he come up with old Sis Cow, and he say, "Howdy, Sis Cow? Is you got a tick you could lend out to your friends?" and he take a tick and tote it back, and put it on the rock just where Brer Terrapin was.

Presently here come Brer Wolf back, totin' a big rock; and he see Brer Rabbit just tearing his hair and fanning his hands, and crying, "Oh, dear! oh, dear! I'se feared of my power, I'se feared of my power!" but Brer Wolf he say, "Where old man Terrapin gone with his house? I done told you to watch." But Brer Rabbit he only cry the more, and he say, "That what I done tell you, don't you see what my power done done? There all what left of poor ole Brer Terrapin right there." And Brer Rabbit he look that sorrowful-like, he near 'bout broke down, and he point to the cow-tick.

But Brer Wolf he done live on the plantation with Brer Rabbit many a day; and Brer Wolf he say, "Quit your fooling, ole man. You done turn Brer Terrapin loose, and I just going to use this here rock to smash your head." Then Brer Rabbit he make haste to make out to Brer Wolf how that little chap surely are all what's left of poor old Brer Terrapin.

And Brer Rabbit he make out how the power are in his left eye to make a big man perish away; and Brer Rabbit he 'low how he just happen to strike his left eye on his old friend Brer Terrapin, and directly he get smaller and smaller, 'til that all there be left of the poor old man. When Brer Rabbit say that, he turn and cut his left eye sharp at Brer Wolf, Brer Rabbit do.

Brer Wolf he just look once on the little tick, and he say, "Don' look at me, Brer Rabbit! Don' look at me!" and Brer Wolf he strike out, and he just burn the wind for the woods.

Then Brer Rabbit he clip it off down the road 'til he come up with old Brer Terrapin; and they strike a fire, and make a good pot of coffee, and talk it over.

THE WATCHER TRICKED

Tradition Bearer: Josephine Johnson

Source: Bacon, A. M., and E. C. Parsons. "Folk-Lore from Elizabeth City County, Virginia." *Journal of American Folklore* 35 (1922): 262–264.

Date: ca. 1900

Original Source: Virginia

National Origin: African American

After being deceived by rabbit's flattery, buzzard turns **trickster** by playing on fox's greed in this African American **variant** of "The Watcher Blinded" (AT 73).

Once there was a fox and a buzzard who were good friends. They used to go hunting together. One day they took their guns and went a-hunting. They came to a tree where there was a holler in the tree. Ol' fox decided there was somethin' up the holler, a rabbit or somethin'.

So he got some dry wood and made a fire in the holler, and smoked it. He smoked and smoked it, and nothin' came down. But he was sure there was somethin' up there. So he tol' the turkey-buzzard to stay and watch the holler, and see that nothin' came down, while he went back home to get an axe to cut the tree down. The buzzard promised that he'd do so. The fox went home to get an axe, and the buzzard set down by the tree to watch the holler.

While the fox had been talkin' to the buzzard, the rabbit had been thinkin' of some way to come down the holler. So after de fox left, Rabbit said to de buzzard, "Mr. Buzzard, they tell me you have silver eyes and a gold bill."

An' the buzzard said, "Well, so I have."

The rabbit said, "Look up yonder an' let me see them!"

An' the buzzard was very glad to show his gold bill and silver eyes. So he poked his head in the holler and looked up at the rabbit. The rabbit raked up a handful of trash and threw in his eyes. The buzzard went off to get some water to wash his eyes; and while he was gone, the rabbit came down.

The buzzard came back and sat down by de holler and waited for the fox. Fox came and cut down the tree, and didn' see the rabbit run or anything. So he ask, "Mr. Buzzard, where is dat rabbit?"

And de buzzard said, "He was up dere de las' time I see him."

So de fox decided to split de holler open. He split it, and still didn' see any rabbit; an' he ask again, "Mr. Buzzard, where is de rabbit?"

Buzzard said, "He was up dere de las' time I saw him." Den de fox got angry wid de buzzard, and ran at him with his axe to kill him. And de buzzard ran and ran so fast, dat he split his dress wide open, and he took de two sides of his dress and commence to fly, used dem for wings. So you see de buzzard's been flyin' ever since.

Buzzard was angry wid de fox, and wanted to get even with him: so one day he came flyin' over de fox, singin',

Way down yonder, whey I come from,
 Dey t'row away meat,
 Dey t'row away bread.
 Everyt'ing good dey t'row away.

And de fox say, "What's that, Mr. Buzzard? Sing dat again."
 And de buzzard sang it:

Way down yonder, whey I come from,
 Dey t'row away meat,
 Dey t'row away bread.
 Everyt'ing good dey t'row away.

Fox asked de buzzard, "Mr. Buzzard, could you take me down there?"

Buzzard say, "Yes, jump up on my back."

Fox got on de buzzard back. Buzzard went flyin' 'round. He went way up in de air. When he'd gotten high enough to kill the fox, he turned from one side to the other. Every time he turned, de fox would run to de other side, and de buzzard saw he couldn' turn him off in dat way. So he turned over upside down, and Fox fell to de ground and was killed.

'COON IN THE BOX

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Fauset, Arthur Huff. "Negro Folk Tales from the South. (Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana)." *Journal of American Folklore* 40 (1927): 265–266.

Date: 1925

Original Source: Mississippi

National Origin: African American

In this classic example of the John and Master **cycle**, Jack uses his repertoire of eavesdropping, wit, and even sham fortune-telling to advance and maintain his position with Master. When at last he believes his subterfuge has been found out, he significantly saves the day by his use of a

racist and derogatory term for African American. Thus, from weakness and apparent denigration yet another advantage emerges. The tale is commonly found as an episode of “Dr. Know-All” (AT 1641). The specific **motif** upon which this tale is built is “What Is in the Dish: Poor Crab” (*Motif* N688); in the tale from which the motif was originally drawn, the sham fortune-teller’s surname is “Crab.”

White man had a slave; his name was Jack. This slave let on he know everything. Wasn’t a thing he didn’t let on he knew. Every night this man would talk to his wife. He’d say, “Y’know Jack, he’s a smart slave, smartest slave I ever knew.” One night he was talkin’ to his wife, and Jack he was eavesdroppin’. Man says, “Y’know, wife, the slaves are about done in de bottoms, I think I’ll send em down to de new lands.”

So nex’ day he goes to Jack an’ says, “Oh, Jack.”

Jack says, “Yassir, master.”

“What’s on fo’ t’day.”

Jack says, “Well de slaves done pretty good in de bottoms, t’morrer y’ goin’ send us to de new lands.”

So de master said to his wife, “Y’know, dat’s a smart slave. I asked him today what I was gonna do, an’ he tol’ me jus’ what I tol’ you las’ night. Said slaves done so good in de bottoms gonna send ‘em to de new lands.”

So nex’ mornin’ Master said to Jack, “Say, Jack, hitch up fifteen or sixteen wagons, I’m gonna send ‘em to de grocery.”

So Jack said, “Yassir, master, I know ‘xactly what you want.”

So de man said to his wife, “You know dat slave’s a fortune teller.” So dey goes to town, an’ in town de master meets another plantation owner. So dis man had a barrel an’ dere was a coon in dat barrel.

So Jack’s master said, “Say, I bet you I kin tell you ‘xactly what’s in dat barrel.”

De other man says, “Whut you bet?”

So de master says, “Le’s bet my plantation ‘gainst yours.”

So de other plantation owner says, “All right, my plantation ‘gainst yours. Now whut’s in de barrel?”

So de master says to Jack, “Come here, Jack.”

Jack says, “Whut you want, master?”

Master says, “Y’got t’ tell me whut’s in dis man’s barrel?”

Jack says, “I got t’ tell you whut’s in dis here barrel?”

De master says, “Yes, or you’re a dead man.”

So Jack commenced scratchin’ his head. He says. “Off it right now, cause he’s wool gatherin’.”

So he couldn’t guess whut was in de barrel. He says to his master, “Send to town an’ git me twelve deck o’ cards.” Dey got him de cards. He tore open a deck. He wanted to whisper. He tear open another deck. He wanted to whisper.

Den he says, “Aha, master, git me another twelve decks.” So he wanted to whisper. He tore open one deck after de other.

Den he say, “Well, oh, sen’ git me twelve mo’.” So he looked through eleven decks, den he fell back against a tree an said, “Well, oh master,” an’ he shook his head, “y’ caught de coon [derogatory term for African American] at las’.”

De master won de bet an’ he said to de other plantation owner, “I tol’ you he could do it, I tol’ you he could do it.”

Ol’ Jack he ups an’ says, “I could ha’ tell you when I fust cooked up here, but I only wanted to have some fun. I know dat was a raccoon in dat barrel.”

YOUR HORSE STAYS OUTSIDE

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Fauset, Arthur Huff. “Negro Folk Tales from the South. (Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana).” *Journal of American Folklore* 40 (1927): 274–275.

Date: 1925

Original Source: Mississippi

National Origin: African American

This protest tale comments on the social conditions begun under the plantation system and continuing into the post–War Between the States Jim Crow era by projecting racism into the afterlife. As the plot of the tale runs, even the staunch abolitionist Horace Greeley (1811–1872), who in his time had been founding editor of the *New York Tribune*, congressman, and U.S. presidential candidate, could not desegregate heaven. Choosing to disguise Brother Abraham Jasper as Greeley’s horse offers additional commentary on the status of African Americans as perceived by the narrator.

Ol’ Brother Abraham Jasper he died. Well, he went to heaven as they say. When he got there they wouldn’t admit him. Old Salt [Saint] Peter wouldn’t let him in.

Ol’ Abraham said, “Well, things ain’t here like I thought they was. I’m goin’ back.” So he met Ol’ Brother Horace Greeley goin’ to the same place he comin’ from.

Greeley said to him, “Well, hello Brother Jasper, where you been?”

Brother Jasper said, “I just been to heaven.”

“Well, what you comin’ back for?”

Brother Jasper said, “Well, ol’ Brother Salt Peter wouldn’t let me in.”

Brother Horace Greeley said, “Well now, that’s too bad. Now I’m gonna work a plan to git you in. Well now, you just let me get on your back an’ when I get there I’ll let on you’re my horse an’ we’ll both get inside the gates.”

So Brother Horace Greeley rode on Brother Jasper's back. When they got to the gates of [Heaven] Salt Peter said, "Whoa there, who's there?"
"Brother Horace Greeley."
Ol' Salt Peter said, "Is you ridin' or walkin'?"
Brother Horace Greeley said, "Ridin' on a horse."
Ol' Salt Peter said, "Hitch your horse outside an' come on in."

HOW COME PIGS CAN SEE THE WIND

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Backus, Emma M. "Animal Tales from North Carolina." *Journal of American Folklore* 11 (1898): 285–286.

Date: 1898

Original Source: North Carolina

National Origin: African American

This tale is reminiscent of the well-known "Three Little Pigs and the Big Bad Wolf," which was popular in the late nineteenth century. In fact, Joel Chandler Harris included a wolf and pig tale in his *Nights with Uncle Remus* published in 1883. Unlike either Chandler's version or the tales of the Big Bad Wolf familiar to American children, this becomes an origin narrative. Brer Wolf calls on Satan for help, and the encounter ends badly for Sis Pig. The collector provided no contextual information nor commentary along with the folktale, but several features of the tale invite further speculation. Among them are the following: Brer Wolf claims that he is "the master," leading to Sis Pig's surrendering four of her five offspring. This reflects the bondsperson's plight. The action casts light on the master's character as well. Brer Wolf enlists Satan's aid only to find himself frightened out of his wits by his pact. Similar pacts throughout African American tradition elicit similar consequences. Perhaps the best known is the **legend** of blues musician Robert Johnson (1911–1938) selling his soul to the devil at the crossroads.

Did you done hear how come that old Sis Pig can see the wind? Well, to be sure, ain't you never hear that? Well, don't you take noticement, many and many a time, how unrestful, and 'stracted like, the pigs is, when the wind blows, and how they squeal, and run this here way and that here way, like they's 'stracted? Well, sir, all dat gwine on is along of the fact that they can see the wind.

One time the old sow, she have five little pigs—four black and one white one.

Now old Brer Wolf, he have a mighty good mouth for pig meat, and he go every night and walk round and round Miss Pig's house, but Sis Pig, she have the door lock fast.

One night, he dress up just like he was a man, and he put a tall hat on he head, and shoes on he foots; he take a sack of corn, and he walk hard, and make a mighty fuss on the brick walk, right up to the door, and he knock loud on the door in a great haste, and Sis Pig, she say, "Who there?" and Brer Wolf say up, loud and powerful, Brer Wolf did, "Quit your fooling, old woman, I is the master, come for to put my mark on the new pigs; turn 'em loose here lively."

And old Sis Pig, she mighty skeered, but she feared not to turn 'em out; so she crack the door, and turn out the four black pigs, but the little white pig, he am her eyeballs, the little white pig was, and when he turn come, she just shut the door and hold it fast.

And Brer Wolf, he put down the corn, and just pick up the four little pigs and tote 'em off home; but when they done gone, he mouth hone for the little pig, but Sis Pig, she keep him mighty close. One night Brer Wolf was wandering up and down the woods, and he meet up with old Satan, and he ask Brer Wolf, old Satan did, can he help him, and Brer Wolf he just tell him what on he mind, and old Satan told him to lead on to Miss Pig's house, and he help him out.

So Brer Wolf he lead on, and directly there Sis Pig's house, and old Satan, he 'gin to puff and blow, and puff and blow, till Brer Wolf he that skeered, Brer Wolf is, that he hair fairly stand on end; and Miss Pig she done hear the mighty wind, and the house a-cracking, and they hear her inside down on her knees, just calling on God A'mighty for mercy; but old Satan, he puff and blow, and puff and blow, and the house crack and tremble, and he say, old Satan did, "You hear this here mighty wind, Sis Pig, but if you look this here way you can see it."

And Sis Pig, she that skeered, she crack the door and look out, and there she see old Satan's breath, like red smoke, blowing on the house, and from that day the pigs can see the wind, and it look red, the wind look red, sir. How we know that? I tell you how we know that, sir: if anybody miss a pig and take the milk, then they can see the wind, and they done tell it was red.

HOW BRER RABBIT BRING DUST OUT OF THE ROCK

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Backus, Emma M. "Tales of the Rabbit from Georgia Negroes." *Journal of American Folklore* 12 (1899): 113–114.

Date: 1899

Original Source: Georgia

National Origin: African American

Brer Rabbit's trick of seeming to strike dust from a rock despite the failure of other stronger competitors is reminiscent of the European and European American Jack Tales in which Jack uses similar slight of hand to appear to squeeze milk from a stone (AT 1060). By doing so, Jack intimidates giants and ogres. Unlike the folktale Jack, however, Brer Rabbit uses his deception to exploit yet another in a long line of reluctant fathers-in-law, shrugging off his ploy as just one of "his court-ing tricks." As Brer Rabbit once again in his guise of **trickster** subverts a competition designed to take him out of the running, the social mes-sage is again the triumph of brain over brawn and the flexibility of rules.

Mr. Fox, he have a mighty handsome daughter, and all the chaps was flying round her to beat all. Brer Coon, Brer Wolf, Brer Rabbit, and Brer Possum was a courting of her constant, and they all ask Brer Fox for he daughter.

Now the gal, she favor Brer Rabbit in her mind, but she don't let on who her favor is, but just snap her eyes on 'em all.

Now Ole Brer Rabbit, he ain't so mighty handsome, and he ain't no proud-ful man, that's sure, but somehow it 'pears like he do have a mighty taking way with the gals.

Well, when they all done ask Ole Man Fox for his daughter, he ask the gal, do she want Brer Wolf? And she toss her head and 'low Brer Wolf too bodaciously self-ish; she say, "Brer Wolf's wife never get a bite of chicken breast while she live."

Then the Ole man, he ask her how she like Brer Possum? and she just giggle and 'low "Brer Possum mighty ornery leetle Ole man, and he 'longs to a low family anyhow."

And Ole Man Fox, he 'low, "Dat's so for a fact," and he sound her affec-tions for Brer Coon, but she make out Brer Coon pass all endurance. Then the Ole man he tell her Brer Rabbit done ask for her too, and she make out like she mighty took 'back, and 'low she don't want none of that lot.

Then Ole Brer Fox, he say that the gal was too much for him; but he tell the chaps to bring up the big stone hammer, and they can all try their strength on the big step rock what they use for a horse block, and the one what can pound dust out of the rock shall have the gal.

Then Brer Rabbit, he feel mighty set down on, 'cause he know all the chaps can swing the stone hammer to beat hisself, and he go off sorrowful like and set on the sand bank. He set a while and look east, and then he turn and set a while and look west, but may be you don't know, sir, Brer Rabbit sense never come to hisself 'cepting when he look north. When it just come to hisself what he goin' to do, he jump up and clip it off home, and he hunt up the slippers and

he fill them with ashes, and Lord bless your soul, the ole chap know just what them slippers do 'bout the dust out of the rock.

Well, the next morning they was all there soon. Ole Brer Rabbit, the last one, come limping up like he mighty lame, and being so, he the last one on the land, 'cause he have last chance.

Now Brer Wolf, he take the big hammer and he fetch it down hard, and Brer Wolf mighty strong man in them days, but he ain't fetch no dust. Then Brer Coon and Brer Possum, they try, but Ole Man Fox he say, he don't see no dust, and Miss Fox she behind the window curtain and giggle, and Ole Man Fox he curl the lip and he say, "Brer Rabbit, it you turn now." Brer Wolf he look on mighty scornful, and Brer Rabbit have just all he can do to fetch up the big hammer; it so hard he just have to stand on tiptoe in he slippers, and when the hammer come down, he heels come down "Sish," and the dust fly so they can't see the ole chap for the dust.

But Ole Brer Rabbit, he don't count that nothing but just one of his court-ing tricks.

JACK AND THE BEAN-POLE

Tradition Bearer: Mary Smith

Source: Parsons, Elsie Clews. "Tales from Maryland and Pennsylvania." *Journal of American Folklore* 30 (1917): 212–213.

Date: 1917

Original Source: Maryland

National Origin: African American

This **ordinary folktale** is an African American **variant** of the well-known European tale "Jack and the Beanstalk" (AT 328). The narrative shows localization and modernization by disguising Jack as a newsboy during one of his visits to the giant's castle, locating the castle on a hill-top rather than in the sky, and substituting a beanpole for a beanstalk. Jack, in this version, is shown to be reclaiming family property rather than stealing from the giant.

Jack an' his mother lived together, an' they had planted some beans. And it seemed that one bean had strayed off from the rest, an' it grew up right alongside of the house.

Their house was right below a hill, and Jack had always wondered what was on top of the hill. So one day Jack climbed a bean-pole to get up to the top of the hill. So, when he had got to the top, he saw a palace, an' he went to this place to see who lived there.

So, when he had got there, he found it was a giant's castle, but the giant wasn't at home. But his wife was. Jack was tired and hungry. So he asked the lady to take him in and give him something to eat. So she did so. But she told him not to let her husband catch him there. So, while Jack was eating, the giant came to the door.

She told Jack to hide, an' Jack hid in the chest behind the door. So the giant came in. He said,

Fe, fi, fo, fum,
I smell the blood of an Englishmun.

He said,

Be he alive or be he dead,
Fe, fi, fo, fum!

But his wife told him that he didn't, that it was only some mutton that she was cooking. So the giant sat down to eat his supper; and after he had finished eating, he called to his wife, and told her to bring him the wonder-box, which he was supposed to have taken from Jack's father before Jack's father died. So, while the giant was sitting there looking in the box, he fell asleep.

An' Jack slipped out of the chest behind the door, an' took the wonder-box home to his mother. So it wasn't very long till Jack made up his mind to make another trip back to the castle of the giant. So, when Jack went back this time, he tried to put on like another poor little boy that was half starved. So he begged entrance at the door of the castle from the wife.

And she didn't want to have him in, and she told him about the boy that had took the wonder-box from her husband. So he begged so hard that she left him in, an' she gave him some bread and milk to eat. And again, while Jack was eating, the giant came.

And as he came in the door, he said,

Fe, fi, fo, fum,
I smell the blood of an Englishmun.

He said,

Be he alive or be he dead,
Fe, fi, fo, fum!

And Jack jumped in the salt-cellar.

His wife said, "No, there hasn't been any one here today." She says, "I'm only roastin' some pork for your supper." So, after he ate his supper, the giant

sent for his golden hen that lay the golden egg. So his wife went and brought it for him. And while the giant was playing with the egg that the hen had laid, he fell fast asleep.

An' Jack carried off the hen and the egg down the bean-stalk to where his mother lived. But Jack still thought that he wanted to visit the castle again.

So this time, when he went up the bean-stalk to the giant's castle, he was in the appearance of a newsboy selling papers. So, while the wife went to get the money to buy a paper, the giant appeared, and Jack hid in the closet. And the giant repeated again,

Fe, fi, fo, fum,
I smell the blood of an Englishmun.

He said,

Be he alive or be he dead,
Fe, fi, fo, fum!

So the wife said, "No, there hasn't been any one here today." And after the giant had ate his supper, he called for his harp, the only thing that he had left, an' this was a magic harp. So it commenced to play, an' it played so sweetly that the giant fell fast asleep and commenced to snore.

And as the harp stopped playing, Jack came out of the closet, took the harp, and started to the door. But the harp began to play, and it woke the giant up. An' the giant followed Jack out of the door, an' Jack run as fast as he could down the bean-stalk, an' the giant started to follow. But as the giant reached the top, Jack cut down the bean-stalk with an axe; an' as the giant stepped on, he fell down an' broke his neck.

An' Jack and his mother always lived happy afterward with the property of the father which the giant had stolen an' Jack had restored again.

TABLECLOTH, DONKEY, AND CLUB

Tradition Bearer: Helen Seeny

Source: Parsons, Elsie Clews. "Tales from Maryland and Pennsylvania." *Journal of American Folklore* 30 (1917): 210–212.

Date: 1917

Original Source: Maryland

National Origin: African American

This African American **variant** of "The Table, the Ass, and the Stick" (AT 563) contains the classic **motifs** of the Old World versions of this

ordinary folktale. The final beating at the end is a touch of poetic justice.

Once upon a time there lived a woman an' a boy in a house together, Jack an' his mother. An' Jack's father was dead. So Jack's mother planted some barley. An' she told Jack to get the barley. Jack was lazy, an' he didn't want to gather it. So one day she whipped him with a broomstick, an' made him go to gather it.

An' Jack made up his mind then that he would go an' gather the barley. So when he went to gather the barley, the wind had blown it away. There was an oak tree standin' in the field where the barley had been, so Jack picked up a club an' commenced to beat on the tree.

So there came along a little old man while Jack was beatin' on the tree. An' he said to Jack, "Jack, my son, what are you doin'?"

An' he said, "I'm beatin' the wind for blowing my barley away." So the little man reached in his pocket, an' he took out something that looked to be a handkerchief to Jack. An' instead of being a handkerchief, it was a tablecloth.

An' so the old man said, "Spread, tablecloth, spread!" An' so it spread, and there was a lot of all different kinds of food on it. So the old man said to Jack, "Take this home, an' it will pay your mother for the barley."

But instead of going home, Jack went to a halfway house to play, an' he stayed there all night. An' he said to the people when he went to bed, "Do not tell this tablecloth to spread."

But as soon as he was in bed, they told the tablecloth to spread. So in place of Jack's tablecloth they put their own, an' kept Jack's.

So the next mornin' Jack got up overjoyed, an' took the tablecloth an' ran home. So he says to his mother, "Mommer, I have something to pay for all your good barley, even though the wind has blown it away." He says, "just tell this tablecloth to spread." An' they told the tablecloth to spread, an', instead of spreading, it lay still.

So his mother whipped him an' sent him out again. And he went down the field an' beat the same oak tree. And the little old man came along again, an' he said, "Jack, my son, what are you doing today?"

So he says, "Didn't the tablecloth repay your mother for the barley?"

An' Jack said, "No, when I told it to spread, it lay still on the table." So by this time there came a donkey up.

So the little old man he said, "Tell this donkey to shake." An' Jack told the donkey to shake. An' he shook a pack of gold out of one foot, and a pack of silver out of the other. But, instead of going home this night, he went back to the halfway house again; but he cautioned them to be sure not to tell the donkey to shake.

But it wasn't long before he had gone to bed but they went to the stable and told the donkey to shake. And when they found out that he shook a pack

of gold out of one foot, an' a pack of silver out of the other, they put their donkey in place of his.

So the next mornin' he got up an' rode the donkey home to his mother; an' he said to her, "Now, this time, mother, I really have got something that will pay you for your barley." He says, "Let's tell this donkey to shake." But the donkey stood still.

So the old lady beat him an' sent him away again. So this time, while he was beatin' on the tree, the little old man came along again. So he says, "Jack, my son, what are you doin' this mornin'?"

Jack says, "I'm still beatin' the wind for blowing my barley away." So this time the little old man gave Jack a club. An' he told Jack whatever he wanted the club to beat, to tell it, "Beat, Club, beat!"

So Jack went to the halfway house again with the club. So he said to de people before he went to bed, "Be sure and don't tell this club to beat." So Jack went up-stairs, but he didn't go to bed this time; an' wasn't long till he heard the old man say, "Beat, Club, beat!" an' the club commenced to beat on the man. And the old man stood it as long as he could, an' the woman told it to beat her. So they couldn't stand it no longer, so they called for Jack.

When Jack came down, he asked them what was the matter. And the man said he had told the club to beat, an' it beat on him. So Jack says, "Give me my donkey an' tablecloth, and I'll stop the club from beatin'." So, to keep from gettin' beat any more, they give Jack his donkey and tablecloth.

So Jack took the donkey an' the tablecloth an' the club, all three, home to his mother. So Jack says, "Mother, I am quite sure this time I have more than enough to pay you for all the barley you have planted." So he says, "Tell this tablecloth to spread." So he says, "Tell this donkey to shake." An' then he says, "Tell this club to beat." An' it beat her.

And he says, "That's the way it felt when you beat me." So, after it beat her a while, he told it to stop. An' after the club had stopped beatin', they lived happy together always after, by the use of the tablecloth, club, an' donkey.

THE BRIDE OF THE EVIL ONE

Tradition Bearer: An African American gardener known as "Old William"

Source: Cooke, Elizabeth Johnston. "English Folk-Tales in America. The Bride of the Evil One." *Journal of American Folklore* 12 (1899): 126–130.

Date: 1899

Original Source: Louisiana

National Origin: African American

This tale of the demon lover who comes to claim the rich, beautiful, and heretofore inaccessible Maritta warns of the dangers of avarice. This

narrative plot is distributed cross-culturally. Moreover, the plot crosses generic boundaries; “The Demon Lover” (also “James Harris” and “The House Carpenter”) presents the plot in the form of a British ballad. The **motifs** of the closing test of the devil’s questions and the Obstacle Flight enjoy a similar popularity. Localization of what is undoubtedly an old tale is seen in Satan’s breakfast of buckwheat cakes and his spending his days in his blacksmith shop overseeing “his hands” at work.

In former times there lived, on a great plantation far out in the country, the richest and most beautiful lady in the world. Her name was Maritta, and she was beloved by all who knew her, especially so by her parents, with whom she dwelt.

She was so rich that one could not count her wealth in many days; and her home was a palace, filled with rare things from all quarters of the globe. Rich hangings of damask and tapestry adorned the walls, and massive and wonderfully carved furniture filled the rooms. Instead of gilt, as is usual in splendid mansions, the mirrors and pictures were framed in gold, silver, and even precious stones. Then, the dining-table was a wonder to behold—glittering with costly glass and golden service. The lady Maritta always ate from a jeweled platter with a golden spoon; and her rooms were filled with wondrous vases, containing delicious spices and rare perfumes of many kinds.

Half the brave and daring fine gentlemen of her country had sought her hand in marriage; but her parents always declared that each was not rich enough. So loath were her parents to give her up, that they finally said she should never marry unless she could view her suitor ten thousand miles down the road.

Now, as roads in general are not straight for so great a distance, to say nothing of one’s eyesight, the poor lady was quite in despair, and had almost decided to remain a spinster.

At last the Evil One, seeing the covetousness of this old couple, procured for himself an equipage of great magnificence, and went a-wooing. His coach was made of beaten gold, so ablaze with precious stones that the sun seemed mean in comparison with it. Maritta beheld it thirty thousand miles off, and all the household were called out to view it; for such a wonder had never been seen in that part of the world. But so great was the Evil One’s power for conjuring that he was a very short time in arriving. He drove up to the door with so grand a dash and clatter and style that Maritta thought she had never beheld as princely a personage. When he had alighted most gracefully, uncovering [removing his hat] and bowing to the mother and father, he knelt at the feet of Maritta, kissed her hand, and turning to her astonished parents, asked the hand of their daughter in marriage. So pleased were they all with his appearance that the wedding was hastened that very day. After the marriage compact was

completed Maritta bade adieu to her proud parents; and tripping lightly into his coach, they drove away with great effect.

Then they journeyed and journeyed, and every fine house or plantation which they approached, Maritta would exclaim, "Is that your home, my dear?"

"No, darling," he would reply with a knowing smile, "my house is another cut to [different from] that." Still they journeyed: and just as Maritta was beginning to feel *very* weary they approached a great hill, from which was issuing a cloud of black smoke, and she could perceive an enormous hole in the side of the hill, which appeared like the entrance to a tunnel. The horses were now prancing and chafing at the bits in a most terrifying manner; and Maritta thought she saw flames coming from out their nostrils. just as she was catching her breath to ask the meaning of it all, the coach and party plunged suddenly into the mouth of the yawning crater, and they sank down, down into that place which is called Torment. The poor trembling lady went into a swoon, and knew nothing more until she awoke in the House of Satan. But she did not yet know that it was the Evil One whom she had married, nor that, worse still, he was already a married man when she had made his acquaintance. Neither did she know that the frightful old crone was his other wife. Satan's manner had also undergone a decided change; and he, who had been so charming a lover, was now a blustering, insolent master. Lifting his voice until it shook the house, as when it thunders, he stormed around, beating the old hag, killing her uncanny black cat, and raising a tumult generally. Then, ordering the hag to cook him some buck-wheat cakes for breakfast, he stamped out of the house, towards his blacksmith shop, to see how his hands were doing their work. While the wretched young wife sat in her parlor, looking very mournful and lovely, wiping her eyes and feeling greatly mystified, the old hag was turning her cakes on the griddle and growing more and more jealous of this beautiful new wife who was to take her place. Finally she left the cakes and came and stood by Maritta. "My child," quoth she, "my dear daughter, have you married that man?"

"Yes, dame," replied the pretty Maritta.

"Well, my child," said she, "you have married nothing but the Devil." At this the wretched young wife uttered a scream and would have swooned again, except that the hag grasped her by the arm, and putting a rough horny hand over Maritta's mouth, said in a low and surly voice, near her ear, "Hist! Should he hear you, he will kill us both! Only do my bidding, and keep a quiet tongue, and I will show you how to make your escape."

At this Maritta sat up quite straight, and said in trembling tones, "Good dame, prithee tell me, and I will obey, and when I am free, I will send you five millions of dollars."

But the forlorn hag only shook her head, replying, "Money I ask not, for it is of no use to such as I; but listen well."

Then seating herself on the floor at the feet of Maritta, her black hair hanging in tangles about her sharp ugly face, like so many serpents, she continued in

this wise, “He has two roosters who are his spies, and you must give them a bushel of corn to pacify them—but I shall steal the corn for you. He also has two oxen; one is as swift of foot as the wind can blow; the other can only travel half as fast. You will have to choose the last, as the swift one is too well guarded for us to reach him. The slower one is tethered just out-side the door. Come!” she cried to Maritta, who would have held back, “a faint heart will only dwell in Torment.”

At this thought the poor Maritta roused herself, and summoned all her strength. Her hair had now fallen loose and she was all in tears. But she mounted quickly, looking over her shoulder, to see if he was coming even then. “But dame,” cried she, “will he not overtake me, if his ox is so much more fleet of foot than mine?”

“Hold your slippery tongue,” replied the hag, and mark my words. Here is a reticule [a drawstring bag] to hang at your side; this is a brickbat which I put in the bottom, and on that I place a turkey egg and a goose egg. When you feel the hot steam coming near you, drop the brickbat—for he will soon return, and missing you, will start on your chase, mounted on the ox. As he approaches near, you will feel the heat of his breath like hot steam. When you drop the brickbat a wall will spring up from the earth to the sky; and the Devil cannot pass it until he tears down every brick, and throws it out of sight. When you feel the hot steam again, drop the turkey egg, and there will come a river; and when he reaches this river he cannot cross over until his ox drinks all the water. Do the same with the goose egg, and a river will again flow behind you, thus giving you more time in which to reach home. Now off with you, and Devil take you, if you don’t hold on tight and keep up your spirits. But, hark ye, if he catches you, I will poison you when you come back. At this terrible threat the lovely Maritta was so frightened that she forgot to thank the old hag or say good-bye. In the twinkling of an eye the weird-looking creature had raised her mighty arm, and gurgling out a frightful laugh, she lashed the ox with a huge whip.

Away he sped, verily as fleet as the wind, with the beautiful lady clinging on, her arms wound around his neck, and her soft face buried in his shaggy hair. On-ward they floated, above the earth, it seemed to Maritta, over hills and plains, through brake and swamp. Just as the lady began to rejoice at being set free, for it seemed a kind ox, and, after all, it was not so *very* hard to hold on, as she glided along, she heard a piercing shriek behind her; and suddenly a burning hot steam seemed to envelop her. Thinking of the brickbat, in an instant she snatched it from the reticule—almost breaking the eggs in her haste—and flung it behind her, nearly suffocated with the heat. Then she turned to look and lo! a great dark wall shut the awful sight from her gaze.

Onward, onward they sped, as she urged the ox by kind words, stroking his great neck with her delicate white hands. After they had traversed a great distance, Maritta began to think of home and the loved ones, when her reveries were broken by a gaunt black hand clutching at her hair over the back of the ox; and again she felt the intense heat. Too terrified to put her hand in the

reticule, she gave it a shake, and the turkey egg fell to the ground. On the instant water was flowing all about her, cooling the air and quite reviving her. Then a harsh voice fell upon her ear, crying, "Drink, drink, I tell you; mighty hard on you, but you must drink!"

Soon the river was left far behind, and again Maritta aroused herself as she began to notice many familiar landmarks, which told that she was nearing home. After urging the ox on at a great rate for many more miles, she dropped the goose egg, in order to give herself ample time, although as yet she had not again felt the approach of her fiendish husband.

At length the welcome sight of her own broad fields greeted her anxious and weary eyes; and soon her dear home arose upon the horizon. With a few more strides the wonderful ox halted at her own very door, and she fell from his back more dead than alive. For some moments she was unable to rise and embrace her alarmed parents, who had seen her approach.

They had only had time to retire into the house, when Satan rode up to the steps. Throwing himself from the ox, he banged for admittance, in a vastly different manner from that of his first visit. But the father confronted him, and he had to content himself with talking to Maritta over her father's shoulders, while the poor lady was cowering in a corner of the room clinging to her mother. However, the touch of loving parental arms soon reassured her, and she demanded of Satan what he wished further. "I have," replied his Satanic majesty, "three questions to propound to you; and if not properly answered, I shall take you by force again to my realms." Then placing his feet wide apart, with head thrown back, one arm akimbo on his hip, and snapping the fingers of his other hand, he sang in an impudent, swaggering manner:

What is whiter than any snow?
 What is whiter than any snow?
 Who fell in the colley well?

The gentle Maritta lifted her soft eyes, and raising her sweet voice sang in a pure and tender strain:

Heaven is whiter than any snow,
 Heaven is whiter than any snow,
 Who fell in the colley well?

"Yes, ma'am," replied Satan, rather taken aback. "That's right." Then he continued:

What is deeper than any well?
 What is deeper than any well?
 Who fell in the colley well?

Maritta replied in the same strain:

Hell is deeper than any well,
Hell is deeper than any well,
Who fell in the colley well?

Again the Evil One took up his strain:

What is greener than any grass?
What is greener than any grass?
Who fell in the colley well?

Maritta lifted her voice a third time:

Poison is greener than any grass,
Who fell in the colley well?

Greatly confounded at her answers, the Evil One stamped his feet in such a manner that smoke and sparks flew upward, and an odor of sulfur filled the room. Then turning on his heels he cried to the mother that he had left a note under the doorsteps with the Devil's own riddle on it.

A thousand or more acres of green corn grew about the house; and the Devil, pulling it all up by the roots, carried it in his hands, tore the roof off the mansion, and raising a fearful storm, disappeared in it. When the storm had abated, the mountains around about were all leveled to the ground. After the panic caused by his wonderful conjuring had subsided, the mother bethought herself of the note, and when found it read as follows:

Nine little white blocks into a pen,
One little red block rolled over them.

None could guess it save Maritta, who said it meant the teeth and tongue.

TRAPPING A HAG

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: "Beliefs of Southern Negroes Concerning Hags." *Journal of American Folklore* 7 (1894): 66-67.

Date: 1894

Original Source: Virginia

National Origin: African American

“Hag-craft” refers to a belief in the “night hag,” an individual who can travel in body or spirit to torment a victim at night. The “hag experience” has been established to be a cross-cultural psycho-physiological phenomenon. Folklorist David Hufford describes it as being associated with four common symptoms: (1) awakening, (2) hearing or seeing something come into the room and approach the bed, (3) being pressed on the chest and strangled, and (4) the inability to move or cry out. The hag experience is represented in John Henry Fuseli’s painting “The Nightmare.” The **legend** below functions as a **belief tale**.

There is another way by which suspicions of hag-craft may be proved or disproved. A neighbor comes to see you whom you suspect. Would you be certain in regard to the matter, give your visitor a seat near the fire, and then, when she is not looking, steal quietly up behind her and stick a fork into the floor under her chair. By this means you have pinned her hag-spirit to the floor, and the old woman cannot or will not withdraw her bodily presence until the fork is withdrawn.

This story told by a young woman of my acquaintance illustrates this method of identifying a hag. She remembers how, when she was a little girl, her mother was greatly troubled by the nightly visitation of one of these tormentors. She finally fixed her suspicion upon a neighbor, and told her children that she believed old Aunt So-and-So was at the bottom of all her troubles. Accordingly the children, with the desire of verifying their mother’s suspicions, took council together and arrived at a conclusion.

The next time old aunty called, she found a nice comfortable chair awaiting her close by the fire, and an urgent invitation to sit down in it. As soon as she became absorbed in conversation, one of the children stole up behind her and stuck a steel fork into the floor under the chair. Aunty had only run in for a few minutes, but she spent the morning. The day moved on, and was near its end, but still aunty sat in the chair by the fire, never offering to stir. She was the hag, and her spirit was pinned down to the floor by that three-tined steel fork.

At last the mother, who had been making signs to the children that they must take that fork out, took them aside and told them that, if the fork was not removed at once, they should get a whipping that they would long remember. Under this threat the child who had stuck the fork into the floor came up again behind the chair and drew it out, and the old aunty rose and politely withdrew, leaving behind her a certainty where before there had been suspicion.

SOL LOCKHEART'S CALL

Tradition Bearer: Sol Lockheart

Source: Steiner, Roland. "Sol Lockheart's Call." *Journal of American Folklore* 48 (1900): 67–70.

Date: 1900

Original Source: Georgia

National Origin: African American

The following **personal experience narrative** is classified in Protestant religions as "testimony," which is reporting one's religious experience as a means of affirming one's faith or of converting others to belief. In this case, Sol Lockheart, a licensed (as distinct from a fully ordained) minister recounts his call to the Christian ministry, an occupation that he pursued part time while taking care of stock for collector Roland Steiner. His call, during the course of which he is struck blind and receives a vision from Christ, is reminiscent of many elements of the apostle Paul's call to preach while on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1–9). Lockheart's notion of man's being influenced by both a good and bad conscience suggests the concept of hoodoo (see "When Brer Rabbit Help Brer Terrapin," page 180). However, Sol Lockheart rejects the belief in conjuring and hoodoo, although he is reported in Steiner's gloss of this narrative to be a traditional healer who uses magical-religious techniques for his cures.

When a man starts to pray, he has a conscience to tell him when and where; then he has at the same time a conscience to tell him not to go and pray. The first is a good spirit, the last is a bad spirit. Maybe you may be lying in bed at midnight, eating breakfast or dinner, or between meals. The good spirit may say, "Go in the swamp to pray," night or day. If you follow the good one, you will receive good; if the bad one, you will get nothing.

I have to work out and find the difference between the two spirits. I felt sometimes like obeying the good spirit and sometimes the bad, and I continued to live to obey it better, and was one morning, just at daylight, called out by it into a gully; and when I got there and sat down, I lost my sight, and I heard a voice at my head saying, "When a child learns to read it don't forget for seventy-five or eighty years; write and send your mistress word and give her thanks for teaching your lips to pray, and tell her to get right, if she ain't right"; and then there rose a dead head before me, with rotten teeth; the head seemed all torn up, a terrible sight; the sight made me sick and blind for three days.

A woman in the presence of me said, "Give me a pipe of tobacco"; another one said, "You don't use tobacco, just use at it"; [that is, "you don't use very

much tobacco"] a voice said, "Go and set you out a tobacco plant, and let it grow to about one and a half feet, and there is a little worm on the plant." And he showed me the plant, a pretty green plant, and I never saw as pretty a tobacco plant, "the worm eats it and lives on it. Methodists live by the power of God, the Baptists live off of grace; go and tell all the Methodists they are wrong."

Three days after that I was in the field plowing, a sunshiny morning; there came a west wind as a fire and lifted me up, and showed me a ladder from the northwest, that passed right along by me, about two miles from me; the voice told me to go to it and be baptized. I saw the church, and in it twelve people, and in the pulpit a colored man preaching. I could see half his body; the twelve people were in front of him, and I saw myself sitting behind him in the pulpit, and by that spirit and that sign I was showed I was called to preach. The end of the ladder at the church was light and bright; the end away from the church ran up into the sky and was dark; if it had a been bright I would have seen into heaven.

I told my experience in April eleven years ago, and was baptized the third Sunday in May. As my experience I told the three deacons and our minister what I had seen and heard. When they carried me to the water I lost my sight again, got into the water about waist deep; my breath left me; a voice spoke at my right ear, "Brother Lockheart, I baptize you." I was sick all the time from the time I saw the head till I was baptized.

Tuesday night, after I was baptized, I fell from my chair dead, and when I fell back a cloud passed over me darker than any black night, and from that I got well; that night was the best night's rest I ever had.

Two days after that I was plowing in the field, turned my mule round and sat on my plow-stock; a voice spoke in midday, "What makes me Black?" The skin and hair shows it; if you look upon a hill and see two black men standing, you say there stands two Blacks; if you see two white men, you say there stands two white men; that is to show the difference between the two, skin and hair. I saw the master and servant walk out one day; the master got snake-bit, but by the help of God he got well, and he found the servant, the black man, knew the snake was there before it bit him, but would not tell him. The master would never like the servant no more for not telling him.

The servant wants the master to tell him the terror that is in death and hell, but he won't tell him on account of the snake. Now you can see clearly to pull the mote out of your brother's eye.

Two days after that I saw the heavens open and a white cloud come out about the size of a man's hand; it spread to the size of a tablecloth, closed to the size of a man's hand again, then again spread out to the size of a tablecloth and then closed out of sight, like a door closing in the heavens: then the next day, early in the morning, I saw the spirit of God, like a bird, like a rain-crow in shape, but the color of a dove: it had wide wings; as it passed by on the right side, it burnt inside of me like a flame of fire, and run me nearly crazy for about five minutes, and then I was all right again. About a week after that I was

walking along from the field, when the horn blew for dinner. I walked right up to a coffin on two little benches; it was painted a dark red, and on each side were silver handles, and when I first saw it I was badly frightened and stopped and looked in it, till when I got quiet, it was empty, but lined, with a pillow at the head. When I got over my fear a voice spoke at the head of the coffin and said, "Your body shall lie in that and rest in the shade," and then, as soon as the voice ceased speaking, the coffin disappeared, and then I began preaching.

About a year after I was called, I went on a journey preaching. I walked all the way for about forty miles. I walked, for the commandment says you must not use your critter on the Sabbath day. When I was coming home, I felt great pain, as if some one was driving nails in me. It was nine o'clock Saturday morning. Sunday morning about the same time, I saw in the road before me the likeness of a man, clothed in a long white gown; he turned my mind round, just like a wheel turning round. The next day, at the same time, I saw the same spirit again, who said to me, "You have a purple gown made like mine." The spirit looked like a young white man, clean-faced; his hair was kinder straw-colored, and hung down to his shoulders. For three days he kept after me till I had one made, and on a Friday I felt something in my shoes. I couldn't keep them on, until Saturday evening, and then a voice spoke and said, "Take off those shoes and go to Cermonia church tomorrow barefoot and preach." I now preach like the Apostles, with my purple gown on and barefoot, at my own church, Mt. Pleasant, near Grovetown, Georgia.

One night I prayed to the Lord to let me visit Heaven, and then fell into a deep sleep, and then I began a journey up in the sky. I soon came to a fine building, and it was paled round with white palings. I walked up in front of the gate; the gate was shut. I looked through the gate, and saw a white man standing in the door of the house. The house was built round, of white stone, and the house was full of windows, as high as I could see. I could not see to the top of the house. All the windows were full of little children. I didn't see any grown folks there I expect, what I see and know in this world, they are powerful scarce up there in Heaven.

POSSESSED OF TWO SPIRITS

Tradition Bearer: Braziel Robinson

Source: Steiner, Roland. "Braziel Robinson Possessed of Two Spirits." *Journal of American Folklore* 13 (1900): 226–228.

Date: 1900

Original Source: Georgia

National Origin: African American

In terms of structure, "Possessed of Two Spirits" is best classified as a **personal experience narrative**. It is a first-person account of an individual

experience. In terms of function, this account serves as a **belief tale** by virtue of exemplifying and reinforcing the narrator's belief in the powers of conjuration (supernatural manipulation) possessed by root doctors (spiritual practitioners from African American tradition). The overall system mastered by conjure men or root doctors has been labeled hoodoo, and these experts are often referred to as "two-headed doctors" in tribute to their cognizance of both the natural and supernatural world. The present narrative contains references to both culturally specific beliefs (the power of graveyard dirt, sometimes called "goofer dust," to affect the living) and more universal folk beliefs (the powers of second sight conferred by being "born with the caul," a delivery in which the birth sac is draped over the newborn's face). Typically, the more tightly structured of Robinson's narratives (such as his being conjured in May 1898) are framed by affirmations and descriptions of belief in the supernatural.

“I am not a preacher, but a member of the church, but I can make a few remarks in church, I have a seat in conference, I can see spirits, I have two spirits, one that prowls around, and one that stays in my body. The reason I have two spirits is because I was born with a double caul. People can see spirits if they are born with one caul, but nobody can have two spirits unless they are born with a double caul, very few people have two spirits. I was walking along and met a strange spirit, and then I heard a stick crack behind me and turned round and heard my prowling spirit tell the strange spirit it was me, not to bother me, and then the strange spirit went away and left me alone. My two spirits are good spirits, and have power over evil spirits, and unless my mind is evil, can keep me from harm. If my mind is evil my two spirits try to win me, if I won't listen to them, then they leave me and make room for evil spirits and then I'm lost forever, mine have never left me, and they won't if I can help it, as I shall try to keep in the path.”

Here he took the quid of tobacco out of his mouth, and rolling it in his hand for a few minutes, resumed:

“Spirits are around about all the time, dogs and horses can see them as well as people, they don't walk on the ground, I see them all the time, but I never speak to one unless he speaks to me first, I just walk along as if I saw nothing, you must never speak first to a spirit. When he speaks to me and I speak back I always cross myself, and if it is a good spirit, it tells me something to help me, if it is a bad spirit, it disappears, it can't stand the cross. Sometimes two or more spirits are together, but they are either all good, or all bad spirits, they don't mix like people on earth, good and bad together.

“Good spirits have more power than bad spirits, but they can't help the evil spirits from doing us harm. We were all born to have trouble, and only God can

protect us. Sometimes the good spirits let the evil spirits try to make you fall, but I won't listen to the evil spirits.

"When a person sees a spirit, he can tell whether it is a good spirit or a bad spirit by the color, good spirits are always white, and bad spirits are always black. When a person sees a bad spirit, it sometimes looks like a black man with no head, and then changes into a black cat, dog, or hog, or cow, sometimes the cow has only one horn and it stands out between the eyes. I never saw them change into a black bird; a man told me he saw one in the shape of a black owl; but I have seen good spirits change into white doves, but never saw one in shape of a cat, have seen them in the shape of men and children, some with wings and some without, then I have seen them look like a mist or a small white cloud. When a person is sick and meets good spirits near enough to feel the air from their bodies, or wings, he generally gets well. Any one can feel a spirit passing by, though only a few can see it. I've seen a great many together at one time, but that was generally about dusk. I never saw them flying two or three along together. Good and bad spirits fly, but a bad spirit can't fly away up high in the air, he is obleeged [obliged] to stay close to the ground. If a person follows a bad spirit, it will lead him into all kinds of bad places, in ditches, briers. A bad spirit is obleeged to stay in the body where it was born, all the time. If one has two spirits, the one outside wanders about, it is not always with you. If it is near and sees any danger, it comes and tells the spirit inside of you, so it can keep you from harm. Sometimes it can't, for the danger is greater than any spirit can ward off, then one's got to look higher.

"I've heard spirits talk to themselves, they talk in a whisper like, some-times you can tell what they're saying, and sometimes you can't. I don't think the spirit in the body has to suffer for the sins of the body it is in, as it is always telling you to do right. I can't tell, some things are hidden from us.

"People born with a caul generally live to be old. The caul is always buried in a graveyard.

"Children born with a caul talk sooner than other children, and have lot more sense.

"I was conjured in May 1898, while hoeing cotton, I took off my shoes and hoed two rows, then I felt strange, my feet begun to swell, and then my legs, and then, I couldn't walk. I had to stop and go home. Just as I stepped in the house, I felt the terriblest pain in my jints [joints], I sat down and thought, and then looked in my shoes, I found some yaller [yellow] dirt, and knew it was graveyard dirt, then I knew I was conjured, I then hunted about to find if there was any conjure in the house and found a bag under my door-step. I opened the bag and found, some small roots about an inch long, some black hair, a piece of snake skin, and some graveyard dirt, dark-yaller, right off some coffin. I took the bag and dug a hole in the public road in front of my house, and buried it with the dirt out of my shoes, and throwed some red pepper all around the house. I didn't get any better, and went and saw a root-doctor, who told me he could

take off the conjure, he gave me a cup of tea to drink and biled [boiled]up something and put it in a jug to wash my feet and legs with, but it ain't done me much good, he ain't got enough power, I am gwine [going] to see one in Augusta, who has great power, and can tell me who conjured me. They say root-doctors have power over spirits, who will tell them who does the conjuring; they generally [sic] uses yerbs [herbs] gathered on the changes of the moon, and must be got at night. People git conjur[e] from the root-doctors and one root-doctor often works against another, the one that has the most power does the work.

“People gits most conjured by giving them snake’s heads, lizards, and scorpions, dried and beat up into powder and putting it in the food or water they drink, and then they gits full of the varmints; I saw a root-doctor cut out of a man’s leg a lizard and a grasshopper, and then he got well. Some conjur ain’t to kill, but to make a person sick or make him have pain, and then conjur is put on the ground in the path where the person to be conjured goes, it is put down on a young moon, a growing moon, so the conjur will rise up and grow, so the person stepping over it will git conjured. Sometimes they roll it up in a ball and tie it to a string and hang it from a limb, so the person to be conjured, coming by, touches the ball, and the work’s done, and he gits conjured in the part that strikes the ball, the ball is small and tied by a thread so a person can’t see it. There are many ways to conjure, I knew a man that was conjured by putting graveyard dirt under his house in small piles and it almost killed him, and his wife. The dirt made holes in the ground, for it will always go back as deep as you got it, it goes down to where it naturally belongs.

“Only root-doctors can git the graveyard dirt, they know what kind to git and when, the hants [haunts, that is, ghosts] won’t let everybody git it, they must git it thro’ some kind of spell, for the graveyard dirt works trouble ‘til it gits back inter [into] the ground, and then wears’ off. It must git down to the same depth it was took from, that is as deep as the coffin lid was from the surface of the ground.”

JACK-O'-MY-LANTERN

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Newell, William Wells. “The Ignus Fatuus, Its Character and Legendary Origin.” *Journal of American Folklore* 17 (1904): 39–41.

Date: 1904

Original Source: Maryland

National Origin: African American

Ignus Fatuus (literally, “foolish fire”) has been identified as foxfire, swamp gas, will-o-the-wisp, the spirits of the dead, and in the **legend**

below, “Jack-O’-My-Lantern.” William Wells Newell, citing W. Wirt Sikes, describes the hideous swamp “goblin” as being preternaturally strong and swift though no taller than five feet, covered with hair, and able to leap long distances. Other commentators differ on the apparitions’ exact attributes, but in all cases the Jack-O’-My-Lantern is associated with the devil and out to harm any mortal crossing its path. In this narrative, he even surpasses the devil himself in deceit and guile.

Once there was a man name Jack. He was a mighty wicked man, an’ treat he wife an’ children like a dog. He did n’ do nothing’ but drink from morning til night, an’ it wasn’t no use to say nothing’ at all to him ‘cause he was just as ambitious as a mad dog. Well sir, he drink an’ he drink til whiskey couldn’t make him drunk; but at last it burn him up inside; an’ then the Devil come for him. When Jack see the Devil, he was so scared he couldn’t do anymore than drop in the floor.

Then he beg the Devil to let him off just a little while, but the Devil say, “Naw Jack, I ain’t going’ wait no longer; my wife, Abbie Sheens, is expecting you.”

So the Devil start off pretty brisk’ an’ Jack was obliged to follow, till they come to a grog shop.

Mr. Devil,” said Jack, “don’ you’ wan’ a drink?”

“Well,” said the Devil, “I believe I does, but I ain’t got no small change; we don’t keep no change down there.”

“Tell you what you do, Mr. Devil,” said Jack. “I got one ten cent in my pocket; you change yourself into another ten cent, an’ we can get two drinks, an’ then you can change yourself back again.”

So the Devil change hissself into a ten cent, an’ Jack pick him up, but instead of going in the grog shop, Jack clap the ten cent in he pocket-book that he hadn’t took out of he pocket before, ‘cause he didn’t want the Devil to see that the clasp was in the shape of a cross. He shut it tight, an’ there he had the Devil, an’ it wasn’t no use for him to struggle, ‘cause he couldn’t get by that cross. Well sir, first he swear and threaten Jack with what he was going’ to do to him, an’ then he begun to beg, but Jack just turn round an’ start to go home.

Then the Devil say, “Jack, of you’ll lemme out o’ here, I’ll let you’ off for a whole year, I will, for truth. Lemme go Jack, ‘cause Abbie Sheens is too lazy to put the brush on the fire, an’ it’ll all go out of I ain’t there for’ long, to tend to it.”

Then Jack say to hissself, “I have a great mind to let him go, ‘cause in a whole year I kin repent and get religion an’ get shed of him that there way.”

Then he say, “Mr. Devil, I’ll let you out if you declare for gracious you won’t come after me for twelve month.”

Then the Devil promise before Jack undo the clasp, an' by the time Jack got he pocket-book open he was gone. Then Jack say to hisself, "Well, now I going' to repent an' get religion sure; but it ain't no use being' in no hurry; the last' six month will be plenty o' time. Where that ten cent? Here 'tis. I going get me a drink."

When the six month was gone, Jack allowed one month would be time enough to repent, and when the last month come, Jack say he going have one more spree, an' then he would have a week or ten days left an' that was plenty o' time, 'cause he done heard o' folks repenting on their death bed. Then he went on a spree for' sure, an' when the last' week come, Jack had the delirium tremblin's, an' the first thing he knowed there was the Devil at the door, an' Jack had to get out of he bed and go 'long with him. After a while there pas a tree full o' great big red apples.

"Don' you' wan' some apples, Mr. Devil?" said Jack.

"You can get some if you want them," said the Devil, an' he stop an' look up in the tree.

"How you expect a man with delirium tremblin's to climb a tree?" said Jack. "You catch hold the bough, an' I'll push you up in the crotch, an' then you' kin get all you' wants."

So Jack push him in the crotch, an' the Devil begin to feel the apples to get a ripe one. While he was doing' that, Jack whip he knife out of he pocket, an' cut a cross in the bark of the tree, just unther the Devil, an' the Devil holler, "Tzip! Something nurr but me then. What are you doing' down there, Jack? I going' cut you' heart out."

But he couldn't get down while that cross was there, an' Jack just sat down on the grass, an' watch him raging an' swearing an' cussing. Jack kept him there all night tell 'twas close to day, an' then the Devil change he tune, an' he say, "Jack, lemme get down here an' I'll give you another year."

"Give me nothing'!" said Jack, an' stretch hisself out on the grass.

After a while, 'bout sun up, the Devil say, "Jack, cut dis thing off here an' lemme get down, an' I'll give you ten year."

"Naw siree," said Jack, "I won' let you get down less you declare for' gracious that you won't never come after me no more."

When the Devil find Jack was hard as a rock, he agreed, an' declared for gracious that he wouldn't' never come for Jack again, an' Jack cut the cross off the tree, and the Devil left without a word.

After that Jack never thought no more about repenting, 'cause he wasn't afraid of the Devil, an' he didn't want to go where there wasn't no whiskey. Then he live until he body wore out, an' he was obliged to die.

First he went to the gate o' heaven, but the angel just shake he head. Then he went' to the gate o' Hell, but when word come that Jack was there, the Devil holler to the imps. "Shut the do' an' don' let that man come in

here; he done treat me scandalous. Tell him to go 'long back where he come from."

Then Jack say, "How I going' find my way back in the dark? Give me a lantern." Then the Devil take a chunk out of the fire, an' say, "Here, take this, and don't you never come back here no mo'." Then Jack take the chunk o' fire an' start back, but when he come to a marsh, he done got lost, an' he ain't never find he way out since.

CAJUN

THE WINE, THE FARM, THE PRINCESS AND THE TARBABY

Tradition Bearer: Aneus Guerin

Source: Claudel, Calvin. "Louisiana Tales of Jean Sot and Boqui and Lapin." *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 8 (1944): 288–291.

Date: 1931

Original Source: Louisiana

National Origin: Cajun

Cajuns are the descendents of Europeans of French ancestry who were exiled from Acadia (now Nova Scotia, Canada) by the British, who began a systematic program of deportation in 1755. Although the exiles found homes as far away as the Caribbean, the largest and historically most identifiable Cajun population settled in what was then the Louisiana Territory, where they preserved tales from European tradition, adapted those of their neighbors, and developed their own that summed up their perceptions of themselves and others. The Cajun cycle of Lapin and Bouqui tales casts Lapin (French, "rabbit") in his common role of **trickster** and Bouqui (derived from Wolof "hyena" as noted on page xiv) as Lapin's foil and the butt of all his jokes. The Lapin and Bouqui cycle in general and "The Wine, the Farm, the Princess and the Tarbaby" in particular show the influence of African American tradition. Cross-cultural borrowing and adaptation to the southern environment are striking in these tales. In addition, this tale, composed of several narratives that are capable of standing alone, should be compared to other trickster narratives in this collection, especially "How Brer Rabbit Practice Medicine" (page 168) and "Brother Rabbit an' Brother Tar-Baby" (page 414).

One day Comrade Lapin was working with Comrade Bouqui on a farm. They were cropping together that year, and they had arranged to divide the crop equally at the end of the year. It was very hot that day, and Comrade Lapin wanted to fool Comrade Bouqui in some way or other.

“What do you say if we buy a jug of wine today?” suggested Lapin.

“Fine!” agreed Bouqui. “You will go get it yourself.”

Comrade Lapin went to fetch the wine. When he returned, he put it in a ditch where there was shade. He went to work again, but did not try to keep up with Bouqui. He took his time, cheating on his comrade. Bouqui was working fast to get finished, and Lapin was far behind. Suddenly Lapin exclaimed:

“Ooh!”

“What’s the matter?” requested Bouqui.

“There’s someone calling me,” explained Lapin.

“Go see who it is,” suggested Bouqui.

Lapin left, went toward the jug and took a drink. When he returned, Bouqui asked him why he had stayed so long.

“I was called for a christening,” explained Lapin.

“Is that so?” questioned Bouqui. “What did you name the baby?”

“I named him First-One,” continued Lapin.

They started working, and soon Comrade Lapin was called again. He went to take another big drink. When he returned, he told Bouqui it was another christening and he had called the baby Second-One.

Next he went to perform a third christening and named this baby Third-One. This time he finished drinking all the wine, turning the jug over before he returned to his work.

“Ah now!” exclaimed Bouqui when it was time to quit, “let’s go drink us some wine now.”

They went to the jug and saw it was turned over. There was not a drop of wine left in the jug.

“Too bad!” declared Lapin. “Our wine is all lost.”

Bouqui was sad, disappointed and tired. Comrade Lapin felt good as he returned to his cabin.

A little while after that Bouqui and Lapin went into the field to see their potatoes. There was a good crop. The potato plants were big and full of flowers. They stayed there a long time, talking and admiring their labor.

“It’s almost time to dig our potatoes,” said Lapin “How are we going to divide our crop? Do you want to take the roots, and I’ll take the plant?”

“Oh no!” replied Bouqui, “myself I want the pretty plant.”

“As you wish,” agreed Lapin.

When they took in the potato crop, Bouqui brought all the pretty plants into his storeroom. He had nothing at all. Lapin took the roots, and he had food for the whole year.

Later on it was time to harvest the crop of corn. Bouqui made up his mind that Lapin would not fool him on the corn. He said he wanted the roots this time, and Lapin told him to choose as he wanted again. Bouqui took the roots, taking them to his storeroom, and he had nothing. Lapin took the stalks, and he had a lot to eat for the whole year.

During the winter Bouqui went to ask Lapin for something to eat. Lapin refused him. Bouqui almost died from hunger that year, and he decided not to work on shares with Comrade Lapin anymore.

Comrade Bouqui was very dissatisfied, but he was to be still more unhappy yet before he would be done with Lapin.

They were courting the same girl, a princess. She was a pretty girl, and she liked Lapin better. Bouqui was jealous, and he wanted to know whether he or Lapin would marry the girl.

“I’ll tell you what we’ll do,” suggested Comrade Bouqui to Lapin one day. “We’ll have a race. We’ll leave here together tomorrow morning. He who gets at the girl’s place first will marry her.”

“Fine!” agreed Lapin. “We shall run a race.”

As they had planned, the following morning they started the race. Comrade Lapin beat him by a long distance. When Bouqui got there, he asked Lapin to give him another chance.

“What do you want to do this time, Comrade Bouqui?” asked Lapin.

“Let’s see,” thought Bouqui, scratching his head. “Oh yes! let’s boil a big pot of water, and he who jumps over it wins the girl. Do you want to try that?”

“As for me, I’ll do whatever you want,” replied Lapin.

They boiled some water until it was boiling over. They placed it in the yard by the house, and it was decided that Lapin should jump first. Lapin started running to make his jump; but when he got up to the big pot, fear seized him and he did not jump.

“It’s high, yes!” exclaimed Lapin.

He tried again. This time he jumped it.

“It’s your turn now, Bouqui,” said Lapin.

Bouqui started running. When he jumped, he fell into the middle of the pot. The water was so hot, he was cooked before he could count to four.

After that Bouqui’s family had a grudge against Lapin. They blamed Lapin for the death of their son, Bouqui; and they watched for the chance to pay him back in the same way.

Comrade Lapin would come to steal water from their well every night. Now old man Bouqui knew it was Lapin who was stealing his water. When Lapin came for water that night, he saw a little tar baby. He could not make out who it was. He walked all around it, looking closely. Finally he got up enough courage to talk to it.

“Get away from that well!” cried Lapin.

But it did not act as if it heard. Lapin advanced more closely, crying out:

“Go away! Go away, before I hit you a blow with my foot.” But it did not pay any attention at all. Comrade Lapin struck a blow with his foot, and his foot stayed stuck.

“Let my foot go!” cried Lapin. “Let me go, or I’ll strike you with my other foot.”

As he struck, the other foot stayed stuck, too. Lapin struck with his other two, and they stayed stuck, too. Then he struck with his head, his body, all staying stuck on the tar baby. Lapin was well caught.

The following morning old Bouqui found Lapin in his trap. “Now I have you!” exclaimed he. “I will go kill you, and I think I’ll burn you.”

“Burn me if you will!” cried Lapin, “but I beg of you not to throw me into the briars behind the fence there. That would be too mean a death.”

“I am going to give you the worst death I know,” added old man Bouqui, “and it’s into the briars you go.”

He went off with Lapin, to throw him into the briars. When he got by the fence, he threw him over. Lapin fell into the middle of the briar patch. Old Bouqui looked through a crack to see him die, but Lapin only laughed at him. Bouqui realized his mistake, but too late.

“You threw me exactly into my home here,” shouted back Lapin, running quickly toward his place.

“He’s a bad fellow, yes, that Lapin!” exclaimed old Bouqui to himself, turning homeward very regretful.

THE SACK OF PEAS AND THE MULE

Tradition Bearer: Aneus Guerin

Source: Claudel, Calvin. “Louisiana Tales of Jean Sot and Boqui and Lapin.” *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 8 (1944): 292–294.

Date: 1931

Original Source: Louisiana

National Origin: Cajun

In the following narrative, Lapin takes advantage of Bouqui’s appetite to acquire a free mule by indirect means. Obviously considering Bouqui easier prey than the farmer who owns the mule he covets, Lapin manipulates his victim into trading his beautiful wife for the mule and a sack of peas to start a vegetable farm. Much of the tale hangs on Bouqui’s poor powers of observation. He does not appreciate how beautiful his wife is until he has initiated the trade and alienated her. He is unable to recognize the dearly bought mule after its tail has been bobbed, and at last, he is deceived into seeing a drowning mule in a bundle of floating hair.

One day Bouqui went to visit Lapin. While at the dinner table Bouqui noticed what fine vegetables Lapin's wife served—squash, pumpkin and fine celery salad.

“What fine food you have, Lapin!” remarked Bouqui. “I wish I had such wonderful vegetables for my household.”

“I raise them on my farm,” replied Lapin. “Why don't you start a vegetable farm yourself and farm the way I do?”

“That's a good idea,” ventured Bouqui. “But I have no mule or seed to start such a farm.”

After they had all eaten a while, Lapin said to Bouqui:

“I know just the thing for you, Bouqui. A farmer nearby has a mule and a sack of peas. You can probably make a bargain with him to get them. You can use the peas to start a crop.”

“But what can I offer him, Lapin?” questioned Bouqui. “I have no money. My wife is all I've got.”

“I'll tell you what,” proposed Lapin. “Trade your wife for his mule and the peas. . . . I'm sure he'll accept. I'll talk to him and fix it up for you. . . . Tomorrow I'll come to see you.”

After Bouqui had returned home, he pondered over Lapin's proposition. Finally he said to his wife, who was indeed very pretty:

“My wife, I have been thinking about swapping you for a mule and a sack of peas. We can't live in this poverty. So I really need a mule more than I need you.”

Next day Bouqui heard Lapin knock at the door.

“I have brought the mule and sack of peas,” explained Lapin. All you have to do now is get your wife over to the farmer's place. He has agreed to the bargain.”

At first Bouqui was reluctant, for he had noticed how his wife was pretty, and he really wanted to keep her. However, his wife came up just then with her clothes all bundled and packed ready to leave and said:

“No, Bouqui, I shall go. . . . You were stupid enough to want to trade me for a mule and a sack of peas. So I'm going to leave you now for the farmer. . . . Good-bye.”

This settled the bargain. Bouqui's wife left, carrying her bundle. Bouqui kept the mule and the sack of peas, and Lapin went home.

Now it happened that Lapin really wanted the mule for himself. So he began to devise a trick to get the mule away from Bouqui. That night he went to Bouqui's barn, unlocked the door and started to lead the mule to his own place. While on his way home, he clipped off the end of the mule's tail and threw it into a pond nearby, where there was a very deep hole. Next day Bouqui came to Lapin's house and knocked at the door.

“Lapin,” began Bouqui, “someone must have stolen my mule. Have you seen him?”

“Why no,” replied Lapin.

Just then Bouqui noticed his mule in Lapin’s barn, and he exclaimed, “That looks very much like my mule!”

“Of course not,” added Lapin. “That mule has a bobbed tail. Your mule has a long tail.”

That’s true enough,” answered Bouqui, shaking his head, however, in a puzzled fashion.

I’ll go help you to look for your mule, Bouqui,” offered Lapin, feigning sympathy. So the two started off together. Finally Lapin reached the pond and exclaimed, “There! Your mule slipped into the deep hole of the pond. I see his tail sticking out of the water.”

Lapin walked out over the water on a fallen tree to the place where the piece of tail was floating. He reached down and pulled and pulled on the tail, making out as if he was trying to pull up the mule on the other end of the tail. Finally he flew backwards out of the water, holding the tail in his hands.

You see, Bouqui,” explained Lapin. “Your mule fell in here and drowned. I pulled so hard, his tail came off.... It’s no use; he is lost under the water.”

“Yes, that’s too bad,” replied Bouqui, as he left with a look of despair.

ON HORSEBACK

Tradition Bearer: Aneus Guerin

Source: Claudel, Calvin. “Louisiana Tales of Jean Sot and Boqui and Lapin.” *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 8 (1944): 294–295.

Date: 1931

Original Source: Louisiana

National Origin: Cajun

Lapin chooses to humiliate Bouqui in front of some female friends. This tale is similar to “Mr. Deer’s My Riding Horse” (page 173). Unlike rabbit’s motive of eliminating a romantic competitor, Lapin demonstrates no motive beyond the **trickster’s** standard desire to stir up trouble.

One day Comrade Lapin and Comrade Bouqui planned to go see some girls together. Bouqui was to come to meet Lapin at his house at four o’clock Sunday afternoon, and they would go together. At four o’clock Bouqui arrived.

“Well now, let’s go,” he called to Lapin.

“I don’t think I can go,” replied Lapin. “I was coming down my steps yesterday, and I fell down. I really believe I broke my foot, because I can’t walk.”

“Can’t you walk just a little bit?” asked Bouqui very disappointedly.

“The only way I can go with you is if you carry me,” suggested Lapin.

“I’ll carry you until to the big-gate,” agreed Bouqui. “But I’ll put you down there, and you will have to walk the rest of the way, because the girls will laugh at me if they see that you ride me like a horse.”

Lapin put on a pair of spurs and mounted Bouqui. When they got to the big-gate, Lapin got down but could not make a single step, his foot hurt him so much.

“I can’t make it,” complained Lapin. “If you want me to go all the way, you will be obliged to carry me a little farther.”

“Oh well! get upon my back again,” agreed Bouqui.

Bouqui did not want to leave his friend there and would do any-thing to help him. When they passed the house, the girls were all upon the gallery. See Lapin seated upon Bouqui, they wanted to laugh, but they did not laugh, because they did not want to hurt Bouqui’s feelings.

Poor Bouqui placed himself next to the steps, and Lapin bounded upon the gallery, completely well. Lapin then turned toward the girls, saying, “Didn’t I always tell you Bouqui was my horse!”

The girls could no longer withhold themselves. They almost burst with laughter at Bouqui, right in front of him. He was so ashamed he was all miserable. So he excused himself right away and left.

JEAN SOT AND THE COWHIDE

Tradition Bearer: Jack Vidrine

Source: Claudel, Calvin. “Louisiana Tales of Jean Sot and Bouqui and Lapin.” *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 8 (1944): 297–298.

Date: 1944

Original Source: Louisiana

National Origin: Cajun

In the opening episode of this Cajun comic tale, Jean Sot (French, “John the Fool”) kills the family’s cow. In another episode, the misinterpretation of his mother’s instructions leading to this act would seem a willful attempt to misconstrue. In the case of Jean Sot, however, such behavior is consistent with the **stock character**. In a later episode in the tale, and due to a misinterpretation of Jean’s words by a group of robbers, he turns folly to fortune. The following tale (“Numskull Talks to Himself and Frightens Robbers Away,” 1653F) and **motifs** from it are found throughout the South.

Foolish John and his mother lived by the bayou in Louisiana and they spoke French. He was such a foolish lad he misunderstood everything he was told.

“Foolish John, go get the cow by the bayou and drive her into the lot,” said his mother.

In the French they spoke, “to drive” can also mean “to push.” So Foolish John went to fetch the wheelbarrow and rolled it out to where the cow was pasturing. He placed her into the wheelbarrow and rolled her home. When he reached home, he was panting and sweating like a horse.

“What in the world are you doing, Foolish John?” questioned his mother.

“Well, Mama, you told me to push the cow here, and that’s what I’m doing.”

“Fool! will you ever learn anything!” exclaimed the exasperated woman. “Now take that cow out of there and go milk her.”

As with many words that have double meanings, “to milk” also meant “to shoot.”

While his mother was busy inside, Foolish John went to get the gun and shot the cow. When he appeared inside without the milk, his mother became worried.

“Foolish John, where is the milk for supper?” she asked.

“Why, Mama, I thought you meant for me to shoot the cow with a gun.... That’s what I did,” replied the lad.

“Ah, foolish son!” she cried, “killing our only cow.... Now you must go skin her and sell the hide so we can buy food, because we don’t have milk.... Hurry now!”

Foolish John fetched the big butcher knife, strung the cow up to a tree by her hind legs and skinned her—head, feet and everything. He put the hide over his head and set out for town. As he walked under the hide, he looked like a strange beast.

It was getting dark and growing cold, for it was almost winter. He reached a tree that was losing its leaves. The tree groaned and shivered as the cold wind whistled through its limbs.

“That poor tree must be cold,” remarked Foolish John to himself. “I’ll cover it with this hide to keep it warm.”

He began climbing the tree with the cowhide still on his head. When he was up in the top ready to place the hide over the tree, a band of seven men suddenly came and sat down in a circle under the tree. They were robbers with a huge sack of money. The chief began to divide the money.

“This is for me.... That’s for you,” counted the chief as he placed each robber’s share before him.

Every time he said this, Foolish John would pluck a hair from his cowhide and cry, “And one hair for me-eee!”

“Listen, listen, the Old Devil!” would exclaim one of the robbers, and the chief would start to divide again. The dividing and counting continued far into

the night, and each time the chief would say, “This is for me.... That’s for you,” Foolish John would add while plucking out hair, “And one hair for me-eee!”

Finally when they had all the money spread out, and Foolish John had picked his cowhide clean, he suddenly lost his grip on the limb he was holding and crashed to the ground right into the middle of the circle of thieves. When they beheld this strange apparition with horns, they all took to their heels and fled. Foolish John gathered up the money, placed the hide over the tree and went back home.

“Well, how much did you get for the hide?” inquired his mother.

“I collected a dollar for every hair on the hide,” answered Foolish John, laying down the heavy sack load of money.

“Foolish John!” exclaimed the mother with joy, “sometimes I think you are not so foolish!”

JEAN SOT FEEDS COWS NEEDLES

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Ray, Marie. “Jean Sotte Stories.” *Journal of American Folklore* 21 (1908): 364.

Date: 1908

Original Source: Louisiana

National Origin: Cajun

The following narrative (a **variant** of “Stupid Stories Depending on a Pun,” AT 1345) casts Jean Sot in the **numskull** role once again. In this case, his linguistic misinterpretation has no saving grace.

Jean Sot’s old mother was in despair over the stupidity of her boy, but thought she would try him again, hoping he would do better. So calling him, and giving him some money, she said, “My son, I want a paper of needles, and you must go down the road to the village and buy me one, but do not lose it on the way.”

Jean Sot promised to be careful and went off in high glee, for he liked to go on errands to the village. He knew just where to go; and, having counted out the money to the old dame who gave him the needles, he started down the lane which led to his home. He had not gone far when he met a number of cows, who, when they saw him, lifted their heads and cried, “A-moo, a-moo!” and turned into a barnyard. Jean Sotte, thinking they were calling him, followed; and when they continued to cry “A-moo!” he said, “Well, if it is the needles (a pun on French *aiguille*, “needle”) you want, here they are!” and he sprinkled them all over the straw they were eating.

Then he went home; and when the old woman asked where the needles were she had sent him for, he said, "Mother, I obeyed you: I did not lose them, but, when the cows cried so for them, I was obliged to give them to them on their hay."

JEAN SOT KILLS THE DUCK

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Ray, Marie. "Jean Sotte Stories." *Journal of American Folklore* 21 (1908): 364–365.

Date: 1908

Original Source: Louisiana

National Origin: Cajun

Jean Sot commonly reveals his stupidity when justifying the logic that motivates his unconventional actions. In this narrative, however, he attempts to conceal a minor crime by committing and then confessing to a worse one.

There was an old woman who had two sons—one so simple that he received the name of Jean Sotte, and the other so bright and intelligent that he was known as Jean Esprit.

One day the old woman said to Jean Sotte, "My son, I am old and stiff, but you are young and active and can go on my errands; so go into the store-room and bring me a bottle of wine you will find there."

Jean Sotte went to the storeroom, and, having found the bottle, he thought he would take out the cork and make sure it was wine; and when he had smelled it, he thought he would taste it to be sure it was all right; but the wine was so good and old, he soon felt very merry, and continued to drink until the bottle was quite empty.

Now, in a corner of the room an old duck had made her nest in some straw; and when Jean Sotte began capering around, she cried out, "Quack, quack!" and flapped her wings, which so frightened him that he caught her by the neck, and wrung her head off, and seated himself on her eggs.

The old woman, having waited some time for Jean Sotte's return, determined to see what was keeping him. What was her surprise, on hobbling to the store-room, to find her old duck dead and Jean Sotte sitting on her nest. "Silly boy!" she said, "why have you killed my duck, why are you sitting on the nest, and where is the bottle of wine you were to bring me?"

"Mother," said Jean Sotte, rolling his head and looking very sleepy, "I drank the wine; and when the old duck saw me, she cried out, and I knew she would

tell you, so I killed her to keep her from telling; and, now she is dead, you will never know!”

TI JEAN CANNOT TELL A LIE

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Personal communication

Date: 2000

Original Source: Louisiana

National Origin: Cajun

Ti Jean (French, “Little John”) is a **trickster** figure found throughout French-descended traditions in the Americas. Unlike many such figures, this character has successfully survived into contemporary joke repertoires. Compare this character with Boudreaux in the following narrative, “Boudreaux and the Cottonmouth.”

Early one morning, Ti Jean was walking along the bank of Bayou behind his house. All of a sudden, he noticed that the family outhouse, located right on the bank, was sliding into the bayou. he decided to help it out and picked up a big tree limb and hit the outhouse til it.

Later, when Ti Jean got home his papa met him at the door and said, “Ti Jean, did you knock that outhouse into the bayou?”

“Papa,” the boy answered, “like George Washington, I cannot tell a lie. I did it.”

“Ti Jean, come with me to the woodshed. You are going to get the whipping of your life!”

Ti Jean looked up at his father and said, “Papa, when George Washington told his papa that he had chopped down the cherry tree, his papa didn’t give him a whipping.”

“*Mais no* (French, “But no”), Ti Jean, but George Washington’s papa wasn’t in that cherry tree when he cut it down, either.”

BOUDREAUX AND THE COTTONMOUTH

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Personal communication

Date: 1985

Original Source: Louisiana

National Origin: Cajun

The **stock character** of “Cajun” in jokes, as folklorist Barry Jean Ancelet has pointed out, can speak neither English nor French, is incapable of being educated, and is rural and stubborn. Boudreaux is far and away the supreme stock Cajun character who can be a wily **trickster** or an impregnable **numskull**. In contemporary intragroup narratives, however, Boudreaux’s foolishness is intended to attack the stereotype rather than the stereotyped.

Boudreaux tell this story ‘bout when he been fishin’ down at da bayou one night and he done run outta bait. He got ready bout to leave when he seen a big snake with a frog in his mouth, so he decide to steal dat frog from de snake.

Dat snake, he be a cotton mouth water moccasin, so he have to be real careful not to git bit. He sneak up behind dat snake and grab him round da neck. Dat snake squirm and twist tryin’ to git loose from Boudreaux. and he don’t let go of dat frog. No.

Now, Boudreaux need dat frog, so reach into his back pocket and pull out a little bottle of whiskey he keep in there. Den he pour a little bit o’ dat whiskey in da corner o’ dat snake’s mouth just to make him relax a little bit.

Da snake swallow down dat whiskey and turn loose of dat frog. Boudreaux take da frog outta da snake’s mouth and let da cottonmouth loose and he swim away slow and happy. Den, he put the frog on his hood and goes back to fishin’.

In a few minutes, Boudreaux hear a splashing down in the water by him and feel somethin’ bumpin’ against his leg. He look down, and what you t’ink he see?

It dat water moccasin an’ he lookin’ up at Boudreaux and got another frog in his mouth.

CAJUN COCKFIGHT

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Personal communication

Date: 2001

Original Source: Louisiana

National Origin: Cajun

The following joke connects two regional stereotypes: (1) the Aggies, students and graduates of Texas A&M University who are commonly cast in the **numskull** role in the South and southwestern regions; and (2) the Cajuns, who (as noted in the introduction to “Boudreaux and

the Cottonmouth,” page 219) have been similarly stereotyped. In this contemporary **trickster** tale, however, the Aggies, the Cajun bettors, and (who one can assume) a Cajun detective turn the tables on detractors with the aid of the Mafia.

The Louisiana State Police received reports of illegal cock fights being held in the area around Lafayette, and duly dispatched the infamous Detective Desormeaux to investigate. Desormeaux reported to his sergeant the next morning.

“Dey is tree main groups in dis cock fightin’,” Desormeaux began.

“Good work Desormeaux! Who are they?” the sergeant asked.

Desormeaux replied confidently, “De Aggies, de Cajuns, and de Mafia.”

Puzzled, the sergeant asked, “How did you find that out in one night?”

“Well,” said Desormeaux, “I went down and done seed dat cock fight, I knowed de Aggies was involved when a duck was entered in de fight.”

The sergeant nodded. “Ok, I’ll buy that, but what about the others?”

Desormeaux intoned knowingly, “Well, I knowed de Cajuns was involved when somebody bet on de duck.”

“Ah,” sighed the sergeant. “And how did you deduce that the Mafia was involved?”

“De duck won.”

Regional

APPALACHIAN

PHOEBE WARD, WITCH

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Cross, Tom Peete. "Folk-Lore from the Southern States." *Journal of American Folklore* 22 (1909): 254–255.

Date: 1909

Original Source: North Carolina

National Origin: Anglo American

The fear of the night hag (the witch who comes in the night) is a terror that crosses cultures and regional boundaries. The following **legend cycle** alludes to many of the widely held beliefs about this supernatural figure, including the need for her to remove her skin, the ability to slip through tiny openings, and ways of repelling attacks.

The early years of Phoebe Ward, witch, are shrouded in mystery. It is known that she was a woman of bad morals. No one seemed to know anything of her past. She was an old, old woman when this account begins.

Phoebe Ward had no fixed home. She lived here and there, first at one place and then at another in Northampton County, North Carolina. She stayed in a hut or any shelter whatsoever that was granted her.

She made her living by begging from place to place. Most people were afraid to refuse her, lest she should apply her witchcraft to them. When she found a house at which people were particularly kind to her, there she stopped and abused their kindness. Hence the people resorted to a number of methods to keep her away. For instance, when they saw her coming, they would stick pins point-up into the chair-bottoms, and then offer her one of these chairs. It is said that she could always tell when the chair was thus fixed, and would never sit in

it. Also, they would throw red pepper into the fire, and Phoebe would leave as soon as she smelled it burning.

Among her arts it is said that she could ride persons at night (the same as nightmares), that she could ride horses at night, and that when the mane was tangled in the morning it was because the witch had made stirrups of the plaits. She was said to be able to go through key-holes, and to be able to make a horse jump across a river as if it were a ditch. She was credited with possessing a sort of grease which she could apply, and then slip out of her skin and go out on her night rambles, and on her return get back again. It is said that once she was making a little bull jump across the river, and as she said, "Through thick, through thin; way over in the hagerleen," the animal rose and started. When he was about half way over, she said, "That was a damn'd good jump," and down the bull came into the river. (The witch is not to speak while she is crossing.)

To keep the witch away people nailed horse-shoes with the toe up over the stable-doors. To keep her from riding persons at night, they hung up sieves over the door. The witch would have to go through all the meshes before she could enter, and by the time she could get through, it would be day, and she would be caught.

Phoebe came near meeting a tragic death before her allotted time was out. One night several men of the neighborhood gathered around a brandy-barrel. As the liquor flowed, their spirits rose, and they were on the lookout for some fun.

They went over to where Phoebe was staying and found her asleep. Thinking she was dead, they shrouded her, and proceeded to hold the wake. They were soon back at their demijohns, and while they were standing in one corner of the room drinking, there came a cracked, weak voice from the other corner, where the supposed corpse was lying out, "Give me a little; it's mighty cold out here."

They all fled but one, Uncle Bennie, and he was too drunk to move. When things became quiet and Phoebe repeated her request, he said, "Hush, you damn'd b-h, I'm goin' to bury you in the mornin'."

The others were afraid to return that night, but did so the next morning, and found Bennie and Phoebe sitting before the fire, contented, warm, and drinking brandy.

After this Phoebe lived several years, making her livelihood by begging. Her last days were as mysterious as her early life had been.

THE WITCH AND THE BOILER

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Porter, J. Hampden. "Notes on the Folk-Lore of the Mountain Whites of the Alleghanies." *Journal of American Folklore* 7 (1894): 116–117.

Date: 1894

Original Source: Tennessee

National Origin: Anglo American

The legend of “The Witch and the Boiler” illustrates common practices attributed to witches and to those who attempt to combat their negative influences. One of the means of revenge pursued by the witch in this narrative is “dancing” on the chest of the victim of her supernatural assault. In the literature on supernatural assault, this is termed being ridden (attacked) by a “night hag” or simply “hagging.” These attacks are accompanied by paralysis and a feeling of an oppressive weight bearing down on the chest of the victim. The principles of “sympathetic magic” (the concept that phenomena can be made to influence each other at a distance by means of the proper magical rituals) are seen in the measures taken by the witch doctor, who used the organs of a sheep who was killed by supernatural assault to affect the agent of that attack. At the root of this diagnosis and cure is the principle of contagion: objects that have once been in contact continue to influence each other.

An animal killed by witchcraft should be burnt, partly because that is the best and most effectual way of destroying things that are infected, and also for the reason that in more than one way this may be made to affect the witch; she can be fascinated or punished. One of the parties implicated related the effects of fire in the case of a Tennessean sorceress who had done much harm.

An incredulous and stupid person, such as exists in every community, borrowed a boiler from her and refused to return it. Then she came every night and danced on him till he nearly fainted. There was no doubt about this, because she permitted herself to be seen. Each day, also, one of his sheep reared up, gave two or three jumps, and fell dead.

At length the “witch doctor” was called in, and he, being a pious man and a member of the church, advised his patient to try the effect of honesty and give back the boiler. This he did, but the witch laughed at him, and things went on as before. It was now evident that her machinations were prompted by malice, and not resorted to from a sense of justice, so the doctor directed him to eviscerate the next sheep that died, to do this alone, and in perfect silence. Moreover, on no account to lend or give away any article, however trifling its value, until the effect of his charm had been fully tried. Having taken out the lungs and heart, they were to be carried home, the kitchen cleared, and these organs laid upon a bed of live embers. While procuring them, the witch’s granddaughter, “a right smart shoot of a girl, training for a witch herself,” saw what he was doing as she passed through his field, and, anticipating the result, ran home, saying that her “Granny” would shortly be ill.

Such was indeed the case, for no sooner had the sheep’s vitals been placed upon the coals than her shrieks alarmed the neighborhood. A crowd gathered

that seems to have had some inkling of what was going on, for a committee of women inspected the sufferer by force, and found her breast completely charred. The spell was broken before fatal consequences ensued, and from that time the persecutions and losses which had persisted so long came to an end.

THE MYSTERIOUS DEER

Tradition Bearer: A. S. Wiltse

Source: Wiltse, Henry M. "In the Southern Field of Folk-Lore." *Journal of American Folklore* 13 (1900): 211.

Date: 1900

Original Source: Tennessee

National Origin: Anglo American

The following **legend** operates as a **belief tale** intended to substantiate the existence of a white deer that displayed an uncanny ability to avoid death, the scream of a human being, and the ability to exact supernatural revenge on a hunter who had wounded it.

There is quite a prevalent belief among mountaineers in the existence of a mysterious deer, of which they stand in no inconsiderable awe. I have heard of a hunter in upper East Tennessee, who claims to have shot at this deer, or one of these deer, under a misapprehension. The bullet came back and lodged in his own leg, and he shows the scar in apparent confidence that the evidence is conclusive.

Dr. A. S. Wiltse, who has for many years practiced his profession in the Cumberland Mountains, and who takes a deep interest in the mountain people and their peculiarities, writes me this version of the deer myth, secured from a celebrated hunter named Jackson Howard. The language of the original relater is reproduced as nearly as practicable:

"El Moore is a good hunter, and a splendid good shot, too. But he gat into a streak o' mighty ornery luck one time jes' on account of one of them thar white deer. He tole me all about hit with 'is own lips, an' El is a mighty truthful man.

"He said he war out a' huntin' one mornin', an' he come onter a white deer, an' hit war not more 'n fifteen er twenty feet from him.

"He fired at hit, but never touch a hair. That deer jes' stood still until he'd a-wasted seven or eight shots on hit. Then hit run off, an' he tried his gun on a spot in a tree, an' the bullet went straight to their mark.

"He got his dander up then, an' laid for that white deer, an' he wasted a powerful lot more ammunition on hit, until fin'ly 'e plugged hit in the shoulder.

“But he was mighty sorry for that, right then an’ for a long time afterwards. He said hit made the sorrowfulest noise ‘at he ever heard in all of his life. An’ from that day twelvemonth hit war impossible for El ter kill any kind of deer whatsomever. He could kill other kinds of varmints all right enough, but kill a deer he couldn’t.”

LUCKY JACK

Tradition Bearer: R. M. Ward

Source: Chase, Richard, and Kathryn Chase. “Lucky Jack.” *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 3 (1939): 21–24.

Date: 1939

Original Source: North Carolina

National Origin: European American

The Appalachian region encompasses West Virginia, large areas of North and South Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia, and portions of Alabama, Georgia, and Mississippi. Although the area has been home to Native Americans and African Americans as well as those of European descent, the tale corpus that is often thought of as characteristically Appalachian comes from the British Isles. Specifically, the European ethnic makeup of the region is historically northern English and Scottish Irish. Jack is the quintessential folk hero, **trickster**, and everyman of the Appalachian folktale tradition. The plots of the following narratives follow the typical structure of European tales in which the protagonist begins in a miserable condition, but through effort and in many cases luck is elevated in status at the end. In the “Jack tales,” the **formulaic** ending closes with Jack rich.

[P]eople] said one time there was a man named Jack. He’uz a tol’able poor boy, but he kindly thought he’d hunt him up some girl for a wife. There was a farmer lived way back in the mountains had two awful pretty girls, and they said the boys was crazy about ‘em. This farmer though, he was wealthy and he didn’t want the boys to come around there, so he fixed up a way to get shed [rid] of ‘em. He put out an adver-tizement that any boy wanted one of his girls would have to catch a wild rabbit and put it in a ring and make it stay there thirty minutes. That was his proposition. They’d have to bring a wild rabbit and he’d make a ring ten foot across; then they’d put the rabbit in there and if it stayed thirty minutes they could have one of the girls. But if the rabbit failed to stay there, he’d kill them.

Well, not many went to try but some did and the old man cut their heads off. Directly it got so the boys quit goin' down there. That suited the old man because it kept the girls from bein' bothered. But then a boy'uld get so struck on one he'd venture, and get his head cut off. Finally it got so nobody 'uld go.

Well, Jack was studyin' out how he could get one of them girls. His mother told him he'd better not go, but Jack he said, "I'll jest have to try."

So his mother put him tip a little snack of dinner, and Jack caught him a rabbit, and then got fitted up and started out.

About twelve o'clock in the wilderness Jack met up with an old man. This old man looked like he was about a hundred years old, had a long grey beard and was walkin' with a walkin' cane, said,

"How we do, Jack."

"How d'e do, daddy."

Jack looked at him, said, "I don't believe I know ye."

"Well," says the old man, "I know you, and I know right where you've started. You goin' up there to get killed."

"I might now," says Jack.

"Are you familiar with what you got to do to get one of them girls?"

"Tol'able familiar," says Jack.

"Don't you think you jest as well start on back home?"

"O no," says Jack, "I never turn back. I'm goin' on down there."

"Well," says the old man, "I could help you if you got any faith in me." Says, "How's your faith, Jack?"

Jack said his faith was pretty good, said, "I'd sure be glad for you to help me."

"Well, if you come up the road a piece with me, I'll test you out and we'll see whe'er you got faith or no."

So they went on, and the old man said, "Now Jack, you take my cane here and go up yonder in the woods a ways till you come to a very flush spring. Then you take my cane and stir in that spring till the water turns to wine. And when it turns to wine, I'll come up there with something to help you."

So Jack took the cane and went on to where there'uz a very bold spring comin' out of the ground. Jack's faith was weak when he started, but he 'lowed he'd have to keep on tryin'. He stirred right on and on and it looked pretty soon like the water was turnin' jest a little bit red, so Jack's faith got stronger and stronger and the water got redder and redder.

Well, when the water turned right red the old man come back, says, "Well Jack, you shore got real faith." Says, "Now, Jack, you get out your lunch and we'll eat a little and jest try some of that and see whe'er it tastes like wine or not."

So they did, and that water 'uz jest as good as any wine. Then the old man says to Jack, says, "Now, Jack, I've made you a drill. You take it and set it in the middle of that ring and a rabbit'll stay in there till it dies, it don't differ how wild he is."

He gave Jack a drill shaved out of a stick. It was eight-square like a steel drill and about a foot long.

So Jack went on down to the farmer's house, and when he got there he hollered the old man out and said he'd come to try for one of the girls. The man said for Jack to come around in the yard, and then he marked out a ring, says to Jack, "Now you put your rabbit right down in this ring and if it stays there thirty minutes you can kill me and take whichever girl you want and take all the money I got, and if it don't stay in the ring thirty minutes I'll kill you."

So Jack went and stuck that drill down in the middle of the ring and turned his rabbit loose. Now that rabbit jest took out around that drill and went around and around and around.

The man watched it a while, saw it wouldn't leave, and directly he got up and went in the house. Says to the girls and his old woman, says, "Its my opinion that rabbit is stayin' in there on account of that drill Jack stuck down in the middle of the ring." Says, "One of you run out there and see can't you buy that drill off Jack."

So the oldest girl she went out and says to Jack, "What'll you take for that drill, Jack?"

Jack says "I don't know as I'd want to sell it right now."

"I'll give you a thousand dollars for it."

"No," says Jack, "I'll not sell it."

So she went back and told her daddy she couldn't make no trade. Then he sent his youngest girl out.

She says to Jack, says, "Jack, I'd like awful well to buy that drill."

"Well," says Jack, "You can have it after thirty minutes is up."

"No," she says, "I want it now. I'll give you two thousand dollars for it."

"No," says Jack, "You wait till thirty minutes is out, and then we'll trade."

So she saw she couldn't do no good and she went on back in the house. Then the old man said to his old lady, says, "You go." So she went out.

Says, "Jack, I'd shure like to trade you out of that drill. You can have one of the girls, and I'll give you three thousand dollars and everything on the place."

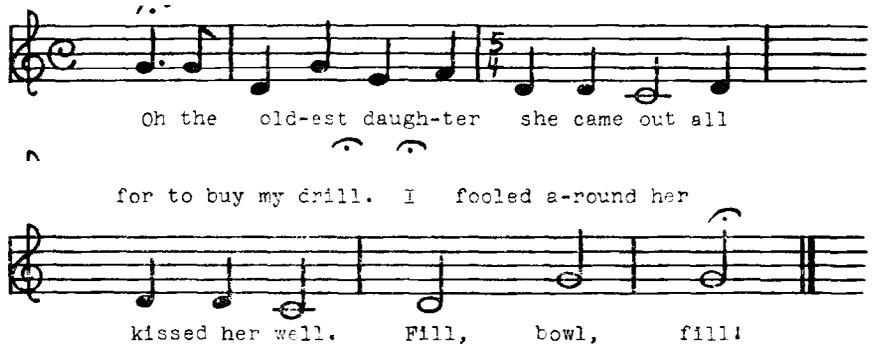
"No," says Jack, "Not till thirty minutes is out."

So the old lady went on back, says, "I can't do a thing with him. He won't even talk about selling."

Then the old man says, "Well, I guess that thirty minutes is about out. I reckon I'll have to go on out and let Jack kill me."

He started out, picked tip a big bowl off the table, took that to Jack, says, "Jack, it looks like your rabbit's goin' to stay in there, and you might as well kill me. But before you do, I wish you'd sing this bowl full for me."

"All right," says Jack, "I'll try." And he sang this song (recorded by John Powell at Marion, Virginia, August 1936).



“Is it full?”

“No,” says the old man, “Only one drop.”

“Oh the youngest daughter she came out. All for to buy my drill. I fooled around her, kissed her well. Fill, bowl, fill!”

“Is it full yet?”

“Jest two drops.”

“Oh the old lady she came out All for to buy my drill. I fooled around her, Ki—”

“Stop, Jack! It’s full and runnin’ over. Jes’ cut my head off.”

So Jack cut off the old man’s head and married the youngest girl, and as far as I know Jack’s plumb rich yet.

THE LION AND THE UNICORN

Tradition Bearer: Monroe Ward and Miles Ward

Source: Chase, Richard. “The Lion and the Unicorn.” *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 1 (1937): 16–19.

Date: 1937

Original Source: Beech Creek, North Carolina

National Origin: European American

As in many **variants** of the well-known European **märchen** (“The Brave Tailor,” AT 1640) on which “The Lion and the Unicorn” is modeled, this Jack tale is built around the unlikely hero’s inadvertent successes in defeating wild animals. His conquests are based not on hunting skill nor on cleverness, but rather on lucky accidents. Beyond luck, Jack’s primary attribute in the tale is audacity in asserting his prowess. The invariable conclusion of this tale, and the others of the **cycle**, is that Jack ends up rich.

Jack started out one time to try his fortune. Told his mother he couldn't do any good there at home. So he went traveling about over the country, and was going past a saw mill 'side the road, picked up a little thin piece of plank looked rather nice. He laid down under a tree to rest a while and got to shaving on that plank till finally he'd made him a paddle. He didn't know what he'd do with it, just carried it along. He struck out directly through a pasture field, come to where a bunch of flies had lit down on a cow-pile. So Jack cut loose with his paddle and come down on 'em, then he looked to see how many he'd killed. Well, he went on down the road and come to a blacksmith shop. Jack went in and got the blacksmith to make him some big letters for his belt, said:

Strong Man Jack
Killed Seven at a Whack.

So Jack put that around him and went on. Pretty soon here come the King riding on his horse, says, "Hello, Jack. What's all that writing you got around you?" So the King read it, says to Jack,

"You must be a pretty brave fellow."

"Not so awful. I can do some things."

"Well, if you're up to that sign on your belt, I got a job for you. How'd you like to take a chance on killing a wild boar? There's one over on the side of the mountain yonder been killing lots of sheep. I'll pay you a thousand dollars if you kill it. All my men are scared of it."

"Well," says Jack, "I'll try."

Jack got the King to pay him five hundred down, and then the King says, "Come on, Jack, I'll go with you and show you what mountain it uses on."

So Jack says, "If I can find it, King, I'll sure kill it."

Jack knew if the King's men were scared of it, it must be awful dangerous. The King took him over in the mountain a right smart piece, got to looking around kind of nervous, stopped his horse directly, says "Now, Jack, you'll have to go on up in the mountain and find it. I got important business back home."

Then he turned his horse around and just lit out. Jack said he'd wait a little while and then he'd slip out before that wild boar smelled him. He'd got five hundred dollars, and he didn't want to get mixed up with no wild hog. But when he started back to the road, he heard it breaking brush up the mountain, making an awful racket, then he saw it coming. So Jack took out across the field, him and the boar, whippety cut! whippety cut! and the wild hog just a-gaining. Well, Jack saw an old waste-house with no roof on it, standing down the field a ways, so he made for it, run in the door, and scrambled up the wall. The old hog was right on him and got a piece out of Jack's coat tail, Then he stood there with his forefeet up on the wall, looking for Jack. Well, Jack climb down the outside and run around and pushed the door to and propped it with some timbers. Then he went on back to the King's house.

“Well, Jack, did you have any luck?”

“No, I couldn’t find no wild hog. I hunted all over that mountain, didn’t see nothing.”

“Why, Jack, that wild boar just makes for anybody goes up there, time he smells ‘em.”

“Well, a little old boar shoat come bristling up to me, kept follering me around, I kicked it over several times, but the blame thing got playful and jerked a piece out of my coat tail. Made me a little mad then so I took it by the tail and ear, threwed it in an old waste house up there and barred him in. You can go up and look if you want to.”

When the King rode up there and saw it was that boar, he like to beat his horse to death getting back. Then he blowed his horn and fifty or sixty men come up. They took a lot of Winchester rifles and went up to that old waste-house; but they was so scared that they wouldn’t go close enough to get a shoot at it. Jack said he wasn’t scared so he went down with a rifle and poked it in there and shot two or three times. That old hog commenced tearing around inside and tore the house plumb down. He give one kick, knocked the chimney down and one of the rocks took him between the eyes and he keeled over dead. So the men skinned it out, and it made two wagon loads of meat. The King paid Jack the rest of the thousand dollars, said he had another job for him. Jack asked him what it was.

“They say there’s a unicorn using back here on another mountain, doing a lot of damage to people’s live stock. It’s a lot more dangerous than that boar, but a brave feller like you, Jack, ought not to have any trouble killing it. I’ll pay you another thousand dollars, too.”

Well, Jack couldn’t back out of it, but before he said he would try it he got the King to pay him five hundred down. When the King took Jack up there and left him, Jack watched him out of sight, then he says, “I’ll just get out of here now. I’m not going to fool around and get killed. I got my money, I’ll just go another way.”

But Jack hadn’t got out of the woods when he heard unicorn a-coming. So he started running around in among them trees as hard as he could go. He looked back and saw that horn making a lunge for the middle of his back so he grabbed hold of a little white oak and swung around behind it. The unicorn swerved at him, but he hit that oak and stove his horn plumb through it. And when Jack saw it come through, he took some nails out of his overall pocket, grabbed him up a rock, and wedged the horn in tight. Then he went on back to the King.

“What luck you have this time, Jack?”

“Why, King, I didn’t see no unicorn.”

“Now that’s a curious thing to me. Nobody else ever went in there but what that unicorn come right after ‘em.”

“Well, some kind of little old yearling bull, didn’t have but one horn, come down there bawling and pawing the ground. Follered me around so close it kind of aggravated me finally. So I took it by the tail and stove its horn through a

tree. I reckon it's still fastened up where I left it. You can go up there and see if you want to."

So Jack took the King where it was, and when he saw it he whirled his horse and got back in a hurry. The men got their rifles but they were too scared to go close enough to get a shoot at it. So Jack went up to the unicorn, took a switch and hit it, says,

"See, men, there's not a bit of harm in him."

The men finally shot it and when it fell it tore that tree plumb up by the roots. Then they skinned it and brought back the hide. The King paid Jack the other five hundred and Jack was just about to leave when the King called him, says,

"Jack, they've just brought in word that a lion has come over the mountain and been using around a settlement over there killing every-thing it comes across, cattle and horses, and they say it's done killed several men tried to go after it. I told them about you, Jack, and they made me promise to send you."

"Well, King, that sounds like the dangerest thing of all." "I'll pay you nother thousand dollars for it, Jack."

"I don't know as I favor working any more right now, King. I said I'd be back home tonight and they'll be looking for me in. Besides I'm tired out with all that running around I done already."

"Come on now, Jack, I'll pay you two thousand."

"Well, I don't know. I'll have to study on it a while." "Here's a thousand dollars right now, son. I'd sure like to get shed of that lion."

"I'll do it then, I reckon."

So the King took Jack up behind him on his horse and they rode over to where they said the lion was. Then the King said he'd not venture any further, so Jack slipped off the horse, and the King says to him,

"When it smells you, Jack, you'll sure hear from it," and then he put out like a streak.

Well, Jack said he had three thousand dollars and he'd go a different direction and get back home. But before he'd started hardly, that old lion smelt him and commenced roaring up in the woods, roared so he jarred the mountain.

"Lordy me!" says Jack, "I'm a goner this time."

He didn't waste no time running, he made for the closest scaly bark sapling and skinned up it like a squirrel. The old lion jumped up on the tree a time or two and then prowled around looking up at Jack. Then the lion commenced gnawing on the tree and Jack was just about scared to death. He got it gnawed about half through, when he quit and laid down and went to sleep right against the foot of the tree. Well, Jack had heard that lions were hard to wake up, so he thought he'd better take a chance and try to slip down and get away before it woke up again. He got down about halfway all right, but he was looking so hard at the lion's eyes that he didn't see when he set his foot on a prickly snag. Well, that snag broke with him and he went scooting down and landed right straddle of the lion's back.

Well, the old lion started in roaring and jumping and humping around but Jack just held on. And directly the lion got to running and he was so scared he didn't know that he was headed right for town. All the people come out shouting and hollering and the King's men started in to shooting at it till finally they tumbled it up. When they done that Jack picked himself up out of the dirt and come over where the King was, says,

"Look a-here, King, I'm mad."

"Why, how come, Jack?"

"These men have done killed your lion."

"My lion? What you mean, son?"

"Why, King, I'd a-not had him killed for three thousand dollars; I was just riding him down here to get him broke in for you a ridey horse."

So the King went over to where his men were and raised a rumpus with 'em, says,

"Why, I'd a-felt big riding that lion around. Now you men will have to pay Jack three thousand dollars for killing that lion."

So Jack went home with six thousand dollars in his pocket, and the last time I was down there he was still rich.

JACK AND THE FIRE DRAGAMAN

Tradition Bearer: Monroe Ward and Miles Ward

Source: Chase, Richard. "Jack and the Fire Dragaman." *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 5 (1941): 151–155.

Date: 1941

Original Source: North Carolina

National Origin: European American

Although the following narrative with its relatively complex plot, monstrous antagonist, and descent into a magical realm resembles the European **märchen**, its setting, characters, and occupations are localized to the rural southern highlands of the United States. Featuring the exploits of a clever hero Jack, who is often the youngest of three brothers, the tale is one of a widely distributed **cycle** derived from European models. Jack, unlike his brothers, offers hospitality to the ogre, and this may be the reason for his successes in the tale.

Well, hit's said that one time Jack and his two brothers, Will and Tom, wuz a-layin' around home: wuzn't none of 'em doin' no good, so their daddy decided he'd set 'em to work. He had him a track of land out

in a wilderness of a place back up on the mountain. Told the boys they could go up there and work it. Said he'd give it to 'em. it wuz a right far ways from where anybody lived at, so they fixed 'en, up a wagon load of rations and stuff for housekeepin' and pulled out.

There wuzn't no house up there, so they cut poles and notched 'em up a shack. They had to go to work in a hurry to git out any crop and they set right in to clearin' 'em a newground. They decided one boy'd have to stay to the house till twelve and do the cookin'.

First day Tom and Jack left Will there. Will went to fixin' around and got dinner ready, went out and blowed the horn to call Tom and Jack, looked down the holler and seed a giant a-comin'. Had him a pipe about four foot long, and his long old blue beard drug the ground. When Will seed the old giant wuz headed right for the house, he run and got behind the door, pulled it back on him and scrouged back ag'inst the wall jest a-shakin' like a leaf. Old Bluebeard come on in the house, threwed the cloth back off the dishes, eat ever' bite on the table and sopped the plates. Went to the fire and lit his pipe; the smoke jest come a-bilin' out. Then he went on back down the holler.

Tom and Jack come on in directly, says, "Why in the world ain't ye got us no dinner, Will?"

"Law me!" says Will, "If you'd 'a seed what I seed, you'd a not thought about no dinner. Old Fire Dragaman come up here, eat ever' bite on the table, and sopped the plates."

Tom and Jack laughed right smart at Will. Will says, "You'uns needn't to laugh. Hit'll be your turn tomor', Tom."

So they fixed up what vittles they could and they all went back to work in the new ground.

Next day Tom got dinner, went out and blowed the horn. There come old Fire Dragaman.

"Law me!" says Tom, "Where'll I git?"

He run and scrambled under the bed. Old Fire Dragaman come on in, eat ever'thing on the table, sopped the plates, and licked out all the pots. Lit his old pipe and pulled out down the holler, the blot, smoke jest a-bilin' like smoke comin' out a chimley. Hit'uz a sight to look at. Will and Jack come in, says, "Where's dinner at?"

"Dinner, the nation! Old Fire Dragaman come back up here. Law me! Hit'uz the beatenist thing I ever seed!"

Will says, "Where wuz you at, Tom?"

"Well I'll just tell ye," says Tom, "I'uz down under the bed."

Jack laughed, and Will and Tom says, "You jest wait about laughin', Jack. Hit'll be your time tomorr'."

Next day Will and Tom went to the newground. They got to laughin' about where Jack'd hide at when old Fire Dragaman come, Jack fixed up ever'thing for

dinner, went out about twelve and blowed the horn. Looked down the wilder-ness, seed old Fire Dragaman a-comin'.

Jack went on back in the house, started puttin' stuff on the table. Never paid no attention to old Bluebeard, jest went right on a-fixin' dinner. Old Fire Dragaman come on in. Jack 'uz scoopin' up a mess of beans out the pot, says, "Why hello, daddy."

"Howdy, son."

"Come on in, daddy. Git you a chair. Dinner's about ready; jest stay and eat with us."

"No I thank ye. I couldn't stay."

"Hit's on the table. Come on set down." "No. I jest stopped to light my pipe."

"Come on, daddy. Let's eat."

"No, much obliged. I got no time."

Old Fire Dragaman went to git him a coal of fire, got the biggest chunk in the fireplace, stuck it down in his old pipe and started on back. Jack took out and follered him with all the smoke a-bilin' out; watched where he went to, seed him go down a big straight hole in the ground.

Will and Tom come on to the house, seed Jack wuz gone. Will says, "I reckon that's the last of Jack. I bet ye a dollar old Fire Dragaman's done took him off and eat him. Dinner's still on the table."

So they set down and went to eatin'. Jack come on in directly. Will and Tom says, "Whare'n the world ye been, Jack? We allowed old Fire Dragaman had done eat ye up."

"I been watchin' where old Fire Dragaman went to."

"How come dinner still on the table?"

"I tried my best to git him to eat," says Jack; "He jest lit his old pipe and went on back. I follered him, seed him go in a big hole out yonder."

"You right sure ye ain't lyin', Jack?"

"Why no," says Jack. "You boys come with me and you kin see the place where he went in at. Let's us git a rope and basket so we kin go in that hole and see what's down there."

So they got 'em a big basket made out of splits, and gathered up a long rope they'd done made out of hickory bark, and Jack took 'em on down to old Fire Dragaman's den.

"Will, you the oldest," says Jack. "We'll let you go down first. If you see any danger, you shake the rope and we'll pull ye back up."

Will got in the basket, says, "You recollect now; whenever I shake that rope, you'uns pull me out in a hurry."

So they let him down. Directly the rope shook; they jerked the basket back out, says, "What'd ye see, Will?"

"Seed a big house."

Then they slapped Tom in the basket and let him down; rope shook; they hauled him up. "What'd ye see, Tom?"

“Seed a house and the barn.”

Then they got Jack in the basket, let him down. Jack got down on top of the house, let the basket slip down over the eaves, and right on down in the yard. Jack got out, went and knocked on the door. The prettiest girl Jack ever had seed come out. He started right in to courtin’ her, says, “I’m goin’ to git you out of here.”

She says, “I got another sister in the next room yonder, prettier’n me. You git her out, too.”

So Jack went on in the next room. That second girl wuz a heap prettier’n the first, and Jack went to talkin’ to her and wuz a-courtin’ right on. Said he’d git her out of that place.

She says, “I got another sister in the next room, prettier’n me. Don’t ye want to git her out, too?”

So he went on in. Time Jack seed that ‘un he knowed she ‘uz the prettiest girl ever lived, so he started in right off talkin’ courtin’ talk to her; plumb forgot about them other two. That girl said to Jack, says “Old Fire Dragaman’ll be back here any minute now. Time he finds you here he’ll start spittin’ balls of fire.”

So she went and opened up an old chest, took out a big sword and a box of ointment, says, “If one of them balls of fire hits ye, Jack, you rub on a little of this medicine right quick, and this here swords the only thing kin hurt old Fire Dragaman. You watch out nosy and kill him if ye kin.”

Well, old Bluebeard come in the door directly, seed Jack, and coin. commenced spittin’ balls of fire around in there, some of ‘em big as pumpkins. Jack he’uz jest a-dodgin’ around tryin’ to git at the old giant with that sword. Once in a while one of them fireballs would glance him but Jack rubbed on that ointment and it didn’t even make a blister. Fin’lly Jack clipped him with that sword, took his head clean off.

Then Jack made that girl promise she’d marry him. So she took a red ribbon and got Jack to plait it in her hair. Then she give Jack a wishin’ ring. He put it on his finger and they went on out and got them other two girls.

They wuz awful pleased. Told Jack they’uz such little bits of children when old Bluebeard ketches ‘em they barely could recollect when they first come down there.

Well, Jack put the first one in the basket and shook the rope. Will and Tom hauled her up, and when they seed her they commenced fightin’ right off to see which one would marry her. She told ‘em, says, “I got another sister down there.”

“Is she prettier’n you?” says Will. She says to him, says, “I ain’t sayin’.”

Will and Tom chunked the basket down in a hurry. Jack put the next girl in, shook the rope. Time Will and Tom seed her they both asked her to marry, and went to knockin’ and beatin’ one another over gittin’ her. She stopped ‘em, says, “We got one more sister down there.”

“Is she prettier’n you?” says Will.

She says to him, says, “You kin see for yourself.”

So they slammed the basket down, jerked that last girl out. “Law me!” says Will, “This here’s the one I’m a-goin’ to marry.”

“Oh no you ain’t!” Tom says; “you’ll marry me, won’t ye now?” “No,” says the girl, “I’ve done promised to marry Jack.”

“Blame Jack,” says Will, “he kin jest stay in there,” and he took the basket and rope, throwed ‘em down the hole.

“There ain’t nothin’ much to eat down there,” says the girl; “He’ll starve to death.”

“That’s jest what we want him to do,” says Will, and they took them girls on back up to the house.

Well, Jack eat ever’thing he could find down there, but in about three days he seed the rations wuz runnin’ awful low. Then he scrapped up ever’thing there wuz left and he wuz plumb out of vittles didn’t know what he would do.

In about a week Jack had commenced to git awful pore. Happened he looked at his hand, turned that ring to see how much he’d fell off, says, “I wish I wuz back home setting’ in my mother’s chimley corner smokin’ my old chunky pipe.” And next thing, there he wuz.

Jack’s mother asked him how come he wuzn’t up at the new ground. Jack told her that wuz jest where he wuz started.

When Jack got up there, Will and Tom wuz still a-fightin’ over that youngest girl. Jack come on in the house and seed she still had that red ribbon in her hair, and she come over to him, says, “Oh Jack!”

So Jack got the youngest and Tom got the next ‘un, and that throwed Will to take the oldest.

And the last time I’uz down there they’d done built ‘em three pole cabins and they wuz all doin’ pretty well.

JACK’S HUNTING TRIP

Tradition Bearer: R. M. Ward and M. A. Ward

Source: Chase, Richard. “Jack’s Hunting Trip.” *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 2 (1938): 145–148.

Date: 1938

Original Source: Beech Creek, North Carolina

National Origin: European American

The following tale is a **variant** of the widely distributed “The Lucky Shot” (AT 1890). The story often takes the form of a **tall tale** performed in the guise of a **personal experience narrative**.

Jack was shure a fool for luck. They say the luckiest time he ever had, though, was one time when he went hunting. His daddy had an old flint-lock rifle hanging up over the fire-board, so Jack took that down and inspected it a little, said he thought it would do all right. Then he found the powder horn and some bullets. He put on his old baggy overalls, poured the bullets in one pocket, picked up his old ragged hat and took out up the river.

He went a long ways, but he didn't see a thing all day long till he'd come back down the river and pretty near home again and the sun just about an hour high.

Well, he looked up ahead of him in the woods and he saw a deer standing under an oak tree, biggest buck deer he'd ever seen, and right over that deer was a whole flock of wild turkeys sitting on a limb. They were in a straight row pointing right Jack's way. Jack didn't know what to do. If he shot the deer all them turkeys would fly off and he figured if he shot down that row of fowls he'd likely kill three or four of 'em with one shot. He liked wild turkey meat the best in the world but lie hated not to bring that big deer home. So he took out his knife and cut the ramrod in two. Then lie put in a double charge of powder and one bullet, then he put that half-a-ramrod in and put the other bullet in on top of it. He drew down on the deer and when he lammed loose on him he jerked the gun up so the bottom bullet would hit the turkeys. Well, he got the deer and the other bullet hit the limb them turkeys was sitting on, split it open and when it clamped back, it clamped down on their toes and held 'em fast. Such a squawking and flopping you never heard.

Well, Jack saw he had them, so he went over to look at his deer, and he was a full grown buck and had horns on him reached about six feet from tip to tip. Jack started to walk around him when he saw something kicking in the bushes on the other side. He looked and found him a big, fat rabbit. That bullet had gone plumb through the deer and hit a rabbit was sitting in the weeds. Then Jack saw where the bullet had glanced from the rabbit and stopped in a holler tree. There was something sticky oozing out the hole, so Jack stuck his finger in it and tasted it. Well, sir, it was sourwood honey. That tree was packed full of wild honey right up to the top.

Then Jack he looked up at all them turkeys fluttering and clucking and he 'lowed he'd have to cut the limb off. So he cloomb up and started cutting it down with his pocket knife. But soon as he'd cut that limb through and tools hold on it, them turkeys commenced flying off all together, and when Jack grabbed on with both hands, they carried him right with 'em, clean over the tops of the trees. Jack was mighty near scared to death. Well, directly the turkeys got to flying a little lower down and Jack saw they were heading to fly right over an old stumpy tree was sticking up out of the woods. So Jack figured if they'd fly low enough he'd drop off on top of that stumpy tree.

They kept on straight and was flying pretty low, so Jack let go for that stumpy tree but when he drapped instead of lighting on top of the tree, it was

holler, and Jack lit right in the mouth of the holler and drapped clean to the bottom. When he got up and quit staggering around, he heard something whimpering. Then he felt something like a big puppy come out from the side and rub up against his leg. Then two more come out sort of grunting around and tumbling over his feet. His eyes got used to how dark it was down there finally and he saw it was three young grizzly bears.

“Lord!” says Jack, “I’m into it now! The old bear’ll be coming down in here directly and she’ll eat me shure!”

He couldn’t figure no way in the world to get out. He tried to climb up the holler but he couldn’t catch no hold. He just kept slipping back and aggravating them young grizzlies till they got to yapping at him and biting his shins. So Jack quit trying to get out that way and tried to tame them bear cubs down a little. They ca’med down finally and then Jack picked up a sharp piece of dead root was lying down there and started trying to dig out one side when something cut the light out from above him all of a sudden like and Jack heard the old grizzly bear scrouging down the holler.

“Now what’ll I do?” says Jack. Well, he knew the old bear couldn’t turn around in the holler and he knew she had to come down backwards, so when she got close enough Jack seized hold on her tail and commenced gouging her with that sharp stick. The old bear just scrambled back up the holler and Jack swung on and kept on gouging her. When they got out at the top Jack shoved her off right quick and the old bear fell to the ground and broke her neck.

So Jack cloomb down the outside and started on home to get the axe and to fetch somebody to help him bring home all his game and all that honey, and to help catch them young bears. He went to the river, moved along till all to once he saw a bunch of wild ducks swimming on near the side of a bend where it was pretty deep. Jack just had to have them ducks, so he studied a while how he’d try to get ‘em without no gun nor nothing, then he crope up and slipped in the pool, and kept on easing in till he was clean under the water. Then he swum around under the ducks, pulled a long piece of stout cord out of his overall pocket, and right easy-like so’s not to scare ‘em, he tied all their feet together. He wasn’t aiming to let them ducks fly away with him like the turkeys done, so he dove on down to the bottom and tied the loose end to a big sycamore root. Then he popped out of the water right in amongst ‘em. They started in quacking and flopping to rise off the river but that rope would pull every one of ‘em slap back in the water. They kept on rising and jerking back till they got so tangled up in that rope they was all in one bundle. So Jack started wading out then and he’d been down under the water so long a lot of fish had got all tangled up inside his old baggy overalls. Jack kicked his legs till he’d shuck ‘em all out and when he’d strung ‘em up they weighed about thirty pounds. He slung the string of fish across his shoulder, picked up that passel of ducks and started for home once more. He kept looking for them turkeys but he reckoned they’d flown

clean out of the county by that time, so he thought he'd might as well give up on ever finding them again.

When he got home he got the axe and he made his two brothers, Will and Tom, come to help him. They didn't believe Jack had done all that. They took the big wagon and two mules, and two big barrels for the honey. Will and Tom laughed at Jack all the way going, but Jack knew he'd be the one laughing on the way back. Well, when they got there and tried to load the deer on, it was so heavy that they had to cut some poles and roll the carcass up onto the wagon bed. Jack picked up the rabbit and stuck it under the wagon seat. Then they cut the bee tree, and when they'd filled both barrels with that fine sourwood honey the tree was still half full, so they had to leave it to fetch the next day. Then they took the poles and went after the bear. The bear weighed even more than the deer but they finally got it loaded. Then Jack cut a hole in the bear-holler and Will and Tom caught the young 'uns. They made some rope halters and let the young bears walk along behind the wagon.

When they got out in the road again and had gone along a piece, they heard some wild turkeys a-squawking and there was Jack's flock still fastened on that limb and it tangled up on a telephone wire where they'd tried to light down again. Jack hit 'em all in the head with a long pole to stunt 'em so they wouldn't fly off again, then he knocked the limb loose and flung 'em on the wagon.

So they cured up the bear and the deer and had enough meat to last all winter. Jack's mother cooked up a big dinner of all the ducks and turkeys and invited all the neighbors. Jack sent word to the king to come too, and before he left he got to liking them young bear cubs so well he paid Jack a thousand dollars apiece for 'em and took 'em home to pet up for his children. Jack didn't sell none of that honey, though. He got his mother a lot of quart jars and she canned it all. Jack was mighty partial to honey and for the next two years him and his folks had honey to eat with their biscuits every time they sat down to the table.

PENNSYLVANIA GERMAN

CURES OF A MARYLAND WITCH

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Wrenshall, Letitia Humphreys. "Incantations and Popular Healing in Maryland and Pennsylvania." *Journal of American Folklore* 15 (1902): 268–271.

Date: 1901

Original Source: Maryland

National Origin: German American

The "Pennsylvania Dutch" are descendants of German-speaking immigrants who came to Pennsylvania from various parts of southwest Germany, Alsace, and Switzerland. Although, as early as the seventeenth century, these immigrants began to settle heavily in Pennsylvania, "Pennsylvania German" culture found a home in other colonies as well, including Delaware, Maryland, and New York. Pow-wow doctors in this tradition are magical-religious healers using incantations, holy words, and holy actions to heal both animals and humans. Folklorist Letitia Humphreys Wrenshall's account of the **personal experience narratives** of a Maryland "witch" clearly identifies her **resource person** as operating within this folk tradition. Two of the more obscure diseases mentioned in the narrative are Botts, an ailment in horses caused by the larvae of the botfly, and Erysipelas, a skin infection generally caused by group A streptococci.

Last autumn I had the opportunity of making personal observations amongst the people living in the mountain valleys of western Maryland and Pennsylvania, and especially as to their ways of affording relief in

many bodily ailments. It is most interesting to see the entire faith of the country patients in their sometimes called witch doctors, and the quiet acquiescence of some of the town folks in these practices. In Pennsylvania the practice is called "powwow"; in Maryland it is spoken of as "trying for it," and there is no doubt that the Maryland incantations are borrowed from the German; indeed, positive proof of this is found in South Mountain, the home of magic (of this species) in Maryland.

Among the women of the region patchwork is their sole indulgence. I was so fortunate as to obtain from a most accomplished weaver of quilt pieces and spells much information upon "trying for it" and some of her "words."

She was a gentle, quiet-spoken woman, living in her own thick-walled stone house, very comfortably surrounded, and supplied by all that was yielded from a well-cared-for place of several acres. She practiced her faith, and to her it was truly a faith.

I asked her if she made any effort to place her will in submission and supplication [to God] when she "tried for it." She looked at me in surprise, and said very seriously, "If I didn't do that, I couldn't cure. That's the way I do it." She then complained, almost to tears, that some people thought she did it in other ways, and said she was a witch, and nothing hurt her as bad as that.

She had perfect faith in her powers and her formulas, and told me instance after instance where she had "tried for it," and accomplished the cure. A few typical ones I will give you. Mostly her cases were for "livergrowded children" I asked her to tell me the meaning of this term. She explained, "when they are cross and peaky, and don't grow, just cry all the time."

"A wheal in the eye [inflamed eye]" was another, also all kinds of hemorrhage. "Botts in horses," I asked.

"Oh, yes, often cured them and burns and cuts of all kinds." She could always blow the fire out. The practice of treating burns by words, blowing, and movements of the hands, is very general in the mountains, and I have always been able to trace it to German origin.

Words often used are these, "Clear out, brand, but never in. Be thou cold or hot, thou must cease to burn. May God guard thy blood, thy flesh, thy marrow, and thy bones, and every artery, great and small. They all shall be guarded and protected in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

Erysipelas can be cured by taking a red hot brand from the fire, and passing it three times over the person's face, saying the words. This ordeal by fire was not fancied by some of the patients, so my witch told me; she sometimes put coals on a shovel, and waved it over the face, saying:

Three holy men went out walking,
They did bless the heat and the burning,
They blessed that it might not increase,

They blessed that it might quickly cease,
And guard against inflammation and mortification
In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

My witch was especially proud of her ability to stop hemorrhages, and here comes in the absent treatment. She said it was not necessary for her to see the patients; they might be far away. Only the first name must be known and pronounced exactly, also the side of the body from which the blood came, the right or left side; this was essential. She always stopped it.

Not long before I talked with her, she had been called between midnight and morning to go to a young man some miles away, who was bleeding severely. He had had a number of teeth extracted, and when the messenger left was “pretty near dead”; nothing stopped the blood. She asked for the necessary information (his name, and which side of the mouth was bleeding), then told the messenger to go back; she would “try for it.” When he reached home, the bleeding had stopped, and when she inquired the time of relief, found it was just after she had said her words. Two formulas for stopping bleeding are:

On Christ’s grave grows three roses;
The first is kind,
The second is valued among rulers,
The third stops blood.
Stop, blood, thou must, and, wound, thou must heal,
In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Another charm: As soon as cut, say, “Blessed wound, blessed hour, blessed be the day on which Christ was born. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.”

After my second or third visit to the gentle witch, who was pretty, rosy, and plump, she told me how she had learnt to “try for it.” When as a child she had been adopted by an aunt who had married a “German man,” and he had taught her how to use the words, how to speak them, how to move her hands (much value is attached to the movements of the hands), and, dying, bequeathed her his precious book. She showed me the book, which had been translated from the German in 1820. The preface stated that the translator had put it into English greatly against his wife’s wish, but he was old, he had no one to leave his book to, and he did not wish his wonderful knowledge to die with him, and accordingly translated it into English, which was generally spoken about him.

My witch would not part with her book. No, she must leave it to her daughter. She could not sell it; money could not buy it. If she had no daughter, she would give it to me, but could not sell it. I might study it all I wanted, but she could not part with it.

GHOST LEGENDS OF THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Newell, William Wells. "Ghost Legends of the Blue Mountains in Pennsylvania." *Journal of American Folklore* 11 (1898): 76–78.

Date: 1897

Original Source: Henning, D. C. "Tales of the Blue Mountains in Pennsylvania." *Miners' Journal*. Pottsdam, PA, March 26, 1897.

National Origin: German American

Folklorist William Wells Newell notes that "In 1755 the colonial authorities established as many as forty forts and blockhouses along the Blue Mountains, from the Susquehanna to the Delaware" (77). Newell contends that during the latter part of the nineteenth century these forts served as the catalyst for tales of "fairies" and other supernatural beings.

Return of Siegfried

The following **legend**, a folk version of Washington Irving's "Rip Van Winkle," attests to the vitality of a belief in mountain spirits within the German American community of the Blue Mountain region well into the nineteenth century.

A youth of the name of Siegfried, having paid a visit to his promised bride, rather singularly called Chriemhilt, crossed the mountains during a thunder-storm and disappeared. Sixty-five years, a month, and a fortnight later the bride, now grown to an old woman and still unmarried, received a visit from this lover, who appeared on horseback, still wearing the costume habitual in the time when he had been lost to knowledge.

This interview took place, according to the tale, in the presence of children. The old woman afterwards explained that she had been accosted by her lover, who was under the impression that he had remained only a few hours in the mountains with the spirits, whose splendid palaces and golden streets he described, and who were able to pass at will and in a moment from one end of the mountains to the other. The woman refused to accompany him, and one of the spirits of the mountain appeared, who claimed the suitor as his captive.

At the prayer of Chriemhilt, however, he consented that after her death the prisoner should be released, and reunion effected in heaven. Such is the folk-tale, obtained from the relation of one of the children present at the advent of the suitor, and who in after days narrated the incident.

Paul Heym, the Wizard of Lebanon

Although shape-shifting is usually associated with witchcraft, Paul Heym would be labeled a pow-wow doctor in the Pennsylvania German community. Pow-wowing (or *braucherei*) is a benign folk medical tradition that involves cures using, among other devices, charms such as the one included at the end of the following brief account.

A certain Paul Heym, living near Lebanon about 1755, was supposed to possess the ability of trans-forming himself into various shapes. When hard pressed by Indian pursuers, he escaped by changing himself into a stump, and under the form of a wildcat was able to visit an Indian council and overhear the plans formed; from an arrow the beast received a wound in a paw, which after-ward appeared on the arm of the wizard.

When he left his house, Heym was in the habit of protecting it by a charm, written on a piece of paper, and regarded as also a protection against lightning. The words are preserved:

In Namen Gottes geh' ich aus;
Der Vater wahr' mir dieses Haus;
Der Sohn mit seiner Lieb dabei
Dies Haus bewahr' in aller Treu;
Und Heil'ger Geist, lass nicht heran,
Ein Sach das dies Haus schaden kann.

WOLF OF THE GREENWOOD

Tradition Bearer: Mrs. William Buell

Source: Gardner, Emelyn E. "Folk-Lore from Schoharie County New York." *Journal of American Folklore* 27 (1914): 311–314.

Date: 1914

Original Source: New York

National Origin: German American

"The Wolf of the Greenwood" is an **ordinary folktale** that incorporates some of the traditional **motifs** associated with "The Girl as Helper in the Hero's Flight" (AT 313). **Variants** of this narrative are found throughout Europe and the United States.

Once upon a time there lived a woman who had three daughters who were old enough to marry, but no one came to marry them. The woman owned a witch chair, which had the power to charm any one who sat in it into loving one of the daughters. One day a fine young man came and sat in the chair, and the mother told him that he might have the choice of her daughters for his wife. After looking at them all to see which was the prettiest, he chose the youngest.

A short time after they were married, another young woman who had loved the young man invited him to her home high up on one of the Rocky Mountains. He went; and while he was there, the young woman, who was a witch, put a spell upon him which changed him into a wolf. Every day he was to roam the greenwood; but when night came, he could return to his own home in human form. So the poor young wife never saw her husband except at night, for every morning in the form of a wolf he ran away to the greenwood and spent the day.

After about a year a little baby girl was born to them; and after another year there came another babe to make them happy. This made the witch woman on the mountain so jealous, that she sent down her dog, which went to the baby lying in its cradle, and licked its little cheek so hard that it licked out one of the baby's eyes.

The mother took good care that the dog did not get at her children again, until the third baby came. Soon after that, one day the eldest disappeared; and all the mother knew was, that she saw the same dog which had licked out the second child's eye, disappearing up the road.

She did not know that the dog took the child to one of its father's brothers and left it there. As the brother had no children of his own, he was very glad to take the one which the dog left. In the same manner another was taken to another uncle, who was also childless.

The poor mother was almost distracted, for now the witch woman did not allow the husband to return to his home at all. The mother watched the third child as carefully as ever she could; but at last the dog managed to steal that, too, and carried her to still another childless uncle.

When the mother had lost both her babies and her husband, she felt that she must set out and see if she could not find them. She did not go far, before she came to the house of the brother-in-law who had taken the first child. The witch woman had put her under a spell, so that she did not know her own babe or her brother-in-law. Nor did they know her. When she told the man of her loss, he was so sorry for her that he gave her an accordion for company.

But she could not bear to go home and stay alone, so she went on until she came to the house of the second brother-in-law. Here the same things happened as had happened at the house of the first brother; and when she left him, he gave her a beautiful golden comb.

Still she could not bear to go home, but continued on her way until she came to the house of the third brother-in-law. To him she told her story, and also that her husband was kept upon a high icy mountain which she was not

able to climb because it was so slippery. Wishing to help her, this brother-in-law, just as she was going away, told her to go to the nearest blacksmith, whom he ordered to shoe the woman with some sharp iron shoes, which would enable her to climb the mountain where the witch woman lived.

When the blacksmith had her shod, she started up the mountain, and, owing to the fine shoes he had made her, soon reached the home of the witch woman, and saw her own husband working about, felling trees and chopping wood to keep the witch woman comfortable, for it was very cold on the mountain. When the witch woman saw the wonderful shoes which had enabled the woman to climb so well, she asked her how much she would take for them. The woman replied that if she would let her pass the night with the wood-chopper, she would give her the shoes. The witch woman agreed to that; but when night came, before the wood-chopper went to bed, the witch gave him a draught which made him sleep soundly until the witch willed for him to awaken.

The wife, thinking that if she could get her husband by himself she could win him back, waited until she thought that the witch would not hear. Then she said, "O wolf of the greenwood! why won't you turn to me? Three poor little babes have I borne to thee."

But the witch had sealed his ears; so that, although the wife said three times, "O wolf of the greenwood! why won't you turn to me? Three poor little babes have I borne to thee," her husband did not hear her.

In the morning the witch saw her combing her hair with a beautiful comb, and asked her what she would take for it. The wife replied that she would exchange it for another night with the wood-chopper. The witch agreed to this. But again she gave the man a draught, so that he paid no heed when his wife said, "O wolf of the greenwood! why don't you turn to me? Three poor little babes have I borne to thee." In the morning, before he came out from the power of the draught, the witch came and took him away.

In the afternoon the witch heard the wife playing beautiful music on her accordion, and asked her how much she would take for it. The wife made the same reply as before; and the witch agreed, thinking that she would give the man the sleeping-draught the same as before.

Before night came on, however, the wife escaped the watchful eyes of the witch, and ran into the wood to her husband. She did not tell him who she was, but gave him a sponge, and told him when the witch gave him the draught that night to pretend to take it, but really to pour it into the sponge. The witch watched him so carefully that he had to pretend to get choked. Then, when the witch went for water to help him, he poured the draught into the sponge; and when she returned, he pretended that he had swallowed it.

That night the wife told her husband all that had happened to her; so in the morning, when the witch came into the room where they were, the husband fell upon her and killed her. Then he and his wife went down the mountain and

got their children, after which they returned to the witch's house, and lived happily ever after.

GRANNY STEEL

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Hoffman, W. J. "Folklore of the Pennsylvania Germans III." *Journal of American Folklore* 2 (1889): 192–193.

Date: 1889

Original Source: Pennsylvania

National Origin: German American

The **legend** of "Granny Steel" describes of a benign haunting. Granny Steel's spirit is bound to the spot of death by an untimely death, but unlike many revenants, she does not seek restitution for a wrong committed by the living. The elimination of supernatural visitors by reversals, in this case counting backward, is a widely held traditional concept.

When Granny Steel was dead, there was a silver quarter [of a dollar] found in her wind-pipe, and it was said that she had undoubtedly been strangled by it. Anyhow, her ghost used to go about the house at all hours of the night. They used to hear it go up and down stairs, the doors opened and closed of their own accord, and in various ways it made itself very uncanny to those who dwelt in the house; for all that they knew there was no danger to be apprehended, inasmuch as old Granny had been a good old soul.

One of the members of a family who once lived there was a half-witted girl, who imagined that it would be well to go to a fortune-teller about this ghost. The fortune-teller told her to go home, to close all the doors in the house except one, and to sit in the dark to await the arrival of the ghost. The instant that it began to ascend the stairs she should count the number of steps. Then, when the ghost had finished its wanderings up-stairs, and was about to come down, she was to follow it, coming down backward, and to count aloud the number of steps taken by the ghost in ascending.

This the girl did, from first to last; and since that time the ghost of old Granny Steel has not been heard.

JAKE STRAUSS

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Hoffman, W. J. "Folklore of the Pennsylvania Germans III." *Journal of American Folklore* 2 (1889): 193–194.

Date: 1889

Original Source: Pennsylvania

National Origin: German American

In spite of Jake Strauss' apprehensions, there is no real evidence of witchcraft in the following narrative. The fright Jake Straus suffers is likely due to his superstitious nature fed by a guilty conscience. Although this is presented as a **local legend**, this **anecdote** featuring a local character most closely resembles "Clothing Caught in a Graveyard" (AT 1676B).

Jake Strauss had the name of being very superstitious, and he also believed in witches.

Late one night, as he was returning toward home from courting, and he had a considerable distance to go, he thought that by going across the fields he might reach home before the old folks had risen in the morning. One of the fields through which he had to pass was overgrown with brambles and vines, and he had not gone far when the vines made him fall down. Then he instantly thought that the witches had caused this, and that he could appease them by giving them a little tobacco; so he threw down a piece and began to run. He did not proceed far before falling again, and as he arose he again threw down a piece of tobacco to keep off the witches.

In the beginning Jake was well provided with plug tobacco, of the variety called horse-leg, but by the time he had crossed that field and paid the witches he had nothing left. Still he considered himself fortunate in not sustaining greater injury than the loss of his tobacco and a lacerated skin.

Jake used to have great times in telling of his misfortunes through the witches. Everything that he possessed, his cattle, chickens, and ducks, were bewitched, and at last he could no longer raise any ducks at all. Through the spells put upon them by witches, these became so lean that they could no longer pull the blades of grass, through sheer weakness. Then it occurred to him that perhaps the grass might be bewitched, because some of his ducks in attempting to pull up blades of grass pulled themselves out of their skins; then he had the trouble to place them near the fire until a new skin and feathers grew upon the bodies. This was too much for Jake, so he gave up raising ducks.

LAZY MARIA

Tradition Bearer: Mrs. William Buell

Source: Gardner, Emelyn E. "Folk-Lore from Schoharie County New York." *Journal of American Folklore* 27 (1914): 307–310.

Date: 1914

Original Source: New York

National Origin: German American

According to folklorist Emelyn Gardner, the tradition bearer comes from a family known for traditional arts such as divination and supernatural healing as well as storytelling. This **ordinary folktale** embodies the familiar quest images, **formulaic** elements, contrasts between siblings, and supernatural encounters that mark this **genre**. The most familiar version of this tale is the Grimms' "Mother Holle" (AT 480).

Once upon a time there lived a man with three daughters, who, as he thought, were old enough to look out for themselves. So he called them to him, and said, "It is time to go out in the world and seek your fortune. I'll start the oldest first. Go and see what luck you have in the world!"

So the oldest girl took her bundle of clothes tied up in a big kerchief, and away she went. After a while, just as she was beginning to feel hungry, she saw standing right near her a cow. The cow said, "Milk me, milk me, or my bag will bust! Milk me, milk me, or my bag will bust!"

No sooner had the cow said this, and the girl was wishing for something to milk the cow into, than she espied right near the cow an oven. From it came a voice, which said, "Take me out or I'll burn up! Take me out or I'll burn up!"

The girl looked inside the oven to see what was talking, and there was a fine loaf of bread. She took it out, dug the center out of it, and filled the hollow with milk from the cow, then had a meal of bread and milk. She said, "The old man sent me out, and I must be doing well."

After she had eaten all the bread and milk she wanted, she went on her way. Pretty soon she came to an apple tree full of apples. "Shake me, shake me, or my limbs will break! Shake me, shake me, or my limbs will break!" said the apple tree.

So the girl shook the tree until her lap was full of apples. When she had eaten all the apples she wanted, she put some in her kerchief and went on her way. Towards dusk she came to a fine-looking mansion, and she thought she would inquire if they (the occupants) wanted anybody to work for them. Seeing a man standing in front of the house, she called out, "Halloo!"

"Halloo!" answered the man, who liked the girl's looks.

"Do you want a girl to work for you?" asked the girl.

"I think we do need one," answered the man; "but my master isn't home tonight, so you had better stay all night. Which door would you like to enter? One is a gold door: if you go in through it, you will be covered from head to foot

with gold. The other is a tar door: if you go in through it, you will be covered with tar.”

“Oh, I don’t mind!” replied the girl. “I had just as soon be covered with tar as with gold.”

“You are so humble, you deserve to go through the golden door.”

“I don’t care,” repeated the girl.

Thereupon the man led her through the golden door; and the gold clung to her nose, her fingers, her ears, to every part of her, until she was completely covered with gold. When she was well inside the house, the man said, “We have two places where we put those who come here. Will you sleep under the ladder with the cats and dogs, or will you sleep in the high bed with all your gold and glitter?”

“I’d just as soon crawl under the ladder with the cats and dogs as to sleep in the high bed.”

“Being as you are so humble, I’ll put you in the high bed with all your gold and glitter.”

When she reached the room where the high bed was, she saw that everything was of gold. The gold from everything she touched stuck to her, even the golden sheets; and in the morning, with the golden sheets clinging fast to her, she thought she was rich enough to go home. So home she went.

When the family saw her coming, her father said, “What! Is that lazy whelp coming back? I’ll get the horse-whip and whip her to death!”

The girl, however, as soon as she came near enough to make herself heard, cried out, “O father! I’m rich, rich!”

And sure enough, the father had never seen so much gold in his life as he now saw on his daughter. As soon as he touched her, the gold fell off from her to the ground. The father ordered the girl to tell where she had been. When he heard the story, he decided to send the second daughter to try her luck in the same way.

The second daughter had precisely the same experiences as her sister, and she too returned home “rich, rich!”

Then the father said, “Now for Lazy Maria! She’s never been good for anything yet. Let’s see what she can do!” To her he said, “Even if you are our baby, you must go.”

So Lazy Maria took her bundle on her shoulder and started. Soon she came to the cow, which said, “Milk me, milk me, or my bag will bust! Milk me, milk me, or my bag will bust!”

“Go along, you old bitch! I don’t care if it does,” replied the girl.

Then the voice from within the oven cried out, “Take me out or I’ll burn up! Take me out or I’ll burn up!”

“Burn up, then! I won’t touch you. I won’t work when I’m all tired out,” complained the girl, and went on her way. When she came to the apple tree, it cried, “Shake me, shake me, or my limbs will break! Shake me, shake me, or my limbs will break!”

“Let your limbs break, then! I sha’n’t shake you,” said the girl, and went on. When she came to the mansion, the man on guard told her of the two doors, and asked her through which she wanted to enter. “I want to go through the golden door,” said the girl.

“All right!” and the man pushed her through the tar door. The tar stuck to her hair, filled her eyes, and covered her from head to foot.”

“Oh, my father will kill me!” she cried.

“Where will you sleep, under the ladder with the cats, or in the high bed?” asked the man.

” In the high bed, tar and all,” at once decided the girl.

“All right! Creep under the ladder.” And the man pushed her among the cats and dogs. “You must be more humble,” said he, “if you would get on in the world.”

The next morning the poor girl, all covered with tar as she was, started for home. When the family saw her coming, they rushed out to see the gold; but when they discovered that she was covered with tar instead of gold, they cried, “Let’s whip her!”

“Oh, no!” said her father. “Let’s scrub the tar off!” but, scrub as they would, they couldn’t get it off, because, you see, it had been put on by a witch. They scraped and scraped until they scraped the hair off her head, and the skin off her fingers and toes. At last they scraped off one of her warts, and there lay the witch. At that all the tar fell off, and Lazy Maria was free once more. But while her two sisters were rich and could go and come as they liked, Lazy Maria always had to stay at home, poor.

THE SECRET ROOM

Tradition Bearer: Mrs. William Buell

Source: Gardner, Emelyn E. “Folk-Lore from Schoharie County New York.” *Journal of American Folklore* 27 (1914): 310–311.

Date: 1914

Original Source: New York

National Origin: German American

The following **ordinary folktale** is unusual if only for the fact that justice is not done at the end of the tale. Perhaps the female protagonist is not held culpable because she is bewitched. The **motif** of the animal spouse itself, however, is not uncommon.

Once upon a time there lived a mother with three daughters, whose duty it was to guard the cabbage-patch in front of the cottage in which they lived. One day they were all sitting in the sun, spinning, when they

saw a Bull in the cabbage-patch. "Take your distaff and run, child, run!" said the mother to the eldest daughter. So the girl took her distaff and ran. The Bull ran and she ran, and she ran and the Bull ran, until they came to a great house standing on the edge of a wood.

There the Bull gave her a large bunch of keys, and told her that she could go anywhere in the house she liked except one room. He showed her the key to this room, and told her that she must not unlock the door to which it belonged. Then the Bull went away and left her. The girl took the keys and roamed from one beautiful room to another, until she had seen all except the forbidden room. This she wanted to see more than she had any of the others. At last her curiosity became so great that she opened the door and went inside. What was her horror to discover that the room was full of headless bodies hung on all sides. Quickly she locked the door and ran downstairs. But she had some blood on the key, on her hand, and on her shoes.

As she was trying the best she knew how to get the blood off, along came a big black Cat, which said to her, "Mew, mew, mew! Give me a dish of bread and milk, and I will tell you how to get the blood off your shoes."

"Go away, you old black thing! I am not going to bother with you."

So the Cat went away, and pretty soon the Bull came. "Let me see your keys!" said he. "How came the blood on this one?" Then he asked to see her hands and her shoes. When he saw blood on them too, he knew that she had disobeyed him; so, as he had done with all the others who had disobeyed him, he cut her head off and hung her body up with the others in the forbidden room.

The next day, when the mother and her two remaining daughters again sat spinning in the sun, they again saw the Bull in the cabbage-patch. The mother sent the second daughter just as she had sent the first, and exactly the same things happened to her.

The third day the mother and the youngest daughter sat spinning in the sun, when the mother looked up and saw the Bull a third time in the cabbage-patch. "Take your distaff and run, child, run!" cried the mother.

So the youngest daughter ran, and the Bull ran. The Bull ran and she ran until they came to the great house on the edge of the wood. There the Bull gave her a bunch of keys, and told her that she might open every door in the house except the one whose key he showed her. Then the Bull went away. The youngest daughter did just as her sisters had done, and went into all the rooms except the forbidden one. She kept wondering what could be in there, until her curiosity became so great that she unlocked the door and went in. She, too, was so horrified that she quickly shut the door and ran downstairs, but with the tell-tale blood on the key, on her hand, and on her shoes.

To her came the big black Cat, who said, "Mew, mew, mew! Give me a dish of bread and milk, and I will tell you how to get the blood off your shoes." Instead of telling the Cat to go away, as her sisters had done, she went and got

some bread and milk for him. When the Cat had finished eating, he said, "If you will go into the attic, you will find there a sickle. Take it, rub it on the key, on your hand, and on your shoes, while you say, 'Blood, be gone! Blood, be gone!'"

The girl went to the attic, found the sickle, and did with it as the Cat had told her to do, saying, "Blood, be gone! blood, be gone!" Even as she spoke the last word, the blood-stains disappeared.

Then the girl went downstairs, where she found the Bull waiting for her. "Let me see your keys," he said, "and your hands and your shoes!"

When he saw that she had no blood-stains upon her, he suddenly changed from a bull into a beautiful prince. "I was bewitched," he said, "by a girl who loved me, but whom I wouldn't marry because I didn't love her. I killed many a girl when I was a bull; but now we will have the bodies taken care of, and then we will be married." So they buried the bodies, and then were married and lived happily ever after.

SOUTHWEST

RANGE LIFE IN TEXAS

Tradition Bearer: Jack Robert Grigsby

Source: Angermiller, Florence. *Interview of Jack Robert Grigsby*. *American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936–1940*. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. *American Memory*. Library of Congress, Washington, DC. <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wpaintro/wpahome.html> (October 12, 2005).

Date: 1938

Original Source: Texas

National Origin: Anglo American

Most of the historical accounts that find their way into print chronicle significant turning points in political careers, national crises, and major encounters between political systems. The autobiography that follows includes a **personal experience narrative** about the notorious Billy the Kid, William H. Bonney (ca. 1859–1881), and passing references to lesser known, but no less deadly, gunmen Bill (William Preston) Longley (1851–1878) and George Gladden (a central figure in what came to be known as the Mason County [Texas] War). The Mason County War, also known as the Hoodoo War, took place in the decade after the Civil War. More important, however, the following are the vivid memories of a fairly average man caught up in the turmoil of Reconstruction and the changes brought by the turn of the twentieth century. This is a life that many lived in the Southwest region, but few have passed along to the twenty-first century.

I was born in Tyler, Texas, August 26, 1854, coming to this country in November, 1870. I was about sixteen years old when I came here. I was raised an orphan. I don't ever remember seeing my mother, and my father died

when I was six or seven years old. After that I lived first one place and another till I came out here.

I started work on a ranch when I first got to this country, working for Will Pruitt. I just lived in the woods, for there were very few people here at that time. I worked for Mr. Pruitt about six years, just working for my board and clothes, and it wasn't many clothes either.

I went part of the way up the trail to Oklahoma, twice with stuff for Will Pruitt. But he would always turn me back at Red River. He knew that I had a half brother living on up in Oklahoma and I always thought he did this so I wouldn't find my brother and stay with him, for he wanted me to work for him. I would come all the way back from Red River alone. Sometimes I would meet up with herds on the way and sometimes I would ride all the way back without seeing anyone.

I have had all kinds of ups and downs in the cattle business. Once we took a bunch of cattle to the old Woodhull ranch out south of Spofford. Part of the herd belonged to Mr. Furness. He had come up here and bought them up, and we got twenty-five cents a head for all we delivered, and furnished ourselves. But we had to pay for all we lost. One night we had camped about where Cline is now and had put the herd in a corner of a pasture for the night. We were herding them too, but along in the night something scared them and they run through all three of those wire fences. As we would turn them from one string they would go into another. But we only lost two. One broke it's shoulder and one got away. It was a steer that belonged to old Man Vogel and three years later Millard Parkerson caught him and sold him for old Man Vogel. But the one that got its shoulder broke didn't cost us anything for it belonged to one of the boys in the bunch.

Our boss wanted to get there with the cattle looking good. So after we crossed Turkey Creek, we heard the train coming and he asked us to take the cattle a mile or so away from the track so the train wouldn't stampede 'em. Well, we all had cattle in the outfit and we made it up to hold them right to the track. So we took our slickers from behind our saddles and whipped the herd right up to the track. We had to do some riding for about two miles, for those cattle really did run. But we stayed with 'em. The boss sure got red but it didn't do him any good.

The next day we got to the ranch and was going down on a creek to camp, and one of the boys roped the pack horseman and he went to pitching and scattered skilletts, frying pans, coffee pots and all our grub everywhere. But we got everything back but our grub. So we went up to the house and told Mr. Furness what had happened. He told us to come on up to the house and stay. So we helped him brand out his cattle, and he give us enough grub to get back home.

Yes, we always used a pack horse to carry our grub for we worked in this rough country and there were no roads, so we had no use for a chuck wagon. Except one time when we made a trip up on the divide above Leakey. Well,

there was no road and the wagon broke down. We had gotten ahead with the herd, so some of the boys went back to see what was wrong and to get some corn from the wagon to feed the horses. The man saw a light out across the country and came back and told us it was Indians. So we had to get out and round up the horses. We built a brush pen to put them in and guarded them all night. The next morning we had gotten breakfast and started to eat. But it was always the custom then, when the cowboys were eating, for someone to keep watch for Indians.

Well, one of the boys got up to look and saw a big bunch of men coming. He says, "Boys, here they come!" But it turned out to be soldiers and they had seen us and thought we were Indians. So the boss got up and hollered at them to wait and the officer in charge come on up to the camp. We had killed a beef the evening before, so we gave them part of that and they gave us about twenty-five pounds of coffee.

One time Joe Pan Pelt came to work with our outfit down here about Rio Frio. Well, we always turned all the horses loose at night except one or two we kept to ride after the others next morning. We never cared what we kept up to ride—just anything, no matter how they were. The boys always took it turn about going after the horses in the morning, so it came Joe's time to get the horses. It was a cold, frosty morning and he said he didn't want to get on the horse. But I told him yes, he must go. So he got on the horse and he began pitching and finally turned a somersault with him. He got up and said he couldn't ride the horse again. But I told him we had those horses there to ride and if he didn't ride him I couldn't keep him for I couldn't afford to keep a hand that could not ride the horses. So he got on him again and that time he rode him.

Joe Collins used to come out in this country and buy fat cattle and take them to New Orleans and ship them from there. I have seen him ride into cow camp with a morral (nose bag) full of gold and go off and leave it there maybe all night and no one ever bothered it. I guess if someone had taken it he would have just been killed and that would have been all there would have been to it. There wasn't any court. Uvalde was the nearest post-office.

Old Man Schwartz used to come to the cow camps with his hack peddling dry goods and lots of times he would stay all night. He always went prepared to camp, for them days you couldn't always make it to a house for the night. But he would always sell something to the cowboys, such as gloves and if they didn't have the money they got them just the same. And I don't believe those cowboys ever beat him out of a quarter. He was sure a fine old man. I thought a lot of him.

When I first commenced work for myself I had some awful mean horses. I traded for the meanest ones I could get, so the boys wouldn't ride 'em when I was gone. I had one I only rode every three days. Well, he was so mean I would have to tie him to a tree and beat him up before I could get a bridle on him, for he sure would fight.

I broke a horse down here once for Mart Pruitt. He finally traded him to Calvin Bowles. The horse was getting tender-footed so I met Calvin one day and told him his horse needed shoeing. He said yes, but he was too mean to shoe. But the old blacksmith in Leakey come out and said he could handle him. Well, they brought the horse down and the old blacksmith fooled around him a little while and finally dropped the rope. I said, "Don't do that; he'll run off." He told me to just let him alone he would handle him. So he went in and got his nails and hammer and horseshoes and put the shoes on him and the horse never moved. I don't know what he did to the horse for after that he was just as mean to kick anyone else as he ever was.

Yes, times are quite different now to what they used to be. I remember when Old Man Hanson come in here and taken up a preemption of a hundred and sixty acres. Hatten Elms come along and wanted to trade him out of it. Elms asked him what he would take for it and he said, "Two cows and calves," which meant about eight dollars for a cow and calf. Well, they traded for about a week, and then Elms backed out. So you can imagine about what land was worth then.

Once the Indians come into the country and was stealing horses. Well, we heard of them and the settlers got together and took their trail down here about Rio Frio. We followed them on across the Seco to the Sabinal Canyon and on to Frio Town, down by Old Man Westfall's ranch, which was a big cow ranch. And when we crossed the Frio near where Loma Vista is now, we had run out of food and were sure hungry. We hadn't had anything to eat for several days but a little coffee. There didn't seem to be any stock in that country then. But we finally met a Mexican sheep herder with a herd of sheep and asked him for one. He said we would have to go see the boss. We didn't have time to fool around hunting the boss. So Joe Van-Pelt jumped off his horse and shot at a big old mutton and killed two. We took them on down to a little creek and cooked them and the eighteen of us ate every bit of those two sheep.

The Indians killed nineteen people before they reached the Rio Grande. Well, we went on for a day or two without overtaking them and some of the men got discouraged and kept dropping out till there was only five of us left. We had appointed Henry Patterson as captain. So he decided it was best to go back to Uvalde and wire Lieutenant Bullis for help so he met us here with his Seminole Indian soldiers and we took up the trail again and followed it on to the Rio Grande. But they had already gone across. We could see men riding back and forth and we were satisfied it was these Indians, but we were not allowed to go after them.

They killed one man by the name of Byrd and about five of his men who was herding sheep for him. Mr. Byrd was in his buggy when the Indians overtaken him and after they killed him, they taken everything he had in the buggy and his buggy harness. They cut the leather harness up in little pieces and scattered it along the way. Of course it was of no value to them. But we found it as

we followed the trail. They had also gone by the Mount Woodward ranch and killed two or three men there. We didn't see anyone as we passed the ranch. We wasn't bothered about seeing people—we was just following that Indian trail.

Another time we followed a bunch of Indians over on Dry Frio. They had killed a man by the name of Terry and captured his two children a little boy and a little girl. The girl's name was Mattie and the boy's name was Joe. But Joe had fought them so hard they knocked him in the head and left him for dead, right before his little sister's eyes. But he didn't die. Well, we rode all night that night till daylight. At daylight we took up the trail again and overtaken them just before noon. They didn't offer to fight for it was raining and their bow strings were wet. They couldn't shoot and that gave us the best of them.

One old Indian was off ahead of the others and they were crossing a creek when we begin to shoot at them. We followed them on into a shin-oak thicket. After awhile we come into a little opening and just as we got to this opening we saw the little girl. It looked like she had just been kicked off of the horse by the old Indian she was riding behind. She had an Indian blanket wrapped around her and when she saw us she started to run. But we told her to wait, we wouldn't hurt her, so she sat down on the blanket and waited.

We went on after the Indians, still shooting at them every chance we got. Finally we got so close to the old Indian that had dropped the little girl that we could see him kick his horse every jump trying to make him go faster. Anyway, he had a bed tick around him and we found that full of bullet holes and bloody. I don't know if we killed any or not but there was plenty of blood along the trail. He ran on till he got to a ridge and when he went over this ridge and into another thicket, we was close enough to see he carried a long lance in his hand. None of us wanted him bad enough to go in there after him, for you know they can throw those old lances through you.

We got the little girl and started back home. On the way back we found a lot of stuff the Indians had lost, such as goat hides and one buffalo robe. It was cold and everything was wet. So we picked them up and took them to camp and used them for bedding. Just before night someone said, "Do you suppose these things have lice?" But we slept on them just the same. Yes, we got plenty lice.

When we got back to Old Man Shores' where we were in cow camp, we took a big wash pot, got off down on the river and cleaned up. We boiled all our clothes and tied the buffalo robe in the river for about three days. Jim Avant took the little girl on to his home, but he had to stay in camp with the rest till he got rid of those lice. Mrs. Avant took the little girl and combed and washed the lice out of her hair, and washed the paint off of her face that the Indians had put on it. And she put clean clothes on her.

Every family in the whole country wanted the little girl, but she didn't want to stay with any of them. She wanted to stay with us men who had rescued her from the Indians. When they did take her back to her mother, she went with a herd of fat cattle that Pruitt was taking to San Antonio. When they got to San

Antonio, she wouldn't get on the stage coach to go home unless one of the cowboys went along, so one of them got on the coach up with the driver and put the little girl back inside with the mail. There was a little window in the top where she could see the cowboy sitting up on top. Well, when they got down the road a piece, they picked up another passenger so the cowboy slipped off and this man took his place. The little girl didn't know the difference. But I never saw her after that.

I knew Billy the Kid. He stayed in camp with us down here about Hackberry once for about a week. He rode into camp one day and his horse was rode down. He told us his name was Word and he wanted to stay a few days. I told him all right. So he stayed on and helped us round up cattle till one day he got into a fight with a Negro we had working with the outfit. Billy cut the Negro across the side of the face and down the back with a long butcher knife. The Negro finally run. And when he stopped, I walked over to where he was and he said, "Mr. Jack, please don't let him hurt me any more!" About that time Billy came up and said, "Oh, shut your damn mouth. I have already done all to you that I want to." Billy stood there and wiped the blood off of the knife with his hands and looked at the cut on the man as unconcerned as if he hadn't done a thing. But he left after that. He was afraid the officers would hear of this and would get him for other things he was wanted for.

When he left camp he went on up to Bill Patterson's ranch and got a job going up the trail to Kansas that spring. They said he stayed with them part of the way back home, but stopped one day away out on the prairie and took his bed but turned his horse a-loose. So they left him right there without a horse. They said they guessed he didn't want to get any closer to Texas.

I knew several other desperados. Among them was Bill Longley, George Gladden, John Beard and Lew Sawyers. They all come through this one winter at different times. They didn't do any kind of work while they was here but they took in all the dances.

There was one man, a desperado, come in to this country one time. I can't remember his name right now. Anyway he stayed over on the West Prong a lot. I don't know what he had done, no telling what. Anyway, while he was staying up on the West Prong, he shot a Mexican one day just to try out his gun. The Mexican was about two-hundred and fifty yards away and as he stooped over to dig a hole this man shot him in the hip. I met the man about a mile down the road just after it had happened but he didn't say a word about what he had done. Well, the (Texas) Rangers come in and got after him and caught him away from home without a horse. But he got away from them and Old Man Lyman Smith helped him get out of the country by exchanging clothes with him so he would be disguised and wouldn't get caught. Those fellows were very peaceful and nice unless trouble come up.

I was married to Miss Jennie Horton in January 1888. We were married right up the river here about a half-mile in my wife's parent's home. We walked

on down here after the wedding and have been here ever since. But I had to give a dance at Leakey in the court house that night to keep the boys from shivareeing us. We had a big supper and danced till about four o'clock, then it came up a big, snow storm and we had to go home to keep from freezing. It was one of the biggest snow storms I ever saw in this country. I guess me getting married caused it.

HISTORY OF A BUFFALO HUNTER

Tradition Bearer: Manuel Jesus Vasques

Source: Tejada, Simeon. *Interview of Manuel Jesus Vasques. American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936–1940.* Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. *American Memory.* Library of Congress, Washington, DC. <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wpaintro/wpahome.html> (October 12, 2005).

Date: 1939

Original Source: New Mexico

National Origin: Mexican American

The passing of the great bison (buffalo) herds on the Plains has been incorporated into every American school child's history text. The image of the white hide hunters and their Sharps rifles has transcended life into pop culture via media from the "dime novel" to the Hollywood feature film. The reality of this life has not survived into contemporary times. Manuel Jesus Vasques—hunting with a lance from horseback, making his patron a wealthy man while "never holding a single penny in his hand"—intimately knew the reality of life as a buffalo hunter and horse trader. His account is contained in the following **personal experience narrative**.

Don Manuel Jesus Vasques was born in the settlement of Chamisal, Taos County, New Mexico on the 31st day of January of the year 1856. He himself does not know how he came to live at the home of Don Juan Policarpio Romero of the village of Penasco but at the age of eight he was herdboy for a flock of goats belonging to Don Juan Policarpio Romero and continued as such until he married Rosario Fresquez of Penasco.

After he was married he practiced carpentry, making coffins for the dead, during the great smallpox plague of the year 1875. There were days in which four or five deaths occurred and Don Manuel could not make coffins enough to supply the demand and there was no other carpenter in Penasco. Some of the dead were placed on poles and dragged to the cemetery by burros.

While the epidemic raged Don Manuel continued making coffins and when it had subsided in Penasco, Don Juan Policarpio sent him to Ocate, Chacon and Santa Clara, now known as Wagon Mound, to make coffins at those places.

In the year 1877 Don Policarpio sent Don Manuel Jesus Vasques in company with other men to the plains on a buffalo hunt. He left Penasco with a Navajo Indian called Juan Jesus Romero, whom Don Policarpio Romero had raised. Alvino Ortega and Jesus Maria Ortega of the settlement of El Llano de San Juan (Plains of Saint John) as well as some thirty other men went with them on the buffalo hunt. They took with them fifteen ox drawn carts, the oxen's horns were tied securely to the yokes with straps of ox-hide. This group of men met in Penasco on the 15th of November, 1877 before setting out on the hunt.

They set the same day for Mora, there they were joined by more men and more carts, from there they went to Ocate and there also, they were joined by more men and more carts. From this place they traveled as far as the Colorado river which they crossed below what is now the town of Springer in Colfax County. At that time there was not a single house there, or at least they saw none, nor did they see any footprints and there was no trail of any kind.

They were traveling towards the state of Oklahoma and reached Chico, also in Colfax County, New Mexico. At this place they camped for a few days in order to rest their oxen. A meeting was called with the object of placing some one of them at the head of the expedition; votes were cast and Don Alvino Ortega of the Llano de San Juan received a majority of votes and was given the title of "Comandante," Commander.

From this time on nothing was done except at the express command of Don Alvino Ortega, he ordered the oxen to be yoked, he gave the order to make camp, to water the animals, he also ordered mounted men to ride ahead to scout for signs of Indians who might cause them trouble, and to reconnoiter ahead for water for since there was no road over the prairies it was quite possible and dangerous that at any moment they might suddenly come upon a deep canon or swollen stream which they would not be able to cross. These scouts would ride ahead of the caravan, returning to the cam each night.

They passed close to the site of the city of Clayton by way of a spring called El Ojo del Cibolo (Buffalo Spring) and continued across Texas to enter Oklahoma at a point called Punta de Agua (Waterhole). It took them a month to reach buffalo country. At a point called Pilares a buffalo bull was killed which furnished them meat for a few days.

From Pilares the expedition traveled for three or four days more until it reached a river called Rio de las Nutrias (Beaver River). They camped a short ways down the stream and began hunting buffaloes.

The hunt continued until they had killed enough buffaloes to fill fifty carts with the meat. Only the meat which could be cut into large strips was used, that is, the hind quarters, the hump. The buffalo fat was saved also.

The hunt was conducted on horseback and lances were the weapons used. The commander would order the men to form a line placing the hunters mounted on the swifter horses at each end so that when they advanced on a herd of buffalo the ends of the line would lead the rest in an encircling movement of the beasts.

When the men were formed in line and before they launched themselves on the buffalo the Commander would ask that they all pray together and ask the Almighty God for strength in the impending hunt. When the Commander was heard to say, "Ave Maria Purissima" (Hail Holy Mary) the line would move forward as one man the end men on their swifter horses outdistancing the rest so as to encircle the herd which was to be attacked.

Some of the men designated as skimmers followed the hunt driving burros before them. These men skinned the fat cows only for the dead animals were so plentiful that they would ignore the bulls and lean cows.

They would pack the buffalo meat into camp where they would cut it into convenient sized strips after which they would slice it very thin and hang it up to dry on poles. The "*cecina*" or jerked meat was prepared in the following manner; long strips were cut from the carcasses, for this, men expert at the job were selected. After the meat had cooled it was spread on hides and tramped on until it was drained of blood and then as we have already stated the *cecinas* were hung on poles to dry in the sun. After it had dried they would stack it up like cordwood, each pile containing enough meat to load three or four carts.

As soon as the Commander thought that sufficient meat had been prepared to fill all of the ox-carts he would give orders to cease killing buffaloes. He then would assign three or four carts to each pile of meat and he himself would divide the meat according to the different kinds, larger pieces, meat from the hump and the tallow; the smaller pieces were anybody's property in any quantity desired.

In loading the meat the same method was used as in loading fodder, some would load the meat on the cart while the owner of the cart would trample it down so as to get as much of a load on the cart as he possibly could and all that the oxen would be able to haul home.

After the carts were loaded a party of ten Plains Indians of the Kiowa tribe suddenly rode into camp. The Indians asked for something to eat and their request was complied with, after they had eaten some of the party thought it would be a good idea to kill the Indians arguing that they were only ten in number and could be safely dispatched whereas if they were allowed to leave they might apprise others of their tribe and return in larger numbers to kill the members of the hunting party and steal the meat. Don Manuel Jesus Vasques opposed this plan. The Indians were ordered out of camp. They retired a short distance but followed the homeward bound caravan for a long distance. The following morning on orders of the Commander the long trek home was begun in earnest.

At the crossing of the Nutrias river the ox-cart belonging to the only American in the party, became stuck in midstream. This American lived in Ocate.

After all the rest of the ox-carts had safely crossed the river, all of the party helped in extricating the American's cart from the river and onto dry land. The actual hunting of the buffaloes lasted one month, the trip to and from the hunting grounds required a month's travel each so that the whole trip lasted three months. It took three months of that winter for the entire trip.

This expedition was free of any dispute or fight of any kind, whatever Don Manuel ordered was executed and the whole expedition got along very agreeably.

When Don Manuel Jesus Vasquez returned to Penasco preparations were being made for another expedition to the country of the Comanches and Cayguas (Kiowas) towards Kansas. Don Manuel Jesus Vasques went on this trip also. The object of this trip was the buying of horses from the Apaches and Kiowas.

On this trip burros loaded with bread were taken along. The bread was a certain kind of bread called Comanche bread. This bread was made of wheat flour but without yeast so that the bread was as hard or harder than a rock; and was traded to the Indians for horses. The Indians were Kiowas and Comanches. A "trinca" of bread was given for each horse. A "trinca" was half a sack of bread or in other words a sack of bread for a pair of horses. At this time the Indians already were receiving some aid from the government and they would feed those who went to trade with them, they had plenty of coffee and sugar. Twenty men went on this trading expedition and they brought fifteen horses back to Penasco with them.

The most of the men who went on this expedition worked for wages, small wages however, no one of them ever made more than 50¢ a day. Yet Don Juan Policarpio Romero never paid Don Manuel Jesus Vasques a single cent for his labors, as shepherd for his flock of goats nor for the making of coffins, nor for his services as a buffalo hunter or horse trader with the Indians, but he did keep Don Manuel and his family. While his patron lived Don Manuel never held one single penny in his hand.

Don Manuel Jesus Vasques who is alive today at the age of 83 says that he never recollects having seen the inside of a school house, but that his patron taught him how to sign his name. Don Juan Policarpio left or designated Don Manuel as one of his heirs and the sons of Don Juan Policarpio Romero gave him four goats and asked him to sign a paper which attested that he had received his share of the inheritance, and he not knowing how to read signed. The Probate Judge at Taos called him before him and asked Don Manuel if he was content and satisfied and upon his answering that he was, he signed the paper or document.

THE ADAMS DIGGINGS

Tradition Bearer: E. V. Batchler

Source: *Interview of E. V. Batchler. American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1940.* Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. *American*

Memory. Library of Congress, Washington, DC. <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wpaintro/wpahome.html> (October 12, 2005).

Date: 1938

Original Source: New Mexico

National Origin: European American

The following is one of the many **legends** of lost treasures and goldmines that circulated throughout the Southwest. Many were lured by the tales, but virtually all came away disappointed.

Since I came to New Mexico, eighteen years ago, I have heard stories of the wealth of the famous, old, lost Adams Diggings Mine. I have heard at least a dozen different stories and each succeeding story made the mine richer both in actual gold value and romantic interest. As is often the way with lost mines of this type, it all depends on who you listen to, whether the mine gets richer or not. It always seemed strange to me that nearly every old-timer will swear that he knows more about a fabulously rich, lost mine than any other old prospector. He will try to discredit other prospectors who have searched for the mine and in an effort to tell something “bigger”, magnify its riches by many times what others have estimated it at. In reality, none of them know or have the slightest idea as to the value of the lost mine, because it has never been found.

The current story based on a story from the *El Paso Herald* is that a bunch of men, among them Edward Adams, who purportedly found the mine that was later named for him, organized an expedition to go to California. Their probably starting place was Magdalena. They traveled in a northwesterly direction, until somewhere between Magdalena and old Fort San Rafael, they camped on a little stream.

One of the men noticed gold in the stream and excitedly revealed his discovery to the rest. Adams, who knew a little more about mining than his companions, decided that the gold washed into the stream from a rich outcropping above the camp. Taking his partner, a man by the name of Davidson with him, he left camp and traveled up the canyon about a mile to try to discover the “mother lode”. A little while after they had disappeared around a bend in the creek, the expedition was attacked by Apaches, and as they caught the encampment totally unprepared, the Indians massacred every man in camp.

Adams and Davidson heard the firing, and guessed its cause, took to the cover of the bushes on the nearby hillside. After hiding for several hours, the two men cautiously made their way over the hill and saw that the Apaches had left, secure in the belief that they had killed all the men of the expedition, and had taken all the mules and horses with them.

After burying all the dead, Adams and Davidson knocked a few pieces of gold-bearing ore off an outcropping of quartz that they believed to be the “mother lode”. They then purported made their way to Fort San Rafael, where they said they asked for aid to go back and find the gold and were refused by the officer in charge.

They then made their way afoot and after perilous hardships and a great deal of suffering, came into the little town of Reserve, in what is now Catron County. It is said that they showed the ore to several of the natives, and then after borrowing some money on the strength of the richness of the ore, bought horses and went to Pima, Arizona, where Adams had friends whom he thought had enough money to properly outfit an expedition to return to the place where he had found the gold.

The expedition was organized, and traveled from Pima to Alma and thence to the immediate locality where Adams was supposed to have found the gold. But through some freak of nature of loss or direction, they could not find the gold, or even the place where the men had been massacred. Perhaps it was because Adams and Davidson both were notoriously poor in remembering directions. Many expeditions have been organized since then, but to this day, the Adams Diggings remains as much a mystery as when Adams first told of it.

Now I am going to tell a story that is almost completely at variance with the story printed by the *El Paso Herald*. It is a first-hand story from the lips of Bob Lewis, pioneer, old-time prospector, cowboy and for the better part of his manhood, a frontier peace officer and a personal friend of Edward Adams. Bob is a big man, well over six-feet and weighing in the vicinity of two-hundred pounds. He always have a jovial greeting and manner, and has the map of Ireland printed all over his face. Big, rough and burly, he has been the bane of many crooks and lawbreaker in his County. He lives in Magdalena. He has been over nearly every section of the southwestern corner of the State of New Mexico, and knows its rugged terrain as well or better than nearly any other man. He is renowned for his lack of fear, and truthfulness. That is why I believe his account of the Adams Diggings far more than any of the others I have heard. Here is the story in his own words:

“Sure I knowed old Adams. I knowed him before he left Magdalena, and after he came back. Never was a bigger old liar. He’d tell a lie when the truth would fit better. He was used to braggin’ and stretchin’ the truth. He was drinkin’ man too. I knowed him to stay drunk six months out of the year, and then go on and throw a big drunk the rest of the year.”

It was in the early part of August, 1864, when Adams and about seven other men organized a trappin’ expedition and started up in the northwestern part of the state to trap beaver. They started early and intended to get their camp set up before cold weather came. They camped on a little stream not far from old Fort San Fafael, which is now Fort Wingate and has been moved a few miles from the old site of Fort San Rafael.

Now I don't know this for certain, but I believe from events which I will try to explain later, that just about dark, a caravan from California stopped and threw camp with Adams party. They had stopped at Fort Wingate two days before and had told the commanding officer that they were transporting between sixty and eighty thousand dollars in placer gold from California to some of the Eastern states. I know that they were never seen after the time Adams party was wiped out by the Indians, so I believe that they camped with Adams party and met the same fate.

I know from Adams personal character, that he was not above ambushing such a caravan. I did not know Davidson, but as he was Adams sidekick, I believe he threw in with Adams and the two of 'em made plans to hijack the California outfit and steal their gold.

An encampment like that, in those days, usually got us an hour or two before daylight, in order to make an early start. It is said that Adams and Davidson made an excuse to go and gather some wood, as wood had been scarce the evening before and they had not been able to obtain a sufficient supply. I believe that Adams and Davidson absented themselves from camp, so they could go down country a few miles and find a suitable place for waylaying the California outfit.

While they were gone, and it must have been just as good daylight came, because that is the time when Indians usually attack, a big bunch of Apaches attacked the camp. So complete must have been the surprise, that the white men could not have had a very good chance to grab their guns and defend themselves. Every man in that camp was killed, scalped and their bodies mutilated, and all their provisions, horses and mules stolen by the Apaches.

When Adams and Davidson returned to camp, they must have congratulated themselves on the luck that had caused them to absent themselves from camp. Rummaging around among the supplies, Adams must have found the gold the California outfit had been carrying. As proof of this, I later saw a handful of this gold that Adams had save when he buried the rest and it was a quality entirely foreign to that part of New Mexico and identical with some I had seen from California Diggins. The pellets were about the size of a pinhead, up to as big as a pinto bean, and I knew that nobody ever found that kind of gold in the parts of New Mexico I have prospected over.

After burying the gold in what they considered a safe place, the two made their way afoot, supposedly, to Fort San Rafael, where they said they reported the massacre to the authorities in charge and petitioned aid from the commanding officer to go back and help them relocate a mine they had found and to view the remains of the Indian attack.

I do not believe this last part, because many years later, I happened to be in Evans, in March 1890, where Adams, who had been drinkin' pretty heavy, related a story of how he had gone to Fort San Rafael, on a certain day (he mentioned the exact date, which I can not now remember) in August, 1864, and petitioned the commanding officer for aid to return to give decent burial to

the massacred party and offer him and Davidson, protection while they tried to relocate a rich gold mine.

There happened to be an old, retired Army officer in the saloon who had listened intently to Adams story. This man was Captain Sanborn, who was considered a heavy drinker. However, he did not appear to be drunk at this particular time, and he answered Adams:

“Sir, since the latter part of your speech concerns me, and it is most damaging to my character, I now take it upon myself to refute your statements and call you a contemptible, damned liar. I happened to be the commanding officer of Fort San Rafael at the time of which you are talking. I recall the day of which you speak very clearly and to my knowledge you never set foot in that Fort in your life. It could never be said truthfully that Cap Sanborn ever refused aid to anybody within a weeks ride of my post who needed it.”

“Who’s a damn liar?” bellowed Adams. “Yuh better eat them words Cap, or me an’ you are agoin’ to tangle right here an’ now. Bigod! I don’t like army officers anyway, so I might as well wipe up th’ floor with one of ‘em right now.” Saying which, he started for Sanborn.

Cap Sanborn ran behind the lunch counter and grabbed a big butcher knife and jumped over the counter. Adams ran out the front door and Sanborn chased him for a couple of blocks shouting that Adams was the dirtiest liar that ever lived. He could not catch Adams, and returned to the saloon, where he again told everybody in hearing distance that Adams had not ever been to Fort San Rafael.

From the above incident I drew the conclusion that Adams and Davidson never went to Fort San Rafael at all, but passed a considerable distance to the south in an effort to avoid it. They limped into the little town of Reserve, sore-footed and half-starved.

It was in Reserve that Adams showed a couple of pieces of ore in quartz form that was exceedingly rich, and stated that it was from the mine he had found before the Indians had massacred his party. He made no mention of the California expedition.

I later saw the same samples Adams had shown in Reserve and recalled that Adams had showed me one of the samples before he left Magdalena in 1864. He had told me then that he had given an Indian some whiskey for the samples and had promised him more if he would show him where he got the samples. If Adams story he told in Reserve about these samples had been true, there would indeed have been a substantial claim to his having found a rich mine. But to my knowledge, no ore of similar quality has ever been found, and the Indian who gave the samples to Adams must be long since dead and the place he found the samples will probably never be found.

Adams didn’t dare show any of the gold at that time he had stolen and buried. Therefore he and Davidson separated, Adams going to Pima, Arizona to obtain money and supplies from friends to outfit an expedition to later come

back and salvage the gold. Davidson went on a supposed visit to see some relatives in Louisiana.

Adams was successful in his attempt to raise an expedition, and he sent for Davidson who returned from Louisiana and the expedition met him in Alma, a little town just south of Reserve. They could not find any gold, and Adams later made several solitary trips in search of it, but never had any luck.

Several expeditions have been organized and sent forth in an effort to find the Adams Diggings, but all have met with defeat. It was in 1818 that I decided to see if I couldn't find the bodies of the men who were massacred in Adams party. Adams had told me that they had camped about fifteen miles north of three peaks that rose up from the plain and were a considerable distance from any other mountains. I got to thinkin' and the only three peaks I knew of between Gallup and Magdalena, were the Tres Montosas, which are only about fifteen miles west of Magdalena. Figuring about fifteen or twenty miles north of there, I went to North Lake. A few miles north of North Lake, I found the bodies of five men, all buried in one hole. I could find no clue to any gold from anything in the vicinity, so I came back to town and reported the finding of the bodies. It is my belief that the bodies I found were the remains of part of Adams expedition, but of course I can't prove this. But there is one thing I do know. That is that an old fellow I know, found about twenty thousand dollars buried about five miles north of North Lake, and only a few miles from the place I discovered there bodies. This mans name is Jose Maria Jaramillo, and this what he told me. But when I asked him if the twenty thousand was in gold dust, he would not tell me.

That's the way a lot of there old, "rich-nice' stories get started," finished old Bob. "I've heard that the definition of a miner is a damn liar with a hole in the ground. And a prospector is a damn liar without anything but a dang good imagination. You can talk to most of 'em, and dang near ever' one of 'em tells you about some rich prospect they struck. But they're always broke and beggin' a grubstake. If their mines was half as rich as their imaginations, they could take a handpick, and a gold pan and make more money in a month than most bank presidents could by wearin' out a half a dozen fountains pens. It's true that sometimes a prospector does hit it rich, but when he does, he generally don't talk and brag on it, but gets busy and gets some capital interested and starts workin' it. That's my story of the Adams Diggings. It is one of the richest mines in the world in the mind of a danged old liar like I knowed Ed Adams to be, and in the minds of a bunch of old, dream-crazy prospectors who ain't got no more sense than to believe in it."

VICTORIO'S RAID

Tradition Bearer: Maurice Coates

Source: Totty, Francis. *Interview of Maurice Coates. American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936–1940.* Manuscript Division, Library of

Congress. *American Memory*. Library of Congress, Washington, DC. <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wpaintro/wpahome.html> (October 12, 2005).

Date: 1938

Original Source: New Mexico

National Origin: European American

Victorio's War, which lasted from 1879–1880, was waged against the European Americans who moved into the Southwest after the Civil War. The war followed repeatedly broken promises to provide a reservation to his Warm Springs Apache in New Mexico Territory. Ultimately, Victorio led his band throughout the New Mexico and Arizona Territories waging guerilla warfare, terrorizing residents, and fleeing across the border into Mexico to evade the U.S. Army forces sent to subdue him. In Mexico, Victorio and the remainder of his band, by then numbering fewer than eighty, were penned in and killed in 1880. At its greatest strength, his band numbered fewer than two hundred. The following **legend** is important both for its account of one of the events in this campaign and for the clash of cultures the narrator's words reveal.

In 1878 Jim Keller, Maurice Coates, John Roberts, W. H. Beavers, Robert Stubblefield and Morris Smith and family left Prescott Arizona for the Frisco Valley, where they settled.

Late in May of 1879 we were out in the field plowing when a roving band of Apaches, five in number, fired upon us, we made a rush for the house and after getting our guns we crossed the Frisco river up into the Cedars, we were at the present site of Glenwood when we saw the Indians coming. Deming was going on down the valley to warn the settlers and Houston, Beaver, Keller and I hid, after staking out a horse as a decoy.

We fired on the Indians when they came in sight for they had made for the horse as they were all afoot. Deming came back as he was afraid that the Indians were heavily armed and he was taking too much of a risk to continue on down the valley. We fired too low and broke three of the warriors' legs, one of the warriors had been left on the hill to watch, and the others when we fired ran up the hill to escape.

We camped for the night and the next morning took the trail of the Indian that we had injured that went over the hill we saw an Indian up in the hill covered with a blanket Mr. Foster thinking that the warrior was dead lifted up the blanket and was surprised to find that the man had been asleep. Mr. Foster raised his gun to shoot. The Indian began to beg for his life, but Foster was so disgusted with the raids of the Indians that he pulled the trigger and blowed the Indian's head off.

Terrible was a son-in-law of Victorio and was killed by us during the fight, we soon heard that Victorio was on the warpath as he was going to revenge the death of his son-in-law.

During the month of April, 1880, there were many rumors that Victorio was out. Steve, a sub-chief of the Apaches, was up in the hills, was up in the White Rocks country camping for Indians on the warpath. Steve was on a hunting trip when Victorio arrived on the scene and tried to get him to throw in with him to attack the settlers in the territory. Victorio became angry with Steve because he wouldn't attack the whites, and attacked the sub-chief. Three of Victorio's warriors were killed and Steve left the region.

On April the 28th Victorio made his presence known by appearing at the location of the Conney Mine killing two men. The rest of the party hid out and brought the news into the camp that the Indians had attacked and killed two of their group. Jim Cooney and Jack Chick went to give the alarm while another group went Clairmont to give the alarm. George Doyle and John Lambert remained on the grounds. The tribe soon took over the mining camp and burned the cabins. Around noon one of the braves took a mirror and tied it around his neck. The squaws were soon fighting for a chance to get a glimpse of their dirty features in the mirror.

When Chick and Conney arrived with the news that Bright man and one other had been killed, we began at once to get out and round up the live stock. We spent the entire night on the range hunting the stock.

Conney and Chick went to the Meader ranch to carry the news, and Mr. Meader made the remark that, "Well we have the garden planted and I don't think the Indians are going to bother us." Mrs. Meader remarked that she believed the report and started at once to mold bullets. Conney desired to return to camp, and Mrs. Meader begged him to not leave, but he insisted that he was going and it was not long until the horses of Chick and Conney returned without riders.

When the horses were seen without their riders the alarm was sent out at once. Mr. Elliot rushed over to the Meader ranch and gave the alarm. The Meader family started at once for the Roberts Ranch. On the way over the Indians fired upon the family and as the wagon was between the house and the Indians there wasn't much that the people in the cabin could do to help the family. Agnes Meader Snyder had an arrow shot through her bonnet as near as the Indians came to hitting any of the members of the family. Mrs. Meader had the people to fill of the barrels and tubs with water before the water was cut off, and it was only a short time after the vessels were filled that the ditch was cut.

Five of we men decided to go behind the house and shoot at the Indians. They were out there only a short time when they were fired upon. We made a run for the house. I lost my belt of cartridges and pistol.

There was a horse picketed some forty feet from the house. An Indian tried to get the horse. When he raised up to cut the rope, he was surprised with a shot

from Jim Keller's gun. Some time later when it was decided safe to go out to where the Indian was it was found that he had on the gun that had been lost earlier in the day. The body of the Indian was removed during the night from where it was laying.

Wilcox raised up to look over the barricade and was shot through the heart. The only member of the party to be killed after the fight started.

A rescue party was sent from Silver City to the aid of the besieged, but as the Indians left the morning after the fight and were not to be found.

ELFEGO BACA

Tradition Bearer: Elfego Baca

Source: Smith, Janet. *Interview of Elfego Baca. American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936–1940.* Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. *American Memory.* Library of Congress, Washington, DC. <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wpaintro/wpahome.html> (October 12, 2005).

Date: 1936

Original Source: New Mexico

National Origin: Mexican American

Elfego Baca (1865–1945) was a lawman, gunfighter, lawyer, and politician at various points in his life. The Frisco Affair that is mentioned in passing refers to an incident that took place in Frisco, New Mexico, when Baca was nineteen years old. Baca was deputized by the local deputy sheriff to arrest a gang of cowboys who had turned murderous. The ensuing events included a gunfight, an arrest, and the death of one of the men whose horse fell on top of him during the excitement. The arrested cowboy was fined for disorderly conduct, and later, Baca was compelled to hold off a reputed eighty cowboys from a refuge in a shack for thirty-six hours. He survived by lying flat on the dirt floor that had been dug to below ground level. From this legendary event, his reputation grew for the next sixty years. In 1958, Disney Studios made a film of his life.

“I never wanted to kill anybody,” Elfego Baca told me, “but if a man had it in his mind to kill me, I made it my business to get him first.”

Elfego Baca belongs to the six-shooter epoch of American history. Those were the days when hard-shooting Texas cowboys invaded the territory of New Mexico, driving their herds of longhorns over the sheep ranges of the New Mexicans, for whom they had little liking or respect. Differences were settled

quickly, with few words and a gun. Those were the days of Billy the Kid, with whom Elfege, at the age of seventeen, made a tour of the gambling joints in Old Albuquerque. In the words of Kyle Crichton, who wrote Elfege Baca's biography, "the life of Elfege Baca makes Billy the Kid look like a piker." Harvey Ferguson calls him "a knight-errant from the romantic point of view if ever the six-shooter West produced one.

And yet Mr. Baca is not a man who lives in his past. "I wonder what I can tell you," he said when I asked him for pioneer stories. "I don't remember so much about those things now. Why don't you read the book Mr. Crichton wrote about me?"

He searched about his desk and brought out two newspaper clippings of letters he had written recently to the *Albuquerque Journal* on local politics. The newspaper had deleted two of the more outspoken paragraphs. Mr. Baca was annoyed.

I tried to draw Mr. Baca away from present day politics to stories of his unusual past, but he does not talk readily about himself, although he seemed anxious to help me. Elfege Baca is a kindly courteous gentleman who is concerned to see that his visitor has the coolest spot in the room.

He brought out books and articles that had been written about him, but he did not seem inclined to reminiscing and answered my questions briefly. "Crichton tells about that in his book" or "Yes, I knew Billy the Kid."

Finally I asked him at random if he knew anything about the famous old Manzano Gang which I had frequently seen mentioned in connection with Torrance County.

He replied that he broke up that gang when he was Sheriff of Socorro County.

"There were ten of them," he said, "and I got nine. The only reason I didn't get the other one was that he got over the border and was shot before I got to him. They used to go to a place near Belen and empty the freight cars of grain and one thing and another. Finally they killed a man at La Jolla. Contreros was his name. A very rich man with lots of money in his house, all gold. I got them for that. They were all convicted and sent to the Pen."

Mr. Baca settled back in his chair and made some remark about the late Senator Cutting whose photograph stood on his desk.

I persisted about the Manzano Gang. "I wish you'd tell me more about that gang. How you got them, and the whole story."

"Well," he said, "after that man Contreros was shot, they called me up at my office in Socorro and told me that he was dying. I promised to get the murderers in forty-eight hours. That was my rule. Never any longer than forty-eight hours."

Mr. Baca suspected certain men, but when a telephone call to Albuquerque established the fact that they had been in that city at the time of the killing, his next thought was of the Manzano Gang.

Accompanied by two men, he started out on horseback in the direction of La Jolla.

Just as the sun was rising; they came to the ranch of Lazaro Cordova. They rode into the stable and found Cordova's son-in-law, Prancasio Saiz already busy with his horse.

"Good morning," said Elfego, "what are you doing with your horse so early in the morning?"

Saiz replied that he was merely brushing him down a little.

Mr. Baca walked over and placed his hand on the saddle. It was wet inside. The saddle blanket was steaming. He looked more closely at the horse. At first sight it had appeared to be a pinto, white with brown spots. Mr. Baca thought he remembered that Saiz rode a white horse. "What happened to that horse?" he asked.

The man replied that the boys had had the horse out the day before and had painted the spots on him with a kind of berry that makes reddish-brown spots. "Just for a joke," he added.

"Where's your father-in-law?" asked Mr. Baca.

Saiz said that his father-in-law had gone the day before to a fiesta at La Jolla and had not returned.

"I understand you're a pretty good shot," said Sheriff Baca. "You'd better come along, and help me round up some men I'm after for the killing of Contreros in La Jolla." Saiz said that he had work to do on the ranch, but at the insistence of Mr. Baca, he saddled his horse and rode out with the three men.

"About as far as from here to the station," went on Mr. Baca, "was a graveyard where the gang was supposed to camp out. I rode over to it and found where they had lunched the day before. There were sardine cans and cracker boxes and one thing and another. Then I found where one of them had had a call to nature. I told one of my men to put it in a can. Saiz didn't know about this, and in a little while he went over behind some mesquite bushes and had a call to nature. After he came back I sent my man over, and by God it was the same stuff—the same beans and red chili seeds! So I put Saiz under arrest and sent him back to the jail at Socorro with one of my deputies, although he kept saying he couldn't see what I was arresting him for."

Mr. Baca and his other deputy proceeded in the direction of La Jolla. Before long they saw a man on horseback coming toward them.

"He was running that horse like everything. When we met I saw that he was a Texan. Doc Something or other was his name. I can't remember now. But he was a pretty tough man."

"You a Sheriff?" he said to Mr. Baca.

"No," replied Mr. Baca, "no, I'm not a Sheriff. Don't have nothing to do with the law, in fact."

"You're pretty heavily armed," remarked the man suspiciously.

"I generally arm myself this way when I go for a trip in the country," answered Baca, displaying his field glasses. "I think it's safer."

"Well, if you want fresh horses, you can get them at my ranch, a piece down the road," said the Texan.

Mr. Baca figured that this was an attempt to throw him off the trail, so as soon as the Texan was out of sight, he struck out east over the mountains for Manzano. Just as he was entering the village he saw two of the gang coming down the hill afoot leading their horses. He placed them under arrest and sent them back to Socorro with his other deputy.

It was about two o'clock in the morning when Mr. Baca passed the Cordova ranch again on his way back. He roused Lazaro Cordova, who had returned from La Jolla by that time, and told him to dress and come with him to Socorro.

"The old man didn't want to come," said Mr. Baca, "and kept asking what you want with me anyhow?" I told him that he was under arrest, and on the way to Socorro I told him that unless he and his son-in-law came across with a complete statement about the whole gang, I would hang both of them, for I had the goods on them and knew all right that they were both in on the killing of Contreros. I put him in the same cell with his son-in-law, and told him it was up to him to bring Saiz around. They came through with the statement. I kept on catching the rest of the gang, until I had them all. All but the one who got himself shot before I caught up with him."

"If you ever go to Socorro you ask Billy Newcomb, the Sheriff down there now to show you the records. You might see the place on the way down where they buried a cowboy I shot. It's a little way off the main road though.

"That was a long time before I was a real Sheriff. In those days I was a self-made deputy. I had a badge I made for myself, and if they didn't believe I was a deputy, they'd better believe it, because I made 'em believe it."

"I had gone to Escondida a little way from Socorro to visit my uncle. A couple of Texas cowboys had been shooting up the town of Socorro. They hadn't hurt anybody that time. Only frightened some girls. That's the way they did in those days—ride through a town shooting at dogs and cats and if somebody happened to get in the way—powie!—too bad for him. The Sheriff came to Escondida after them. By that time they were making a couple of Mexicans dance, shooting up the ground around their feet. The Sheriff said to me 'Baca, if you want to help, come along, but there's going to be shooting.'"

"We rode after them and I shot one of them about three hundred yards away. The other got away—too many cottonwood trees in the way.

"Somebody asked me what that cowboy's name was. I said I didn't know. He wasn't able to tell me by the time I caught up with him."

I asked what the Sheriff's name was, and when Mr. Baca said it was Pete Simpson, I said, "The one you were electioneering for the time of the Frisco affair when you held off about 80 cowboys for over thirty-six hours." This is the one of Mr. Baca's exploits that has been most frequently written about.

“Hell, I wasn’t electioneering for him,” he said. “I don’t know where they got that idea. I couldn’t have made a speech to save my life. And I didn’t wear a Prince Albert coat either. They didn’t have such things in this country in those days.”

“Is it true that you ate dinner afterward with French and some other men who had been shooting at you, and talked the affair over,” I asked.

“I ate dinner with some men afterward but I don’t remember who they were now. I don’t think that man French was there at all, although he must have been in the neighborhood, as he seemed to know all about it. But I don’t remember him. Jim Cook was one that was shooting at me though. He was a pretty tough man, but he came near getting it.”

He showed me a photograph which Jim Cook had sent him recently. The picture showed an old man who still looks as though he could not be easily trifled with. It was inscribed “To Elfego Baca in memory of that day at Frisco.”

“Did you see the letter that Englishman wrote to Crichton?” He wanted to hang me. “Why don’t you hang that little Mexican so-and-so?” he asked. I said, “Why don’t you be the one to do it?” and pulled my guns, and wooo, he wasn’t so eager. You know I surrendered only on condition that I keep my guns. They placed six guards over me, but they rode twenty-five steps ahead of me all the way to Socorro.

“Those were great old days. Everything is very quiet now, isn’t it?” said Mr. Baca looking up. “I think I’ll run for something this fall, but I don’t know what yet.”

THE GHOST PENITENTE

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Espinosa, Aurelio M. “New Mexican Spanish Folklore.” *Journal of American Folklore* 223 (1910): 397–398.

Date: 1910

Original Source: New Mexico

National Origin: Spanish American

Los Hermanos Penitente, the Brotherhood of Penitents, are a religious society operating outside the boundaries of official Roman Catholicism. They demonstrate their piety by acts of self-flagellation, cross-bearing, and on Good Friday, the crucifixion of a member.

A certain evening during holy week the Penitentes entered the church in Taos for the purpose of flogging themselves. After flogging themselves in the usual manner, they left the church. As they departed, however, they heard the floggings of a Penitente who seemed to have remained in the church.

The elder brother (*hermano mayor*) counted his Penitentes, and no one was missing. To the astonishment of the other Penitentes, the one in the church continued his flagellation, and they decided to return. No one dared to re-enter the church, however; and while they disputed in silence and made various conjectures as to what the presence of an unknown Penitente might mean, the floggings became harder and harder.

At last one of the Penitentes volunteered to enter alone; but, as he opened the door, he discovered that the one who was scourging himself mercilessly was high above in the choir, and it was necessary to obtain a lighted candle before venturing to ascend to the choir in the darkness. He procured a lighted candle and attempted to ascend. But, lo! he could not, for every time he reached the top of the stairs, the Penitente whom he plainly saw there, flogging himself, would approach and put out his candle.

After trying for several times, the brave Penitente gave up the attempt, and all decided to leave the unknown and mysterious stranger alone in the church. As they departed, they saw the mysterious Penitente leave the church and turn in an opposite direction. They again consulted one another, and decided to follow him. They did so; and, since the stranger walked slowly, scourging himself continuously and brutally, they were soon at a short distance from him.

The majority of the flagellants followed slowly behind; while the brave one, who had previously attempted to ascend to the choir, advanced to the side of the mysterious stranger and walked slowly by him. He did not cease scourging himself, though his body was visibly becoming very weak, and blood was flowing freely from his mutilated back. Thus the whole procession continued in the silence of the night, the stranger leading the Penitentes through abrupt paths and up a steep and high mountain.

At last, when all were nearly dead with fatigue, the mysterious Penitente suddenly disappeared, leaving his good companion and the other Penitentes in the greatest consternation. The Penitentes later explained that this was doubtless the soul of a dead Penitente who had not done his duty in life, a false Penitente, and God had sent him back to earth to scourge himself properly, before allowing him to enter heaven.

CURANDERAS AND BRUJAS

Tradition Bearer: Maria Antonia

Source: Bourke, John G. "Popular Medicines, Customs and Superstitions of the Rio Grande." *Journal of American Folklore* 7 (1894): 142–143.

Date: ca. 1894

Original Source: Texas

National Origin: Mexican American

John G. Bourke's comments on the following legends offer the cultural outsider's perspective on *brujeria* (Spanish, "witchcraft") and *curandismo* (Spanish, "curing") in the Southwest region. See "Witch Flights" (page 283) and "Witches Discovered" (page 284) for the insider's perspective on these traditions.

Maria Antonia was emphatic in her expression of belief that there were lots of "brujas" (witches) around, who took delight in doing harm to you personally, or in spreading sickness among your cattle, blighting your crops, or ruining your fruit trees. Everybody believed in witches; there might be some fool "Americanos" who would say they did not, but she was sure that they were only talking for talk's sake.

Once there was a man down here (Rio Grande City, Texas) who owed a washerwoman five dollars and refused to pay her. Now this washerwoman was a witch, and she filled this man full of worms, but Maria Antonia was called in just in time and gave him a strong emetic and a strong purge, and then dosed him with a decoction of Yerba de Cancer, Yerba Gonzalez, and Guayuli, and expelled thirteen worms ("gusanos") with green heads and white bodies.

Tradition Bearer: Sam Stewart

Source: Bourke, John G. "Popular Medicines, Customs and Superstitions of the Rio Grande." *Journal of American Folklore* 7 (1894): 144–146.

Date: ca. 1894

Original Source: Texas

National Origin: Mexican American

The last punishment inflicted for witchcraft within the limits of the United States was that imposed by Judge Sam Stewart of Rio Grande City (Fort Ringgold), Texas, in 1886.

As nearly as I can arrange the story from my notes and my recollection of the judge's account, it was about like this: A young man of good Mexican family was slowly wasting away under the attack of a disease, the exact nature of which quite baffled the local medical talent. All the medicines on sale in the "Botica del Aguila" (Eagle Drug Store) had been sampled to no purpose, and the sick man's condition had become deplorable. The physicians, who disagreed in everything else, concurred upon the one point that he had but a few days longer to live. At this juncture, a friend suggested to the mother that she call in one of the numerous old hags, who, under the name of "curanderas," combine in equal portions a knowledge of kitchen botany, the black art, humbuggery pure and simple, and a familiarity with just enough prayers and litanies to give a specious varnish to the more objectionable features of their profession.

The “curandera” responded promptly, and made her diagnosis almost with a glance of the eye.

“Your son,” she said to the grief-stricken mother, “has neither consumption nor paralysis. The doctors can’t tell what ails him, but I can see it all, and with the power of God can soon make him well again.”

“What is the matter with him, then, my dear little friend?”

“Black Thomas cats. When I came into the room, the floor was a foot deep with Thomas cats which had jumped out of your son’s throat, but they became frightened when they saw me and scampered back again. I’ll soon get rid of them all.”

Her intentions may have been good, but she got rid of nothing. Her “remedies” produced no effect, and the patient kept on sinking.

Just then a rival “curandera” came up to the mother and said, “That woman is deceiving you. She don’t know what she’s talking about. Why your son never has been troubled by Thomas cats, but I can tell you at once what ails him.”

“Tell me, then, in the name of God.”

“It is bull-frogs. I can see them jumping over each other and running into and out from his mouth.”

To make a long story short, the first “curandera” would not give up the case, but insisted on holding on to what, in the language of today, would be called a decidedly soft snap, and the town, as is usual in such cases, taking up a quarrel in which it didn’t have the slightest interest, became divided into the two bitterly hostile factions of the “bull-froggers” and the “Thomas-catters.” The street became blocked with a crowd of partisans and excitement ran high. Judge Stewart surrounded the whole gang and had them run down to court, where he dismissed all but the ten “curanderas” (for there were ten altogether), who were loudly proclaiming their influence with witches.

“Have you ever seen any witches?” he asked of the first.

“Oh yes, indeed, many times. Why only last Wednesday, the witches picked me up at midnight and took me out on the Corpus Christi road, and up above the clouds, where they played *pelota* (football) with me, and when they got tired of that, they dropped me into a mesquite thicket, and here you see my clothes all torn to rags to prove that I am telling the truth.”

The next one said she could get into any house, no matter whether the doors were open or shut.

The third could tell where to find hidden money, and so on through the list.

The judge wasted no time on the culprits, but fined them all ten dollars apiece, and sentenced them to a month each in the county jail, and when they begged for clemency and told him that they were poor humble women, he brusquely replied, “That’s nothing. You can all get out through the keyholes, and you all know where to find buried money to pay your fines. That is all there is about it.”

WITCH FLIGHTS

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: "Witchcraft in New Mexico." *Journal of American Folklore* 1 (1888): 167–168.

Date: 1888

Original Source: New Mexico

National Origin: Mexican American

This series of **legends** gives the general outlines of *brujeria* (often translated as "witchcraft"), a practice that embodies elements of both indigenous and Christian belief. The *bruja* (female) or *brujo* (male) is generally considered to constitute the opposite end of the spectrum of Hispanic magical-religious practice from the *curandero* (male healer) or *curandera* (female).

Every *paisano* in New Mexico can tell you the witches' strange habits, their marvelous powers, and their baleful deeds. They never injure the dumb animals, but woe to the human being who incurs their displeasure. Few, indeed, are bold enough to brave their wrath. If a witch asks for food, wood, clothing, or anything else, none dare say her nay. Nor dare any one eat what a witch proffers; for, if he does, some animal, alive and gnawing, will form in his stomach.

By day the witches wear their familiar human form; but at night, dressed in strange animal shapes, they fly abroad to hold witch meetings in the mountains, or to wreak their evil wills. In a dark night you may see them flying through the sky like so many balls of fire, and there are comparatively few Mexicans in the territory who have not seen this weird sight!

For these nocturnal sallies the witches wear their own bodies, but take the legs and eyes of a coyote or other animal, leaving their own at home. Juan Perea, a male witch, who died here in San Mateo some months ago, met with a strange misfortune in this wise: He had gone off with the eyes of a cat, and during his absence a dog knocked over the table and ate up Juan's own eyes; so the unfortunate witch had to wear cat's eyes all the rest of his life.

"Before they can fly, witches are obliged to cry out, 'Sin Dios, sin Santa Maria!' (Without God and without the Holy Virgin) whereupon they mount up into the air without difficulty. If you are on good terms with a witch you may persuade her to carry you on her back from here to New York in a second. She blindfolds you and enjoins strict silence. If you utter a word you find yourself alone in some vast wilderness, and if you cry, 'God, save me!' you fall from a fearful height to the ground, but are luckily never killed by the fall. There are several courageous people in the territory who have made journeys thus upon the backs of witches.

“Lorenzo Labadie, a man of prominence in New Mexico, once unknowingly hired a witch as nurse for his baby. He lived in Las Vegas. Some months afterward there was a ball at Puerta de Luna, a couple of hundred miles south, and friends of the family were astonished to see the nurse and baby there. ‘Where is Senor Labadie and his family?’ they asked. The nurse replied that they were at a house a few miles distant, but too tired to come to the ball. The friends went there next day and found the Labadies had not been there. Suspecting the nurse to be a witch, they wrote to Don Lorenzo, who only knew that the nurse and baby were in his house when he went to bed, and there also when he woke up. It being plain, therefore, to the most casual observer, that the woman was a witch, he promptly discharged her.”

WITCHES DISCOVERED

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Espinosa, Aurelio M. “New Mexican Spanish Folklore.” *Journal of American Folklore* 223 (1910): 397–398.

Date: 1910

Original Source: New Mexico

National Origin: Spanish American

In the Southwest region, witches were traditionally believed to take on the shapes of owls, foxes, and coyotes to work their evil deeds. As seen in other **belief tales**, the appearance of similar wounds on a human suspect after the wounding of a witch in animal form is a common method of discovering guilt.

In a certain village in northern New Mexico, which was considered a favorite rendezvous for witches, a certain house had been surrounded for various nights by owls and foxes (the fox is another animal whose form witches like to take). Fearing harm from witches, since the hooting of the owls and the howling of the foxes had become almost insufferable, men went out to meet them with bows and arrows. The owls and foxes disappeared in all directions, with the exception of one old fox, which had been wounded near the heart by an arrow. No one dared to approach the wounded fox, however; and the next morning it was discovered that an old lady, a witch, living near by, was in her death-bed, with an arrow-wound near the heart.

On another occasion a man was riding on a fast horse and saw a fox. He started in pursuit; and after a long chase, when the fox was very tired and was already dragging its tongue along the ground, a sudden transformation took place. At a sharp turn of the road the fox stopped, and the rider did the same.

To his amazement, he at once perceived a gray-haired woman sitting on a stone and panting in a terrible manner. Recognizing in her an old woman who was his neighbor, and whom he had suspected of being a witch, he went his way and troubled her no more.

The *bruja*s (generally women) are women who are wicked (*pautadas con el diablo*) and non-Christian. By confessing their sins to a priest, repenting, and abandoning their devilish ways, they may become good Christian women.

A certain witch desired to forsake her evil ways and save her soul, since those who die witches cannot expect salvation. She confessed to a priest, and gave him a large bundle in the shape of a ball, which consisted largely of old rags, and pins stuck into it, the source and cause of her evil powers.

The priest took the diabolical bundle and threw it into a fire, where, after bounding and rebounding for several minutes in an infernal manner, it was consumed, and the compact with the Devil ceased (*ya no estaba pautada con el diablo*).

METEOR HELL! CICERO DONE IT

Tradition Bearer: Harry Reece

Source: Bowman, Earl. *Interview of Harry Reece. American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936–1940.* Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. *American Memory.* Library of Congress, Washington, DC. <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wpaintro/wpahome.html> (October 12, 2005).

Date: 1939

Original Source: Arizona

National Origin: European American

As with the following narrative “Them Petrified Buzzards” (page 290), this **tall tale** is attributed to “Uncle” Steve Robertson and recounted by his nephew Harry Reece. Like “Them Petrified Buzzards,” “Meteor Hell! Cicero Done It” is atypical in its exaggerated focus on the rigors of the Arizona climate. The narrator further adopts a “persona” who lies with the greatest sincerity while cursing “some danged liars.” As is commonly the case with tall tales, this story abounds with pseudo-verifications as in the following: “if they don’t believe you, take ‘em out there an’ show them th’ Hole, its still there ain’t it? They can see for themselves th’ damned thing’s there—An’ that ought to be proof enough for anybody.”

“**M**y Uncle Steve Robertson told me how the ‘Great Hole’ (which some people think was made by a meteor) happens to be out in the very middle of the vast, almost level Arizona desert. He told me about it one night when we were camped over in the Lost River country

where we had gone with a pack outfit, aiming ultimately to get up into the Stanley Basin part of the Sawtooth Mountains and perhaps get ourselves a mountain sheep or, if our luck was good, maybe a mountain goat.

“My Uncle Steve was such a great pioneer in the very Far West that there were few things indeed whether of natural, human or animal phenomenon of those early settler days which he could not tell about and that too with the greatest of sincerity.

“So, Uncle Steve told me about the ‘Big Hole.’”

“We had been out through the ‘lavas’ where there are many strange sink-holes, lava-pots, and other weird and ghostly formations in the volcanic desolation of that mighty interesting corner of Idaho. (I think that it has been made into a National Park by the Government and is now called “The Craters of The Moon). Anyhow, it’s fascinating and one kind of feels like he is ... on the desolate Moon when he is wandering around in the silence that is always there.

“After supper, both of us entirely full of Little Lost River trout, we were lying by the camp fire listening to the coyotes and just sort of thinking ... maybe about what we’d seen that day, so I mentioned to Uncle Steve that once down in Arizona I had come onto a Great Hole, several hundred feet deep and nearly a mile across from lip to lip, right out there in the flat desert and as far as I could see there wasn’t the slightest excuse for it being there.

“But some people, I told my Uncle Steve, had the idea that a big meteor had fallen there one time and caved in the earth and that probably that was why the hole was there.

“My Uncle Steve then told me just how it happened...”

“Yeah, I-Gawd, since you mention it, I remember that damned hole out there in Arizony,” my Uncle Steve exclaimed. “In fact, by gosh, Bob White and me was right there and practically saw it made.... But, Meteor, hell, Cicero done it. ‘twant no dammed meteor a-tall!

“But maybe, to be plumb reliable an’ truthful an’ not ‘xaggerate an’ stretch things like some danged liars does, Bob an’ me wasn’t on the ‘xact spot where th’ hole is when she was made, an’ maybe we didn’t ‘xactly see th’ cussed thing made, but I-Gawd we was as clost as anybody ought to be an’ we sure as hell *heard* her when she was made. They ain’t no doubtin’ that!

“An’ like I said, twasn’t no cussed ‘meteor’ that made it. ‘Cicero’ which was Bob’s and my goat done it an’ he done a hell of a good job when he done it.

“That was one thing I admired about ‘Cicero’. He was one of th’ thoroughest damned goats I ever seen an’ when he done anything ... whether it was eatin’, or buttin’ or, I-Gawd, even smellin’ he done it right or he didn’t do it a-tall.... Fer instance, if Cicero started to eatin’ anything he et it all ‘fore he’d quit, if he started to buttin’ anything he’d keep buttin’ the danged thing till he busted it or butted it out of his way, that’s all there was to it; an’ when it come to smellin’, well, hell there jest ain’t no describin’ how p’rsistent he was about that!

“But Cicero was a Papago Injun goat (to be plumb honest an’ truthful, Bob an’ me stole him from some Papago Injuns an’ thats how we come to have him in the’ first place) an’ that’s that way the Papago Injun goats is. They ain’t nothin’ they won’t undertake an’ when they undertake it, I-Gawd they finish it up.

“Bob an’ me’d never possessed a goat back in Arkansas an’ natcherally when him an’ me an’ Mam (she was Bob’s wife) went out to Arizony an’ we heard about th’ buttin’ power of them Papago Injun goats, Bob an’ me thought that by rights we ought to git ourselves one jest to see if all we’d heard about ‘em was th’ truth, besides we figgered that probably we’d need one some time.... ‘Cause we’d heard how powerful they was in an emergency when it come to buttin’. Why, I-Gawd all th’ freighters haulin’ ore from Bisbee an’ so forth always had a Papago Injun goat in their outfit so’s when they’d git stuck in th’ sand with a load of ore an’ their six or eight mule-team couldn’t budge it they’d jest take their Papago Goat back a ways an’ turn him loose an’ tell him to butt th’ hind end of their wagon an’ I-Gawd he’d butt her a couple of butts an’ away they’d go! What them six or eight mules couldn’t do, that danged Papago Injun goat could accomplish with jest a few brief butts....

“So, when Bob an’ me got a chance we stole Cicero an’ took him home. “Mam (Bob’s wife) wasn’t so hellish enthusiastic about Cicero when she first saw him.

“My Gawd,” Mam says when she saw Bob an’ me leadin’ Cicero up to the’ ranch, “what have you danged fools gone an’ brang home now? Ain’t there enough disagreeable features on this cussed desert out here in Arizony without you goin’ an’ gittin’ a doggone Papago Injun goat for a body to be dodgin’ an’ also smellin’ all th’ time? Jest when I’m gittin’ used to smellin’ Arizony skunks an’ Arizony vinagaroons an’ Arizony carrion when a steer or cow dies an’ the buzzards let it ripen too long before cleanin’ it up, I-Gawd you go an’ bring home a danged Papago Injun goat for me to also smell—When I married you, Bob White, I promised to ‘love, honor an’ obey’ but darned if I promised to smell Papago Injun goats for you! So, you can take him right back where you got him or take him out behind th’ corral an’ shoot him, I don’t give a dang which, before he butts th’ britches off of you an’ Steve Robertson an’ smells me out of house an’ home!

“But Bob he always had a soothin’ way with wimmen so he jest said, ‘Why, Mam, Steve an’ me thought Cicero would be a kind of surprise to you an’ we stole him jest so you could have somethin’ else to smell a while besides them other things an’ he’d be a sort of change for you—But now you go an’ scold us for bringin’ him home! You’ve plumb hurt our feelin’s Mam ‘cause we brung him home jest for you an’ now you go an’ ... an’ ... resent him! I-Gawd, you see, Steve,” Bob says, “that’s the way it is—A Man goes an’ does his damndest to do somethin’ for a woman like stealin’ a goat for her to smell or something an’ then she gives him hell for it! That’s th’ way wimmen is, they never appreciate nothin’ an’ I-Gawd I don’t blame you for shyin’ off from ‘em like you do Steve an’ never gittin’ married or nothin’....”

“Bob winked at me when he said it an’ ‘course I knowed he was jest ‘soft-talkin’ Mam but I-Gawd it worked an’ Mam repented and said, ‘Alright, dadgum you, Bob White—you know cussed well no woman can resist that, danged honey-tongue-of Yourn—If it hadn’t been for it I’d still be down in Arkansas enjoyin’ paw-paws an’ persimmons in Mam an’ Pap’s peaceful home down on th’ old Sac River! So, you an’ Steve Robertson can keep your cussed Papago Injun goat but I’m promising you one thing and that is that if he ever butts me once I’ll bust him twice! I’ll smell Him ... but I’ll be danged if I’ll be butted by him, that’s all there is to it, Bob White!”

“So, Bob an’ me kept Cicero an’ if we hadn’t there probably wouldn’t be that damned Big Hole out in th’ middle of that Arizony desert you mentioned a while ago....

“To start with, that danged hole wasn’t a hole but was Injun Head Butts ... one of them cussed mountains that sticks itself right up all alone as if it doesn’t want any other mountain neighbors close to it ... Sort of like Big Butte, over there th’ other side of Lost River Sinks, where we was today.

“An’ Injun Butte was practically solid rock to begin with ... jest a great big bump of rock stickin’ up out of the’ desert.... Then, I-Gawd, Cicero turned that damned Butte into a hole in th’ ground!

“Yeah, it wasn’t no danged ‘Meteor,’ Cicero done it.

“I-Gawd, I ought to know. Bob White an’ Mam an’ me an’ Cicero was there when it happened.... After it happened, well, Bob an’ Mam an’ me was still there but where th’ hell Cicero was ... that’s a mystery nobody ain’t ever solved yet an’ I don’t reckon they ever will!

“It happened th’ year before th’ big dry spell, th’ one I told you about, maybe you remember it, when it got so dry an’ hot that even th’ damned buzzards wheelin’ around up in th’ sky an’ practically everything else includin’ th’ cattle an’ the trees out in th’ forest jest up an’ petrified from th’ heat and th’ dryness....

“Well, Bob an’ Mam an’ me decided to take a trip up to North Arizony an’ see if maybe there wasn’t better grazin’ for our cattle up there than there was down along th’ Santa Cruz river in south Arizony where we’d started our cow-outfit when we come out from Arkansas, so we traveled up there.

“Natcherally, Cicero went along. Bob an’ me had trained him to go along with us wherever we went with a wagon-outfit so if we got stuck in the sand he could butt us out like th’ ore freighters had their Papago Injun goats do when they got stuck.

“So, we got up there to where there was a little spring ... Arsenic Springs they called it ‘cause th’ water would physic anybody worse than hell but it was all there was an’ they had to drink it anyhow ... about two miles from old Injun Head Butte an’ we camped there.

“Everything would a’been all right only there was a couple of prospectors already camped there who was figgerin’ on doin’ some prospectin’ on Injun Head

Butte 'cause a old Hopi Injun Chief had told 'em there was a lost gold mine somewhere on th' Butte.

"Them damned prospectors had a whole burro load of dynamite with them an' had spread it out in th' shade of a Joshua tree to sort of cool off and ... Well, to make a long story short, while Bob an' Mam an' me was gittin' our camp set an' not payin' much attention to Cicero th' damn fool found that dynamite an' 'fore he quit he'd et every last cussed stick of it!

"Th' first thing Bob an' me knowed about what had happened was when one of th' prospectors ... Dirty Shirt Smith was his name ... caught Cicero jest swallerin' th' last damned stick of dynamite they had, an' he come runnin' over to our camp yellin' 'Hey, your cussed doggone goat has et up all our dynamite every damned drop of it! Now, how th' hell is Solemn Johnson (that was th' other prospector's name) an' me goin' to do any balstin' to find that damned lost gold mine that old Injun Chief told us was on Injun Head Butte? How th' hell are we goin' to—You gotta pay us for that dynamite your goat et!"

"I ain't worryin' about payin' for your damned dynamite," Bob up an' told him. "What I'm worryin' about is that cussed goat runnin' loose around here with all that high explosive in him. If he ever gits th' idea that 'cause our wagon's standin' still we're stuck an' need buttin' out, or if he starts in to practicin'g buttin' like Papago Injun goats does, well, Gawd help us all, that's all I can say!"

Mam she got excited too an' says, "White, for Gawd's sakes, you an' Steve Robertson figger out some scheme to keep that goat from stirrin' around much till he either sweats all that dynamite out of his system or digests it or something. If he goes off anywheres clost to us there wont be nothin' but fragments of us left! For Gawd's sake tie him up or something but do it an far away from camp as possible—Maybe you'd ought to give him a dose of castor oil, that might help!" Mam says.

"Yeah," Bob says, "an' who th' hell would straddle him an' hold him while I'm givin' it to him ... an' take a chance of him goin' off while they're straddle of him?"

"Mam realized th' danger of it an' didn't insist on us givin' Cicero castor oil.

"So Bob an' took Cicero an' tied him to a Joshua tree about a hundred yards from camp an' everything seemed safe an' sound for th' time being.

"Mam, she quieted down an' after supper we all went to bed ... lettin' the white Arizony moonlight stream over th' desert calm an' serene like.

"Fore I went to bed I looked out where Cicero was tied an' he was layin' there peaceful an' quiet as if eatin' sixty or seventy sticks of dynamite was jest a incident an' didn't have no significance a-tall....

"Bout three o'clock in th' mornin' I reckon it was I waked up all of a sudden with a sort of p'resentiment—I think that's what you call it when you think somethin' terrible's about to happen—pressin' down on me. Anyhow, I felt it in my marrow that Gawd only knowed what might take place any minute....

"Natcherally, when I was a little a waker I remember about Cicero eatin' that dynamite an' the first thing I done was to peer out through th' moonlight

an' see if he was still tied to th' Joshua tree an' still keepin' still till th' dynamite was absorbed out of his system—

“I-Gawd, that’s when I got a shock. Cicero was gone.

“He’d gnawed his rope in two an’ escaped.

“Then I snuck over to where Bob was sleepin’ an’ shook him an’ says, ‘Bob, fer Gawd’s sake wake up! Cicero’s loose an’ prowlin’ around somewhere with all that dynamite in him an’ Gawd only knows what’s liable to happen!’”

Bob waked up and says, “My Gawd, Steve, don’t wake Mam ... she’s tired an’ needs her rest (Bob was always like that, awful considerate of Mam) an’ besides if she wakes up an’ realizes Cicero’s loose she’ll raise hell an’ I’m too dammed worried to have any woman raisin’ hell with me at this time of night! But where th’ hell do you reckon Cicero’s gone to, Steve?”

“Danged if I know,” I told Bob, “but th’ chances is he’s wanderin’ around in th’ moonlight huntin’ something to practice buttin’ on—Only, I-Gawd, I says, ‘if he find it I hope to Gawd it’s a good ways from camp!’”

“I-Gawd, so do I,” Bob said. An’ then it happened—

“Sounded jest exactly like th’ world had come to a end.

“Th’ long an’ th’ short of it was, th’ next mornin’ there wasn’t no danged Injun Head Butte out there on th’ Arizony desert. There was jest a hell of a big hole in th’ ground where she had been.... Bob an’ me knowed what had happened.

“Cicero had wandered around huntin’ somethin’ to practice butting on an’ in that moonlight he’d saw Injun Head Butte.... She looked danged good an’ solid so he thought he’d practice on her. An’, natcherally, when he hit here with all that dynamite in him he jest went off. That’s all there was to it.

“An’ when he went off he jest ripped old Injun Head Butte out by th’ roots ... an’ there couldn’t be nothin’ left but jest a hole where she had been!

“So, that’s the way it was—An’ I don’t give a dang what anybody says—even them cussed ‘scientists’ that thinks they know such a hell of a lot ... an’ that that Big Hole out in Arizony was made by a meteor ... gits crazy ideas sometimes. They jost don’t know th’ inside story of them things like us Pioneers of th’ Far West does, that’s all.

“But th’ next time anybody tells you that that hole was made by a ‘meteor’ jest tell them, ‘Meteor hell, Cicero done it’ ...

“An’ I-Gawd, if they don’t believe you, take ‘em out there an’ show them th’ Hole, its still there ain’t it? They can see for themselves th’ damned thing’s there—An’ that ought to be proof enough for anybody....”

THEM PETRIFIED BUZZARDS

Tradition Bearer: Harry Reece

Source: Bowman, Earl. *Interview of Harry Reece. American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers’ Project, 1936–1940.* Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

American Memory. Library of Congress, Washington, DC. <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wpaintro/wpahome.html> (October 12, 2005).

Date: 1938

Original Source: Arizona

National Origin: European American

This tale, attributed to Steve Robertson and recounted by his nephew Harry Reece, develops a typical **tall tale** theme in its exaggerated focus on the rigors of the Arizona climate. More than a playful attempt to enhance a regional reputation, a narrative of this sort, by implication, increases the stature of those who are able to survive the rigorous natural elements they describe—in the present case, a blistering summer whose heat petrifies buzzards in midair—and live to tell the tale. Therefore, it functions as tongue-in-cheek bragging. The repudiation of lies and liars that precedes and follows this tale is a typical way of **framing** such narratives. Moreover, Uncle Steve’s tale, in relying on the audience’s ignorance of the West, is typical of the tall tales included in explorers’ accounts of their exploits. See, for example, the literary contributions of Karl Friedrich Hieronymus Baron von Münchhausen, an eighteenth-century German aristocrat so noted for telling tall tales that his name became synonymous with the **genre**.

My Uncle Steve Robertson was a native of the State of Missouri or Arkansas; he was not certain which, because he said he was born so close to the line that sometimes he thought it was on one side and sometimes on the other.

He also said that one reason he didn’t remember which State it was, was because he started Out West when he was so young that it really didn’t matter whether he was born in Missouri or Arkansas; he was satisfied just to be born, and was willing to let it go at that.

Anyway, my Uncle Steve Robertson was a great pioneer in his day, before any government irrigation projects were built in the West, and he knew all about shooting bear and deer and fighting Indians, and settling in out-of-the-way places where people had to depend mostly on themselves and each other and there were not any electric lights or telephones or radios or WPAs or PWAs or AAAs or things like that to distract their attentions, and post offices were quite far apart indeed. So, people depended to a large extent upon themselves and not to any great extent to or on anything else.

My Uncle Steve’s idea of “Out West” was anywhere west of the east line of the Indian Territory (Uncle Steve never did get around to calling it “Oklahoma” because he said that did not seem natural!). He also thought that

“Out West” was bounded on the south by the Big Bend country of the Rio Grande and on the north by the last peak of the Bitterroot Mountains in Idaho and which leaned over into Canada. So, Uncle Steve had quite a large idea of what “Out West” really was, and he also had quite a lot of experience with it...

Naturally, also, my Uncle Steve Robertson accumulated a vast knowledge of and quite a few strange experiences during the many years he was a great “pioneer” of the far “out west” and which, I am sorry to say, quite a lot of people in New York, and especially around the Washington Square district, do not yet realize ever existed—or for that matter may still exist to some extent.

Also, my Uncle Steve used to say that the one damned thing he could not endure was ... “a danged double talkin’ liar ... one of them ‘rubber-tongued’ persons who ... could stretch the truth till she would crack, and keep on stretchin’ it, and still expect people to believe it.”

My Uncle Steve always began his “tall tales,” (for I am afraid that they were “tall” tales, and some of them very tall indeed!) with the preliminary statement that he “just couldn’t stand any damn person that ‘zagerates!”

When we were on a fishing trip one time he told me about how the petrified forests of Arizona happened to be petrified—and also about “the petrified buzzards” ... It was a hot and dry season and I had mentioned it because the water in the creek where we were fishing was almost all dried up, and that was Uncle Steve’s excuse to tell me about a really hot and dry season he once experienced in Arizona.

“It was back in ... now danged if I remember jest which year it was back in,” Uncle Steve said, “but anyhow it was the year that old Geronimo was loaded on the train at Bowie, Arizona, when the government sent him to Florida to keep him from butchering people in Arizona. Well, that was the year that it was in, and it shore-as-hell was a hot and dry year in Arizona.

“Bob White an’ me had a little cow outfit in partnership down close to the Mexican line, and we was gettin’ along pretty well. We’d took up some land ... about two sections ... and dug some wells and built some ditches so we could irrigate a little ground around the place. We had windmills to pump water out of the wells into a pond and the ditches, and our nine or ten hundred head of cattle had pretty good feed on the range. And outside of havin’ to shoot a few Apaches now and then, before the government got rid of them, we was doin’ fairly well and was contented enough, I reckon.”

At first, “Mam” White, that was Bob’s wife, was a little lonesome because there wasn’t no frogs to croak down by th’ pond or along th’ ditches at night. She said she plumb missed frogs a-croakin’ an’ if there was jest some frogs she could hear croak of a’ evenin’ she’d be about as happy as she used to be back in Slippery Elm County, Arkansas, where she was born, and her pa and ma still lived. Well, Bob was always sentimental and he fixed it for Mam. He sent back to Arkansas and had a few settin’s of frog eggs sent out to her. So, Mam set ‘em an’ they hatched out jest fine, and before long, when the sun went down behind

old Apache Peak of an' evenin', frogs was croakin' all over th' place and Mam was plumb happy.

Like I said, everything was goin' smooth an' pleasant and we was prosperous till it began to get hot and dry one summer ... hotter an' dryer, I-Gawd, than anybody'd ever knowed it to be in that part of Arizona before, an' the first thing me realized them damn pumps wasn't suckin' nothing out of them wells but hot air, and th' alfalfa was withered and Mam's marigolds she'd planted by the side of the house was all dead and dried up, too.

And in addition to that, them nine or ten hundred head of cattle Bob an' me had out there on th' range was staggerin' around, so cussed thirsty an' dried out, that when they'd walk their livers and hearts and lungs or whatever was loose inside of them would rattle against their hides like seeds shakin' around in a ripe gourd. Yeah, that's jest th' way they'd sound! And when one of them got tired walkin' around, hearin' hissself or herself as the case might be, rattlin' like a gourd that ain't got nothin' in it but some seeds, and finally laid down, well, danged if he or she or it didn't jest naturally petrify, plumb solid. That's when them poor buzzards got a awful shock.

They'd be wheelin' around, jest wheelin' around watchin' for a cow or a steer brute to topple over, and as soon as they'd see one topple, down they'd swoop thinkin' they'd make a meal on it, and when they'd try to take a bite out of that petrified carcass they'd bust their poor bills off, and there they was ... plumb helpless, so they'd topple over, too—and in a minute they'd be petrified themselves!

Well, the rest of them damn buzzards that hadn't come down and was still wheelin' 'round up there in the hell-blisterin' heat and dryness, would wonder what th' hell had happened to their brother buzzards, layin' down there all petrified beside them petrified cattle; they'd be scairt to come down, and jest keep on wheelin' and wheelin' and gettin' more and more bewildered till damned if they wouldn't petrify themselves up there in the sky without ever knowin' it—and that's the way it was.... Thousands and thousands, hell, millions of buzzards jest wheelin' and wheelin' around 'way up in that hot, sizzlin' Arizona atmosphere—and all so damned petrified they couldn't do nothin' but keep on wheelin' and wheelin' without ever makin' a sound or flappin' a doggone wing—Gawd, it was a gruesome sight!

Yeah, them damned buzzards—all petrified and everything jest wheelin' and wheelin' around up there in th' sky, was a terrible thing to look at, but, I-Gawd, bad off as they was they didn't suffer as much as them poor wild hydrophobia cats that got so dry that they couldn't even foam at th' mouth when they'd have hydrophobia fits ... That was one of the pitifullest sights I ever seen. A poor hydrophobia-cat tryin' to foam at th' mouth when he's havin' a fit, and not be able to do nothin' only spit out a little stream of dry, kind of chalky dust, instead of good rich foam like he'd naturally do! It sure as hell was pitiful to look at....

'But them hydrophobia-cats wasn't no worse off than all them poor ants jest crawlin' around on the sand under th' blazin' sun, without a drop to drink, jest

sweltherin' and dryin' up till eventually they'd be in such agony they'd double over an' bite themselves on their own belly-band, an' commit suicide an' perish in misery ... Gawd, I'll bet ten billion ants ... damn nice big red Arizona ants committed suicide on our ranch alone! It's a awful thing to see a poor damn ant so thirsty an' hot an' dried out that it doubles over an' gnaws its own belly-band in two ... It sure is.

Still, I reckon th' worst sufferin' was done by them miserable danged frogs; all them frogs Mam had hatched out from them settin's of frog eggs Bob had had sent out from Arkansas ... They got so dry, they jest kind of shriveled up and all wrinkled sort-of-like, well, like a prune that has been layin' out in th' sun too long. That's jest th' way their hides looked—jest shriveled up an' wrinkled like a prune, or worse. But th' worst of it was when they didn't have no water to waller in any more, and sort of soak 'em up; I-Gawd, when the sun would go down behind old Apache Peak an' them poor frogs would open their mouths and try to croak, like Mam loved to hear 'em do of an evenin', all th' poor damn things could do was jest sort of whistle.... It was terrible, th' most agonizin' and heart-wrenchin' thing anybody can imagine. Yes, sir, I-Gawd, if you ever saw a poor shriveled frog tryin' to croak, and not be able to get anything out but jest a measly little damn whistle, it's th, saddest thing you ever saw!

It sure was distressin'.... Them poor frogs gaspin' out little dinky whistles instead of good solid croaks, was what settled it. When it got that dry, Mam, Bob's wife, couldn't stand it no longer. She'd listen to them frogs tryin' to croak—and jest break down with grief. She jest couldn't stand it. So, finally, after all then buzzards was petrified and most of them ants had committed suicide and them hydrophobia cats “most plumb forgot how to foam at the mouth, and at last them helpless cussed frogs was whistlin' 'stead of croakin,” Mam said to me an' Bob one day, “We're goin' to move out of this cussed place, Bob White and Steve Robertson. When it gets so danged dry that even a buzzard petrifies and even a frog can't croak, I-Gawd, it's time to go somewhere else.” That's what Mam said. And Bob an' me always did believe in lettin' the women folks have their way, so, I-Gawd, we moved. An' damned if I know whether it ever did rain an' bust th' dry spell, or not. Maybe it did an' maybe it didn't. But while we was present it was *one hell of a dry spell* and I imagine if anybody went down there to that part of Arizona they could still see some of them petrified trees layin' around on the ground ('cause—while I didn't mention it before—even most of th' damn trees got to be petrified, too, before things was done with) an' I also imagine that anybody would probably see some of them poor petrified buzzards still wheelin' an' wheelin' and wheelin' around and around, 'way up there in the air ... never makin' a sound an' never flappin' a wing.... Jest petrified as hell, an' unable to do anything about it!

My Uncle Steve Robertson was a very great pioneer in his day, and no doubt had many wonderful and thrilling experiences in the very far Out West, and—as I said before—he was one of those sturdy old ex-Rebel soldiers who could not endure a danged liar an' despised any ornery man that 'xagerates. Perhaps that is why I loved him; he was my favorite Uncle ... the one with whom I liked best to go fishing, or on camping-out trips.

SOUTH AMERICA

AUROHUAC (COLOMBIAN ARAWAK)

TACH THE PROPHET

Tradition Bearer: Unknown

Source: Nicholas, Francis C. "The Aborigines of the Province of Santa Marta, Colombia." *American Anthropologist* 3 (1901): 641–644.

Date: ca. 1901

Original Source: Aurohuaca

National Origin: Native American

The following narrative is set in the historical past as are **legends**. It focuses on a prophet around whom a cult has grown up; as such, it would qualify as a **myth**. The conclusion that should be drawn, therefore, is that traditional narrative often does not fit neatly into Western academic categories. Concerning the central figure of the narrative and the cult that developed around him, Francis C. Nicholas writes, "Among other strange beliefs they have a fixed faith in a prophet whom they call the Tach. They say that he came to them out of the sea and that he will return to make them a great people. In the latter part of December or early in January, according to the time of the new moon, they all assemble and dance in expectation of the coming of the Tach. Of their prophet they will say very little, but an Indian told the story to me, though it required urging from a Colombian who had heard it and wished that I should hear the story from the Indians themselves. His account, in brief, was as follows" (641–642).

Long ago, longer than the lives of the oldest *mamas* [leaders] and in the days of their fathers (fathers of the *mamas*), whose names had been forgotten, a stranger came up out of the sea. His skin was white, but he was not

pleasant to look upon because his hair had grown wrong and covered his face, and not his head where it should have been; and the people thought to kill him, but the *mamas* to whom he first had come, and who were wise, gave hospitality and kept him alive. His dark garment was girt about the waist and flowed below his knees.

When the people saw that no harm came, they were no more afraid, and saw that he had clear, kind eyes. They helped him and he lived among them; but he wanted little, and when the time came that they could hear his voice—that is, when he could speak their language—he taught them all things that were good, and the fathers who lived so long ago that their names are forgotten told their sons, who told it again that the story might be remembered.

This man was the Tach, and his teachings are these: That to worship the sun is right, that it is holy and quickens all life; that gold represents the sun on the earth and it is holy, and those who gather it must hide it and let no stranger look on it, in order that there should be much gold when he returned; and when he came again he promised to make them a great people. And he prophesied, saying that others with hair grown wrong and covering their faces would come, but they would be different and none could trust them, and he who bargained with them would carry away not enough and would give too much. To these strangers no gold should be shown, nor should they see the temple and holy gold (perhaps the golden images of the sun and the bird), because on the day in which they saw them they would carry all away and the sun would be angry and never shine on the mountains again.

And the Tach said, “Live at peace and shed no man’s blood, but cultivate the soil, have gardens, and eat plenty.” And he charged them to live only with their own people and take no strangers, not Indians nor white men with hair on their faces, into the tribe, but remain a people apart, yet hospitable. And if strangers came, to receive them with hospitality, for he came as a stranger and would so return, but that no stranger must stay too long in the land, for that would not be good. Then he taught them all the lore of sins, sickness, and death, and the healing charms of stones on which the sin could rest, and he went away to the sea but will return out of it again.

This is probably their conception of the teachings of a missionary priest who chanced among them and who, seeing gold, thought of the necessities of the church and what a great people the church could make of the Indians if it only had the money; but when they heard of a second coming, the Indians naturally thought that the priest spoke only of himself.

AYMARA

THE CREATION

Tradition Bearer: Juan de Betanzos

Source: Bandelier, Adolph F. "Aboriginal Myths and Traditions Concerning the Island of Titicaca, Bolivia." *American Anthropologist* 6 (1904): 201–202.

Date: ca. 1551

Original Source: Aymara

National Origin: Native American

The Aymara are a native South American ethnic group, indigenous to Bolivia and, to a lesser extent, Peru. Although they have retained their ethnic identity into the twenty-first century, the Aymara were subjugated by the Inca Empire. The following **myth** records the Aymara version of the arrival of the Inca creator and **culture hero** Viracocha. Compare this narrative to the Inca myth "Viracocha" (page 315).

In ancient times, they say, the country and province of Peru was dark, having neither light nor day. In those times there were certain people in it, which people had a certain chief who commanded them, and to whom they were subjected. Of the name of that people and of the chief who commanded them they have no recollection.

And in those times, when all was night in this land, they say that from a lagoon in this country of Peru, in the province called Collasuyo, came a chief whom they called Con Tici Viracocha, who, they say, had with him a certain number of people, which number they do not recollect. And after he had come out of this lagoon he went to a place near it, where today stands a village called Tiaguanaco, in this aforesaid province of the Collao; and when he and his

people were, there, they say that at once, and unexpectedly, he made the sun and the day, and ordered the sun to move in the course in which it now moves; and afterward, they say, he made the stars and the moon.

Of this Con Tici Viracocha they relate that he had appeared once before, and on that occasion he made the heavens and the earth, leaving them in darkness, and that when he made the people who lived in darkness as aforesaid, this people did some sort of wrong to this Viracocha, and as he was angered by it he turned to come out again, as the first time, and those first people and their chief he converted into stones, in punishment for the anger they had caused him.”

Then Viracocha made, at Tiahuanaco, men and women out of stones. His companions he told to scatter, and, pointing out to them the people he had created from the stones, said to them, “These shall be called so and so, and will come out of such a spring in such a province, and will settle in it and grow and multiply there and those will come out of such a cave and their name will be so and so, and they will settle in such a place; and as I have them here painted and carved out of stone, so they shall come forth from springs and rivers, caves and heights, in the provinces I have told you and named; and now you go in that direction (pointing to the rising sun) indicating to each one the line which he had to travel.

With himself he kept only two of his followers; the others started on their peregrination, in the direction assigned to them. Each one, as he came to the province designated, called out aloud. “So and so, come forth and settle in this deserted region, for so it is ordered by the Con Tici Viracocha who made the world.” Thereupon the people would come out of the places foretold by the Viracocha.

While these executed his commands in the direction of the east, the great Viracocha dispatched his two companions, one to the south and the other to the north, while he himself went to the northwest toward Cuzco [the center of the Inca Empire]. On his way he kept on peopling the country in the manner described, by creating men and women from rocks, springs, and rivers, and when he reached the site of Cuzco he caused to come forth a chief called by him Alcaviza, and also gave the place its name Cuzco. Con Tici Viracocha continued his journey as far as the coast of Ecuador, where his companions rejoined him. There they all began to walk together on the waters of the sea and disappeared.”

Alcaviza settled the site of Cuzco; and after that settlement had been made, a cavern opened at a nearby place called Pacaritambo, and out of this cave came four men with their women. One of the men was called Ayar Mango, afterward called Manco Capac. Two of the others had a rather strange fate—one being immured alive in a cave and the other becoming an idol. Manco Capac, however, settled at Cuzco with Alcaviza, and through his shrewdness became the first chief of the tribe and the founder of the Incas.

MANCO CAPAC

Tradition Bearer: Anello Oliva

Source: Bandelier, Adolph F. "Aboriginal Myths and Traditions Concerning the Island of Titicaca, Bolivia." *American Anthropologist* 6 (1904): 221–222.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Aymara

National Origin: Native American

The following **legend** elaborates on Manco Capac who was introduced in the **myth** "The Creation" (page 299). This narrative offers a rational, as distinct from a supernatural, explanation for events in the life of the founders of the Inca Empire. "The Deluge," alluded to in the beginning of "Manco Capac," is described in further detail in "The Children of the Sun" (page 302). Lake Titicaca, which serves as a major point of orientation in this and other Aymara narratives, is located in the Andes on the border between Bolivia and Peru.

After the Deluge, the first people came to South America from parts unknown, landing somewhere on the coast of Venezuela. From there they gradually scattered over the whole continent, one band reaching the coast of Ecuador near Santa Elena. Several generations passed, many made voyages along the coast and some were shipwrecked.

At last one branch took up its abode on an island called Guayau, near the shores of Ecuador. On that island Manco Capac was born, and after the death of his father Atau, he resolved to leave his native place for a more favored clime. So he set out, in such craft as he had, with two hundred of his people, dividing them into three bands. Two of these were never heard from again, but he and his followers landed near Ica, on the Peruvian coast, thence struggled up the mountains, reaching at last the shore of Lake Titicaca.

There Manco separated from the others, leaving them with orders to divide after a certain time and to go in search of him, while he took the direction of Cuzco. He told his people, before leaving, that when any of the natives should ask them their purpose and destination, to reply that they were in quest of the son of the Sun. After this he departed, reaching at last a cave near the Cuzco valley, where he rested.

When the time had elapsed, his companions started in several groups in search of him. One of these crossed over to the Island of Titicaca, where they were surprised to find a rock, and in this rock a cave lined with gold, silver, and precious stones. Thereupon they sunk the craft in which they had reached the island, and agreed among themselves, if anybody from the surrounding country

should appear, to say that they had come out of the cave to look for the son of the Sun.

A few days after, on the day of the full moon, they saw some canoes approaching, and they forthwith retreated to the cavern. Those who came in the canoes, when they approached the cliff and perceived the strangers viewing the cave apparently with the greatest unconcern, were surprised. The strangers gave them to understand that they had just come out of the rock and were in quest of the son of the Sun. This filled the others with profound respect for the newcomers; they worshipped them and made offerings to the rock, sacrificing children, llamas, and ducks.

All together went back to the mainland, and shortly afterward learned that at Pacari Tampu, the son of the Sun, had come out of a cavern, called Capacocco, in great splendor, bedecked with gold, as brilliant in appearance as his father, and that with a sling he had hurled a stone with such force that the noise was heard for more than a league off, and the stone made in the rock a hole as large as a doorway.

At this news all the people of those regions went to see the miraculous being. Manco Capac received them as subjects. On this artifice he began to base his authority and the subsequent sway of the Inca tribe.

THE CHILDREN OF THE SUN

Tradition Bearer: Cristoval de Molina

Source: Bandelier, Adolph F. "Aboriginal Myths and Traditions Concerning the Island of Titicaca, Bolivia." *American Anthropologist* 6 (1904): 209–210.

Date: ca. 1570

Original Source: Aymara

National Origin: Native American

The following is a complete **myth** of origin. This narrative serves as a supernatural complement to the more mundane explanation for the emergence of Manco Capac from the underworld described in "Manco Capac" (page 301).

In the life of Manco Capac, who was the first Inca and from whom they began to be called Children of the Sun and to worship the Sun, they had a full account of the deluge. They say that all people and all created things perished in it, in as far as the water rose above all the highest mountains in the world. No living things survived except a man and a woman, who remained in a box, and when the waters subsided, the wind carried them to Huinaco, which

will be over seventy leagues from Cuzco, a little more or less. The creator of all things commanded them to remain there as Mitimas, and there in Tiahuanaco the creator began to raise up the people and nations that are in that region, making one of each nation of clay and painting the dresses that each one was to wear, those that were to wear their hair, with hair, and those that were to be shorn, with their hair cut; and to each nation was given the language that was to be spoken, and the songs to be sung, and the seeds and food they were to sow.

When the creator had finished painting and making the said nations and figures of clay, he gave life and soul to each one, men as well as women, and ordered that they pass under the earth. Thence each nation came forth up in the places to which he ordered them to go. Thus they say that some came out of caves, others issued from hills, others from fountains, others from the trunks of trees. From this cause, and owing to having come forth and commenced to multiply, from those places, and to raving had the beginning of their lineage in them, they made *huge* and places of worship of them in memory of the origin of their lineage which proceeded from theta. Thus each nation uses the dress with which they invest their *huacas*, and they say that the first that was born from that place were there turned into stones; others say the first of their lineage were turned into falcons, condors, and other animals and birds. Hence the *huaeas* they use and worship are in different shapes....

They say that the Creator was in Tiahuanaco and that there was his chief abode, hence the superb edifices—worthy of admiration, in that place. On these edifices were painted many dresses of Indians, and there were many stones in the shape of men and women who had been changed into those for not obeying the commands of the Creator. They say that it was dark, and that there he made the sun, the moon, and stars, and that he ordered the sun, moon, and stars to go to the Island of Titicaca, which is near at hand, and thence to rise to heaven.

They also declare that when the sun in the form of a man was ascending into heaven, very brilliant, it called to the Incas and to Manco Capac as their chief, and said, “Thou and thy descendants are to be Lords and are to subjugate many nations. Look upon me as thy father and thou shalt be my children and thou shalt worship me as thy father.” And with these words it gave to Manco Capac for his insignia and arms the *suntur pauear* [a feathered staff] and the *champi* [mace-like weapon] and the other insignia that are used by the Incas like scepters. And at that point the sun and moon and stars were commanded to ascend to heaven and to fix themselves in their place, and they did so.

At the same instant Manco Ccapac and his brothers and sisters, by command of the Creator, descended under the earth and came out again at the cave of Paccari-Tambo, though they say that other nations also came out of the same cave, at the point where the sun rose on the first day, after the Creator had divided the night from the day. Thus it was that they were called Children of the Sun, and that the Sun was worshipped and revered as a father.

TWO SONS OF THE CREATOR

Tradition Bearer: Cristoval de Molina

Source: Bandelier, Adolph F. "Aboriginal Myths and Traditions Concerning the Island of Titicaca, Bolivia." *American Anthropologist* 6 (1904): 210–211.

Date: ca. 1570

Original Source: Aymara

National Origin: Native American

"Two Sons of the Creator" introduces a pair of **culture heroes** who are entrusted with naming species and instructing humans in plant lore and healing arts. Compare the two Viracochas in this **myth** to the central character in the Inca myth "Viracocha" (page 315).

The Creator had two sons, the one called Vmaymana Viracocha and the other Tocapo Viracocha. Having completed the tribes and nations and assigned dresses and languages to them, the Creator sent the sun up to heaven, with the moon and stars each in its place. The Creator, who in the language of the Indians is called Pachayachi and Tecsiviracocha, which means the incomprehensible God, then went by the road of the mountains from Tiahuanaco, visiting and beholding all the nations and determining how they had begun to multiply and how to comply with his commands.

He found that some natives had rebelled and had not obeyed his commands; so he turned a large number of them into stones of the shape of men and women, with the same dress they had worn. These conversions into stone were made at the following places: Tiahuanaco, Pucara, and Yauxa; where they say he turned the *huata* called *Huarivilca* into stone, and in Pachacamac, and Cajamarca, and in other parts. (In truth there are great blocks of stone in those places, some of which are nearly the size of giants. They must have been made by human hands in very ancient times; and by reason of the loss of memory and the absence of writing, they invented this fable, saying that people had been turned into stones for their disobedience, by command of the Creator.) Also, in Pucara, which is forty leagues from the city of Cuzco, on the Collao road, fire came down from heaven and destroyed a great part of the people, while those who were taking to flight were turned into stones.

The Creator, who is said to be the father of Ymaymana Viracocha and Tocapo Viracocha, commanded that the elder Ymaymana Viracocha, in whose power all things were placed, should set out from the point and go by way of the mountains and forests through all the land, giving names to the large and small trees and to the flowers and fruits that they bear, and teaching the people which ones were good for food or for medicine and which should be avoided. He also

gave names to all the herbs and explained which had healing virtues and which were poisonous. The other son, Tocado Viracocha, which means "I the maker," was ordered to go by way of the plains, visiting the people and giving names to the rivers and trees, and instructions respecting the fruits and flowers. Thus they went on until they reached the sea, whence they ascended to heaven, after having accomplished all they had to do in this world.

CAINGANG (KAINGANG)

THE DELUGE

Tradition Bearer: Arakxó

Source: Borba, Telemaco M. "Caingang Deluge Legend." *Journal of American Folklore* 18 (1905): 223–224.

Date: ca. 1905

Original Source: Caingang

National Origin: Native American

The Caingang people are a nomadic Native American group indigenous to southern Brazil. The following **myth** was collected in the province of São Paulo. Beyond serving as a South American example of the widely distributed **motif** of the destruction of the world, this myth accounts for the origin of various native species and cultures as well as their behavior and physical attributes, the origins of song and dance, and sources of supernatural knowledge.

In times past there was a great flood which submerged all the land inhabited by our ancestors. Only the top of Mt. Crinjijiné emerged from the waters. The Caingangs, Cayurucrés and Camés swam towards the mountain carrying in their mouths burning wood. The Cayurucrés and the Camés became tired and were drowned; their souls went to live in the center of the mountain. The Caingangs and a few Curutons (Ares) reached with difficulty the top of Crinjijiné, where they remained, some on the ground, and others (by reason of lack of space) clinging to the branches of trees. There they passed several days without food, for the waters did not subside.

They expected, indeed, to die, when they heard the song of the *saracúra* birds, who came carrying earth in baskets and threw it into the waters, which slowly subsided. They cried out to the *saracúras* to make haste, and the birds did so, repeating their song and asking the geese to help them. In a short time they reached the top with the earth, so that the Caingangs who were on the ground could get away. Those, however, who clung to the branches of the trees were transformed into macaques and the Curutons into *bugios*. The *saracúras* did their work on the side where the sun rises, and thus our waters all run to the west and flow into the great Paraná. When the waters dried up, the Caingangs established themselves close to Crinjijinbés.

The Cayurucrés and Camés, whose souls had gone to dwell in the center of the mountain, began to open roads in the interior. After much labor they succeeded in getting out by two paths. In the Cayurucré opening broke forth a beautiful valley, very level and without stones, wherefore to this day they have kept their small feet. It was different with the Camés, whose path opened through stony ground, bruising their feet and causing them to swell in walking, hence, to this day, they have kept their feet large. In the path which they opened there was no water, and, being thirsty, they had to beg it from the Cayurucrés, who allowed them to drink what they needed. When they got out from the mountain, they ordered the Curutons to bring the baskets and gourds which they had left below, but the latter, through laziness, remained there and never joined the Caingangs again, for which reason, we, when we meet them, lay hold of them as our escaped slaves.

The night after leaving the mountain they kindled fire, and with ashes and coals made tigers [jaguars], and said to them, "Go, eat people and hunt." And the tigers went about roaring.

As they had no more coal to paint with, they could only make with ashes the tapirs (*oyoro*), to which they said, "Go, eat and hunt." But these had not come out with perfect ears, and, for that reason, did not hear the order, and asked again what they were to do. The Cayurucré, busy making other animals, said to them in an ill mood, "Go, eat leaves and twigs of trees." This time they heard, and that is the reason why tapirs eat only leaves, twigs of trees, and fruits.

The Cayurucré was making another animal. The teeth, tongue, and some nails were lacking, when it began to grow daylight. Since nothing in the way of making could be done in the daytime, he put into the animal's mouth, in haste, a fine rod, and said, "Since you have no teeth, live by eating ants." That is why the *tamandua*, or ant-eater, is an unfinished and imperfect animal. The next night they continued and made many animals, among them the bees. At the time these animals were made, the Cayurucré made also others to combat them, for example, the "American lion," venomous snakes, wasps, etc.

After these labors, they set out to join the Caingangs, but found that the tigers were bad and ate many people. In passing a deep river, they made a bridge of a tree trunk, and, when all had crossed, the Cayurucré said to one of the

Camés that, when the tigers were on the bridge, he was to push it off so that they would fall into the water and be killed. The Camé did so, but of the tigers some fell in the water and dived, and others leaped on the bank and clung there by their claws. The Came wanted to throw them back into the river, but, when the tigers roared and showed their teeth, he was seized with fright, and let them get away. This is why we have nowadays tigers on land and tigers in the water.

They reached a great plain, where they joined the Caingangs and considered how to marry the youths and maidens. First they married the Cayurucré to the Camés, (girls), and then, as there was a superfluity of men, they married these to the Caingangs (women). Hence the Cayuruces, Comes, and Caingangs are relatives and friends.

Then they wanted to have festivals, but knew neither how to sing nor how to dance. One day some Cayuruces, who were out hunting, saw, at the edge of a clearing in the wood, by the trunk of a great tree, a little clear spot. Against the trunk of the tree were some rods with leaves, and one of them had a gourd stuck on end. They departed and told the Cayurucré about it. He made up his mind to go there the next day and verify the matter. So he went to the clearing cautiously and hid near the trunk. After awhile the little rods began to move slowly from bottom to top and a feeble voice began to sing and the little gourd, with a cadenced movement, produced this sound: *Xii, xii, xii...* The Cayurucrés approached the trunk, when suddenly all song and movement of the rods ceased, but they continued on the same trunk. He withdrew, and returned the next day with several friends. They cautiously approached the same spot and saw and heard the same things as on the day before. After the first song a voice sang another song. They learned the song, approached the trunk, but saw only the rods. Then they brought them with them, made others like them, and prepared to have a great festival. On that day the Cayurucré opened his mouth and sang the songs which he had heard in the clearing, making with the rod with the gourd on it and with his body the movements he had seen. His companions imitated him, and this is why we learn to sing and dance without knowing who is the teacher.

After some time the Cayurucré met on the road an ant-eater and lifted his stick to kill him. The ant-eater began to dance and to sing the songs heard in the clearing. Then the Cayurucré knew that this was his dancing-teacher. The ant-eater asked for his stick, and after having danced with it, gave it back and said to him, "The child that your wife has within her womb is man, and let this be established between us, that when you or yours meet me and mine and give their sticks and would fain dance with them, it is a sign that your wives will give birth to male children. If they would leave without dancing, the children will be girls." The Cayurucré returned much pleased, and we, when we meet the ant-eater, always renew this experience, which almost always gives certain results. The ant-eater knows many other things we are ignorant of, and we think that they are the first people who through magic took on the form which they now have.

CHILE

THE GOOD SERPENT

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Moore, T. H. "The Good Serpent. A Chilian [sic] Fairy Tale in Spanish, el Culebroncito, Literally Big Snake." *Journal of American Folklore* 1 (1883): 221–226.

Date: ca. 1883

Original Source: Spanish American

National Origin: Chile

Chile extends along the Pacific coast of South America bordered by the Andes mountains on the north and Peru, Bolivia, and Argentina to the east. The following tale blends the European **ordinary folktale genre** with pre-Columbian elements. "The Snake Helper" (AT 533) is found elsewhere in Latin America, especially in the Caribbean. Although the tale more closely adheres to Spanish American than to Native American plot structures, it is likely that the figure of the "Good Snake" in the following narrative has been influenced by the benevolent deity and **culture hero** Viracocha, who is often associated with a serpent. The serpent in the indigenous cultures that served as one of the bases of contemporary Spanish-Chilean folklore was typically regarded as benevolent rather than malevolent.

Thou must know to tell, and understand in order to know that there was a gentleman who had three children; two sons, and a daughter whose name was Mariquita. This one was precisely the darling of her father and brothers. One day when she was in the garden she found a little snake; she took it up and put it in her bosom. There she nursed it, and when it was bigger she

kept it inside a trunk. Every day she kept a plate of food, went to the trunk, opened it, and said to the snake, "Sister mine, Florita!"

The snake answered, "What wantest thou, sweetheart?" put out its head and ate the food. Her father noticed this. For whom should she hide away food? and set his servants to spy upon her. When they saw the serpent, that had grown ever so big, they were very frightened, and went running to the master to tell him that the food was for a very horrid animal. The gentleman went to see it, and indeed the sight of the serpent put one in a fright; he ordered a servant to go with it to a wooded height and to kill it. In vain the maiden begged him to leave it with her, since she had brought it up from a very little one, but her father was not willing, only he told the servant instead of killing it, to cast it alive into the wood. The maiden remained weeping very much for her snake, for she liked it as if it were a sister; so she passed many days very sorrowful.

One day her father had to send his two sons with a message to the king, who lived in a neighboring town. Being one day at the king's table, they were relating many things to him (for they were very well instructed in everything), and amongst others they said to him, "We have a very singular sister, for when she laughs she lets fall fine pearls; when she washes her hands, the water next day changes into a block of silver; and when she combs her hair, the hair that falls off becomes golden threads."

"Is this possible?" said the king.

"So possible is it," said the young men, "that we will lose our heads if it be not as we have said."

"Very well," said the king, "I am going to ask for your sister in marriage, and if what you have told me does not turn out true, I will order your heads to be cut off, as a punishment for having deceived me." Soon after he sent messengers to their father, asking him for Mariquita, to become the king's wife. Now, besides the gifts which her brothers had talked of, she was beautiful as the sun, and good.

Her father consented, highly pleased; and sent her to the king, accompanied by her nurse. The latter had a daughter named Estefania, and she and her daughter were very bad-hearted and envious. When they had traveled halfway, Mariquita fell asleep; so Estefania said to her mother, "Can you tell what I am thinking about?"

"What is it?" said she to her.

"That it would be a good thing if we were to put out Mariquita's eyes, and cast her off in this wooded height (now just then they were passing through a thickly wooded spot), and as the king does not know which is Mariquita, we will tell him that I am she, and I shall be married to him."

"Very well," said the old woman to her; so they did so, but seeing that the eyes were very beautiful, they put them in a glass to keep them.

The maiden passed a dreadful night in the wood, for that night it rained and thundered a great deal; she was half dead with pain and cold. The following

day there came a little old man to the wood with his little donkey, to get a load of firewood to take to sell in the town, and with the money to buy a bag of bran for his family, for he could not do any better for them. Instead of getting firewood he found the maiden, and moved by pity he took her to his house on his little donkey. The little old man had three bad-hearted daughters, who treated him very badly.

When they saw him coming without firewood and a woman in its stead they began to cry out, "Bad old man, what wilt thou give us to eat today? It will be this woman mayhap? She is coming to bring another mouth to the house that we may come to an end once for all by dying of hunger! Of what use is this blind wench who cannot gain her living?"

The little old man said to them, "Have patience, daughters; this poor creature was in the wood, and I have brought her out of pity. I am going quickly for the load of firewood, and you shall soon have your dinners. I will leave my share and will give it to her." But his daughters scolded him more and more, for that blind wench he would die of want, and then who was going to work for them? At last he managed to pacify them a little, went for the firewood, sold it, and brought them their food.

Meanwhile the daughters ill-treated Mariquita in all sorts of ways, until at last one of them more merciful than the others got them to leave her in peace.

The maiden said to this one, "Little sister, bring me a little water to wash my hands." She brought it to her in a broken earthen pot.

But the others cried out, "What a fine lady! She does not like to go and wash herself in the river!"

But the kind one said, "There now, don't you see that the poor little thing is blind, and might fall into the water?"

She washed her hands, and said, "Keep this water, little sister, till tomorrow."

The old man's daughter said, "But tomorrow I will bring thee fresh water."

Mariquita said, "But I want the same." At last the girl put it away among some shrubs, spilling a little on the ground.

The next day Mariquita said, "Little sister, bring me the water that I asked thee yesterday to keep for me."

She went to bring it, and found in its stead a block of silver, and silver on the ground where the water was spilt; and in bringing it the potsherd came to pieces from the weight of the silver. "What is this," said she, "that I have found instead of the water?"

Mariquita said, "This is silver; tell daddy to go to the town and sell it, for it is worth a great deal, and let him buy for you clothes and food."

The little old man did as Mariquita said; they bought it of him for a great deal of money; he bought plenty of clothes and plenty of food, and went home well pleased, for he had never even dreamed of so much riches.

Mariquita laughed heartily at the surprise of these people; and while she laughed, gathered in her lap the pearls that fell from her mouth. Then she said

to the little old man, "Take these, daddy, they are fine pearls; take them to the town and sell them, for they are worth a great deal. Buy more food and all that you need."

Meanwhile she asked the girls for a comb, to comb her hair. They brought her one; for since she had made them rich, they were so kind to her that they did not know what to make of her. She began to comb herself at the corner of the fireplace; and the girls to take care of her feet that she might warm them, put them so close to the fire that it almost burnt them.

She kept the hair that fell from her head, and the next day she had a handful of golden threads. "Take these, daddy," said she to the little old man, "and go to town and sell them, for they are threads of gold. Buy all you need; all that you get for them is for you." The little old man was well pleased, and brought much money to his daughters.

Meanwhile, Estefania had arrived at the king's palace. He received her with great kindness, and married her on the spot. On the morrow he made her wash her hands, and put away the water, but the next day it was nothing but water. He made her laugh, but not a single pearl fell from her mouth. He made her comb herself, and kept the fallen hair, but hair it was, and hair it remained. So he slapped his forehead, and said, "These young men have deceived me; I will order their heads to be cut off!"

He did so, and had their bodies embalmed to be sent to their father. Estefania went on living with the king, and the time was drawing nigh that she was about to have a baby, so that she was full of longings for everything she set eyes on.

One day that Mariquita was sitting in the sun, at the door of the little old man's hut, his daughters saw a big serpent that went towards Mariquita. "Ay!" they said, "come away from there! There is a big serpent, a very dreadful one, that is going to eat thee!"

She said to them, "He will not hurt me, only let him come!" The girls wanted to kill it, but Mariquita would not let them. The serpent came near to her, caressed her a great deal, and began to lick the sockets of her eyes, for it was the same which she had reared from a little snake. It said to Mariquita, "Thy foster sister Estefania will soon have a baby, and all that she sets eyes on she longs for. Send the little old man to the town, let him buy the most beautiful nosegay of flowers that he can find, and take it to sell at the king's palace."

The little old man did so, and when he passed by the palace, cried out, "Who buys nosegays?"

Estefania said to her mother, "I must have that nosegay!" Her mother asked the little old man what it was worth, and he told her that he sold it for eyes.

"Mother," said Estefania, "let us take out the eyes of the dog and give them to him."

The old man took them and went his way; but, before he got home with them the serpent said, "Eyes are coming, Mariquita, but they are not thine, thine will come later."

When the little old man arrived, the serpent said to him, "Throw them away, daddy, they are dog's eyes!"

The next day Mariquita told him to buy another nosegay finer still, and pass by the palace to sell it for eyes. Estefania came out, as on the day before, to buy it, and said to her mother, "Let us take out the cat's eyes, and give them to him."

They did so, and the little old man took them, but before he came home the serpent said, "Eyes are coming, Mariquita, but they are not thine, thine will come later"

So she said to the little old man, "Throw them away, daddy, they are cat's eyes."

The following day, they sent to buy a nosegay more beautiful than the others, with birds singing on the top of it, and the little old man went to the palace to sell it.

Estefania came out to buy it, and said to her mother, "Now we have no more eyes, what shall we do, for I must have the nosegay?"

Her mother said to her, "Dost thou not remember that we kept Mariquita's eyes in a glass; we will see if they are sweet yet."

Estefania said, "So long ago, they must be rotten." They went to look for them, and found them the same as when they had taken them out, so they gave them to him for the nosegay. Before the little old man got home, the serpent said, "Eyes are coming, Mariquita, and they are thine!"

So when he arrived she was well pleased, and said, "These, daddy, are really my eyes." She took them and gave them to the serpent. The serpent licked the sockets, put the eyes in again, and if beautiful they were before, much more beautiful were they afterwards.

The next day the serpent said, "Let us go to the palace. Take this bag of gold ounces, and as the king takes his afternoon nap with Estefania, and has his guards at the door, thou must throw a handful of ounces to the soldiers, and while they are busy in gathering them up, thou must cry at the door, 'Sister mine, Florita!' I will answer, 'What wilt thou, sweetheart?' Thou wilt say—

My servant Estefania
In the king's arms asleep;
Woe is me because of a faithless wretch.

Thou wilt fling another handful of ounces to the guards, and while they pick them up we will escape."

They did so one day, but the king, who had seen and heard all, gave orders to his guards to seize Mariquita and the serpent when they came again. But the guards, busied with picking up the ounces, took no notice of the king's orders. The third day, the king himself got behind the door to seize them, since he could not get his guards to do it, even though he threatened to cut their heads

off. When they came the third time, and said the same things, and were running away, the king took hold of Mariquita by her clothes and stopped her.

“What is this, maiden,” said he, “what wert thou saying?”

Therewith the serpent spoke up for her and said, “It is that the wife that your royal majesty has is not Mariquita. She is here; order her to do the wonders which her brothers spoke of.” She then told all that the two wicked women had done with Mariquita on the way to the palace.

The king, very wroth, took her indoors, made her wash her hands, kept the water, and the next day it had changed into a block of silver. He made her comb her hair, and the hair that fell off became golden threads. She laughed and fine pearls fell from her mouth.

The king acknowledged his mistake, and felt very sorry for having killed so unjustly the brothers; he married Mariquita, and ordained great royal feasts, and ordered Estefania and her mother to be broken on the wheel, quartered, afterwards to be burnt and their ashes cast to the winds.

After some time had passed, Mariquita had twin princes. Once when they were lying in the cradle, and their parents fondling them, the serpent came, and said, “Which should you like best; to see, your sons dead, or your brothers alive?”

They answered, “Our sons dead, since they are angels from heaven, and our brothers alive.” The serpent cut the infants’ throats, and led the parents to the place where the bodies of the two brothers lay embalmed, and they found them alive and well. The parents then felt very sorrowful, and went back to weep over their children; when they found them alive, and playing in the cradle.

The serpent said to them, “I have now done all that I can do for you. I have no more business here, for I am an angel sent by God, and I am going back to heaven. Farewell

The tale is finished.

INCA

VIRACOCHA

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Colum, Padraic. *Orpheus: Myths of the World*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930, 275–279.

Date: 1930

Original Source: Inca

National Origin: Native American

The Inca Empire centered in Cuzco extended through the territory comprising the modern countries of Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Argentina, Chile, and Colombia. As such, it was the largest of the pre-Colombian cultures. To the Incas (and other indigenous cultures), Viracocha was the creator of the sun, moon, stars, human beings (see the Aymara tales “The Creation,” page 299, and “Two Sons of the Creator,” page 304), and civilization itself. Two symbols commonly associated with him are mentioned in the following **myth**: a golden staff and the chakana (a three-tiered cross). The staff is mentioned directly, while the chakana is mentioned by implication by the blessing of the condor, the puma, and the serpent—the creatures who represent the top, middle, and lower tiers of the cross, respectively. Viracocha commonly traveled among humans disguised as a beggar, a central **motif** of this myth.

In other days we who are of the race of the Incas worshipped the Sun; we held that he was the greatest and most benignant of all beings, and we named ourselves the children of the Sun. We had traditions that told of the pitiable ways that we and the rest of the human race lived in before the Sun, having had compassion upon us, decided to lead us towards better ways of

living.... Lo, now! Our Lord, the Sun, put his two children, a son and a daughter, in a boat upon Lake Titicaca. He told them they were to float upon the water until they came to where men lived. He put his golden staff into the hands of his son. He told him he was to lead men into a place where that staff, dropped upon the earth, sank deep down into it.

So the children of our Lord the Sun went upon the waters of Lake Titicaca. They came to where our fathers lived in those far days. Where we live now we see villages and cities; we see streams flowing down from the mountains, and being led this way and that way to water our crops and our trees; we see flocks of llamas feeding on good grass with their lambs—countless flocks. But in those days we lived where there were thickets and barren rocks; we had no llamas; we had no crops; we knew not how to make the waters flow this way and that way; we had no villages, no cities, no temples. We lived in clefts of the rocks and holes in the ground. The covering of our bodies was of bark or of leaves, or else we went naked in the day and without covering to put over us in the night. We ate roots that we pulled up out of the ground, or fought with the foxes for the dead things they were carrying away. No one bore rule amongst us, and we knew nothing of duty or kindness of one to another.

Out of their boat on Lake Titicaca came the children of our Lord to us. They brought us together; they had rule over us, and they showed us how to live as husband and wife and children, and how to know those who were leaders amongst us and how to obey those leaders. And having showed us these things they led us from the land they had found us in. And often did he who was the son of our Lord the Sun drop the golden staff upon the ground as we went on. Sometimes the staff sank a little way into the earth, sometimes it sank to half its length in the earth. We came to a place where the golden staff, dropped by him who was the son of our Lord the Sun, sank into the earth until only its top was to be seen. And there we stayed, or, rather, there our fathers stayed, for we are many generations from the men and women who came into this place with the two who were the children of the Sun.

They showed us how to sow crops in that rich ground, and how to lead water down from the hills to water the crops and the trees. They showed us how to tame the llamas, and how to herd them and tend them as tamed beasts. They showed us how to take the wool from them and weave the wool into garments for ourselves; also, they showed us how to dye our garments so that we went brightly clad in the light of the sun. They showed us how to work in gold and silver, and how to make vessels of clay, and how to put shapes and figures upon these vessels. They showed us how to build houses, and how to build villages, and cities, and temples. And they showed us, too, how to obey the rule of those who were left to rule over us, the Incas.

Then the two who were the son and daughter of the Sun left us. Before they went from us they told us that the Sun, their father, would adopt us as his children. And so we of the Inca race became the children of the Sun. They said to

us, too, "Our father, the Sun, does good to the whole world; he gives light that men may see and follow their pursuits; he makes men warm when they had been cold; he ripens their crops; he increases their flocks of llamas; he brings dew upon the ground. The Sun, our father, goes round the earth each day that he may know of man's necessities and help him to provide for them. Be like the Sun, then, far-seeing, regular in all your occupations. And bring the worship of the Sun amongst the tribes who live in darkness and ignorance."

And so these two, his son and daughter who were sent to us by the Sun, were seen no more by us. But we knew ourselves now as the children of the Sun. We subdued the tribes in his name, and brought the knowledge of his beneficence amongst them. We built a great temple to him. And the daughters of the Incas in hundreds served him as Virgins of the Sun.

Yes, but there were those amongst us who came to have other thoughts about Heaven and the ways of Heaven. "Does not the Sun go as another being directs him to go?" one of the Incas said to his councilors. "Is he not like an arrow shot onward by a man? Is he not like a llama tethered by the will of a man rather than like one who has freedom? Does he not let a little cloud obscure his splendor? Is it not plain that he may never take rest from his tasks?"

So men amongst us have said, and they who have said them have mentioned a name. Viracocha that name is. And then they would say words from rites that were known to the people of this land before the Incas came into it. They would say, "O conquering Viracocha! Thou gavest life and valor to men, saying, 'let this be a man,' and to women saying, 'let this be a woman.' Thou madest them and gavest them being! Watch over them that they may live in health and peace! Thou who art in the high heavens, and among the clouds of the tempest, grant this with long life, and accept this sacrifice, O Creator!" So those who were priests in the land before our fathers came into it prayed.

And they said that it was Viracocha who created the Sun, and created the Moon also. They said that at the beginning the Sun was not brighter than the Moon, and that in his jealousy he flung ashes upon the face of the Moon and dimmed the Moon's primal brightness. And they said that Viracocha could make great terraces of rock and clay rear themselves up with crops upon them, and that he could bring the water-courses to freshen terraces and gardens merely by striking with a hollow cane that he carried.

Now although Viracocha was so great, he obscured himself, and came back to live amongst the Gods in the guise of a beggar. None knew him for Viracocha, the Creator of all things. And he saw the Goddess Cavillaca as she sat amongst llama lambs under a lucma tree, weaving the wool of the white llama. He saw her and he approached her. He left a ripe fruit beside her. She ate the fruit and she became with child by him.

And when her child was born her parents and her friends said to her, "You must find out who is the father of this child. Let all who live near come to this

lucma tree, and let the child crawl amongst them. The man he crawls to and touches with his hand we will know is his father.”

So under the lucma tree Cavillaca sat, and her child was with her. All who lived near came to that place, and amongst them came Viracocha, still in his beggar’s dress. All came near to Cavillaca and her child. The child crawled where they stood. He came to Viracocha. He put his hand up and touched the man who was in the beggar’s garb.

Then was Cavillaca made ashamed before all the Gods. She snatched up her child and held him to her. She fled away from that place. She fled towards the ocean with her child. Viracocha put on his robes of splendor and hastened after her. And as he went he cried out, “O Goddess, turn; look back at me! See how splendid I am!” But the Goddess, without turning, fled with her child from before him.

Viracocha went seeking them. As he crossed the peaks he met a condor, and the condor flew with him, and consoled him. Viracocha blessed the condor, and gave him long life and the power to traverse the wilderness and go over the highest peaks; also he gave him the right to prey upon creatures. Afterwards he met a fox; but the fox derided him, telling him that his quest was vain. He cursed the fox, saying to him that he would have to hunt at night, and that men would slay him. He met a puma, and the puma went with him and consoled him. He blessed the puma, saying that he would receive honor from men. As he went down the other side of the mountain, he came upon parrots flying from the trees of their forest. And the parrots cried out words that were of ill-omen. He cursed the parrots, saying that they would never have honor from men. But he blessed the falcon that flew with him down to the sea.

And when he came to the sea he found that Cavillaca and her child had plunged themselves into the water and had been transformed into rocks. Then Viracocha in his grief remained beside the sea.

Now beside the sea there were two virgins who were Urpihuachac’s daughters. They were guarded by a serpent. Viracocha charmed the serpent with his wisdom, and the serpent permitted him to approach Urpihuachac’s daughters. One flew away and became a dove. But the other lived there with Viracocha. And this Virgin of the Sea showed Viracocha where her mother kept all the fishes of the world. They were in a pond and they could not go through the waters of the world. Viracocha broke down the walls of their pond, and let them go through the streams and the lakes and the sea. And thus he let men have fishes to eat.

He lived amongst men, and he taught them many arts. He it was, as the priests of those who were here before the Incas say, showed men how to bring streams of water to their crops, and taught them how to build terraces upon the mountains where crops would grow. He set up a great cross upon the mountain Caravay. And when the bird that cries out four times at dawn cried out, and the light came upon the cross he had set up, Viracocha went from amongst men.

He went down to the sea, and he walked across it towards the west. But he told those whom he had left behind that he would send messengers back who would protect them and give them renewed knowledge of all he had taught them. He left them, but men still remember the chants that those whom he left on the mountain, by the cross, cried out their longing:

“Oh, hear me! From the sky above, In which thou mayst be, From the sea beneath, In which thou mayst be, Creator of the world, Maker of all men; Lord of all Lords, My eyes fail me For longing to see thee; For the sole desire to know thee.”

THE SHEPHERD AND THE DAUGHTER OF THE SUN

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Markham, Sir Clements. *The Incas of Peru*. London: Smith Elder & Co., 1910, 408–415.

Date: 1910

Original Source: Inca

National Origin: Native American

The Incas, as established in their **myth** “Viracocha” (page 315) and in the Aymara “The Children of the Sun” (page 302), regarded themselves as the children of the Sun deity. As a consequence of divine descent, the supreme Inca—the ruler of the empire—was considered the Sun incarnate. To serve the needs of the deity in human form and to minister to the celestial manifestation of the Sun, special religious orders were enfranchised. Among these religious classes were the Virgins (or Daughters of the Sun). The Virgins of the Sun were chosen at puberty to serve the ceremonial needs of the Sun-centered religion of the Inca and his subjects. They, for example, wove sacrificial cloths, ground the maize used for the principal solar festival of Inti Raimi, and preserved in their convents a portion of the fire generated each year during Inti Raimi. Chuqui-llantu was a Virgins of the Sun. In this role, she had access to the Inca (the Sun), and his family and was expected to carry out sacred duties upon which the lives of all his subjects depended. The dire consequences following her disobedience should be understood in the light of these facts. The **motif** of transformation into stones is common to this region (see, for example, “Viracocha,” page 315, and “Two Sons of the Creator,” page 304).

In the snow-clad cordillera above the valley of Yucay, called Pitu-siray, a shepherd watched the flock of white llamas intended for the Inca to sacrifice to the Sun. He was a native of Laris, named Acoya-napa, a very well

disposed and gentle youth. He strolled behind his flock, and presently began to play upon his flute very softly and sweetly, neither feeling anything of the amorous desires of youth, nor knowing anything of them.

He was carelessly playing his flute one day when two daughters of the Sun came to him. They could wander in all directions over the green meadows, and never failed to find one of their houses at night, where the guards and porters looked out that nothing came that could do them harm. Well, the two girls came to the place where the shepherd rested quite at his ease, and they asked him about his llamas.

The shepherd, who had not seen them until they spoke, was surprised, and fell on his knees, thinking that they were the embodiments of two out of the four crystalline fountains which were very famous in those parts. So he did not dare to answer them. They repeated their question about the flock, and told him not to be afraid, for they were children of the Sun, who was lord of all the land, and to give him confidence they took him by the arm. Then the shepherd stood up and kissed their hands.

After talking together for some time the shepherd said that it was time for him to collect his flock, and asked their permission. The elder princess, named Chuqui-llantu, had been struck by the grace and good disposition of the shepherd. She asked him his name and of what place he was a native. He replied that his home was at Laris and that his name was Acoya-napa. While he was speaking Chuqui-llantu cast her eyes upon a plate of silver which the shepherd wore over his forehead, and which shone and glittered very prettily. Looking closer she saw on it two figures, very subtly contrived, who were eating a heart. Chuqui-llantu asked the shepherd the name of that silver ornament, and he said it was called utusi. The princess returned it to the shepherd, and took leave of him, carrying well in her memory the name of the ornament and the figures, thinking with what delicacy they were drawn, almost seeming to her to be alive.

She talked about it with her sister until they came to their palace. On entering, the doorkeepers looked to see if they brought with them anything that would do harm, because it was often found that women had brought with them, hidden in their clothes, such things as fillets and necklaces. After having looked well, the porters let them pass, and they found the women of the Sun cooking and preparing food. Chuqui-llantu said that she was very tired with her walk, and that she did not want any supper. All the rest supped with her sister, who thought that Acoya-napa was not one who could cause inquietude. But Chuqui-llantu was unable to rest owing to the great love she felt for the shepherd Acoya-napa, and she regretted that she had not shown him what was in her breast. But at last she went to sleep.

In the palace there were many richly furnished apartments in which the women of the Sun dwelt. These virgins were brought from all the four provinces which were subject to the Inca, namely Chinchasuyu, Cuntisuyu, Antisuyu

and Colla-suyu. Within, there were four fountains which flowed towards the four provinces, and in which the women bathed, each in the fountain of the province where she was born. They named the fountains in this way. That of Chinchu-suyu was called Chuculla-puquio, that of Cunti-suyu was known as Ocoruro-puquio, Siclla-puquio was the fountain of Anti-suyu, and Llulucha-puquio of Colla-suyu. The most beautiful child of the Sun, Chuqui-llantu, was wrapped in profound sleep.

She had a dream. She thought she saw a bird flying from one tree to another, and singing very softly and sweetly. After having sung for some time, the bird came down and regarded the princess, saying that she should feel no sorrow, for all would be well. The princess said that she mourned for something for which there could be no remedy. The singing bird replied that it would find a remedy, and asked the princess to tell her the cause of her sorrow. At last Chuqui-llantu told the bird of the great love she felt for the shepherd boy named Acoya-napa, who guarded the white flock. Her death seemed inevitable. She could have no cure but to go to him whom she so dearly loved, and if she did her father the Sun would order her to be killed.

The answer of the singing bird, by name checollo, was that she should arise and sit between the four fountains. There she was to sing what she had most in her memory. If the fountains repeated her words, she might then safely do what she wanted. Saying this the bird flew away, and the princess awoke. She was terrified. But she dressed very quickly and put herself between the four fountains. She began to repeat what she remembered to have seen of the two figures on the silver plate, singing, "Micuc isutu cuyuc utusi cucim." Presently all the fountains began to sing the same verse.

Seeing that all the fountains were very favorable, the princess went to repose for a little while, for all night she had been conversing with the checollo in her dream.

When the shepherd boy went to his home he called to mind the great beauty of Chuqui-llantu. She had aroused his love, but he was saddened by the thought that it must be love without hope. He took up his flute and played such heart-breaking music that it made him shed many tears, and he lamented, saying, "Ay! ay! ay! for the unlucky and sorrowful shepherd, abandoned and without hope, now approaching the day of your death, for there can be no remedy and no hope." Saying this, he also went to sleep.

The shepherd's mother lived in Laris some distance from where he tended his llamas, and she knew, by her power of divination, the cause of the extreme grief into which her son was plunged, and that he must die unless she took order for providing a remedy. So she set out for the mountains, and arrived at the shepherd's hut at sunrise. She looked in and saw her son almost moribund, with his face covered with tears.

She went in and awoke him. When he saw who it was he began to tell her the cause of his grief, and she did what she could to console him. She told him

not to be downhearted, because she would find a remedy within a few days. Saying this she departed and, going among the rocks, she gathered certain herbs which are believed to be cures for grief. Having collected a great quantity she began to cook them, and the cooking was not finished before the two princesses appeared at the entrance of the hut.

For Chuqui-llantu, when she was rested, had set out with her sister for a walk on the green slopes of the mountains, taking the direction of the hut. Her tender heart prevented her from going in any other direction. When they arrived they were tired, and sat down by the entrance. Seeing an old dame inside they saluted her, and asked her if she could give them anything to eat. The mother went down on her knees and said she had nothing but a dish of herbs. She brought it to them, and they began to eat with excellent appetites. Chuqui-llantu then walked round the hut without finding what she sought, for the shepherd's mother had made Acoya-napa lie down inside the hut, under a cloak. So the princess thought that he had gone after his flock.

Then she saw the cloak and told the mother that it was a very pretty cloak, asking where it came from. The old woman told her that it was a cloak which, in ancient times, belonged to a woman beloved by Pachacamac, a deity very celebrated in the valleys on the coast. She said it had come to her by inheritance; but the princess, with many endearments, begged for it until at last the mother consented. When Chuqui-llantu took it into her hands she liked it better than before and, after staying a short time longer in the hut, she took leave of the old woman, and walked along the meadows looking about in hopes of seeing him whom she longed for. (We do not treat further of the sister, as she now drops out of the story, but only of Chuqui-llantu.)

She was very sad and pensive when she could see no signs of her beloved shepherd on her way back to the palace. She was in great sorrow at not having seen him, and when, as was usual, the guards looked at what she brought, they saw nothing but the cloak. A splendid supper was provided, and when every one went to bed the princess took the cloak and placed it at her bedside. As soon as she was alone she began to weep, thinking of the shepherd. She fell asleep at last, but it was not long before the cloak was changed into the being it had been before. It began to call Chuqui-llantu by her own name. She was terribly frightened, got out of bed, and beheld the shepherd on his knees before her, shedding many tears. She was satisfied on seeing him, and inquired how he had got inside the palace. He replied that the cloak which she carried had arranged about that. Then Chuqui-llantu embraced him, and put her finely worked lipi mantles on him, and they slept together.

When they wanted to get up in the morning, the shepherd again became the cloak. As soon as the sun rose, the princess left the palace of her father with the cloak, and when she reached a ravine in the mountains, she found herself again with her beloved shepherd, who had been changed into himself. But one of the guards had followed them, and when he saw what had happened he gave

the alarm with loud shouts. The lovers fled into the mountains which are near the town of Calca. Being tired after a long journey, they climbed to the top of a rock and went to sleep. They heard a great noise in their sleep, so they arose. The princess took one shoe in her hand and kept the other on her foot. Then looking towards the town of Calca both were turned into stone. To this day the two statues may be seen between Calca and Huayllapampa.

SURINAME MAROON

HOW MAN MADE WOMAN RESPECT HIM

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Penard, A. P., and T. E. Penard. "Surinam Folk-Tales." *Journal of American Folklore* 30 (1917): 244.

Date: ca. 1917

Original Source: Suriname Maroon

National Origin: African American

Suriname (formerly Dutch Guiana) is located on the northeast coast of South America, bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the north, Brazil to the south, French Guiana to the east, and Guyana on the west. The Maroons of Suriname from whom the following narratives were collected were slaves of African descent who escaped from the coastal plantations developed by the Dutch and found refuge in the tropical rainforests of the interior. The Maroons established communities (in Suriname and throughout the Western hemisphere) in resistance to the European slave system and many successfully preserved and adapted African arts and cultural practices in "the bush." The following tale shows African influence both by the use of the typical African and African American **trickster**, the anthropomorphic spider Anansi, and by its deliberately explanatory quality. The words "Er tin tin," are **formulaic** in this folk tradition and mean, essentially, "Once upon a time."

Er tin tin, women had no respect for men. They were always scolding their husbands, and calling them all kinds of bad names, such as "Stupid," "Lazy," "Beast."

Anansi, too, was treated in this manner, and it humiliated him very much indeed. “I must put an end to this,” he muttered. “I’ll teach my wife better manners; I’ll make her respect me. *Mi sa sori hem fa watea de go na kokronoto bere*” [“I will show her how the water goes into the coconut’s belly,” Suriname creole, roughly, “I will teach her a lesson.”]

Anansi set to work and dug a deep well; and when it was deep enough, he called his wife, and asked her to bring him a ladder so that he could climb out. Scolding and jawing, as usual, she brought the ladder and set it in place. With spade in hand, Anansi climbed out of the pit; but, just as he reached the top of the ladder, he slyly dropped the spade into the pit, pretending that it was an accident.

“*Ke!*” [loosely, “My goodness!”] he exclaimed, turning to his wife, “I have just dropped the spade into the well, and I am so tired. *Tangi tangi*, (please) will you go down and get it for me?” His wife scolded him dreadfully, but she went down the ladder to fetch the spade. As she stooped to pick it up, Anansi quickly pulled up the ladder, and his wife was caught in the trap.

She began to rave and tear, called Anansi everything that was bad, and commanded him to lower the ladder; but Anansi paid no attention. He just smiled, and noted with satisfaction that the water was beginning to flow into the new well. And as the water rose, his wife scolded less and less, until it was on a level with her stomach. Then she asked her *dear* Anansi for the ladder, but Anansi paid no attention. When the water was up to her breast, she beseeched her good Boss (*Basi*) for the ladder; but Anansi paid no attention. When the water was up to her neck, she tearfully begged her beloved master to lower the ladder; then Anansi gave in. He lowered the ladder; and his wife, wet and shivering, meekly climbed out of the well.

But after that day she became very obedient and respectful; she never scolded her husband any more, and always addressed him as “*mi masra*” (“my master”). Other women followed her example and also became very obedient; and so to this day every woman respects her husband, and calls him “*Basi*,” or “*mi masra*.”

ANANSI EATS MUTTON

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Penard, A. P., and T. E. Penard. “Surinam Folk-Tales.” *Journal of American Folklore* 30 (1917): 245–246.

Date: ca. 1917

Original Source: Surinam Maroon

National Origin: African American

Anansi is so prominent in the folktales of some African American regions that the tales are referred to generically as “Anansi ‘tory” (Anansi story). Most, but by no means all, of the tales feature this anthropomorphic spider in the central role as **trickster**, liar, thief, and scoundrel. His guile and ability to change form to serve his own ends are showcased in the following narrative. This tale plot is known throughout the African Caribbean. See, for example, “Nancy Fools His Wife” (page 407).

Er *tin tin*, Anansi’s wife had a fine fat sheep that she herself had raised. Anansi often begged her to slaughter the sheep; but she steadily refused, and scolded him angrily for his greediness. “I will teach my wife not to be so stingy,” muttered Anansi one night as he went to bed.

Next morning he did not get up, but pretended to be very sick. He trembled and shook so, that his wife became alarmed, and asked him what ailed him and what she could do to relieve him.

“Ke!” replied Anansi weakly, “I don’t know what the matter is, but I feel awfully sick.” So he told his wife to consult with the *loekoeman* [traditional healer], whom she would find under the big *kankantri* [silk cotton tree, regarded as sacred] in the forest. His wife did not know the *loekoeman*, but she started out to find him. As she was going out, Anansi requested her to take the children with her. “They make such a terrible noise, that I shall go crazy,” he explained.

Well, as soon as his wife had departed, Anansi jumped out of bed and disguised himself as an old *loekoeman*. He pulled an old hat well over his eyes, and, hurrying over a short cut which he knew, reached the *kankantri* before his wife.

After a while his wife and children arrived, and greeted him politely with a *kosi* [curtsy], without seeing through the disguise. “Ke, mi *papa*,” spoke his wife, “*masra* Anansi is very sick. He has convulsions and terrible pains in his stomach, so he has sent me to you for some medicine to cure him.”

The *loekoeman* consulted with the spirits, shook his head thoughtfully, and said, “My good woman, your husband is a very good friend of mine; and so I will tell you a good medicine to cure him, and it will not cost you anything for the advice. My friend Anansi is very sick indeed; his spirit longs for mutton, and the poor man is slowly dying from this craving. You must serve him a nice fat sheep, nicely cooked, and he alone must eat it. You and the children must not even taste it, otherwise the *takroe sani* (‘evil thing’) that possesses him will surely kill him. Nothing else can save him.”

Anansi’s wife thanked the *loekoeman* and left. As soon as she was out of sight, Anansi hurried home over the short cut, removed his disguise, and jumped into bed, where he awaited the return of his wife and children.

In a short while they arrived, and told Anansi what the *loekoeman* had said. Anansi praised the *loekoeman*'s wisdom. He said that the advice was good, and he felt that the medicine would cure him.

With unwilling hands his wife and children prepared the sheep for Anansi in a most appetizing manner. Anansi ate so much mutton that he nearly burst, while his wife and children looked on with longing eyes. When he had swallowed the last mouthful, he smacked his lips, thanked his wife, and advised his children to follow their good mother's example and never to be stingy or greedy.

JAUW'S DREAM

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Penard, A. P., and T. E. Penard. "Surinam Folk-Tales." *Journal of American Folklore* 30 (1917): 246–248.

Date: ca. 1917

Original Source: Surinam Maroon

National Origin: African American

The following narrative of a prophetic dream and the workings of one man's "good spirit" is unlike the two previous Anansi 'tories in all its particulars except for the **formulaic** opening. The notion of the spirit helper in the guise of an animal may be a mark of the influence of the neighboring Native American cultures on the Maroon repertoire.

Er *tin tin*, there were two friends, Jauw and Kwakoe, who thought very much of each other. Where any one saw Jauw, he would be sure to find Kwakoe; and where any one saw Kwakoe, he would be sure to find Jauw; they were inseparable. Even at night they went to bed together; and if one of them should fall asleep first, the other would lie quietly beside him until he, too, fell asleep.

Well, one night the two friends went to bed as usual, and it happened that Jauw fell asleep first. Kwakoe, who was lying with his face toward Jauw, was greatly surprised to see a mouse come out of Jauw's nose and noiselessly leave the hut. Kwakoe wanted to find out more about this wonderful animal, for he knew that it could not be an ordinary mouse; so he got up quickly and followed the little beast.

The mouse moved stealthily in the dark shadows, took the road, and entered the forest, through which it led the way to a giant *kankantri* whose trunk was completely hidden in a tangle of *boesitetei* [vines] that hung about it.

Cautiously the mouse looked around, and, swiftly climbing up one of the bush-ropes, disappeared between the clumps that grew thickly upon the branches of the big tree. But Kwakoe, from behind a near-by bush, had seen everything, and patiently he awaited the mouse's return.

Well, after a long time the mouse again made its appearance from among the mass of *boesi-nanasi*, came down the same bush-rope, and returned to the village by the same road. The strange little animal went straight to the hut of the two friends, entered cautiously, and ran quickly into Jauw's nose before Kwakoe, who had followed it, had a chance to grab it.

As soon as the mouse had vanished, Jauw awoke with a yawn, stretched himself lazily, and rubbed the sleep from his eyes, saying to his friend, "Kwakoe, man, I dreamed a wonderful dream, which I shall not soon forget. *Ka* [an exclamation of wonder or surprise] but a man's head can take him to strange places!" Kwakoe, curious to know if Jauw's dream could have any connection with what he had just seen, asked him to tell him about it; so Jauw proceeded to relate his dream.

"Well, then, friend Kwakoe, I dreamed that I quietly left the hut, followed the road a ways, and entered the forest. And I walked until I came to a big *kankantri* all covered with *boesi-tetei* and *boesi-nanasi*. I looked around to make sure that nobody was watching, and then I climbed up one of the bush-ropes. Hidden between the branches I discovered a great, big box, so big that I could easily enter it through the keyhole. And what do you think I found in the box, Kwakoe? It was full of gold money, just gold money, nothing else but gold money. *Baja*, ["friend" or "brother"] I was surprised. Happy to think that you and I would not have to work any more, I spent a long time counting the money. Then I crawled out of the box through the keyhole. I wanted to take the box back with me, but it was too heavy; so I decided to go home and get you to help me cut down the *kankantri*. I slid down the same bush-rope, and came home to tell you all about it. But you know how it is with dreams, Kwakoe. As soon as I entered the hut, I awoke. *Ka*, but a man's head can take him to strange places!"

Kwakoe, who had listened with great interest while Jauw related his dream, asked, "Do you think, friend Jauw, that you would recognize the *kankantri* if you should see it again?"

"Certainly I would," replied Jauw, "never before in my life have I seen such a big *kankantri*, or one so completely covered with *boesi-tetei* and *boesi-nanasi*. But why do you ask me that, Kwakoe?"

Thereupon Kwakoe told Jauw that it was his plan to search for the *kankantri*, and that Jauw would do better to get up and help grind the axes, so that they would have no difficulty in cutting down the tree which he thought they would have no trouble in finding. But Jauw, who knew nothing of the mouse in his own head, laughed at Kwakoe, saying that he had no desire to get up so early in the morning for the purpose of sharpening axes to cut down a *kankantri* he had

never really seen, and that he could not see how an intelligent man like Kwakoe could put so much faith in dreams.

Then Kwakoe told Jauw that he did not believe in dreams, either, but that this was no ordinary dream; and he related to Jauw his experience with the wonderful mouse. Jauw was amazed at what Kwakoe told him, but he was sure that Kwakoe would not tell him a lie; so he consented to go out and help sharpen the axes.

At daybreak the two friends entered the forest, and soon they came to the giant *kankantri* into which the mouse had climbed during the night. As soon as Jauw saw the big tree all covered with *boesi-tetei* and *boesi-nanasi*, he exclaimed, “Kwakoe, this is the *kankantri* I saw in my dream. It can be no other.”

Kwakoe and Jauw now went to work with their axes. It was not an easy matter to cut down such an enormous tree; but the thought of finding the treasure in its branches spurred them on, and at last the forest giant tottered and crashed down with a noise like thunder.

And, sure enough, from its branches fell a large box. As it struck the ground, it broke open from the force of its own weight, and the bright gold pieces which Jauw had seen in his dream scattered and rolled over the ground. The two friends, in their joy, embraced each other, and declared that the mouse which had come out of Jauw’s nose must have been his good spirit. “Ka!” exclaimed Kwakoe, it was a good thing for you that I did not catch the mouse when I tried, or you would be a dead man now.”

Kwakoe and Jauw gathered up their treasure and carried it safely home. They celebrated by giving a great feast, to which everybody in the village was invited. At the feast they made it known how they came into possession of the golden treasure. They spent their money so freely, that the gold coins soon spread over the whole world and became known to every one; for I must tell you that before Kwakoe and Jauw found their treasure, gold coins were not known to anyone on earth.

SNAKE AND HUNTER

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Penard, A. P., and T. E. Penard. “Surinam Folk-Tales.” *Journal of American Folklore* 30 (1917): 248–250.

Date: ca. 1917

Original Source: Surinam Maroon

National Origin: African American

The following **animal tale** is a **variant** of “The Ungrateful Serpent Returned to Captivity” (AT 155A). In this tale, Anansi departs from his usual self-serving behavior to play the role of the sage judge. This

narrative adds a final episode to the usual plot in which the snake learns his lesson and repays the hunter for his kindness.

*E*r tin tin, there was a big fire in the wood. All the trees were in flames, and nearly all the animals were burned to death. To escape the terrible heat, Snake lowered himself into a deep hole. The fire raged fiercely for a long time, but was at last extinguished by a heavy rain. When all the danger was past, Snake attempted to climb out of the hole, but, try as he would, he could not scale the steep sides. He begged every one who passed to help him; but nobody dared to give him assistance, for fear of his deadly bite.

Well, at last Hunter came along. He took pity on Snake and pulled him out. But as soon as Snake was free, he turned upon Hunter with the intention of biting him. "You must not bite me after my kind act," said Hunter, warding him off.

"And why shouldn't I bite you?" asked Snake.

"Because," explained Hunter, "you should not do harm to him who has shown you an act of kindness."

"But I am sure that everybody does," hissed Snake. "You know the saying, 'Buen no habi tangi'." ["Good has no thanks."]

"Very well," proposed Hunter, "let us put the case before a competent judge!" Snake agreed, so together they started for the city.

On the way they met first Horse, next Ass, then Cow. To each of these Hunter and Snake told their story, and to each they put the question, "Ought any one to return Evil for Good?" Horse neighed, saying that he was usually whipped for his good services to man. Ass hee-hawed, saying that he was beaten with a stick for his good services to man. Cow bellowed that she expected to be slaughtered for her good services to man.

Snake then claimed that he had won the case, and lifted his head to strike Hunter; but Hunter said, "I don't agree yet; let us put the case before Anansi, who is very wise!" Snake agreed, and so they continued on their way.

Well, they came to the city where Anansi dwelled, and it so happened that they found him at home. They told Anansi how Snake had let himself down into a deep hole to escape the terrible fire that was raging in the wood; how he had begged everybody who passed for assistance; how Hunter had helped him out of the hole; and how Snake had then tried to bite Hunter. They also told Anansi how they had met Horse, Ass, and Cow, and how each of them had told them that "Tangi foe buen na kodja." ["Thanks for good is the cudgel."] And so they had come to Anansi, who was very wise, that he might settle the dispute fairly.

Anansi looked thoughtful, and, shaking his head, said, "My friends, I cannot say who is right until I have seen with my own eyes how everything happened. Let us go back to the exact spot."

Well, then all three walked back to the hole in the wood out of which Hunter had helped Snake, and Anansi asked them to act out everything just exactly as it had happened. So Snake slid down into the hole and began calling for assistance. Hunter pretended to be passing, and, turning to the hole, was about to help Snake out again, when Anansi stopped him, saying, "Wait, I will settle the dispute now. Hunter must not help Snake this time. Snake must try to get out without any assistance, so that he may learn to appreciate a kind act." Snake was obliged to remain in the hole, and he suffered much from hunger. At last, after many unsuccessful attempts, he managed to get out. But experience had been a good master, and Snake had learned his lesson well.

Well, it came to pass that some time later Hunter was caught poaching in the king's woods and was thrown into prison. Snake heard of it and made up his mind to help Hunter, so he hastened to the king's palace. Unobserved he approached the king. When he saw a good chance, he suddenly bit the king, and succeeded in making his escape before any one could catch him.

Then he made his way to the prison in which Hunter was confined, and found a way to enter it. He calmed Hunter's fears, and said, "A while ago you did me a favor, and now by experience I have learned to appreciate it. I come to aid you. Listen! I have just bitten the king, and he is very sick from the effects of the poison; in fact, he is on the point of dying. I bring you the only remedy for my deadly bite. It is known to me alone. Send word to the king that you can cure him, but that you will not do so unless he promises to give you his only daughter in marriage." So saying, Snake gave Hunter the remedy, consisting of three different kinds of leaves, and then he departed.

Hunter did as Snake advised him. He sent word saying that he could cure the king, and asked as reward his release from prison and the king's daughter in marriage. Fearing death, the king consented, and allowed Hunter to try the remedy. The king was quickly restored to health. Hunter married the princess, and the teller of this tale was present at the wedding.

WARRAU

THE ADVENTURES OF KOROROMANNA

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Roth, Walter E. *An Inquiry into the Animism and Folk-Lore of the Guiana Indians*. Thirtieth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 1908–1909. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1915, 126–129.

Date: ca. 1915

Original Source: Warrau

National Origin: Native American

The Warrau (also known as the Guarauno) are a nomadic Native American culture indigenous to northeastern South America, residing primarily in Venezuela, Guyana, and Suriname. Hunting, fishing, and gathering provide their primary subsistence. The Warrau believed that Kororomanna was a supernatural who created male human beings. Women were created by the spirit Kuliminia. Kororomanna was said to have two wives: Uri-Kaddo (“a worker in darkness”) and Emeshi (the name refers to a large burrowing ant). Regarding the names, Walter Roth contends that “together, they are typical of the creation of all things out of the earth in the dark” (126). The following narrative gives a description of a typical encounter with bush spirits (Hebus). In the course of the tale, Kororomanna is revealed to be something of a **trickster** as well as a creator.

Kororomanna went out hunting and shot a “baboon” (*Mycetes*), but as it was already late in the afternoon, in trying to make his way home he lost his way in the darkness. And there he had to make his *banab* [temporary shelter], and to lie down, with the baboon beside him. But where he lay was a

Hebu road; you can always distinguish a Spirit road from any other pathway in the forest because the Hebus occupying the trees that lie alongside it are always, especially at night, striking the branches and trunks, and so producing short sharp crackling noises.

It was not pleasant for poor Kororomanna, especially as the baboon's body was now beginning to swell with all the noxious humors inside; lest the Hebus should steal it from him, he was obliged to keep the carcass alongside and watch over it with a stick.

At last he fell asleep, but in the middle of the night the Hebus, what with the knocking on the trees, aroused him from his slumbers. Now that he was awake, he mimicked the Spirits, blow for blow, and as they struck the limb of a tree, Kororomanna would strike the belly of the baboon. But what with the air inside, each time he struck the animal, there came a resonant *Boom! Boom!* just like the beating of a drum.

The Hebu leader heard the curious sound, and became a bit frightened, "What can it be? When before I knocked a tree, it never made a noise like that." To make sure, however, he struck the tree hard again, and *Boom!* came once more from the carcass. Hebu was really frightened now, and began to search all around to find out where the extraordinary noise could possibly come from; at last he recognized the little manicole banab, and saw Kororomanna laughing. Indeed, the latter could not help laughing, considering that it was the first time he had heard such a funny sound come out of any animal.

Hebu then said to him, "Who are you? Show me your hand," to which Kororomanna replied, "I am Warrau, and here is my hand," but instead of putting out his own, he shoved forward one of the baboon's, and then held forward the animal's other hand, and finally both feet. Hebu was much puzzled and said he had never seen before a Warrau with so black a hand, and would not be satisfied until he saw the face. Kororomanna accordingly deceived him again and held out the monkey's, which caused Hebu to make the same remark about his face as he had done about his hands and feet.

The Spirit became more frightened than ever, but his curiosity exceeded his fear, because he next wanted to know where all that *Boom! Boom!* sound had come from. And when he learnt its source of origin (breaking wind), he regretted that he had not been made like ordinary mortals, he and all his family having no proper posteriors, but just a red spot. He thereupon begged Kororomanna to make for him a posterior which would allow of his producing a similar sound.

So with his bow Kororomanna split the Spirit's hind quarters, and completed the task by impaling him, but so rough was he in his methods, that the weapon transfixed the whole body even piercing the unfortunate Hebu's head. The Hebu cursed Kororomanna for having killed him, and threatened that the other Spirits would avenge his death; he then disappeared.

Our hero, becoming a bit anxious on his own account, and, recognizing by the gradually increasing hullabaloo in the trees that swarms of Hebus were

approaching the scene of the outrage, now climbed the manicole tree sheltering his banab, leaving the baboon's corpse inside. The Spirits then entered the banab, and believing the dead animal to be Kororomanna, began hitting it with their sticks, and with each blow, there came *Boom!* Our friend up the tree, whence he could watch their every movement, and their surprise at the acoustic results of the flogging, could not refrain from cracking a smile, which soon gave way to a hearty laugh.

The Spirits, unfortunately for him, heard it, and looking at the dead baboon, said, "This cannot be the person who is laughing at us." They looked all around, but could see nothing, until one of them stood on his head, and peeped up into the tree. And there, sure enough, he saw Kororomanna laughing at them. All the others then put themselves in the same posture around the tree, and had a good look at him. The question they next had to decide was how to catch him. This they concluded could most easily be managed by hewing down the tree.

They accordingly started with their axes on the trunk, but since the implements were but water-turtle shells, it was not long before they broke. They then sent for their knives, but as these were merely the seed-pods of the buari tree, they also soon broke. The Hebus then sent for a rope, but what they called a rope was really a snake. At any rate, as the serpent made its way farther and farther up the tree, and finally came within reach, Kororomanna cut its head off; the animal fell to the ground again, and the Hebus cried "Our rope has burst."

Another consultation was held, and it was decided that one of their number should climb the tree, seize the man, and throw him down, and that those below might be ready to receive him when dislodged, the Hebu was to shout out, when throwing him down, the following signal: *Tura-buna-sé mahara-ko na-kai*. The biggest of the Spirits being chosen to carry the project into execution, he started on his climb, but head downward of course, so as to be able to see where he was going.

Kororomanna, however, was on the alert, and, waiting for him, killed him in the same peculiar manner as that in which he had dispatched the other Spirit just a little while before; more than this, having heard them fix upon the preconcerted signal, he hurled the dead Spirit's body down with the cry of *Tura-buna-sé mahara-ko na-kai!* The Hebus below were quite prepared, and as soon as the body fell to the ground, clubbed it to pieces. Kororomanna then slipped down and helped in the dissolution.

"Wait a bit," he said to the Spirits; "I am just going in the bush, but will soon return." It was not very long, however, before the Spirits saw that they had been tricked, and yelled with rage on finding that they had really destroyed one of themselves; they hunted high and low for their man, but with approaching daylight were reluctantly compelled to give up the chase.

In the meantime, Kororomanna had no sooner got out of their sight than he started running at topmost speed, and finally found shelter in a hollow tree.

Here he discovered a woman (she was not old either), so he told her that he would remain with her till “the day cleaned” (that is, till dawn broke).

But she said, “No! No! My man is Snake and he will be back before the dawn. If he were to find you here, he would certainly kill you.” But her visitor was not to be frightened, and he stayed where he was.

True enough, before dawn, Snake came wending his way home, and as he crawled into the tree, he was heard to exclaim, “Hallo! I can smell someone.”

Kororomanna was indeed frightened now, and was at his wits’ end to know what to do. Just then dawn broke, and they heard a hummingbird. “That is my uncle,” said our hero. They then heard the doroquarra [another species of bird] “That also is an uncle of mine,” he added. He purposely told Snake all this to make him believe that, if he killed and swallowed his visitor, all the other hummingbirds and doroquarras would come and avenge his death.

But Snake said, “I am not afraid of either of your uncles, but will gobble them up.” Just then, a chicken-hawk (*Urubitinga*) flew along, which made Snake ask whether that also was an uncle of his.

“To be sure” was the reply, “and when I am dead, he also will come and search for me.” It was now Snake’s turn to be frightened, because Chicken-hawk used always to get the better of him; so he let Kororomanna go in peace, who ran out of that hollow tree pretty quick.

It was full daylight now, but this made little odds, because he had still lost his way, and knew not how to find the road home. After wandering on and on, he at last came across a track, recognizable by the footprints in it: following this up, he came upon a hollow tree that had fallen across the path, and inside the trunk he saw a baby. This being a Hebu’s child, he slaughtered it, but he had no sooner done so than he heard approaching footsteps, which caused him promptly to climb a neighboring tree and await developments.

These were not long in coming, for the mother soon put in her appearance; as soon as she recognized her dead infant, she was much angered, and, looking around, carefully examined the fresh tracks, and said, “This is the man who has killed my child.” Her next move was to dig up a bit of the soil marked by one of the fresh footprints, wrap it up in a leaf tied with bush-rope, and hang it on a branch while she went for firewood.

Directly her back was turned, Kororomanna slid down from his hiding place, undid the bundle, and threw away the contents, substituting a footprint of the Spirit woman. Then, tying up the parcel as before, he hung it where it had been left, and hid himself once more. When the woman returned with the firewood, she made a big fire, and threw the bundle into the flames, saying as she did so, “Curse the person whose footprint I now burn. May the owner fall into this fire also!” She thought that if she burnt the “foot-mark” so would the person’s shadow be drawn to the fire. But no one came, and she felt that her own shadow was being impelled. “Oh! It seems that I am hurting myself; the fire is drawing me near,” she exclaimed. Twice was she thus dragged toward it against her will,

and yet she succeeded in resisting. But on the third occasion she could not draw back; she fell in, and was burnt to ashes; she “roasted herself dead.”

Kororomanna was again free to travel, but which direction to follow was the puzzle; he had still lost his way home. All he could do was to walk more or less aimlessly on, passing creek after creek and back into the bush again, until he emerged on a beautiful, clean roadway. But no sooner had he put his foot on it, than it stuck there, just like a fish caught in a spring-trap. And this is exactly what the trap really was, save that it had been set by the Hebus.

He pulled and he tugged and he twisted, but try as he might, he could not get away. He fouled himself over completely, and then lay quite still, pretending to be dead. The flies gathered on him and these were followed by the worms, but he continued to lie quite still.

By and by two of the Spirits came along, and one of them said, “Hallo! I have luck today. My spring-trap has caught a fish at last,” but when he got closer, he added, “Oh! I have left it too long. It stinks.” However, they let loose their fish, as they thought it was, and carried it down to the riverside to wash and clean it.

After they had washed it, one of the Hebus said, “Let us slit its belly now, and remove the entrails,” but the other one remarked, “No, let us make a basket first, to put the flesh in.”

This was very fortunate for Kororomanna, who, seizing the opportunity while they went collecting strands to plait with, rolled down the river bank into the water and so made good his escape. But when he succeeded in landing on the other side, he was, in a sense, just as badly off as before, not knowing how to get home.

Kororomanna next came across a man’s skull lying on the ground, and what must he do but go and jerk his arrow into its eye-ball? Now this skull, Kwa-muhu, was a Hebu, who thereupon called out, “You must not do that. But now that you have injured me, you will have to carry me.”

So Kororomanna had to get a strip of bark and carry the skull wherever he went, and feed it too. If he shot bird or beast, he always had to give a bit to Kwa-muhu, with the result that the latter soon became gradually and inconveniently heavier, until one day he became so great a dead weight as to break the bark-strip support. The accident occurred not very far from a creek, and Kororomanna told Kwa-muhu to stay still while he went to look for a stronger strip of bark.

Of course this was only an excuse, because directly he had put the skull on the ground, he ran as fast as he could toward the creek, overtaking on the way a deer that was running in exactly the same direction, swam across, and rested himself on the opposite side. In the meantime Kwa-muhu, suspecting that he was about to be forsaken, ran after Kororomanna, and seeing but the deer in front of him, mistook it for his man and killed it just as it reached the water.

On examining the carcass, the Hebu exclaimed, when he got to its toes, “Well, that is indeed very strange. You have only two fingers”; and though he

reckoned again and again, he could make no more—"but the man I am after had five fingers, and a long nose. You must be somebody else."

Now Kororomanna, who was squatting just over on the opposite bank, heard all this, and burst out laughing. This enraged Kwa-muhu, who left the deer, and made a move as if to leap across the creek, but, having no legs, he could not jump properly, and hence fell into the water and was drowned. All the ants then came out of his skull.

Poor Kororomanna was still as badly off as before; he was unable to find his way home. But he bravely kept on his way and at last came upon an old man bailing water out of a pond. The latter was really a Hebu, whose name was Huta-Kurakura ("Red-back"). Huta-Kurakura, being anxious to get the fish, was bailing away at the water side as hard as he could go, but having no calabash had to make use of his purse [scrotum], which was very large. And while thus bending down, he was so preoccupied that he did not hear the footfall of Kororomanna coming up behind.

The latter, not knowing what sort of a creature it was, stuck him twice in the back with an arrow, but Huta-Kurakura, thinking it to be a cow-fly (*Tabanus*), just slapped the spot where he felt it. When, however, he found himself stuck a third time, he turned round and, seeing who it was, became so enraged that he seized the wanderer and hurled him into a piece of wood with such force that only his eye projected from out the timber.

Anxious to be freed from his unenviable position Kororomanna offered everything he could think of—crystals, rattles, paiwarri [cassava-based liquor], women, etc., but the Spirit wanted none of them. As a last chance, he offered tobacco, and this the Hebu eagerly accepted, the result being that they fast became good friends. They then both emptied the pond and collected a heap of fish, much too large for Kororomanna to carry home. So the Spirit in some peculiar way bound them all up into quite a small bundle, small enough for Kororomanna to carry in his hand.

Kororomanna now soon managed to find the right path home, because each and every animal that he met gave him news of his mother. One after the other, he met a rat with a potato, an acouri with cassava root, a labba with a yam, a deer with a cassava leaf, a kushi-ant with a similar leaf on its head, and a bush-cow (tapir) eating a pineapple.

And as he asked each in turn whence it had come, the animal said, "I have been to your mother, and have begged potato, cassava, yam, and other things from her."

When at length he reached home, and his wife and mother asked what he had brought, he told them a lot of fish, and they laughed right heartily at what they thought was his little joke. So he bade them open the parcel, and as they opened it, sure enough out came fish after fish, small and large, fish of all kinds, so many in fact that the house speedily became filled, and the occupants had to shift outside.

KOMATARI, THE FIRST MEDICINE MAN

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Roth, Walter E. *An Inquiry into the Animism and Folk-Lore of the Guiana Indians*. Thirtieth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 1908–1909. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1915, 336–341.

Date: ca. 1915

Original Source: Warrau

National Origin: Native American

The following tale relates the origin of shamanism among the Warrau. Their shamans, as is the case in those other cultures in which this supernatural specialist exists, are both venerated and feared. Among the Warrau, in fact, even the bones of dead shamans are regarded as power-laden objects. Two important features of Warrau shamanism are emphasized in “Komatari, The First Medicine Man”: (1) the need for shamans to gain knowledge through their own communion with the spirits and (2) the central role played by tobacco. Tobacco juice is used as an intoxicant to induce the trances needed first to pass into trance and contact the Hebus (bush spirits) and later to bring on the state needed for some healing rituals. The **myth** of Komatari further rationalizes the fact that shamans’ efforts do not always succeed.

Komatari wanted some tobacco, but as there was none about, he searched for it. He had heard of its growing on an island out at sea, so he went down to the shore, where he came across a house with a man inside. Approaching him, Komatari said, “I am poor, and want tobacco. I hear you have it growing on an island. Could you get me some plants?”

While thus engaged in conversation, the hummingbird came along, and said, “Hullo! What are you two talking about?”

“Tobacco: we want tobacco,” they replied.

“Oh, is that all?” the little bird said; “why, I’ll go and fetch some for you. I shall be making a start before the morning, and you can expect me back just as the sun begins to turn that way” pointing in a direction which would indicate about an hour after midday.

The hummingbird kept his word, and returned as promised, but when the house-master saw what he had brought back, he said, “Why, that is no tobacco leaf: it is only the tobacco flower,” and, turning to Komatari, he said, “I will go myself.” The house-master started next morning for the same island, telling Komatari to expect him back as soon as the hummingbird, that is, shortly after midday. But as a matter of fact, he never returned until the following morning.

The cause of the delay was that so many people were watching the tobacco that he had to wait for nightfall before he could steal the leaves.

However, giving Komatari some of the seed, he told him to go down to the waterside, where he would find his corial [dugout canoe], and if he looked inside he would see two or three tobacco leaves, which he might take. Komatari did as directed, but instead of two or three leaves he found the whole corial full of them. He helped himself to as many as would fill a quake [basket] and went home.

Before taking his departure, however, the house-master said, "I have a name, but will not mention it: when you know all about Piai [that is, 'Medicine'] you will be able to find it out for yourself."

At last Komatari reached home, and naturally all his friends came to pay him a visit, to get some of the tobacco; but he was shrewd, kept the tobacco under the roof [that is, hanging up to dry in the ordinary manner] in charge of the marabuntas [wasps], left home very early of a morning, and only returned late, so as not to be at home when anybody called.

But at last a visitor came and made a very long stay purposely. They thus met, Komatari gave him three leaves, and sent him away. Next day, another man paid him a visit, but Komatari had already left, and only marabuntas were there—many marabuntas, all of different kinds. The visitor went home, and, taking some fish with him, returned to Komatari's place and asked the marabuntas to let him have some tobacco, at the same time showing them his fish and saying, "Look! this is the payment." And so, while the marabuntas all swarmed down upon the fish, the man climbed up, got what tobacco he wanted, and cleared out.

When Komatari got home, he also got up under the roof where the tobacco was stored, but found much of it missing, so he placed what was left elsewhere, and drove away all the marabuntas except one particular kind, a black variety, the *oro* [yiseri of the Arawaks], which he made his watchmen.

Starting now on his field, he cut it day after day, and after burning it [clearing the stubble by setting it on fire], at last planted his tobacco. When he saw that it was beginning to thrive, he built a piai-house, and going round his field, looked out for a calabash tree; he found one full of gourds.

He took one, but on turning round, he saw a Hebu, who, after asking whether it belonged to him and getting "Yes" for an answer, said, "All right. So long as the calabash is yours, you may have the whole tree. I have a name, but will not tell it you. I want to see whether you learn the piai business well. If you do, you will be able to find it out for yourself."

On reaching home with the calabash, Komatari started cleaning it out. When cleaned, another Hebu came along and asked him what he intended doing with it, but Komatari would not tell him. You see this particular Hebu was the one who comes to kill people and so was afraid of the power of the *mar-aka* [rattle], which is made from this very calabash.

After scooping out and cleaning the calabash, Komatari went into the bush and, traveling along, came upon a creek with swiftly flowing water: it was here that he cut the timber from out of which he next shaped the handle for the rattle and cut the sticks to make his special fire with.

Returning home once more, he fastened the handle in the gourd, but was not satisfied with the result: the rattle did not look as it should. So he hung it up on the beam of his pi'ai-house, and went once more into the bush, where he again met the killing Hebu, who repeated his question as to what Komatari intended doing with the rattle, but, as before, the latter would not tell him.

Passing along, and hearing a noise as of many people talking, Komatari proceeded in the direction whence the sound came, and found a number of Hebus fastening various parrot feathers into cotton-twine. How pretty this ornament would look tied on his calabash left hanging up at home, was Komatari's first thought when he saw what they were doing. On asking, the ornament was given him.

The Hebu who gave it to him said, "I have a name, but I will not tell it to you. You can find it out for yourself, if you should ever become a good pi'ai-man." Komatari next asked him for another kind of cotton-plait, with feathers different from those on the one mentioned, to wear as a hat, but the Hebu said he had none, though he would get it at the next house.

So Komatari went to the next house, saw the Hebu house-master, asked for the cotton-plait for the hat, and in the same manner as before, this Hebu also said to him, "I have a name, but I will not tell it to you. You must find it out for yourself when you are a medicine-man."

Komatari went home now, and arranged the feathered cotton on top of the calabash, when who should put in an appearance again but the killing Hebu. When he again asked Komatari what he intended doing with the calabash, the latter refused to tell him, as before.

But Komatari was not satisfied even now, because when he shook the gourd it did not rattle. As yet it had no stones in it. So Komatari went into the bush again, and followed creek after creek, and at last came to a big river. There he met another Hebu, who got the proper stones that were wanted.

When he had given them to Komatari, he said, like the others, "I have a name, but I will not tell it to you. You must find it out for yourself when you are a medicine-man." Komatari again made his way home and put the stones into the calabash. Just as he was finishing the work the killing Hebu again appeared, asking him as before, what he intended doing with the calabash. The answer was, "This is to kill you with, and to prevent you killing other people," and as Komatari shook the calabash, which was now a finished maraka rattle, the Hebu began to tremble and stagger and almost fell, but he managed to pick himself up and get away just in the nick of time.

He ran to his Aijamo [head-man, chief] and said, "There is a man who has an object with which he nearly killed me and I must get my payment [that is, my revenge]. I am going back to kill him."

“All right!” said the Aijamo, “I will go with you.” So they went together, and brought sickness to a friend and neighbor of Komatari’s; for they were afraid of attacking Komatari himself. However, his sick friend sent for him. Komatari went, and played the maraka on him, and took out his sickness. So the killing Hebu made another man ill, but Komatari took the disease out of him also. The Hebu next afflicted a third victim, and again Komatari was victorious. But when he attacked a fourth one, Komatari was out hunting.

When he returned, the poor fellow was in a bad enough condition: so strong did the sickness come, that Komatari could not cure him—he had “stood too long.” The killing Hebu then explained to Komatari that it would always be thus: some patients he (Komatari) could save, and other patients he could not.

Of course Komatari had been able to find out the names of all the Hebus that had lent him assistance in the manufacture of his maraka, and it is to these different Hebus whom the present-day medicine-men are said to “sing” and call on when they cure the sick. For instance the name of the Hebu that procured the tobacco seeds for Komatari was Wau-uno “the white crane.”

THE NIGHT OWL AND HIS BAT BROTHERS-IN-LAW

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Roth, Walter E. *An Inquiry into the Animism and Folk-Lore of the Guiana Indians*. Thirtieth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 1908–1909. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1915, 276.

Date: ca. 1915

Original Source: Warrau

National Origin: Native American

The following **myth** explains the origins of both natural and supernatural phenomena. In the natural category, the myth asserts that the vampire bat seeks revenge on humans and their domestic animals by sucking their blood, while in the realm of supernatural cause and effect, the myth establishes the cry of the night owl as a portent of death.

Boku-boku, the Night-owl, married the bats’ sister, and often took his brothers with him at night to rob peoples’ houses. One night they came across a house where the people were drying fish on a babracote: just to frighten them, they all sang out, *boku! boku! boku!*—this made the occupants run out into the bush, and so gave the bats their opportunity for stealing the fish.

The trio played the same trick at many a settlement, until one day the owl told them he had to travel about for a while, and that during his absence they

must behave themselves, and stay indoors at night, as otherwise trouble would be sure to happen. But no sooner had Boku-boku turned his back, than the bats, unable to resist temptation, continued their evil courses.

They got to a place one night where the fish were being dried, but having no owl with them on this occasion, they could not shout *boku! boku! boku!* as loudly as they did before; hence, the people not being so frightened now, ran away only a little distance, just far enough to be able to watch everything and to see that it was only the bats who were stealing their food. But the bats, remaining undisturbed, thought they could now do what they liked with impunity, and hence returned again upon the following evening, when the people remained just as they were, some seated, some lying in their hammocks.

The bats still thought of course that nothing bad could happen them, and were laughing *chi! chi! chi!* for very joy. But the house master took out his bow and arrow, the latter tipped with a knob of wax, with which he shot one of them on the rump, stunning it.

The other bat, escaping into the forest, met Boku-boku, who had just returned from his travels, and to whom he narrated the circumstances of his brother's untimely death. Nothing daunted, the two returned to hunt that night, and on this occasion the noise of their voices, now that it included the owl's, created such a stir that the folk ran as before into the bush, while Boku-boku and his brother-in-law stole the fish. But lying on the babracote was the dead bat, which they took home with them, and there they soundly smacked him on the spot where he had been struck with the arrow: this brought him round, the fire not having withered him up beyond recovery, and he laughed *chi! chi! chi!* on awakening.

And although Boku-boku was prevented accompanying them the following evening, the two bats insisted on repeating their nocturnal excursion: as before, the folk were not frightened, and again one of the bats got shot in his posterior. Next night, the surviving bat returned with Boku-boku, and they found as before upon the babracote, the body of their relative: this they took away with them, but on this occasion, when they smacked the corpse, it never woke—it had been dried too much over the fire.

The surviving bat however continues to take his revenge upon people and sucks them and their fowls, as well as doing other damage, while the presence of Boku-boku, his brother-in-law, invariably means mischief: when heard at night, some one is surely about to sicken and die.

THE EXPLOITS OF KONEHO

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Roth, Walter E. *An Inquiry into the Animism and Folk-Lore of the Guiana Indians.*

Thirtieth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 1908–1909. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1915, 275–278.

Date: ca. 1915

Original Source: Warrau

National Origin: Native American

The following **cycle of animal tales** are modifications of African narratives; they were likely borrowed from Maroon sources (see Suriname Maroon, pages 324–331). Konehu (from Spanish, *conejo*, “rabbit”) is a widely spread **trickster** figure in the Western hemisphere, partly owing his origins to contact between African-descended and Native American cultures (see, for example, the Creek tales “Rabbit Gets a Turkey for Wildcat,” page 63, “Rabbit Steals Fire,” page 64, and “Rabbit Fools Alligator,” page 65). The fact that the Warrau label any rogue who uses guile and wit to get the better of his neighbors and overcome adversity “Konehu” attests to the vitality of these tales in the Warrau repertoire. The **motif** of concealing his murder of the jaguar cubs has precedents in the trickster tales of continental Africa (see, for example, “The Lion and the Jackal,” Volume 1, page 144).

There was once a celebrated Konehu, walking along the bush, when he met a female Tiger [jaguar]. The latter, who was hungry, wanted to go out hunting, but did not like to leave her three little cubs at home without anyone in charge of the place. So Konehu agreed to look after the youngsters while Tiger searched for game.

Things went on very well for some time, Tiger returning home each evening with meat which she shared with Konehu. But on a certain day, one of the cubs bit Konehu, so he killed it, threw the body away, and said nothing to the mother when she returned. In fact, Konehu as usual brought from out of the hollow log one cub after another for the mother to suckle, but on this occasion he brought out the same cub twice, and the mother was none the wiser.

Next day, another cub bit Konehu. So he killed it, threw the body away as before, and said nothing, but in the evening brought out the remaining cub three times to be fed, and its mother was none the wiser.

Next day, however, the surviving whelp bit Konehu. So he killed it, left its carcass close by the hollow log, and made tracks elsewhere. He knew that Tiger would follow him, so he traveled a long, long way before he rested. He next built a house on very high posts, posts too high for anyone to climb up, and then started making the roof which was just as high up again. Indeed, to get up all that way, he built a long ladder. And he started tying on the thatch.

In the meantime, Tiger, on her return home, found her one dead cub but no signs of the other two. There was also no Konehu. She therefore was vexed much, and determined to follow and kill him. She traveled night and day, and

went on and on until she came to the house which Konehu was building, and there she saw him on top thatching the roof. "Hullo!" she growls, "What are you doing up there? I am come to eat you."

But Konehu does not worry himself. He only says, "You had better look out for yourself, because there is a big sea coming. I am building this house to save myself. You had better join me. Come up the ladder." Tiger thereupon clammers up the ladder and gets close to Konehu who is tying on the thatch with the itir-iti strand. As soon as she got too uncomfortably close to him, he suddenly exclaimed, "Oh! What a pity! I have just dropped a piece of the tying strand. Wait up here a minute, while I go down and fetch it."

This was a lie, for directly he reached the ground, he removed the ladder, leaving Tiger helpless on the roof. Again Konehu made tracks and walked about. He walked so far that he got tired. He then sat down and started making a quake, an openwork basket. Now, what did Tiger do? When she found the ladder gone, she scrambled up and under the roof, over and among the beams and rafters, but she could not get down. At last, hunger compelled her to say, "I must live, or I must die." So she made a big jump and reached the ground safely.

She was vexed much, and determined upon following and killing Konehu. She traveled night and day, and went on and on until she reached the spot where Konehu was seated, busily occupied in making his quake. "Hullo!" she growls, "What are you doing? I am come to eat you." Konehu however remained quite cool and quiet. He stuck to his story about the big sea coming, and swore that he was making the quake so that when completed he could get inside and haul himself up to the top most branch of a big mora tree that was close by.

Silly Tiger then believed what he told her, and said she would like to get into the basket also. Konehu therefore took her measure and increased the size of the basket. When finished, he told her to get inside, but no sooner had she comfortably fixed herself, than he drew the sides of the quake together, and sewed them up. Tiger was now prisoner. Fixing a long vine-rope to the basket, Konehu threw it over the topmost branch of the mora tree, pulled on its free end, left his victim dangling in mid-air, and made tracks.

Tiger was now in a bad way, for the more she roared the more did all the other animals get frightened and run away. At last, one of the most inquisitive, a little monkey, wanting to know what all the noise was about, climbed down the vine-rope and opened the basket. No sooner had he done so, than out jumped Tiger and both fell to the ground, where the monkey's only reward was to be eaten.

Yes, Tiger was vexed much and determined upon following and killing Konehu. She wandered on and on, and at last met him upon the banks of a river. Directly he saw her coming he commenced looking down into the water very hard, as if he was examining something very carefully. "Hullo!" growled Tiger. "What are you looking at? I am come to eat you."

“Nonsense, woman,” says Konehu. “Look, look down there. Don’t you see that beautiful yellow stone [gold]? If you could only fetch it you would be a rich woman. You would have a new husband, and get new cubs.”

Now what he was pointing at in the water was only the reflection of the sun overhead. Tiger, however, being both silly and greedy, dived in, and quickly came up to the surface to breathe.

“Oh!” he tells her, “you must go down deeper.” So she jumps in again, and stays under much longer. When she again appears on the surface, Konehu reiterates “You haven’t gone deep enough.” And so the game goes on, she being fooled every time about not having stayed below long enough.

She makes a last effort to dive under a very long time, when Konehu takes the opportunity of making good his escape. Tiger now sees that she has been tricked. She is vexed much and is more than ever determined to follow and kill Konehu, who by this time knows what to expect.

So he travels far, far until he comes to a high hill on the top of which he balances a big rock, and at the bottom of which he digs a deep pit. By and by, Tiger comes along, and seeing Konehu on top of the hill, looks up at him and says, “Hullo! What are you doing up there? I am come to eat you.” But Konehu puts his arms around the rock, and says it is a large piece of meat, which he will throw down to her if she lies quietly in the pit. And the silly, greedy Tiger believes him again, does just what he tells her, and waits for the meat to come. Soon, bumpy, bumpy, down the hill comes the big rock, faster and faster it speeds, until falling on Tiger, it kills and buries her.

Konehu was a lazy man, and would not labor for his living. He was hungry. One fine morning he sat at the foot of a high overhanging cliff, waiting for some one to come along. By and by he saw a company of men approaching. They had been out hunting, and were bringing along a quantity of game.

Konehu then picked up a long wooden pole, and placing it against the side of the cliff after the manner of a brace, began pressing it into position just as the huntsmen came up. In reply to their inquiry as to why he was pressing so hard upon the pole, Konehu said, “Can’t you see that the mountain is falling over, and that if I don’t brace it up, it will come down and destroy all of us? Look up and see it moving! Come, take my place, and let me have a little rest. I have been shoving at it all the morning.”

The huntsmen accordingly gazed up the wall of the precipice, and seeing the clouds moving over the top of it, indeed thought that the cliff was about to fall. So dropping their quarry on the ground, they all together started pressing on the timber, and continued pressing, and pressed harder, until by the time the sun was about to sink, they were so exhausted that they could press no longer. They satisfied their conscience by saying that whether the cliff overwhelmed them or not, it would not be their fault. They therefore let go the timber and turned around to pick up all their game and provisions. But these had all disappeared. And so had Konehu!

On another occasion Konehu was again hungry, but the people all about knew what a tricky man he was, and refused to give him anything to eat, unless he paid or worked for it. He had nothing to give, so he had to work.

He asked for food at a certain house, and the house-master told him to pound some rice. He pounded away until late in the afternoon. The master came to see how much rice had been cleaned, but was astonished to find so small an amount resulting from the large quantity that had been handed over in the morning.

The master gave Konehu the same quantity to pound next day, and in the afternoon there was again a marked shortage, so he became very angry and sent Konehu away. That very night, Konehu cooked rice for supper. Instead of a solid heavy-wood pounder, he had used a hollow-bamboo one, and the more he pounded the rice with it, the quicker it became filled.

One day Konehu met a man carrying two quakes of yams. The yams looked just splendid, and Konehu, not having any of his own, determined on possessing himself of them. "Those are fine yams," he said, "what are you going to do with them?"

On learning that they were being taken up the river for sale at the next settlement, Konehu said that he knew of another settlement where such beautiful yams would fetch a far higher price, and that if they were handed over to his care he, Konehu, would negotiate the business to the better advantage just for friendship's sake. Once they were in his possession, however, Konehu said good-bye to the stranger, and brought them home for his wife to cook. All that he had said about selling them at a big price was a lie.

Soon after the very same man whom he had cheated came up to the house and threatened to kill him. But Konehu managed to talk "sweet-mouth" and soothed his anger by telling him that if he waited a while, he would give him some nice pepper-pot.

Going into that portion of the lodge which was screened off for the women-folk, he told his wife to shriek and scream as if he were killing her. She did what she was bid. Konehu brought out some pepper-pot, which he placed before the stranger.

The man tasted and was enchanted with it. "That is a fine pepper-pot. What did you make it from?" he says.

"Just out of my wife's breast," replied Konehu. "Didn't you hear her yell when I cut it off?" The foolish man went back to his own home, and seizing his wife, gashed her breast to pieces, but the result was that she bled to death, and he recognized only too late that he had again been tricked.

The way in which Konehu managed to get the advantage of everybody soon spread abroad. Among others, it reached the ear of a head-man at one of the settlements. This man had a big field and several wives: he was indeed a rich man. He prided himself on being very clever and knowing everything: he knew all about the history of his tribe, and by looking at a certain star he could tell

the proper time to visit the coast when the crabs were “on the march.” In fact, he knew he was shrewder than Konehu, and publicly said so.

Now, Konehu heard of this, and taking up a position on the path leading to this individual’s cassava field, waited for the owner to come along. As soon as he heard footsteps approaching, he loosed his bowels, and tearing a “cap” from off the shoot of a “trolley” palm, carefully placed it point upwards on the ground, over the dung, at the same time pressing his palms around the edge just as if there was some live animal underneath.

When a few feet distant, the owner saw Konehu in this extraordinary attitude, he asked him what he was doing. “I have just caught a bird here,” says Konehu, “and am afraid of it getting away. Do you happen to have a quack with you?”

Not suspecting any trickery, the man told him that if he liked to go round to his house, he could have the quack which he would find hanging up on one of the posts. So he puts down his bow, arrows, and pegall [basket], and Konehu shows him how to hold the trolley cap tightly down and prevent the wonderful bird escaping.

Konehu takes up the bow and arrows, marches off to the man’s dwelling, and makes himself quite at home with both the eatables and the women: indeed, he spends a gloriously happy time there. But as for the man watching over the wonderful bird, hour after hour passed and he finally felt so weary that he tipped up one edge of the trolley cap, and saw that he had indeed been outwitted by the very man he had boasted to despise.

The time at last arrived when mere mention of Konehu’s name made every-one spit. All had been fooled by him at some time or another, and now left him strictly to himself.

His wife went off with another man. Poor Konehu did not know how to clean the house, which became more and more dilapidated; he knew nothing about cooking, he had no cassava, and when he did manage to go out hunting with bow and arrow, he invariably met with poor success.

One day, however, he managed to shoot a fine big deer. He ate all of it except one leg, which he barbecued and slung up to one of the beams of his house. Next day, he again managed to secure some game, and so things went on, his luck, day after day, not only continuing but increasing.

More than this, every time he reached home in the afternoon, there he found the fire lighted, the pepper-pot already boiled, everything tidied up and cleaned, and yet not a soul was to be seen. He became curious. So instead of going hunting out back one morning, he hid himself behind a big tree whence he could observe everything taking place in the house without himself being seen. He waited and waited.

By and by he saw the deer leg change into a beautiful woman, and he then knew who it was that had been minding him so carefully. He rushed forward and held her fast. He wanted her to be his wife, but she resolutely declined, though she promised to remain and continue as his benefactress.

He therefore built another house, adjoining his, just for her especial use. After a time, she changed her mind about becoming his wife. She had only refused his offer before, because she was afraid he might tell his friends and relatives who she was—the offspring of a deer's foot—the shame and disgrace of which she felt she could never face. The bargain was accordingly struck that so long as he held his tongue about her antecedents, she would remain with him as his spouse: if he betrayed her, she would punish him.

They were happy together for a long time, and everything prospered. Konehu's luck in hunting and fishing, as well as his abundance of provisions, became now almost proverbial, but whenever questioned as to how he managed to secure such luck, and what *binas* [charms] he employed, he always remained silent. The neighbors' envy and curiosity were not to be baffled by his silence. They said, "Let us ask Konehu to a *paiwarri*, and make him drunk. Then he will tell us!"

So they held a big feast, and they had many jars of drink, and Konehu, getting beastly intoxicated, told the whole story. When he woke next morning out of his debauchery, he turned his steps homeward: His astonishment was indeed great to find his old house, without any additions, just as dirty and untidy as in his grass-widower days—and, yes, there was the deer-leg still hanging on the cord.

In his anger he determined on eating the venison, but when he struck his knife in, all the blood gushed forth. This sobered him, and he left the house to become a wanderer. He may be here today, and gone tomorrow. Yes, indeed, there are so many Konehus [that is, rogues and vagabonds] wandering about the world now, that it is very difficult to recognize which one is our old friend.

MEXICO AND CENTRAL AMERICA

BRIBRI

HOW THE FIRST BRIBRI INDIANS WERE BORN

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: de Fábrega, H. Pittier. "Folklore of the Bribri and Brunka Indians in Costa Rica." *Journal of American Folklore* 16 (1903): 3–4.

Date: ca. 1903

Original Source: Bribri

National Origin: Native American

The Bribri's traditional homeland was on the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica located in Central America between Nicaragua to the north and Panama to the south. This **myth** of human origin establishes the territorial rights of the Bribri and the neighboring Brurán, and explains features of the natural environment. The Arari River is one of the largest waterways in the ancestral territory of the Bribri. The Djiri is a tributary of the Arari, and Torok-hu lies opposite its mouth.

In those far-away times, Sibû once thought what he could do to break up the seed of our kin, which he kept hidden without avail in a certain place. Then he made a bet with Jáburu, and they agreed that they would throw two cacao pods at each other, and that he should lose in whose hands the pod of cacao would break. And as Sibû did not want to lose again the seed of our kin, and let Jáburu have it, for that was the stake they were going to play for, he willed that he would choose for himself the green cacao, and give the ripe one to Jáburu. They were to throw four times.

Jáburu placed himself beyond the Arari, at the mouth of Djiri, while Sibû remained on the opposite side at Torok-hu. And Jáburu threw his pod twice, and

the next time it broke in his hands, so that he lost the wager. This happened at dawn, and the angry Jáburu then proceeded to warm his chocolate, and to have the monkey, his *bikd-kra* or servant, serve it hot to him. But he, in trying to be quick, kicked the pot, and upset the hot chocolate. And this is how the warm spring near Torok-hu was formed. And there, where the hot water now remains, Jáburu had his large pot, and since dawn came upon him, he had to abandon it.

Just at this time our kin were born in human form. And as our forefathers were lying down on the stone banks which are still found there, they saw the peccaries going by. They went after them, and thus it was that they discovered the way over the cordillera. They got to the other side, and there they found out that the hogs had turned into men like themselves. And these are the *Brurán* people [neighbors of the Bribri].

THE TALE OF OUR DYING AWAY

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: de Fábrega, H. Pittier. "Folklore of the Bribri and Brunka Indians in Costa Rica." *Journal of American Folklore* 16 (1903): 4.

Date: ca. 1903

Original Source: Bribri

National Origin: Native American

In addition to explaining features of the physical environment, such as the white spots near the top of a local mountain and behavioral taboos such as the avoidance of certain areas, the following **myth** sets the tone for an indigenous worldview. The animal world, like some of the deities in the Bribri pantheon, conspires against human beings and threatens their continued existence.

Our forefathers told us that in far-away times, when we lived in other countries, the gods allowed us to be eaten by birds and animals. Once upon a time, when many of our people were playing on a plain, there came flying a mighty eagle, and he caught one of our kin and blood, and threw him into a large basket he was carrying. He carried him away to the top of the Kamuk, where he fell asleep, because he was very tired. At that time the eagle never thought of eating up our kinsman. On the morn, he flew again, carrying off his prey far away to the peak of Nëmósul, where he rested, without thinking yet of eating him.

Again he flew away, far away, and got to the ridge of Nëmóie, where he met with powerful jaguars. And he told them how he had brought the man.

One of the jaguars then proposed to him that they should eat the man together. The eagle consented, and they ate him. They ate him, and after that, the eagle flew up, high up to the top of Nēmóie. And this is the reason why we see white spots near the top of Nēmóie; they are the bones of our kinsman, and there it was that man was eaten for the first time by birds and animals, because the jaguar taught the eagle how to eat him.

Our forefathers also used to say that on the same ridge of Nēmóie there are stones shaped like jaguars. Whenever any one goes there, those stones become alive and true jaguars, because they are not stones at all, but bad spirits.

Such is the tale of our forefathers, and they also used to say, that once upon a time strange men became a prey to the jaguars, on that same ridge of Nēmóie. And this is why we are not permitted to live in these dangerous places.

HOW JÁBURU ATE THE SEED OF OUR KIN

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: de Fábrega, H. Pittier. "Folklore of the Bribri and Brunka Indians in Costa Rica." *Journal of American Folklore* 16 (1903): 2–3.

Date: ca. 1903

Original Source: Bribri

National Origin: Native American

The Bribri are a Native Central American culture who traditionally pursued an agricultural way of life on the coasts and in the mountains of Costa Rica. Their economic concerns with plant life are reflected in the incidents of the following **myth**. According to the research conducted by H. Pittier de Fábrega, the Bribri believed that "every man or animal was originally born from a seed like that of a plant. The seeds of the several races of man were kept in baskets which were entrusted by Sibû [their primary deity] to the keeping of the good deities. The evil ones, on the other hand, were constantly hunting for them" (2), as described in the following narrative.

Surá, the good God, had gone to see his cornfield. While he was away, Jáburu, the evil One, came and ate the seed of our kin which the almighty Sibû had given Surd to take care of. When Surd re-turned home, Jáburu murdered him, and buried his corpse in a hole behind the house; on the grave he planted a cacao tree and a calabash tree.

Then, Sibû the almighty God, resolved also to kill Jáburu. Moving away, he went to Jaburu's house, and talked to him, "O Thou, uncle of mine, let us have our chocolate!"

But Jáburu replied, “I have no chocolate.”

“Do not lie so openly! I have seen thy cacao fruits hanging from the tree, as I was coming.”

“It is good,” answered Jáburu, and, turning to his wives, he said to them “Go and gather cacao, and bring also a calabash,” and then Jáburu spoke again to his wives, “Let Surá’s first crop be roasted for us to drink!” They then roasted and prepared the cacao, and scooped out the calabash to drink the chocolate from.

Then Sibû, the almighty God, willed—and whatever he wills has to be, “May the first cup come to me!” and as it so came to pass, he said, “My uncle, I present this cup to thee, so that thou drinkest!”

Jáburu swallowed the chocolate at once, with such delight that his throat resounded, *tshaaa!*

And he said, “My uncle! I have drunk Surá’s first fruit!” But just at this moment he began to swell, and he swelled and swelled until he blew up.

Then Sibû, the almighty God, picked up again the seed of our kin, which was in Jáburu’s body, and willed, “Let Surá wake up again!” And as it so happened, he gave him back the basket with the seed of our kin to keep.

HOW SIBÛ KILLED SÓRKURA

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: de Fábrega, H. Pittier. “Folklore of the Bribri and Brunka Indians in Costa Rica.” *Journal of American Folklore* 16 (1903): 4–6.

Date: ca. 1903

Original Source: Bribri

National Origin: Native American

de Fábrega notes, “Every time the Indians find in the woods leaves sprinkled with blood, or bones and excrement, the origin of which they cannot explain, they see in them Sórkura’s relics, and turn away with awe; also leaves having the appearance of being spotted with blood, such as frequently occur in certain groups of plants (Araceae, Begonia, Columnea, etc.), are considered to be of the same origin, and are signs of ill-omen for the undertaking they are engaged upon” (6).

The following Bribri **myth** focuses on the origin of these ill omens, but it exhibits many of the characteristics that appear in Native American myth cross-culturally. The most powerful supernatural figure in the narrative is a shape-shifter whose motives often seem capricious and driven by whim rather than reason. The pattern of fours that figures into the plot is common, also. The significance of the skunk’s choice of the

drum over the calabash lies in the fact that the calabash is a rattle used to control the cadence in ritual songs. Declining it in favor of the drum, an instrument of less importance, signifies the character's humility.

Sórkura was in the habit of drinking the water of a spring in which the skunk used to ease his body. Sibû, the almighty God, thought it would be well that Sórkura should kill the skunk. And so it happened: Sórkura went to watch the skunk, killed it, and hung its dead body to dry on the fire, since it was a prophet of ill-omen.

Now, while Sórkura was in the woods, Sibû went to his house. Sibû went to Sórkura door, and spoke to the spider, "Art thou there, art thou there?"

And the spider answered, "Here I am, here I am."

Sibû also asked the dried skunk, "Art thou there and dry?"

And the dried skunk answered, "Here I am and dry!"

Sibû had brought with him a cotton apron. He blew on the skunk, and it breathed again; it stood on its hind legs like a man, and was ordered to fasten the apron upon his body. Sibû had brought, also, the Singer's Calabash, and he said to the skunk, "O thou, my uncle; thou shalt get the Calabash!"

The skunk replied, "Oh no, I prefer to have the Drum of the Helper!"

Then they played for a long time, until the music pervaded the wilderness. And Sórkura, alone in the woods, said to himself, "What is that resounding *tuit, tuu*, in my house?"

And he thought, "What is it that so resounds? No one would dare to go to my house to bewitch." Then he thought again that he would go and watch. He went home, and hid himself behind a wall, to wait and see.

Sibû came again to play with the skunk. But then Sórkura was waiting for him with his spears. He threw one of these, and Sibû evaded it, so that it stuck fast in a wooden pillar; he threw another, but Sibû warded it off with a pot; the third one fell into the fire, and the fourth went through the door. And then Sibû ran away so swiftly that Sórkura only could grasp the whistle, which remained in his hand. Sórkura's people went after Sibû to kill him, but he could not be found.

Four days passed by, and Sibû was not seen anywhere. When he went back to Sórkura's house, this time under the disguise of an old Sórkura, buried in far-away times, and now covered full with wounds and sores, he said, "I am told that your boys stole Sibû's whistle."

Sórkura answered, "How is it? Dost thou happen to be Sibû?"

Then Sibû spoke again, "Thou willest make fun of me, because I am so old and sore! I Sibû, the Almighty! Could Sibû be like myself?"

But Sórkura insisted, "No, thou mightst be Sibû."

And Sibû went on, "Was Sibû, the Whistle-Bearer, like myself?"

Sórkura went and took the whistle, which was hanging from the brim of a basket. He showed it to Sibû, and Sibû grasped it; but Sórkura did not loose the

string. Then Sibû spoke once more, and said, "The good gods manifest good virtues: what you have done is wrong! Let the string go."

But Sórkura said, "No."

Sibû then willed, "May he let me have the whistle! May he look back into the house!" And as this happened, Sibû ran away and ran on whistling all the while.

Meanwhile Sórkura thought he would go and set him an ambush on the path. He took four of his spears and his shield, hung his conch upon a string around his body, and said to his people, "I will go and kill Sibû; when you hear my conch resound, Sibû shall be dead. Then you are to warm up my cacao, as I will soon be back." He then went and waited for Sibû to pass by, and when Sibû came along, he threw one of his spears at him.

But Sibû had on the back of his head another ear, which warned him that some one was going to shoot at him. The spear fell noisily on his side. Sórkura made another throw, but without effect. And now Sibû took one of the spears in his hand, and threw it at Sórkura, who received it on his shield. Then Sibû willed, "I will kill Sórkura; may he look over his shield!" Then he took a new aim, and Sórkura was shot just in the middle of his face. And Sibû took the conch, and blew: *Tuit, tuu*, so that the woods resounded, and he cut Sórkura body into pieces with his knife, and made it into flesh, bones, blood, and bowels, which ever since have been things of ill-omen to us.

Sórkura's people waited long, and kept his chocolate warm for him; but he never came back. Sibû had killed Sórkura!

MAYA

THE MAYA CREATION

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Spence, Lewis. *The Popol Vuh: The Mythic and Heroic Sagas of the Kichés of Central America*. London: David Nutt, 1908. 217–219.

Date: pre-1500 C.E.

Original Source: Maya

National Origin: Native American

Over the course of approximately 3,000 years, the Maya developed a sophisticated, urban civilization that dominated an area extending from southern Mexico and the Yucatan Peninsula into the modern Central American nations of Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. Contemporary Maya descendants of the classical civilization still reside throughout this area. The *Popol Vuh*, excerpts of which comprise the following narratives, is a collection of Guatemalan Mayan **myths** copied in the mid-sixteenth century from documents originally written during the post-Classical period (1000–1400 C.E.) using the Quiché writing system. The following creation myth details the wrath of the divine creator Hurakan at the neglect displayed by his first creations.

Over a universe wrapped in the gloom of a dense and primeval night passed the god Hurakan, the mighty wind. He called out “earth,” and the solid land appeared. The chief gods took counsel; they were Hurakan, Gucumatz, the serpent covered with green feathers, and Xpiyacoc and Xmucane, the mother and father gods. As the result of their deliberations animals were created. But as yet man was not.

To supply the deficiency the divine beings resolved to create manikins carved out of wood. But these soon incurred the displeasure of the gods, who, irritated by their lack of reverence, resolved to destroy them. Then by the will of Hurakan, the Heart of Heaven, the waters were swollen, and a great flood came upon the manikins of wood. They were drowned and a thick resin fell from heaven. The bird Xecotcovach tore out their eyes; the bird Camulatz cut off their heads; the bird Cotzbalam devoured their flesh; the bird Tecumbalam broke their bones and sinews and ground them into powder.

Because they had not thought on Hurakan, therefore, the face of the earth grew dark, and a pouring rain commenced, raining by day and by night. Then all sorts of beings, great and small, gathered together to abuse the men to their faces. The very household utensils and animals jeered at them, their mill-stones, their plates, their cups, their dogs, their hens.

Said the dogs and hens, "Very badly have you treated us, and you have bit-ten us. Now we bite you in turn."

Said the mill-stones (metates used for grinding corn), "Very much were we tormented by you, and daily, daily, night and day, it was *squeak*, *screech*, *screech*, for your sake. Now you shall feel our strength, and we will grind your flesh and make meal of your bodies."

And the dogs upbraided the manikins because they had not been fed, and tore the unhappy images with their teeth.

And the cups and dishes said, "Pain and misery you gave us, smoking our tops and sides, cooking us over the fire burning and hurting us as if we had no feeling. Now it is your turn, and you shall burn."

Then ran the manikins hither and thither in despair. They climbed to the roofs of the houses, but the houses crumbled under their feet; they tried to mount to the tops of the trees, but the trees hurled them from them; they sought refuge in the caverns, but the caverns closed before them. Thus was accomplished the ruin of this race, destined to be overthrown. And it is said that their posterity are the little monkeys who live in the woods.

VUKUB-CAKIX, THE GREAT MACAW

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Spence, Lewis. *The Myths of Mexico and Peru*. London: G. G. Harrap and Company, 1913. Internet Sacred Text Archive <http://www.sacred-texts.com/nam/mmp/mmp1.htm> (April 10, 2007).

Date: pre-1500 C.E.

Original Source: Maya

National Origin: Native American

In his vanity, the demon Vukub-Cakix considered himself the source of all light, the sun and the moon god. Their exploits in serving the will of the gods and cleansing the universe of destructive forces is typical of twin **culture heroes** of **myth**. So, too, is their use of guile rather than brawn in overcoming the superior forces of the demon and his titanic sons.

Ere the earth was quite recovered from the wrathful flood which had descended upon it, there lived a being orgulous and full of pride, called Vukub-Cakix (“Seven times-the-color-of-fire,” the Kiche name for the great macaw bird). His teeth were of emerald, and other parts of him shone with the brilliance of gold and silver. He boasted dreadfully, and his conduct so irritated the other gods that they resolved upon his destruction. His two sons, Zipacna and Cabrakan (Cockspur or Earth-heaper, and Earthquake), were earthquake-gods. These also were prideful and arrogant, and to cause their downfall the gods dispatched the heavenly twins Hun-Apu and Xbalanque to earth, with instructions to chastise the trio.

Vukub-Cakix prided himself upon his possession of the wonderful nanze tree, the tapal, bearing a fruit round, yellow, and aromatic, upon which he breakfasted every morning. One morning he mounted to its summit, whence he could best espy the choicest fruits, when he was surprised and infuriated to observe that two strangers had arrived there before him, and had almost denuded the tree of its produce. On seeing Vukub, Hun-Apu raised a blow-pipe to his mouth and blew a dart at the giant. It struck him on the mouth, and he fell from the top of the tree to the ground. Hun-Apu leapt down upon Vukub and grappled with him, but the giant in terrible anger seized the god by the arm and wrenched it from the body. He then returned to his house, where he was met by his wife, Chimalmat, who inquired for what reason he roared with pain. In reply he pointed to his mouth, and so full of anger was he against Hun-Apu that he took the arm he had wrenched from him and hung it over a blazing fire. He then threw himself down to bemoan his injuries, consoling himself, however, with the idea that he had avenged himself upon the disturbers of his peace.

Whilst Vukub-Cakix moaned and howled with the dreadful pain which he felt in his jaw and teeth (for the dart which had pierced him was probably poisoned) the arm of Hun-Apu hung over the fire, and was turned round and round and basted by Vukub’s spouse, Chimalmat. The sun-god rained bitter imprecations upon the interlopers who had penetrated to his paradise and had caused him such woe, and he gave vent to dire threats of what would happen if he succeeded in getting them into his power.

But Hun-Apu and Xbalanque were not minded that Vukub-Cakix should escape so easily, and the recovery of Hun-Apu's arm must be made at all hazards. So they went to consult two great and wise magicians, Xpiyacoc and Xmucane, in whom we see two of the original Kiche creative deities, who advised them to proceed with them in disguise to the dwelling of Vukub, if they wished to recover the lost arm. The old magicians resolved to disguise themselves as doctors, and dressed Hun-Apu and Xbalanque in other garments to represent their sons.

Shortly they arrived at the mansion of Vukub, and while still some way off they could hear his groans and cries. Presenting themselves at the door, they accosted him. They told him that they had heard some one crying out in pain, and that as famous doctors they considered it their duty to ask who was suffering.

Vukub appeared quite satisfied, but closely questioned the old wizards concerning the two young men who accompanied them.

"They are our sons," they replied.

"Good," said Vukub. "Do you think you will be able to cure me?"

"We have no doubt whatever upon that head," answered Xpiyacoc. "You have sustained very bad injuries to your mouth and eyes."

"The demons who shot me with an arrow from their, blow-pipe are the cause of my sufferings," said Vukub. "If you are able to cure me I shall reward you richly."

"Your Highness has many bad teeth, which must be removed," said the wily old magician. "Also the balls of your eyes appear to me to be diseased."

Vukub appeared highly alarmed, but the magicians speedily reassured him.

"It is necessary," said Xpiyacoc, "that we remove your teeth, but we will take care to replace them with grains of maize, which you will find much more agreeable in every way."

The unsuspecting giant agreed to the operation, and very quickly Xpiyacoc, with the help of Xmucane, removed his teeth of emerald, and replaced them by grains of white maize. A change quickly came over the Titan. His brilliancy speedily vanished, and when they removed the balls of his eyes he sank into insensibility and died.

All this time the wife of Vukub was turning Hun-Apu's arm over the fire, but Hun-Apu snatched the limb from above the brazier, and with the help of the magicians replaced it upon his shoulder. The discomfiture of Vukub was then complete. The party left his dwelling feeling that their mission had been accomplished.

But in reality it was only partially accomplished, because Vukub's two sons, Zipacna and Cabrakan, still remained to be dealt with. Zipacna was daily employed in heaping up mountains, while Cabrakan, his brother, shook them in earthquake. The vengeance of Hun-Apu and Xbalanque was first directed against Zipacna, and they conspired with a band of young men to bring about his death.

The young men, four hundred in number, pretended to be engaged in building a house. They cut down a large tree, which they made believe was to be the roof-tree of their dwelling, and waited in a part of the forest through which they knew Zipacna must pass. After a while they could hear the giant crashing through the trees. He came into sight, and when he saw them standing round the giant tree-trunk, which they could not lift, he seemed very much amused.

“What have you there, O little ones?” he said laughing.

“Only a tree, your Highness, which we have felled for the roof tree of a new house we are building.”

“Cannot you carry it?” asked the giant disdainfully.

“No, your Highness,” they made answer; “it is much too heavy to be lifted even by our united efforts.”

With a good-natured laugh the Titan stooped and lifted the great trunk upon his shoulder. Then, bidding them lead the way, he trudged through the forest, evidently not disconcerted in the least by his great burden. Now the young men, incited by Hun-Apu and Xbalanque, had dug a great ditch, which they pretended was to serve for the foundation of their new house. Into this they requested Zipacna to descend, and, scenting no mischief, the giant readily complied. On his reaching the bottom his treacherous acquaintances cast huge trunks of trees upon him, but on hearing them coming down he quickly took refuge in a small side tunnel which the youths had constructed to serve as a cellar beneath their house.

Imagining the giant to be killed, they began at once to express their delight by singing and dancing, and to lend color to his stratagem Zipacna dispatched several friendly ants to the surface with strands of hair, which the young men concluded had been taken from his dead body. Assured by the seeming proof of his death, the youths proceeded to build their house upon the tree-trunks which they imagined covered Zipacna’s body, and, producing a quantity of pulque [alcoholic beverage made from the fermented juice of the “century plant,” the agave], they began to make merry over the end of their enemy. For some hours their new dwelling rang with revelry.

All this time Zipacna, quietly hidden below, was listening to the hubbub and waiting his chance to revenge himself upon those who had entrapped him.

Suddenly arising in his giant might, he cast the house and all its inmates high in the air. The dwelling was utterly demolished, and the band of youths were hurled with such force into the sky that they remained there, and in the stars we call the Pleiades we can still discern them wearily waiting an opportunity to return to earth.

But Hun-Apu and Xbalanque, grieved that their comrades had so perished, resolved that Zipacna must not be permitted to escape so easily. He, carrying the mountains by night, sought his food by day on the shore of the river, where he wandered catching fish and crabs. The brothers made a large artificial crab, which they placed in a cavern at the bottom of a ravine. They then cunningly

undermined a huge mountain, and awaited events. Very soon they saw Zipacna wandering along the side of the river, and asked him where he was going.

“Oh, I am only seeking my daily food,” replied the giant.

“And what may that consist of?” asked the brothers.

“Only of fish and crabs,” replied Zipacna.

“Oh, there is a crab down yonder,” said the crafty brothers, pointing to the bottom of the ravine. “We espied it as we came along. Truly, it is a great crab, and will furnish you with a capital breakfast.”

“Splendid!” cried Zipacna, with glistening eyes. “I must have it at once,” and with one bound he leapt down to where the cunningly contrived crab lay in the cavern.

No sooner had he reached it than Hun-Apu and Xbalanque cast the mountain upon him; but so desperate were his efforts to get free that the brothers feared he might rid himself of the immense weight of earth under which he was buried, and to make sure of his fate they turned him into stone.

Thus at the foot of Mount Meahuan, near Vera Paz, perished the proud Mountain-Maker.

Now only the third of this family of boasters remained, and he was the most proud of any.

“I am the Overturner of Mountains!” said he.

But Hun-Apu and Xbalanque had made up their minds that not one of the race of Vukub should be left alive.

At the moment when they were plotting the overthrow of Cabrakan he was occupied in moving mountains. He seized the mountains by their bases and, exerting his mighty strength, cast them into the air; and of the smaller mountains he took no account at all. While he was so employed he met the brothers, who greeted him cordially.

“Good day, Cabrakan,” said they. “What may you be doing?”

“Bah! nothing at all,” replied the giant. “Cannot you see that I am throwing the mountains about, which is my usual occupation? And who may you be that ask such stupid questions? What are your names?”

“We have no names,” replied they. “We are only hunters, and here we have our blow-pipes, with which we shoot the birds that live in these mountains. So you see that we do not require names, as we meet no one.”

Cabrakan looked at the brothers disdainfully, and was about to depart when they said to him, “Stay; we should like to behold these mountain-throwing feats of yours.”

This aroused the pride of Cabrakan.

“Well, since you wish it,” said he, “I will show you how I can move a really great mountain. Now, choose the one you would like to see me destroy, and before you are aware of it I shall have reduced it to dust.”

Hun-Apu looked around him, and espying a great peak pointed toward it. “Do you think you could overthrow that mountain?” he asked.

“Without the least difficulty,” replied Cabrakan, with a great laugh. “Let us go toward it.”

“But first you must eat,” said Hun-Apu. “You have had no food since morning, and so great a feat can hardly be accomplished fasting.”

The giant smacked his lips. “You are right” he said, with a hungry look. Cabrakan was one of those people who are always hungry. “But what have you to give me?”

“We have nothing with us,” said Hun-Apu.

“Umph!” growled Cabrakan, “you are a pretty fellow. You ask me what I will have to eat, and then tell me you have nothing,” and in his anger he seized one of the smaller mountains and threw it into the sea, so that the waves splashed up to the sky.

“Come,” said Hun-Apu, “don’t get angry. We have our blow-pipes with us, and will shoot a bird for your dinner.”

On hearing this Cabrakan grew somewhat quieter. “Why did you not say so at first?” he growled. “But be quick, because I am hungry.”

Just at that moment a large bird passed overhead, and Hun-Apu and Xbalanque raised their blow-pipes to their mouths. The darts sped swiftly upward, and both of them struck the bird, which came tumbling down through the air, falling at the feet of Cabrakan.

“Wonderful, wonderful!” cried the giant. “You are clever fellows indeed, and, seizing the dead bird, he was going to eat it raw when Hun-Apu stopped him.”

“Wait a moment,” said he. “It will be much nicer when cooked,” and, rubbing two sticks together, he ordered Xbalanque to gather some dry wood, so that a fire was soon blazing. The bird was then suspended over the fire, and in a short time a savory odor mounted to the nostrils of the giant, who stood watching the cooking with hungry eyes and watering lips. Before placing the bird over the fire to cook, however, Hun-Apu had smeared its feathers with a thick coating of mud. The Indians in some parts of Central America still do this, so that when the mud dries with the heat of the fire the feathers will come off with it, leaving the flesh of the bird quite ready to eat. But Hun-Apu had done this with a purpose. The mud that he spread on the feathers was that of a poisoned earth, called *tizate*, the elements of which sank deeply into the flesh of the bird.

When the savory mess was cooked, he handed it to Cabrakan, who speedily devoured it. “Now” said Hun-Apu, “let us go toward that great mountain and see if you can lift it as you boast.”

But already Cabrakan began to feel strange pangs. “What is this?” said he, passing his hand across his brow. “I do not seem to see the mountain you mean.”

“Nonsense,” said Hun-Apu. “Yonder it is, see, to the east there.”

“My eyes seem dim this morning,” replied the giant.

“No, it is not that,” said Hun-Apu. “You have boasted that you could lift this mountain, and now you are afraid to try.”

“I tell you,” said Cabrakan, “that I have difficulty in seeing. Will you lead me to the mountain?”

“Certainly,” said Hun-Apu, giving him his hand, and with several strides they were at the foot of the eminence.

“Now,” said Hun-Apu, “see what you can do, boaster.”

Cabrakan gazed stupidly at the great mass in front of him. His knees shook together so that the sound was like the beating of a war-drum, and the sweat poured from his forehead and ran in a little stream down the side of the mountain.

“Come,” cried Hun-Apu derisively, “are you going to lift the mountain or not?”

“He cannot,” sneered Xbalanque. “I knew he could not.”

Cabrakan shook himself into a final effort to regain his senses, but all to no purpose. The poison rushed through his blood, and with a groan he fell dead before the brothers.

Thus perished the last of the earth-giants of Guatemala, whom Hun-Apu and Xbalanque had been sent to destroy.

THE CALABASH TREE

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Hartman, C. V. “The Story of the Calabash-Tree in the *Popol Vuh*.” *Journal of American Folklore* 20 (1907): 148–150.

Date: pre-1500 C.E.

Original Source: Maya

National Origin: Native American

“The Calabash Tree” is the prequel to “Vukub-Cakix, the Great Macaw” (page 358). Hun-hun-ahpu and Vucub-hun-ahpu are divine athletes who excelled at *juego de pelota* (Spanish, “ball game”) a ritualized pre-Columbian game. Lured to Xibalba by an invitation to a ball game, they were killed and dismembered by Hun-came and Vucub-came (Vukub-Cakix or Vucub-Caquix). The sons of Hun-hun-ahpu, the hero twins Hun-Apu and Xbalanqu, subsequently avenged their father after their miraculous birth from spittle. C. V. Hartman contends that the birth from spittle is a widely distributed **motif** in Native American **myth**.

The two brother wizards Hun-hun-ahpu and Vucub-hun-ahpu were condemned to death by the rulers of the nether world, Hun-came and Vucub-came, on their visiting them, inasmuch as they did not succeed in passing through the ordeals to which they were subjected....

“That is sufficient,” said Hun-came and Vucub-came, “now your days are accomplished! Ye shall die the death! Ye shall cease to exist! Ye shall be rent in pieces and your countenances shall be hid here in this place!”

They were, therefore, hewn in pieces and buried on the spot whereupon the ashes were wont to be cast. But ere that took place, the head of Hun-hun-ahpu was severed from his body and placed, by order of Hun-came and Vucub-came, between the two main branches of a dry tree by the wayside.

Thereupon the tree began to blossom and bear fruit, and the fruit thereof is what we now call “jicarás.” Hun-came and Vucub-came were mightily astonished at the wonder that had taken place. Round fruits were to be seen all along the branches, and shortly it was impossible to distinguish Hun-hun-ahpu’s head from the other fruits on the tree. It took the shape of a calabash. All those who dwelt in the nether regions went out to behold the marvel. The tree was very highly esteemed and prized, for in a moment of time, on their depositing the head of Hun-hun-ahpu in the fork of the tree, it had received life, and they said among themselves, “Do not pluck the fruit of the tree! Do not walk beneath this tree!” Such was the determination of all those who dwell in the nether regions. Now a young girl heard the story of the miracle that had happened. We are now about to narrate how it was that she went to the spot where the tree stood.

Herein is narrated an account of a young virgin, the daughter of a great lord of the name of Cuchumaquic.

A young girl, the daughter of a great lord, Cuchumaquic by name, and of a woman of the name of Xequic (blood), heard, her father speak about the marvelous tree. Astonished at what she had heard she exclaimed, “Why should I not go down to see the tree they are talking about; for, in truth, what they relate is very strange and delightful.”

She went there straightway alone and went up to the foot of the tree, which was just opposite the place where the ash-heap lay. On seeing it she exclaimed in astonishment, “What beautiful fruits, and how very fruitful the tree is! I surely shall not die, shall not perish, if I take one of these fruits.”

Then the skull fixed between the branches spoke and said, “What do you want? These round things are only bones of the dead, but perchance you desire them nevertheless.”

“Yes,” answered the girl, “I should like to have one of those fruits.”

“Stretch out your right hand,” said the skull.

“Gladly,” said the girl, stretching up her right hand towards the skull. The skull thereupon spat right in the middle of her hand. The girl immediately drew back her hand and looked into it, without, however, observing a single trace of the spittle of the skull.

“I have given you a sign,” said the skull, “in my spittle and slaver; this head of mine will never speak any more, for it is only bone; there is no flesh left here. The same shall be the fate of all mighty men whoever they may be.... They are only honored for the sake of their flesh, and when they die human beings are

terrified at the skull, and its progeny is as spittle and slaver. But if they be children of a wise and clever man, the being of the wise man is not terminated but passes to the sons and daughters he has engendered. My being has now passed into you. Rise from the realms of the dead to the earth, in order that you may not die.”

So spoke the head of Hun-hun-ahpu. That was the word of wisdom and the message of Huracan, of Chipacaculha and Raxacaculha, and in accordance with their orders it was done. Then the young girl returned to her home, after hearing many words of counsel and messages.

In a short time she was conscious of being with child as a result of what was only spittle. The children who were born were Hun-hun-ahpu and Xbalanque. Six months afterwards the girl’s father became aware of her being with child, and she was severely reprimanded by him.

Then assembled in the council-chamber Hun-came, Vucub-came, and Cuchumaquic. The last named said, “My daughter is with child by reason of her dishonorable ways of life.” So spoke Cuchumaquic, when he stepped forward before his masters.

“That is sufficient,” they replied; “subject her to cross-examination, that she may confess and we may hear what she has to say in her defense.”

“Good, noble lords,” he replied, and thereupon at once asked his daughter, “Whose is the child thou hast in thy womb?”

She replied, “I am not with child, O my father! No man hath ever approached unto me.”

“Thou hast brought dishonor upon thyself,” was the father’s answer. “Come hither now and carry her away to be sacrificed, and then bring me her heart in a calabash.” This command was given to the owls, who were four in number.

They went straightway and brought a calabash, carried away the girl, taking with them a sharp knife to cut her asunder with.

The girl then said to those who had been sent, “Kill me not, for I have not done any wrong, for the fetus I have in my womb came there of itself; what happened was this: I went out to divert myself by beholding the marvel that had taken place with regard to Hun-hun-ahpu’s head on the ash-heap; do not therefore put me to death!”

The messengers replied, “Well, then, what are we to take with us in the calabash instead of your heart? Did not our masters order that it was to be placed in this calabash? We would gladly set you at liberty.”

“Good,” said she. “This heart does not belong to them ... it shall not be burnt in their sight; put in the calabash the fruit of this tree,” said the girl, and the sap of the tree was red. The sap was tapped into the calabash, and at once it coagulated and formed a round ball. And the hardened sap was placed in the calabash instead of the heart, and in color it was red as blood ... and this tree is called “granapalo colorado” or the blood tree.

MEXICO

TALE OF THE RABBIT

Tradition Bearer: Unknown

Source: Boas, Franz. "Notes on Mexican Folklore." *Journal of American Folklore* 25 (1912): 204–210.

Date: ca. 1912

Original Source: Mexico

National Origin: Mexican

Mexico, south of the United States and north of Guatemala, was the birthplace of several of the most advanced cultures in the Western hemisphere (see, for example, the Maya tales, pages 357–366, and the Nahuatl tales, pages 393–401). With the Spanish conquest in the 1500s, European influence extended into the traditional folktale repertoire. The "Tale of the Rabbit," actually a tale **cycle**, attests to this European and Native American blending. Franz Boas notes that "The people of Pochutla [the village in which he collected the following tale cycle] today speak Spanish, and their folk-lore is based largely on Spanish sources" (204). An important position among the folktales is held by the "Rabbit and Coyote" tales, which are known from Mexico City eastward to the Gulf Coast, and southward to Central America. The following **ordinary tale** contains a number of traditional **tale types**. Among them are "Tarbaby and Rabbit" (AT 175), "The Wolf Dives into the Water for Reflected Cheese" (AT 34), "Holding up the Rock" (AT 1530), and "Hello, house!: Cave Call" (AT 66A).

There was a woman who had a *chile*-garden; and every day she went to watch it, because the Rabbit ate much of it. One day she went, and on the road met an *arriera* [a species of ant], and asked her if she did not

know how to prevent the Rabbit from eating the *chile*. The *arriera* replied that she did not know, and that she should ask her sister the *barendera* [a species of ant], who came behind. She met the *barendera*, and asked her. Then she said that she should make four little monkeys of wax, and that she should nail them up in the opening in the wall where the Rabbit entered, two on each side, and that she should go the next day to see if the Rabbit had fallen into the trap.

She placed the four little monkeys of wax; and the Rabbit arrived, and said to them, "See here, monkey of wax? If you do not let me pass, I'll box your ears"; and he boxed his ears, and his little hand stuck fast.

He said again, "Look here, little monkey of wax! If you don't let me pass, I have another hand, and I'll box your ears again; and he boxed his ears, and the other little hand stuck fast.

He said again, "Look here, little monkey of wax! If you do not let go of my little hands, I'll kick you"; and he kicked him, and his little foot stuck fast.

He said again, "Look here, little monkey of wax! If you don't let go of my hands and of my foot, I'll kick you again. I have another little foot."

They were talking thus when the good little daughter arrived, and said to him, "Ah, it must be you who eats *my chile*. Now you'll pay it to me." She put him in a net which she was carrying, and took him to her house.

When she arrived, she hung him up in the middle of the house, and said, "What shall I do with you?" She thought she would throw boiling water over him; but the lady had no water, and went to fetch it and left the door locked.

The Rabbit was still hanging in the net; but since the house stood by the roadside, it so happened that a Coyote passed by, and the Rabbit, as soon as he saw the Coyote, began to talk, to speak, and said, "How can they want to marry me by force—me, who is so small, and I do not want to marry!"

Then the Coyote drew near, and asked him what he was saying; and Rabbit spoke to him, (asking him) if he (the Coyote) would not place himself in that net, for he himself was caught in the net because they wanted to marry him to a pretty girl, and he did not want to marry. Then the Coyote said to him that he accepted what the Rabbit proposed. The Coyote placed himself in the net, and the Rabbit escaped.

When the dear old woman found the Coyote, she said to him, "Ah, how did the Rabbit turn into a Coyote!" [She] put the pot of water over the fire, and, when it was boiling, she threw it over the Coyote. The Coyote was burnt, but only his backside was burnt. Then the Coyote left, rolling himself on the road, but the Rabbit was on a pitahaya ("dragon fruit" that grows on a variety of cactus) plantation.

When the Coyote passed by, the Rabbit said to him, "Good-day, Uncle Coyote!" and then the Coyote turned to see who spoke to him, and the Coyote said, "Why did you deceive me?"

And the Rabbit replied, "Because they did not find me, they punished you; but really I was about to marry a girl."

Then he said to him, “Better let us eat *pitahayas*,” and threw one down from above. He said to him, “Shut your eyes and open your mouth!” He threw one down, and then another one. The two were clean; but the third one he did not clean, but threw it down with all the spines on it. The Coyote rolled about, and the Rabbit went away.

He saw the Coyote pass by, and said to him, “Coyote, burnt backsides!”

The Coyote said, “What do you say to me?” and the Rabbit replied, “I say to you, that you shall come and help me rock my little sister, who is crying, and my mother is not here.” [Rabbit had put a wasps’ nest in the cradle and covered it with a blanket. The buzzing of the insects was the sound that Rabbit identified as crying].

The Coyote did not reply to this. “You owe me much. You deceived me, saying that I was going to marry, and then you threw me a *pitakaya* with spines, and now I’ll take revenge for what you have done to me.”

He said to him, “But I do not know you, and have never seen you. Maybe those are others, perhaps my brothers.”

And the Coyote said to him, “Then you have brothers?”

“Certainly,” he said to him. “Man alive, who knows which one that may be!”

“And you, what are you doing here?”

“My mother has been away a long time to get *tortillas* to eat, and left me here rocking this little girl. Now I wish that you would stay here in my place, while I go to look for her, that she may come.” The Coyote stayed there.

When the Rabbit left, he said to him, “If you see that my sister does not stop crying, box her ears and leave her.”

The Coyote did so. He got tired of rocking the cradle, and the noise did not stop. He boxed her ears with vigor, and out came a swarm of wasps, who gave the Coyote a good dose [of stinging] and flew away.

The Coyote followed the road, and said to himself, “Where shall I find the Rabbit?” He walked along the road.

The Rabbit spoke to him, and said, “Coyote, burnt backsides?” and the Coyote asked him what he was saying.

The Rabbit said to him that he was asking him to help him pull out a cheese that was there. The Rabbit was in a pond, and the moon was shining and was seen in the water, and this was the cheese which the Rabbit said he was pulling out. The Rabbit left the Coyote there, saying that he was going to rest for a while, because he was very tired. The Coyote began to pull at the cheese; but since he could never do it, he got tired and went on his way.

After that he walked along the road, when the Rabbit spoke to him, and said, “Good-day, Uncle Coyote!”

The Coyote said to him, “Now you won’t escape me, for you have deceived me much.”

“No,” said the Rabbit to him, “it is not I. Since the world has existed I have been placed here in this place, with this stone in my hand”; for the Rabbit, as

soon as he had seen the Coyote, put a large stone into his hand, and said that he had been left right there supporting that stone, for, if he let go of it, the world would be lost.

The Coyote believed him; and the Rabbit said to him, "Sir, will you not help me a little while with this stone, for I am very tired?"

The Coyote took the stone. The Rabbit said to him, "Uncle Coyote, sir? Don't let go of the stone, else the world will be lost."

The Rabbit went away, saying to the Coyote that he would soon return; but the Rabbit did not come back. He went on; and the Coyote, who was tired, let the stone down gradually, and looked at the sky to see if it was coming down. But when he looked and saw that it was not so, he let the stone down until he put it down on the ground.

He left it and went, and said, "Whenever I find the Rabbit, I must kill him, because he has fooled me too much."

The Rabbit placed himself by the wayside, among the reeds. When the Coyote passed by, the Rabbit held a guitar, which, as soon as he saw the Coyote, he began to play, and said, "Good-day, Uncle Coyote!"

The Coyote said to him, "Come down, that we may talk together!"

"No, Uncle Coyote! Indeed, sir, you are much annoyed with me."

The Coyote said to him, "You have deceived me much, and therefore I am annoyed."

"No, Uncle Coyote," he said to him, "I am the best one of all, and, sir, don't be annoyed with me. I know well what has happened, but I did not do those things. My brother, he is a very bad one, it is he who has done all these things. But now he is about to marry, and I am waiting for them. They have been delayed a very long time. Who knows what they are doing! I should like to go and look for them if you would stay here and play the guitar; I'll give you a sign, sir, when the bridal couple are coming. I'll fire some rockets, so that you may know it, sir; and then you must play more strongly, so that they can dance when they come."

The Coyote did so. The Rabbit went. After a little while the Rabbit came and set fire to the reeds. The Coyote, believing that the bridal couple were coming, continued to play and began to dance. Before he knew it, he was in the midst of the flames. He could not escape; and the poor Coyote was burnt, and died.

The Rabbit came to look, and mourned the death of the Coyote, and said to himself, "Poor Uncle Coyote! Now he is dead, indeed, and where shall I go now?"

The Rabbit went to the bank of a river. He could not cross the river, and began to say, "Whoever takes me across may eat me."

He was saying thus, when the Alligator came, and said to him, "I'll take you across."

"Well!" said the Rabbit. He climbed up on the back of the Alligator.

When he came near the other bank, the Alligator said to him, "Now I am going to eat you."

“And don’t you feel any pity,” replied the Rabbit, “to eat such a little fatty as myself?” The Alligator said, “What shall we do?”

“Let us go nearer the bank,” replied the Rabbit, “that you may eat me easily, sir.” Already they were on the bank. The Rabbit said to the Alligator, “Does it not seem to you, sir, that there are some large leaves there? I’ll fetch them; and then I shall throw myself down, that you may not lose anything.”

The Alligator agreed. The Rabbit went, and never came back.

On the other side there were old stubbles; and the Rabbit found only a little piece of field, and thought, “I’ll sell much corn, and to whom shall I sell it? I’ll sell one bushel to Aunt Cockroach, another one to Aunt Hen, one to Uncle Dog, one to Uncle Lion, and one to Uncle Hunter.”

The time came when the corn was to be delivered. The Rabbit had a little ranch; and when he went out to take a walk, he used to lock the door of the ranch. Since, however, he had fooled the Alligator and owed him his life, the Alligator informed himself as to where he lived, and went to place himself near his bed, that the Alligator might eat the Rabbit when he arrived.

The Rabbit was on his guard; and when he arrived, he said, “Good-day, dear House!” The House never replied; but one day when he said, “Good-day, dear House!” the Alligator replied, “Good-day, Rabbit!”

“What? You never answer me, dear House!” He opened the door, looked inside, and, when he saw the back of the Alligator, he said, “What are those pegs that I see here? I am not a guitar-player, and I am not a violinist. I had better go to another ranch!”

There he was when the Cockroach arrived. “Good-day, Uncle Rabbit!”

“Good-day, Aunt Cockroach.”

“I come for my corn.”

“All right, only it is very early. Let us lunch first, and then we will go.”

They were waiting for their lunch when they saw the Hen. The Rabbit said to the Cockroach, “Listen, Aunt Cockroach! Will not the Hen want to eat you?”

“Certainly, where shall I hide?”

The Rabbit said to her, “Madam, hide under this piece of bark here.”

When the Hen arrived, “Good-day, Uncle Rabbit!”

“Good-day, Aunt Hen!”

“I came for my corn.”

“Certainly, let us first take lunch, and then we will go and shell it.” The Hen sat down; and the Rabbit said to her, “Madam, would you not like to eat a cockroach?”

“Certainly,” said the Hen, “where is it?”

The Rabbit showed her the cockroach, and the Rabbit said, “Thus I am getting rid of my troubles.”

The Rabbit and the Hen were talking when they discovered the Dog, who was coming.

The Rabbit said, "Where are you going to hide, madam? For the Dog is coming, and will want to eat you. Hide under this carrying-basket." The Hen hid, and the Dog arrived.

"Good-day, Uncle Rabbit!"

"Good-day, Uncle Dog?"

"I came for my corn."

"Certainly! Sit down for a moment." The Dog seated himself; and the Rabbit said, "Listen, sir! Would you not like to eat a hen?"

"Where is it?"

"It is under this basket." The Dog ate the hen, and continued to talk with the Rabbit.

They were still talking when they saw the Lion; and the Rabbit asked the Dog if he was not afraid that the Lion would eat him.

The Dog said, "I am frightened. Where shall I hide?" and the Dog hid behind the house.

The Lion arrived. "Good-day, Uncle Rabbit!"

"Good-day, Uncle Lion!"

"I came for my corn."

The Rabbit said to him, "Sir, enter for a moment, we will go right away." The Lion entered; and the Rabbit said to him, "I'll tell you something, sir. Would you not like to eat a dog?"

"Why not? Where is it?" The Rabbit showed him where the dog was, and the Lion ate it at once.

There they were still talking when they discovered the Hunter, who was coming; and the Rabbit said, "Will he not want to kill you, sir?"

"Certainly," said the Lion. "Where shall I hide?"

"Hide on the rafter of the house. There he will not see you, sir, even if he should come. He will not do you any harm."

The Hunter arrived. "Good-day, Uncle Rabbit!"

"Good-day, Uncle Hunter!"

"I came for my corn."

"Certainly, Certainly," he said to him. "Come in, sir, and take a lunch first of hot cakes and fresh cheese, and then we will go to shell the corn. This is the only remaining debt that I have. Meanwhile, sir, would you not like to kill a lion?"

The Hunter said "Where is it?" The Rabbit showed him where the lion was, which the Hunter killed. The Hunter killed the lion, and the Rabbit made his escape. When the Hunter came back to the house to look for the Rabbit, he did not find him. The Rabbit had gone away.

He went on, and met a Serpent, who was under a stone and could in no way get out; and she asked every one who passed to pull her out. The Rabbit took pity on her and went to get some levers. He lifted the stone, and the Serpent was able to get out. When she was free, she wanted to eat the Rabbit.

Then he said to her, "Why do you want to do this to me? Haven't I done you a favor in taking you out from under that stone?"

The Serpent said to him, "Certainly, but don't you know that a good deed is repaid by evil deeds?"

"Allow me three witnesses before I die."

When two horses came down, the Rabbit said, "Excuse me, gentle-men! Just one word! Is it true that a good deed is repaid by an evil deed?"

"That is very true," said the Horse, "for formerly I was a good horse for my master. When he was a boy, he loved me well, and fed me well. Now I am old, and he has let me go into the fields without caring how I fare. Thus it is well said that good deeds are repaid by bad ones."

The Serpent said to him, "Now, do you see? You have only two more chances."

When two Steers passed by, the Rabbit said, "Excuse me, gentlemen! Just one word! Is it true that a good deed is repaid by evil ones?"

The Steers said, "Even if it causes sorrow, for once my master considered me a valuable animal. I served him well in my time. I was very obedient. As I served him, he loved me well. Now I am old; I am useless; and he has said that he has let me go to the field to recuperate a little, so that he can kill me."

They went on, and met a Donkey. He was standing on one side of the road, and was very sad. "Friend," said the Rabbit, "is it true that a good deed is repaid by evil ones?"

"Even if it causes sorrow," answered the Donkey, "for I gave good service to my master when he was a boy; and today, when I am old, he does not want to look at me. I just come from receiving a sound beating, which they gave me because I went to see my master."

"There is no help," said the Serpent, "you must die."

They were talking when a Rooster passed by, and he said to him, "Friend, I must die because of a good deed."

"What good deed have you done?" said the Rooster.

"I pulled the Serpent from under a stone, where she had been a long time."

The Rooster said, "How was she?"

The Serpent placed herself just in the same way as she had been under the rock; and he said, "That is the way you were placed!"

The Serpent replied, "Yes."

Then he said, "If you were in this position, stay in it."

The Rabbit replied, "I owe you my life."

He followed on his way; and they were nearing a town, when the Hunter arrived at his house, and saw the Rabbit. "There is no help, I'll kill you."

He put a ball through him, and the Rabbit died. The Hunter took the Rabbit, who was half dead; and the Rabbit said, "Now I believe that a good deed is repaid by evil ones."

THE LONG-LEGS

Tradition Bearer: Unknown

Source: Boas, Franz. "Notes on Mexican Folklore." *Journal of American Folklore* 25 (1912): 219–220.

Date: ca. 1912

Original Source: Mexico

National Origin: Mexican

The following tale demonstrates the postcontact influence of Christianity as it recounts the hierarchy of powers in the universe. The narrative is a Mexican **variant** of "Stronger and Strongest" (AT 203.1).

There was a Long-Legs [a variety of mosquito], and it was very cold. He was sleeping in the foliage of a tree, and on the next day he could not sleep because his foot was broken.

Then said the Long-Legs, "Cold, cold, how strong you are, who have broken my foot!"

Then the Cold said, "But stronger is the Sun, because he heats me."

He went to where the Sun is, and said to him, "Sun, how strong you are, Sun that heats frost, frost that broke my foot!"

"But stronger is the cloud, because it covers me."

"Cloud, how strong you are, cloud that covers sun, sun that heats frost, frost that broke my foot?"

"But stronger is the wind, because it dissolves me."

"Wind, how strong you are, wind that dissolves cloud, cloud that covers sun, sun that heats frost, frost that broke my foot!"

"But stronger is the wall, because it resists me."

"Wall, how strong you are, wall that resists wind, wind that dissolves cloud, cloud that covers sun, sun that heats frost, frost that broke my foot!"

"But stronger is the mouse, because he perforates me."

"Mouse, how strong you are—mouse that perforates wall, wall that resists wind, wind that dissolves cloud, cloud that covers sun, sun that heats frost, frost that broke my foot!"

"But stronger is the cat, because he eats me."

"Cat, how strong you are, cat that eats mouse, mouse that perforates wall, wall that resists wind, wind that dissolves cloud, cloud that covers sun, sun that heats frost, frost that broke my foot!"

"But stronger is the stick, because it kills me."

“Stick, how strong you are, stick that kills cat, cat that eats mouse, mouse that perforates wall, wall that resists wind, wind that dissolves cloud, cloud that covers sun, sun that heats frost, frost that broke my foot!”

“But stronger is the fire, because it burns me.”

“Fire, how strong you are—fire that burns stick, stick that kills cat, cat that eats mouse, mouse that perforates wall, wall that resists wind, wind that dissolves cloud, cloud that covers sun, sun that heats frost, frost that broke my foot!”

“But stronger is the water, because it quenches me.”

“Water, how strong you are, water that quenches fire, fire that burns stick, stick that kills cat, cat that eats mouse, mouse that perforates wall, wall that resists wind, wind that dissolves cloud, cloud that covers sun, sun that heats frost, frost that broke my foot!”

“But stronger is the steer, because he drinks me.”

“Steer, how strong you are, steer that drinks water, water that quenches fire, fire that burns stick, stick that kills cat, cat that eats mouse, mouse that perforates wall, wall that resists wind, wind that dissolves cloud, cloud that covers sun, sun that heats frost, frost that broke my foot!”

“Hut stronger is the knife, because it kills me.”

“Knife, how strong you are, knife that kills steer, steer that drinks water, water that quenches fire, fire that burns stick, stick that kills cat, cat that eats mouse, mouse that perforates wall, wall that resists wind, wind that dissolves cloud, cloud that covers sun, sun that heats frost, frost that broke my foot!”

“But stronger is the black-smith, because he makes me.”

“Blacksmith, how strong you are—blacksmith who makes knife, knife that kills steer, steer that drinks water, water that quenches fire, fire that burns stick, stick that kills cat, cat that eats mouse, mouse that perforates wall, wall that resists wind, wind that dissolves cloud, cloud that covers sun, sun that heats frost, frost that broke my foot!”—

“But stronger is Death, because he kills me.”

He went to Death, and said, “Death, how strong you are—death that kills the blacksmith, blacksmith who makes knife, knife that kills steer, steer that drinks water, water that quenches fire, fire that burns stick, stick that kills cat, cat that eats mouse, mouse that perforates wall, wall that resists wind, wind that dissolves cloud, cloud that covers the sun, sun that clears the frost, frost that broke my foot!”

“But stronger is God, because he sends me.”

“God, how strong you are, God who sends Death, Death who kills blacksmith, blacksmith who makes knife, knife that kills steer, steer that drinks water, water that quenches fire, fire that burns stick, stick that kills cat, cat that eats mouse, mouse that perforates wall, wall that resists wind, wind that dissolves cloud, cloud that covers sun, sun that heats frost, frost that broke my foot!”

JOHN TIGER

Tradition Bearer: Samuel Villalobo

Source: Boas, Franz. "Notes on Mexican Folklore." *Journal of American Folklore* 25 (1912): 241–245.

Date: ca. 1912

Original Source: Mexico

National Origin: Mexican

"John Tiger" is a **variant** of the **ordinary folktale** classified as AT 301B. The tale is often entitled "John the Bear." In this case, however, rather than being the offspring of a human mother and a bear, the protagonist is the son of a jaguar (Spanish, *tigre*).

A man and his wife were living on their ranch at the outskirts of a village. They had several head of cattle which they milked every day. They used part of the milk for selling, and part for making cheese. The wife was pious, almost a fanatic, and went to mass every day just before her husband finished milking; then she took the milk of the first cows along for sale, and fulfilled her religious duties at the same time.

One Sunday it happened that she urged her husband to go to mass. After they had agreed upon this, he went to church, while she remained behind to milk the cows.

Unfortunately, that day one of them did not come to the corral, and, as it was getting late, the woman went out to look for her all around the corral; but instead of finding the cow of which she was in search, she met a tiger; and before she realized what was happening, the beast carried her to his cave, where he kept her locked up many years.

During this time the poor woman lived on raw meat, which the tiger obtained from the herd of her own husband. At the end of one year the woman gave birth to a boy, the son of the tiger, who grew up, strong and fierce, like his father, but who had human form. The years passed, and the boy developed extraordinary strength. Therefore he opened the stone door of the cavern, which his mother had not been able to move with all the efforts she had made. The mother, with the tenderness that belongs to all of them, taught him to speak, and told him her story as soon as she thought that her son understood her.

The boy asked her one day if she wished to leave her prison, and said that he could free her by killing his own father. The woman accepted the proposal of her son, although with great fear, and made up her mind to suffer the consequences in case he should not succeed. The beast had gone out to bring meat for his family. Then the boy, who was seven years old, searched for a weapon,

and found near the cave a stout and heavy pole, with which he prepared himself to murder his father.

The boy kept in hiding outside of the enormous rock which served as his mother's prison, when the tiger's terrific and wild howl was heard, which terrified the poor woman inside the cave as never before. The wild beast came to the door, and, when he tried to open it, he received a tremendous blow on the head, which killed him almost immediately. A second blow ended the life of the animal, who lay there, extending his teeth and his claws for a little while, as though he wanted to imbed them in the flesh of his enemy.

The boy and his mother left the dark place in which they had passed such sad days of their existence, and traveled to the ranch of the woman's husband. As might be supposed, the woman had not even a rag with which to cover herself. While they were walking through the woods, she covered herself with leaves; but when they came near the hut, she sent her son to see the master, and to ask him for a garment for his mother, who was naked. That poor man was no other than her husband, who preserved as a sacred token of remembrance the dresses of his beloved wife, whom he believed to have been dead for many years.

The woman reached the home of her husband, to whom she did not disclose herself at once. She only asked for a room in which she and her son might sleep several days. But while these days were passing, he became convinced that she was his wife. He questioned her one day. "Do you remember Mr. H——. You say that you lived here a long time ago?"

"Certainly," replied she. "He was a very good and true man." Then he noticed in her face an expression of sadness which overshadowed her soul and tortured her.

He did not doubt any longer, and said to her, "You must be my wife Maria, whom I have not forgotten a single moment, and whom I love with all my soul."

Maria could not restrain her tears, and said, "Yes, I am your wife; rather, I have been your wife; for now, although I should like to call myself so, I am unworthy of loving you. I have lived with a tiger that took me from your side." And she told him all the bitterness and sadness she had endured in the dark abode of that wild beast.

The couple lived united, and loving each other more than in the first years after their marriage. They agreed to take the boy to be baptized; and they called him Juan, and his godfather was the priest of the village. They sent the boy to school; but as soon as his fellows saw him, they made fun of him, and called him Little-Hairy-Body or Juan Tigre. And Juan, who had in his veins the blood of the tiger, with one stroke of his fist left all those who made fun of him foolish for all their lives. His parents, in order to reform him, left him with his godfather, the priest. He thought he could reform Juan by frightening him by means of the skulls of the dead, which, according to the beliefs of the people, haunted the steeple of the church.

One day, when Juan went up to toll the bells, he saw two skulls, which jumped about as though moved by a mysterious power. Juan smiled, threw them down so that they rolled about, and, when he arrived at home after calling to mass, he said to the priest, "Godfather, your servant-girl is very careless; she left on the stairs of the steeple the two calabashes in which she makes atole [corn-meal gruel]." The priest was surprised at the courage of the boy, and replied, saying that he would tell the girl to take better care of her things.

Then he sent him to another town to take a letter to the priest there, with the condition that he should sleep alone in a hut which stood all by itself in the fields. Juan stayed there, as he had been told, continued his way on the following day, and on his way back he slept there again. He had hunger, but had no wood to heat the food that he was carrying.

Juan said to himself, "Why is there no wood or straw of any kind to make a fire, and heat my supper?" At the same moment he heard a noise which announced a falling body. They were bones of skeletons, which Juan used as fuel to heat his meal.

Undoubtedly the ghosts knew his courage, and said, "In the corner which looks southward, at a depth of half a yard, you will find a pot full of gold and silver coin, for, on account of this money, we have been haunting this spot for a long time."

Juan left there, and directed his steps to his godfather, to whom he gave the reply to his message, and explained to him the place that had been indicated to him, and where the money was. The priest took this wealth away in small quantities, so that nobody should know what he was doing.

Two years passed. The father of Juan had come to be rich, because he participated in the enormous wealth that his son had found. He, however, on account of his instincts, had to look for adventures, and make himself famous by his deeds throughout the world.

He left his home, armed only with a goodly iron pole, which he alone, on account of his extraordinary strength, could manage. He met a ghost, a man who carried enormous stones, and a very noted person called "Big-Finger" because he lifted whatever he liked with his first finger and without any effort.

These three wished to fight Juan Tigre; but it was impossible to vanquish him, and he made them his slaves. They traveled about several days, and came to a hut in the field which seemed to be inhabited. Notwithstanding appearances, nobody lived there.

The ghost stayed there, and was to prepare dinner for his fellows who went out to hunt. Poor ghost! He would better have gone with his friends! A wildman, ugly, exceedingly ugly, came to the hut, beat him, threw away his dinner, and ordered him to leave at once, or else he would kill him. The hunters came back, and the ghost explained to them what had happened. Then Juan Tigre, the chief, scolded him severely, and ordered that on the following day Big-Finger should stay at home. To him and to Stone-Carrier happened the same as to the ghost.

Then Juan Tigre said, "You all go and hunt, I shall await the wildman and see what he wants." Poor negro! Better he had not come! Juan beat him so hard, that the poor wildman had to flee precipitately, leaving a line of blood on the road, for he had torn off one of his ears. When Juan's companions arrived, he gave them a good dinner to eat, while they had not been able to provide a meal.

After dinner they followed the tracks of the wildman, and noted that in all probability he had gone down into a well. They brought halters; and Juan went down to the bottom of the well, telling his companions to pull him up as soon as he should shake the rope. After a few moments Juan shook the rope, and his companions began to pull up something heavy. They were surprised to see a beautiful maiden tied in the halter. They lowered the rope again, and pulled up another, younger girl. The same happened a third time.

Then each one of these bad people said, "This one shall be my wife!" and each one took his future wife by the arm.

They left Juan in the dark well. When the chief saw that the halter was not coming down again, he threatened the wildman of whom we have spoken, and who was in the bottom of the well, howling on account of the loss of his ear, with death, if he should not take him out of there. The wildman said, "Do not kill me! Let me live here! If you wish for anything, bite my ear which you have, and you will get your wish." Juan bit the ear, and, to his great surprise, he saw himself out of the well without knowing how it had happened.

By means of the ear he also learned the whereabouts of his companions, who thought Juan would die in the well, and took those beautiful maidens to the house of the King, who said that he was their father, and that they had been carried away by a wildman whose whereabouts could not be discovered.

The King compelled his daughters to marry the bad persons who had returned them to their father. They protested, saying that the person who had saved them was a stout, fierce, and ugly man, with whom each of them had left a ring. The father insisted on his idea; and the miserable companions of Juan would have triumphed, if he had not appeared on time at the castle of the King and shown the rings which his daughters had given him.

The King ordered the treacherous friends of Juan to be shot, and said to him, "You shall be the master of my daughters. They love you, because you have saved them from the claws of the monster; and as a prize for your virtues and strength you shall be my heir."

GOD

Tradition Bearer: Unknown

Source: Boas, Franz. "Notes on Mexican Folklore." *Journal of American Folklore* 25 (1912): 215–217.

Date: ca. 1912

Original Source: Mexico

National Origin: Mexico

This moralistic tale of three brothers and their choices of either money or grace derives from European sources. As seen in all cross-cultural borrowing, however, there is considerable adaptation to new settings. Franz Boas notes a particularly interesting one in this case: “[T]he end may be in part a description of the Mexican journey to the lower world, in which the soul has to pass between two mountains that strike each other, past a serpent guarding the trail, past the green lizard, eight deserts, eight hills, the wind of the knives, and a river which has to be crossed on the backs of the dogs of the dead” (251).

There was a man who had three sons. One day the oldest one said to his father, “Father give me your blessing, for I am going to seek my fortune”; and he went. He walked and walked along a road until he came to an old hut, and there was an old man who was God. The boy said, “Good-day, sir!”

“Good-day, son!” replied the old man. “Have you no work, sir?”

“Certainty,” replied the old man. “Come in! Be seated! Let us take lunch, and then you shall go and take a letter to Monjas.” After the boy had eaten, he said to him, “Sweep the house, and saddle this donkey and go and take this letter.”

The boy went, and came on the road to a red river, and he was much frightened. He threw the letter into the river and went back. The old man said at once, “Have you come back already, son?”

“Already, sir,” he said to him. “Did you deliver the letter?”

“Yes”; and the letter had come back again to the hands of God.

“All right!” he said. “Now what do you want?—money or grace?”

“Money,” he said to him. “Then take this napkin,” he said to him, “and you will have in it whatever you wish for.”

The boy went to his house well satisfied, and said, “Father, here I bring this napkin, and we must lunch with it presently.” Then the boy said, “Napkin, by the virtue given to thee by God, I ask thee to give me a lunch”; and at once a table was there, with much to eat.

After this the second brother said, “Father, give me your blessing, for I am going to seek my fortune”; and he went the way which his brother had taken.

He found the old hut and also the old man. He said, “Good-day, sir!”

“Good-day, my son!”

“Have you nothing to do, sir?”

“Yes,” replied the old man. “Come in! Be seated! We will lunch. Then sweep the house, put flowers on the altar; saddle the donkey, and go to take this letter to Monjas.”

The boy did so, and also met the red river, threw the letter into the river, and came back. The letter came again to the hands of God.

The boy arrived; and the old man said to him, "Have you come already, son?"

"Already, sir," he replied. "And now, what do you want? Money or grace?"

"Money," replied the boy. Then he presented him with an empty trunk, took a little pole, touched the top of the trunk with it, and said, "Pole, pole, by the virtue that God has given to thee, put this trunk in my house"; and immediately the trunk was transferred to the house of the boy. He bade good-bye to the old man; and when he arrived in his house, the trunk was there full of money.

Then the youngest brother said, "Father give me your blessing, for I, too, will seek my fortune." The father gave him his blessing, and the boy took the same road. He found the old hut and God who lived there. The boy said, "Good-day, sir!"

"Good-day, boy!" replied the old man. "Have you no work, sir?"

"Yes," replied the old man. "Come in! Be seated! We will lunch," and he gave him some very tough cakes to eat; and the boy said to himself, "Poor old man! How can he sustain himself on those tough cakes?" and God heard him, and said, "Arise, sweep the house; put flowers on the altar, saddle this donkey, and go to Monjas to take this letter there."

The boy went. First he came to the red river. He had no fear, passed it, and the water reached to the hoofs of the donkey. He went on. He walked and walked. He came to a white, white river. He passed it. Then he came to a green, green river. He passed it. Then he came to a grassy hill, and the cattle that roamed there, how lean they were! Then he came to a barren hill, and the cattle that roamed there were fat. He walked on and on, and came to rocks which were striking one another. Again he walked on and on, and came to a roast that was roasting.

He arrived at Monjas, inquired for the church, and delivered the letter into the hands of the Virgin. Then the Virgin said to the boy, "Take this little hat as a sign that you have delivered to me my letter. Tell God what you have seen on the road."

When the boy went back, there was nothing on the road. He reached the hut of the old man, and the old man said to him, "Have you come already, son?"

"Already," replied the boy. "Well," said the old man to him, "tell me about what you have seen on the road."

"Sir," said the boy to him, "first I saw a red, red river."

"That red river," said God, "is the blood that your mother shed for you."

"Then I saw a white, white river."

"That is the milk that you have sucked."

"Then I saw a green, green river."

“Those are your mother’s veins.”

“Then I saw a grassy hill with lean cattle.”

“Those are the cattle of the rich.”

“Then I saw a barren hill with fat cattle.”

“Those are the cattle of the poor.”

“Then I saw several rocks which struck one another.”

“Those are the godmothers when they are fighting.”

“When I came to Monjas there was a roast roasting.”

“That is the tongue of the gossip.”

“Well, son,” said God to him, “and now what do you want? Money or grace?”

“Grace,” replied the boy. “All right I” said the old man to him. “Take this crucifix, and on the base you will find a present every day.”

The boy left well satisfied. When he arrived at his house, he placed the crucifix on his altar; and every day early, when he awoke, he found two dollars on the base of the crucifix.

One day when the boy was eating, he saw at a distance an old man wrapped in his sheet, and full of ulcers, and disgusting to see. He came to the entrance, and said, “Good-day!”

“Good-day, sir?” replied the boy; while the other brothers began to cover the food, because the old man was very disgusting to see. Only the youngest boy gave the old man to eat.

Then the Lord said, “You have not felt disgust at seeing me; and now I’ll take you up, body and soul.” He took up the boy, and the brothers remained with their food full of grubs, and in the pot, instead of the food, a snake.

CINDER MARY

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Mason, J. Alden. “Four Mexican-Spanish Fairy-Tales from Azqueltan, Jalisco.” *Journal of American Folklore* 25 (1912): 192–194.

Date: ca. 1912

Original Source: Mexico

National Origin: Mexico

The following narrative of “Cinderella” (AT 510A) combines a medieval social structure (for example, an aristocratic hierarchy), Spanish European references (for example, “Black Moors”), and localization (for example, “five hundred pesos”) to produce a uniquely New World **variant** of the classic tale.

Once there was a poor orphan-girl who lived in an ash-hole belonging to the Black Moors. One day when one of them went there to throw out the ashes, he saw her, and asked her to come to their house. There they asked her name; but the poor girl did not know her own name, nor were they able to discover it. Finally they gave her the name of Maria Ceniza (Cinder-Mary).

Now, the Black Moors were witches; but they did not wish Cinder-Mary to learn the fact, so they gave her a black sheep's skin and a half-real [small Spanish coin] of soap, and sent her to the river, telling her not to waste the soap, but to wash the sheep-skin until it was as white as a pod of cotton.

Cinder-Mary knelt by the river and wept, because she could not wash the sheep-skin as the Moors had commanded her. Suddenly there appeared a lady, who asked her why she was weeping; and Cinder-Mary replied, that, if she could not wash the black sheep-skin as white as a pod of cotton, the Black Moors would kill her. Then the lady told her that she would bring her two white stones with which she would be able to wash the black sheep-skin. Presently she returned, and soon Cinder-Mary had washed the sheep-skin as white as a pod of cotton. Then the lady gave her a magic wand, and told her that when she needed anything, she need only speak to the wand. Then, placing a tiny star on Cinder-Mary's forehead, she disappeared.

Now, one of the Black Moors had a daughter; and when she saw the star on the forehead of Cinder-Mary, she was very jealous, and asked her mother to have a black lamb killed, that she also might go to the river to wash the skin. So, going to the river, she commenced to weep; and when the lady appeared to her and asked her why she was weeping, she replied that it was because she could not wash the black sheep-skin. Then she asked her if she would not put a star on her forehead likewise, but the lady replied that she would put nothing but "mango de burro" there. Then the girl returned to the house of the Black Moors.

Another day the Moors said to Cinder-Mary that they were going to mass, and they left her behind to prepare the breakfast. "If you have not a good breakfast ready when we return, we shall kill you," they said.

Then Cinder-Mary asked her magic wand to give her a dress such as had never before been seen in the world, and some shoes, in order that she might go to mass. Then she followed a little behind the Moors, and entered the church; and neither the Moors nor the rest of the people recognized her. When the priest saw her, he was much impressed with her beauty, and thought that she would make an excellent wife for the prince; so he gave orders that double guards be stationed at the doors of the parish, and that she be not allowed to leave.

This, however, did not deter Cinder-Mary, who fastened some wings to her back, so that they might not catch her. The guards tried to restrain her, but only succeeded in catching one of her shoes. Then she flew back to the house of the

Moors and ordered her magic wand to prepare a breakfast with good food. Soon the Moors came home, and began to talk about the beautiful maiden whom they had seen with a star which illumined everything up to the grand altar; but it was Cinder-Mary.

Then the king ordered his men to search all the villages and ranchos for the maiden who had left the shoe behind. Soon they came to the house of the Black Moors, and found Cinder-Mary's other shoe.

They were about to carry the daughter of the Moor to the king, when a little dog commenced to howl, saying, "Mango de Burro goes, and Star of Gold remains." Then the king's retainers demanded to see the other maiden who was hidden in the house. Accordingly they left the girl who had the "mango de burro" on her forehead, and carried Cinder-Mary to the king, that she might marry the prince. There was a grand wedding, and Cinder-Mary was given a castle in which to live with the prince.

Soon afterwards the Black Moors came to the castle and asked that they be allowed to louse Cinder-Mary. They came to her while she was bathing, with her hair loose, and commenced to louse her. Suddenly they stuck a pin into her head, so that she became enchanted and flew away, for they were afraid that she would denounce them because they were witches. Then they left without as much as saying good-bye.

When her attendants came for Cinder-Mary, she was gone, and the only living being they could find was a dove in a cypress tree. Then they went to the head servant and asked him how much he would give them for the dove which they had found singing in the cypress tree, and which said in its song that it wanted to see the king in his palace. The dove, they said, was crying piteously. The servant went at once to the king and told him about the dove. Then the king asked him how much he wanted for bringing the dove to him; and the servant replied, that if he would give him five hundred pesos, he would bring it. The king agreed, and the servant went and brought him the bird. While stroking its back, the king found a pin stuck in its head, and pulled it out. Immediately the bird became Cinder-Mary. Then he asked her why the Black Moors had thus bewitched her; and she replied, that it was because they were witches, and were afraid that she would denounce them.

Then the king ordered that the Moors be brought before him, and he condemned them all to be burned to death with green wood.

THE STORY OF THE SUN AND THE MOON

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Mason, J. Alden. "Four Mexican-Spanish Fairy-Tales from Azqueltan, Jalisco." *Journal of American Folklore* 25 (1912): 196-198.

Date: ca. 1912

Original Source: Mexico

National Origin: Mexico

The following tale combines **motifs** such as G532—the hiding and deception of the sun and moon by their mothers when they smell human blood—and “The Obstacle Flight” (D672)—the protagonist throws small objects behind him that are magically transformed to aid in his flight. In this narrative, a clever soldier seeks a woman who appears to him in a dream. The tale, best labeled as an **ordinary folktale**, draws heavily on familiar European traditions to create its plot.

Once there was a soldier who saw a maiden in his house one night. He thought he might have been dreaming when he saw her, and decided to watch again the next night. When she appeared again, he lighted a candle, that he might see how beautiful she was; but no sooner had he done so, than he received a blow in the face which caused him to drop the candle and spill a drop of wax on the floor. Then the maiden disappeared. “I will go and search for her,” said the soldier, and he set out.

Soon he met on the road two brothers who were fighting about their inheritance. One of them said to the other, “Here comes a man who will know how to arrange it.”

When the soldier came up to them, he asked, “What are you doing, my good men?”

And they replied, “We are fighting over our inheritance.”

“My father,” said one of them, “had these magical boots, this magical cudgel, and this hat; and my brother wishes to inherit all of them. So I told him that you would arrange the matter for us.” The soldier agreed, and told the boys to run a race to a near-by hill and back. “Whoever arrives here first,” said he, “will be the owner of all that your father possessed.” The boys agreed, and started off; but when they re-turned, the soldier had disappeared with the magical objects. “Did I not tell you that he would settle the matter for us?” said one to the other.

Then the soldier went on, taking three leagues at a step, with the aid of his magic boots, until he came to the house of the Sun. Entering, he said to the old woman there, “Good evening, grandmother!”

“What are you doing here, my good son?” she asked. “When my son comes home, he will eat you!” Soon they heard the Sun approaching; and when he came in, he was very angry. “Mamma, mamma!” he cried. “Here is a human being! Give him to me! I will eat him!” But the old woman only replied, “No, my son! It is only a poor traveler, who is stopping here.” And then she gave the Sun a little box on the ear.

Then the soldier went on, taking three leagues at a step, until he came to the house of the Moon, and went within to greet the occupants. Seeing an old woman, he said to her, "Good evening, grandmother!"

"Why have you come here, my good son?" she asked. "My son will come home and eat you!" And soon arrived the Moon, very angry, and cried out, "Here is a human being! Give him to me! I will eat him!" But the old woman, the mother of the Moon, merely replied, "No, my son, you must not eat him. It is only a poor traveler, who is stopping here." Then she boxed his ears.

The soldier went on until he came to the house of the mother of the Wind. Here he found the Wind weeping because his mother had just died. So he said to the Wind, "What will you give me if I revive her?"

"Would that you could do so, my friend!" cried the Wind. "If you succeed, I will go with you to seek your lady." Then the soldier hit the old woman three times with his magic cudgel, and she rose up and began to talk. Then the soldier said, "Let us go to seek my lady. I will go ahead, and you follow behind." Then he set out at such a pace that the Wind was unable to keep up with him. "It is these boots which make me travel so fast," he said to the Wind.

"Lend me one of them," replied the Wind. "Then we may converse as we go."

Finally the Wind said, "Wait here a little while. I will go to see the maiden for whom we are searching." Presently he arrived, and found the mother of the maiden warming herself. He entered very briskly; and the old woman said, "Daughter, go to your sister and give her food." So the girl went to carry the food. Then the Wind said, "I told the soldier to follow a little ways behind."

Soon the soldier came in, and did not stop until he had looked through the entire house for his lady. After opening the seven doors, he at last found her, and she immediately commenced to give thanks to God. Then she and the soldier began to arrange a plan of escape from the place where she was confined. He told her to get a comb, a brush of pine needles, a thimbleful of ashes, and another of salt. Then he gave her a piece of the magic hat, a bit of the boot, and another piece of the cudgel. He embraced her, and they left the room where she had been imprisoned. Then they fled.

Soon the old woman found that they were gone, and commenced to pursue them, and soon drew near to them. "Throw down the piece of comb!" said the soldier; and immediately there grew up a thick brush behind them, and the fugitives fled on. Soon the old woman was near overtaking them again, and the girl threw behind them the brush; and immediately there grew up a wood of spiny pine trees, and the fugitives fled on. Again the old woman came nearer, and this time they threw down the thimble of ashes, and there appeared a fog of great density, and the fugitives fled on. But again the old woman approached them; and this time they threw down the thimble of salt, and there appeared behind them a great river. Then the old woman sat down on the bank and began to weep, crying, "Oh, ungrateful daughter! The grain of corn will return in the

spring of water!” Then the girl turned to the soldier, and said, “You have released me from the prison where I was confined, but not from the curse which my mother has laid upon me.”

Soon the soldier said to the maiden, “I will leave you here a little while, and go to see my parents.”

“Very well,” she replied. “I will tie three knots in your belt. In one I will tie my clothes; the second is that you may not forget me; and the third is that you do not allow your parents, nor your brothers and sisters, nor any of your kinsfolk, to embrace you.” So the soldier went home and met his family; but at night, while he was sleeping, his grandmother came and embraced him, and immediately he forgot the maiden whom he had left at the spring of water.

Then the parents of the soldier decided to marry him with another woman, and the wedding was about to be celebrated. Then there came to the wedding the maiden whom the soldier had left at the spring of water, begging that she be allowed to give an entertainment at the wedding feast.

So, when all were assembled, she took two little doves, and said to them, “You remember, ungrateful little dove, that you released me from the prison where I was confined, but from the curse of my mother, no!”

“Kurukuku, I do not remember.”

“You remember, ungrateful little dove, that you left me at the spring of water.”

“Kurukuku, I believe that I am beginning to remember.”

“You remember, ungrateful little dove, that I tied my clothes in your belt.” Then the little dove remembered, and the soldier embraced the maiden and they went away. But the other woman they killed, and so ends the story of the Sun and the Moon.

HOW THE ELVES PUNISHED A QUARRELSOME MAN

Tradition Bearer: Luciano Munoz

Source: Blake, Mary. “The Elves of Old Mexico.” *Journal of American Folklore* 27 (1914): 237–238.

Date: ca. 1914

Original Source: Mexico

National Origin: Mexico

The duendes in this supernatural **legend** act as agents of social order. Although specifics regarding these mythical creatures vary from community to community, in both Spain and in the Spanish-descended cultures of the Western hemisphere duendes are compared to the fairies, goblins,

or brownies of other folk traditions. The citing of specific locations and the naming of specific individuals who participated in alleged events are typical **validating devices** of legends.

In former times there was a ranch called “La Loma de Bufanda,” which I think still exists under that name. The owner had good land; and he had two large barns—one for wheat, and the other for hay. Near the barns was a house where the over-seer, José Maria Ruga, lived. The household consisted of José, his wife, two sons, and two daughters. One son was a cowherd, the other a shepherd.

Now, this family knew that duendes inhabited the barn which held hay. They had sometimes caught glimpses of them, and they described them as lightly clad children of diminutive stature. The shepherd was a gentle lad, who had made himself a rude musical instrument like a flute; and on Sundays and holy days he often sat among the haystacks in the barn, and played little tunes to the elves. He would hear childish giggles of delight, quickly suppressed, followed by stealthy footsteps toward him; but he rarely saw the little ones on these occasions. At the close of the concert, a half-eaten fruit or a bright-colored pebble, and sometimes a live frog or a harmless little snake, was dropped at his feet. The elves were like small boys in their tastes, and gave the shepherd the things most prized by them-selves.

Once there was a dance given at La Loma, and to this there came from a neighboring ranch a man who was of the most quarrelsome. He began by asking the shepherd’s betrothed to dance. When she refused, for of course no respectable girl cares to dance with other than her promised husband, he insisted, and tried to pull her from her seat.

Then the cowherd, who stood near, said, “Friend, this maiden is betrothed to my brother. Find thyself another partner.”

At that, the quarrelsome fellow, whose head had been heated by drink, answered, “I dance with whom I please,” and pushed the cowherd aside so violently that the overseer’s son fell against a stone bench and cut his cheek.

The girl screamed, and hid her face in her scarf; while all the young men with one accord hustled the brawler from the courtyard, where the dance was going on, to the hay-barn, into which they thrust him and locked the door, saying, “There canst thou pass the night, dancing with whichever lady-mouse pleases thee.”

With much laughter they returned to the dance, leaving the quarrelsome man to kick at the door and shout maledictions. At last the fellow grew tired of this occupation, and, lying down upon the hay, he fell asleep.

In a short time he awoke with a scream from a dream of being buried alive, to find himself completely covered with the hay. He shook himself free from it, and composed himself to sleep again; but no sooner had he closed his eyes than

great bundles of hay fell on him. “There are other prisoners in the barn,” thought the quarrelsome man; and he called in a loud voice, “Who are you, and where are you?” There was no answer.

The man, as was his wont, began to shout insults, which were answered by a perfect shower of hay. He groped around the immense building among the stacks, but he found no one. At last he lay down again, and was again nearly smothered. He knew his tormentors then, and began to plead, “Dear duendes, pretty little duendes, let me sleep!” He could go no further, for a fistful of hay was suddenly thrust into his mouth. He was half-strangled, and each of his painful coughs brought a peal of laughter from the surrounding darkness.

When he had recovered a little, he exclaimed, “Unless you little brutes leave me alone, I shall set fire to the hay, even if I myself perish with you!” Now, this was a threat that the man was powerless to put into effect, as he had nothing with which to make a fire; but the elves were so frightened that they were perfectly quiet after that, and just before dawn the quarrelsome man fell asleep. The young men came early to release the prisoner, who was mightily shaken by the night he had passed. He related what had happened; and all, narrator as well as listeners, found the account so interesting, that they went off to drink coffee together, and to astonish the women with the tale.

THE PRIEST AND THE DEVIL

Tradition Bearer: Unknown

Source: Boas, Franz. “Notes on Mexican Folklore.” *Journal of American Folklore* 25 (1912): 223–225.

Date: ca. 1912

Original Source: Mexico

National Origin: Mexico

The priest’s domination of the devil in the form of a tiny, but fully formed, human (a manikin), beyond its assertion of the power of Christianity to prevail over evil, incorporates elements of Mexican and Mexican American folk belief concerning the devil. Two of the more important of these are the revelation of the devil’s disguised identity by his having the feet of a rooster and the supernatural flight seen in Mexican American tales such as “Witch Flights” (page 283).

There was a man pursued by the Devil, to whom, wherever he went, he appeared in the form of a manikin. Once upon a time the man went to mass, and there was the Devil. Whatever the padre did at

mass, the Devil did too. He alighted on the shoulders of the boys, and made them sleep.

The man went and talked with the curate; and the padre said, "I'll take your confession, in order to see why you have these visions. Tomorrow go to early mass, in order to see if you'll again see that manikin."

The man went to mass, and there he [the manikin] was. Then he went to confession, and the Demon went there also. Then the padre said, "My son, take this string, and follow the Demon wherever he goes, catch him with this string, and bring him to me."

Again the man went to church with the string in his hand. The Demon left the church, and the man followed behind. He saw how he made some dogs fight; he saw how he made some drunkards fight; and the man followed the Demon. He entered a saloon, and put himself into a pot of tepacke [cane sugar-based liquor].

Then he went to notify the curate that the Demon had put himself in a pot of tepacke; and the curate said to him, "Go and ask the lady how much she wants to allow you to put your hand in and pull out that beast that is in the pot." The lady was frightened, and said, "You shall pay me nothing, only pull that beast out of there." Then the man put his hand and the string in, and caught him in a noose. It was not a manikin that came out, but a person with the feet of a rooster; and he took him to where the padre was; and the padre said to him, "Tie him up here, and give him hay to eat."

Then the padre went to where the beast had been tied up, and said to him, "Why are you interfering where it does not behoove you?" The Demon said to him, "Let me go! Promise to free me, and I'll tell you why."

"Yes," said the padre. "I promise to free you; But tell me, why do you come to my church?" Then the Demon replied, "Because you owe a vow to Rome; and if you wish to fulfill it, I'll take you there in four and twenty hours."

"Yes," said the padre to him. "But you know," said the Demon, "we shall not travel by land, but by sea."

"All right!" said the padre. "Early tomorrow we will go."

The next day, when daylight broke, a saddled mule was in front of the door of the curate's house. The padre mounted, and they went on the waters. In four and twenty hours they were in Rome.

The padre arrived at a house, and tied up his mule. The padre went to church, and brought from there many relics, pictures, and rosaries, which he put into a satchel. He did not find the mule tied up, but the people of the house were very much frightened because the mule had turned into a man; and the man said to the landlord, "Would you like to see how I put myself into this bottle of wine here?"

"Yes," said the people, "we should like to see how you do it." Then he put himself into the bottle.

The padre came, put the string inside the bottle, caught him in the noose, and pulled him out in the shape of a man. "Let us go!" he said, "I am ready."

He tied up the man by the nape of his neck, and he turned again into a saddled mule, and the curate mounted her. Then the mule could not walk, on account of the relics which the curate carried. The Mule said to him, "Throw away those things which you are carrying, for they burn me much. I promise you that you shall find them on your table."

Then the padre threw his relics into the middle of the sea, and in four and twenty hours he arrived at his house. The padre let him go, and said, "Go away, accursed one, and never come again to trouble me." The Demon did not come back.

HOW THE ELVES PUT A HOLY FATHER AND HIS SACRISTAN TO FLIGHT

Tradition Bearer: Luciano Munoz

Source: Blake, Mary. "The Elves of Old Mexico." *Journal of American Folklore* 27 (1914): 237–238.

Date: ca. 1914

Original Source: Mexico

National Origin: Mexico

The duendes are noted for mischief rather than malice as is shown in the following **legend**. Their threat to "cut off the priest's head" was merely a joke that exposed the pretensions and apparent lack of faith of their would-be exorcist.

In the ranch of San Jeronimo, jurisdiction of San Francisco del Rincon, many old houses were full of elves. In one house in particular the sprites were riotous from eight at night until dawn. The master of the house went to the priest of the nearest village and begged him to come and exorcise the spirits.

The priest willingly consented; and the next night he arrived on horseback, with his sacristan mounted behind him, bearing all the articles necessary for the holy task. "Now, father," said the man of the house, as he helped the good man dismount, "my son will unsaddle and feed the horse, while you and the sacristan will have a bite to eat before the service."

The three entered the house, and were soon seated upon a bench: while the man's wife placed before them three earthen dishes of pork cooked deliciously with green peppers, herbs, and olives; a pile of fresh tortillas; and three jugs of pulque (the national drink of Mexico, the juice of the maguey-plant). Each man rolled a tortilla to use as a spoon, and dipped it into his dish. Just as the little father had swallowed the first savory mouthful, a clamor of small voices began

in the next room, He let his tortilla fall into his dish, and asked, "Who is in there?"

"The duendes, father," answered the woman. "It is the hour when they begin their pranks."

Just then there was a sound of metal being drawn back and forth over a stone. "What are they doing now?" inquired the sacristan.

A shrill voice from within replied, "We are sharpening a knife which we shall use to cut off the priest's head."

"Saddle the horse and follow us with it!" cried the priest to the man of the house, as he started running down the road, dragging the sacristan after him. They continued to run knee-deep in dust, until they fell upon the moonlit road exhausted. There the man with the horse helped them, and assisted them to mount. The priest advised the horse-owner to sprinkle the home with the holy water. The man returned to his home, and sprinkled the holy water over the floors and walls of his two rooms; but the elves were never so boisterous as that night. The duendes never left that house, it is said. They seemed to bring prosperity to a house. It is certain that their hosts never lacked good food and raiment.

NAHUA

QUETZALCOATL AND TEZCATLIPOCA

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Spence, Lewis. *The Myths of Mexico and Peru*. London: G. G. Harrap and Company, 1913. Internet Sacred Text Archive <http://www.sacred-texts.com/nam/mmp/mmp1.htm> (April 10, 2007).

Date: pre-sixteenth century

Original Source: Nahua

National Origin: Native American

The Nahua are a cluster of culturally and linguistically related groups indigenous to Mexico and Central America. The contemporary Nahua reside from Central Mexico to El Salvador and Nicaragua. Historically, the Aztec are the best known of the Nahua cultures, and during the pre-Columbian era, they developed an advanced civilization in the area of contemporary Mexico. The Aztec and related groups used the term Nahua, meaning “Those who live by Rule,” to distinguish themselves from the neighboring cultures that did not attain the Nahua level of cultural complexity. According to Nahua tradition, they originated in Aztlan and later migrated into the Mexican Plateau region. In Nahua **myth**, the Toltecs were the first to arrive in Mesoamerica, but scholars cannot incontrovertibly establish the fact of the existence of the Toltecs as an ethnic group outside of Aztec myth. The following myth illustrates the basic features of these sacred histories.

In the days of Quetzalcoatl there was abundance of everything necessary for subsistence. The maize was plentiful, the calabashes were as thick as one’s arm, and cotton grew in all colors without having to be dyed. A variety of

birds of rich plumage filled the air with their songs, and gold, silver, and precious stones were abundant. In the reign of Quetzalcoatl there was peace and plenty for all men.

But this blissful state was too fortunate, too happy to endure. Envious of the calm enjoyment of the god and his people the Toltecs, three wicked “necromancers”—Huitzilopochtli, Titlachahuan (or Tezcatlipoca), and Tlachahuepan—plotted their downfall. These laid evil enchantments upon the city of Tollan, and Tezcatlipoca in particular took the lead in these envious conspiracies. Disguised as an aged man with white hair, he presented himself at the palace of Quetzalcoatl, where he said to the pages in-waiting, “Pray present me to your master the king I desire to speak with him.”

The pages advised him to retire, as Quetzalcoatl was indisposed and could see no one. He requested them, however, to tell the god that he was waiting outside. They did so, and procured his admittance.

On entering the chamber of Quetzalcoatl the wily Tezcatlipoca simulated much sympathy with the suffering god-king. “How are you, my son?” he asked. “I have brought you a drug which you should drink, and which will put an end to the course of your malady.”

“You are welcome, old man,” replied Quetzalcoatl. “I have known for many days that you would come. I am exceedingly indisposed. The malady affects my entire system, and I can use neither my hands nor feet.”

Tezcatlipoca assured him that if he partook of the medicine which he had brought him he would immediately experience a great improvement in health. Quetzalcoatl drank the potion, and at once felt much revived. The cunning Tezcatlipoca pressed another and still another cup of the potion upon him, and as it was nothing but pulque, the wine of the country, he speedily became intoxicated, and was as wax in the hands of his adversary.

Tezcatlipoca, in pursuance of his policy inimical to the Toltec state, took the form of an Indian of the name of Toueyo (Toveyo), and bent his steps to the palace of Uemac, chief of the Toltecs in temporal matters. This worthy had a daughter so fair that she was desired in marriage by many of the Toltecs, but all to no purpose, as her father refused her hand to one and all. The princess, beholding the false Toueyo passing her father’s palace, fell deeply in love with him, and so tumultuous was her passion that she became seriously ill because of her longing for him.

Uemac, hearing of her indisposition, bent his steps to her apartments, and inquired of her women the cause of her illness. They told him that it was occasioned by the sudden passion which had seized her for the Indian who had recently come that way. Uemac at once gave orders for the arrest of Toueyo, and he was hauled before the temporal chief of Tollan.

“Whence come you?” inquired Uemac of his prisoner, who was very scantily attired.

“Lord, I am a stranger, and I have come to these parts to sell green paint,” replied Tezcatlipoca.

“Why are you dressed in this fashion? Why do you not wear a cloak?” asked the chief.

“My lord, I follow the custom of my country,” replied Tezcatlipoca.

“You have inspired a passion in the breast of my daughter,” said Uemac. “What should be done to you for thus disgracing me?”

“Slay me; I care not,” said the cunning Tezcatlipoca.

“Nay,” replied Uemac, “for if I slay you my daughter will perish. Go to her and say that she may wed you and be happy.”

Now the marriage of Toueyo, to the daughter of Uemac aroused much discontent among the Toltecs; and they murmured among themselves, and said, “Wherefore did Uemac give his daughter to this Toueyo?” Uemac, having got wind of these murmurings, resolved to distract the attention of the Toltecs by making war upon the neighboring state of Coatepec.

The Toltecs assembled armed for the fray, and having arrived at the country of the men of Coatepec, they placed Toueyo in ambush with his body-servants, hoping that he would be slain by their adversaries. But Toueyo and his men killed a large number of the enemy and put them to flight. His triumph was celebrated by Uemac with much pomp. The knightly plumes were placed upon his head, and his body was painted with red and yellow, an honor reserved for those who distinguished themselves in battle.

Tezcatlipoca’s next step was to announce a great feast in Tollan, to which all the people for miles around were invited. Great crowds assembled, and danced and sang in the city to the sound of the drum. Tezcatlipoca sang to them and forced them to accompany the rhythm of his song with their feet. Faster and faster the people danced, until the pace became so furious that they were driven to madness, lost their footing, and tumbled pell-mell down a deep ravine, where they were changed into rocks. Others in attempting to cross a stone bridge precipitated themselves into the water below, and were changed into stones.

On another occasion Tezcatlipoca presented himself as a valiant warrior named Tequiua, and invited all the inhabitants of Tollan and its environs to come to the flower-garden called Xochitla. When assembled there he attacked them with a hoe, and slew a great number, and others in panic crushed their comrades to death.

Tezcatlipoca and Tlachahuepan on another occasion repaired to the market-place of Tollan, the former displaying upon the palm of his hand a small infant whom he caused to dance and to cut the most amusing capers. This infant was in reality Huitzilopochtli, the Nahua god of war. At this sight the Toltecs crowded upon one another for the purpose of getting a better view, and their eagerness resulted in many being crushed to death. So enraged were the Toltecs at this that upon the advice of Tlachahuepan they slew both Tezcatlipoca and Huitzilopochtli. When this had been done the bodies of the slain gods gave forth such a pernicious effluvia that thousands the Toltecs died

of the pestilence. The god Tlachuepan then advised them to cast out the bodies lest worse befall them, but on their attempting to do so they discovered their weight to be so great that they could not move them. Hundreds wound cords round the corpses, but the strands broke, and those who pulled upon them fell and died suddenly, tumbling one upon the other, and suffocating those upon whom they collapsed.

The Toltecs were so tormented by the enchantments of Tezcatlipoca that it was soon apparent to them that their fortunes were on the wane and that the end of their empire was at hand. Quetzalcoatl, chagrined at the turn things had taken, resolved to quit Tollan and go to the country of Tlapallan, whence he had come on his civilizing mission to Mexico. He burned all the houses which he had built, and buried his treasure of gold and precious stones in the deep valleys between the mountains. He changed the cacao trees into mesquites, and he ordered all the birds of rich plumage and song to quit the valley of Anahuac and to follow him to a distance of more than a hundred leagues.

On the road from Tollan he discovered a great tree at a point called Quauhtitlan. There he rested, and requested his pages to hand him a mirror. Regarding himself in the polished surface, he exclaimed, "I am old," and from that circumstance the spot was named Huehuequauhtitlan (Old Quauhtitlan). Proceeding on his way accompanied by musicians who played the flute, he walked until fatigue arrested his steps, and he seated himself upon a stone, on which he left the imprint of his hands. This place is called Temacpalco (The Impress of the Hands). At Coaapan he was met by the Nahua gods [the necromancers Huitzilopochtli, Tezcatlipoca, and Tlachuepan, who were inimical to him and to the Toltecs.

"Where do you go?" they asked him. "Why do you leave your capital?"

"I go to Tlapallan," replied Quetzalcoatl, "whence I came."

"For what reason?" persisted the enchanters.

"My father the Sun has called me thence," replied Quetzalcoatl.

"Go, then, happily," they said, "but leave us the secret of your art, the secret of founding in silver, of working in precious stones and woods, of painting, and of feather-working, and other matters."

But Quetzalcoatl refused, and cast all his treasures into the fountain of Cozcaapa (Water of Precious Stones). At Cochtan he was met by another enchanter, who asked him whither he was bound, and on learning his destination proffered him a draught of wine. On tasting the vintage Quetzalcoatl was overcome with sleep.

Continuing his journey in the morning, the god passed between a volcano and the Sierra Nevada (Mountain of Snow), where all the pages who accompanied him died of cold. He regretted this misfortune exceedingly, and wept, lamenting their fate with most bitter tears and mournful songs. On reaching the summit of Mount Poyauhtecat he slid to the base. Arriving at the sea-shore, he embarked upon a raft of serpents, and was wafted away toward the land of Tlapallan.

THE ORIGIN OF THE CALABASH TREE AND THE TOBACCO PLANT

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Hartman, C. V. "The Mythology of the Aztecs of El Salvador." *Journal of American Folklore* 20 (1907): 144–146.

Date: ca. 1907

Original Source: Nahua

National Origin: Native American

The following **myth** of the origin of two sacred plants is drawn from the Aztec-Pipil Nahua culture indigenous to western El Salvador. Oral tradition claims the Pipil migrated to El Salvador from central Mexico. Although the surviving record of Pipil oral tradition is relatively scant, it is clear that their myths were profoundly influenced by the neighboring Maya cultures. For example, compare the sacred nature of the calabash in the following myth to the Quiché Maya myth "The Calabash Tree" (page 364).

The wizards come into the houses by night in the shapes of dogs, hogs, cats, or owls, and entice the women away with them. The women are acquainted with a number of tricks and dodges of which the men have no knowledge. The men are asleep, unaware of everything. Sesimite, or the Giant, was in the habit of coming to a house in the pueblo of Ahuachapan and carrying off the wife of one of the men to enjoy her.

The neighbor, the husband's friend, observed it and gave him warning. "Do you not know," said he, "that your wife is a witch, who steals away at night in a disguise to meet her lover? Take care of yourself!"

The husband kept watch over his wife, and observed her get up in the middle of the night and place a log of wood in his arms instead of herself. Then she swung herself up to the beams of the ceiling, falling straightway to the floor, where she lay headless, her head having vanished through the door.

The husband narrated to his neighbor what had happened. "What am I to do?" he said.

"Let us think out something to do!" said his neighbor. "Let the body lie where it is, but put a heap of hot ashes on the spot where the head belongs. That is the best method of curing women who give themselves up to witchcraft."

The man did as he was told. Later, during the night, the head re-turned, but could not succeed in attaching itself to the trunk. "Where are you, you cruel husband, who have done this thing?" the head exclaimed. The husband, however, who had gone up to the loft, made no reply, but sat crouched up in a

corner perfectly still. Thereupon the head flew up to the loft. When it saw the husband, it settled on his shoulder and stuck fast there.

The man being aware of the fact with regard to witches, that you never get rid of them, if once they settle on your body in that manner, was grievously distressed at his woeful fate and went to the priest to inquire what he ought to do.

“Take matters quietly and wait!” said the priest. The head, however, remained on the man’s shoulder. The man wept at his misfortune, but that availed nothing. Not until after the lapse of a long time did the man succeed in enticing the head to leave his shoulder.

That occurred on one occasion, when the man was out in the woods, and at a time of the year when the zapotes [a soft sweet fruit] were just beginning to ripen. The man, as he was wandering about in the woods, caught sight of a gigantic zapote tree. “My daughter,” said the man to the head, “there are some zapotes already ripe in that tree. Would it not be nice to have some zapotes to eat? I know you are fond of that kind of fruit! Get off my shoulder while I climb up the tree, and do you sit here meanwhile on my back-cloth,” said the man. So saying he spread out his garment on the ground and the head settled itself down upon it.

The man then climbed the tree and got hold of a few quite green zapotes, which he hurled with all his force at the head. It jumped and cried out and called upon the man for mercy. “Have pity, for mercy’s sake, have pity upon me. Oh, cruel husband that you are! Do you want to kill me?”

“Oh, no,” said the man. “Why, I was choosing out the fruit that is ripest, those green zapotes fell off accidentally.” Straightway he began anew to hurl down upon the head the hard green fruit, and the head yelled and uttered lamentations. At that moment a roe happened to be passing quite near to the spot. The head then sprang up into the air and settled on the back of the roe, who in terror made off into the woods. The plaits came undone and the hair was tossed about by the wind. At the first precipice she came to, the roe threw herself over, and nothing remained of them but “dust” and skulls (*pinole y calaveras*).

The husband then returned to the priest and reported what had happened. The priest replied, “You must now follow in the footsteps of the roe and collect all the hairs which aid you in finding the place where the head lies. Then you must bury the head with all the hair at the same spot, and you must carefully tend the mound over the grave. For from that head something will arise.” The man obeyed the priest’s injunctions.

After burying the head he made a habit of going every fifteenth day to put the grave in order and to root up the weeds. He had been to the grave in this way many times, when one day he saw a sprout shooting up out of the mound. The young plant grew apace and soon became a tree, which one day brought forth a black flower, resembling the bowl of a pipe in shape. This flower gave place to a very large, round, green fruit. The tree was that which we now call “*huachkal quahuit*” (the calabash tree).

Once more the husband repaired to the priest and narrated what had taken place. "Be very careful of that fruit," said the priest. "Do not touch it until it is quite ripe." When the fruit had at length ripened and gone yellow, it fell to the ground. Then the priest lent the man a saw, with which he very cautiously began to divide the shell. To his amazement he observed something moving inside the fruit. His surprise turned into alarm when he plainly heard infant voices from within the calabash. The shell of the fruit had now been cut open.

Within there were four small children, three boys and a girl, who at once asked him, "Are you our father? Where then is our mother?" The mother being dead, the children were taken in hand by the husband's parents-in-law, Sesimite the Giant and Tanteputz, the man-eating woman.

The virgin up in the sky, to-wit, the Moon, dispatched a messenger, carrying a bamboo joint filled with milk from her own breast to the motherless little children found in the calabash. The messenger handed the joint to the alligator, who, however, drank up the milk himself. The rabbit, on hearing that, went to the alligator to ask him what he had done with the milk sent by the moon to the motherless children in the calabash.

"Here it is," said the alligator, opening its mouth and stretching out its tongue. With a rapid slash the rabbit cut off the alligator's tongue, leaving only a short stump in its mouth. Thereupon the alligator dived down into a deep pool. Ever since he lost his tongue the alligator in shame frequents the deepest pools of the rivers to hide himself.

The girl in the calabash was named Xochit Sihuat, "the flower-girl." In course of time she became one of the most beautiful women that have ever lived. Her black hair was very long, and she was ever en-compassed with that fresh scent that emanates from a woman on leaving the bath. "No man shall ever touch me," she said, "but after I am dead all the people in the world shall take delight in the glorious strength of which I am possessed."

She died quite young, a virgin as she had vowed, and on her grave there sprang up a plant called yet, which has a finer aroma and is possessed of diviner qualities than any other plant in the world [tobacco].

THE QUEEN WITH A HUNDRED LOVERS

Tradition Bearer: Adapted from *Relación histórica de la nación tulteca* by Alva Cortés Ixtlilxóchitl (ca. 1648).

Source: Spence, Lewis. *The Myths of Mexico and Peru*. London: G. G. Harrap and Company, 1913. Internet Sacred Text Archive. <http://www.sacred-texts.com/nam/mmp/mmp1.htm> (April 10, 2007).

Date: pre-sixteenth century

Original Source: Nahua

National Origin: Native American

The following historical narrative of the Mesoamerican Nahua ruler Nezahualpilli is contained in a historical account written between 1600–1608 and commissioned by the Spanish viceroy to New Spain. Despite the fact that the narrative was committed to print, oral tradition provided his primary resource. Therefore, the tale of “The Queen with a Hundred Lovers” is best classified as a **folk history** as distinct from historiography (a scientific history). As such, it reflects a worldview and attitudes toward the past more than an unbiased view of historical events.

When Axaiacatzin, King of Mexico, and other lords sent their daughters to King Nezahualpilli, for him to choose one to be his queen and lawful wife, whose son might succeed to the inheritance, she who had the highest claims among them, for nobility of birth and rank, was Chachiuhnenetzin, the young daughter of the Mexican king. She had been brought up by the monarch in a separate palace, with great pomp, and with numerous attendants, as became the daughter of so great a monarch. The number of servants attached to her household exceeded two thousand.

Young as she was, she was exceedingly artful and vicious; so that, finding herself alone, and seeing that her people feared her on account of her rank and importance, she began to give way to an unlimited indulgence of her power. Whenever she saw a young man who pleased her fancy she gave secret orders that he should be brought to her, and shortly afterwards he would be put to death. She would then order a statue or effigy of his person to be made, and, adorning it with rich clothing, gold, and jewelry, place it in the apartment in which she lived. The number of statues of those whom she thus sacrificed was so great as to almost fill the room.

When the king came to visit her, and inquired respecting these statues, she answered that they were her gods; and he, knowing how strict the Mexicans were in the worship of their false deities, believed her.

But, as no iniquity can be long committed with entire secrecy, she was finally found out in this manner:

Three of the young men, for some reason or other, she had left alive. Their names were Chichucoatl, Huitzilimitzin, and Maxtla, one of whom was lord of Tesoyucan and one of the grantees of the kingdom, and the other two nobles of high rank. It happened that one day the king recognized on the apparel of one of these a very precious jewel which he had given to the queen; and although he had no fear of treason on her part it gave him some uneasiness.

Proceeding to visit her that night, her attendants told him she was asleep, supposing that the king would then return, as he had done at other times. But the affair of the jewel made him insist on entering the chamber in which she

slept; and, going to wake her, he found only a statue in the bed, adorned with her hair, and closely resembling her. Seeing this, and noticing that the attendants around were in much trepidation and alarm, the king called his guards, and, assembling all the people of the house, made a general search for the queen, who was shortly found at an entertainment with the three young lords, who were arrested with her.

The king referred the case to the judges of his court, in order that they might make an inquiry into the matter and examine the parties implicated. These discovered many individuals, servants of the queen, who had in some way or other been accessory to her crimes: workmen who had been engaged in making and adorning the statues, others who had aided in introducing the young men into the palace, and others, again, who had put them to death and concealed their bodies.

The case having been sufficiently investigated, the king dispatched ambassadors to the rulers of Mexico and Tlacopan, giving them information of the event, and signifying the day on which the punishment of the queen and her accomplices was to take place; and he likewise sent through the empire to summon all the lords to bring their wives and their daughters, however young they might be, to be witnesses of a punishment which he designed for a great example. He also made a truce with all the enemies of the empire, in order that they might come freely to see it.

The time having arrived, the number of people gathered together was so great that, large as was the city of Tezcuco, they could scarcely all find room in it. The execution took place publicly, in sight of the whole city. The queen was put to the garrote (a method of strangling by means of a rope twisted round a stick), as well as her three gallants; and, from their being persons of high birth, their bodies were burned, together with the effigies before mentioned. The other parties who had been accessory to the crimes, who numbered more than two thousand persons, were also put to the garrote, and burned in a pit made for the purpose in a ravine near a temple of the Idol of Adulterers.

All applauded so severe and exemplary a punishment, except the Mexican lords, the relatives of the queen, who were much incensed at so public an example, and, although for the time they concealed their resentment, meditated future revenge. It was not without reason, says the chronicler, that the king experienced this disgrace in his household, since he was thus punished for an unworthy subterfuge made use of by his father to obtain his mother as a wife!

CARIBBEAN

African Caribbean

ANTIGUA

NANCY AND THE HONEY TREE

Tradition Bearer: George W. Edwards

Source: Johnson, John H. "Folk-Lore from Antigua, British West Indies." *Journal of American Folklore* 34 (1921): 51–52.

Date: 1921

Original Source: Antigua

National Origin: African American

Antigua was established as a British colony in the seventeenth century. Located in the Eastern Caribbean Sea, it is the largest of the Leeward Islands. This tale of the **trickster** Anansi (Nancy in this version) is popular in the West Indies. As is common in both Continental African tales and African American plots, the narrative portrays Anansi as both trickster and dupe when he matches wits with monkey. Supernatural elements are included in the motifs of the speaking tree, the transformation of Nancy, and the power of the word "Wheelum," which causes the tree to wheel around and throw its victims. In a Jamaican **variant** collected by Beckwith (1924), the word is "Fling-a-mile." In both versions, therefore, Nancy's own words lead to his downfall. See "How Come Mr. Buzzard to Have a Bald Head" (page 163) and "How Ananse Tales Got Their Name" (Volume 1, page 61) for southern U.S. and West African views of Anansi.

While Nancy was goin' on dis day, he see dis tree. Come up to dis tree, an' say, "Ah! dis a pretty little tree. Dis honey tree is a pretty little tree."

De tree say dat he mus' call 'em "Wheelum." Nancy laugh, an' say dat it was a honey tree. Dat he not need to call it "wheelum." Den Nancy get up in dat tree, an' start to suck de honey. He suck till he get all de honey what he want. Den he got stuck when he go to pull off from de tree. He twist, but he can't loose himself. Nancy start to beg. Say, "Please, Mr. Honey-Tree, don' catch me! Leave me go, please, Mr. Honey-Tree!"

Honey-Tree say, "My name not Honey-Tree. My name Wheelum," Nancy say, "Alright, Mr. Wheelum! Dat all right! Please let me go, Mr. Wheelum!"

When Nancy say "Wheelum," de tree start to spin. Dat tree wheel an' wheel. When it have him goin' round so, yap it loose him. Nancy was put at a distance by dis tree. He land, an' pick hisself well hurted by dis tree call "Wheelum."

Now Nancy come, an' all prepare to fool some a dese other animals wid dis tree. Soon he see Bro' Cow comin'. Bro' Cow he a stupid one, an' Nancy pick him quick. Say, "O Bro' Cow! Ah done find one very sweet tree."

Bro' Cow say, "Where dis tree? Show me it!"

An' Nancy carry him to where dis tree was. When he got him dere, he tell him dat he mus' suck, an' he will get all de honey dat he can eat. Bro' Cow did suck. When he finish, he not able to loose hisself. He cry, an' tell Bro' Nancy to help get him off. Nancy laughin' for fair now. Cow beg de tree to let he go. De tree say it name Wheelum. Den when Cow say "Wheelum," de tree t'row him also at a distance. An' he was hurted too.

Bro' Nancy have all dis sport. He fool some dese other animals wid dis same honey tree. By an' by he see Bro' Monkey. Now, Bro' Monkey was in dis tree, an' see all dat Nancy do. He come down, an' pass to where Nancy was. Nancy greet him. Say, "Well, Bro' Monkey, jus' de man I like to see. jus' de man. Bro', dere is a honey tree dat has so sweet t'ing; an' I going to carry you dere, bro'." De monkey was willin', an' Nancy took him.

Dey come to dis tree. Nancy tell Monkey dat he must suck. Monkey answer dat he will not suck till Nancy firs' suck. Nancy say, "What matter, bro'? Dat is sweet dere. You go. I have finish my suck. What matter you? Not want dat sweet t'ing dere! Come on, Bro' Monkey! suck from dis tree!" But Monkey refuse to suck till Nancy go firs' to suck. No matter what Nancy say, he still will not suck firs'. After dis, Nancy go to de tree, an' whisper, "Ah goin' suck firs', Bro' Honey-Tree, but don' hol' me! Hear, Bro' Honey-Tree, don' hol' me!"

De honey tree answer dat it will not hol' him. Den Nancy say, "Alright, Bro' Monkey! I going suck firs'. We going get full of dis honey."

Nancy went, an' he suck. But Monkey did not suck. De tree hol' him; an' no matter what he say, de tree not loose him. Monkey had in dis time gone to a distance. Here he put up a tall spike. Dese spike were jus' where de tree was t'rowin'. Monkey tell Nancy dat he going tell de tree wheelum.

Nancy say, "No!" Monkey he in all kind of glee an' jump 'round. Nancy he keep beggin' dat tree please let he go. Dis de tree would not do. Nancy say, "Please don' hol' me, Bro' Honey-Tree! Please let me go, Bro' Honey-Tree!"

Tree say, “My name not Honey-Tree. My name Wheelum.”

Den Bro’ Monkey shout, “Wheelum, wheelum, wheelum!” An’ de tree turn an’ commence to spin about. De tree wheel an’ wheel. Yap de tree let Nancy go, an’ he land upon dis spike. Nancy he turn to spider, an’ run in de cassy tree.

I went through Miss Havercomb alley,
An’ I see a lead was bending;
So da lead ben’,
So da story en’.

NANCY FOOLS HIS WIFE

Tradition Bearer: George W. Edwards

Source: Johnson, John H. “Folk-Lore from Antigua, British West Indies.” *Journal of American Folklore* 34 (1921): 49–50.

Date: 1921

Original Source: Antigua

National Origin: African American

Nancy (Anansi) turns tragedy to selfish triumphs by claiming to his wife that his arm was lost not as punishment for a crime, but rather in a work accident. His use of disguise to deceive his wife out of her only possessions suggests the **trickster’s** common ploy of “shape-shifting.”

Dis Nancy was real smart. He have wife too, an’ a son name Little Toukouma. On one day when Nancy was out stealin’, he get his arm caught, an’ it was cut off. Some man stuff he was stealin’ when de arm get caught, an’ it take off. Dis arm got take jus’ at de elbow. When Nancy come home, his wife say, “Ah, Nancy! How you get your arm cut off?”

Nancy say he been to a mill workin’, when it caught his arm an’ tear it off. He say dat it took all his arm. Dey was sorry fer Nancy, an’ he don’ do nothin’ now. He eat all dat he could get. An’ when da wife she gone, Nancy take all de food from de little Toukouma. Dis boy would be dere wid de food, an’ Nancy would come to him. Say, “Gi’ me dat food, or Ah show you me stump.” Den de boy go shoutin’, for he afraid to have Nancy show him de stump a his arm. While he cryin’, de wife come, an’ say Nancy refuse to admit dat he show de boy de stump.

Dis day come when Nancy want to get all de food what his wife got. Now, de woman had two pigs and a field of yams. Nancy try to t’ink how he could get dese. Each day she go to feed de pigs an’ work de yams. Nancy make up his

mind dat he must get dem. On dis day Nancy he stay in de bed. Make out dat he sick. Say, "Wife, me so sick! O wife! Me too sick. Me too sick." De woman tell him dat he must go to de doctor. Nancy say, "Ah, wife me too sick. Me can't go, wife. Me too sick, wife." He roll an' toss about, an' de woman t'ink he about to die. Nancy tell her, "Wife, you go get de doctor! Wife, me too sick. You go!" She t'ink dat her husban' was really sick, an' she start fer de doctor. When she gone, Nancy up from de bed an' take another road, so dat he come out in front of where de woman is goin'.

When Nancy get dere [to meet her on the road], he have another kind a coat, so dat de woman not able to know he her own husban'. She come along. Nancy come out. Say to her, "Whar you goin', Mrs. Anancy?" She tell him dat her husban' so sick. Dat he look like he goin' to die. She goin' to get de doctor to come. He tell her dat she is doin' de right, an' dat she must be sure to get de doctor for him.

So she went. Nancy take by different road, and he come to de place where de doctor live. When de woman come, he take bearing like he de doctor. She come to dis place.

Say, "O doctor! Nancy is too sick. Me 'fraid he will die. Me here to bring you to him."

Den Nancy say to her. She not know who he was. All time t'ink dat dis was de doctor. "Well, Mrs. Anancy, dat is too bad. Dis is what you try to make you' husban' better. You has two pigs an' a field a yams. If you kill dem pigs an' cook 'em up wid jus' de hair off, also cook up de yam wid dem, dat will cure you' husban'."

Dese pigs an' de field a yam was all dat dis woman had. But she fool. De doctor say dat no matter what Nancy say, she mus give him dese t'ings, or he will die. She got home. Nancy was dere now in bed. Groanin' like he was goin' to die. Ask her what de doctor tell her. She say dat de doctor say she mus' kill a pig wid only de hair off, an' cook wid de yams.

Nancy say, "Don' do it, wife! Don' kill you' pig! Me not satisfy you kill de pig." He foolin' her now, an' she was sure to kill dem. So she have one pig kill, an' did as de doctor tol' her. When she bring de pig an' yams to Nancy, he eat it all.

On de next day she ask him how he feel. He say, "O wife! Me sure to die. Me too sick." Den she tol' him dat she was goin' to kill de other pig. Nancy say, "No!" But she sure dat only way to save Nancy, an' she did it.

She bring de food. Nancy eat every bit a dis, an' not give his wife an' Little Toukouma any. Dat's de way Nancy fool his wife.

Finish.

PLAYING MOURNER

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Johnson, John H. "Folk-Lore from Antigua, British West Indies." *Journal of American Folklore* 34 (1921): 61–62.

Date: 1921

Original Source: Antigua

National Origin: African American

The theft of food by a **trickster** is a common folktale motif. This tale of rat's betrayal of his friend cat closely resembles "Theft of Butter (Honey) by Playing Godfather" (AT 15). **Variants** of AT 15 are found elsewhere in this collection (see "Playing Godfather," page 164). The following narrative departs from AT 15, however, by virtue of the omission of the concluding **motif** of pinning the food theft on the victim (see "How Brer Fox Dream He Eat Brer Possum," page 177, for an example of this plot twist). "Playing Mourner" concludes instead with justice for the offender, which serves to explain the origin of the enmity between cats and rats.

Pussy and Rat was great friends. Dey was all de time in each other company.

On dis occasion Pussy learn dat his father is dead. Rat cry an' tell him dat he sorry. Pussy is sick at dis. Dese two prepare to go to de wake. Pussy not feelin' well. Rat pretend dat he is sick too. Dey both had a big barrel of rice. Before dey go to de wake, dey is goin' to cook dis rice. Dey cook it.

When de wake is over, dey will come for de rice. Both put a big cover over dis rice. De rice was finish. Also dey was to take somet'ing for dis wake. Dey had a tambourine, a triangle, an' a fiddle-bow. Dey prepare dese to take. At de wake dey will have dese. Pussy say, "Come, Bro' Rat! Me father dead. We goin' to de wake now."

"Dat is all right," Rat tell him. An' dey went. When dey gone some ways, Rat say, "Ah, Bro' Pussy! me forget de tambourine. Goin' back to get it." Pussy tell him he mus' hurry. He father dead, an' de wake done commence.

Rat went back. He hop in de kettle an' eat some of de rice. Now he come again. Dey went on. Pussy cryin' 'cause he father dead. Rat he cry too. Dey have de tambourine. Rat stop hear. Say, "Ah, Bro' Pussy! we done forget de triangle. Can't go widout de triangle."

"Bro' Rat, how go off widout de triangle? We need dem t'ings for to have at de wake."

Rat tol' him dat is "you' father," an' he will go back for de triangle. Bro' Pussy consent, an' Rat went back to their house. When he get back again, he jump in de kettle wid de rice. Eat full.

Now he come, an' dey go on. Pussy cryin' an' Rat bawlin'. Pussy say, "Step up dere, Bro' Rat! we is behin' for de wake now. My father mus' need for me to get to de wake."

Dey almos' dere. Rat stop. Say, "What happen to de fiddle-bow? You has de fiddle-bow?" Pussy has not it. He excite dat dey no have de fiddle-bow.

Rat tell him dat is all right, an' dat he goin' get it. "You' father dead, and me goin' bring back dat fiddle-bow. You is wait here. Jus' wait at dis point for me. I goin' back." An' Pussy let Rat go back.

Rat get back, an' he clean de pot. Not any rice in it. In dis time Pussy start to t'ink dat Rat fool him. An' he come back.

When he is dere, he not see nothin'. Look around, Bro' Rat not in sight. He move all round, can't find he friend. By an' by he hear sound, "Chip, chip, chip, chip, chip, chip, chip, chip!"

Dis sound is at de kettle. Soft, Pussy move to it. He creep up to it. Hear, "Chip, chip, chip, chip, chip!" Now he know where was Bro' Rat. De cover is on de pot. Bro' Pussy get to de cover. Jump on it. Cry, "Well, Bro' Rat, I's got you at it. So you is in dere. I goin' kill you, Bro' Rat." Rat beg him not to kill 'em. Say, "Please don' kill me, Bro' Pussy! Do anyt'ing to me, but please don' kill me!" Bro' Pussy insist dat he was goin' kill him. Rat beg dat he don't. Say he must not kill 'em. Den Pussy agree not to kill him, an' open de top.

Rat hop out. Pussy jump on him. Den John Cowrie (cat) lift him. He toss him. He let him go, den catch him. He beat him. He t'row him. He pounce on him. Beat him, but he did not kill him. He do dis till Rat was dead. But he did not kill him. He played him till he dead. Dat is why cat play wid de rat dat dey caught.

WHY RABBIT HAS A SHORT TAIL

Tradition Bearer: George W. Edwards

Source: Johnson, John H. "Folk-Lore from Antigua, British West Indies." *Journal of American Folklore* 34 (1921): 49–50.

Date: 1921

Original Source: Antigua

National Origin: African American

In this tale of the master **trickster** being tricked, rabbit seems a particularly easy dupe. The narrative resembles "The Tail-fisher" (AT 2). In the classic model, however, bear or wolf is tricked into using his tail to fish through a hole in the ice. The ice freezes around the tail, and when the tail-fisher is compelled to escape, the originally long tail is bobbed. Caribbean environmental factors require a modification of the preceding plot.

Dis was how dis come, Rabbit once have a tail long like dem other an'mals. Not short all de time.
On dis occasion Rabbit was goin' about, an' he was hot. Dis was

summer, an' everyt'ing was hot. Rabbit he had run all over, was feelin' warm. By a' by he come to where Bro' Barracuda was. When Bro' Rabbit come near to de water, Bro' Barracuda speak to him. Say, "Why is it dat you so warm, Bro' Rabbit?"

Rabbit tell him dat is so warm 'round here, an' dat he been runnin' all 'bout. He not able to stay cool.

Den Bro' Barracuda fool Rabbit. An' Rabbit is a smart one. Bro' Barracuda say, "Bro' Rabbit, I will tell you which way you can get cool." Rabbit he glad for dat, an' ask de Barracuda to please do dis. Bro' Barracuda say dat Rabbit must come up to dis piece of wood what is over de water, an' let he tail hang down into de water. "In dis way, Bro' Rabbit, de cool from de water will go up from you' tail, an' you will not be warm."

Rabbit not against dis, an' he come. Now, when Rabbit come up to dis piece a wood, he drop his tail to de water. Den Bro' Barracuda sneak up to Rabbit tail, an' he bit it off.

Dat how Barracuda fool Rabbit, an' is why Rabbit has dat short tail.
Finish.

MR. HARD TIME

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Johnson, John H. "Folk-Lore from Antigua, British West Indies." *Journal of American Folklore* 34 (1921): 82–83.

Date: 1921

Original Source: Antigua

National Origin: African American

The foolish misunderstandings of a husband's orders to his wife lead first to disaster then to wealth in this **variant** of "Guarding the Door" (AT 1653A).

You see, it was like dis. A man was goin' out one day, an' he took his money an' give it to his wife, an' tell her to keep it for hard time. At the same time, you know, he had owed a man by the name of Mr. Hard-Time. His wife misunderstand him, an' pay it all to Mr. Hard-Time. When da husban' come home, she tol' him, "Mr. Hard-Time was here, an' I pay him all da money you gave."

You can picture dat man feelin', for it was all da money he had. Man got 'rouse', an' start to quarrel with his wife. Den he tol' her to close de door an' follow him. Instead of she closin' de door, she lift up de door an' put it on her shoulder.

An dey went travelin' through a wood. Whiles' dey was goin' on, you know, dey saw all kinds of food under a tree, an' dey sat down an' was ready to eat some of what was dere. In da mean time dey heard a set of robbers comin', an' both clampered up in da tree. Dis woman climb da tree with dis heavy door on her back, too. Well, da robbers come an' form a circle under da tree. Dey bring in all dere gold, an' had it under dis tree. Well, da robbers didn't see dem. Den da woman said de door was hurtin' her shoulders, an' she were goin' to t'row it; an' her husban' tell her not to do it, da robbers see it an' kill dem. An' she t'rowed it down. Da robbers got scared, an' said, "Da Lord has sent us vengeance in an earthquake." 'Cause dat door came crashin' down. So dey run an' make another camp.

Dere was a little boy with dem. Dey sent him back to see what had become of da gold. Da little boy came along whistlin'. Da man tol' him dat's not da way to whistle come, an' he'll show him how to whistle like a man. He tell him to long out [stick out] his tongue an' let him scrape it. Da man did scrape a little of da boy's tongue, an' he whistle a little clearer. Den he ask him, "Don't you see you whistle clearer?"

Da boy say, "Yes," an' ask him to scrape a little more. Da boy long out his tongue, an' da man cut off a piece of his tongue.

At that da boy run back to da robbers, goin', "Ma, ma, ma, ma, ma, ma!" talkin' like a man who is dumb. At dat da robbers got scared an' start to run too, an' dey run in da sea an' all over. Some turn shark, some turn whale, some turn ballyho (a fish), some turn turtle, dey turn all different kind a animal. Durin dis time da man an' woman took to carry home da gold. Dey brought back a wagon an' carry away da rest of da stuff.

An' I, da storyteller, got some of dat money, an' became rich myself.
And I went through Miss Havercomb alley,
An' I see a lead was bending;
So de lead ben',
So de story en'.

UNDER THE GREEN OLD OAK TREE

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Johnson, John H. "Folk-Lore from Antigua, British West Indies." *Journal of American Folklore* 34 (1921): 62–63.

Date: 1921

Original Source: Antigua

National Origin: African American

"Under the Green Old Oak Tree" is a **variant** of "The Singing Bone" **tale type** (AT 780). The version adheres to the classic plot: the bone of

a murder victim is crafted into a musical instrument that makes an accusation that leads to the perpetrator of the crime.

Dis a nice little story. Der woman had two chil'ren. One was a boy. an' der oder was a girl. De fader a dese chil'ren die. Moder decide to marry again. She marry to anoder man.

Each day dese chil'ren did go to de mountain to get flowers. Dey went on dis day. Girl had a better bucket den what de broder got. Dey cumin' wid de flowers. On his way home, de boy stop wid de gal. He t'inkin' some evil plan. Want dis bucket which was his sister. She would not consent to gi' him dis bucket. He t'ink it best to kill der sister. He kill de sister. He kill dis girl near to a big oak tree. An' he hide her dere. After he kill her, he go home. Can't give no account a he sister. Dey all went to search for de girl, but none can find her.

Der broder stay home. Month gone.

Shepherd-boy dat is comin' down de mountain meet [finds] a big bone like a flute. He pick dis bone under dat same tree. He took up de bone an' play. Comin' home wid de flock, he play on de bone. It play a sweet tune:

My broder has killed me in de woods, an' den he buryth me.
 My broder has killed me in de woods, an' den he buryth me
 Under de green of oak tree, an' den he buryth me.

Dat's all it could play. It play sweet, you know. Comin' home, all dat hear dis tune beg de boy for a play on it. He give dem a play.

Now he way down de mountain. Mos' to where de moder is livin'. He meet de moder. She ask him for a play. He give her a play. As quick as she play, t'ing say—

My dear moder, my dear moder, it my dead bone you play.
 My dear moder, my dear moder, it my dead bone you play.

She drop an' faint, but never die. All de people was lookin' for de girl. Dis broder meet de boy. He ask him for a play. Take de bone an' start. T'ing say—

My broder, it is you dat has killed me.
 My broder, it is you dat has killed me.

An' dere he faints an' dies.
 Dat is de end a da green of oak tree.

BAHAMAS

BROTHER RABBIT AN' BROTHER TAR-BABY

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Edwards, Charles L. "Some Tales from Bahama Folk-Lore." *Journal of American Folklore* 4 (1891): 50–51.

Date: 1891

Original Source: Bahamas

National Origin: African American

The Bahamas (Commonwealth of the Bahamas) is an archipelago located in the Atlantic Ocean between the U.S. state of Florida and Cuba. Although Christopher Columbus' first landfall in the Western hemisphere was on San Salvador in the Bahamas, in the mid-seventeenth century English settlers established a British presence that led to the Bahamas becoming a crown colony. In the wake of the U.S. struggle for independence, the Bahamas provided a refuge for loyalists who immigrated along with their slaves in the late 1700s. The African-descended population of the islands was bolstered further in the nineteenth century by runaway slaves who escaped to the Bahamas following the emancipation of slaves in the British West Indies in 1834. The African influence is apparent in the following tales.

"Brother Rabbit an' Brother Tar-Baby" enjoys not only a general popularity because of a widely read version, "The Wonderful Tar-Baby Story," by Joel Chandler Harris, and the twentieth-century Walt Disney print and film versions, but also a wide oral distribution with versions found in South and East Asia, Africa, and Europe as well as the Western hemisphere (see the Native American Natchez tale "The Tar Baby," page 121). The tale of "The Tar Baby and the Rabbit" (AT 175) is

usually concluded with the “Briar-patch Punishment for Rabbit” (AT 1310); “fine grass” is substituted for briars below. The **formulaic** “Once it was a time a very good time/De monkey chewed tobacco an’ ‘e spit white lime” serves as an opening marker equivalent to the familiar “Once upon a time” of the **märchen**. As is common in African American tradition, rabbit is a **trickster** figure living by his wits, outsmarting stronger beings, and overcoming superior numbers to achieve his ends. Given the position in which the African bondsperson was placed in the New World context, rabbit’s antics may serve not only as comic catharsis but also as models for emulation under social oppression. In this version, rabbit plays out both the strengths (cleverness and audacity) and the weaknesses (selfishness and impulsiveness) in his effort to obtain the necessities of life at the expense of other’s labor. Nevertheless, rabbit plays a common role of tricksters in transforming the world, avenging himself on the other animals by forcing them from their initial anthropomorphic lifestyle, and condemning them to run wild in the bush.

Once it was a time, a very good time,
De monkey chewed tobacco an’ ‘e spit white lime.

So dis day Brother Rabbit, Brother Bouki (hyena), Brother Tiger, Brother Lizard, Brother Elephant, Brother Goat, Brother Sheep, Brother Rat, Brother Cricket; all o’ de creatures, all kind, so now dey say, “Brother Rabbit, you goin’ help dig well?”

Brother Rabbit say, “No!”

Dey say, “When you wan’ water, how you goin’ manage?”

‘E say, “Get it an’ drink it.”

Dey say, “Brother Rabbit, you goin’ help cut field?”

Brother Rabbit say, “No!”

Dey say, “When you’re hungry, ho you goin’ manage?”

“Get it an’ eat it.” So all of ‘em gone to work. Dey went; dey dig well first. Nex’ dey cut field.

Now dis day Brother Rabbit come. Dey leave Brother Lizard home to mind de well. So now Brother Rabbit say, “Brother Lizard, you want to see ho can make de mostest noise in de trash?”

Brother Lizard say, “Yes!”

Brother Rabbit say, “You go in dat big heap o’ trash dere an’ I go in dat over dere” (Brother Rabbit did want to get his water now).

Brother Lizard gone in de trash; ‘e kick up. While ‘e was makin’ noise in de trash, Brother Rabbit dip ‘e bucket full o’ water. He’s gone!

So no when Brother Elephant come, an’ all de other animals come out of de field, Brother Elephant say, “Brother Lizard, did you’ let Brother Rabbit come here today an’ take dat water?”

Brother Lizard say, "I couldn't help it!" 'E say, "E tell me to go in de trash to see who could make the mostest noise."

Now de next' day dey leave Brother Bouki home to mind de well.

Now Brother Rabbit came. 'E say, "Brother Bouki, you wan' to see who can run de fastes'?"

Brother Bouki say, "Yes."

'E say, "You go dat side, an' le' me go dis side." Good! Brother Bouki break off; 'e gone a runnin'. Soon as Brother Bouki git out o' sight Brother Rabbit dip 'e bucket; 'e gone.

So no when Brother Elephant and the rest of them come dey say, "Brother Bouki, you let Brother Rabbit come 'ere again today and take our water?"

'E say, "'E tell me to have a race to see who could run de fastes', an' soon's I git a little ways 'e take de water an' gone."

So Brother Elephant say, "I know how to ketch him!"

All of them went to de pine yard. Dey make one big tar baby. Dey stick 'im up to de well.

Brother Rabbit come. 'E say, "Hun! dey leave my dear home to min' de well today." Brother Rabbit say, "Come, my dear, le' me kiss you!" Soon as 'e kiss 'er his lip stick fas'. Brother Rabbit say, "Mind you better le' go," 'e say, "You see dis biggy, biggy hand here," 'e say, "If I slap you wid dat I kill you." No when Brother Rabbit fire, so, 'e han' stick. Brother Rabbit say, "Min' you better le' go me," 'E say, "You see dis biggy, biggy han' here; f I slap you wid dat I kill you." Soon as Brother Rabbit slap wid de other han', so, 'e stick. Brother Rabbit say, "You see dis biggy, biggy foot here: my pa" say, "'f I kick anybody wid my biggy, biggy foot I kill 'em." Soon as 'e fire his foot, so, it stick. Brother Rabbit say, "Min' you better le' go me." Good! soon as 'e fire his foot, so, it stick. Now Brother Rabbit jus' was hangin'; hangin' on de Tar-baby.

Brother Bouki come runnin' out firs'. 'E say, "Ha! we got 'im today! We got 'im today!" 'E gone back to de field; 'e tell Brother Elephant; 'e say, "Ha! Brother Elephant; we got 'im today!"

Then all of 'em gone out now dey ketch Brother Rabbit. Now dey did want to kill Brother Rabbit; dey didn't know where to t'row 'im. Brother Rabbit say, "'f you t'row me in de sea" (you know 'f dey had t'row Brother Rabbit in de sea, dey'd a kill 'im)—

Brother Rabbit say, "'f you t'ro me in de sea you won't hurt me a bit." Brother Rabbit say, "'f you t'row me in de fine grass, you kill me an' all my family."

Dey take Brother Rabbit. Dey t'row 'im in de fine grass. Brother Rabbit jump up; 'e put off a runnin'. So now Brother Rabbit say, "Hey! ketch me 'f you could." All of 'em went away now.

Now one day dey [the other animals] was all sittin' down eatin'. Dey had one big house; de house was full o' all kinds o' animals. Brother Rabbit gone; 'e git up on top de house; 'e make one big hole in de roof o' de house. Brother Rabbit sing out, "Now, John Fire, go out!" Brother Rabbit let go a barrel o' mud; let it run right down inside de house. when 'e let go de barrel o' mud, so,

every one of 'em take to de bush, right wild; gone right over in de bush. Brother Rabbit make all on 'em went wild, till dis day you see all de animals wild.

E bo ban, my story 's en':
If you don't believe my story 's true,
Ask my captain an' my crew.

BROTHER ELEPHANT AND BROTHER WHALE

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Edwards, Charles L. *Bahama Songs and Stories. Memoirs of the American Folklore Society*, No. 3. New York: American Folklore Society, 1895, 65.

Date: 1895

Original Source: The Bahamas

National Origin: African American

“Brother Elephant and Brother Whale” is distributed not only in the West Indies but throughout the American South and in African South America. A **variant** of “Deceptive Tug-of-War” (AT 291), Brother Rabbit (B’Rabby) indulges in his pastime of stirring up trouble by issuing false challenges that pit unwitting competitors against each other. Along the way, there is another object lesson concerning the power of brain over brawn.

Once it was a time, a very good time,
De monkey chewed tobacco an’ 'e spit white lime.

Now dis day Brother Rabbit was walkin’ ‘long de shore. ‘E see Brother Whale. ‘E say, “Brother Whale!”
Brother Whale say, “Hey!”

Brother Rabbit,” Brother Whale, I bet I could pull you on de shore!”

Brother Whale, “You can’t!”

Brother Rabbit say, “I bet you tree t’ousan’ dollar!”

Whale say, “All right!” ‘E gone.

‘E meet Brother Elephant. ‘E say, “Brother Elephant,” ‘e say, “I bet I could pull you in de sea!”

Brother Elephant say, “Me!” ‘E Dey ain’t ary man in de worl’ can pull me in de sea!” Brother Rabbit “I’ll try it tomorrow at twelve o’clock.”

‘E gone an’ get a heap o’ rope. ‘E say, “Now today we’ll try”

‘E tie one end of the rope aroun’ Brother Whale’s neck, and den ‘e tie one end aroun’ Brother Elephant’s neck. ‘E say, “When you hear me say, set taut,’ you mus’ set taut.”

'E say, "Pull away!"

When Brother Whale pull, 'e pull Brother Elephant in de surf o' de sea.
'E say, "You think dis little Brother Rabbit doin' all o' dat!"

When Brother Elephant pull, 'e pull Brother Whale in de surf o' de sea.
Brother Whale catch underneath one shelf o' de rock, and Brother Elephant
catch to one big tree. Den de two of 'em pull so heavy de rope broke.

Brother Whale went in de ocean and Brother Elephant went way over in
pine-yard. Das why you see Brother Whale in de ocean today and das why you
see Brother Elephant over in de pine bushes today.

E bo ban, my story 's en',
If you doan' believe my story 's true,
Ask my captain an' my crew.

BROTHER RABBIT, BROTHER BOOKY, AND BROTHER COW

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Edwards, Charles L. "Some Tales from Bahama Folk-Lore." *Journal of American Folklore* 4 (1891): 50–51.

Date: 1891

Original Source: Bahamas

National Origin: African American

In the usual pairing of rabbit and Booky (spelled variously as Bouqui, Bouki, Bookie), Booky plays the foil to rabbit and is the butt of all his jokes (see, for example, "Brother Rabbit an' Brother Tar-Baby," page 414). In this tale, however, Bouki imitates rabbit, tries his hand at being a con man, triumphs over his dupes, and wins rabbit's praise.

Once it was a time, a very good time,
De monkey chewed tobacco an' 'e spit white lime.

Now dis day it was Brother Rabbit an' Brother Bouki. The wind was blowin'; dey did n' have nuthin' to eat; dey could n' ketch no fish. Dey was travelin' along to see if dey could n' find something to eat. An' now when Brother Rabbit look 'e see one big cow; 'e gone to de cow.

Den 'e take his hand an' spank on de cow bottom. 'E say, "Open, Kabendye, open!" When de cow bottom open Brother Rabbit jump in with his knife an' his pan. 'E cut his pan full o' meat. Brother Rabbit say, "Open, Kabendye, open!" and de cow bottom open an' Brother Rabbit jump out.

Good! Now Brother Rabbit was goin' home; his pan full o' meat. Brother Bouki see Brother Rabbit; say, "Brother Rabbit, where you get all dat meat?" Brother Bouki say, "'f you don' tell me where you get all dat meat I goin' tell!"

Brother Rabbit say, "Go right down dere where you see one big cow."

Brother Bouki say, "Hall right!"

Brother Rabbit say, "When you get dere you must take your ban'- an' spank hard on de cow bottom an' say, 'Open, Kabendye, open!'" Brother Rabbit say, "Soon as dey open you must jump in." Den 'e say, "O' You see one big t'ing inside dere; you must n' cut dat!" Brother Rabbit say, "Mind, 'f you cut dat de cow goin' to fall down dead."

Brother Bouki gone. When 'e got dere 'e take his hand; 'e spank on de cow bottom an' 'e say, "Open, Kabendye, open." Den 'e jump in. Brother Bouki cut, 'e cut, 'e cut his hand full! Brother Bouki wan' satisfied; 'e went an' 'e cut de cow heart; de cow fall down; *Bran*, 'e dead! Den Brother Bouki say, "Open, Kabendye, open!" After 'e foun' de cow bottom could n' open, 'e went inside de cow mouth. Nex' mornin', when de people come to feed 'im, dey found de cow dead.

Now dey begin to clean de cow; skin 'im. After dey done clean 'im dey cut 'im open; dey take out all his guts. Brother Bouki was inside de maw; swell up. De woman say, "Cut dat big t'ing open. See what in dere! "After dat dey went to cut it open; den Brother Bouki jump 'way yonder. Dey did n' see 'im.

Brother Bouki say, "See what you t'row on me. Ma jus' sent me down here to buy fresh beef, den you go t'row all dis nasty stuff on me!"

De people say, "Hush, don' cry, we give you half o' de cow!"

Brother Bouki say, "I don' want no half!" 'E say, "I goin' to carry you to jail!"

Den de man say, "No, Brother Bouki, we give you half o' de cow! "De man goin' t'row another stinking' pan o' water an' blood out. Brother Bouki jump 'way yonder [in order to be splashed by the water and blood]. De man t'row it on Brother Bouki.

Den Brother Bouki say, "Now I ain' goin' to stop; I goin' carry you right to de jail!"

De man say, "Hush, Brother Bouki, don' cry, I goin' give you half o' de cow!" Anyhow, dey give Brother Bouki half o' de cow. Brother Bouki take it on his shoulder; 'e gone.

When 'e look 'e see Brother Rabbit.

Brother Rabbit say, "Hey, where you get all o' dat meat?"

Brother Bouki say, "I went down dere; I cut dat big, big t'ing in de cow, an' de cow fall down dead." Den 'e say, "When de people come in de mornin' to kill de cow," 'e say, "I was inside de cow; when dey cut dat big t'ing I jump 'way yonder"; I say, "See what you t'row 'pon me!" 'e say, "Den dey give me half o' de cow."

Brother Rabbit say, "Dat 's de way to do!"

E bo ban, my story 's en':
If you don't believe my story 's true,
Ask my captain an' my crew.

THE GIRL AND THE FISH

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Edwards, Charles L. "Some Tales from Bahama Folk-Lore: Fairy Stories." *Journal of American Folklore* 4 (1891): 247.

Date: 1891

Original Source: Bahamas

National Origin: African American

Collector Charles Edwards notes that catching the tiny fish that gather in old conch shells is a common pastime for children in the Bahamas. Martha Warren Beckwith (1924) in her discussion of this **tale type**, which she labels "The Fish Lover," notes that it is common in Jamaica and distributed widely in the West Indies. The message of the tale is that violations of the natural order cannot be tolerated. As Beckwith's label attests, this **ordinary folktale** is classified "The Fish Lover" (AT 431C).

This day this girl went down to de sea for salt water. She catch one little fish out de conch shell. She name him Choncho-wally. She put him in de well. Ev'ry morning she use to put some of her breakfas' in de bucket an' carry to de fish; an' some of her dinner, an' some of her supper. She feed him 'till 'e get a big fish.

This mornin', when she went' to carry de breakfas' for him, she sing:

Conch-o, Conch-o-wall-y,
Don't you wan' to mar-ry me,
my daddy short-tail.

'E comes up an' she feed him. Den she let him go down. When she wen' home, de boy say, "Pa, sister' got somet'in' inside de well."

Den de nex' day she come; bring vittles again for him. De man say to de boy, "You go behin' de. tree an' listen to what she goin' sing." De gal sing:

Conch-o, Conch-o-wall-y,
Don't you want to marry me,
My daddy short-tail?

Huh! De boy catch it [hears her song]; 'e gone; tell 'e pa. De boy say, "Pa, sister say, 'Conch-o, Conch-o-wally,' etc. De man go; 'e took he grange, [fish spear] 'e sing, "Conch-o, Conch-o-wally," etc. De fish come up; 'e strike him. 'E carry him home an' they had some for dinner. De gal say, "I bet you this nice fish!"

Den de gal took some in de bucket to carry to de fish. Den when de gal went' to de well to call de fish, she sing,

Conch-o, Conch-o-wally,
Don't you want to marry me,
My daddy short-tail?

She sing again,

Conch-o, Conch-o-wally,
Don't you want to marry me,
My daddy short-tail?

She ain' hear no fish, an' she ain' see none. She sing again,

Conch-o, Conch-o-wally,
Don't you want to marry me,
My daddy short-tail?

She begin to cry now,

Conch-o, Conch-o-wally,
Don't you want to marry me,
My daddy short-tail?

Den she went' home to de house, behin' de house, an' she cry 'erself to death.

E bo ban, my story 's en':
If you don't believe my story 's true,
Ask my captain an' my crew.

THE BIG WORM

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Edwards, Charles L. *Bahama Songs and Stories. Memoirs of the American Folklore Society, No. 3.* New York: American Folklore Society, 1895, 72–73.

Date: 1895

Original Source: The Bahamas

National Origin: African American

“The Big Worm” is a member of the class of stories known in the Bahamas as “old story.” These stories are, at their cores, of African rather than European origin.

Once it was a time, a very good time,
De monkey chewed tobacco an’ ‘e spit white lime.

So once there was a man; he had two sons; dey did n’ have no fire. All dey had to eat was raw potatoes. Now de man send’ dis boy to look for fire. De boy walk; he walk; he walk till ‘e saw smoke rising. When ‘e gone ‘e get to dat fire.

When ‘e get there, he saw a worm was full o’ fire. De boy say, “Dimme some fan!” (Give me some fire).

De worm say, “‘T ain’, ‘t ain’ none; jus’ enough for me.” De worm say, “Come in little closer.” *Good!* Soon as de boy wen’ a little closer, when ‘e went to reach de fire de worm swallow him down.

Den de boy wen’ down, right down, down inside de worm till ‘e stop. De boy met whole lot o’ people what de worm did swallow.

So now de man tell de other son, “I wonder where my son gone?”

De other son say, “Pa, I goin’ look for him.” ‘E walk, ‘e walk, ‘e walk till ‘e come to this big worm, what had de fire in his mouth. So now de boy went to de worm. De boy say, “Dimme some fan!”

De worm say, “Keelie o’ fire” (Come and get fire).

De boy say, “*Do i en e* [untranslated, perhaps a retention from an African language], dimme some fan?”

De worm say, “Come a little closer.” De worm say, “Time for Joe come” (Time to go home). De worm say, “Keelie o’ fire.”

When de boy wen’ to get de fire so, de worm swallow him down. De boy wen; ‘e wen’ down; ‘e wen’ down, till ‘e met ‘e brother.

Now de boy father say, “My two sons gone an’ I might as well gone too.” De man take ‘e lan’ (lance); it fairly glisten, it so sharp. When ‘e get there where de worm was wid de fire in he mouth, de man say, “Dimme some fan!”

De worm say, “You too do fur me!” (You’re too much for me). De worm say, “Keelie o’ fire.”

When de man wen’ to get de fire, so, de worm wen’ to swallow him. De man take he’ lan’; as ‘e was goin’ down ‘e cut de worm; ‘e cut de worm till ‘e cut de worm right open an’ all de people come, an’ dat was a big city right there.

E bo ban, my story ‘s en’,
If you doan’ believe my story ‘s true,
Ask my captain an’ my crew.

JAMAICA

THE ORIGIN OF WOMAN

Tradition Bearer: Harry Murray

Source: Bates, William C. "Creole Folk-Lore from Jamaica II: Nancy Stories." *Journal of American Folklore* 9 (1896): 124–125.

Date: 1896

Origin: Jamaica

National Origin: African American

Jamaica is an island located in the West Indies, east of the Central American coast, south of Cuba, and west of Haiti. From the mid-seventeenth century through independence in 1962, it was under British rule. The following "origin" tale, embedded within an argument between a husband and wife, serves no explanatory function as does the **myth genre** that it parodies. Rather, this story serves as an example of a comic narrative turning on alleged gender differences based on a flawed act of creation.

A discussion arose between black Lizzie and her husband upon the origin of man. Harry laid it down for an axiom that he was made from the dust of the earth, because the minister said so.

"I make out o' dust fe' sartin."

To him, according to the story, Lizzie replies, "Me no make out o' none dirt." Then Harry, "Ef you don' make out o' dirt, wha' you make out o'? You make out o' dirt, yes!"

"I don't make out o' notin' o' de skin."

"Den wha' you make out o'? You mus' make out o' some golden thing or another, den?"

“I don’ make out o’ no golden thing, an’ I don’ make out o’ none dirt. I make out o’ bone.”

“Make out o’ wha’?”

“Bone!”

“Bone?”

“Yes, bone to be sho’.”

“Wha’ kin’ o’ bone?”

“Rib’s bone! You na hea’ minista’ say so?”

“Well, I don’ know what to say ‘bout dat; I don’ like to say dat wha’ minista’ say not de truth; but I mean fe’ say, when minista’ read ‘bout dat rib’s bone, him must mean white woman, because dem white, so de bone white. Ef you make de same, you’ ‘skin would a been white.”

“Cho,” said Lizzie, “ef you had opened your ears instead of sleeping, you would a hea’ de minsta’ say de ‘skin notin’, but de blood, da de thing, because in de book say, dat white-o, brown-o, black-o, all make de same blood; you eba’ see white blood an’ black blood?”

“Look you,” said Harry, “It you know how me Uncle Jame use to say woman came in dis worl’?”

“Cho, no bother me.”

“Never min’, I going tell you. Dem make two men; de first one he made very well, but when dem make de other one, it’s kinda’ spoil. Den as dem look upon it, so it began to jump about, and shake him head, and do all kind o’ stupid thing, like a how woman goes on. Den one o’ dem hold him, say, “Wha’ kind o’ thing you?” Den de oder say, “Cho, him no use, him can’ talk. Every day him was like a dummy, till one day dem hol’ him so, examine him tongue, den dem see de tongue tie; dem take a razor, cut it. As dem cut it so, bam! de thing mouth begin to fly, dem couldn’t stop it. Dem say, “Well, dem sorry dey ever cut de tongue.” From dat time, it make you hear dem say, “‘Ef you wan’ woman to be good, give him ‘tump o’ tongue (stump of tongue, a tongue-tie).”

ANNANCY AND THE YAM HILLS

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Smith, Pamela Coleman. “Two Negro Stories from Jamaica.” *Journal of American Folklore* 9 (1896): 278.

Date: 1896

Original Source: Jamaica

National Origin: African American

“Annancy and the Yam Hills” shows the popular **trickster** figure in a typical attempt to satisfy his own needs at his neighbor’s expense. In a

gloss on a **variant** of this tale, Martha Warren Beckwith claims that the story turns on a belief that it is “unlucky to reveal to others a marvel one has seen oneself, or to repeat certain taboo words” (1924, 254). In any case, Annancy, rather than being constrained by the witch queen’s tyranny, finds a way to subvert it, at least temporarily. The concluding maxim concerning the penalty for greed is a common way of ending Annancy tales in some Caribbean traditions.

One time Annancy lived in a country where the Queen’s name was Five, an’ she was a witch; an’ she says whoever say “five” was to fall down dead.

It was very hungry times, and so Annancy go build himself a little house by de side of de river. An’ him make five yam hills. An’ when anybody come to get water at de river he call them an’ say, “I beg you tell me how many yam hills I have here. I can’t count whoever well.” So den dey would come in and say, “One, two, three, four, *five!*” an’ fall down dead. Then Annancy take dem an’ corn dem in his barrel [preserved them in brine] an’ eat dem, an’ so he live in hungry times—in plenty.

So time go on, an’ one day Guinea fowl come dat way, an’ Annancy say, “Beg you, Missus, tell me how many yam hills have I here.” So Guinea fowl go an’ sit on hill an’ say, “One, two, three, four, an’ de one I am sittin’ on!”

“Cho!” say Annancy; “you don’t count it right!” An’ Guinea fowl move to another yam hill an’ say, “Yes, one, two, three, four, an’ de one I am sittin’ on.”

“He! you don’t count right at all!”

“How you count, den?”

“Why dis way,” say Annancy, “One, two, three, four, **FIVE!**” an’ he fell down dead, an’ Guinea fowl eat him up!

Dis story show dat “Greedy choke puppy.”

CUNNIE-MORE-THAN-FATHER

Tradition Bearer: George Parkes

Source: Beckwith, Martha Warren. *Jamaica Anansi Stories. Memoirs of the American Folklore Society*, No. 17. New York: American Folklore Society, 1924, 27–31.

Date: 1924

Original Source: Jamaica

National Origin: African American

In the wake of being outwitted at every turn by the cleverness of Cunnie-mo’n-father (that is, “More Cunning Than Father”), Anansi is

driven to murderous fury by losing his title of supreme **trickster** to his child. Folklorist Martha Warren Beckwith points out that this tale has parallels throughout the Caribbean, Latin America, and Africa. The particular narratives in this **cycle** of folktales differ in their details, but all focus on the superior wit of the son and the jealousy of the father, Anansi.

Anansi has seven children. He ask them how they would like to name. Six of them like different name, but one boy say he would like to [be] name “Cunnie-mo’n-father.” So for every tack [trick] Anansi put up, Cunnie-mo’n-father break it down.

One time he work a groun’ very far away into the bush, an’ in going to that bush he pass a very broad flat rock. So one day a man give him a yam-plant; that yam name “yam *foofoo*” [a yellow yam]. The same day plant the yam, it been bear a very big one same day. So nobody in the yard know the name of that yam save him, Anansi, alone.

So when he go home, he cook the yam an’ call the wife an’ chil’ren aroun’ to eat, an’ say, “Who know name, nyam; who no know name, don’ nyam!” So as no one know the name, they didn’t get none of it; Anansi alone eat off that yam that night. The nex’ day go back to the groun’ and the yam bear a larger one. He bring it home an’ bile it again, call the wife an’ chil’ren an’ say, “Who know name, nyam; who no know name, don’ nyam!” The nex’ day he went back an’ the yam bear a larger one than the previous day. He cut it an’ carry it home, cook it, call up the wife an’ chil’ren; he alone eat it.

Cunnie-mo’n-father say, “Look here! I *mus’* fin’ out the name of that yam!” He got some okra an’ went to the place where the broad rock is an’ mash up the okra an’ have the place quite slippery, an’ hide himself away in the bush near by. Anansi now coming with a larger yam this time. As he reach to the rock, he make a slide, fa’ down, an’ the yam smash.

He said, “Lawd! All me yam *foofoo* mash up!”

Cunnie-mo’n-father now catch the name, an’ he ran home now an’ tell mother an’ other chil’ren, “Remember! yam *foofoo*!” Anansi then take up the pieces, put them together and carry home. He cook it an’ ca’ all of them roun’ to eat.

He say, “Who know name, nyam; who no know name, no nyam.” They began to guess all sort of name; after that, whole of them say, “Yam *foofoo*! yam *foofoo*!” Anansi get vex, say, “Huh! eat! nobody fin’ it out but Cunnie-mo’n-father!”

Anansi then get to hate Cunnie-mo’n-father, want to make an end of him, but he didn’t know what way was to do it. So one night Brar [Brother] Tiger came to pay a visit to Anansi at his house. While both of them sittin’ an’ talkin’, at that time Cunnie-mo’n-father was lying down underneath the table fawning [feigning] sleep.

Anansi said to Tiger, "Look heah! ev'ry tack dat I put up, Cunnie-mo'-n-father break it down. I wan' to mak an end of him, but I don' know what way to do it." That time, Cunnie-mo'-n-father listen.

Tiger said, "I wi' kill him fo' you."

Anansi say, "How you will manage it?"

So Tiger said to Anansi, "You mus' put up a tack, an' I wi' ketch him."

Anansi said, "Look heah! Tomorrow night jus' at dinner-time you come here hide yo'self in the pepper tree; behin' that fattest limb, you hide yo'self there, an' I will sen' him to pick some pepper an' as he put his han' on the pepper tree, you mus' hol' him."

So the nex' night at dinner-time Tiger went to hide himself there. Anansi call Cunnie-mo'-n-father, say, "Go get pepper from the pepper tree."

Cunnie-mo'-n-father start for de pepper tree. On his way going he call in the kitchen an' take a fire-stick, an' as he went to the pepper tree, he shove the fire-stick right in Tiger face.

Tiger cry out, "W'y-ee!" an' gallop away.

Cunnie-mo'-n-father return to Anansi an' say he hear something in the pepper tree cry, so he don' pick any. Anansi eat his dinner that night without pepper.

A few minutes after, Tiger come back in the house an' tol' Anansi what have taken place. Anansi say, "Well, the boy have tack! but we *mus'* ketch him." At that time the boy go under the table lay down an' study for them again.

Tiger say, "How mus' we ketch him?"

Anansi said, "You come here tomorrow twelve o'clock an' I'll sen' him up on a cocoanut tree an' while he in the tree, you wait underneath; when he come down you ketch him." The nex' morning, Cunnie-mo'-n-father get two bags, fill it with red ants go up same cocoanut tree an' hide it, preparing for Tiger. At twelve o'clock Tiger come to Anansi yard. Anansi call for Cunnie-mo'-n-father an' said, "Go an' get me some cocoanuts off'n that tree." He went, an' Tiger lay wait under the tree for him. He shout to Tiger he mus' look up an' show him the bes' cocoanut he want, an' while Tiger do that, he open one of the bag an' throw it down in Tiger face. Ant begun to bite him an' he has to run away. Cunnie-mo'-n-father slip right down off the cocoanut tree, so he didn't get any cocoanut.

In the evening, Tiger went back to Anansi to tell him how Cunnie-mo'-n-father do him again. While the two of them was talking an' setting up another tack, Cunnie-mo'-n-father was underneath table listening to them again.

Anansi said, "The boy smart! but I goin' to put you up a tack fo' ketch him! Look heah! Tomorrow at twelve o'clock, you fin' yo'self at me groun' an' you will see a fat root of yam near to a tree. You mus' hide yo'self in the bush an' I will sen' him there to come cut yam, an' as he come there, hol' him."

Tiger then went an' fix himself in the yam bush. At twelve o'clock Anansi call Cunnie-mo'-n-father an' sen' him to groun, to cut yam an' tell him that very spot whe' he is to dig them.

Cunnie-mo'n-father went to the groun' an' shout out "Yam-o-e-e! yam-o-ee! yam-o-ee!" t'ree times. Nobody answer. Cunnie-mo'n-father say, "I t'ink father tell me say that when I come to groun' call fo' yam, yam wi' speak, an' de yam don' speak!" Call again, "Yam-o-ee!"

So Tiger answer him, "O-ee-e!"

So Cunnie-mo'n-father say, "From me bwoy born, the firs' I hear that yam can talk!" So run home back lef' Tiger.

So Tiger leave the groun' an' come home an' tell Anansi what happen.

Anansi said, "Well, 'cunnie mo' than me' fe trew, but we goin' to ketch him!"

At that time Cunnie-mo'n-father underneath the table fe listen, an' unfortunately he fell fas' asleep. So Anansi an' Tiger ketch him an' make a coffin an' put him in. Anansi tell Tiger he mus' take him t'row him far away in the sea where he kyan't come back again. Tiger lif' up the coffin, put it on his head an' start on the journey.

On reaching to a bush he help down the coffin an', as the sun was so hot, went underneath a tree an' fall asleep. Now there was a little hole in the coffin, an' looking thru that hole, Cunnie-mo'n-father saw an ol' man comin' along drivin' a flock of sheep. He began to cry, sayin' they want him to go to heaven an' he don' ready to go yet.

The ol' man said, "Bwoy, you too foolish! Heaven's a good place an' you don' ready to go there yet? You open the coffin put me in!"

The ol' man open the coffin, Cunnie-mo'n-father come out, put in the ol' man an' nail up the coffin back with him in it. He then drove the sheep a little way up inside the bush. Tiger now wake out of his sleep, lif' up the coffin an' away he went to the sea with it, an' go as far he could an' t'row the coffin down in the sea drown the ol' man, fe' a heaven he want to go! He then go back to Anansi yard an' tell him that he has finish with the fellow—no more of him, fe' he has drown' him in the deepest part of the sea.

Later in the evening, while Anansi an' Tiger was sitting down an' talking about the badness of Cunnie-mo'n-father, Anansi look an' see a flock of sheep was coming up to his house an' some one driving it. The driver was Cunnie-mo'n-father.

Anansi says to Tiger, "But now look at the bwoy what you drown' today, look at him driving a flock of sheep coming up!"

Tiger said, "No! 'cause I t'row him in the farthest part of the sea!" They waited until he drove them up to the yard. Tiger said to him, "Boy, don't it was you I t'row into the sea today?" Cunnie-mo'n-father said, "Yes, the place whe' you t'row me I get these sheep, an' if you did t'row me a little further, I would get double more than this!"

Anansi, hearing that, said that he would like to get some himself an' Cunnie-mo'n-father mus' carry him an' t'row him at the part where he can get the sheep. Cunnie-mo'n-father then get a coffin make an' put Anansi in it carry him to the sea-side, hire a boat, an' carry him far far away in the sea an' drown him.

An' that was, the las' of poor Anansi in *that* story.

ANANSI AND THE LADY IN THE WELL

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Trowbridge, Ada Wilson. "Negro Customs and Folk-Stories of Jamaica." *Journal of American Folklore* 9 (1896): 283–284.

Date: 1896

Original Source: Jamaica

National Origin: African American

Anansi, often simply called "Nancy" in Jamaican tradition, plays out the ambiguities of **tricksters** cross-culturally. While identified with a large, black spider found throughout the islands, in the "Nancy tales," he may take on the human form along with his human attributes. Often turning his guile to selfish and even sadistic ends, in the tale of "Anansi and the Lady in the Well," he acts as a compassionate intermediary between an abused wife and her neglected child. Although his motivations remain unknowable, he intervenes to help the victims of an abusive and exploitive male figure.

Once it was a time when there was a good queen. An' she have husban' an' one pretty baby. An' she have one little pet dog, who go trot, trot, all 'bout de house after her.

Now de husban' he t'ink nothin' at all of him wife, an' he say to himse'f. "I put dat queen down de ole well, and den I get another mo' beau'ful queen." Den he do dis same t'ing what he t'ink in him ole black heart.

Now de queen she fall way down to de bottom of de well an' she can't scramble out no way, an' jus' sit all de day and cry fu' her baby. By an' by Nancy he come scrape, scrape, crup, crup, down de side de well an' say, "Howdy! W'at fo' you' cry, me lady?"

De queen say, "Howdy, Nancy! Me cry fo' me baby."

"Jus' jump on me back," say Nancy, "an' I fetch you' out dat well."

He take de queen on him back and go scrape, scrape, crup, crup, up de side de well. Den he say, "Now run! wash de baby, an' me fetch you down de well again befo' your husban' catch you."

Den she run to de door an' sing:

O-pen de do', my lit-tle dog-gie!

An' de little dog sing:

Yes, fo' cer-'a'n, my fair lah-dy!

Den she sing ‘gain:

Fetch the baby, my lit-tle dog-gie!

An’ de little dog sing:

Yes, fo’ certain, my fair la-dy!

An’ so till all de t’ings fetched an’ de baby all wash, dress, an’ sleep so sweet. Den she run back to Nancy an’ he take her on him back an’ go scrape, scrape, crup, crup, back down de well ‘gain. [In telling this story the narrator will often sing for each article of the baby’s toilette, and sing the reply of the dog, in the simple measures given above.]

An’ ev’ry day Nancy come dis way and say, “Howdy, me lady!” and take de queen on him back an’ fetch her out de well, an’ she wash an’ dress dat baby till him grow big boy.

COCK’S BREAKFAST

Tradition Bearer: Richard Morgan

Source: Beckwith, Martha Warren. *Jamaica Anansi Stories. Memoirs of the American Folklore Society*, No. 17. New York: American Folklore Society, 1924, 61.

Date: 1924

Original Source: Jamaica

National Origin: African American

The tale of the “Cock’s Breakfast” casts cockroach in the role of **trickster**. Martha Warren Beckwith, in fact, suggests a comparison between cockroach and the more famous African and African American trickster Anansi (1924, 260). Cockroach is featured in similar tales in Caribbean tradition. The present narrative is built on “Enmity of Fowl and Cockroach” (*Motif* A2494.5.18).

One day Cockroach said to Cock, “Brother Cock, get little breakfas’, so I will come an’ have breakfas’ wid you.” Cock said yes. Cockroach come, Cockroach eat.

When he done ‘e said, “Brother Cock, when you know time my breakfas’ ready, come.”

Cock said, “How mus’ I know?”

Cockroach said, “I will gi’ you a sign. When you hear I make noise, don’ come; but when you hear I stay still in de yard you mus’ come.”

When Cock go, he didn't fin' Cockroach. Cock return back to his yard. Secon' day, Cockroach come an' say, "Oh, Brother Cock! after I lef' you here, I got pain all over my skin so I go an' lie down, I couldn't look a t'ing; but t'-day you can come."

Cock do de same, go to de yard, didn't fin' him, return back. When he got half way, he hear in Cockroach house,

Ring a ting ting,
Me know fool for fool!

Cock take time, tip on him toe. An' go long to one gourd, he hear cockroach in a de gourd. An' Cock take him beak, lick him at de gourd. Cockroach run out. Cock pick him up an' swaller him.

So from dat day, not a cockroach walk a fowl yard any more.

TIGER SOFTENS HIS VOICE

Tradition Bearer: George Parkes

Source: Beckwith, Martha Warren. *Jamaica Anansi Stories. Memoirs of the American Folklore Society*, No. 17. New York: American Folklore Society, 1924, 116–118.

Date: 1924

Original Source: Jamaica

National Origin: African American

As is the case with various tales from the African Caribbean, an animal desires a human woman for his wife. These tales usually share a similar **motif** of the magic power of song to charm and transform.

Once upon a time a woman had one daughter, an' that daughter was the prettiest girl in an' around that country. Every man want the girl to marry, but the mother refuse them as they come.

Tiger, too, wanted the girl, an' demands the girl, an' the mother says no. Tiger said if he don't get the girl he will kill her. So they remove from that part of the country and go to another part, into a thick wild wood where no one live. And she made a house with a hundred doors and a hundred windows and a large staircase; and the house is an upstairs, an' there both of them live.

Tiger hear of it, always loafing aroun' the house to see if he can catch the girl, but the girl never come out. During the day, the mother went to her work, leaving the girl at home. When going out, the mother fasten all the doors an' windows; coming home in the evening, at a certain spot where she can see the

house an' notice that all the windows an' doors are close as she leave it, then now she have a song to sing, go like this—

Tom Jones, Tom Jones, Tom Jones!
(that's the name of the girl)

Girl now—

Deh lo, madame!

Woman said to her now—

Fare you well, fare you well, fare you well,
Fare you well, me dear; fare you well, me love!
A[in't] no Tiger, deh la, ho, deh la, ho?
Me jus' come, ho!

Then the door open, so—

Cheeky checky knock umbar,
Cheeky checky knock umbar,
Cheeky checky knock umbar.

The door don't open without that song now, and when it open, the mamma go into the house.

At that time, Tiger in the bush listening to the song. So one day while she was away, hear time for her to come home, Tiger approach the spot where she always sing. He now in a very coarse voice sings the song—

Tom Jones, Tom Jones, Tom Jones!

Girl now—

Deh lo, madame!

The girl look from the window, said, "Tiger, a who no know sa' a you!" [I know who you are.] So now Tiger go 'way an' hide till mamma come. When she come, he listen good. Next day, Tiger go to a blacksmith an' ask de blacksmith what he t'ink can give him, Tiger, a clear v'ice [voice].

De blacksmi't say he must hot a long iron an' when it hot, mus' take it push down his t'roat. An' de blacksmi't give him a bit of meat to eat after he burn the throat an' that will give him a clear v'ice. So Tiger go away eat de meat first an' den burn de t'roat after.

Nex' day he went to the spot where the woman always sing from. An' that make his v'ice more coarser. He sing now—

Tom Jones, Tom Jones, Tom Jones!

Girl now—

Deh lo, madame!

The girl look thru the window an' say, "Cho! a who no know sa' a you!" So Tiger got vex' now, an' he went home, burn the throat first and afterward eat the meat, and that give him a clearer v'ice than the woman. The nex' day, when most time for the woman to come home from her work, Tiger went to the spot where he can see the house. He begin to sing—

Tom Jones, Tom Jones, Tom Jones!

Girl now—

Deh lo, madame!

The girl answer (tho't it was her mother now)—

Deh la, madame!

Then Tiger say—

Fare you well, fare you well, fare you well,
 Fare you well, me dear; fare you well, me love!
 A no Tiger deh lo o-o-o
 Me jus' come, h-o-o-o!

The door commence to open now—

Cheeky cheeky cheeky knock umbar,
 Cheeky cheeky cheeky knock umbar,
 Cheeky cheeky cheeky knock umbar!

And as the door open, Tiger step up an' caught the girl an' swallow her.

And when the mother coming home, reach to the spot and saw the doors and windows open, she throw down what she carry and run to the house. And she saw Tiger lay down. And the mother then went away an' get some strong men come an' tie Tiger, kill him, an' open de belly an' take out de daughter. At that time, little life left in her an' they get back the life in her. The woman then

leave the house an' go off away far into another country, and that is why you always fin' lot of old houses unoccupied that no one live in.

THE WITCH AT BOSEN CORNER

Tradition Bearer: Martha Roe

Source: Beckwith, Martha Warren. *Jamaica Anansi Stories. Memoirs of the American Folklore Society*, No. 17. New York: American Folklore Society, 1924, 94–96.

Date: 1924

Original Source: Jamaica

National Origin: African American

The following tale is a Caribbean **variant** of “The Kind and the Unkind Girls” (AT 480). This widely distributed narrative is represented in the tale corpus of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm as “Frau Holle.”

A woman have two daughter; one was her own chil' an' one was her daughter-in-law. So she didn't use her daughter-in-law good. So de place whe' dem go fe water a bad place, Ol' Witch country. De place name Bosen Corner.

One day she sen' de daughter-in-law fe water. So when she go long, she see so-so [only] head in de road; she put her hand on belly mek kind howdy. Go on again, see two foot go one in anudder so (crossed) in de road. An' say, “Howdy, papa.”

So-so foot say, “Gal, whe you gwine?” She said, “Mamma sen' me a Bosen Corner fe water.”

He say, “Go on, gal; good befo' an' bad behin'.” She go on till she ketch to a little hut, see one ol' lady sit down deh. She say, “Howdy, nana,” De ol' lady say, “Whe' you gwine?” Say, “Ma sen' me a Bosen Corner fe water, ma'am.” De ol' lady say, “Come in here; late night goin' tek you.” De Ol' Witch go pick up one piece of bone out dungle-heap an' choppy up putty in pot, an' four grain of rice. Boil de pot full of meat an' rice an' get de gal dinner. De gal eat, an, eat done call her say, “Me gal, come here 'cratch me back.” When she run her han' 'cratch her back so, back pick all de gal han' so it bleed. Ol' Witch ask her, “What de matter you' han'?” Say, “Not'ing, ma'am.” Even when it cut up all bleed, never say not'ing. When she go sit down, ol' lady go out of door come in one ol' cat. De ol' cat come in de gal lap, an' she hug it up an' coax de cat an' was so kin' to de cat. An' de gal sleep an' get up to go away in de mo'ning, De ol' lady tell her say mus' go roun' de house see some fowl-egg. She tell de gal say, de egg whe' she hear say, “Tek me! tek me!” dem are big egg; she musn't

tek dem; small egg say, “No tek me!” she mus’ tek four. First crossroad ketch, she mus’ mash one. Firs’ crossroad she mash one de egg, an’ see into a big pretty common. Second crossroad she mash udder one; de common pack up wid cow an’ goat an’ sheep an’ ev’ryt’ing dat a gentleman possess in property. De t’ird crossroad she mash anudder one; she saw a pretty young gentleman come out into a buggy. De fourt’ crossroad she mash de las’ egg an’ fin’ de gentleman is a prince an’ he marry her.

De daughter-in-law come, her an’ her husban’, drive into de yard see murder-in-law. She expect’ de Ol’ Witch kill de gal didn’t know she was living. So she sen’ fe her own daughter, sen’ a Bosen Corner fe water, say de udder one go get fe her riches, so she mus’ get riches too. De gal tek a gourd an’ going now fe water too. Go long an’ see so-so head an’ say, “Ay-e-e! from me bo’n I nebber see so-so head yet!” So-so head say, “Go long, gall better day befo’.” An’ go long an’ meet upon so-so foot, an’ say, “Eh! me mamma sen’ me fe water I buck up agains’ all kind of bugaboo, meet all kin’ of insect!” An’ say, “Go long, gall better day befo’.” An’ go de ol’ lady house now. De ol’ lady go tek de ol’ bone go putty on de fire again, an’ say, “Nana, you gwine tell me so-so bone bile t’-day fe me dinner?” An’ when she see de four grain of rice she say, “Nebber see fo’ grain of rice go in a pot yet!” Till it boil de pot full de same wid rice an’ meat. De ol’ lady share fe her dinner give her, an’ she go tu’n a puss an’ come back in. When de puss beg fe little rice, de gal pick her up fling her out de door. Ol’ lady call her fe come, ‘cratch him back too, an’ put him han’ to ‘cratch him back, draw it back say, “Nebber see such a t’ing to ‘cratch de back an’ cut han’!” Nex’ mo’ning, de ol’ lady tell her mus’ look in back of de house tek egg. De big egg say, “Tek me! tek me!” mus’n’t tek dem; de little egg say, “No tek me! no tek me!” mus’ tek four. She don’ tek de small one, tek four of de big egg. De firs’ crossroad she break one an’ see a whole heap of snake. At de secon’ crossroad she break anudder an’ see a whole lot of insect. At de las’ crossroad she massoo one, an’ see a big Ol’ Witch man tear her up kill her ‘tiff dead in de road.

JACK AND THE DEVIL ERRANT

Tradition Bearer: Elizabeth Hilton

Source: Beckwith, Martha Warren. *Jamaica Anansi Stories. Memoirs of the American Folklore Society*, No. 17. New York: American Folklore Society, 1924, 61.

Date: 1924

Original Source: Jamaica

National Origin: African American

The following **ordinary folktale** is a classic example of “The Girl as Helper in the Hero’s Flight” (AT 313). As such, the plot incorporates

the six characteristic episodes of AT 313: “Hero Comes into Ogre’s [Devil’s] Power,” “The Ogre’s Tasks,” “The Flight,” “The Forgotten Fiancée,” “Waking from Magical Forgetfulness,” and “The Old Bride Chosen.” The tale is an African American **variant** of a common European type.

Jack was a great gambler—no one could ever beat him a game; and he went and gambled with the Devil Errant. Jack won the first, second and third games; the Devil Errant won the fourth and the fifth games,

The Devil Errant said to Jack, “I require nothing of you but to find me in three months.” No man knew where the Devil Errant lived, and if Jack doesn’t find him in three months, the Devil Errant will take his head. And the Devil Errant knew where Jack lived.

Jack was fretting and didn’t know what to do. He asked every one of his friends and they said they didn’t know the Devil Errant and didn’t know where he lived. He went to the keeper of the world and asked him where the Devil Errant lived.

He said, “How could you play cards with a man like that! However, I am keeper of all the beasts. In the morning I will ring the bell and all will come and I will ask them if they know the Devil Errant.”

In the morning he rang the bell and all the beasts came. Everyone said he didn’t know the Devil Errant. So he said, “I don’t know what to do, Jack; but I have a brother who lives three hundred miles from here, and I will roll a barrel and you must go after the barrel; where the barrel stops, that will be where my brother lives.”

In the morning, he rolled the barrel and Jack followed the barrel, and it stopped in the brother’s yard and Jack stopped too. And he asked the brother if he knew the Devil Errant and he said no, didn’t know a man like that. And he said, “Well, I am the keeper of all the fish in the sea. In the morning I will ring the bell and all the fish can come und I will ask them if they know the Devil Errant.” In the morning, he rang the bell and all the fish came and they said they didn’t know a man like the Devil Errant.

Jack was fretting, for it only needed three days and the three month would be gone, The brother said, “Well, I don’t know what to do, but I have another brother who lives two hundred miles from here. Tomorrow I will roll the barrel and where that barrel stops that will be the place.

In the morning, he rolled the barrel and Jack followed after the barrel, and when he got to the other brother the brother said, “Well, I don’t know such a man by the name of the Devil Errant, but I am the keeper of all the birds in the year, and in the morning I will ring the bell and they will come and I will ask them if they know the Devil Errant.”

In the morning, he rang the bell and all the birds came except one named the Quack, and everyone said he didn’t know the Devil Errant. Little after, the

Quack came up. The keeper asked him why he didn't come all this time and he said, "I was just at the Devil Errant's yard picking up a few grains of corn."

The keeper said to Jack, "This is the only one who can take you to the Devil Errant's yard."

Jack had to kill a cow now and cut it up in pieces and put it on the bird's back along with himself, and every time the bird said "Quack," give him a piece of meat. The Quack was a greedy bird; said "Quack" and gave him a piece, "Quack" and gave him a piece, "Quack" and gave him a piece, "Quack" and gave him a piece, till he gave him the whole cow, didn't have any more to give him. The bird said "Quack" and he gave him his hat, "Quack" and he gave him his boots, "Quack" and didn't have anything more to give him, and the bird dropped him at the river-side.

As Jack was there crying he saw an old man come. The man said, "Jack, what you doing here?" Jack said, "I was gambling with the Devil Errant and he won me the fourth and fifth times and he said I was to find him in three months, and the three months are up today."

The man said, "Well, I advise you to stay here for a few minutes and you will see the Devil Errant's two daughters come to bathe. You must not trouble those two, but when you see the third one come, when she goes to bathe take her clothes and hide them, and when she comes out to look for the clothing say to her, 'Your father played me a trick and I will play you one too!'"

Jack did so. When the girl looked for her clothes, Jack said, "Your father played me a trick and I will play you one too."

And the girl fell in love with Jack and told him all her father's secrets and said, "Now, Jack, when you go to my father's gate, if he tells you to come in you mustn't go in at the gate; for there will be a sword ready to cut off your head. Let him come and open the gate for you."

So when Jack went to the Devil Errant's yard, the Devil Errant said, "You are very clever indeed, Jack! Open the gate and come in."

Jack said, "No, you come and open it." The Devil came and opened the gate.

The Devil said, "As you are so clever to find me in three months. I will give you another task to do."

He dropped his gold ring into an empty well and said, "Go and pick it up."

When Jack went, the well was full of water. Poor Jack was hungry and crying. He saw the girl coming with his breakfast and a bag with a machete in it.

And she said, "Why are you crying, Jack?"

He said, "Because your father has given me a task I can't do."

She said, "What is it?" He said, "He dropped his ring into the well when it was empty, and when I went to pick it up, it was full of water."

She said, "Well, what you must do is to take this machete now and cut me up in pieces and I will be a ladder, and when you are coming back, you must take up every piece and put it into this bag and I will become the same woman."

Jack said he couldn't do it at all, but she forced him to and so he did it, He chopped her up and put her down and she became a ladder, and every time in coming up he took up a piece until he had taken up the whole, only one little piece he forgot, till at last she became the same woman, only she had lost one of her finger-joints; but she said, "Never mind for that, Jack!"

Jack took the ring to the Devil Errant and he said, "Since you are so clever, I will give you another task; take this house, now, and shingle it with dove feather." Jack was crying and he saw the girl coming with a barrel of corn.

She said, "Now, Jack, dash this corn about the house and every bird will come to feed; and pick the feathers and shingle it with dove feathers." And so Jack did.

And the Devil said, "You are so clever I will give you another task to do, and when you have done that I will set you free." And he gave him a bit and said, "Go and catch my horse in the pasture." When Jack went to the pasture he saw it was a mountain of sea. Jack was crying and he saw the girl coming with a gun and a stone.

She said, "Don't cry, Jack! take the bridle and stone, fire the gun and dash into the sea. The horse will come and put his head into the bit, as my grandfather was buried here."

When Jack carried the horse to the Devil Errant, the Devil Errant said, "You are very clever indeed. I will give you one of my daughters to marry." He had the three girls dress alike and gave a grand dance and said when they were dancing he must pick out the one that he loved the best. The girl told him that she would wear a different branch and told him what branch she would wear, so he picked out the youngest daughter. The Devil Errant said he couldn't give him that one at all because she was too young, but Jack said she was the only one he loved, and the Devil Errant couldn't break his promise and had to give her to him, and they got the parson to come and marry them.

That night the wife said, "Well, Jack, father is going to kill you tonight." When they went to bed, the wife made two wooden babies that would cry and put them in the bed; and they went into the pasture and got the best riding horses her father had and started for home. The devil got a pot of boiling water and threw it trough the chimney into the room on the bed. When he heard the babies cry, he went to cut their throats and he found the two wooden babies. So he went after them.

The horse's name was "Supple Jack." The girl said to Jack, "Look, look behind you and see what you see!"

Jack said, "Your father is at the horse's tail!" She said, "Take this grain of corn and throw it and it will turn a wood of trees that he can't pass." The Devil went back for his axe, and felled the wood.

She said, "Look, look behind you, Jack, and see what you see!"

He said, "Your father is at the horse's tail!"

She said, "Take this sweat and droop it behind you and it will mount to a great river he can't cross." The devil went back for his ladle and ladled the water till he drowned; he couldn't go any further!

The girl said to Jack, "As you have been away so long, don't take me with you; leave me at the lodgings and come back tomorrow for me. But you must not kiss anyone; if you kiss anyone, you will forget me and never remember me any more."

So Jack went home. His mother and sisters and everybody came to kiss him, but he refused to kiss them. He lay on the sofa sleeping and a pet dog came and kissed him, and Jack never remembered his wife any more for four years.

Then they made a great entertainment. Jack was just about to marry the next day to another woman, and he and his bride went to the entertainment. The first wife sat down at the window sad. They asked her to go with them to the entertainment. She said no, she was not going, but they forced her to go with them. As everybody was enjoying himself, they asked her to entertain them. She knocked her left side; a rooster came out. She knocked her right side; a hen came out. She knocked her stomach; a grain of corn came out. The rooster took it away from the hen.

The hen said, "Get away, you ungrateful rooster! You came into my father's yard, he gave you a task to do and you couldn't do it. He dropped his gold ring into the well and you couldn't take it out, had to mince me in pieces, and now I have lost one of my little finger joints!" She knocked again and another grain of coin came out. The rooster took it away from the hen.

The hen said, "Stop, you ungrateful rooster! You came to my father's yard, he gave you a task to shingle a house with dove feathers and you couldn't do it; I had to do it for you"

Jack said, "I remember something!"

She knocked on her stomach again and another grain of corn came out. The rooster ate it up. She said, "Get away, you ungrateful rooster you! You came to my father's yard. He gave you his bridle to go and catch his horse and you couldn't catch it and I had to show you how to do it!"

Jack said, "I just remember my fault!" Jack fell down at her feet and begged her to forgive him. He said to the company that a man had lost a key and was about to buy a new one when he found the old one just as good, and everybody told him there was now no occasion to buy the new one.

Jack said, "Well, this is my wife that I forgot for four years, and I have found her!" He put her in his buggy and drove home and left the other one in the same place. And they both lived happy forever.

DE STORY OF DE MAN AND SIX POACHED EGGS

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Smith, Pamela Coleman. "Two Negro Stories from Jamaica." *Journal of American Folklore* 9 (1896): 278.

Date: 1896

Original Source: Jamaica

National Origin: African American

The following tale is derived from an English source, “The Witty Exploits of Mr. George Buchanan the King’s Fool.” Buchanan, although he survives in folk narrative as a “fool” in the Elizabethan tradition, was tutor to James VI of Scotland and later an advisor and known as a social reformer. The presence of the tale in the African Caribbean corpus illustrates the influence of English traditions in this culture area.

Once a man go travelin’ an’ he get hungry, so he stop at a tavern an’ order something to eat, so dey bring him six poached eggs. He eat dem, but he did not have any money, so he say he would come back an’ pay. In six years—or maybe it was more—be comeback an’ pay sixpence for de eggs. But den de tavern keeper say dat if he had not eaten de six poached eggs dey might have been chickens, and den de chickens would have grown up and hatch more chickens, an’ dey more—an’ more—an’ more—an’ tell de man he must pay six pounds instead of sixpence. An’ de man say he would not.

So dey go to de judge. An’ while dey was conversin’ a boy come in with a bundle under his arm. An’ de judge say, “What you got in de bundle?” and de boy say, “Parch’peas,” say, “What you goin’ do with dem?”

“Plant dem, sir!”

“Hi” say de judge, “You can’t plant parch’peas, dey won’t grow!”

“Well, sir, an’ poached eggs won’t hatch!”

So dey dismiss de man and he never pay a penny!

Dis story show dat you mus’ never count you’ eggs before dey hatch!

Native Caribbean

ARAWAK

HARIWALI AND THE WONDERFUL TREE

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Roth, Walter E. *An Inquiry into the Animism and Folk-Lore of the Guiana Indians*. Thirtieth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 1908–1909. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1915, 120–122.

Date: ca. 1908

Original Source: Arawak

National Origin: Native American

The Arawaks were the first indigenous groups encountered by the Spanish in the Caribbean. They occupied the modern West Indian islands of the Bahamas, Cuba, Hispaniola (Haiti and the Dominican Republic), Jamaica, and Puerto Rico. The Taino were the dominant Arawak culture in the area at the time of first European contact. The “piai” is the holy man and healer of Arawak tradition. Many are regarded as having such an aura of the sacred as to be venerated after death. This **myth** in which Hariwali creates new species in his quest for revenge against an unfaithful wife and treacherous brother, and travels to the land of the spirits to retrieve his brother to alleviate their mother’s grief, illustrates the power the piais were believed to possess.

Hariwali was a clever, painstaking piyai, who spent most of his time in clearing the field for his two wives. These two women, their children, and his brother lived with him at his house. While felling the timber, the wives undertook, turn and turn about, to bring their husband some cassiri [cassava juice beer] daily.

It happened now that while carrying the usual refreshment one of the wives was met by the brother-in-law, who was bringing in some itiriti [a plant whose stems are used for plaiting household articles] strands to weave baskets with.

“Hullo!” he said, “where are you going?” to which he received reply, “I am taking cassiri to my husband; the field—But I like you. Do you like me?”

“No, I don’t,” he answered, “and even if I did, my brother, being a medicine-man, would find it out very soon.”

She tried him again, and tempted him sorely, and then she threw her arms round him. He was but mortal. She assured him that her husband would never find out what had happened, and both went their respective ways. Before she reached the field, however, she broke the calabash [in which the cassiri was contained]; then with a pointed stick she cut her knee, causing it to bleed. When Hariwali saw her coming slowly along with a limp carrying the broken calabash, he asked her what had happened. All she could do was to point to the scratch and blood on her lame knee, and tell him that she had had an accident, having fallen on a stump. He was a shrewd piyai, however, and knew exactly what had happened, and though he said nothing then, he determined not only upon getting rid of her, but of his other wife also; he just then, however, directed her to return home.

Next morning he bade both the women accompany him, as he intended fishing in the pond, and he merely wanted them to do the cooking and make the fire. When fire had been made, he brought them a turtle, which they put on the hot ashes without killing it, so it promptly crawled out; they pushed it on again, but with the same result. It was the omen betokening their death. The semi-chichi [sorcerer] had bewitched them and they thought they had already killed the turtle.

What they imagined was that the fire was not hot enough, and so the faithless spouse went to look for more dry wood. Now, as she was breaking up the timber she found it very hard work, and exclaimed Tata—Ketaiaba (literally, hard to break), but no sooner were the words out of her mouth, than she flew away as a hawk, the “bul-tata,” which can often be heard crying bul-tata-tata-tata.... Of course it was her husband who had done this. The other wife said she felt hot and would bathe her skin; no sooner had she ducked into the pond, than her husband turned her into a porpoise—she was the very first porpoise that ever swam in these waters.

Hariwali thus punished his wives, and now pondered over what he should do with his brother. While returning home, he met the very man with bow and arrows starting out to hunt, but neither spoke. That same afternoon the brother, who had never missed a bird before, made a bad shot every time now, the arrow invariably flying absurdly wide of its mark. This was really all Hariwali’s doing. At last the brother did manage to hit a bird, but only just hard enough to knock a few feathers off, nothing more.

“Don’t do that again,” said the bird, “and now look behind you.” And when he did so, there was a large sheet of water, and he realized that he was upon an

island. But how to escape? Round and round he wandered, until he finally found a path; no ordinary path, but a Yawahu's ["spirit" in the generic sense] path leading to the Spirit's house.

Arrived at the house, the Yawahu caught him, and took all his bones out except those of his fingers; this was done only out of kindness, so that he could not escape, the Yawahu putting him into a hammock and paying him every care and attention. The bones themselves were tied up in a bundle under the roof (as bundles are kept by many other Indian tribes). The Yawahu was quite a family man, with plenty of youngsters who were always practicing with their bows and arrows; when their arrows got blunted they had only to go up to the captive's hammock and sharpen them on his bony finger tips.

All this time, Hariwali's mother would cry regularly every night over her absent son, whose whereabouts and condition she was absolutely ignorant of. So at last the pi'ai's heart became softened, and he determined on going to fetch his brother home again. It was all due to his "medicine" that his brother fell into the clutches of the Spirits. He told the old woman to pack up everything, because when he returned with his brother they and all their family would have to leave the place forever.

The night previous to their departure, he "played the shak-shak" (that is, called up his Spirit friends with the rattle), and next morning hosts of parrots were passing overhead. His children called his attention to them; so he went out and asked the birds to throw down a seed of a certain tree the bark of which he used medicinally. This they did, and though the youngsters saw the seed falling, directly it touched ground the father put his foot on it, and look as much as they could, the children could not find it. As he did not want them to know what he was doing, he told them that nothing had fallen, that they must be mistaken, and that they must run away now. Young folk are not allowed to see what the old medicine-men practice.

When left alone, Hariwali planted the identical seed just where it had fallen, and that same evening repeated the performance with the rattle; by next morning a stately tree had grown from that one seed. He told his mother to tie all the things which she had packed up, on the branches of this tree and to await his and his brother's return.

It was not long before he reached the Yawahu's place, where, the family being away, he had no difficulty in releasing the captive, untying the bones from the roof, and making good his escape. Unfortunately the Spirit returned earlier than was expected, and seeing the empty hammock and no parcel of bones, was not long in concluding what had happened. He recognized the fresh tracks, and put his dogs on the scent.

Poor Hariwali and his brother! They heard the barking of the dogs and the whistling of the Spirit, and barely had time to crawl into an armadillo hole. They just managed to get out of sight when Yawahu came up, threatening that if they did not come out, he would drive a stick into them; the fugitives laid

low, and said nothing. Yawahu then shoved a stick in, but Hariwali touched it with his hand, and changed it into a bush-master snake. (This is why, even to the present day, a bush-master snake is always found in an armadillo hole.) At any rate, Yawahu on seeing the serpent thought he must have been mistaken in following the tracks and retraced his steps. Having put the bones back into his brother's skin, and waiting till the coast was clear, Hariwali led the way home.

And how glad their mother was to see them! She had everything packed away in and among the branches of the big tree, and she herself, her daughter, and the grandchildren were all prepared for a long journey. As night fell, they all, big and little, climbed up into the lower branches, finding shelter among the leaves while Hariwali made his way up to the very summit and began again the shak-shak performance.

This continued till quite into the middle of the night, when all of a sudden, the family below felt the tree shaking, and heard rumbling noises, followed by a quivering, and experienced a sensation of the trunk being rooted out of the sand, and starting to fly up into the air. Now, it was just about the moment when they were off on their proposed journey that the old woman's daughter, the pi'ai's sister, felt a bit chilly, and casting her eyes downward, remembered that she had left her apron behind in the house. All she could do was to shout out to her brother above, Dekeweyo-daiba (literally, "my apron back"), "I have forgotten my apron," and he told her to slip down quickly and fetch it. But by the time she had reached the old home, she was changed into a wicissi-duck (*Anas autumnalis*), which even yet can always be heard saying dekeweyo-daiba, but as it only whistles these two words, they do not sound so distinctly as if they were spoken slowly.

As to the rest of the family—well, we know that the wonderful tree flew away somewhere, but we have never heard anything more about the people who were on it.

THE TIGER CHANGED INTO A WOMAN

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Roth, Walter E. *An Inquiry into the Animism and Folk-Lore of the Guiana Indians*.

Thirtieth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 1908–1909. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1915, 202–203.

Date: ca. 1908

Original Source: Arawak

National Origin: Native American

Stories of tiger (*tigre*, jaguar) are common among both the Caribbean and South American Arawaks, Caribs, and related Native American

cultures. Two beliefs are crucial to the narrative that follows. The first is the belief that animals are sentient beings possessed of spirits, as are human beings. The second is that metamorphosis from animal and human and human to animal occurs regularly.

There was a man justly noted for his skill in hunting bush-hog. Though his friends might be more than a match for him in hunting other game, with bush-hog he had hardly an equal, certainly no superior. He would always succeed in killing five or six, when the Tiger who invariably followed on the heels of the pack would catch only one or two.

The Tiger could not help noticing his success, and on the next occasion that our friend went into the bush changed himself into a woman, and spoke to him. She asked him how he managed to kill so many bush-hog, but all he could tell her was that he had been trained to it ever since the days of his early boyhood. She next expressed her desire to have him for a husband, but he, knowing her origin, was not too anxious to give a decided answer.

She overcame his scruples, however, by convincing him that if they lived together, they could kill ever so many more bush-hog than it was possible to do singly. And then he agreed. He lived with her for a long, long time, and she turned out to be an exceedingly good wife, for besides looking after the cooking and the barbecuing, she made an excellent huntress.

One day she asked him whether he had father or mother, and learning that his parents and other relatives were still alive, inquired whether he would not like to pay them a visit, because she felt sure that from not having seen him for so long the old people would think him dead.

And when he said, "All right! I would like to go home," she offered to show him the road and to accompany him, but only on the condition that he never told his folk from what nation she was sprung. Before they started, she said they must go hunting for a few days, so as to be able to take plenty of bush-hog with them. This they did, finally arriving at the house of his parents, who were indeed glad to welcome him after so many years.

The first question his old mother asked him was, "Where did you get that beautiful woman?" He told her that he had p. 204 found her when out hunting one day in the bush, at the same time taking care to omit all mention of the fact that she was really a Tiger. While at his old home, the couple went out hunting again and again, invariably returning with an extraordinarily large bag. This, unfortunately, proved to be their undoing.

All his friends and family became suspicious of his luck, and made up their minds to discover to what nation his beautiful wife belonged. He was often asked, but always refused to divulge the secret. His mother, however, became so worried and upset that he at last did make a clean breast of it to her, strictly warning her not to tell anyone else, as his wife might leave him altogether.

And now trouble soon came. One day the husband's people made plenty of cassiri, to get the old woman drunk, but when asked about her daughter-in-law she wouldn't tell: they gave her more drink and still she held her tongue: a last they gave her so much drink, that out came the secret and all the friends now knew that the beautiful creature whom they had so envied was after all only a Tiger.

The woman, however, who had heard her mother-in-law exposing her origin, felt so ashamed that she fled into the bush growling, and that was the last that was ever seen or heard of her. Her husband, of course, upbraided his mother roundly for betraying him but she said she really could not help herself; they had made her so drunk. And the poor husband would often go into the bush and call his wife, but there never, never came a reply.

THE BABRACOTE AND THE CAMUDI

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Roth, Walter E. *An Inquiry into the Animism and Folk-Lore of the Guiana Indians*. Thirtieth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 1908–1909. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1915, 261–262.

Date: ca. 1908

Original Source: Arawak

National Origin: Native American

The following **legend** underscores themes developed in “Haliwari and the Wonderful Tree” (page 443) and “The Tiger Changed into a Woman” (page 446). The sentient nature of the animal world is seen in the anaconda who is the mother-in-law's brother, and the tenuous nature of family relationships is dramatized by the husband's cruelty to his wife, mother-in-law, and younger brother. The issue of cannibalism is raised in the following narrative. The indigenous Caribbean peoples were accused of practicing ritual cannibalism. In fact, the Arawak name for the Caribs gave rise not only to the name of the geographic area, but also to the word “cannibal.” Note, however, that both in this narrative and in the Carib **myth** “How Pain, Misery, and Death Came into the World” (page 453), cannibalism is cast in an unfavorable light as an antisocial practice. The **motif** of the enduring physical signs of a tragic event (the images of the barbacote and the swollen anaconda) is common cross-culturally.

There was a man living with his wife and mother-in-law in the same house: the wife's father had been dead a long time. The man was always going out hunting, but, although he started early, and returned late, luck never seemed to attend his efforts.

This made the mother-in-law very angry, and one day she said to him, “You are a worthless son-in-law. Day after day, you go out hunting, and you bring back nothing. Day after day, you go out fishing, and bring back nothing.” The man made no reply to all this, but just laid himself quietly down in his hammock where he remained until next morning.

Next morning he called his wife and told her to pack the hammocks with sufficient cassava for two or three days, as he intended taking her out hunting with him. After they had traveled a long way, he killed her, cut her into pieces, and dried the flesh on a babracote [drying or cooking rack].

Next day he returned home with his victim’s liver, and handing it to his mother-in-law said, “Here’s the liver of a tapir for you. The wife is laden with the flesh and is slowly coming on behind.” The old woman, who was so hungry, spared no time in eating it, and when finished got into her hammock quite satisfied, anxiously looking down the pathway for her daughter. After watching for some hours in vain, she began to think that the alleged tapir’s liver must really have been her daughter’s. Turning to her son-in-law, she charged him with having killed her daughter, because it was then very late and still she had not returned.

He denied it and swore that she would soon be coming, but the woman would not believe him. She continued watching until late in the night, and then she knew that the liver she had eaten was indeed her own daughter’s. Of course she slept but little, and early next morning crept quietly out of the house, and made her way to her brother, the large camudi [anaconda], that lived at the head of the neighboring creek. She told him how her son-in-law had killed her child, and given her the liver to eat. She told him also that she would send the culprit along that very creek, and that as soon as he got within reach he was to catch and swallow him.

When she reached home again the old woman said nothing, but next day told her son-in-law that she was feeling very hungry, that he must go out hunting, and that if he went up to the head of the creek, he would find plenty of game to shoot. The son-in-law suspected something, so he went to a younger brother of his and told him to put in a day’s hunting at the head of that very same creek, while he took good care to take his bow and arrows in exactly the opposite direction.

That same evening, instead of returning to his own place, he came back to his younger brother’s house. No brother returned that night, nor the next day. Indeed, he never came back, because he had been killed and swallowed by the camudi, who had mistaken his man. The son-in-law, after waiting there a few days, then knew what had happened, and made his way to another settlement, far, far from the nagging old woman. On a clear night you can still see the babracote where he barbecued his wife, and close to its side you can just make out the camudi with its swollen belly, due to the younger brother being inside.

HOW WE BEAT THE CARIBS

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Roth, Walter E. *An Inquiry into the Animism and Folk-Lore of the Guiana Indians*. Thirtieth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 1908–1909. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1915, 382–384.

Date: ca. 1908

Original Source: Arawak

National Origin: Native American

The following **legend** purports to explain the enmity between the Arawaks and the Caribs. Outside evidence suggests that the conflict began not on the South American mainland as this narrative suggests, but on the Caribbean Islands that they struggled to control. Both established island and mainland territories and remained in conflict over them. The **motif** of the treacherous husband appears again as a motivation for the ancient conflict among the two groups. An element of historical truth may lie at the heart of this legend: Caribs were alleged to be notorious for raids on the Arawaks with the intent of stealing Arawak women.

An Arawak and a Carib were very friendly: this must needs be so, because each had taken the other's sister to wife. They regularly used to go hunting together. After living in harmony for a long time, they went out hunting, but on this occasion they did not go in company, and they both stayed away longer than usual, and their friends were beginning to wonder what had happened to them.

The Arawak, having finally returned, went to see after his brother-in-law, followed his tracks into the bush, and came on the babracote upon which he found the dried body of his sister whom her husband had evidently killed. He went home, but did not speak for some time.

He then told his wife, the Carib's sister, to come into the bush and hunt with him: when he got her away, he killed and babracoted her. The Carib next came along to see what had happened, and he soon saw. He also went home again, but did not speak for some time.

Finally, he expressed a wish to fight and kill the Arawak, but the Nafudi [village headman] said, "No. All the Caribs together must fight the Arawaks together." So both sides cut a big field and planted plenty of the particular canes required for making arrows, and when these canes were full grown, they cut them down and completed their weapons, and both sides erected a strong house, Waiba, to store them in. Up at Jack Low, on the left bank of the Pomeroun, is still to be recognized the site of the old settlement and fortress, the place itself

even to this day being known as Waiba-diki. Furthermore, it was arranged by both parties that as they intended fighting their battle at sea, and not on land, they would allow themselves time to build a large number of canoes.

This being done, they filled their boats with arrows: twenty canoes were paddled by Arawaks, and forty by Caribs. They all went down the river, out to sea, at the Pomeroon mouth, each taking up such position as would permit of the intervening distance being just sufficient to allow of the arrows thrown from one side reaching the other.

The Arawaks, however, were shrewd. They made themselves cork-wood shields. The Caribs let fly their arrows first, but these stuck in the shields, then the Arawaks broke them off with their *mossi*, the now almost obsolete club. None of the Arawaks were slain, and it was now their turn to shoot.

This they did, with the result that they killed all their enemy, except two, whom they purposely spared in order that they might go home and tell their friends what had happened, and what to expect should they ever dare to fight the Arawaks again. The two who had been spared went away to the Cuyuni, to the Barima, and to the Waini, and remained three months gathering together all their people, who clamored that they would never rest until they had destroyed all the Arawaks.

The Arawaks were waiting for them at Waiba-diki, their stronghold, and stretched a vine-rope across the river; and as the hosts of Caribs approached up the stream, the steering paddles of their canoes became entangled in this rope, and broke away; and while the occupants were looking after them, their canoes all tossed one against the other in dire confusion, and the Arawaks shot showers of arrows into the wavering multitude.

Half the Caribs were destroyed; the other half effected a landing. But around their fortress, the Arawaks had already built a palisade, with just a few chinks in it to permit of arrows flying through; they were all well under cover, and though losing a few of their own people, massacred as before all their enemy, leaving but two to give the news to their friends.

These two went to the east, to Surinam, and started collecting the remnants of their own tribe from those parts. About three months passed. The Arawaks could wait no longer, so they traveled over to Surinam, and came upon the Carib forces, collected in a fortress with enclosing palisade, similar to what they themselves had constructed for their own preservation at Waiba-diki. The Caribs were in overwhelming numbers. So the Arawaks hid themselves, and sent in one of their number to reconnoiter. This man, who could talk Carib, painted himself like one of that nation, and boldly entered the enemy's camp, where he found them all drinking. He said he was a Carib, and that he had just come from the Pomeroon looking for his family; he accepted a little drink and then took his departure, but not before discovering that very early on the following morning, long before daybreak, a crab whistle (that is, made from a crab claw) would be blown as a signal for them to prepare for battle. The scout returned to his people, with all the information that he had gleaned.

That night, every one of the Arawaks made a crab whistle, and surrounding the Caribs while they were still drinking, blew their whistles, surprising the enemy, and slew them all, save one man and woman, who begged so earnestly for their lives that only their legs were speared. It is from this couple that all the present day Caribs are derived, and this is why there are comparatively so few of them. It was we Arawaks who broke their power.

CARIB

HOW PAIN, MISERY, AND DEATH CAME INTO THE WORLD

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Roth, Walter E. *An Inquiry into the Animism and Folk-Lore of the Guiana Indians*. Thirtieth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 1908–1909. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1915, 179–180.

Date: ca. 1908

Original Source: Carib

National Origin: Native American

The Caribs' traditional home lay in the southern region of the West Indies called the Lesser Antilles and along the northern coast of South America. Most commentators believe that, prior to European contact, the Caribs migrated to the islands from the mainland of South America. The Yurokons are spirits of the forest. As illustrated in the following **myth**, they are believed to be shape-shifters and to have an aversion to sweet potatoes. In this narrative, a Yurokon is the agent by which death and misery is brought into human life, but the responsibility for the "fall from grace" is laid at the feet of a Carib.

In the olden times, there was no contention, all were happy, and no one became sick or died. It was then that the Yurokons used to come and live among us as our friends and associates; they were short people like ourselves. One Yurokon in particular used to come and drink *paiwarri* [A blackish fermented drink made from cassava used on occasions of feasting and sport] with my people, whom he would visit for the purpose regularly once a month.

The last time he came, he appeared as a woman with a baby at the breast. The Caribs gave her of the pepper-pot [meat stew], into which she dipped the cassava, which she then sucked and ate. The pepper-pot was so hot, however, that it burned the inside of her mouth and “heart,” and this made her ask for water, but her hostess told her that she had none. Yurokon therefore asked for a calabash, and leaving her baby up at the house, she went down to the waterside, where she quenched her thirst.

On her return, she looked for her little child, but it was nowhere to be seen: she searched high and low, but all in vain, because during her absence some worthless woman among the company had thrown it into the boiling cassiri pot.

By and by Yurokon went to stir the cassiri with the usual paddle-spoon, and, while she stirred, the body of her baby rose to the surface. She wept, and then, turning on the people, upbraided them, “Why have you punished me in this way? I have never had a bad mind against any of you, but now I will make you pay me. In future your children shall all die, and this will make you weep as I am weeping. And when children are born to you, you shall suffer pain and trouble at their birth. Furthermore, with regard to you men,” continued Yurokon, as she addressed the male members of the company, “I will give you great trouble when you go out to catch fish.”

And so she did, because in those days we Caribs only had to go to the waterside, bail the water out with our calabashes, and picking up the fish that were left exposed at the bottom of the stream, just put the water back again to breed fish once more. Yurokon altered all this, and made us go to the trouble, annoyance, and inconvenience of poisoning the pools with various roots. What is more, Yurokon killed the worthless Indian who had thrown her boy into the cassiri, and then asked her children what had become of their mother.

“She has gone to the field,” they said.

“No, she has not; she is hunting after genitalia,” was the insulting rejoinder, a reply which she purposely gave in order to provoke them into a rage.

She asked them the same question a second time, and they told her she had gone to bake cassava.

“No, she has not,” replied Yurokon; “she has bored her way into my ear,” an answer supposed to be even more offensive. And she asked them the same question a third time, but on this occasion they told her that she had gone to dig sweet potatoes. As soon as they mentioned the word “potatoes,” Yurokon disappeared.

HOW THE MAN FOOLED THE TIGER

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Roth, Walter E. *An Inquiry into the Animism and Folk-Lore of the Guiana Indians.*

Thirtieth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 1908–1909. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1915, 218–219.

Date: ca. 1908

Original Source: Carib

National Origin: Native American

Resembling “Ogre Carries Sham Dead Man” (AT 1139), the drunken **trickster** is able to defeat a much fiercer and stronger adversary—tiger (jaguar). As is common in this folktale tradition, the animal is given human attributes.

An Indian went to a somewhat distant settlement to drink paiwarri, and on arriving there in the early afternoon, commenced imbibing. By midnight, the drinks being finished, he started on the return journey, although the house-master warned him not to leave then but to wait for day-break, because an immense Tiger [jaguar] was known to be prowling about.

Our friend would not be persuaded, however, to postpone his departure, but only said, “Oh, never mind. I am not afraid, and if I meet him I will kill him!” So saying, he hung his poto [stone-club] over his arm, and went out into the darkness. Being more or less drunk, he staggered along, and soon fell dead asleep on the road just about the very spot where the Tiger, of which he had been warned, used to cross.

Tiger found him lying there motionless in the early morning, felt and sniffed him all over to see whether he was dead or alive, and finally sat down on him. This sobered the Indian, and Tiger, seeing that he was alive, started pulling down the bushes so as to clear a pathway along which he could drag the body to his lair. Having thus cleared a few yards, the animal returned and slung the man over his back so that the head and arms hung over one flank and the legs over the other.

This gave the man his opportunity, for as the animal carried him along he caught hold of the bushes with his teeth and hands and so impeded Tiger’s progress. The Tiger thought that the pathway which he had cleared was still too narrow, and accordingly replaced the burden on the ground and pulled down more bushes. The Indian thus fooled his captor some three or four times and, having now collected his wits, watched for the tiger to sling him once more on his back.

No sooner had Tiger done so, than he struck the animal’s head just above the ear with his stone-tipped club, and thus killed him. Making sure that Tiger was quite dead, he returned to the place where he had been drinking the night before, and told the house-master what had happened. The latter would not believe that any drunken Indian could have killed so big a tiger, but when he went and saw with his own eyes, he had to admit that his late guest had spoken truly.

THE SUN, THE FROG, AND THE FIRESTICKS

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Roth, Walter E. *An Inquiry into the Animism and Folk-Lore of the Guiana Indians*. Thirtieth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 1908–1909. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1915, 133–135.

Date: ca. 1908

Original Source: Carib

National Origin: Native American

Makunaima, was one of the twin children of the sun, and as such, he appears in the **myths** of many of the native cultures of the Caribbean and the northern coast of South America. The **motif** of twin boys delivered after the murder of their mother by a fearsome creature is seen elsewhere in Native American narrative (see, for example, the Wichita myth “The Two Boys Who Slew the Monsters and Became Stars,” page 148).

A long time ago; there was a woman who had become pregnant by the Sun, with twin children, Pia and Makunaima. One day the as-yet-unborn Pia said to his mother, “Let us go and see our father. We will show you the way, and as you travel along pick for us any pretty flowers that you may come across.”

She accordingly went westward to meet her husband, and plucking flowers here and there on the pathway, accidentally stumbled, fell down, and hurt herself; she blamed her two unborn children as the cause. They became vexed at this, and when she next asked them which road she was to follow, they refused to tell her, and thus it was that she took the wrong direction, and finally arrived, foot-sore and weary, at a curious house.

This belonged to Tiger’s mother, Kono(bo)-aru, the Rain-frog, and when the exhausted traveler discovered where she was, she told the old woman she was very sorry she had come, because she had often heard how cruel her son was. But the house-mistress took pity on her, and telling her not to be afraid, hid her in the big cassiri jar, and popped on the cover.

When Tiger got home that night, he sniffed up and down, and said, “Mother, I can smell somebody! Whom have you here?” And though she denied having anybody on the premises, Tiger was not satisfied, but had a good look round on his own account, and peeping into the cassiri jar, discovered the frightened creature.

On killing the poor woman, Tiger found the two as-yet-unborn children, and showed them to his mother, who said that he must now mind and cherish

them. So he put them in a bundle of cotton to keep them warm, and noticed next morning that they had already begun to creep. The next day, they had grown much bigger, and with this daily increase in about a month's time they had reached man's size. Tiger's mother told them that they were now fit to use the bow and arrow, with which they must go and shoot the Powis (*Crax*) because it was this bird which had killed their own mother.

Pia and Makunaima therefore went next day and shot Powis, and these birds they continued shooting day after day. When they were about to let fly the arrow at the last bird, the Powis told them that it was none of his tribe who had killed their mother, but Tiger himself, giving them both full particulars as to how he had encompassed her death.

The two boys were very angry on hearing this, spared the bird, and coming home empty-handed, informed the old woman that the Powis had taken their arrows away from them. Of course this was not true, but only an excuse; they had themselves hidden their arrows in the bush, and wanted the chance of making new and stronger weapons. These completed, they built a staging up against a tree, and when Tiger passed below, they shot and killed him. And when they reached home, they slaughtered his mother also.

The two lads now proceeded on their way and arrived at last at a clump of cotton trees in the center of which was a house occupied by a very old woman, really a frog, and with her they took up their quarters. They went out hunting each day, and on their return invariably found some cassava that their hostess had baked.

"That's very strange," remarked Pia to his brother, "there is no field anywhere about, and yet look at the quantity of cassava which the old woman gives us. We must watch her."

So next morning, instead of going into the forest to hunt, they went only a little distance away, and hid themselves behind a tree whence they could see everything that took place at the house. They noticed that the old frog had a white spot on her shoulders: they saw her bend down and pick at this spot, and observed the cassava-starch fall. On their return home they refused to eat the usual cake, having now discovered its source.

Next morning they picked a quantity of cotton from the neighboring trees, and teased it out on the floor. When the old woman asked what they were doing, they told her that they were making something nice and soft for her to lie upon. Much pleased at this, she promptly sat upon it, but no sooner had she done so than the two lads set fire to it; thereupon her skin was scorched so dreadfully as to give it the wrinkled and rough appearance which it now bears.

Pia and Makunaima next continued their travels to meet their father, and soon arrived at the house of a Maipuri (tapir), where they spent three days. On the third evening Maipuri returned, looking very sleek and fat. Wanting to know what she had been feeding on, the boys followed her tracks, which they traced to a plum tree; this they shook and shook so violently as to make all the fruit, both ripe and unripe, fall to the ground, where it remained scattered.

When Maipuri next morning went to feed, she was disgusted to see all her food thus wasted, and in a very angry mood quickly returned home, beat both boys, and cleared out into the bush. The boys started in pursuit, tracked her for many a long day, and at last caught up with her. Pia now told Makunaima to wheel round in front and drive the creature back to him, and as she passed, let fly a harpoon-arrow into her; the rope, however, got in the way of Makunaima as he was passing in front, and cut his leg off. On a clear night you can still see them up among the clouds: there is Maipuri (Hyades), there Makunaima (Pleia-des), and below is his severed leg (Orion's Belt).

Glossary

- anecdote:** Originally, a short, humorous tale. Now, the term commonly refers to single-episode narratives, regarded as true and commonly concentrating on an individual.
- animal tales:** Narratives told as conscious fictions in which the characters, though they speak and behave like human beings, are animals. These animal characters are commonly stock types. For example, in many Native American traditions, coyote is regarded as an exploitive, impulsive manipulator. In African American tales, rabbit is type cast in the same role. The tales are most often moralistic (“don’t be greedy”) or etiological (why the frog has no tail) in intent.
- belief tales:** Legends or personal experience narratives that are told with the purpose of validating a particular folk belief.
- cautionary tales:** Narratives whose plots embody a message cautioning against the consequences of particular kinds of behavior.
- culture hero:** Character in myth who finishes the work that brings technology (usually symbolized as fire), laws, religion, and other elements of culture to humans. Culture heroes may take over the business of creating order out of chaos where a Supreme Creator left off. The culture hero serves as a secondary creator or transformer of the universe. He/she transforms the universe by means of his gifts into a universe in which humans can live. In some myths, the culture hero cleanses the universe of things that threaten human existence: monsters, cannibals, or meteorological phenomena.
- cumulative tale:** A tale that begins with an incident, action, or phrase and adds a succession of elements to create a lengthy chain of events.
- cycle:** A group of tales that focuses on a central character, plot, or theme.
- fable:** Fictional narrative ending with a didactic message that is often couched in the form of a “moral” or proverb.
- fairytale:** See **ordinary folktale**.
- family saga:** Chronologically and often thematically linked collection of legends constituting the folk history of a particular family, usually over several generations. The term was coined by folklorist Mody C. Boatright.
- folk history:** Accounts based on perceptions of historical events rather than on written documentation or similar media.

- formula/formulaic element:** Conventional elements that recur in folk narrative. For example, clichés, structural patterns, stock characters, or situations.
- framing:** The act of setting apart a traditional performance from other types of activity by words, occasions of performance or other distinguishing features.
- genre:** Type, category.
- legend:** Narrative told as truth, set in the historical past, and that does not depart from the present reality of the members of the group.
- local legend:** Legends derived from and closely associated with specific places and events believed to have occurred in those locales.
- märchen:** See **ordinary folktale**.
- motif:** Small element of traditional narrative content, such as an event, object, concept, or pattern.
- myth:** Narratives that explain the will (the intent) and the workings (the orderly principles) of a group's major supernatural figures. Myth is set in a world that predates the present reality.
- natural context:** Setting, in all its elements, in which a performance would ordinarily take place.
- novelle:** Romantic tale.
- numskull:** Character who behaves in an absurdly ignorant fashion, also called "noodle."
- ordinary folktale:** Highly formulaic and structured fictional narrative that is popularly referred to as "fairytale" and designated by folklorists as *märchen* or "wonder tale." Term coined by folklorist Stith Thompson.
- personal experience narrative:** Narrative intended as truth performed in the first person by the individual to whom the described events happened.
- personal legend:** Narrative intended as truth told about a specific (usually well-known) individual.
- resource person:** The bearer of a particular tradition, such as the performer of a folktale.
- stock character:** Recurrent narrative character who invariably plays a stereotyped role such as trickster or fool.
- tale type:** Standard, recurrent folk narrative plot.
- tall tale:** Fictional narrative often told as a firsthand experience, which gradually introduces hyperbole until the audience realizes by the conclusion that the tale is a lie.
- trickster:** Character who defies the limits of propriety and often gender and species. Trickster lives on the margins of his world by his wits and is often regarded as possessing supernatural power. Often a mythic figure such as a coyote or hare will function as both culture hero and trickster.
- validating device:** Any element occurring within a traditional narrative that is intended to convince listeners that the tale is true.
- variant:** Version of a standard tale type.

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