

Titwáatit

(Nez Perce Stories)

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Feathering Place

Once a grizzly bear was digging roots at Feathering Place and was returning from digging. Then she came to a cottontail rabbit and a Bluejay. First they saw her coming looking really fierce. Then she saw them as she approached. Then she heard them talking. "What are you saying?" Bluejay answered her, "I was just asking Cottontail, Cottontailboy, 'What? Was Grizzly Bear your wife? and he was saying 'Yes', then I was expressing my doubt."

Now Grizzly Bear got angry. Cottontail Rabbit was sitting on the edge of a rock. Then Blue jay said to Cottontail, "You jump down and you run into your den. At the same time I will fly up to a branch of a tree and I will sit there. Then I will speak to her from there." And that was what they did. When Grizzly Bear got mad at them, Cottontail jumped down and ran into the den which was under a rock. At the same time, Bluejay flew up high, sat for a moment and from there, BlueJay said, "If you want to kill Cottontail for lying, go to the other side of the creek and make lots of pitch. Then you set fire from there at the entrance of his den and he will run out smothering, and you will catch him,"

"Yes, I will make lots of pitch which is stuck to pine trees. I will make lots more of it, then the smoke will be very strong." And so Grizzly Bear did. She went to fetch pitch hanging from both kinds of trees. Now she brought it. "Where is he?" she asked Bluejay.

"He is still inside." Now Grizzly Bear made a fire for him at the doorway and the smoke started. Now they heard Cottontail inside saying, "Nis nis nis." Then the smoke got strong. Then he almost came out but he turned back and went inside.

"See! You almost caught him. You spread this pitch on your belly and further down and on both legs. You smear yourself with that pitch. Then he will stick to you and you will catch him."

Then Grizzly Bear spread her legs quite near the hole saying, "Yes," and that is what she did.

Now again Cottontail made a noise as if he was coming close and the fire burned fiercely near the doorway. Then Cottontail came out again but grabbed a piece of burned wood and threw it at Grizzly Bear. He threw it at her crotch. Then Grizzly caught fire, her hair burned pretty soon and she burned to death. She burned

from that pitch which she smeared over her belly, crotch and both legs. In this way, Cottontail and Bluejay, who were not distinguished in strength, killed that huge fierce Grizzly Bear who was returning from digging from wherever she \NBS digging.

There was a big camping ground there a long time ago and there is a big spring. That spring now belongs to the town of Kamiah. In English they call it "City Spring. "They developed a road and you can easily see it from the road. That is the place where this incident of weak Cottontail and Bluejay killing the fierce and always angry Grizzly Bear took place. That's all.

Fox and Coyote

(Version Two)

Coyote was lining with Fox and the poor ones were always hungry. Coyote just went around looking for mice for himself and they (mice) were the only thing they had for food.

One day Fox went upriver. Then he saw a house standing as he travelled. There was an old man below the house with a child, a boy. The old man was going to take a sweatbath and he was preparing the sweatbath. There Fox walked up to him. And the old man said, "I am going to take a sweatbath. There the house is standing. You just help yourself there is plenty of meat." "Thank you," Fox (said) nicely and respectfully. Then he went up and went in. Oh there was much meat hanging all over and spread, some dried and some fresh. He (the old man had) said, "There is some fresh meat. You can roast it for yourself. There is much dried meat. You just help yourself." And that is what Fox did. He cooked it over the charcoal. He had his fill of both fresh and dried meat.

Then he (Fox) waited for them (the old man and the boy). Presently they came. "Yes. Did you eat some already?" "Yes," said Fox, "Already. It certainly was good." The old man had just washed his head. And he dried his wet hair against the fire. Now he dried his hair and sat down and spoke to Fox, "Take just as much (as you want of) dried and fresh meat. "Then he (the old man) gave some to him. "Put it in a hide and carry it on your back. You can take it." The Fox took quite a bit and he could hardly lift it. Then he brought it home.

Then he came to Coyote, "Oh what do you have?" He said, "This good old man gave me the dried meat," and gave some to Coyote. Coyote quickly ate it. For several days they were suddenly in luxury.

Coyote said to Fox, "Now I am also going. If you can, I can. You brought it then maybe I will also bring it." Then Fox said, "You behave right, Coyote. You are not upright. Do not behave rudely toward that old man there." (Coyote said) just, "I am going now." Then Coyote went upriver. There he came to them in the same way. He (the old man) was taking a sweatbath. The boy was just playing and the old man was preparing for a sweatbath, and in the same way told Coyote, "Go up. There is much and help yourself to the meat of all kinds, dried and fresh." But

Coyote did not say anything. He was just sullen. Then he went on up and went in. Meat was all over the place. Now he made plans: "I am going to kill the old man. Then all this will be ours. Fox and I will come and we will have the house."

Then the (Coyote) was just sitting there and the old man came, "You must have eaten well already." But Coyote was sullen and did not answer. And he (old man) was drying his hair by the fire and Coyote clubbed him. The old man fell dead.

Then all that meat that he was drying and everything became live deer. Just everything there and the old man also became deer. Then they (the deer) butted Coyote with their heads and ran. The house and everything disappeared. Coyote was just standing (wondering) "What happened?" Then the poor one went home with no meat.

The meat Coyote had in bed and also what Fox had all became deer. They shoved Fox and ran. Fox thought "Coyote must have done something bad." Then soon Coyote came, and he came in dejected. "What happened?" Fox said, "Already I warned you not to get yourself into trouble." The Coyote came in and said, "This is what I did. I thought all this meat would be Fox's and mine and clubbed the old man to death. Then all the meat became deer and ran." Then Fox accused Coyote, "You are not upright, Coyote. Always you are getting yourself into trouble. All that meat we had here, we do not have any more." Coyote became silent. Then they became hungry again and Coyote went around looking for mice again. This is the way Coyote was not upright. On the other hand, Fox was a good old man.

I told another story.

Monster

Coyote was just wandering downriver and it was quiet around for a long time. Then he came up the river. Whatever he busied himself as he travelled he arrived here. And he learned that Monster swallowed everyone. He was all by himself. Coyote learned there was only Monster. Then one who was left, whoever he was, said, "Monster swallowed them all now. And you too are to go there also." Now he made plans. He went up this way here high up and he came to a place called Passasonam (Winona area). Then Coyote made seven rawhide ropes there. Quite long ones, and he tied himself to the Seven Devils Mountains. There he tied and secured himself. Then he shouted to Monster from there, "Let us inhale each other." Now it (Monster) heard him. Then it heard again, "Let's inhale each other."

Now Monster got ready and it breathed in, the wind moved Coyote but he was held because he had himself tied down. Then Monster tried again it breathed more strongly. It was anxious to swallow Coyote in. Now one rope broke. Then again it tried and again another rope broke, then all seven broke. Now Coyote was pulled and it took him in, he was quickly pulled to its mouth, Monster's mouth.

"Now I swallowed you." Then it took him in and the poor one went in, He went on inside and first saw a rattlesnake lying and acting vicious. Coyote said, "Why, what for are you being so vicious?" And he stepped on, kicked, and flattened its head. For this, rattlesnakes have flat heads.

Then he walked into a grizzly bear and it acted vicious toward Coyote. He said to the Grizzly bear, "Why, what for are you being vicious? Why are you here? Why aren't they helping themselves? Meat is hanging all over." And he grabbed the grizzly bear's nose and he bent it with his hand. For this reason, grizzly bears have concave noses,

Then he saw so many people already starving to death. "Why are you making yourselves hungry, while this much meat is here like this?" Then the people said, "No, you are not going to do that, Coyote. It will soon kill us all. " "Why, what for?" he said. Now he pulled out five agate knives. One he took out and he started cutting its heart. Then the knife went "q 'ap" and one broke. Then again he took out another and kept cutting like this and all he pulled out. He broke the

last knife as he was cutting. Now by a little bit the heart was attached, he pulled its heart loose. Then the Monster dropped dead.

Then Coyote cut Monster's meat for each and he threw it to them saying, "Eat this!" Then the poor ones ate. Then Coyote told them, "Now we are going out." Then everyone came out (of the Monster). Monster now lay just dead.

Then Coyote cut it into pieces and he threw them as he proceeded. He threw its leg to the eastern country of the Sioux saying, "There they will be tall people." On the other hand, he threw each of its short arms to the south. Then they became short people.

In this way Coyote cut and distributed meat from various parts to each of different people. But he forgot the Nez Perce people. Then he said, "I surely forgot these people who are living right here. I have not given them anything." Then he washed his hands, they were all bloody. Then he moistened the earth with the bloody water. And he told them, "Right here people will be brilliant and they will feel brave. They will be brilliant in everything."

The head of the Monster was up the river at Kooskia. That is where the head was. And his body came down the river over the bluffs all the way to Kamiah. Monster had such a body and down the river to the Udder-Place. Its tail was down the river on the other side of the Lolo Creek. This was the size of the huge Monster. And Coyote killed it in that way. Then people were happy and became settled. The end.