

Stories of the Cahto Tribe

Polecat Robs her Grandmother

(This is a line-by-line translation (within the limits of English readability))

Many spotted skunk girls were digging bulbs, they say.

When they had come together from the south and from the north they dug many bulbs, they say.

They dug lots of bulbs, they say.

Spotted Skunk's many grandchildren were digging, they say.

There was a fire there, they say.

Because they put a large amount of wood on it they dug a large amount of bulbs, they say.

There were many kinds, some in seed-baskets, some in acorn-baskets, and in basket-pans: Ihtceekeetcing bulbs, goontc bulbs (Brodiaea/Tritelleia?), chinsii'tcing bulbs ("pine-cone sort of thing"), "big bulbs" (Brodiaea?), "many teeth" bulbs, tciighiltcaantc bulbs, naa'aalee' bulbs,, they say.oo'kwit'iing bulbs, kwitchaang bulbs, wild onions, goolbistcing bulbs, kaschiing'-lily bulbs, tciighiltcaang bulbs (Brodiaea?), tciidiknee' bulbs, naasnaaldaaltc bulbs, tciyooyiikostgaitc bulbs, Iheetcyeehdeeleehchow bulbs, and "sharp heads" bulbs.

They dug up all different kinds (of bulbs), they say.

The seed-baskets were full, they say.

"Mine isn't full," they said, they say.

"My basket-pan is full."

"Let's bury them (in the earth oven).

The ground is hot," she said, they say.

"Yes," the old woman said, they say.

They threw the fire over, they say.

They scooped out the ground (to level it).

They poured them down on the fireplace.

They poured them down in other places, they say.

It became high, they say.

Because there were many girls, because there were many (bulbs) it piled up high, they say.

They covered them (buried the bulbs in firepit), they say.

She sang, they say, for her grandmother, they say

She (grandmother) danced outside, they say.

She, herself, went inside (the area where they were cooking), they say.

"I will look at the bulbs," he said, they say.

She came out, they say.

She kept singing, they say.

Her grandmother danced, they say.

When she finished she said, "I'm going to look at the bulbs," they say.

She shook the basket pan up and down, they say.

She kept singing in the basket pan, they say.

Her grandmother danced, they say.

She shook the basket pan up and down, they say.

She poured them into her mouth, they say.

"They aren't done, my grandmother," she said, they say.

She poured them into here mouth, they say.

She came out, they say.

They aren't done, my grandmother," she sang, they say.

"I'm tired of 'they're not cooked.'

She piled the earth up again in the fireplace, they say.

"Why are you dancing?

They are (already) eaten up."

"Her grandmother (said), "Well, I will look at the bulbs."

She went outside, they say.

Her grandmother looked at the dirt on the fireplace, they say.

She went outside, they say.

Her grandmother looked at the dirt on the fireplace, they say.

There were no bulbs, they say.

When she went back outside she was crying, they say.

She left going south, they say.

She came to the home of the houseflies, they say.

"Kill me, my grandchild has mistreated me."

"No, we are not going to kill you."

She came to the home of the "big black flies", they say.

She left, they say.

She came to the home of the wasps here in the south.

"Kill me, my grandchild has mistreated me," she said, they say.

She came to the home of the "little buried flies", they say.

"Kill me, my grandchild has mistreated me," she said, they say.

She left, they say.

She came to the home of the hornets here in the south, they say.

"My grandchild has mistreated me, kill me!"

"No, we are not going to kill you."

She left going south, they say.

She came to the home of the yellowjackets, they say.

"Kill me, my grandchild has mistreated me," she said, they say.

"No, we are not going to kill you."

She left going south, they say.

She came to the home of the nee'yoo'soostc bugs, they say.

"My grandchild has mistreated me, kill me."

"No, we are not going to kill you," they told her, they say.

She came to the home of the "big flies", they say.

"Kill me, my grandchild has mistreated me."

"No, we are not going to kill you," they told her, they say.

She came to the home of the "big flies", they say.

"Kill me, my grandchild has mistreated me."

"No, we are not going to kill you."

She came to the home of the gnats, they say.

"Kill me!"

"No, we are not going to kill you," they told her, they say.

She left, they say.

They say she came to the homes of the "little wood bees" here in the south, they say.

They fed her when she had arrived, they say.

"No, I came because my grandchild mistreated me.

"Kill me!" she said, they say.

"Yes, we are going to kill you," they told her, they say.

They killed her when it was evening.

When they cut her up (pieces of) her legs fell down all over everywhere, they say.

Her legs, both arms, belly, and head fell down all over everywhere, they say.

That is all.

Professor Goddard's Translation

Many polecat girls were digging bulbs. They came together from north and south to dig them. Polecat old woman had many granddaughters who were digging. There was a fire there. They put on much wood because so many bulbs were being dug. They had many kinds of bulbs in seed-baskets, burden-baskets, and basket-pans. (Nineteen varieties are named.) They dug all the different kinds of bulbs.

The seed-baskets were full. "My basket is not full," some of the girls said.

"My basket-pan is full," said others of them.

"Let us bury them to cook. The ground is hot," said one of them.

"Very well," replied the old woman.

They took up the fire. They leveled the ground. They poured the bulbs down in the fireplace. They poured bulbs down in other places. The pile was high because so many girls had been digging. They covered them up.

She sang for her grandmother who danced at one side. She said, "I will look at the bulbs," and went into the open place where they were cooking. She came back and continued her singing and her grandmother the dancing. When she finished the song she said, "I will look at the bulbs." She took a basketpan, filled it with bulbs and ashes and shook it up and down as she continued the song. The grandmother was dancing. When the ashes were sifted out she poured the bulbs into her mouth.

"They are not cooked, my grandmother," she said. She went out to her grandmother. "They are not yet cooked, my grandmother," she told her. She sang. "They are not cooked," she reported again. She piled the dirt up again in the fireplace.

"Why do you dance? They were all eaten up long ago," said the girl

"I will look at the bulbs." She went to the cooking place. She looked at the pile of earth. The bulbs were gone. When she went back she was crying.

She started away toward the south. She came where flies live. "Kill me," she told them, "my grandchild has mistreated me."

"No, we will not kill you," they said.

She came where a large kind of flies lived and received the same reply.

She went on toward the south until she came where wasp lived. "Kill me, my grandchild has mistreated me," she said to them.

She came where insects who live in the ground were living. "Kill me," she said, "my grandchild has mistreated me."

She went on toward the south until she came where hornets lived. "Kill me," she said, "my grandchild has mistreated me."

"No, we will not kill you," they said.

She went on south to the home of another insect. "My grandchild has mistreated me, kill me," she said.

"No, we will not kill you," they said.

She came where large flies lived. "Kill me, my grandchild has mistreated me," she told them.

She came where large flies lived. "Kill me, my grandchild has mistreated me," she told them.

"No, we will not kill you," they replied.

She came where gnats lived. "Kill me," she requested, "my grandchild has mistreated me."

"No, we will not kill you," they told her.

She went on toward the south. She came where other insects lived. They offered her food. "No," she said. "I came because my grandchild has mistreated me. Kill me."

"Yes, we will kill you," they said. When it was evening they killed her.

They cut her into small pieces which they threw about. The pieces of both her legs, of her belly, and of her head fell everywhere.