

## *Stories of the Cahto Tribe*

### Wolf Steals Coyote's Wife

Coyote walked as if he were lame. " Carry me to the creek, " he told his wife. Raven. "I will stay down there. Get some brush. I want brush for a fish-weir. Build a fire. I may be cold. I am lame. Put the spear-points on the pole. Fish may come. Get poles for the fish-weir. Get the hazel with which the poles are to be fastened to the stringer of the fish-weir. Spread down some dirt. Make a pile of it for the fire which we shall have soon."

"We will go after the 'back-bone' of the weir. Bring me the bow for the net. Come, we will put it across. Pass me the brush."

"I have finished. Make its mouth. We will get pitch-wood. Bring me the acorn mush. I am hungry. I will taste it at least. You go home. It is late. I am lame," he told his wife.

He was not that way before. His wife watched him. He was running about. He built a fire in the brush. His wife watched him for a long time. The woman started home. Coyote ran around. He put large rocks across the stream. He was not lame. He was pretending.

The woman went to a neighbor's to get some fish. "Coyote has built a fish-weir. I am going home," she said. There was no one there. He had not come back by daylight next morning. "Well, I will watch him. Something is up; I will watch him," she said to herself.

The boys had stayed with him. He caught two fish in the net. He cut them open and ate them while the boys were asleep. He ate them by himself. The older boy woke up. The younger one woke up. They saw meat of a fish. "There are fish," they said. "This is not meat," he said. "No. It is not fish. It is a piece of rotten wood. No, they are not salmon eggs. Those are the madrone berries you played with yesterday."

He had strung the fish and dragged them away under the water. It was morning. "There are none. Go home and tell your mother," he told the boys.

"Well, I will watch Coyote," said the woman. "I will carry the burden-basket." He had cut up the fish and put them on a frame to dry. There were many fish there. He had gone up stream. The woman brought down the burden-basket. She stole the fish and carried them to the house.

"Coyote had been cutting fish to dry, "she told them. " Hide the fish. He might come again." She gave some of them to Tree-toad, her mother. She pounded acorns.

Wolf came bringing dried venison. "Hide the venison. Do not let him find it," said Coyote's wife. "I am going home," said Wolf. "Some day I will come again. By the time you have eaten the venison up I will probably be back again. You must put acorns in the water. You must bury them in the ground. We will carry away many acorns. You must crack them during the night. That is enough. When it is daylight and we can see well we will carry them to the drying platform. Let them all dry. There is much venison at my house," he told her. "Next time I will take you with me. We will go a long way. You shall take both the children with you."

Again someone came. "Where is Coyote?" he asked.

"He is not at home. Sometime ago he went to spear fish. He has not come back. I do not go to see him. For some reason he is lame. I do not like him. I won't see him. Sometime ago I did go to see him. I went after some fish and there were none," she told him.

"There are plenty of fish. There are a lot at my house " said the man who had come. "You are the only ones who have no fish. There are plenty fish."

"I do not like Coyote. Some day I shall go away because he fooled me. You will not find me here," she said.

Wolf came again bringing venison. "Have you eaten up the venison?" he asked. "I left some venison outside in the brush. I did not come just now. I have been here sometime. I looked at you. I brought you some water. I will go for the venison. I put it down not far away. Will you go with me? Coyote has not come back?"

"No he has not been back."

"Has any one given you fish?" he enquired.

"No one has given me fish. We have been eating nothing hut the venison you brought us before."

"I might go and spear some," he suggested.

"No, Coyote will kill you. Do not go after fish. There is plenty of venison."

"There seems to be much of it. Did you give some to this old woman?" he asked.

"Yes, I gave her a lot," said the woman.

"When will you go back?" she enquired.

"I shall stay sometime. I will go back after a while," he said.

"You will carry some acorns when you go back?" she asked.

"Yes," he said, "I will go back."

"Sometime I will get wood," the woman said.

"I will go with you to get wood. You take the burden-basket. Make some pitch-wood for me. Somewhere I will have a good fire. We will get some dry bark. Rotten wood is good. Pass me the elk-horn wedge and maul.

"Take up the burden-basket," he said. "There is a lot of wood."

"Get a grinding stone for me," she said. "We will carry acorns a long way. We will put them down over there. Crack them and put them up to dry. I am not going to leave acorns."

"Why have you eaten only venison?" he asked.

"You bring too much venison," she told him.

"I kill many deer," he said. "There are many fish at my house. Much dried elk meat is in new burden-baskets. There is also much tarweed seeds, sunflower seeds, and many chestnuts at my house. Many people are also there for a dance-house is in the village. I will take you where there are many people and much food," he told the woman.

"I do not know how we shall go."

"We better go underground. Coyote might track us," said the woman.

Coyote came up from the stream. He had put down the net with the short back-bone of a sore-tailed fish in it. He came limping along. "Mother, Coyote is coming," said one of the boys.

"Urinate in the mush," she told him.

He came in. "I am bringing your fish," he said. "I put it down out there by the entrance. Someone stole the fish I had cut up to dry." He tasted the mush. It was sour. It landed nearly in the creek by CelciyetooduN, he threw it so hard. She did not bring in his fish. It was still there next morning. No one had cut it.

"For some reason you do not like it," he said. "I will go back. I will try again. After a while probably, when two moons have died, I shall be back. Do not be lonesome. Perhaps I shall be around," he said. He went back to the creek carrying the net.

Wolf came again. "Has not my cousin, Coyote, been back?" he asked. "We will carry acorns tomorrow. We will put them down far away. Again we will carry them far and put them down. We will carry them far. We will carry them far. We will put them in the water. You will make them get mouldy. Tomorrow you will carry them to the stream. I like sour mush, " he said.

"How will the old woman live I" he asked.

"We will leave much venison with her."

"Old woman, you must not tell him we have gone together far to the south."

"I will stay alone. I will not be lonesome. You may go anyway. You may leave me. Anyway let Coyote kill me," said the old woman. "You must not come back," she told her daughter. "Let my son-in-law come to see me. Let him bring me some venison. No one will kill me."

"I will leave many acorns."

"Many of them are mouldy. You will take those, the sprouted ones I put in the water. The buckeyes in the burden basket that I put in the water you will let him carry. Some day when my wood is gone, let my son-in-law get some more for me. I like wood. It will rain. I like pitch-wood so that there will be a light. I will sit and crack acorns at night."

"My head aches. I am sick. Yesterday I did not get wood. I want much wood. Nobody came. I cried. I was lonesome. Sometimes I sat up all night long. I have been up two nights. I am sleepy," was the old woman's plaint cry.

"When will you move?"

"We have not yet carried all the acorns. It probably will be soon. There are only six baskets left. We will carry them again tomorrow," said the daughter.

"There are only four baskets. We will carry two again. My mother, tomorrow we will leave you. There are only two baskets left. We shall go through a tunnel under the ground."

"You must go with care."

"He will not track us. Coyote will not track us. It is far. The mountains are large. I go the longer way because the brush is difficult. We will rest. Sit down."

"Come, when we have climbed up I will carry the basket. Are you tired?"

"I am tired."

"We have climbed to the top of the ridge. Do you see the smoke yonder?"

"Yes, I see the smoke."

"It is a large country you have traversed."

"I am tired."

"We cross the stream. I will carry you across, let me take you up. It is evening. Can you still walk? Do you smell the smoke?" he asked.

"The house you see is mine. We will go fast. It will soon be dark. There is a moon. The trail over there is good. Well, do not try to look at it. Walk in my tracks," he told her.

"Do not be ashamed. Come in. Be seated," he told his new wife.

"Put wood on the fire," he told his mother. "Where is the water? I am thirsty."

"Are you tired, my wife, from being so long under the burden-basket?"

"Who killed the elk?"

"Your younger brother shot it yesterday. He killed a grizzly and also a panther he saw," she replied.

"Where is the mush? I am hungry. I have come a long way. I stole a woman."

"Where did they go?" asked Coyote. The grinding stone he had addressed did not reply. A raven croaked. "Well, bring them back," he said. "Where did they move?" he asked the partly burned wood of the fireplace. He picked up a pestle. "Where did they move?" he demanded. He threw the pestle up and was looking into the sky after it, when it fell and hit him on the forehead.

The old woman was digging acorns from a hole in the house. He came in and caught her. "Let me see you, you who have caught me," the old woman demanded.

"No one sees me," he said. He ran out. He defecated in the house. "My faeces, where have they moved?" Coyote asked.

"They went down here through a tunnel," it replied. Wolf led away the woman and the two boys. They went to Lookastkwut."

"Coyote may track us," observed Wolf. "If he comes we will pour mush on him. We will pour it on him from a large basket-bowl. You must give him a seat in the center of the house."

"My mother. Coyote is coming," called out one of the boys. "He is carrying a short piece of the back of a fish. This is your small salmon, he is saying, that one he is bringing here."

"I do not like him. He must keep at a distance. I will not look at him. I do not like this Coyote who has come," said his former wife.

"Come in," he called to him. "It is cold. Have you come here? It is turning cold. Who are you? Well, sit down since you are a stranger."

"Somebody has come. Give him venison and mush," Wolf told them. Coyote chewed away, looking toward the sky. His wife made the mush, dropping in white stones that she might pour it hot on his head. While he was eating venison and mush they poured it on his head. He jumped up, ran to the river, and jumped in. He floated on the water, and only coals came out on the other side of the stream.

"My hair, grow again," he said. He ran off.