



Bear and Deer

A Goshute Tale

Cultural Note

In the past the Goshutes held bear dances every spring, but many of the elders who believed in the traditional dances are no longer living.

The Goshutes don't practice bear dances any more, but they have other dances. Some of the other dances are strictly social, and some are to celebrate the coming of new seasons and plants. Some dances are held to ask for moisture to bless Mother Earth.

Vocabulary

clambered

lumbered

plunged

sprinted

whimper

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The booklets are available on a CD from the USOE. You may print the booklets off the CD, free of charge, for educational purposes. If you would like to purchase printed copies of the booklets, contact San Juan School District Media Center at (435) 678-1229.

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Many years ago, animals walked on two legs. Weta, Bear, and Teheya, Deer, were sisters-in-law, and they each had two children. The mothers often went out to gather carrots together, but one day Deer did not return.

"Your mother camped overnight," Bear told Deer's sons. "She'll be back in the morning."



Deer's sons sensed something was wrong, so they followed Bear to her house and listened outside.

"Mother Deer's fat tastes good," Bear growled to her young ones. The deer brothers could hear the bears grumbling and fighting over the meat.

"She must have killed our mother," the younger boy muttered.

Just then, Bear left the house and saw the two boys. "Your mom will be back pretty soon," she told them, but Deer's children knew their mother would not be back.

"I know how we can get even with Mother Bear," the older boy said after they reached their own home. He whispered the plan into his brother's ear.

The next day they found a cave and built a door over it. As they hammered in the last peg, Bear's children came to see what they had created.

"We're going to make smoke," the older deer brother explained, "but don't tell our mothers. They won't think we're old enough." He opened the door. "Let's take turns going into the cave. Since you are our guests, you can go first."





After Bear's children climbed into the hole, Deer's boys filled it with smoke. When Bear's children cried, the brothers opened the door and let them out.

"We'll go in next," one of Deer's sons said. "We won't cry like some children we know." So they entered the hole, grinning at each other. Bear's children filled the cave with smoke, but after a short while they opened the door and helped the boys out.

“Now it’s your turn again,” Deer’s sons said.

After Bear’s children entered the cave, the deer boys plugged the door tightly. Even though Bear’s children pleaded and cried, the deer boys would not let them out.



When Mother Bear returned from gathering carrots, she saw her children leaning against a fence with red paint all over their faces.

"You're wasting my paint," she snarled, but the cubs did not move. When she got close enough, she saw they were dead. Furiously, she looked around for who had killed her children. She saw Deer's children and charged at them.





The brothers sprinted away from her as fast as they could. Once they had outrun her, they scrambled onto a cliff to hide. Soon Mother Bear lumbered up beneath the ledge, panting. She stretched out under the overhang to rest.



Looking down at Bear, the younger of Deer's sons began to whimper, but the older one whispered, "Shhh. We'll jump over Bear and escape while she's sleeping." He stood up and took his brother's hand. "Ready?"

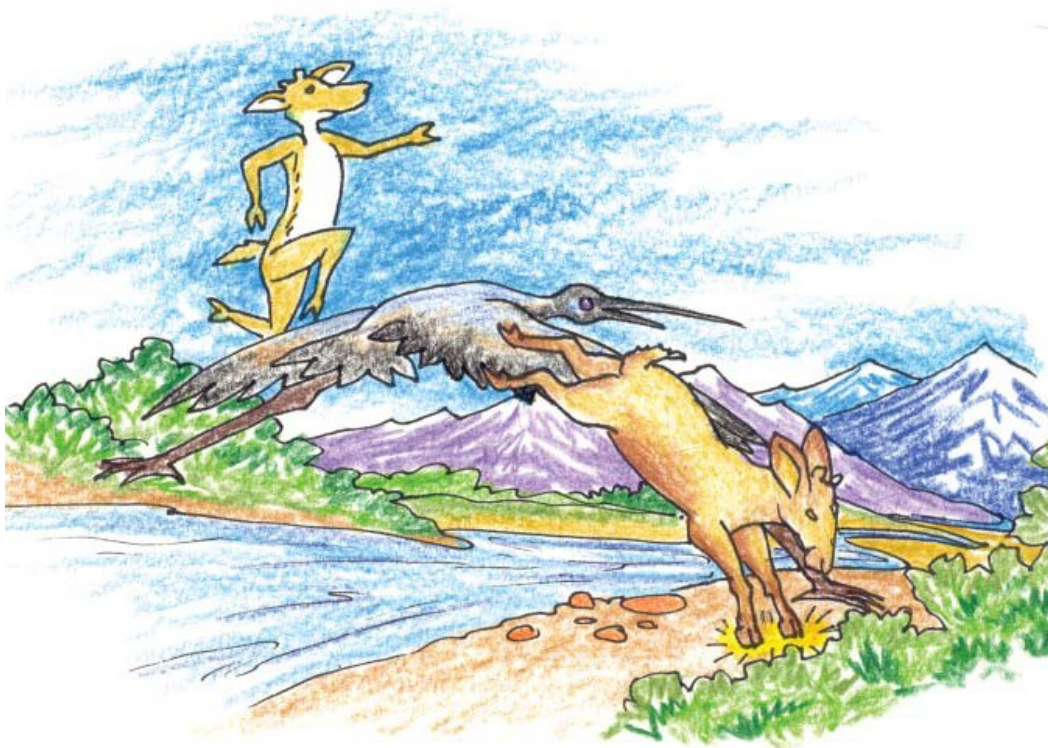
They leaped from the cliff, but as soon as they hit the ground, Bear woke up and began chasing them.

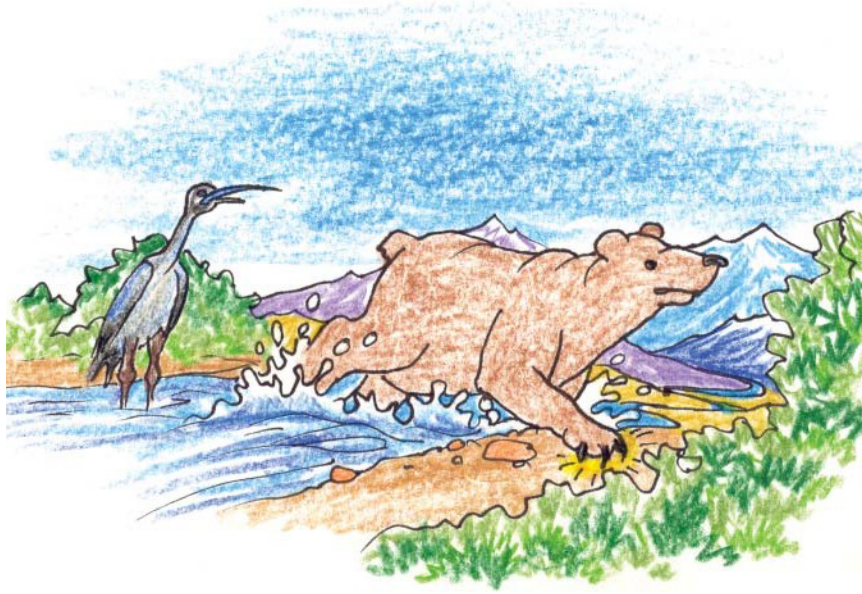
Deer's children raced toward Crane, their paternal grandfather, who stood at the edge of a river. They cried, "Grandfather, Grandfather, Bear killed our mother, and now she's chasing us. Please make a bridge."

After Crane stretched his leg across the river, the deer boys fled across him to safety.

As he pulled his leg back, Crane called, "You will have the other side of Aspen Mountain as your homeland, and you will be deer."

The two became four-legged deer as they bounded away.





Moments later, Bear dashed up, puffing. "The tracks of Deer's sons led to you," she growled. "Where are those bad boys?"

Crane did not answer.

"Make me a bridge," Bear demanded.

Crane stretched his leg across the river, but Bear had eaten so much meat that she made Crane's leg wobble. When she reached the middle of the river, Crane pulled his leg back, and Bear plunged into the water. She began swimming toward the other shore.

When she finally clambered out, Crane called, "The other side of Aspen Mountain will be your homeland. You will be bear."

She waddled off on all fours, shaking the water from her head, still hoping to catch Deer's children.

Glossary

gonda - crane

pia - mother

teheya - deer

tutua - children

weta - bear

Reading Suggestions

- Make some puppets. Visit <http://www.kathyross.com/craftweek11.html> for instructions for making a deer paper bag puppet. Be creative and use a paper bag to make a bear puppet too. Have your own puppet show and perform "Bear and Deer" for your family.
- Another fun Internet site to visit for craft ideas is <http://www.familyfun.com>.

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