

[FLATHEAD]

Coyote was walking one day when he met Old Woman. She greeted him and asked where he was headed.

"Just roaming around," said Coyote.

"You better stop going that way, or you'll meet a giant who kills everybody."

"Oh, giants don't frighten me," said Coyote (who had never met one).

"I always kill them. I'll fight this one too, and make an end of him."

"He's bigger and closer than you think," said Old Woman.

"I don't care," said Coyote, deciding that a giant would be about as big as a bull moose and calculating that he could kill one easily.

So Coyote said good-bye to Old Woman and went ahead, whistling a tune. On his way he saw a large fallen branch that looked like a club. Picking it up, he said to himself, "I'll hit the giant over the head with this. It's big enough and heavy enough to kill him." He walked on and came to a huge cave right in the middle of the path. Whistling merrily, he went in.

Suddenly Coyote met a woman who was crawling along on the ground.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"I'm starving," she said, "and too weak to walk. What are you doing with that stick?"

"I'm going to kill the giant with it," said Coyote, and he asked if she knew where he was hiding.

Feeble as she was, the woman laughed. "You're already in the giant's belly."

"How can I be in his belly?" asked Coyote. "I haven't even met him."

"You probably thought it was a cave when you walked into his mouth," the woman said, and sighed. "It's easy to walk in, but nobody ever walks out. This giant is so big you can't take him in with your eyes. His belly fills a whole valley."

Coyote threw his stick away and kept on walking. What else could he do? Soon he came across some more people lying around half dead. "Are you sick?" he asked.





"No," they said, "just starving to death. We're trapped inside the giant."

"You're foolish," said Coyote. "If we're really inside this giant, then the cave walls must be the inside of his stomach. We can just cut some meat and fat from him."

"We never thought of that," they said.

"You're not as smart as I am," said Coyote.

Coyote took his hunting knife and started cutting chunks out of the cave walls. As he had guessed, they were indeed the giant's fat and meat, and he used it to feed the starving people. He even went back and gave some meat to the woman he had met first. Then all the people imprisoned in the giant's belly started to feel stronger and happier, but not completely happy. "You've fed us," they said, "and thanks. But how are we going to get out of here?"

"Don't worry," said Coyote. "I'll kill the giant by stabbing him in the heart. Where is his heart? It must be around here somewhere."

"Look at the volcano puffing and beating over there," someone said.

"Maybe it's the heart."

"So it is, friend," said Coyote, and began to cut at this mountain.

Then the giant spoke up. "Is that you, Coyote? I've heard of you. Stop this stabbing and cutting and let me alone. You can leave through my mouth; I'll open it for you."

"I'll leave, but not quite yet," said Coyote, hacking at the heart. He told the others to get ready. "As soon as I have him in his death throes, there will be an earthquake. He'll open his jaw to take a last breath, and then his mouth will close forever. So be ready to run out fast!"

Coyote cut a deep hole in the giant's heart, and lava started to flow out. It was the giant's blood. The giant groaned, and the ground under the people's feet trembled.

"Quick, now!" shouted Coyote. The giant's mouth opened and they all ran out. The last one was the wood tick. The giant's teeth were

closing on him, but Coyote managed to pull him through at the last moment.

"Look at me," cried the wood tick, "I'm all flat!"

"It happened when I pulled you through," said Coyote. "You'll always be flat from now on. Be glad you're alive."

"I guess I'll get used to it," said the wood tick, and he did.

—Based on a tale reported by Louisa McDermott in 1901.

## A LEGEND OF DEVIL'S TOWER

[sioux]

*This is another characteristically tongue-in-cheek tale from Lame Deer.*

Out of the plains of Wyoming rises Devil's Tower. It is really a rock, visible for a hundred miles around, an immense cone of basalt which seems to touch the clouds. It sticks out of the flat prairie as if someone had pushed it up from underground.

Of course, Devil's Tower is a white man's name. We have no devil in our beliefs and got along well all these many centuries without him. You people invented the devil and, as far as I am concerned, you can keep him. But everybody these days knows that towering rock by this name, so Devil's Tower it is. No use telling you its Indian name. Most tribes call it Bear Rock. There is a reason for that—if you see it, you will notice on its sheer sides many, many streaks and gashes running straight up and down, like scratches made by giant claws.

Well, long, long ago, two young Indian boys found themselves lost in the prairie. You know how it is. They had played shiny ball and whacked it a few hundred yards out of the village. And then they had shot their toy bows still farther out into the sagebrush. And then they had heard a small animal make a noise and had gone to investigate. They had come to a stream with many colorful pebbles and followed that for a while. They had come to a hill and wanted to see what was on the

# Dah Teef

Maria Campbell

You know

me I talk about dah whitemans like dere dah only ones dat steal.

But dats not true you know

cause some of our own peoples dey steal too.

Oh yeah dats true

We gots some damn good teefs among us an dah worse ting about dem is dey steal from us dere very own peoples.

I member a man one time dat was a teef.

Boy he was a bad one too.

At firs

he wasen very good at it an he gets caught all dah time.

Later

when he goes away from our village he becomes perfessional an he gets real good.

But dah peoples dey knowed it was him cause he already build a repetation as one.

He use to steal every damn ting dat man. He jus can be choosev.



He never gets good enough to steal land dough.  
Maybe it cause we don gots any to steal by den  
and he gots no practice.

But boy  
he shore got good at stealing everything else.

One time you know dis ole man  
we call him Geebow.

He have a nice hat.

Hoo, he was real fancy.

A black one

dah kine da old Breeds dey really like.

Hees got a silk embroider hatban wit a falcon fedder  
stuck on it.

Dat falcon fedder you know

he was old Geebow hees spirit

an he help him all hees life.

Well one day

dis ole Geebow he go visit Margaret.

Margareet him

he was an ole widow woman dat Geebow he like.

When he gets to hees house

dat ole lady he have a nice meal all cook

an he ask him to stay.

You know

dat ole man he never take hees hat off nearly all hees life  
but when Margaret he ask him to eat  
he take it off.

Dat ole Geebow

he gots good manners

like all dah ole peoples dey use to have.

Well on dis day  
dis man dat was dah teef  
he come visiting too.

Dat man he always knowed where dah good meals dey was.

Boy

I like to use hees name

but I can do dat cause he wouldn be right

An me

I don want to make hees grandchildren suffer  
cause dere all good peoples.

Hees not dere fault dat dere granfawder he pick dat  
way to make a name for hisself.

Anyways

dah teef he come visiting  
and Margaret him

he wasen very happy bout dat cause dat mean him and

Geebow

dey can be alone.

But Margaret him

he was a good woman

So he ask him to eat wit dem

an he watch him real clos so he don steal nutting.

Dere wasen very much he can steal from dah table  
anyways

'cept dah knives and forks.

An Margaret he knowed he wouldn dare take dem  
cause dat woman you know

hees got a hell of a repertation for being a hardheaded woman  
when he gets mad.

Dat man he have to be a damn fool to steal from  
hees table.

So dey sit down to eat

Margareet ole Geebow an dah teef.

An dey make good talk at dah table like civilize peoples.

Hoo, he was a hell of a meal to.

Dat woman he was a good cook

an he really done hees bes for ole Geebow.

When dey finish eating

dah teef he jump up an he say he gots to go.

"I got to talk business wit a Frenchman called Biliado"

He say.

Den he tank Margareet and he go.

When he leave

Margareet he check all hees knives and forks.

Dey was all dere

but Margareet he still don trust him.

"Someting hees not right"

Margareet he say to Geebow.

"Hees not like dat man to leave when he knowed I got raisen pie."

"By golly"

Ole Geebow he say

"Maybe dah Prees he finely talk some sense into him."

Dem ole peoples

dey feel real good dat nutting he was missing

an maybe

dat man he change hees ways.

Dey visit till late at night

an ole Geebow him

he finely get dah courage to ask Margareet to marry him.

Margareet he say yes

cause hees been waiting damn near twenty years for dat ole man to ask him.

Ooh dey have a good visit after dat.

Dey kiss

an dey talk about dah wedding dere gonna have.

Ole Geebow him

hees never been married before an he wan to have a big wedding.

He wants dah high mass and everyting dat go wit it.

Margareet he like dat

cause now he can wear a long dress. He can do dat dah firs time cause he was too poor.

Dat Margareet

he was a rich woman now cause hees husban

he use to be a big farmer

an he leave him all hees money.

Course him

he deserve dat money cause he done damn near all dah work.

But anyways dat ole Geebow

he was damn lucky dat woman he love him an he wan to marry him.

Well finely he was eleven o'clock

time for ole Geebow to go home.

In dem days you know

nobody wit any sense he walk home at midnight or after cause dere liable to run into a Rou Garou on dah road.

Oh yeah!

Dat road he was famous for Rou Garous.

An ole Geebow him  
he might be pour an all dat  
but he gots lots of good sense.

But den  
he can stay wit Margaret eeder  
cause in dem days  
peoples dey don sleep wit each udder until dere married.

Margareet and Geebow dey was real ole time peoples dat  
believe on dah right way  
So Geebow him  
he get up to leave.  
He give Margaret a kiss  
den he go for hees hat an he can fine it.  
Dey look all over but he was gone.  
Dat damn teef you know  
he steal dat hat.  
Ole Geebow him  
he nearly have a broken heart  
Dat hat he means a lot to him.  
An besides  
he tinks dats why Margaret he look at him dah first time.  
Cause hee gots a smart hat.

An hees falcon fedder  
hees granmudder he gave it to him when he was a young man  
an he only wear it for very special.  
Like dis night  
he was very special.

Well by dah time him an dah ole lady  
dey finish looking for it  
he was after midnight an Geebow

he can go home cause of dah Rou Garous.  
An deres no damn way Margaret hees gonna let him go eeder.  
He don want no Rou Garou to take hees man.  
So  
he tell him to stay  
an he make him a bed on dah floor.

Boy dat teef!  
He jus make it hard on dem ole peoples.

Dere was only one big room in Margaret hees house an when dey go to bed  
Margareet  
he can take hees close off cause Geebow him hees  
on dah floor.

An Margaret him  
he don know what dat ole man he'll do if he sees  
hees pettycoats.  
Dat teef  
he jus cause a bunch of trouble.

Well you know  
when dah morning he comes  
Geebow he wake up cause he hear somebody knocking on  
dah door.

He never even tink  
he jus jump up an he open dah door  
an dere was Margaret hees grandson Guspar wit dah  
neighbour dere boy.  
Guspar he was surprise  
an kine of shame to  
cause hees granmudder he have a man in hees house.  
Dats not dah kine of ting  
a boy he like to tink hees granmudder he do.



Well ole Geebow an Margaret

dey done dah bes dey could to tell dem boys what he happen  
but dat neighbour boy

he go home an he tell hees mudder what he see  
an dat woman

hees got a big mout an he tell everybody

An pretty soon

dah story of Geebow an Margaret sleeping togedder he  
gets all over.

So dem ole peoples

dey gots to get married as fas as the Prees he allow dem.

An everybody

he say Margaret an Geebow dey have a shotgun wedding.

Well he wasen true.

How you can have a shotgun wedding when your over  
seventy years ole?

Dats how ole dey was.

But you know what our peoples dere like.

Talking an teasing all dah time.

Ole Geebow him

he kine of like dat

cause dat kine of talk make him feel young.

But he worry about Margaret hees repertation

cause you know

dat Margaret

he was a good Catlic woman

an he would of never have a shotgun wedding

Even if he was young.

Boy dat teef

he shore cause a hell of a ruckus in dah village.

An you know

ole Geebow he never get hees hat back

But he fine hees fedder.

He was stuck on hees door frame one day when he come home.

Some people dey say

dat dah teef

he at lees have a little respec cause he don keep  
dat fedder.

But me

I know damn well why he bring it back.

Everybody in our part of dah country

knows dat Geebow him

he know Indian medicine.

Dey know to

dat fedder he was Geebows spirit.

Dat teef

he was jus damn scare when he saw what he took

dats why he bring it back.

Not because he have respec

cause dat man he never have any.

Well you know

dat teef he never change hees ways.

All hees life he steal.

He never work for a living like everybody else he do.

He have a good woman too

an a hell of a pile of kids.

Dey all turn out good dough

but dats cause hees wife he teach dem dah good way.

Hees not just dah stealing dats bad you know.

All dough dats bad enough.

Dah real bad ting is your kids and all your granchildren.

Dey don got no good stories about you if your a teef.

An dah stories you know

dats dah bes treasure of all to leave your family.

Everything else on dis eart

he gets los or wore out.

But dah stories dey las forever.

Too bad about dat man hees kids.

Jus too bad.