

SPEELYA STORIES - Why the Kalispels Don't Have Buffalo

A long time ago Coyote lived in the land of the Kalispel. One day he became very hungry for buffalo meat, and he started walking east towards the buffalo ranges. He traveled a long way and over many mountains until he finally came to the flat prairies.

Then Coyote came upon a large pile of bones. He said, "I must be in buffalo country, because these look like buffalo bones here." So he picked up some of the bones and started to break them open so he could eat the marrow. Then Coyote broke all the leg bones, but they were dry and there was nothing in them. The bones were old, and Coyote threw them down in disgust. "You must have died of starvation," he said to the pile of bones.

Then Coyote kicked the bones around and made fun of them. He picked up the horns and held them to his forehead. He bellowed like a mad buffalo, he pawed the ground, and he threw up a lot of dust with the horns. "See, I'm better than any buffalo," said Coyote to himself. He had always been afraid of the buffalo who was so much bigger than he. So now he ridiculed the buffalo and pretended that he was so superior.

Then he said, "Well, at least I'm in buffalo country, I'll keep walking until I find some buffalo that I can eat." So Coyote started walking, and he walked for a long time. Then all of a sudden he turned around and saw a large cloud of dust like a whirlwind. "What's that," said Coyote. "It looks like the following me." It

alright." "Whenever you get in trouble with someone, you smoke together and then you will be alright."

Suddenly Coyote looked up and the whirlwind of dust was right upon him. Then he saw that it was a buffalo. So Coyote offered the buffalo the pipe to smoke, but the buffalo was angry and said, "No, I don't smoke." But Coyote insisted and urged the buffalo to smoke his pipe. Still the buffalo refused. Then Coyote said, "When the human people come, chiefs will give the pipe to their enemies to smoke, and they will make friends and have peace."

Finally the buffalo said, "Alright." He took the pipe from Coyote and they smoked it together. After he had a couple of puffs, the buffalo said, "Here I am an old, old buffalo, and I already have many problems.

"I'm glad you smoked," said

Then Coyote said, "Well, if you have to fight tonight I will go with you and see what I can do." So Coyote began looking for some

pitch wood roots. When he found some he started whittling and carving on them. Coyote carved them until they were very sharp. Then he went back to the old buffalo and said, "Here, I will put these sharp points on your horns." Coyote put the sharp roots on the buffalo's horns and used the pitch that he made to cement them in place.

he said, "Now, go try these." The buffalo went out and started to dig in the ground and throw dirt and dust up in the air. The buffalo said, "Oh, these are fine. These will work good now!" So Coyote said, "Now this evening you can do your fighting and see how you make out."

Then Coyote and the buffalo headed out for the camp of the buffalo people. When they finally

old man buffalo could come back and take us for his wives, do you?"

When the young bull saw the old buffalo charging and throwing dirt, he came charging over to attack him. But the old buffalo turred on the young bull and charged at him. The old buffalo hit the young bull hard and threw him to the ground. Coyote had been hiding in the thick hair of the old buffalo's back. When he saw the buffalo bull thrown to the ground, he pulled out his long knife and jumped down on the young buffalo. Coyote started to cut into the young buffalo and killed him.

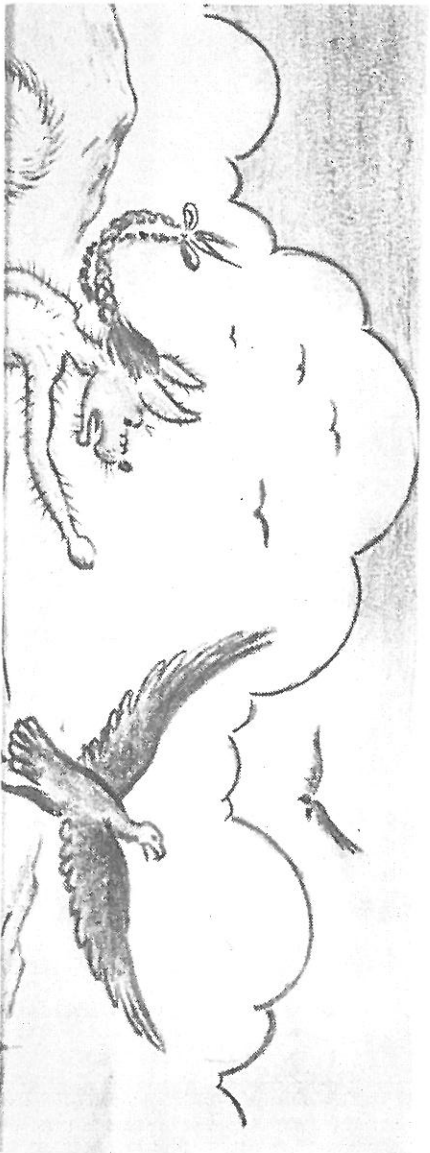
When the buffalo cows saw that the old buffalo had killed the young buffalo, they hung their heads in shame. When the old buffalo and Coyote arrived at the camp, the buffalo cows looked asthamed and said, "Since you

Coyote was disgusted with his buffalo wife. He would walk awhile, then he would have to wait for a long time for his buffalo wife to catch up to him.

Finally Coyote got so disgusted that he hid behind a rock. When the buffalo cow finally caught up to him, he shot her with his bow and arrow and killed her. Then Coyote got out his long knife to skin the buffalo and started thinking of the great feast he would have. But when Coyote finally had all the buffalo meat cut up, a big black bird circled in and dove down on the meat and started to eat it. The bird's name was Malah. Coyote jumped to chase Malah away, but he slipped and got stuck and couldn't move. Then many other birds circles and dove, and picked up the buffalo meat and flew away with it. Coyote was shouting and waving his arms, but he couldn't save the buffalo meat. The birds flew away with all of it. Finally there was nothing left of the buffalo meat, and Coyote didn't get to eat any of it.

Then the female wolves came, and they began to flirt with Coyote. They told him how handsome he was and what a good hunter. Coyote enjoyed being flattered by the wolves and talked to them for a long time. Meanwhile other wolves came and picked up all the buffalo bones and carried them away. Then they all disappeared, and Coyote was left with nothing.

Coyote was very upset because



cloud of dust like a whirlwind. "What's that," said Coyote. "It looks like its following me." In fact, it's coming right the same way that I have been walking."

Later Coyote looked around again, and the cloud of dust was still following him. So he said, "I'm going to see if that is really coming after me." So he zig-zagged back and forth across the hills. Then Coyote looked back again and saw that the whirlwind of dust was still following him. So Coyote became very frightened, and he ran as fast as he could run over the hills. But still the cloud of dust was following him. He ran up on top of a mountain and looked back and saw that the cloud was getting closer and closer. Then he realized that the cloud was really the Buffalo Spirit that was angry at Coyote for ridiculing and profaning its bones.

Then Coyote became very frightened, and he started to call upon his spirit powers to save him so that he would not be killed by the Buffalo Spirit. But Coyote's spirit answered him saying, "Oh, leave us alone; you are always bothering us." "No, I'm in trouble," pleaded Coyote, "I need help." Coyote had four spirits which he called his sons. The youngest one finally said to Coyote, "Alright, do what I say and you will be safe." Then he gave Coyote a pipe and tobacco and said to him, "Here, put this in his mouth, and you will be



Coyote, "now tell me why you were chasing me." "Here I am already tormented by my problems," said the buffalo, "and then you made fun of my bones and said that I must have died of starvation. Now that you've gotten me to smoke with you, I'll have to put up with you too."

"Every night I have to go fight, and I always lose. Then the next night I have to fight again. Oh, I have many troubles. I even have to go fight this evening. I have to fight the young bull that has taken my four wives away from me. Every night I have to fight him, but he always beats me."

"I'm an old buffalo, and my horns are all worn down and broken. I can't even throw dust up into the air like the young buffalo do, and tonight I have to go fight again."

got to the buffalo camp, they could see the young buffalo bull out in the field snorting and throwing up dirt with his horns. Then the old buffalo said, "See those four buffalo cows over on the side. They were my wives, but the young buffalo has taken them away from me." So Coyote said, "Well go try your luck; I think you will be able to do better now."

Then the old buffalo moved out into the field charging, snorting, digging up dust and dirt with his horns, and tossing it high into the air. The four buffalo cows said, "Look at the old buffalo. He is acting different now." "Look," said one, "whenever he strikes the ground, the dust goes high in the air." Another buffalo cow said, "How can this be? You don't think that

killed the young bull, we will be your wives again."

Then the old buffalo turned to Coyote and thanked him for helping. "Since you helped me, you can have one of these buffalo cows for your wife." But Coyote shook his head and said, "No, I don't want a buffalo for a wife. They never stay in one place but are always traveling around. I don't want that kind for my wife." But the old buffalo insisted that coyote take a buffalo cow for his wife. So finally Coyote gave in and took one of the buffalo cows with him.

They started traveling, Coyote in front and the buffalo cow right behind him. But the buffalo was so slow, that they didn't make any progress. After two or three days it seemed to Coyote that they still didn't get anywhere.

and carried them away. Then they all disappeared, and Coyote was left with nothing.

Coyote was very upset because he didn't get any buffalo meat to eat, and not even any marrow from the bones. So Coyote decided to go back to the buffalo camp and see his partner the old buffalo. Coyote traveled back and saw the old buffalo standing in front of the camp. As Coyote got closer, he began crying and crying. The old buffalo said, "My, what's the matter with you that you are so sad?" Coyote answered, "I'm crying because my wife died." "Well," said the buffalo, "you can come into our camp and eat with us." So Coyote walked into the camp. Suddenly he saw all four buffalo cows, even the one that he had killed. They were all there together in the camp of the old buffalo. They welcomed Coyote in and gave him some supper.

After he was through eating, the old buffalo said, "Well, you have lost, so you can go back alone to your own country now." But Coyote was very disappointed. He said, "I came here to get some buffalo." The old buffalo replied, "No, you killed the wife that I gave you. You can't expect me to give you another one. You go back across the mountains to the country you came from, and you will never have any buffalo there. Because you killed your buffalo wife, there will never be any buffalo in that country."

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