

13. *Coyote Marries Squirrel, Sister of Geese*

Squirrel feeds Coyote  
 Squirrel provides Coyote with teeth  
 Coyote marries Squirrel  
 Coyote accompanies four Geese, his brothers-in-law, on hunt  
 Coyote breaks calling taboo and is dropped by Geese  
 Squirrel kills three brothers by pointing Coyote's tail at them  
 Brothers revive, pursue and kill sister

As Coyote was traveling he saw a house and went in. A woman was sitting there. After he had been there a little while she got up and cooked meat. He had a large supply. She gave him some but he could not chew it. He had no teeth. "I'll put it away and eat it later," he said, "I'm too tired now." He lay down and went to sleep, "*xvuu xvuu*," he slept well. He had his mouth open. The woman saw he had no teeth. "That's why he didn't eat," she thought.

She hunted the smallest deer teeth she could find and put them into his mouth. He woke up and it felt as if he had teeth. He got up. "Now I'm ready to eat," he announced. He was now able to eat all of the food left over from his meal. At night a man came in, "Oh, my brother-in-law, here you are," he said in greeting. "Yes," said Coyote who was sitting on the eldest brother's mat. He then moved over to the mat of the next oldest. Soon another came in and Coyote moved over onto the next bed. A third time the same thing happened. As the fourth was saying, "My brother-in . . ." the others grabbed him and corrected, "Just like my brother-in-law."

By this time Coyote was pushed up against the woman and thus got a wife, the sister of the men. The men went out every morning and brought back much meat at night. For four days they left Coyote and the woman while they went hunting. The fifth morning Coyote dressed himself to go out and said, "I'm going with you." "No, no, we don't travel by land. You can't go the way we do." The men were geese. "Oh!" said Coyote. The next day however Coyote insisted upon going along. "You'll get in our way," the brothers told him. "I'm going anyway." They came to a big lake. "Here's where we cross. You will have to hang on to us." They flew way up. Then Coyote imitated their call, "*w' w' w'*." "Be quiet!" they told him.

They alighted. They hunted. They told Coyote, "You must never take more than two deer. Otherwise it will be too heavy." Coyote got two deer and each of the geese got two. Altogether they had ten. As they were flying over the water again Coyote said, "*w' w' w'*." They told him to stop, but he kept right on. Then they let go of him. He fell.

When they got home their sister was lying down. "Why didn't you cook our supper?" they asked. As she did not move or pay any attention they cooked for themselves. The next day the three brothers went hunting, but the youngest stayed home. His sister drew in her mouth with a sucking noise, "Listen!" she said, "Don't look around when I come back. I am going out."

She went to the shore of the lake and searched for Coyote. She saw him floating on the water. She cut him around the nose and down the middle as far as the tail, then she cut the tail right off. She took Coyote's skin along home with her. As she opened the door three of the brothers looked around at her. She made a circular motion with Coyote's tail and they fell dead. Only the youngest was left because he had not looked at her.

He sat there. The sister ran off. After a while the three came to life. "We will kill our sister," they declared. "She must like Coyote."

They took their arrows and tracked her. When they got to the water they lost the trail. "I'm tired," said one and they made camp. They heard a squirrel talking. "Kill him," said the youngest, "so we have something to eat." The squirrel was their sister. Way up in the tree she was standing. "Stop your talking now or we will kill you." Each one went out and warned her, but came back and told the others he had not seen her. Then one said, "They must be lying." So two of them went and saw her. They shot her.

The end of the road.

Parallels to the Coeur d'Alene myth are found for the *Sahaptin* (MAFLS 11:145) and the *Nez Percé* (JAFL 21:149; CUCA 25:331). In these two tribes the sister is not identified with Squirrel, there are five Geese brothers instead of four, and the girl dies when her two surviving younger brothers shoot her in the little finger where she has placed her heart. In all other major particulars however the myths are comparable with the Coeur d'Alene version.

A *Kutwai* myth starts with the usual story of the Geese and Coyote, but terminates in a Coyote-Trout episode.

Coyote is hungry and enters a tipi; he moves nearer and nearer to the woman occupant, as each of her Goose brothers comes in; he marries the Goose girl; the fourth day he accompanies his brothers-in-law on the hunt; on their return the Goose brother carrying him jerks him off in alarm when the people start shooting at the Geese; Coyote sinks to the bottom of the river and enters Trout's tipi; he marries Trout; imitates the Trout children at stealing bait off the people's hooks, is caught by Fox and changes back into a Coyote (Dyer ms.).

In a shorter *Haida* myth the Geese tire of carrying their brother-in-law, Raven, and drop him over the sea; Raven sprinkles sand, lands on Rose Spit, recuperates and travels on (MAM 8:236).

#### 14. Coyote Imitates Magpie (Bumgling Host)

Coyote lives near Magpie  
Coyote's powers become winter berries  
Berries disappear  
Magpie dives for fish  
Coyote imitates Magpie, drowns

Coyote was living near Magpie who had many children. Coyote himself had five. In the winter they were starving. There was just enough camas left for the children. Coyote went out and consulted his powers. One of them said, "I'm hungry too. I'll be serviceberries, there will be a lot." Coyote went in and said, "Go get the camas. We ought to eat. Then the sack will be absolutely empty."

When he said this his family looked out and saw many serviceberries. Mole, Coyote's wife, shared the camas with Coyote and her own children, as well as with Magpie, his wife and their children. Then there was nothing left.

The next morning all went before breakfast to gather serviceberries. They saw many, but each time there was a good patch Coyote said, "No, don't pick them yet, there will be much better ones." Finally he said, "Now pick here." But there were no berries. Coyote had done this to fool them by means of his powers.

Then Mole and Mrs. Magpie became angry. Coyote only laughed at them. "You are crazy. You should know we never have berries in winter," he told them.

They went home. Magpie went off alone. At night he came back with something tied up in his blanket. Coyote said, "What have you there?" He did not answer. He told one of the children to get water. They cooked what was in the blanket and ate. They gave Coyote none. He said, "At least you could give us some broth to drink. How did you get it anyway?"

Magpie said, "I made a hole in the ice, then another not far away. I dived into one with a fishnet and came out the other with my net full of small fish."

Coyote said, "I will try it too." He made two holes, took a net and dived. He came up with a few very small fish in the net. He wanted more and dived again. He could not find the hole to come up out of. He drowned. The next day Mole looked for him. She saw where

he had dived. She saw the little catch he had made. Farther on she saw the other hole. "He must have dived and did not come up again," she said.

So the road ends.

The winter berries theme occurs in *Shuswap*, *Thompson* and *Nootka* mythology:

Coyote produces winter salmon and winterberries; Grizzly Bear Woman eats up her stores of provisions with him; Coyote makes winter again; Grizzly Woman starves (*Shuswap* MAM 4:631; *Thompson* MAM 12:312; MAFLS 6:28).

In the *Nootka* myth Tehnamit's wife is able to provide an inexhaustible quantity of berries in winter for her husband's guests (IS 103).

The Bumgling Host episode, the imitation of the dive for fish, has a widespread distribution, although not in connection with the winterberries episode as in the Coeur d'Alene myth.

Coyote unsuccessfully imitates Kingfisher in myths of the *Sanpoil* (JAF 46:177), *Thompson* (MAFLS 6:41; MAFLS 11:6; MAM 12:206, 301), *Sahaplin* (MAFLS 6:165), *Kutenai* (BBAE 59:9), *Shuswap* (MAM 11:628) and *Columbia River* tribes (Idaho Farmer, Sept. 18, 1930).

Coyote imitates Fishhawk in *Sahaplin* (MAFLS 11:165), *Nez Percé* (MAFLS 11:183) and *Wasco* (PAES 2:270) mythology.

Elsewhere in *Sahaplin* lore (MAFLS 11:167) Coyote imitates Beaver; in a *Nez Percé* myth (MAFLS 11:183), Otter; and in a *Shuswap* myth, Kingfisher, Fishhawk and Bald-headed Eagle (MAM 4:739).

A *Quinault* story relates that Bluejay's children are almost drowned when Bluejay has them imitate the children of Sawbill Duck, Land Otter and Kingfisher (MAM 4:86, 88, 89). In a *Chamook* myth Bluejay all but drowns his sister's children as a result of his command that they imitate Duck (BBAE 20:179).

In *Coast Salish* mythology Coyote imitates Fish Duck, Bluejay imitates Fish Duck, Bluejay's children imitate Fish Duck's children, Bluejay's children dive for trout for Bear (MAFLS 27:249, 344, 5, 349).

Raven is almost fatally unsuccessful in imitating Water Ousel in a *Southern Puget Sound* myth (UWPA 3:39), and in a *Quielite* myth (CUCA 12:39, 109) Raven and his wife fail in attempting to dive like Fish Duck and his wife (CUCA 12:39, 109).

Mink has to be rescued when he imitates his wife, Eagle, or Hawk (*Lower Fraser River* IS 44; *Comox* CUCA 2:71; *Kwakiwilt* CUCA 2:155). O'mal has the same experience when he imitates Kingfisher (*Newette* CUCA 2:239; IS 177).