

Some girls hide in a house; they laugh at Skunk smelling about for them; Skunk finds and marries them; some men steal them and carry them to a mountain top; Skunk tracks them, ejects his secretion and the mountain falls, killing the men; the girls tire of Skunk and run away to sky country, to return eventually to their mother's house (*Chilcotin* MAM 4:28).

Two sisters are sent to chief Pine Marten; the younger girl saves her sister from being deceived by Coyote's disguise; Hawk Man takes the two girls in; Hawk Man, given nothing but bones to eat by the people, tries to feed the girls his own flesh; the younger sister discovers his identity; the two girls go to Pine Marten; Hawk Man causes a great rain; Pine Marten has Hawk Man's head cut off (*Achomawi* JAF 21:163).

Two girls, sent to Sea Otter, a great hunter, marry his servant, Old Beaver, by mistake; the girls leave Beaver and marry Sea Otter; when Beaver pursues them, the people kill him (*Coos* JAF 22:35).

Despite the variations to be noted in even the main features of these abstractions, notably in the myth dénouement as compared with that of the Coeur d'Alene story which is not found duplicated, a general framework outlines them all: girls are sent to a person of rank and standing; his servant or inferior takes them in by deceit; they manage to get to the one whom they sought originally; the servant may avenge himself temporarily, but is ultimately overcome. In those myths most similar to the Coeur d'Alene story in which Skunk has the role of the evil-doer, he consistently has certain distinguishing characteristics and features which identify him—his degrading servility, disagreeable noise, dangerous fluid (its loss and recovery), delusion by reflections in the water, treachery to his hosts and talkative, story-telling habit. There is often also his cringing defeat brought about by his victim's whistling, though this is not included in the Coeur d'Alene model. Skunk as a kidnapper and a chief is a distinctly Coeur d'Alene addition. When other characters such as Screech Owl, replace Skunk, they may possess several, generally only the first, of these distinctive Skunk features.

A *Kutenai* and a *Southern Puget Sound* story have singled out one major element of the Coeur d'Alene myth for the motivation of a short story.

Skunk pursues Panther (Fox) to a lake; he breaks wind at Panther's reflection in the water; he lies down and discovers Panther up above; before he can act, Panther shoots him [Skunk succeeds in killing Panther in the tree] (*Kutenai* BBAE 59:24, 41, 49).

A girl is warned by Raccoon Woman, slave of Thunderbird and his housemate, Skunk, not to laugh at Skunk's jesting and singing or she will be obliged to become

Skunk's wife; the girl heeds the warning; Master Hunter marries her (*Southern Puget Sound* UWPA 3:106).

24. *The Girls Who Stole Dentalia (Kidnapping)*

Chief orders daughters to throw all bones into water and not look at them
 Daughters disobey and discover bones have turned into dentalia
 Girls build house in woods
 They get threat for stringing dentalia by lying
 Chief discovers deceit and deserts daughters
 Girls cross river
 Younger girl breaks eating taboo and is deserted by older sister
 Older girl gives Mudhen dentalium
 Mudhen secures girl as wife for her grandson, Redheaded Woodpecker
 Baby is born to girl and kidnapped by four man-eating sisters
 Mother pursues Man-eaters
 Meadowlark directs her
 Mother catches full-grown son in sweat-house
 Proves motherhood by jumping in her son's tracks and throwing a pailful of water
 without spilling any
 Son leaves dummy behind and flees with mother
 Man-eaters pursue
 Son and mother cross water on her belt; Man-eaters fall off and are drowned
 Man-eaters become terns
 Son turns into helldiver
 Mother turns into robin

There was a settlement. Many people lived there. The chief had two daughters.¹ The chief said to the people, "When you eat meat bring the bones over to me."

The people ate. At night they brought him a lot of bones in a bucket. In the morning he said to his daughters, "Go make a hole in the ice, throw the bones into the water, but don't look at them. Just put them in, then go away."

For a while they did just as he said, but one day one of them thought, "I wonder what that noise is, *mu mu mu*." She thought she would look. As soon as she poured the bones in she looked. The bones had become dentalia. Soon the ice would be full of them. She told her sister about it. They talked it over. "Let's go into the timber and make a house." They did so. They took two sacks full of dentalia to their house. One said to her sister, "Ask all the people for grass thread. You must say, 'My father is asking for it.'"

The girl went about and asked for thread from house to house. The people gave her a lot because they thought the chief wanted it. She took it to their house in the timber and strung the dentalia. At night they

¹ In this case the chief and his daughters were said to be Eagles.

would go home but as soon as they had eaten in the morning they went to the house they had made. After a while the chief thought, "Why do my daughters act that way? They never do any work, just go off and play all day."

He decided to find out. He trailed them to their house. He sneaked over and raised the mat which served for a door. He peeped in and saw the two girls stringing dentalia. He went to see what they had done with the bones. There were none. He was grieved. He went home and called his tribe together

"I want to talk to you, my tribesmen. Not for my own, but for your sake I asked you to bring me the bones. Now my own children have stolen them. That is what grieves me so. It wasn't your children but mine. I will desert them. We'll all go away."

He took off the covering of the house, pulled up the poles and said, "That's where you used to live." Nothing was there. Houses and people were gone.

At night the girls came back as usual. Every fireplace was dark. They went in. "What is the matter? Are you asleep already?" There was not a sound. The ashes were cold. Everyone was gone.

The next morning the girls packed up the dentalia and started off. They came to where a river forked. They saw a house across the water. They called, "Hu . . . !" A man came out.¹ "Ferry us across," they asked. He answered, "*Uhu hu hu*, my grandchildren, I have no canoe. There is a ford. Come that way." They crossed. The younger girl said, "I'll fix it."

She laid a dentalium on her chin and said, "If anyone gives us something to eat, put this in your mouth and pass the food through it like a funnel."

They came to a place where the people were cooking blood and stirring it. "We have nothing but this blood for food but you are welcome to it."

The blood was set near them. They ate, the older one passing it through the funnel. The younger girl ate it in the usual way. When they had finished eating they went on. The older got far ahead of her sister. "Hurry, my younger sister," she called. The younger girl caught up but immediately fell far behind. "My steps are not big enough to step in your tracks."

Her sister came back and beat her. "Why didn't you do as I told you. Now I'll take you back." They turned back. There was a ferryman. "Ferry us over, we are going to stay here," they told him. He rowed

¹The ferryman, *sqwa'xwmenxw*, lives near riffles, stands on rocks in water. When he dives he stays down so long one thinks he has drowned. He glitters like a blackbird.

toward them, but when he was still some distance from the shore he said, "Come meet me."

"No, my moccasins will get all wet," said the older sister.

She reached over and ducked him in the water. His eyelids turned back and became white. They threw him into the canoe. She took all the dentalia herself and left.

After some time she heard many people travelling. Of the two girls who had been deserted only one remained. Mudhen was sitting near to the trail along which the girl was coming. She thought she would stay there. When the girl came up Mudhen sat near the trail tanning a buckskin. She folded it up and put it on her back. She decided to go and tell the people the girl was coming. The girl had given her a dentalium and that is why her nose is shaped like one. She ran and caught up with the travellers. She was holding her nose, "*Tso tsä nä nä*, I am going to see her who was deserted," she said.

"Why are you holding your nose like that?" "The girl paid me." "Let's see!" She let go her nose and they saw it was white and shaped like a dentalium. She said, "She is coming."

The chief said to the men, "You sit around. She'll shake hands with you all. Whichever one of you likes her can have her."

Mudhen ran out. She met the girl and said to her, "You are going to shake hands. Whichever of the men you like you can have. My grandson is handsome. You pick him and go with him. I'll point him out to you. When you shake hands with him pull him. If he doesn't like you I'll push him."

The people sat waiting for her. She began to shake hands. Every time Mudhen thought, "She'll take that one." But no! She came to her grandson, Redheaded Woodpecker. When the girl shook hands Woodpecker jerked back. Mudhen pushed him. "Go with her," she whispered.

He went with the girl and they left the camp. They came to another settlement. The girl had a baby. She made a wide babyboard for it and covered it all over with dentalia. They then dotted it with Woodpecker's head feathers. Everyone liked the baby. Every morning the people took it with them. When he cried they brought him back but left him just long enough to nurse. One night they did not bring him back. The woman was lonesome for her baby and went to the chief. He called, "Bring back the baby. His mother is grieving for him."

They could not find the baby anywhere. Someone said, "At night someone stuck her hands in through the mats of the house. Her hands were sticky. She must be the one who took it." That was the last time it was seen. They found out that four man-eating sisters had the baby. Then the mother took a sackful of dentalia and tracked the monsters. She

went far. As she was going along she stepped on a stick in the trail, "*aninininin*, I was going to tell you some news, but you broke my leg." "Oh, I am sorry. I'll fix it again."

She smoothed down the leg. Meadowlark, for it was she, was all right again. Then she said, "I was waiting to tell you. You can't get your child back; he is just like a wild animal." The girl gave Meadowlark Bluebird's necklace as a reward. "You are near him now," she continued. "In the morning the Man-eaters leave home. They round up the animals here. Your child just sits and kills what he wants of the deer. They have a sweathouse. Early in the morning you hide in the mud. There you will get your baby if you think you will live through it. They might kill you. Grab him and do your best to hold on. Tell him, 'I am your mother.'"

The woman hid herself near the sweathouse. About two o'clock at night she saw a light being carried to the sweathouse. She sat very near the door. She saw her son who was now a man make a fire. It got redhot. He put rocks in it. He went in feetfirst. She grasped him firmly around the waist. He ran out, "*ana'ana'*, something is hanging on to me. Who are you?" The woman said, "I am your mother, be quiet, I am your mother." "Why should I have more than four mothers?" "I'll show you how it is. Be quiet!" "No. You are an ugly thing!" "Be quiet! I *am* your mother. It is true what I tell you."

He became quiet. She said, "You have not four mothers, but one. Have you forgotten your real and only mother? My child, you are my only son. One of those others calls you 'daughter's son,' another calls you 'son's son.' That is not the way to call one's real child." "Which of the four is my mother?" "I will keep on saying 'You are my child.' You will never be anything else to me." He thought, "It must be true." "When you were a baby our people liked you so they were always taking you along with them. You were kidnapped. I trailed the kidnappers and only now I found you."

"Let me go then. I will jump. If it is true you are my mother, you will jump right in my tracks." "Don't run away from me." "No, I only want to prove it."

She let him go. He jumped far. Exactly where he stepped she stepped. Then he said, "Truly you seem to be my mother. Now we'll throw water. If it does not spill, I will believe you are really my mother."

He threw a pailful of water. She threw it also and not a drop spilled out. "Yes, it must be true. My mothers are not real people. They will find out and will kill you. I'll sweat here. Then I'll go to them and say, 'You sleepyheads, you are still asleep.' I'll say, 'Eat!' After they have eaten they will leave. Then I'll round up the animals. I'll sit over there.

We'll make a dummy. We'll put my coat and hat on him and give him an arrow. They'll see it and come back. You go to the house and eat lots of meat. I'll come in and say, 'Get up, my mother!'

"What is the matter? Your mother must have come,' they will say. I will say, 'Have I a mother?' My mother's mother will say, 'I'm just saying that.' My father's mother will say, 'Hurry up! His mother must have caught up with us. He never talks like that.' I will say again, 'Have I a mother?' Go on, you women. They will say, 'Boy, you sound guilty.'"

They fixed the dummy as if he were ready to shoot. The four Man-eaters would make a pile of grass, then set fire to it and make a thick smoke. They would fly up to disguise their tracks and light again. They rounded up the animals toward the boy. They said, "Shoot!" He did not shoot. The animals all ran away. One said, "I am going to teach you a lesson." They caught up with him and hit him with a stick which went all to pieces. "It was all in vain," they said.

They looked back. "I suspected his mother was behind all this," said one. "He talked senseless this morning. There is no place we do not know on the earth. We ought to be able to find her." They went back to their house. They trailed the boy and his mother. The boy said, "They are following us. Let's cross the water."

The mother untied her belt. She threw it across the water and they walked across on it. She put it on again. The Man-eaters saw them crossing. "You have tired us all out. We'll get you," they threatened. "You'll die." The boy and his mother went on. "Where did you cross?" asked the Man-eaters."

"Since you intend to murder us we won't help you across. Those who are angry enough can find a way of their own. Untie your belts and cross the way we did." One tried it but the belt floated. Again the Man-eaters urged the woman to throw her belt down. "No, not when you are going to kill us," she called back. "We are not going to kill you. We only want to shake hands with your son and with you."

She untied her belt and threw it on the waves. They started to cross. "No, its too wobbly!" The mother said, "Put rocks inside your clothes. Then it will be steady." They filled their clothes with rocks. It was heavy, but it stood firm. As they crossed the mother pulled her belt toward her. "Stop pulling," they cried, but she kept on. In the middle they sank. They came up on the other side as terns. "You'll no longer be man-eaters. You'll be animals which live along the river. When people come you will not fly up."

The mother and her son went into the hills at the edge of the cliffs. The mother got thirsty and said, "Come get me some water." The boy went down to the water and played, bathing and idling a long time.

"Come, I'm thirsty!" He brought the water. She drank. This happened several times. Then the mother said to her son, "I want to talk to you. Go fast through this timber. I feel as if I were going to die. We'll separate now. It was good to see you again." He said, "All right!" "You will be Helldiver, I will be Robin. You like the water too well to live with me."

She cut up dentalia and threw them over him. The rest she threw on herself. That is why robin has white streaks. Helldiver has streaks also. She said, "When the wind blows, you will fly. You will make the sound 'yaxa yaxa'.¹ As for me, I will be a ghost. I will sit on a tree near the houses of people and make my sound there when people have a death. Since you like water you will live in water. As for me I will live in the brush. Good day."

That is the end of the road.

The *Kutenai* interweave the two stories of The Girls Who Stole Dentalia and the Story of Lynx (tale 9) into one myth:

Young Buck orders his relatives to throw the soft part of rib bones into the water; his sisters, Fawn and Young Doe, disobey and take the bones which have turned into dentalia out of the water; Buck takes all the people down a hole and deserts his sisters; he refuses to let them come down to him; the girls cross a river on stilts and enter Water Ousel's tipi; Fawn swallows the blood Water Ousel gives them to eat; she misses a step while following in her sister's tracks and gives birth to a fawn; Young Doe sends her back to Water Ousel; Fawn holds Water Ousel under water to punish him; Young Doe approaches a settlement; Rabbit waylays her on the trail and, when addressed as husband, takes her to his grandmother, Frog, who hides her; Lynx secretly impregnates her, she has a baby, the three are deserted, Lynx kills many deer and the starving people return to them; Lynx's child is lent around among the people; Toad and Owl stretch out their hands for the child and kidnap it; Young Doe follows them, takes back her boy and flees up a tree with him with the kidnapers in pursuit; she calls her dog, Grizzly Bear, who bites Toad and Owl and eats their dog, a mouse; Doe reaches home with her child; she and Lynx have another son and the two boys become the sun and the moon (Dyer).

A *Thompson* myth similarly opens with an introduction resembling that of the Coeur d'Alene story, but the adventures of the girls deserted for their violation of a taboo proceed along different lines to culminate once again, as in the *Kutenai* myth, in a direct parallel to the Coeur d'Alene Lynx story.

A man instructs his two sisters not to visit his bathing place; the girls disobey and discover the dentalia which have come from needles from their brother's sponge;

¹ When people hear helldiver they say wind is going to blow.

they take the dentalia; their brother leaves them and goes to the lower world; the girls are unable to descend, for they break the taboo and open their eyes; their brother sends them to their aunt's home, the younger girl breaks the taboo and stops off at Coyote's house, where she eats and becomes pregnant; she is deserted by her older sister; Elk, the older girl's aunt, overtakes her in a race with young men and hides her from them; Lynx spits down upon the girl and impregnates her (MAM 12:213).

In a briefer *Thompson* version the brother takes pity upon his deserted sisters who are unable to descend to him in the lower world and returns to live with them (MAM 12:373).

A third *Thompson* variant leaves no basis for comparison with the Coeur d'Alene model, except in breaking the taboo and desertion:

An older sister, annoyed by many suitors, sets out with her younger sister for her grandmother's house; Coyote makes it so cold, the younger girl insists on entering his house four times to warm herself; Coyote impregnates her; her sister leaves her behind; the elder girl's grandmother hides her granddaughter from the men who are racing for her; Lynx impregnates the girl (MAFLS 6:36).

The element of drowning an enemy while he is crossing the water in pursuit of his prey has a wide distribution. A typical example from *Thompson* mythology in which, as in the Coeur d'Alene model, a belt is the medium for the crossing, is recorded below.

A youth, fleeing with the daughter of a man of magic power, throws his belt down and crosses the lake upon it; the girl's parents follow in pursuit; the girl gives the belt a twist and her parents are thrown into the water; they turn into ducks (MAM 12:291). In a variant, the boy draws in the belt so that the girl's father is unable to cross (MAM 12:383).

Beyond the story of the theft of Young Doe's child in the *Kutenai* myth outlined above, no further duplications of the Coeur d'Alene kidnapping episode were found in the myth bodies under consideration in this study. The account of the theft of a baby by Lion and Crane as told in an Upper Chehalis myth takes a different turn. After the boy has escaped with Crane's assistance from his captor, Lion, he arrives in heaven; here he obtains a wife and becomes the father of twins born stuck together; he eventually returns to earth to his mother and brother. Bluejay separates the twins who die (MAFLS 27:83).

25. Thunder

Thunder kidnaps hunter's wife
Hunter looks for wife
Four men give him needles