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# Arapaho Legends

ARAPAHO LEGENDS

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## THE SCALPED MAN

Long ago when the Arapahos used to fight a lot, they would go out looking for enemy tribes. One time a number of men left to look for a fight and a young boy went with them. The boy was not very big but still he went along.

The group walked a long distance without encountering anyone. Finally, towards the end of the day, they came to a thick stand of brush and built a wood lodge where they would spend the night. After the lodge was completed they built a fire and cooked a meal for themselves. When night fell they amused themselves by telling stories.

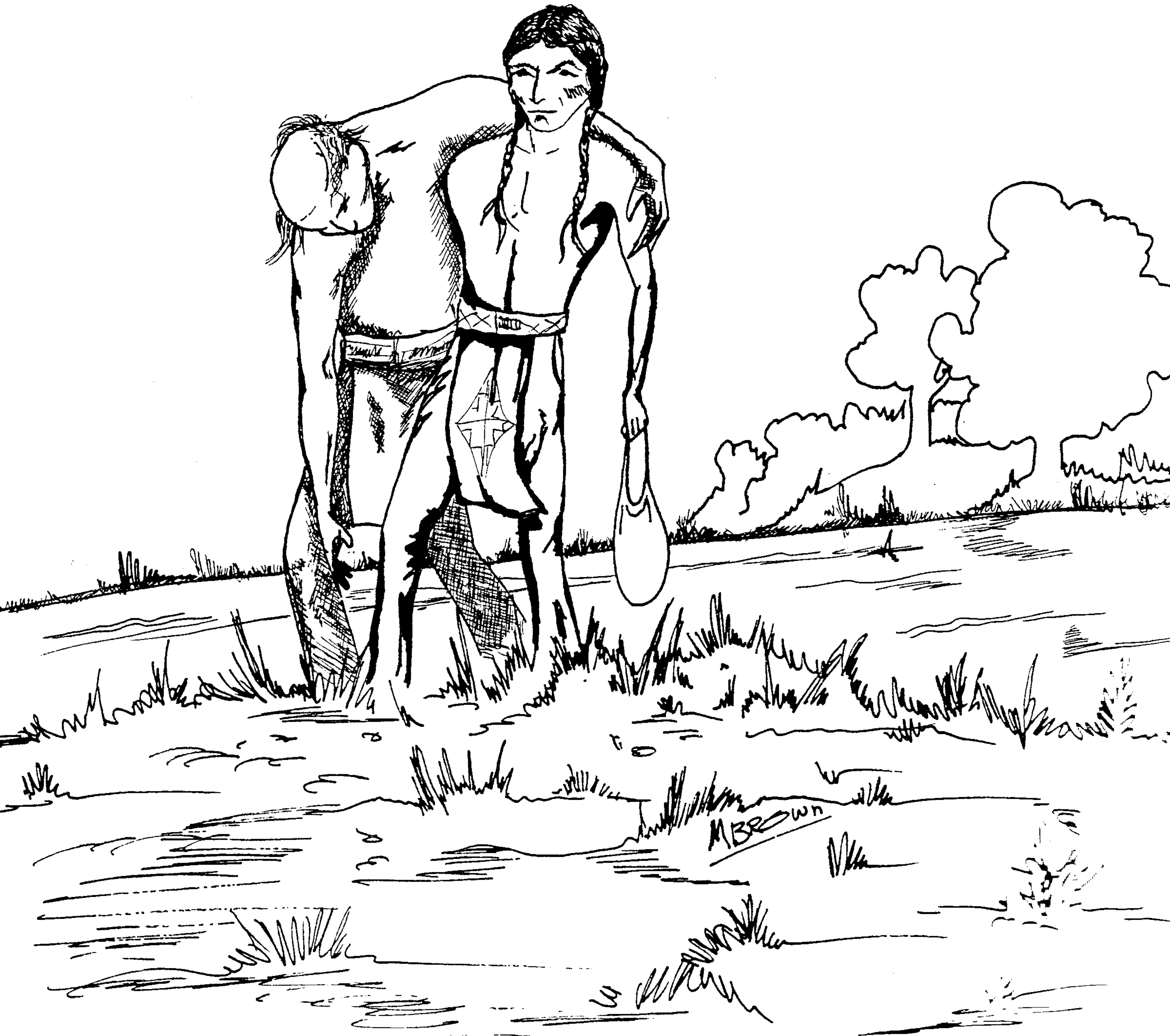
During the story-telling, the chief asked one man to go and get some water. The man refused, so the chief asked another man. The second man refused also, so the chief asked each of the other men. All of the men refused the chief's request because it was too dark. Finally, the young boy volunteered. The other men tried to discourage him by saying that it was too dark, but he went anyway. The boy picked up the water container and set off to the river.

The group had camped near the river and as the boy approached the bank he heard a strange sound. He thought it was the sound of a person moaning. The boy put the water container aside and went looking for the source of the sound. His search led him to a man who was badly wounded but still alive and lying behind a large bush. The boy retrieved the water container and filled it from the river. Then he returned to the wounded man and helped him to his feet. Together they returned to the camp.

Upon reaching the camp, the boy told the man to wait outside while he took the water in to the others. When he entered the lodge the boy told the men, "Here is the water."

The boy and all of the men heard the stranger moaning outside and the men grew frightened. Then the boy told how he had found the man lying wounded and how he brought him back to the camp. The boy told the men, "I will bring him in."

As the boy left the lodge the group of men watched the door apprehensively. When the boy brought the stranger into the lodge, the men saw that he had been scalped. Later, when the stranger became fully conscious, he found that he had no hair at all. After his wound healed, he had a bald, shiny head.



VOCABULARY: Find the meaning of the following words in the dictionary and then write a word in the blank that is synonymous. Use the synonym that fits the context of the story.

1. encounter
2. volunteer
3. retrieve
4. frighten
5. apprehensive
6. conscious
7. discourage
8. fight

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APPLICATION: Substitute a synonym for the underlined word, using the correct form.

9. Long ago when the Arapahos used to fight a lot they would go out looking for enemy tribes.
10. The group walked a long distance without encountering anyone.
11. Finally the young boy volunteered.
12. The other men tried to discourage him because it was too dark.
13. The boy retrieved his water container and filled it from the river.
14. As the boy left the lodge the group of men watched the door apprehensively.
15. Later, when the stranger became fully conscious, he found that he had no hair at all.

ANTONYMS: Write an antonym on the blank line for the following:

16. discourage
17. retrieve
18. conscious
19. encounter
20. frighten

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RETENTION: Your answers to the following questions will reveal how well you remember the details of the story, The Scalped Man.

1. Where were the Arapahos going?

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2. Why were they going on this trip?

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3. One member of the group was unusual. Who was it?

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4. Where did they stay overnight?

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5. What did these men do for amusement?

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6. A protagonist is usually the leading character in a story; in the story, The Scalped Man, who was the protagonist?

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7. Why did you respond as you did to the above question?

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THE WHITEMAN AND THE COYOTE

There once was a whiteman who was travelling east when he came upon a herd of buffalo. As he watched the buffalo grazing he thought to himself, "How can I get at them?"

He began looking for a high cliff, and when he found one he made a marker with his robe near the edge. After he had done this he went back to the buffalo.

"Now, I have come to race with you," the whiteman said to the buffalo. "They claim that you are very fast."

"No, we do not want to run," the buffalo replied. "We are still enjoying our grazing."

"I am going to race with you for only a short distance," the whiteman insisted, so the buffalo agreed.



The whiteman continued, "There is one thing you cannot do. When you get near my robe you must close your eyes. You cannot open them until I tell you. We will turn around when we get to my robe."

The buffalo stood in a row, and when the whiteman told them to start, they all began running. He ran right along with them. As they neared the marker, the whiteman told the buffalo to close their eyes. The buffalo did as they were told and kept running. They did not see the cliff because their eyes were closed, and they fell over the cliff and were killed by the fall.

The whiteman was pleased by his trick and he took his robe and went down the cliff.





A river flowed nearby, and the whiteman began to butcher the buffalo. After he had butchered so many, a coyote appeared. The coyote came limping out pleading, "Please give me something to eat. I am very hungry and very thin. I am never able to find anything to eat."

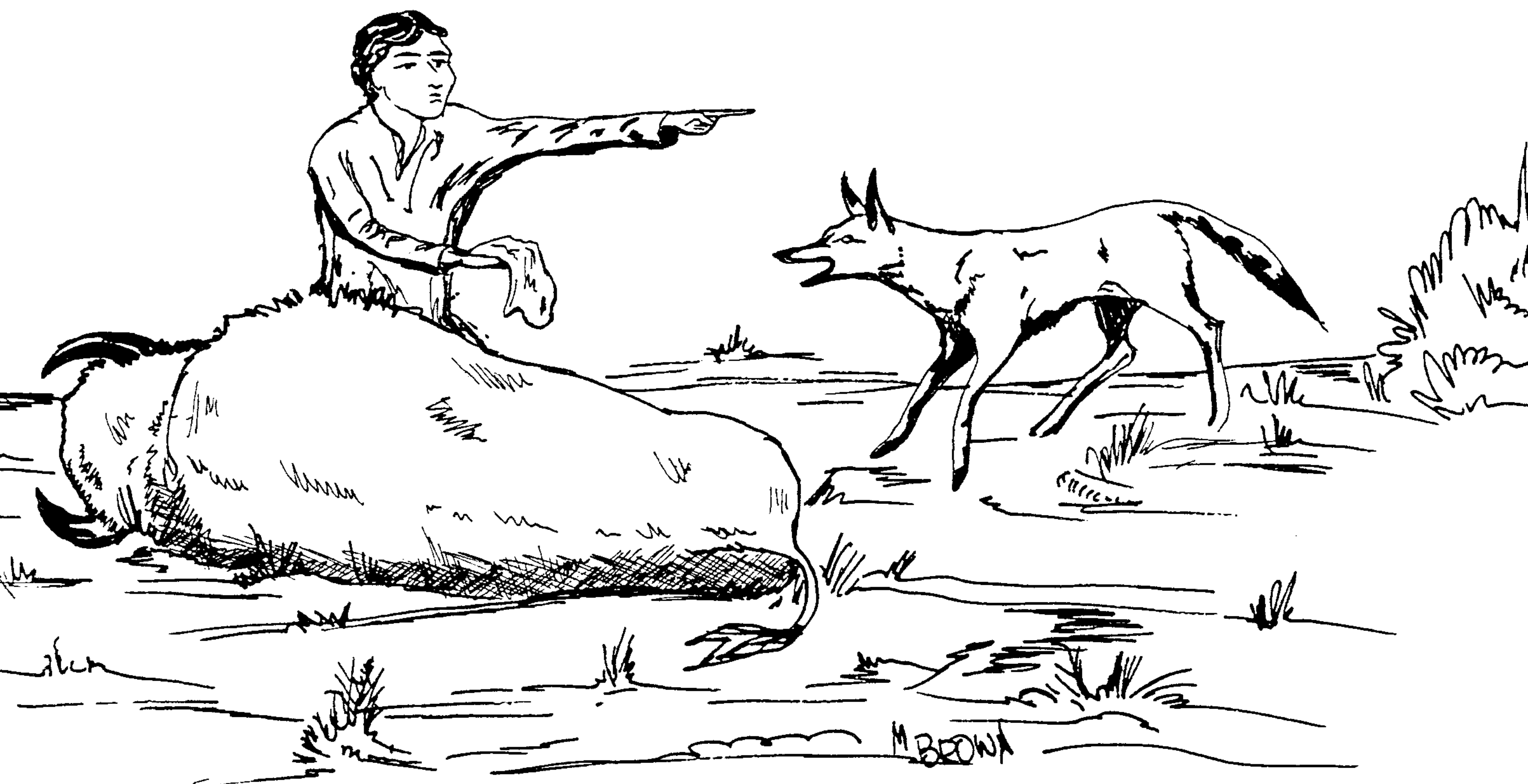
"Go away," said the whiteman, who was annoyed by the sudden appearance of the coyote. "I suppose you are going to bother me."

"Please, whiteman, feed me scraps or bones," begged the coyote. Whiteman just told him to go away, but the coyote would not leave.

Finally, the whiteman gave the coyote a piece of tripe, saying, "Here is some tripe. Go and wash it."

The coyote took the tripe and dragged it down to the river. He hid behind a bush and ate the tripe. When he had finished eating he went back to where the whiteman was butchering the buffalo.

"Whiteman," the coyote said, "the fish took the tripe away from me and ate it up. They are tough. They must have been hungry."



"Here is another one that you can go and wash," said the whiteman to the coyote. The coyote took the tripe and went off behind a bush and ate this second piece of tripe. After he had eaten all of the tripe he went back to the whiteman and told him the same story about the fish.

The whiteman gave the coyote a third piece of tripe, and the coyote went through the same routine as before. However, the whiteman noticed that the coyote looked full, with his belly bulging out. The whiteman became suspicious and jumped up to follow the coyote. He saw the coyote eating behind the bush, so he picked up a big stick. Then he went back to the buffalo and pretended to slice the meat.

When the coyote came back his belly was really bulging out from being so full. He told the whiteman the same story about the fish eating the tripe.

"Yeah," said the whiteman. "Here is another piece." Then he grabbed the big stick and hit the coyote, knocking him out. "He keeps bothering me," the whiteman thought to himself and he dragged the coyote away.

Along toward evening the coyote regained consciousness. The whiteman was still busy butchering and slicing meat. When the coyote got back on his feet he ran up a hill and howled to call the rest of the coyotes.

The coyotes all gathered, asking, "What is it?"

"That whiteman knocked me out," the coyote told his friends. "Tonight we are going to go and eat up all of his meat when he falls asleep."

The coyotes waited around until night fell. By then the whiteman was very tired, so he lay down and went right to sleep. As soon as he fell asleep the coyotes sneaked up slowly. They ate all of the meat and carried the bones away.

When morning came the whiteman woke up, satisfied with his rest. He stretched and looked around. Much to his surprise, he did not see any meat.

"It seemed like I had a lot of meat yesterday," he thought. "I even had some sliced meat, but now I do not see any." The whiteman began looking around for the meat, scolding himself, "I should have shared the meat with that coyote; then he might not have taken it all."

VOCABULARY: Using a dictionary, find the meaning of each underlined word below. Write the correct meaning of each word in the space provided.

1. "They claim that you are fast."

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2. "I am going to race with you for only a short distance, the whiteman insisted,...."

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3. "....and the coyote went through the same routine as before."

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4. "Along toward evening the coyote regained consciousness."

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5. "....the coyote regained consciousness."

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6. "The whiteman became suspicious and jumped up to follow the coyote."

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7. "The whiteman was annoyed by the sudden appearance of the coyote."

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8. "...by the sudden appearance of the coyote."

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9. From reading the story, which of the following words would you use to describe the coyote?

- a. beggar
- b. devious
- c. cunning
- d. all

10. Note some of the coyote's characteristics or actions that explain why you answered the above question as you did.

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11. Which of the following words would best describe the whiteman?

- a. selfish
- b. generous
- c. conceited
- d. all

12. What purpose did the whiteman have in mind when he wanted to race with the buffalo?

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## THE BOY AND THE EAGLES

Long ago, when the Arapaho still moved around a lot, a young boy saw two baby eagles sitting on the edge of a cliff. As he watched the eagles he thought that he would get them down. When he got home he did not let anyone know that he had seen the baby eagles.

When he woke up the next morning he ate his morning meal; then he got a rope and went to where he had seen the baby eagles. He wanted to take the eagles down from the cliff, so he climbed up the rocks. The two little eagles were still sitting together. Checking the rope, he found that it reached exactly to where the little eagles sat. He tied the rope around some rocks; then he let himself down, leaving his bow behind.

Just as he was about to reach the place where the eagles sat, his rope broke. He could not climb back up or jump down because the nest was in a very high place. When the parent eagles returned to the nest they almost attacked the boy. All of the eagles, both big and little, eventually got used to him.



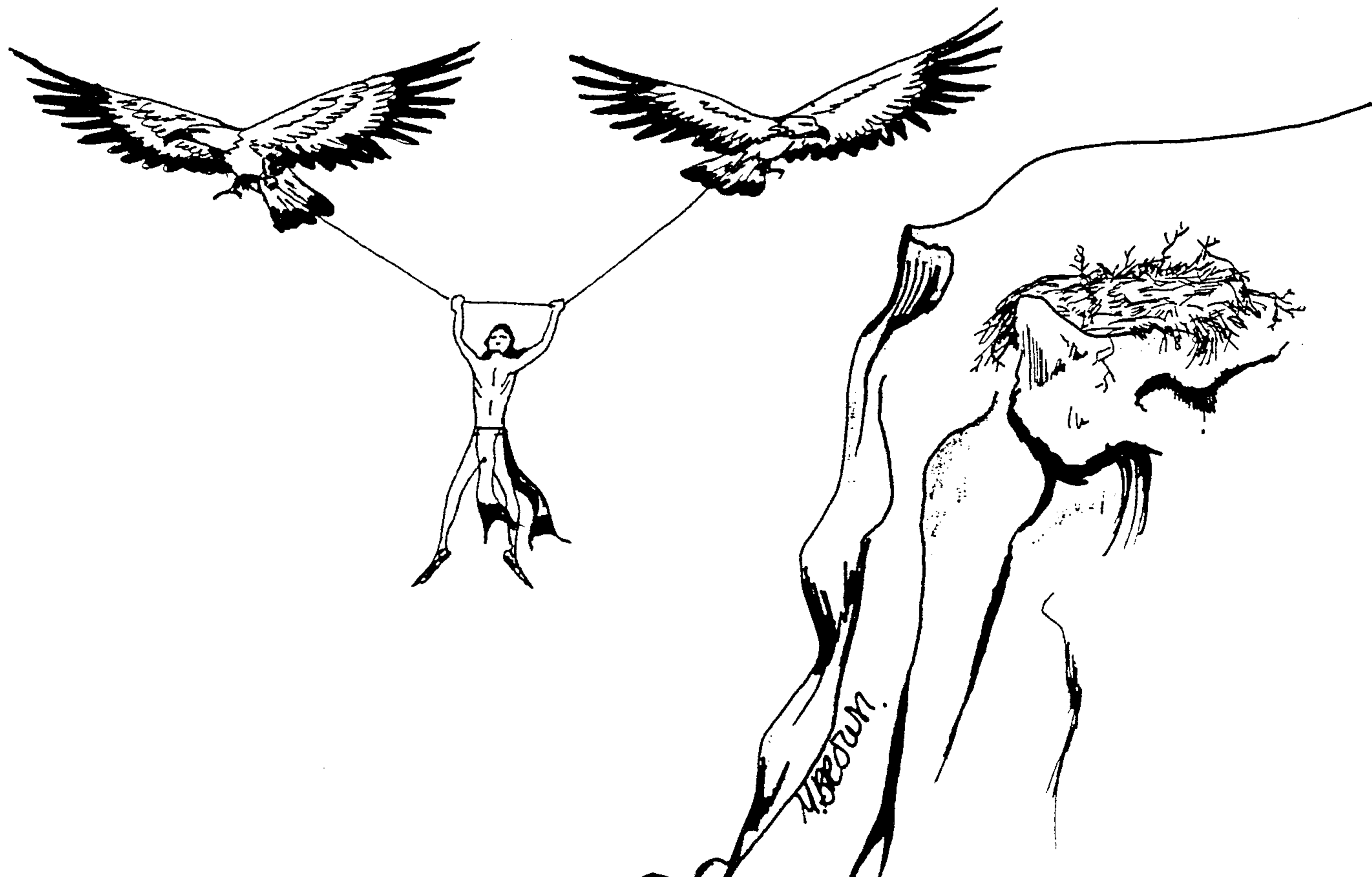
In the meantime, the boy's parents discovered that he was not in the camp. Everyone helped look for him, but in vain. He could not be found anywhere. Finally it was time to move camp and the boy was left behind.

After some time, the eagles became accustomed to the boy. They would allow him to eat with them when they brought in their kills. The big eagles would bring rabbits, prairie dogs and sage chickens.

Finally the little eagles were full-grown and big enough to fly. The boy still had a length of rope, so he hobbled the legs of both eagles. He carried the eagles to the edge of the cliff and jumped off, holding on to the rope. As they fell, the eagles started flapping their wings and at last they reached the ground. The boy untied the rope from the eagles' legs and released them.

The boy started walking, looking for the camp. He found where the encampment had been but everything was gone. Everyone had moved on. Then he started to walk in the direction that he thought they might have gone. After two days of searching he found the camp. His mother and father were happy to see him, and greeted him with hugs and kisses. The boy's father asked him where he had gone.

The boy replied, "I was getting little eagles down from a cliff and the rope broke. I couldn't get down and had to stay with the eagles until they were full-grown. When they were able to fly, they brought me back down."



VOCABULARY: Use the dictionary to find the definitions of the following vocabulary words; use the definition that fits the context of the story.

1. eventually: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. accustomed: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. hobbled: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. vain: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. encampment: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

RETENTION: Your answers to the following questions will reveal how well you remember the details of the story, The Boy and the Eagles.

6. Who did the boy live with after he became stranded on the cliff?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What did the boy eat when he lived with the eagles?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. How long did it take him to find the camp after he started walking?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



9. How did the boy get down from the cliff?

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10. Why did the boy get up on the rocks in the first place?

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11. Why couldn't he get back down after he fell?

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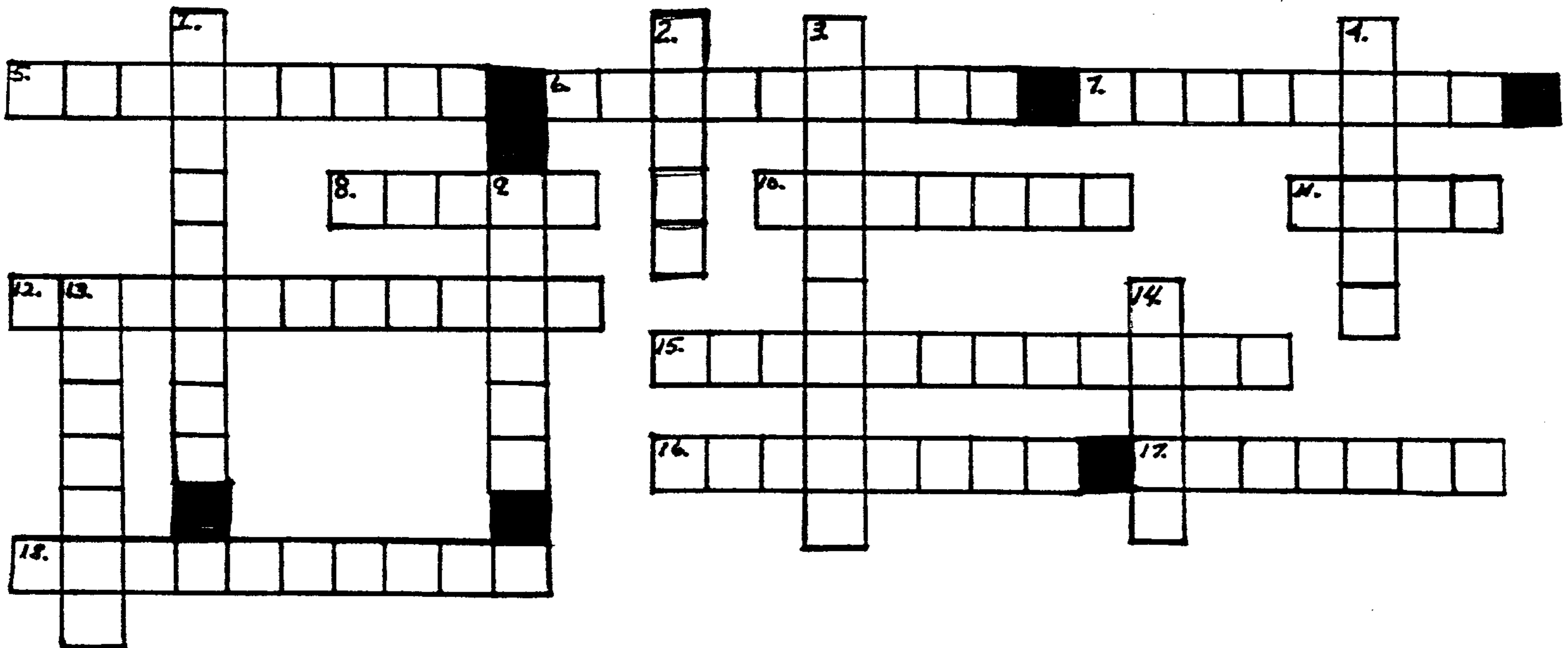
W  
CROSS PUZZLE  
R  
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The following clues were taken from the vocabulary exercises of The Scalped Man; The Whiteman and the Coyote; and The Boy and the Eagles.

ACROSS

DOWN

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| <p>5. to meet unexpectedly<br/>6. state of being fully awake<br/>7. to regain possession of<br/>8. to declare that something is true<br/>10. the story where the man had a bald head was "The _____ Man."<br/>11. useless, futile<br/>12. the leading character in a story<br/>15. feeling apprehension; anxious<br/>16. to cause fear to<br/>17. fastened legs so as to limit but not prevent movement<br/>18. a camp</p> | <p>1. to offer voluntarily<br/>2. to be troublesome to<br/>3. to dissuade or deter<br/>4. to obtain possession of again after loss<br/>9. to demand emphatically<br/>13. a series of acts performed regularly in the same way<br/>14. a conflict of any kind</p> |
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## THE WHITEMAN AND THE BUFFALO

A whiteman was walking along a river when he saw a buffalo standing alone. There was no one else there and the buffalo saw the whiteman picking berries. The whiteman told the buffalo, "You are by yourself and lying around trying to sleep."

The buffalo replied, "Yes, I am living a good life."

The man said, "Would it be alright for me to keep you company? We could stay together."

The buffalo said, "No. You should just walk on by, go away." The whiteman was very insistent about staying with the buffalo and refused to leave.

"Alright, stand over there," the buffalo said. Then the buffalo moved a short distance away. Suddenly the buffalo turned and charged the whiteman, saying, "Do not dodge away."

The whiteman did not obey the buffalo, and he stepped quickly aside just as the buffalo got close to him. "I told you not to move," said the buffalo.

"Alright, this time I will not move away, I will stand still," the whiteman said.

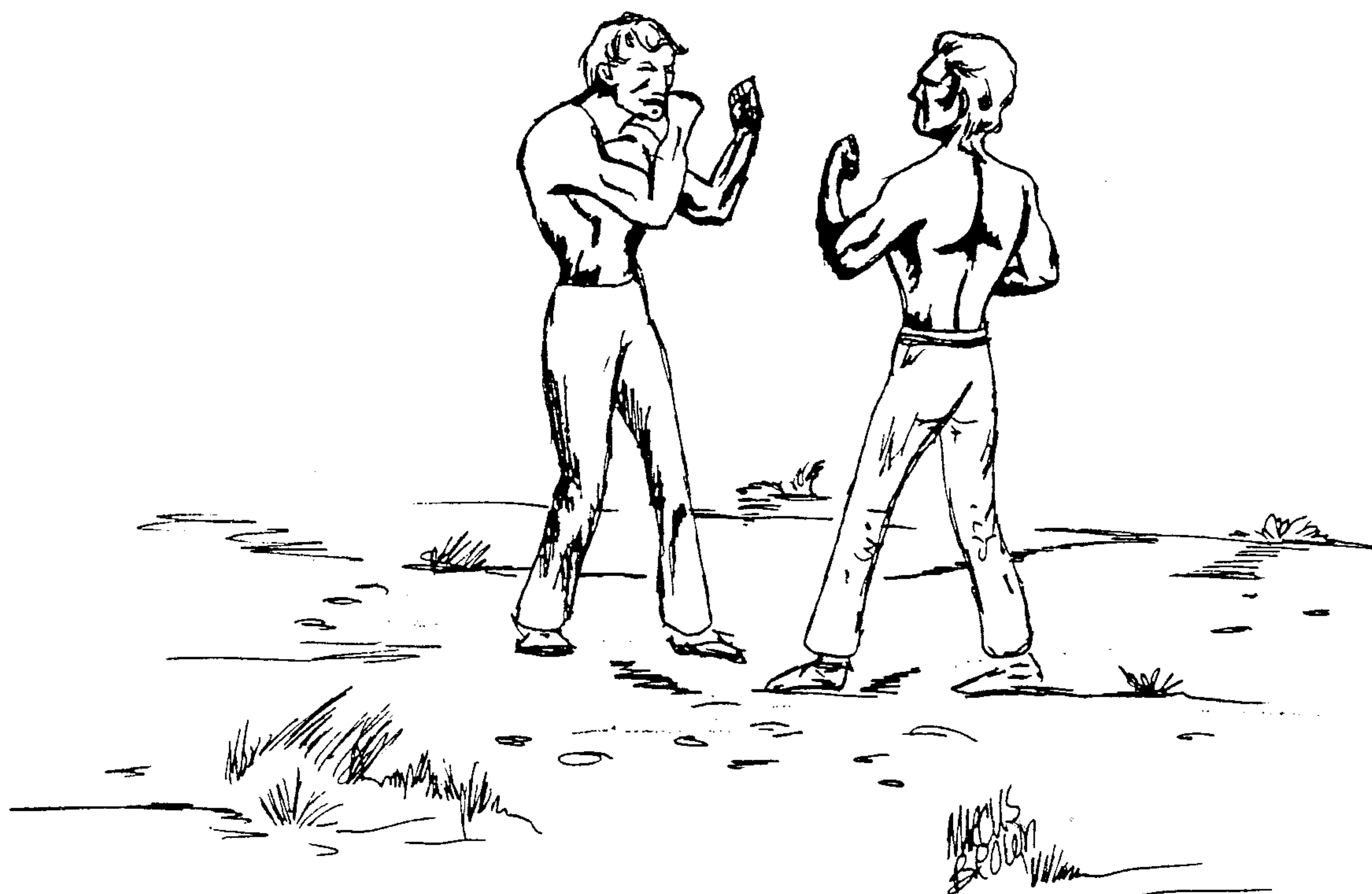


Then the buffalo again walked a short distance away, then turned and charged. When the buffalo got right up to the whiteman, he would jump out of the way again. "I told you not to get scared and jump out of the way but you are still jumping aside. Finally, the fourth time, the buffalo emphatically told the man not to jump aside. So he charged again and this time the whiteman did not move. He butted the man who then turned into a buffalo. Now there were two buffalo.

Later, when they were finished fighting, they laid in the sun. Then the buffalo who had been there first took off somewhere by himself. Only the whiteman who had turned into a buffalo was left. Shortly thereafter, another whiteman arrived on the scene. He saw the buffalo sunning himself and approached him, saying, "You are living a good life, may I join you? I could keep you company."

"No," said the buffalo; however, the whiteman was very insistent and finally the buffalo agreed. The buffalo told the whiteman, "Alright, stand over there. When I come charging at you do not get scared and jump out of the way."

The buffalo moved a short distance away and the whiteman remained standing in one spot. The buffalo turned back and charged the whiteman, who jumped aside at the last moment. This went on for awhile, until the buffalo finally butted the whiteman. Suddenly, the buffalo turned back into his original self and there were two whitemen fighting. They continued fighting, giving each other fancy jabs, and that is how the sport of boxing began.



VOCABULARY: Using the dictionary, find the definitions of the following words; write the definition that best fits the context of the story.

1. insistent: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. emphatically: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. company: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. dodge: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. charged: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

INFERENCE: How well you reach an opinion from facts will be revealed by your answers to the following questions:

6. Why do you think the whiteman wanted to join the buffalo?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Do you think the buffalo wanted the whiteman to join him?

\_\_\_\_\_

8. What sport still popular today was mentioned in the story?

\_\_\_\_\_

9. How did you think the story would end?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Why did you respond as you did to number 9?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## THE STORY OF BLUEBIRD

This is a story of a man named Bluebird. He once pulled an elk-woman out of the mud, but in the process he became stuck, too. He also pulled another woman out, who turned out to be a buffalo-woman. Bluebird later married these two women.

One day there was gambling going on in Bluebird's camp. The crowd was playing a game called "Big Wheel." It is not known exactly what the Big Wheel was, but at any rate the crowd was playing this game. Bluebird was one of the players. As the game was going on, Bluebird's son came running up to him. This boy had long slender legs. He was the son of Bluebird and Elk Woman.

The boy said to Bluebird, "Father, my mother is calling you over there." Bluebird went and talked briefly to Elk Woman, then returned to the gambling game.

Soon, another child came; he was short and stocky. This was Buffalo Woman's and Bluebird's son, a buffalo calf. He said, "Father, my mother is calling you over there." Then he went to talk to Buffalo Woman. The buffalo-woman and the elk-woman noticed each other and became jealous of one another. The buffalo-woman was walking around angrily while the elk-woman built herself a wooden lodge. She built it with willows called red birch. The buffalo-woman started trying to knock a hole in the lodge. She would hit the structure with her horns but would just leave a white mark on the willows. That is why these willows have white marks on them today.

The buffalo-woman told her husband, the bluebird, "I am going to take our son and go back home, back to the buffalo." So she took her son and left in anger. Then Bluebird had a confrontation with Elk Woman, although this part of the story is not told. He was lonesome for his son, the buffalo calf, because his wife had taken him away from his heart. He was very lonesome.

Bluebird announced to his people, "I am going to look for my son. I am lonesome for him. I am going to follow them and bring them back." He then told the men of the camp, "In case I am killed where I am going, you will receive a sign. You will see dust rise up to the sky. Then you will know that I have been killed. You must then build a sweatlodge and think about the different types of birds and which one you would ask to look for me in case I am killed."

The one bird they all kept thinking about was the magpie. However, many were doubtful of the magpie's ability to accomplish any task. They said, "He has weird eyes," and "I don't think he can do anything useful," and on and on.

When Bluebird was gone for sometime looking for his son, he came upon a hilltop, the first of four. He climbed over the first hilltop, and when he walked down, an old bison was standing alone. Bluebird was tracking his son and his son's mother. He went over another hill and saw one old bison standing there again. He said to the bison, "Have my son and his mother come by here on these trails? I am following them."

The old bison replied, "Yes, they are just going over the hill." So Bluebird continued to follow them. He climbed over another hilltop and down, and each time he saw the old bison standing there. Each time Bluebird would ask him if he had seen his son and his mother. The old bison would reply that they had just disappeared over a hilltop, saying, "There is a high ridge over there; that is where they have gone over just now." Part of this story is not revealed, but it is believed that Bluebird stayed overnight sometimes. Each time there were hills or high ridges; there were three, then four hilltops that he climbed. Each time he would only see the one, lone old bison standing there. Finally, the old bison told Bluebird that his son



and the mother had just gone over a ridge and could not be seen anymore. Then Bluebird walked in the direction the old bison had shown him. When he reached the place, he found much to his amazement, many, many buffalo in a herd that reached in every direction that Bluebird looked. The buffalo-woman had rejoined the herd already. Bluebird walked on down the hill but was stopped by another buffalo. The buffalo questioned Bluebird's presence there and Bluebird replied, "I have come for my son. That is the reason I am here."

The buffalo said to him, "Yes, he is here with his mother but you can not just take them away. You will have to complete four trials before you can take him. It is up to the elder bison what they decide to do. They might let you have your son."

All the elder bison were called together. While they were gathering, Bluebird's son suddenly appeared by his side and he secretly tied a plume on his hair.

"Now," the buffalo said to Bluebird, "the buffalo calves are going to race and if your son comes in first, that will be the first trial completed." Then the younger male buffalo lined up to race. They began running and ran in a curve. On they went, farther and farther, then finally they began turning back. Bluebird's son came in first. "Well, that is the first trial completed," the elder bison told Bluebird.

Then the second time, the young buffalo all were to sit in a row. All the young buffalo calves looked the same. The elder bison had told Bluebird that he would have to pick out which one was his son. Again, his little son ran up to him and said, "Father, I will wiggle my left ear. That way you will know it's me."

