

CRY OF AN EAGLE

I stand on a cliff overlooking  
an unknown valley.  
Trying to realize  
Who I am.  
I see an eagle flying above.  
It soars so smooth, so beautiful.  
This eagle brings  
good-luck and good spirit.  
Why does an eagle bring this to me?

Now I realize who I am.  
An Indian.  
That is my answer. As I turn to leave,  
The eagle lets out a cry  
and flies away from the  
tall, beautiful pine tree  
that it was perched upon.

I watch it fly away...  
High over the beautiful valley,  
over the trees and clear blue streams.

Soon it is nothing but a speck.  
A small black speck, in the clear blue sky.  
My answer.

Nicole Jones  
10<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Owyhee Combined School  
Mrs. Reeve, 1987

## NEVADA NATIVE STORY-TELLING

UNIT GOALS: To understand that the four (4) Native Tribes of Nevada used storytelling

1. As an oral tradition.
2. As a way of preserving the culture and history of their people.
3. To teach about relationships between people and between people and nature.
4. As a form of entertainment and a source of amusement

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## **STORYTELLING OF THE FOUR TRIBES OF NEVADA** **(Cooperative Lesson)**

**ACTIVITY GOALS:** Students will identify the major characters, sequence of events and the main idea of a Nevada Native folklore story.

Students will understand that storytelling was an oral tradition handed down from one generation to the next of a Native family of Nevada.

Students will understand that storytelling is a way of preserving a culture and history, a form of entertainment, and a source of amusement

### **MATERIALS:**

- Four (4) Student Information Workbooks
- Comparison chart (Blackline Masters)
- Story Analysis Worksheet
- Large sheet of paper, markers, crayons or tempera paints

### **PROCEDURES:**

1. Explain to the students activity goal #1.
2. Divide the students into their same tribal groups.
3. Suggested Introduction Methods:
  - a. Ask the students how the Natives gained knowledge about their world without a written language.
  - b. Ask the students what are the ways of telling stories (tell, read, draw, and act out a story).
4. Have each group decide which story they will be working on for these activities.
5. Write the topic questions on the board/chart
  - a. Where in Nevada did the event take place?
  - b. What type of activity was involved?
  - c. How many people did it involve (estimate)?
  - d. What are they known for (character traits) or what event took place?
6. Students meet in their cooperative groups, discuss, plan and make a mural depicting one Native story.
7. Record the information on a comparison chart as each group speaker presents their information.
8. Compare and discuss the charted information.

### **ADDITIONAL ACTIVIES OF LESSON:**

1. Knots on a Counting rope - Circle activity using a rope. Turn lights off and put a candle in the middle of the group. As you go around circle, each person starts a story and ties a knot when finished.
2. Sequence story maps - draw different parts of story.
3. Compare stories from different tribal groups

## STORY ANALYSIS

Name of story: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Setting: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Main Characters: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe traits of main characters: \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

Plot: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

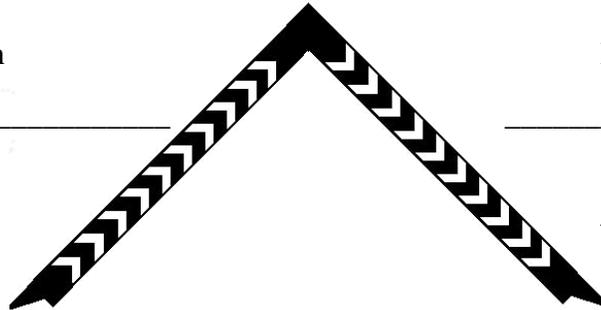
Structure: Climax \_\_\_\_\_

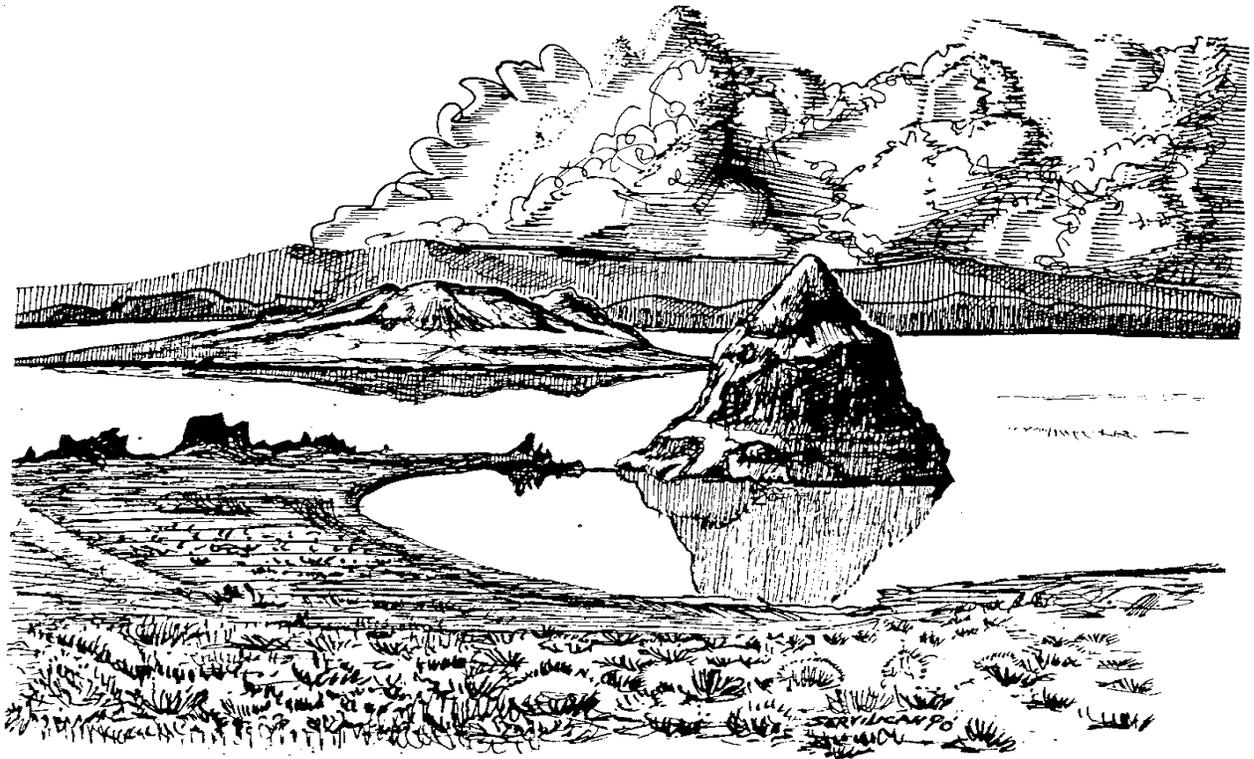
Rising action Falling Action

\_\_\_\_\_

Conclusion

\_\_\_\_\_





### **A Paiute Legend of the Stone Mother of Pyramid Lake**

Long, long ago, all the people of this land were animals. The ruler of this land was the wolf, who was a wise and good ruler. His brother, the coyote, was very tricky and caused his brother the wolf a great deal of trouble. One day, the father of all the Indians came to this area and lived on a mountain near Stillwater, Nevada. He was special...a very great and good man...

Later, a woman who lived in a different part of this country heard about this man. This woman, who had a bear for a husband, thought about the Indian man all the time. She hoped that someday she might be able to see him because she had heard what a wise and good man he was. One day she and the bear had a fight.

She decided to leave the bear and come to the man whom she had heard so much about. Her experiences on the trip to see this wise and wonderful man were many. As she traveled, she left her footprints in the rocks along the shore of Mono Lake and one day she met a giant by Yerington, Nevada. This giant tried to eat her but she managed to kill him. The Indians believed his body turned to stone. After many days, she arrived at Stillwater Mountain.

When she first caught sight of the man ruler, she was filled with awe. He was so handsome, she hid from him at first. He saw her tracks and called to her. After awhile, she gathered enough courage to come out from hiding.



He told her to sit down and eat some soup. It was the best she had ever eaten. She stayed by the fire that night. The next night she slept closer to him. On the ninth night they were married. They had many children. The first was a boy and he was a very mean person. The children could not seem to get along. They fought and argued all the time.

Then one day when they were very, very unruly, the father called them together to talk to them. He told them that he had the power to separate them with one word. They began fighting before he had finished talking.

The father became very angry. He said to them, "I am going to separate you and then I am going up to the sky to my home. When you die you will come up to me. All you will have to do is follow that path and you will reach my home. Someday I hope you will all come to your senses and live together in peace and stop this fighting.

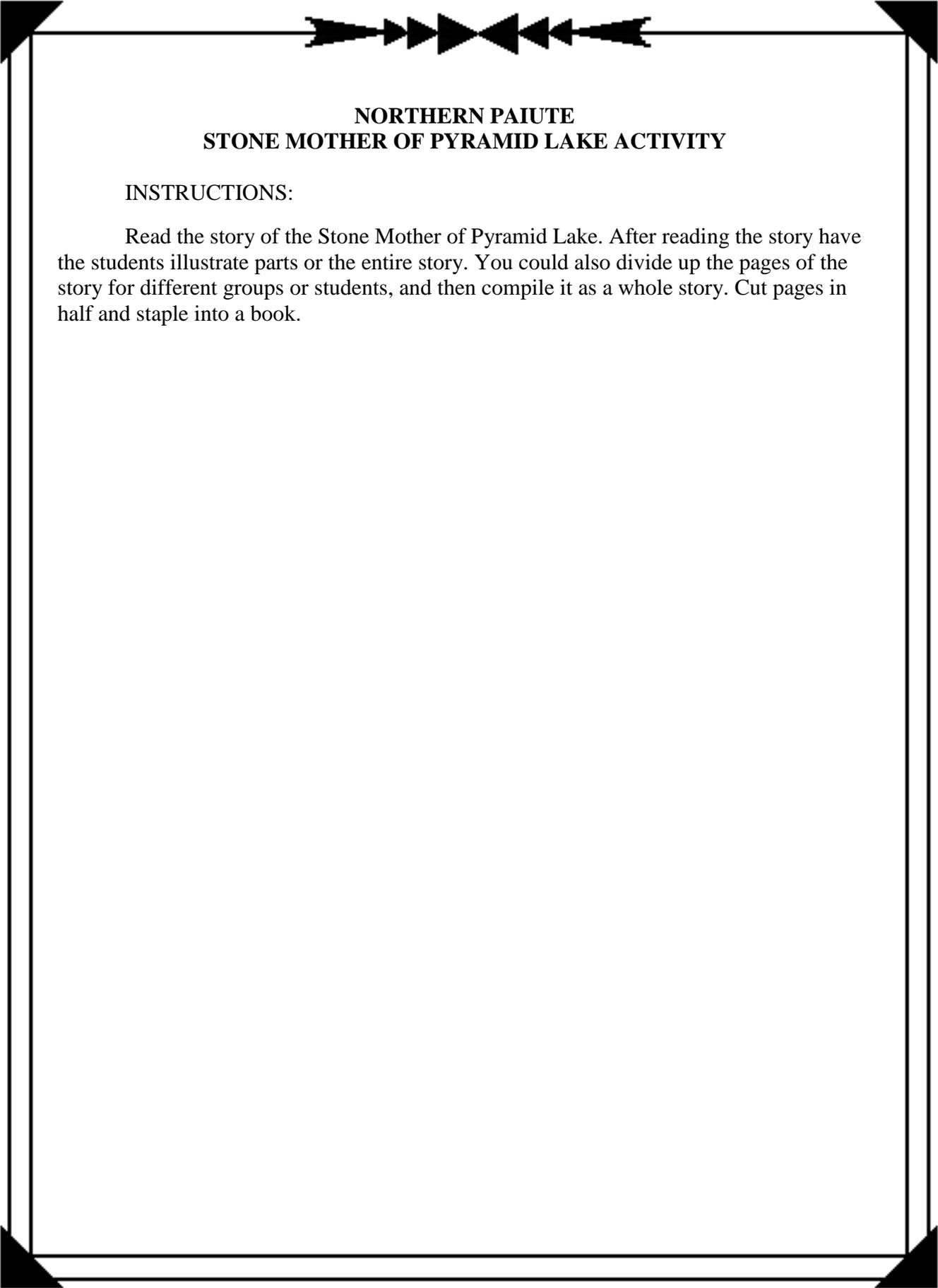
He took the oldest boy and gave him one of the girls and sent him west. They became the Pitt River Indians. He sent another couple east and they became the Bannocks.

The remainder of the group he kept at home and they became the Northern Paiute. Then he went up to the mountain to his home in the sky.

The woman felt so bad that she began to weep bitterly. She missed her children so much, but remained with her children, the Paiutes. The Paiutes grew into a strong tribe and became the most powerful group in the country. But the Paiute mother still grieved for her lost children, especially the Pitt River Indians, who were so poor that she cried more and more each day.

One day, she decided to sit near a mountain where she could look towards the Pitt River Country. She sat there day after day and she cried and cried. Her tears fell so fast and so much that they formed a great lake beneath her. This body of water became Pyramid Lake. She sat there so long she turned to stone. There she may be found today. She is the stone mother of Pyramid Lake and she carries her burden basket at her side.





**NORTHERN PAIUTE  
STONE MOTHER OF PYRAMID LAKE ACTIVITY**

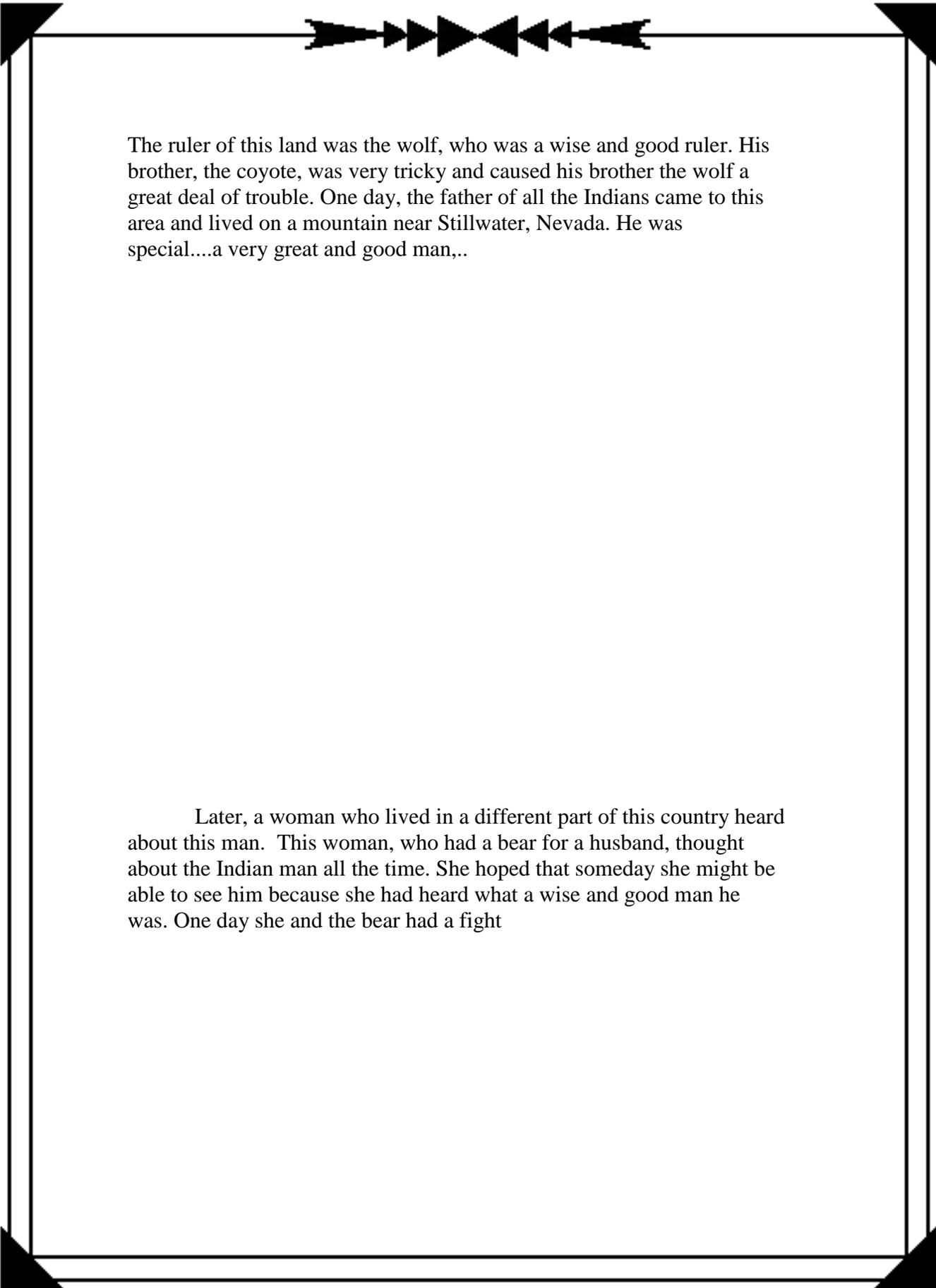
**INSTRUCTIONS:**

Read the story of the Stone Mother of Pyramid Lake. After reading the story have the students illustrate parts or the entire story. You could also divide up the pages of the story for different groups or students, and then compile it as a whole story. Cut pages in half and staple into a book.



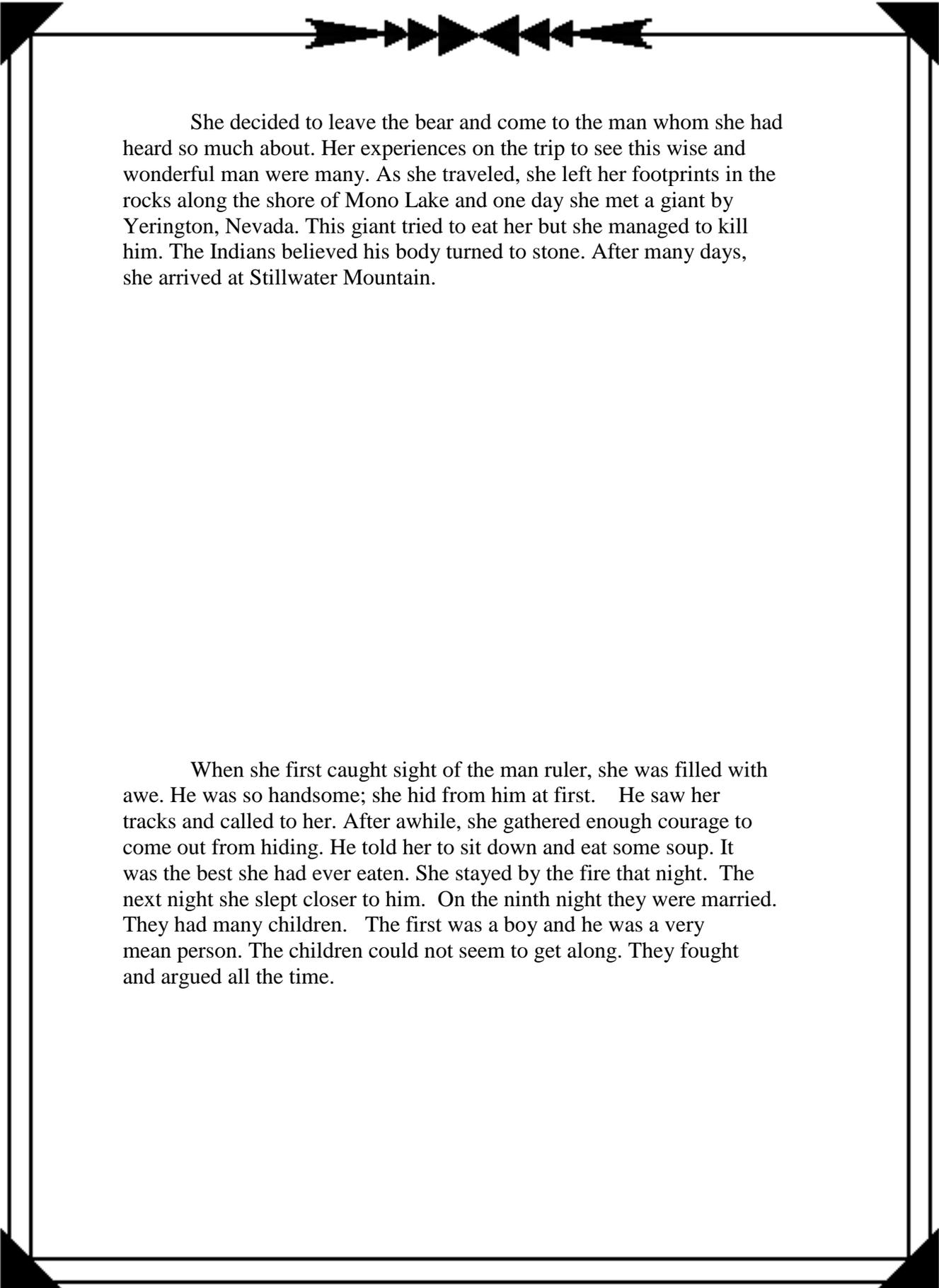
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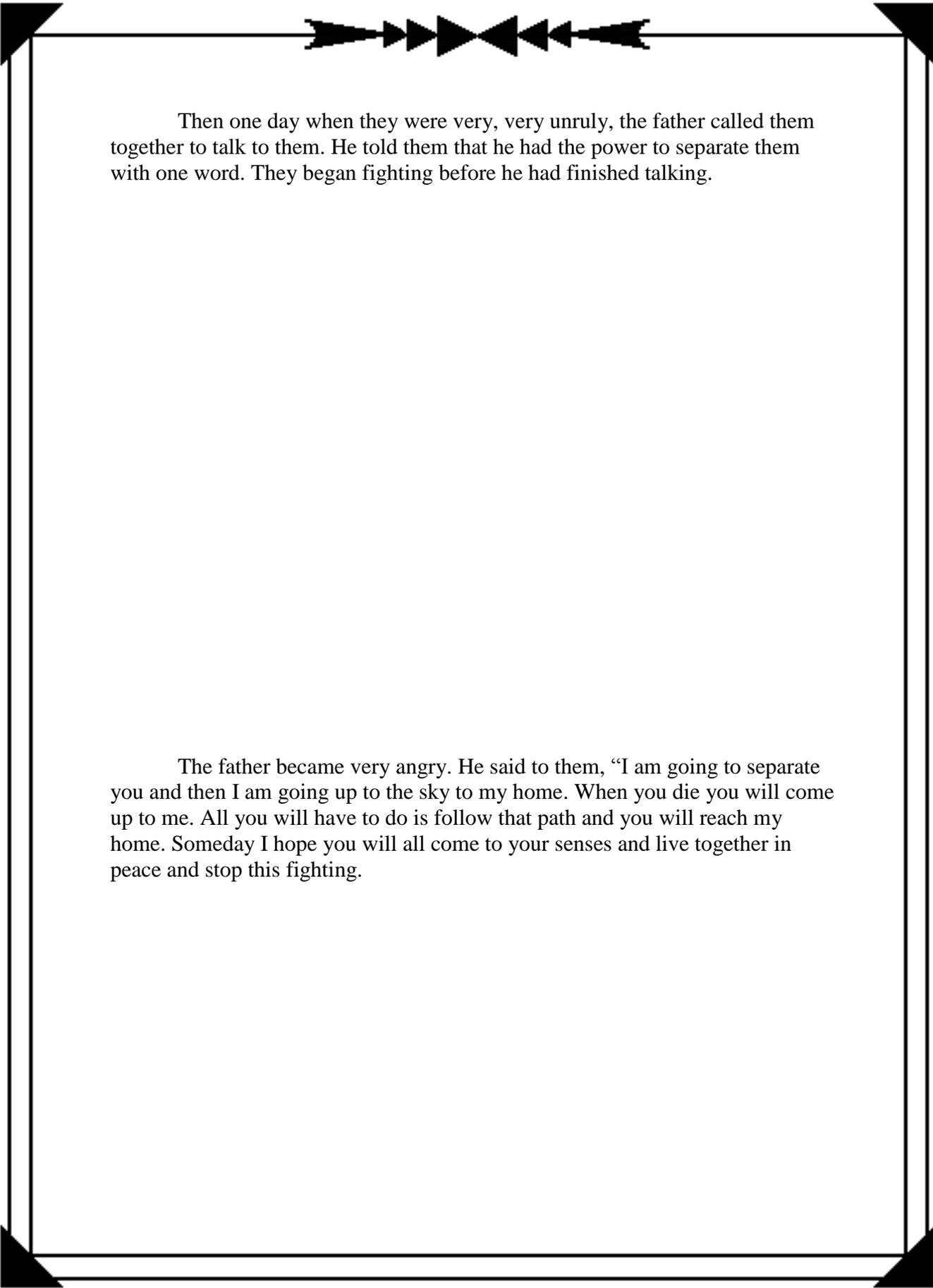
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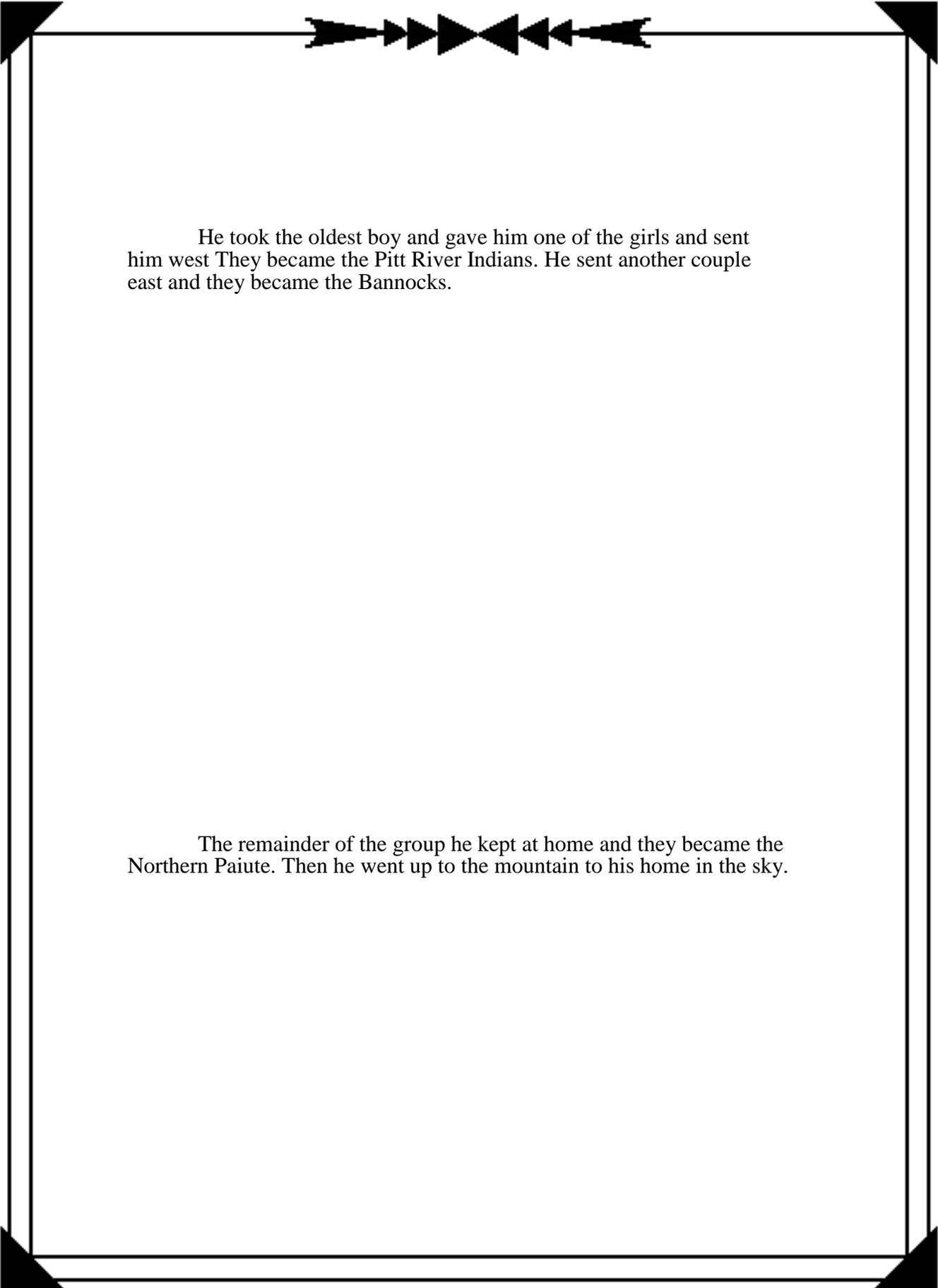
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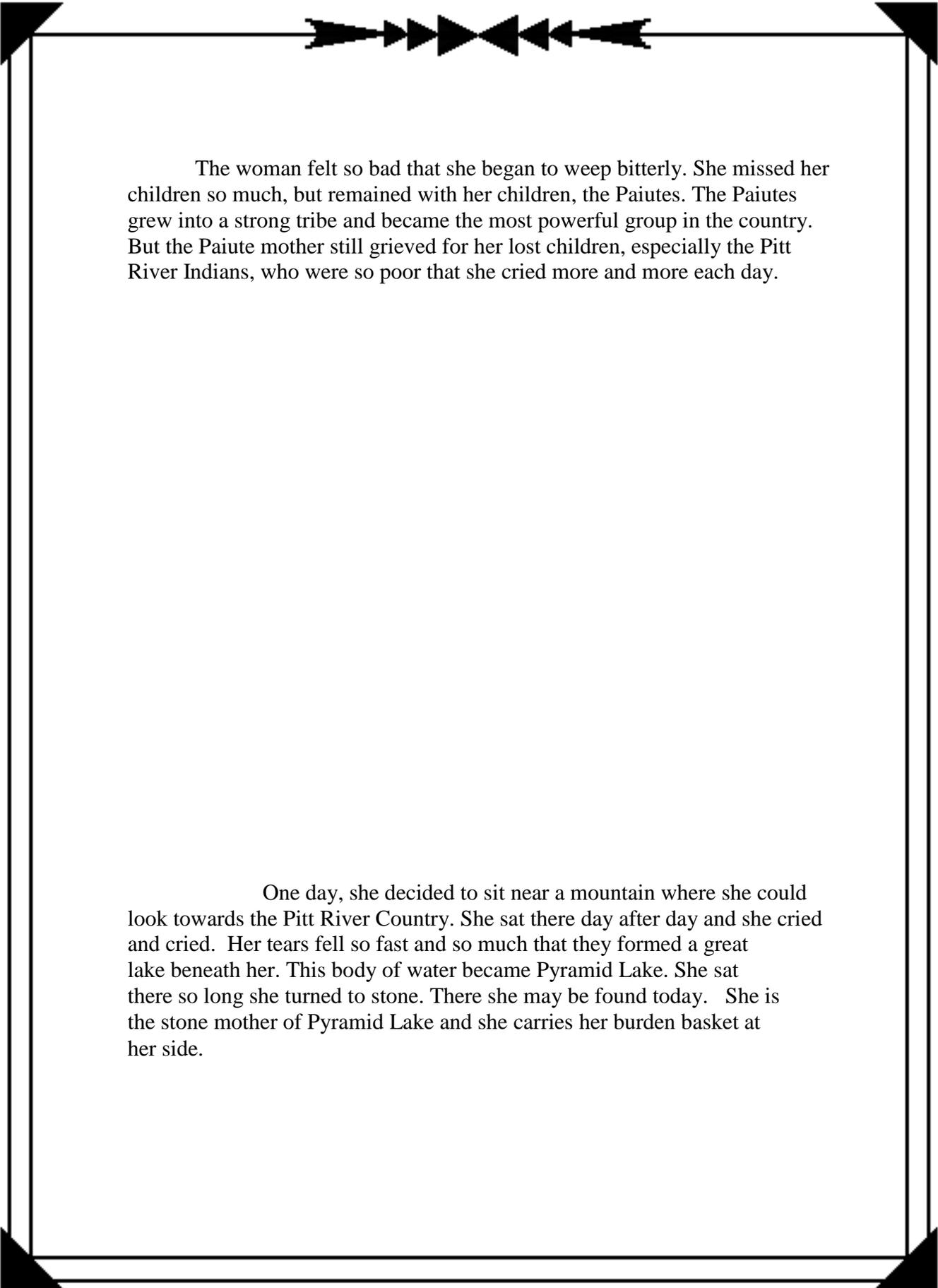
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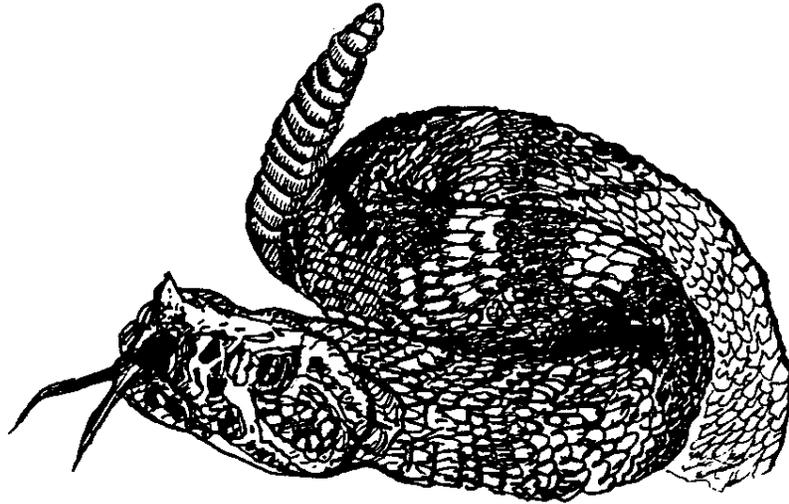
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### Origin of the Echo

Teugai (a witch) came near a village one night and called to a little girl, "Bring me my child." The girl thought it was her mother, so she obeyed. Teugai had a basket on her back, and she put both the baby and the girl in it and carried them away, scampering through the woods. When the mother missed her children, there was a great search through the village for them. The people all believed that a teugai had taken them off.

Early the next morning, they followed the old hag and found her asleep, wearied from her flight. The people quickly rescued the children.

When Teugai awoke and found they had taken the children from her, she went to her grandfather Togoav (Rattlesnake), taking all her own family with her. She begged him to take care of them, for she feared the people of the village would come to kill them and her also. Not knowing what to do, he swallowed them all. It made him very sick, and he asked them to crawl out again. This the children did, but the old Teugai was stuck fast.

Then Togoav crawled out of his own skin, leaving Teugai in it. She shouted, "Let me out, let me out!"

"Stay where you are; be still!" said Togoav.

Still she screamed, "Let me out, let me out!" But Togoav refused to help her and went away.

Then Teugai wriggled with the skin into a crevice in the rocks and made her home there. When the people of the village came in search of her, she repeated their words in mockery; and though they heard her voice, they could not find her.

Since that time, all teugai live in snakeskins, and the echoes which are heard in the rocks are their spiteful mockings.

\*Powell John Wesley, Ute and Paiute Legends,' Microfilm, Archives of the Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution)



## Corn Is Brought to the Earth\*

In the early days people were very hungry and very poor, and they were small in stature because of their scanty food.

One day an old woman called to her son and told him to go up beyond the sky and see if he could find some better food than what they had. But the boy hesitated, saying, "What shall I ride?"

When the boy continued to refuse, the old woman held him up in her hand and blew him away. He rose right into the Heavens. Passing beyond the skies, he came into the country inhabited by the Shinau-av (Coyote).

When he saw the boy coming, Shinau-av said, "What do you seek in this land? Are you a thief?"

The boy said, "No, I seek for better food for my people"

And Shinau-av said, "Perhaps you are a spy and, at night, will cut our throats." But the boy denied this accusation and plainly explained to him why he was there. Shinau-av placed before him some food and the boy ate. Then Shinau-av gave him a drink of the wine of the skies, u-wu-pa (juice of the cactus apple). When the boy was finished, Shinau-av sent him to lie down a little way outside his camp.

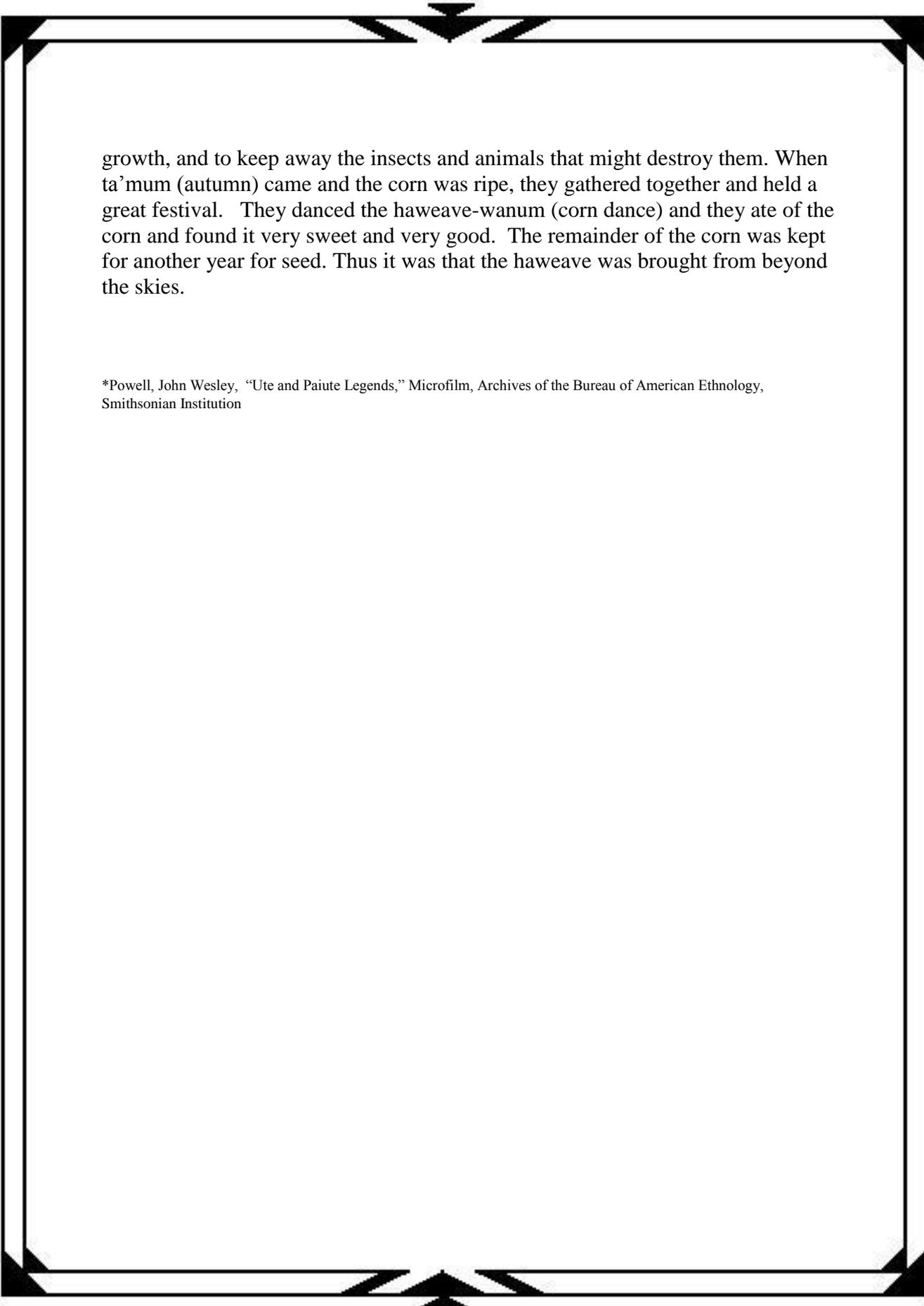
Shinau-av said to himself, "If he becomes drunk from this wine, he is an enemy, but if he drinks his fill and still retains his understanding, he means well."

The boy slept and seemed not to be affected by the wine which had been given him. When morning came, Shinau-av called the boy to him and set food before him and again gave him a drink of the wine of the sky. The boy again drank his fill and still kept his understanding.

Shinau-av said, "This is a good boy, and I will trust him." So he gave some seeds of haweave (Indian Corn) and told him to return. He also gave him a jug filled with wine to drink on his journey.

The boy left Shinau-av's home and passed through the sky and came down again to earth. When he arrived, all the people gathered about him. They wanted to hear his story of that land beyond the sky and to know if he had succeeded in his search for some better food. The boy told the people what he had seen, but didn't tell them about the wonderful wine of the sky which he had drunk. Shinau-av had warned him not to before he had started.

The seeds which the boy had brought were planted, and they grew through the summer. Every day, the people came to see them, to watch their



growth, and to keep away the insects and animals that might destroy them. When ta'mum (autumn) came and the corn was ripe, they gathered together and held a great festival. They danced the haweave-wanum (corn dance) and they ate of the corn and found it very sweet and very good. The remainder of the corn was kept for another year for seed. Thus it was that the haweave was brought from beyond the skies.

\*Powell, John Wesley, "Ute and Paiute Legends," Microfilm, Archives of the Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution

## "Chuarrumpurunkunt and the Yukuts"\*

Chuarrumpurunkunt (He who dug the roots of the yucca) was digging the roots of the great yucca. Seeing two deer, a buck and a doe, he hid himself in the reeds. Then, taking a leaf of the cottonwood tree, he made a whistle with which he imitated the cry of a young fawn. This attracted the older deer, and when they came nearby, Chuarrumpurunkunt killed them with his arrows. Looking around, he found two yukuts (fawns). He came up to them and pretended to be their friend.

"There are some bad people around here," he said, "they have killed your father and mother. So come with me; I will show you where to hide." He took them to a pit nearby and put them in and went away.

Three days later he returned to kill and eat the fawns, but seeing that they were very poor, he thought of a plan to get them to eat grass for a few months and become fat and large. So he told them that the wicked people had gone away, but that they would return soon. He told them to eat grass nearby every day and not to wander far away. They were to go no further than the spring which was nearby. Whenever they had eaten enough, they were to hide again in the pit.

In time these fawns grew and became fine fat deer.

When they were older, they said to each other, "Who knows, this man may have killed our parents, and maybe he will come back and kill us". They talked between themselves until they decided to go and get advice from their grandfather, Togoav (Rattlesnake).

Now when Togoav heard their story, he said: "My children, you were very foolish in believing the words of Chuarrumpurunkunt; he is a great deceiver. When you are in trouble, do not listen to a stranger but go to your friends for advice."

Then he led them up to the Markagunt Kaivwavi (Markagunt Plateau) and showed them the rich grasses which they could eat, and took them to the clear spring where they could drink, and led them to the aspen groves where they could rest in the shade, and taught them a song. Then Togoav returned to his home on the Unka Mukwanikunt (Vermilion Cliffs)

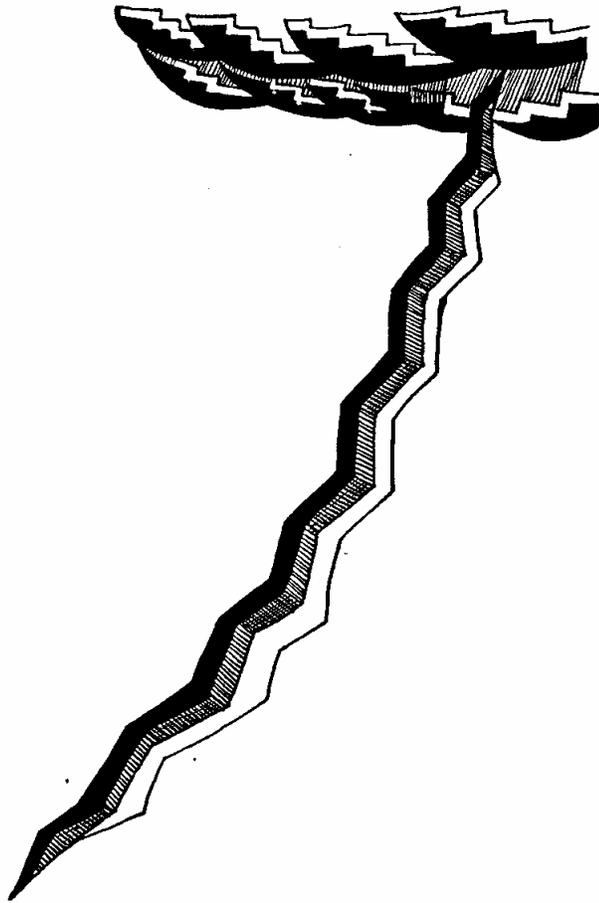
When Chuarrumpurunkunt came to the pit, he expected the fawns to be grown to fine fat deer. When he found that they had left, he was enraged and started searching around. He came upon their tracks and followed them to the home of Togoav. He arrived there at the same time that Togoav returned from the Markagunt Kaivwavi.

"Where are the deer I had in my pit?" said Chuarrumpurunkunt.  
"You have stolen and eaten them."

Togoav replied, “Not so; they came to me for advice and I sent them away to a land where you cannot find them now I know that you are a liar and a bad man; you shall die!”

Togoav then killed him. The fawns lived on the Markagunt Kaiwavi for a long time and often sang.

\*Op.cit., Powell, “Ute and Paiute Legends”\*



### The Flood\*

The waters of the Sea were angry and rolled in great waves over the land and destroyed it. Tobats (Little Rabbit) and the Shinau-av (Coyote) brothers fled to the top of a high mountain. The brothers dared not to drink of the water because it was angry and was about to die. Tobats, who was wiser, drank as much as he wished. He tried to reassure his companions, and at last talked them into going down to the edge of the water to drink. As they came near, a great wave rolled up as if to swallow them. They ran back screaming with terror. Then Tobats shot an arrow into the water and burst it into pieces. The fragments flew high into the heavens and came down in torrents of rain all over the world. Since then, whenever the sea gets mad and its waves begin to roll, Tobats shoots an arrow. This prevents it from flooding the land and drives it back so that it goes up in the side of the sky, and falls down on the land, then we have rain.

The waters during this great flood killed every tree and every shrub and all the grass. There was nothing left to eat, and the Shinau-av brothers were about to die with hunger. Then Tobats took them to a great rock and pointed to a little hole beneath, and told them to dig there and see what they could find. They worked until they were very tired and found nothing.

Then they said to each other, "Tobats has fooled us," and they stopped working.

When Tobats returned and found that they had gone away, he called them back and scolded them for their laziness. He ran into the hole, and as he went the hole opened up in front of him. They all entered a vast chamber and found a fresh store of seeds.

When they had eaten until they were full, they took the seeds and scattered them over the earth, and the land was recovered with vegetation.

\*Op.Cit., Powell, "Ute and Paiute Legends"

## SOUTHERN PAIUTE LEGEND ACTIVITIES

### ACTIVITY 1: STORY MAPPING

#### Materials needed:

butcher paper  
pencils  
markers/crayons/paint

#### Procedure:

1. Identify the major events of the story, number them.
2. Outline the big shape of your map. It can be in any shape you want. For example, in the story, "The Flood" you might make your map in the shape of ocean waves.
3. Draw a picture of each of the major events you have identified. Be sure to put your story pictures in order so that your story does not skip around the paper.
4. Retell your story using your map of the story.



## ACTIVITY 2: PUPPET MAKING

### Materials needed:

small paper lunch bag  
markers  
colored construction paper  
assorted decorations for puppets, i.e.  
yarn, buttons, glitter, felt, fabric, etc...

### Procedure:

1. Pick a favorite character from the story.
2. Imagine what features this character has. What does it look like?
3. Make a puppet of this character.

### ACTIVITY 3: DRAMA PLAY

Materials needed:

Character outline sheet  
pen/pencil

Procedure:

1. Identify all the characters in the story.
2. Re-write the story by using the dialog of the characters.  
Remember to add the dialog of a narrator.
3. Practice the story as a play.
4. Perform for your class, or possibly another class.

EXAMPLE:

CHARACTER OUTLINE SHEET		
STORY TITLE: "THE FLOOD"		
CHARACTER	CHARACTER NAME:	STUDENT NAME
1.	Narrator	
2.	Tobats (Little Rabbit)	
3.	Shinau-av 1 (Coyote)	
4.	Shinau-av 2 (Coyote)	

Read through the story "The Flood" and underline all the parts of your character. Instead of reading what is written, imagine what you would say if you were in the same situation. Write this down exactly as you would say it. This is your dialogue. Work with your group so you "tell the story" in a play.

## CHARACTER OUTLINE SHEET

STORY TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

CHARACTER      CHARACTER NAME:      STUDENT NAME:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

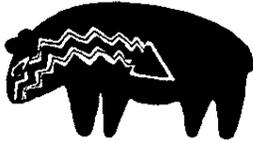
2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

Read through the story ‘The Flood’ and underline all the parts of your character. Imagine what you would say if you were in the same situation. Write this down exactly as you would say it. This is your dialogue. Work with your group so you “tell the story” in a play.



## THE BEAR, THE CRANE, AND THE DEER

A tale told by Joann Martinez.

A mother deer and her two baby fawns lived in the woods. Nearby lived a bear and her two cubs. Every day the mother bear would go hunting for food and the mother deer would graze in the nearby meadow. The cubs and the fawns would play together while the mothers were gone.

One day, the mother bear decided to kill the mother deer for food. She followed the deer as the deer grazed farther and farther from home.

Before the mother deer had left home, she told her young fawns that she would be going across the river to look for more grass and they were to stay close to their home until her return. The fawns minded their mother faithfully for several days, but their mother never returned.

The mother bear returned to camp and told her cubs that she had killed the deer. She said, "Now it is up to you to kill the fawns."

Bear and her cubs paid a visit to the fawns. The fawns asked mother bear, "Have you seen our mother? She has not returned since she crossed the river."

"Oh yes," said the mother bear, "I can show you where she is at. See across there?"

The fawns could see the hide in the distance. Believing that their mother was alive, they began to play with the bear cubs.

Meanwhile, the cubs were plotting how to kill the fawns. They decided to build a willow hut and trap the fawns inside. They built a fire in the middle of the hut and told the fawns it was a game.

The cubs said, "We will take turns. You will go first"

As soon as the fawns were inside, the cubs trapped the fawns by covering the entrance with poles and slabs of bark. As the fire got bigger, it became very hot inside and the smoke filled the hut. The fawns cried out to the cubs to let them out, but the cubs did not answer.

Realizing that they would die without fresh air, the fawns poked holes in the sides of the willow hut with their sharp hooves and poked their noses through to the outside. After some time had passed and believing the fawns were dead, the cubs opened the door. The deer came bounding out and cried, "Boy! That was fun! Now it is your turn."

The cubs reluctantly went inside. The fawns built up the fire, then went out and closed the entrance. The cubs ran around and around and unable to breathe, soon smothered.

As soon as the fawns made sure the cubs were dead, they left camp. They had come to realize that they were in danger.

The fawns talked and decided that the bear was their enemy and had probably already killed their mother. They cried, hugging each other and decided their only hope of survival was to get away as far as they could from the bear.

When bear returned to camp, she was anxious to see if the cubs had succeeded in killing the fawns. She went into a rage when she discovered her dead cubs. "Those two fawns have outsmarted my cubs!" she screamed, "I will kill them just like I killed their mother!"

After searching the camp, she discovered their tracks and followed them.

When the fawns came to the river, they were unable to cross to the other side because the river was swift and deep. They noticed some cranes nearby, dancing, eating, singing, and having fun.

The fawns went to the cranes and asked, "Cranes, will you please help us. We need to cross the river." The fawns told the sad story of the bear killing their mother.

The biggest crane agreed to help them. He stretched his long legs across the river. The fawns walked across and were safe on the other side. They thanked crane and went on their way.

The cranes went back to enjoying themselves, singing, dancing, eating and having fun.

Soon the bear came to the river. She had been tracking the fawns and saw that the tracks ended at the river bank

She called to the cranes saying, "I can see where you helped the fawns across the river. Now you must help me." She claimed to be the deer's friend.

The biggest crane agreed to help the bear, even though he knew the bear was not telling the truth.

Crane stretched his long legs across the river.

Fearful she would fall into the raging river, the bear whined and cried as she went along. She dug her sharp claws into crane's leg, which hurt the crane.

When the bear was halfway across the river and over the deepest and swiftest part of the river, the crane twisted his ankles and bear fell with a huge splash into the river and drowned.

In this way, the crane protected his little deer friends.

## THE STORY OF THE ONG

By Joann Martinez

A long time ago, there was a monstrous bird called the Ong. This gigantic man-eating bird lived in a big nest in the middle of Lake Tahoe. This bird was so powerful, that the wind from his flapping wings caused the trees to bend when he flew near the shore.

The Washoe people greatly feared the Ong. But even after being warned about the Ong, one Washoe Indian ventured out into an open area and was swooped up by the huge monster bird.

The Ong took the Washoe to his huge nest. Luckily, the Ong was not very hungry and did not eat the Washoe right away.

The Washoe pretended to be dead; but, he was really watching the Ong very carefully. As the Washoe watched the Ong, he noticed that the Ong closed his eyes to chew.

This curious habit gave the Washoe an idea. Each time the monster took a bite and closed his eyes, the Washoe threw several arrowheads into the Ong's mouth. By nightfall, all of these arrowheads made the Ong very sick

As the Ong moaned and groaned with pain, a terrible storm raged. But by morning, the Ong was dead. Seeing the Ong dead, the Washoe pulled a feather from the Ong's tail. Using the tail feather for a boat, the Washoe reached the shore and returned to his home.



## THE STORY OF EAGLE ROCK

By Joann Martinez

On an old trail, high up in the Sierra Mountains, there was a high rocky wall known as Eagle Rock. Three eagles nested on the other side of this wall. Young Washoe boys would earn great respect, if they could get an eagle feather from this nest.

One day, a young Washoe boy climbed up the rocky wall and lowered himself to the nest with a buckskin rope. There were several young eagles in the nest, but the mother was gone.

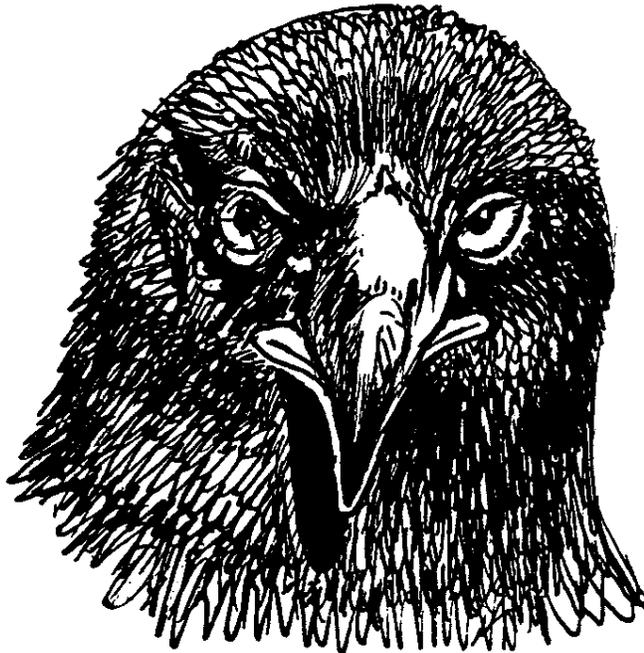
The Washoe boy collected his eagle feathers, but in his excitement did not notice that the wind had blown the rope out of reach.

What was the young Washoe boy to do?

He could not possibly climb out of the nest without the rope. He could not jump because that would surely mean death since he was up so high; and when the mother eagle returns, she will be upset because her babies were disturbed.

The young Washoe boy thought for awhile. Then he had an idea.

He noticed that the young eagles had fairly strong wings. He decided that he would have the young eagles help him. He tied the young eagles to his arms and jumped. The young eagles flapped their wings and slowly the boy fell to the trees below. He made it to the bottom of Eagle Rock without being hurt.



## WASHOE LEGEND ACTIVITIES

Legends were a method of passing the history of the Washoe people from one generation to the next. These stories contained information about the people, the land, and the culture.

Read the legends about “The Deer and the Crane” and “The Story of Ong”. Discuss what the stories were about

### ACTIVITIES FOR THE LEGENDS

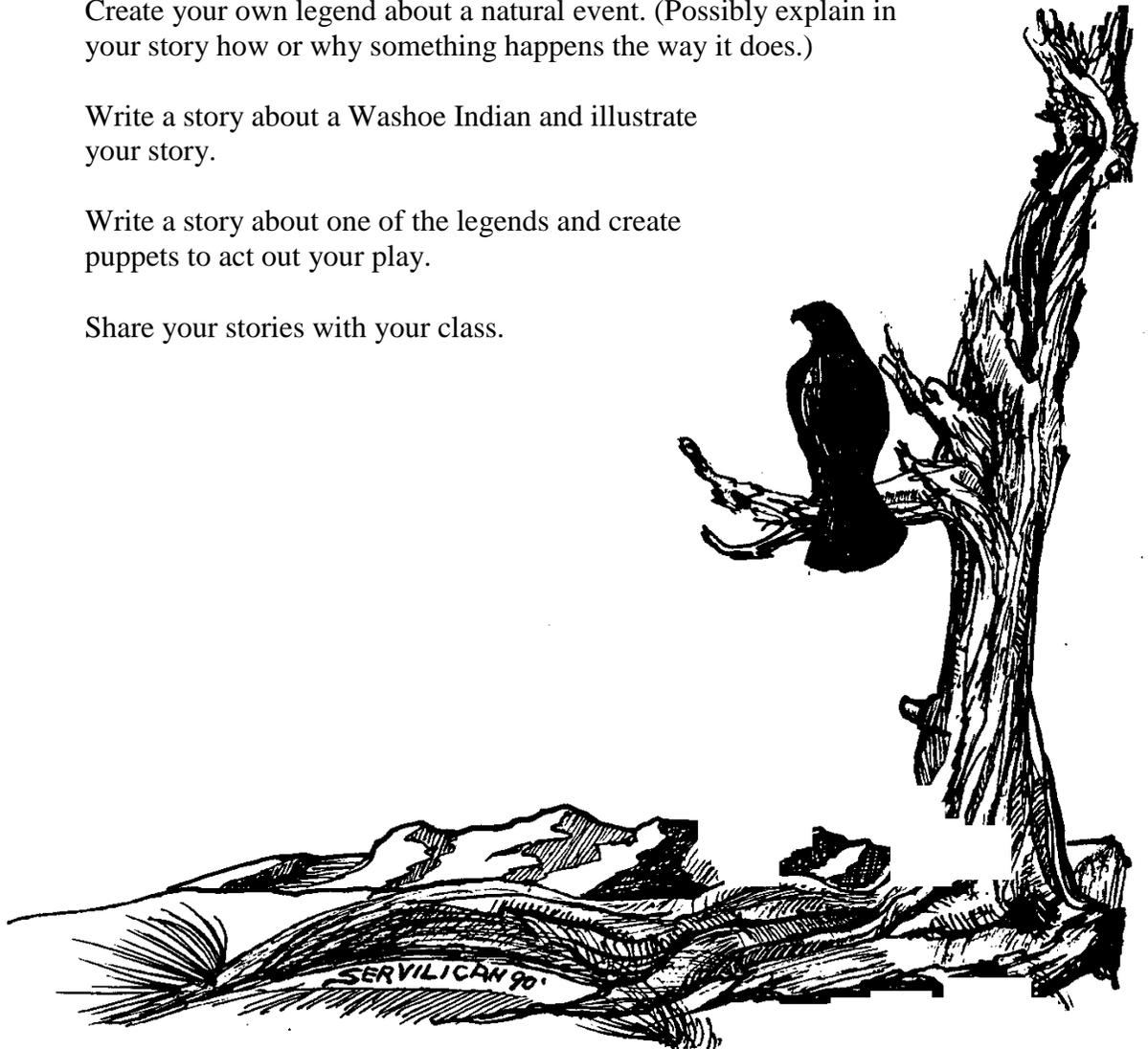
Retell or rewrite the legends in your own words and illustrate your stories.

Create your own legend about a natural event. (Possibly explain in your story how or why something happens the way it does.)

Write a story about a Washoe Indian and illustrate your story.

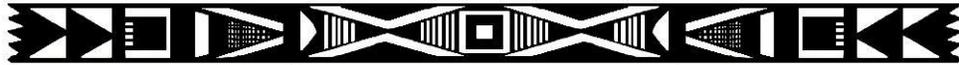
Write a story about one of the legends and create puppets to act out your play.

Share your stories with your class.

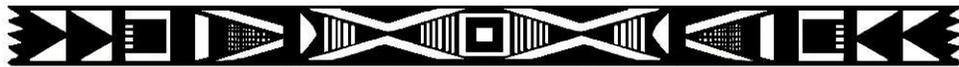


## So-wah-vitch the “ROCK MAN”

Shoshone parents would tell their children that it was time to come in when the sun started to set (dusk). Like many children, they were too busy playing to come in. One of the games, they would play was a game like marbles, played with rocks. In order to get their children to come in, parents would tell them the story of So-wah-vitch the Rock Man. Telling stories was one way that the parents got their children to do things. Here are two stories about him.



Long ago, So-wah-vitch would come and get the children who would not come in when it got dark. He could hear the children still playing outside and would come down from the mountains. Out in the desert near the foothills of the mountains, the children would see the dust kicking up (“Dust Devils”) as the So-wah-vitch would come closer to them. As it got darker, the children would hear the So-wah-vitch calling out saying, “so-wah-way-ho-ho, so-wah-way-ho-ho” (a small dove). Then they would run inside, scared that the So-wah-vitch was going to get them.

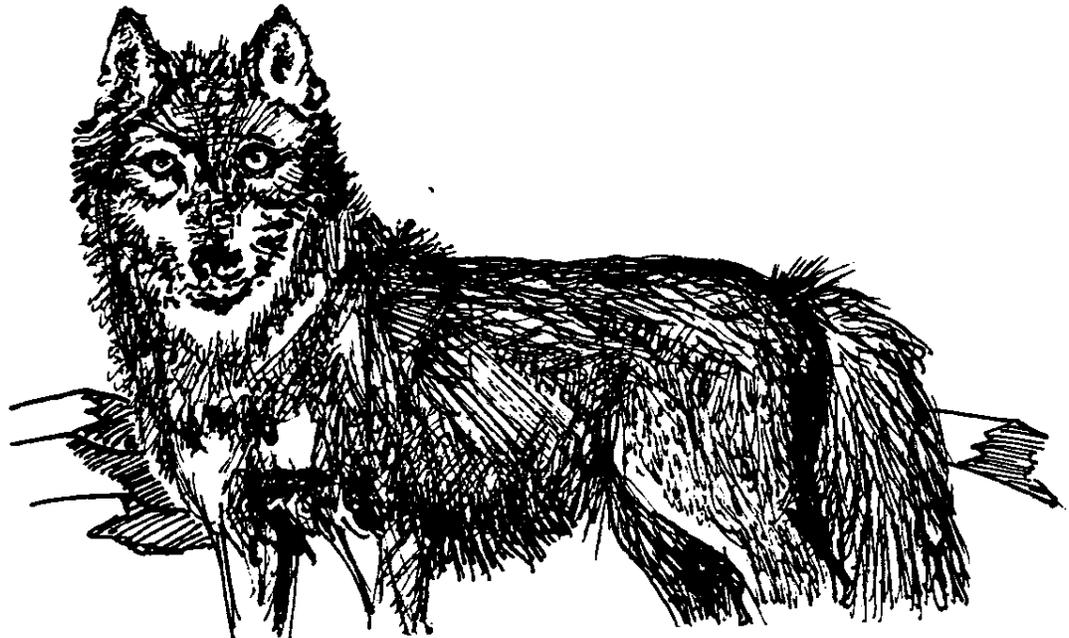


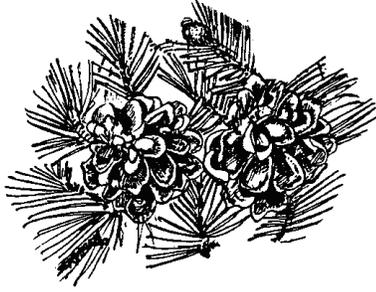
Long ago, So-wah-vitch would get angry because he was hungry and had no food. He would come down from the mountains and knock over the people’s houses so he could get someone to eat (Large winds). Well, the people got tired of him knocking over their houses, so they got together and decided to fix him. One day, they put prickly-pear cactus plants all over their houses and on the ground near the houses. They knew that So-wah-vitch had very tender feet and hands and this would keep him from knocking over their houses. So that night, when So-wah-vitch came down from the mountains and started to knock over their houses, he got prickly-pear cactus stickers all over his hands. Then he stepped on the stickers. He fell over as he was trying to get the stickers out of his hands and fell into more stickers. As he headed for home, he was covered with prickly-pear cactus and this is why, today, prickly-pear cactus grows in the rocky places in the mountains. And why So-wah-vitch doesn’t knock over our houses, anymore.

## ORIGIN OF THE GREAT BASIN PEOPLE

Long ago in the beginning, there was a great body of water around the land of the coyote. One day as he was on one of his journeys, he saw some distant lands across the water. Since he could not swim across the water, he tricked the waterbug into carrying him on his back. Waterbug was afraid of the Coyote but the Coyote knew if he did not behave, the waterbug would dump him in the middle of the water. Coyote made it safely across the water and began his journey. Along the way he met some people and stayed with them. While he was there he acquired a bride, the daughter of one of the leaders. The leader did not trust Coyote and knew he was always up to mischief. The leader wanted him to leave, but knew Coyote would take his daughter with him. So he told Coyote that if he would leave he would give him a great gift to take with him in exchange for his daughter. Coyote, enticed by the thought that he would be given this gift, decided he could always find another bride and agreed to the trade. When he left the leader gave him a woven willow basket with a lid and told him that he was not to open the lid until he returned to his homeland.

Coyote was a very curious person and had little patience. As he was traveling, he could hear sounds and movements within the basket. The sounds sounded like singing and drums beating. Coyote thought it would not hurt to take a small peek once he returned to the other side of the body of water. So once he touched the land, which was far from his homeland, Coyote opened the basket. Immediately, the little people who were inside the basket jumped out and began running in all directions. Stunned, he watched them run away. He quickly shut the lid on the basket, fearing that he would lose all of them. When he returned home, he opened the basket again, finding only three little people left in the basket. These three people stayed in this area and became the Great Basin People. The others who got away from Coyote were all the other Native American tribes that populated the North and South American continents.





## ORIGIN OF THE PINENUTS

Long ago, Coyote was always on a journey looking for food. He could not find enough to keep him full. On this particular journey he was traveling late in the year. It started to snow and Coyote could not find any food. The snow kept falling and turned into a blizzard. Coyote was lost and could not find his way home. He kept walking but soon he became tired. He kept thinking that maybe if he just rested for awhile, he would not be so tired and could think better about which way to go. He laid down to rest, which is very dangerous, because he could fall into a deep sleep and freeze to death. That is exactly what was going to happen to him, as he started to fall asleep.

While he slept, he dreamt he was in a nice, warm house, lying on soft furs and sleeping by a fire. It was so warm, he did not want to wake up but he heard a noise and he opened his eyes. He was inside a nice, warm house and there, near the corner, was an old woman fixing food. She brought it over and gave it to Coyote. Coyote tasted it and it was very delicious. It was a thick, warm soup. When he finished, he asked for more and the Old Woman gave it to him. After eating, he laid down to rest some more.

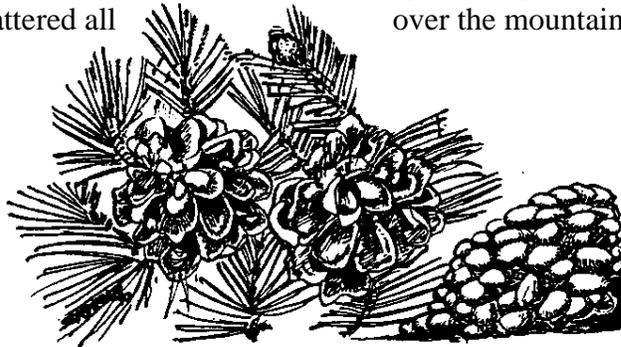
Day after day, he would wake up and the Old Woman would be there with some soup. He thought this was nice. He did not have to go out and hunt his own food to eat. He was getting well and stronger each day, but being a sly and curious person, he was not going to let the Old Woman know he was better. He pretended, each day, that he was still very weak. He wanted to find out where this Old Woman got her food. One morning as he lay in bed and was pretending to be asleep, he saw the Old Woman leave. He got out of bed and followed her. He watched her go up into the hills and stop near a cave. He crept close to the cave and hid behind some rocks. He saw her go in to a corner where many piles of pine cones lay on the ground. Looking around, he saw trees with many pine cones on them. He watched as the Old Woman worked all day. To get the pinenuts out of the cones, she struck them with a stick. She built a fire and with the embers cooked the pinenuts on a winnowing tray by moving the charcoal embers around with the pinenuts. The Old Woman put them on a grinding rock and crushed them softly, so the shells would crack off. She used a winnowing tray, to clean out the shells, by gently tossing the mixture in the breeze so the shells would blow away. She put more embers on the nutmeat and cooked them again. Then, she put the nutmeats back on the grinding rock and ground them into a powdered meal. She added water to the meal and made soup.

Coyote knew that it would soon be time for her to come back to the house, so he quickly ran back to bed. As he lay waiting for his food, he thought how easy it would be to have the pinenut trees growing near his house. But he knew if he moved the trees, they may die and it took a long time for trees to grow. He thought, he could take some from the old woman's trees but that would mean he would have to spend all that time gathering them from the trees. It would be easier if he took the Old Woman's pinenuts and he would have enough food until next year. If he ran out, he could just come back and get more.

So when the Old Woman returned, Coyote told her that he was feeling much better and that it was time for him to leave. The Old Woman was pleased since she knew Coyote was always up to no good.

So the next morning after eating, Coyote left the Old Woman's house and hid behind the rocks. He watched and waited for the Old Woman to go to the cave to work. Coyote ran back to the house and found a large sack to put the pinenut cones in. Going to the cave, he waited all day as the Old Woman worked. When he saw the Old Woman leave, he went into the cave and started to fill up his sack. He filled the sack up to the top. He wanted to make sure he had enough to last until next year. The sack was very heavy and he had to throw it over his shoulder to carry it. It was so heavy, that it dragged on the ground, but Coyote did not care. He was so happy with himself that he did not care that it dragged or that it was so heavy or to even notice that there was a small hole in the bottom of the sack.

You see, the Old Woman knew Coyote was always up to no good, so she cut the hole in the sack knowing that Coyote would try to trick her. When she left the cave, she hid in the trees to watch and see if Coyote was going to steal her food. Sure enough, here came Coyote out of the cave with the heavily-laden sack. She watched as Coyote went on his way with the sack dragging on the ground. She followed a little way, pleased with herself as the small hole began to get larger and larger. Soon the pinenut cones started to fall out of the hole. But Coyote did not notice. He was too concerned with thinking of how he outsmarted the Old Woman. He had gone a long way and was almost home when he began to notice that the sack was lighter, but he thought that he was just getting used to carrying the heavy load. So when Coyote got home, he put his sack down and there were just a few pinenut cones in his sack. He had lost all his pinenut cones along the way and he could never find his way back to the Old Woman's house. To this day, that is why Coyote is still traveling, looking for food, and why we have pinenut trees scattered all over the mountains of Nevada.





### THE FIRST ENCOUNTER

As stories are handed down from one generation to the next, the Western Shoshone learned about their culture and past history. Here is a personal account of one family's first encounter with Europeans. This story has been handed down through five generations of their family. This story takes place near Battle Mountain, Nevada. At one time, the mountains were entirely covered with pinion-pine trees but a huge fire had wiped out the area and the trees never grew back.

At dusk, the family continued their harvesting of pine nuts, in the mountains west of the Battle Mountain area. The father was distracted as he worked, because earlier that morning, he saw a large cloud of dust down on the flats along the Humboldt. He watched it come closer and closer. Fearing that it may be a large war party, he was concerned for the safety of his family.

Finally, he told his family that it was getting too dangerous to stay and work any longer. He needed to go see who was coming and if it was one of their enemies, then they needed to leave the area and head south, towards their main camp.

He took them and hid them in a small cave in the mountains and told them to stay there all day. If he didn't come back by nightfall, they were to leave the area and find their people in the south. He covered-up the opening with rocks, leaving a small breathing hole. He camouflaged the rocks by putting large bushes in front of them and erased any remaining traces. They listened as he ran down the mountainside.

The family waited all day, making no sounds. They could not hear or see anything. It started getting dark. They stayed even though it got later and later. They did not want to leave their father there, without knowing what had happened to him. But come dawn, assuming he had been killed, the family decided that if they did not leave, they might end up like their father. Saddened and fearing for their lives, they quickly left the area moving south.

As they were journeying south, they heard someone coming. They immediately hid themselves, only to find that their father had caught up to them. He was hungry and thirsty, having ran all the way. After eating, he recounted the frightening scenes, he had seen down at the Humboldt River.

He had run all the way down to the river area. Circling around the group, he came up from the rear to follow them. At first, he could not understand what kind of animal could make tracks like these. It looked as if 2 snakes were moving in perfect rhythm together. The closer he got, he recognized men on horses. He knew what horses were, since he had seen those obtained by other tribes and bands. But what scared him was that these men were pale with hair all over their faces. At first, he thought they were sick but after watching them throughout the day, he knew they were healthy. Then he saw their wagons and knew that the house, that moved on the round wood, was what had made the tracks in the dirt. He knew they were hunters because they hunted the beaver along the river. He was astonished by the waste they made. They did not eat the meat or use the bones but just threw it all away except for the hides. He saw them kill other animals with a shiny stick that made a thunderous sound. He stayed into the evening, watching them set-up their camp, cook and entertain themselves. He said they cooked their food in a black rock over a fire and they made strange sounds when talking. He could not understand them. They also made strange sounds by rubbing two wooden objects. He thought they were singing. But it sounded more like laughing. It did not sound like any singing he had heard. He stayed there until the strangers went to sleep, then he quietly stole away. He knew his family was already gone, so he ran until he could catch up to them.

Scared and very confused by what they heard, the family continued south, moving as fast as they could. Not knowing that this encounter would only be the first contact they would have with the strangers that had come into their lives.

## WESTERN SHOSHONE STORY PYRAMID

### LESSON GOAL:

Students will understand how a story is developed by examining the main characters, story setting and plot.

### LESSON OBJECTIVE:

Students will identify the main character, story setting, sequence of events, and plot of a Western Shoshone story by using a story pyramid.

### MATERIALS:

Story Pyramid worksheet.

Western Shoshone Legends.

Chart or transparency of a Story Pyramid.

### INTRODUCTION:

1. Using a short story selection, ask the students to identify the main characters, setting, events and plot of the story. As the students give examples, fill in a story pyramid.
2. Explain to the students that they will be doing the same activity after they have read one of the Western Shoshone legends.
3. Read or tell the story of the So-wah-vitch.
4. Discuss the story and what happened when the story was told to children.
5. Explain that long ago the Western Shoshone did not have books or the written language to record the history of their people or to tell stories. So in order to keep their history alive, they told stories to the younger generations. This way, the people did not forget the history of their culture and ways of life.
6. Explain that these Western Shoshone stories were once handed down by the oral tradition but are now written down, so everyone may enjoy them.
7. Have the students pick one of the stories to read and do a story pyramid.

### FOLLOW-UP:

1. Compare and discuss story pyramids of the same story.
2. Have the students make-up a story of their own using the story pyramids.

### EVALUATION:

Completion of a story pyramid.

Participation in discussion.

### ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:

1. Have students tell stories about themselves.
2. Illustrate one of the stories.
3. Make a story picture sequence of one of the stories.
4. Bring in a native storyteller to tell stories.
5. Do Knots on a Counting Rope Activity. Explained in Cooperative Lesson Unit on Storytelling.
6. Do a role-playing activity with one of the stories.

**WESTERN SHOSHONE  
Story Pyramid**

