

29. *Grizzly and His Brothers-in-Law*

Grizzly Bear has three brothers-in-law; the two elder hate him, the youngest likes him

Grizzly's elder brothers-in-law plan to kill him

Grizzly's youngest brother-in-law warns him and saves him

All are transformed into the Great Bear constellation

Grizzly Bear lived with his wife and three brothers-in-law. The youngest of the brothers-in-law liked Grizzly, the others hated him. They thought it was mean the way he bit people and became angry so easily. So the two brothers-in-law said, "Let's kill him. What's he after anyway? Probably something to eat."

They tracked him. Then they saw him standing. They took up their places, first the oldest, then the second and the youngest, last. The eldest gave orders, "All get ready so if one shoots all will shoot together."

They went on, the two oldest close together ahead, but the youngest lagged behind at a distance because he liked Grizzly. When they came close the first two got ready to shoot at him. The youngest watched and just as the string was about to twang he said, "My brother-in-law! You are going to be shot."

Grizzly turned around and just as he was warned he made the noise of transformation.

They all went to the sky as stars and now we see them up there.

(The four stars which form the cup of the Great Dipper are Grizzly's feet. The northern one moved and made the track formed by it and the star immediately above it. The three stars of the handle are the brothers-in-law, the one nearest the cup is the one who liked Grizzly best.)

Transformation into stars may be found also in the mythology of the *Thompson*. In a footnote to the *Thompson* myth Teit makes the statement: All the Shuswap and *Thompson* tell stories of the transformation of hunters or men and a bear into the constellation the Great Bear (MAFLS 11:16).

The Coeur d'Alene Grizzly Bear-Brother-in-law introduction to the transformation has no parallel in the *Thompson* myth, which is rather the typical concluding episode of a Transformer cycle—the Transformers, having completed their work, are transformed into something permanent (usually in the Northwest into a rock; cp. tale 8):

Qwa'qtqwetl and his three brothers (three Black Bear hunters) finish their transforming tasks and, accompanied by their dog, hunt a bear in the sky (the eldest brother hangs back afraid); the entire group is transformed by the youngest brother into the Grizzly Bear constellation (MAM 12:224; ARBAE 31:615).

In *Chilcotin* mythology three brothers try to trick their grandmother; she transforms them into stars; their dogs and the moose they were tracking may be seen with them in the sky (MAM 4:31).

30. *Muskrat Trespasses*

Muskrat disobeys his grandmother by going in a forbidden direction

Otter clubs Muskrat

Muskrat's grandmother treats him

Muskrat kills Otter's sister, Mink

Otter comes for revenge

Muskrat feigns sickness and Otter leaves believing him to be bedridden

Muskrat's grandmother sings song of triumph

Otter pursues Muskrat and his grandmother

Muskrat and his grandmother escape

Muskrat and his grandmother lived together. One day the grandmother saw Muskrat was trespassing when he went for food. The next morning she said to him, "When you eat grass go this way (pointing). Don't go over the way you have been eating." Every morning she warned him this way. One day he thought, "I wonder why she always keeps at me this way. I wonder what is over the other way."

He went the forbidden way and found much grass. "The grass is so good here, I guess that is why she forbade me going this way." Soon he met an Otter. "I drive people out of here." "It isn't your land." "It isn't yours either." They argued and Otter clubbed Muskrat until his head was all flat. Then he threw him into a canoe.

When Muskrat's grandmother came back he was gone. She thought, "He must have been trespassing again." Then she heard him coming, *änä' änä' änä'*. She saw a canoe coming. He was lying down in it and paddling. He came in. His head was so swollen that his eyes and ears could hardly be seen. His cheeks were all puffed up. His grandmother said, "I told you not to go that way. It's your own fault you got beaten up so badly."

He lay down and she sprinkled his head. A few days later he was well and said to his grandmother, "Get my canoe ready. I am going to kill Otter." "No, you might get killed. Then I would be all alone."

She coaxed him in vain. He got into his canoe and paddled to Otter's house. There were four of them. He saw their sister who was Mink making a hole near the water to make herself a bathing place. When she had the hole made just big enough to sit in she put hot stones in the water. She had leaned her baby in its babyboard up against a tree. Muskrat sneaked up and shot Otter's sister just as she was going to get into her bath. She fell headfirst into the water and died. Then Muskrat rowed

home as fast as he could go. His grandmother was waiting for him. As soon as he came in sight she exclaimed, "Oh! Thanks be! He is alive."

"I killed Otter's sister," he told her. "There's no hope for us now," said the grandmother. Then Muskrat said, "Make a hole through the bushes like a tunnel beginning where you are sitting. Then go through there and you will see a lake." The old woman did so. Then she came back. "Tie up my head and keep sprinkling it for me," he ordered next.

The Otter brothers kept looking for their sister to return with her child. They heard the baby cry. Then said one, "Why doesn't she look after her child? Go tell her to take it up." One went to see what was the matter. He found her dead. He reported to his brothers, "She's dead, shot with an arrow." They went and looked. "Muskrat must have done that," they said. The youngest said, "I am going to kill him."

He came to Muskrat's house. The grandmother was watching. "Here they come. Let's get ready." When the Otter arrived the grandmother was sitting there quietly sprinkling Muskrat's head. He was lying near with his head all tied up. Otter came in with a stick. "You must be the one who killed our sister." "Why how could that be?" said the grandmother. "He is pathetic. He always lies there just like that." "Who could it have been then?" "Oh, sprinkle my head, grandmother," moaned Muskrat. Otter thought, "It must be true. He never gets up." He left. Then Muskrat said, "Keep watching him until just as he rounds the curve, then dance and sing."

The grandmother watched. Just as Otter got out of sight she began to sing and dance, "*Uhu · uhu · · ·*, Otters' only sister was killed by a little arrow. She fell headfirst into the water." Otter kept on thinking, "Who could have killed our sister?"

He rowed back again. He heard the song more clearly. He saw the grandmother run into the house. She ran into the hole she had made and covered it over. He could not find her. He looked around outside. Then he went in, lifted the cover and saw the hole. He reached down into it, but the muskrats had filled it with dirt as they went through. Otter followed as far as the timber but he had to give up as the hole became too small for him.

The end of the road.

In *Shuswap* and *Coast Salish* mythology are found examples of myths which are on the whole comparable, though they vary in specific details:

In the *Shuswap* myth Muskrat kills a girl who refuses to marry him; Muskrat sings a song revealing himself as the killer; the people pursue Muskrat who escapes through a hole in the ice (MAM 4:680).

In the *Coast Salish* story it is Wren who kills Otter. The motivation lies not in a trespassing incident but in Otter's theft of Wren's fish. When the people discover Wren to be the killer, he is invited to a gathering. In the *Upper Chehalis* version Wren escapes, Bluejay catching Snail by mistake (MAFLS 27:31). In the *Hump-tulip* account Wren is kicked into the fire; his grandmother blows on his cinders and he becomes a wren; she turns into a spider (MAFLS 27:326).

### 31. Toad Saves Children

Lazy daughter of chief, her baby brother and all the village children are deserted  
The children stay in the house of a child-eater  
Toad keeps girl from rising  
Toad takes girl's place in monster's oven  
Girl runs away

There was a chief of a village who had a grown daughter and a son who was merely a baby. Every morning the girl carried the little boy away from the settlement and took all the other little children with her. All day she played with them and brought them back at night. For some time she did this. One morning when the chief saw her persist in leaving home with the little ones instead of learning to work like the women, he felt sad. So he decided to punish her.

After she had gone he called his people together for a council and said, "We will leave the children." They pulled out all their tipi poles and all the people went into the holes.<sup>1</sup> At night the children came back. Everything was gone. There were no people. No fire. They cried. The girl told them all to come into one house to sleep. The next day she said, "We'll go look for our parents." All day they travelled. At night they saw a camp. The girl said, "Let's camp there."

Someone came out and saw them. They were glad. "We want to camp here," said the girl. "All right!"

The children went in. The owner of the house was glad to see them. They sat around but were given nothing to eat. The owner of the house had some children already lying there asleep. All went to sleep except the chief's daughter. "Go to sleep," he said. "No," she answered. "Put down your little brother." "No, he might cry."

The owner lay down. After dark the chief's daughter heard someone get up. *Xuts xuts xuts*, she heard a bone breaking. She kicked the fire to make it lighter and heard him go out. This kept up all night. She thought, "He devours a lot of people."

In the morning he said, "Come, let's bake them." He made a pit in the ground for baking. He said to the girl, "Go get the leaves for the

<sup>1</sup> They were some kind of animal.