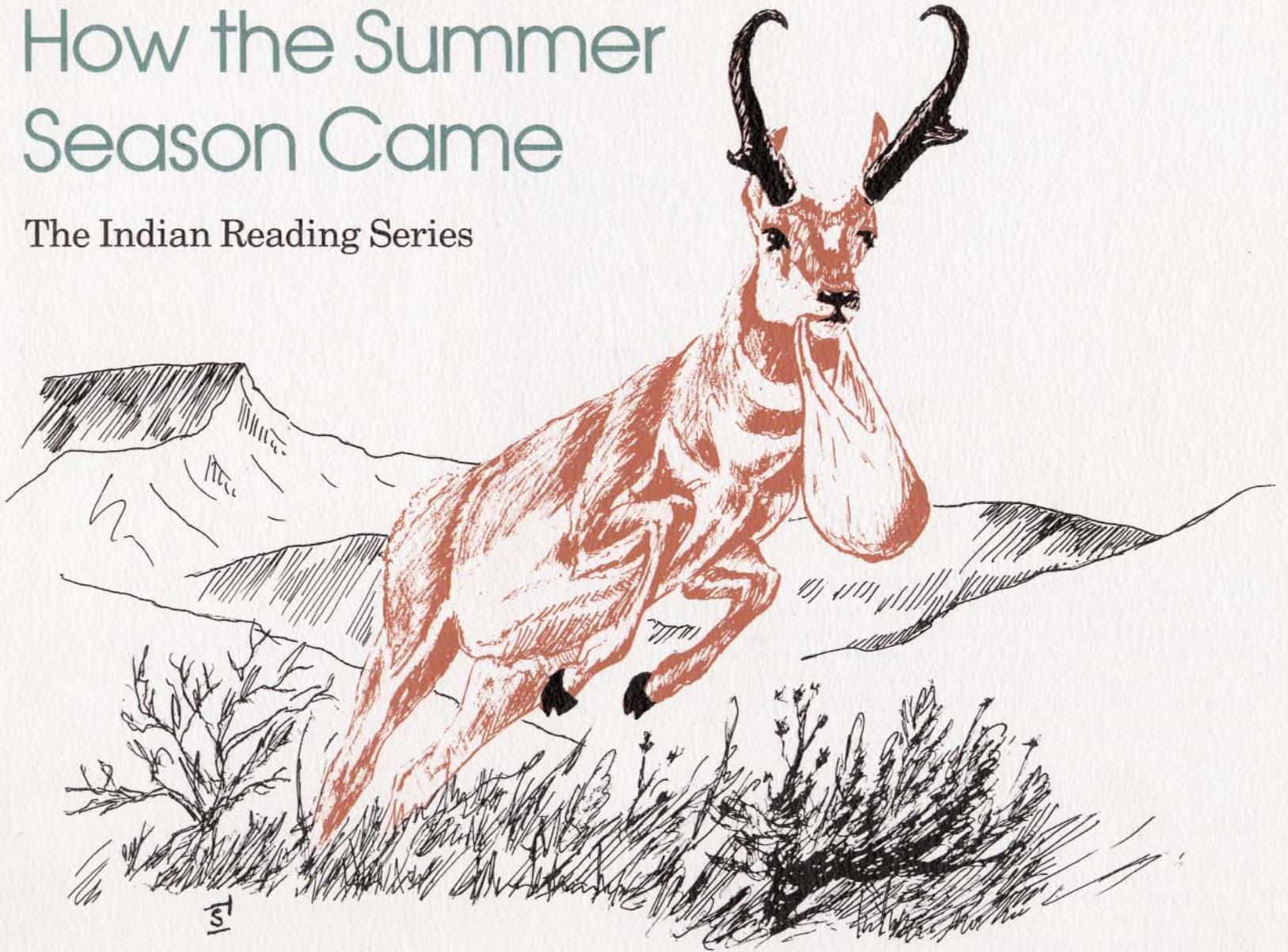


How the Summer Season Came

The Indian Reading Series



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THE INDIAN READING SERIES
Stories and Legends of the Northwest

How the Summer Season Came Series IV

By Members of the Assiniboine Elders Board
of the Fort Belknap Reservation

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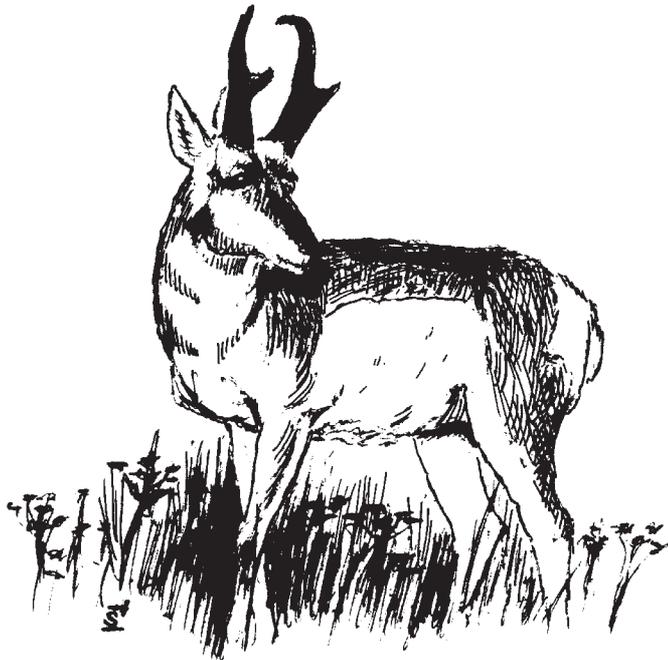
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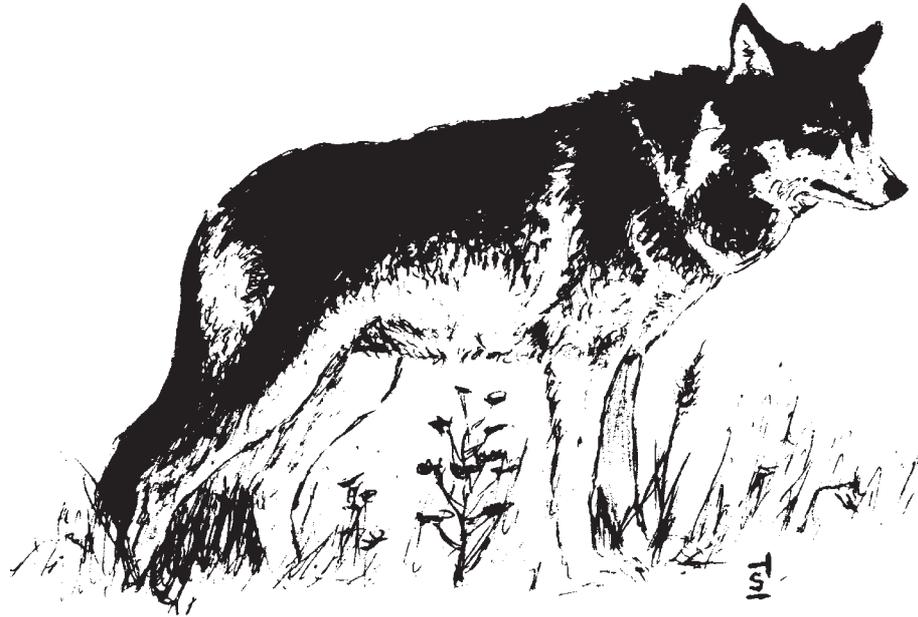
A long time ago, the Assiniboine people lived in a part of the country that was almost always covered by snow. There were no horses and only dogs were used to carry things. A small war party returned after being gone a long time, and went to the Chief's lodge. They told the Chief to call the Council together because they had an important message. The Chief fed the war party and sent his camp crier to call all Council members to his lodge.

The spokesman from the war party said, "We have been away from our people for many moons. We have set foot on land that belongs to others, a land without snow. This land is in the direction where the sun rests at midday. In the middle of a large encampment, there is a lodge painted yellow. Within the lodge, the summer is kept in a bag hung on a tripod. Four old men guard it day and night. One sits in back, directly under the tripod. Another lies across the entrance, and two others sit on each side by the fireplace."



The Chief and his headmen sat in the Council until one of them said, "Let us call in a representative from each of the fast running animals. We will ask them to help us bring this wonderful thing to our country." The camp crier went forth and called upon those medicine men who had fast running animals and invited them to the lodge.





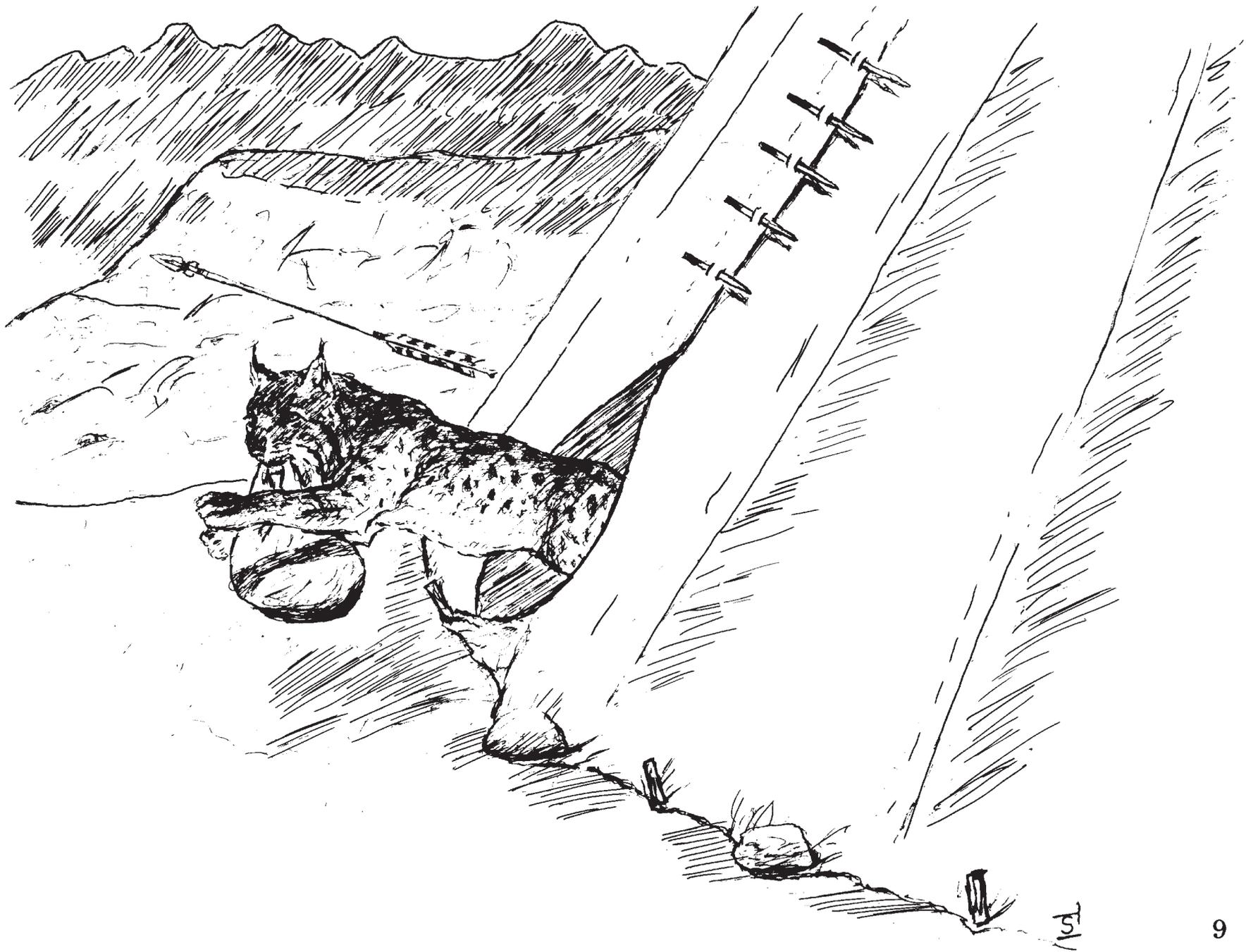
During the Council the Chief said, "My people and my animal brothers. Far in the direction of midday there is the summer. I call you here to make plans to bring it to our people. The ones who will go will never come back alive, but they will do a great service to our people and to their kind. Their children will enjoy the breath of summer forever." It was decided to send the lynx, the red fox, the antelope, the coyote, and the wolf.

The young warriors, who knew the way, were to guide the summer back to the encampment. After many days of marching, they arrived near the camp and took council. The spokesman said, "The lynx will go into the lodge and bring out the bag containing the summer, because no one can hear him walk. He will give it to the red fox, who will be waiting for him along the way. From there, the antelope will carry it to the coyote. The coyote will take it to the wolf, who is long winded, and he will bring it to us by the big river. We will be waiting on the opposite bank for him. From there, we will take it to our people. So, the lynx was left at the lodge.

The red fox was told to take his position. All the animals were stationed a certain distance apart, according to the ability of the runner. If an animal was short-winded, it was not required to make a long run. The bag was to be carried at the fastest speed. Toward morning, before the light showed and everyone in the camp was asleep, the lynx softly walked to the yellow lodge and looked in. The four old men guarding the summer, were all asleep. The bag, containing the summer, was hanging on the tripod in the back part of the lodge. The summer was in the form of spring water and moved about in a bag made from the stomach of a buffalo. Now and then the bag overflowed and water trickled along the ground, under the tripod. In its wake, green grass and many different kinds of plants and flowers grew.



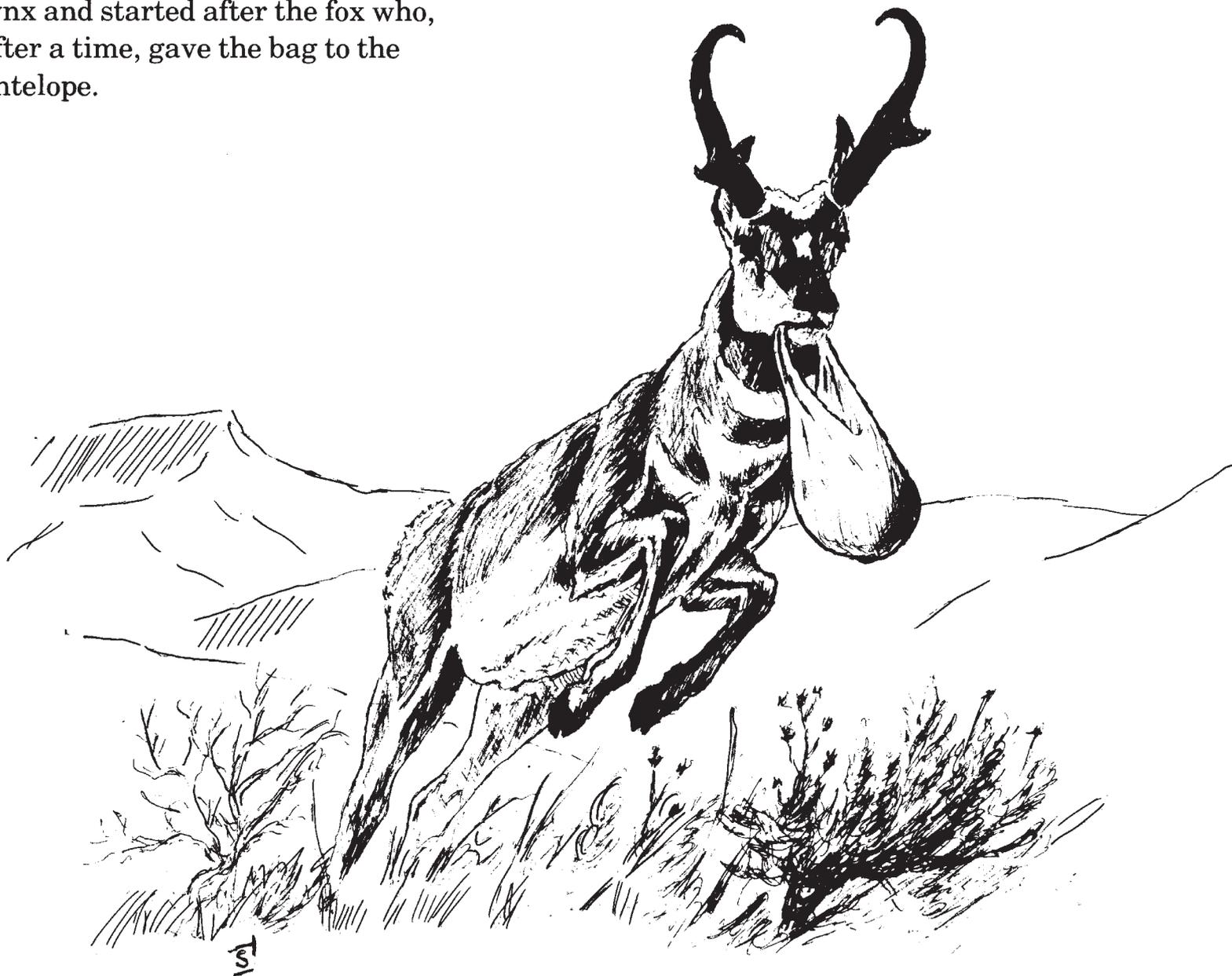
Cautiously, on quiet feet, the lynx entered, stepping over the entrance. With a quick jerk, he snapped the cord that held the bag. Seizing it tightly in his teeth, he plunged through the door and sped away. Almost at the same instant, the four old men awakened and gave the alarm. "The summer has been stolen!" The cry went from lodge to lodge. In a short time, a group of horsemen on fast horses were after the lynx.





They were gaining fast on the lynx when he gave the bag to the red fox who was waiting for him.

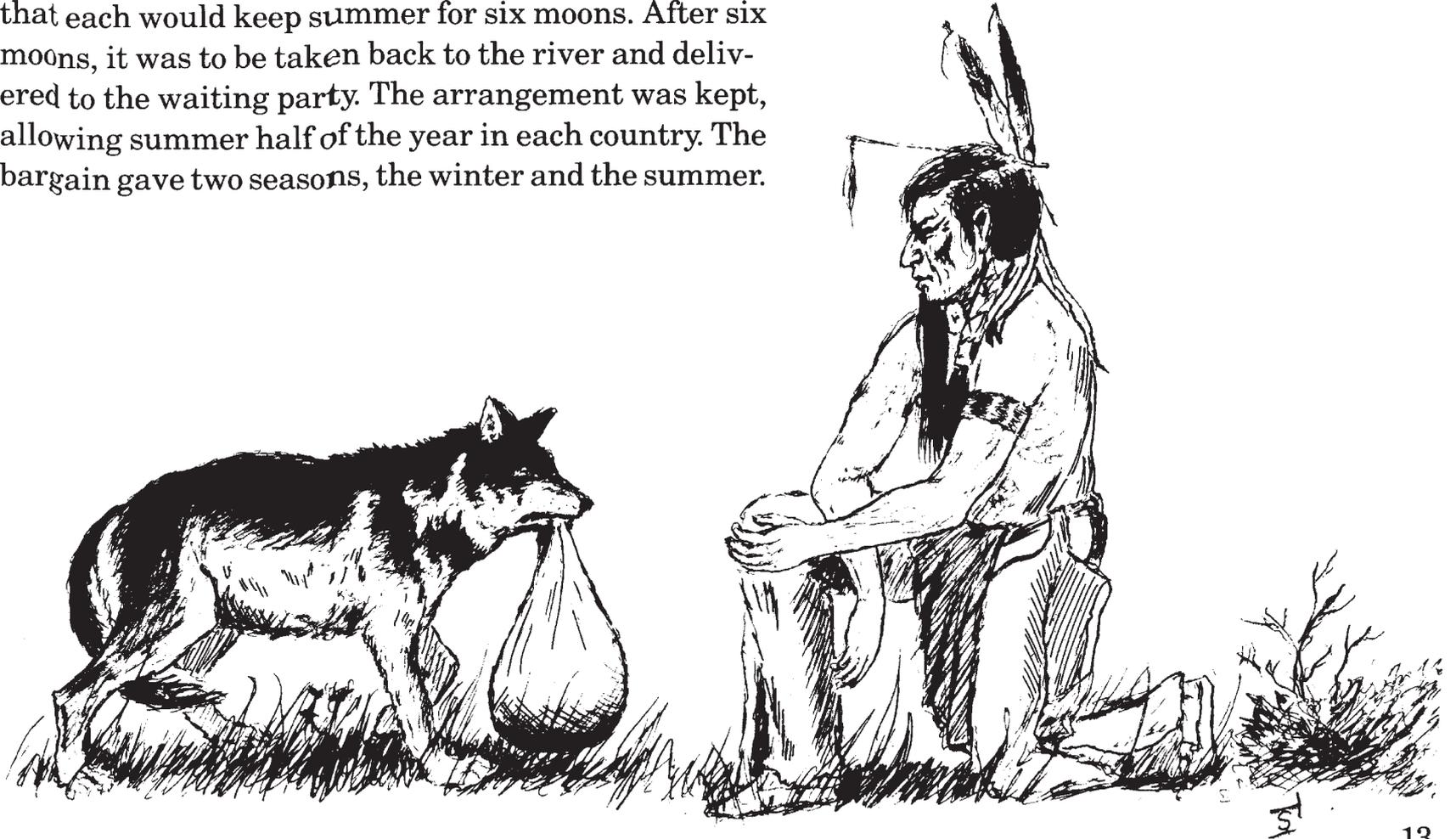
The horsemen then killed the lynx and started after the fox who, after a time, gave the bag to the antelope.





The antelope took the bag to the coyote who brought it to the wolf. Wolf, the long winded one, was to deliver it to the waiting party. Each time the bag was passed from a winded runner to the next, the animals were killed by the pursuers.

As the wolf crossed the river, the ice began to move and break up. By the time the horsemen reached the river, it was flowing ice. This halted the horsemen from the south. In sign language, they said to the Assiniboine, "Let us bargain with each other for the possession of summer." After a time, it was decided that each would keep summer for six moons. After six moons, it was to be taken back to the river and delivered to the waiting party. The arrangement was kept, allowing summer half of the year in each country. The bargain gave two seasons, the winter and the summer.



After many winter and summer years had passed, the headmen of the Assiniboine decided to have the cranes carry the summer back and forth. The cranes were always the first migratory fowl to go south. They migrated in easy stages, stopping for long periods at good feeding grounds. If that method was used for carrying summer, the winter would gradually make its appearance. This method would be better than when the summer was taken south by the men. The fall season, Pda Yedu, made its appearance gradually.



Long before the cranes returned north, there were signs among the plants and animals that the summer was on its way. That time was called the spring, Wedu. A late fall or spring was a sign the cranes had found good feeding grounds and stayed around them longer. An early winter or summer was a sign the cranes had winged their way south or north too soon. When the cranes flew over an encampment, they always circled several times and with their loud calls, seem to proclaim their arrival and departure. With the cranes help, the Assiniboine had four seasons: Winter — Waniydin, Summer — Mno Gedu, Fall — Pda Yedu, and spring — Wedu.



Booklets available in the Level IV sequence are listed below. Numbers refer to the Planned Sequence of use in the *Teacher's Manual*. Materials developed by these tribes and others in the Northwest are included in the Levels I, II and III sequences.

1. *Warm Springs Animal Stories*
The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs
Reservation of Oregon
2. *Snail Women at Sq³a'le*
The Suquamish Tribe of the Port Madison
Reservation
3. *Blue Jay – Star Child/Basket Woman*
Muckleshoot Tribe
4. *Assiniboine Woman Making Grease*
Assiniboine Tribe of the Fort Peck Reservation
5. *Coyote*
The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs
Reservation of Oregon
6. *How the Summer Season Came*
Assiniboine Tribe of the Fort Belknap
Reservation
7. *Little Weasel's Dream*
Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead
Reservation
8. *Fort Hall Stories*
Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall
Reservation
9. *The Bear Teepee*
Northern Cheyenne Tribe
10. *Sioux Stories and Legends*
Sioux Tribe of the Fort Peck Reservation
11. *Kootenai Stories*
Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead
Reservation
12. *Chief Mountain's Medicine*
Gros Ventre Tribe from the Fort Belknap
Reservation
13. *Coyote the Trickster*
Burns Paiute Reservation
14. *Running Free*
Shoalwater Bay
15. *Salish Coyote Stories*
Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead
Reservation
16. *Coyote and the Cowboys*
Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall
Reservation
17. *Napi's Journey*
Blackfeet Tribe
18. *Warm Springs Stories*
The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs
Reservation of Oregon
19. *Teepee Making*
Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead
Reservation
20. *Baskets and Canoes*
Skokomish Tribe
21. *Warrior People*
Blackfeet Tribe



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