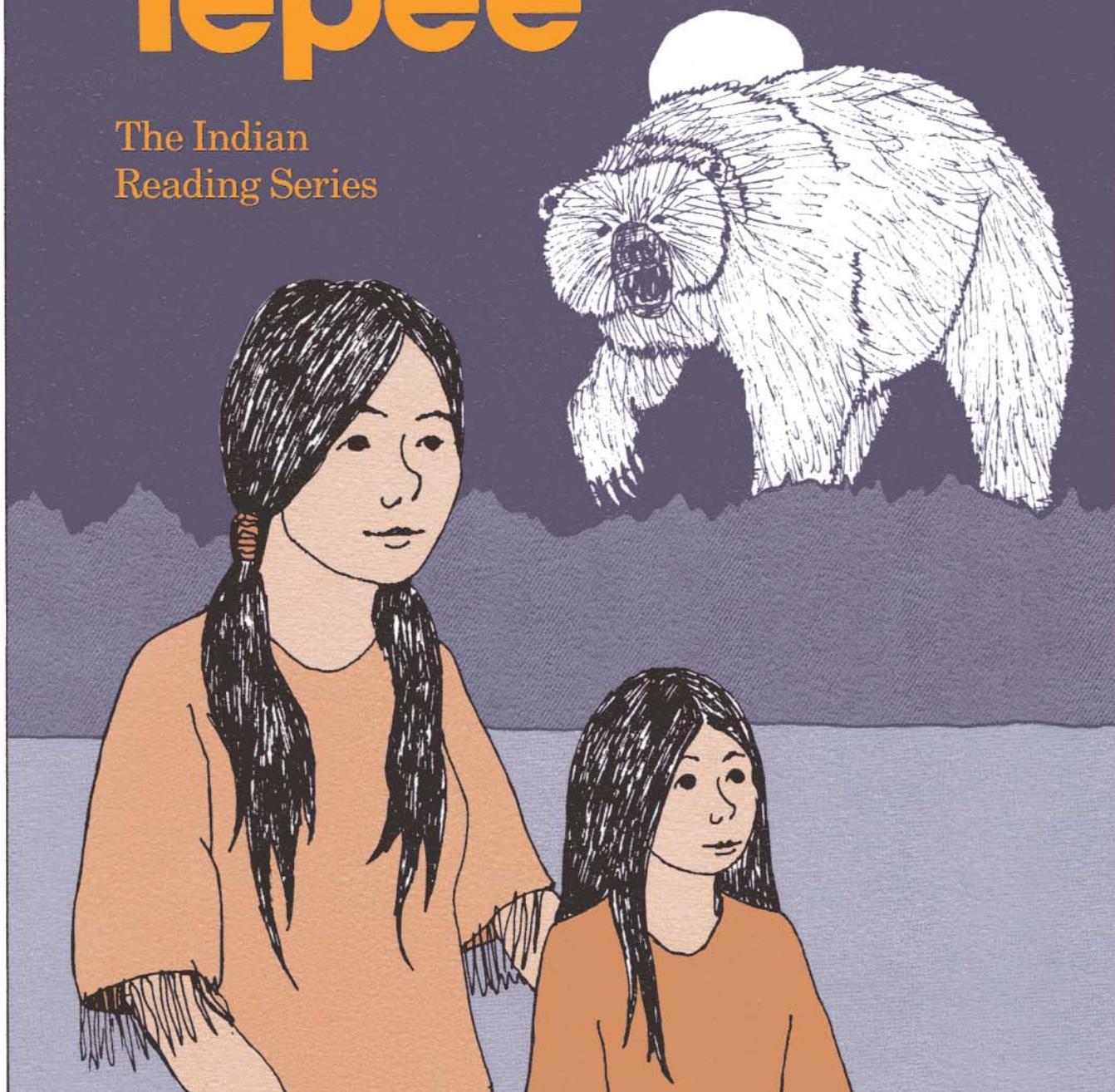


The Bear Tepee

The Indian
Reading Series



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THE INDIAN READING SERIES
Stories and Legends of the Northwest

The Bear Teepee

Series IV

By members of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe

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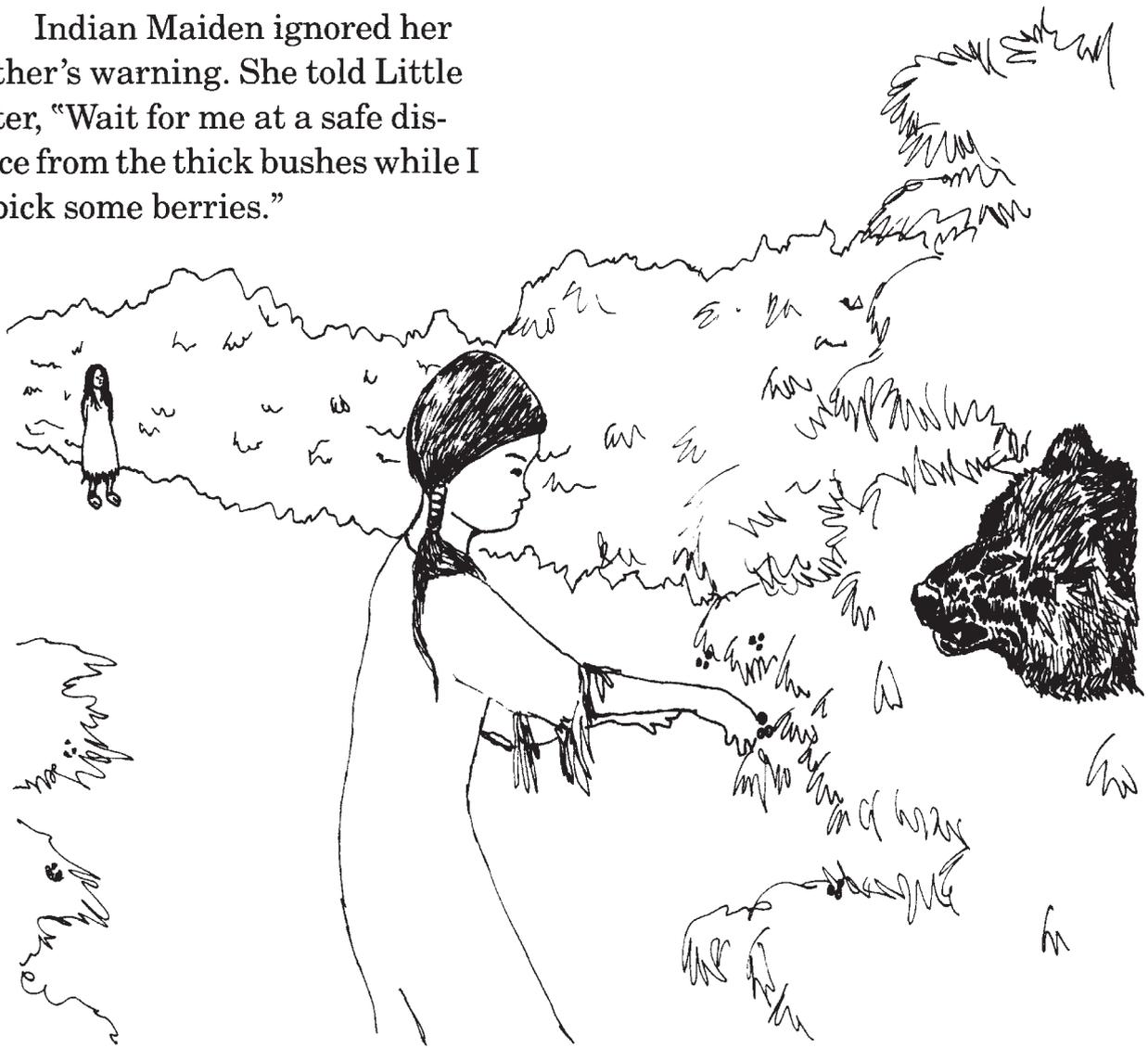
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A long, long time ago, the Northern Cheyenne were camped near the Bear Tepee. The Indian Maiden and her Little Sister suddenly decided to go off to play by themselves.

Indian Maiden whispered to Little Sister, "Let's go play near those thick bushes. Everyone is busy and we won't be missed. Besides, our seven brothers are on scouting and hunting trips far from the camp!" Indian Maiden suddenly had an urge to go into the thick bushes. She thought, "Those berries look so tempting. I'll go and pick some to eat." Then Indian Maiden remembered her mother's warning, "Don't go near the thick bushes alone because it's dangerous. That is one of Bear's favorite hideouts. Bears are known to capture humans and are dangerous! Bear has special powers and does unexpected things to human beings. Bear might try and lure you to his hideout, and turn you into a bear or other animal form."



Indian Maiden ignored her mother's warning. She told Little Sister, "Wait for me at a safe distance from the thick bushes while I go pick some berries."



Later, Indian Maiden sneaked over to the thick bushes with Little Sister several times and picked berries. Again, she would tell Little Sister, "Wait for me here." Little Sister watched Indian Maiden go into the thick bushes to pick berries. She thought, "Indian Maiden has been acting very strange recently, especially when she returns from the thick bushes."



So, Little Sister went into the thick bushes looking for her big sister. As she came into a small clearing and saw two bears, she screamed, "Oh, oh!"



Indian Maiden, now in the form of a bear, snapped, "I warned you not to follow me here!" With this, she leaped at Little Sister and mauled her on the shoulder.



Indian Maiden warned, "Do not tell mother about this incident or I will eat all of you. Now, I will turn myself back into a human being, and follow you home."

When the sisters reached home, mother saw the frightened look of Little Sister and asked, "Why do you look sick? Is there something wrong? Come here, let me look at you." Too afraid to say anything, Little Sister moved closer to her mother. Mother found the big wound on her shoulder and cried, "How did you get mauled? How did you get away?" Little Sister gave a quick glance at her sister and replied, "I was walking near some bushes when a bear reached out and grabbed me. I fell to the ground and got up to run. The bear must have gotten tangled in the bushes because it did not follow me."



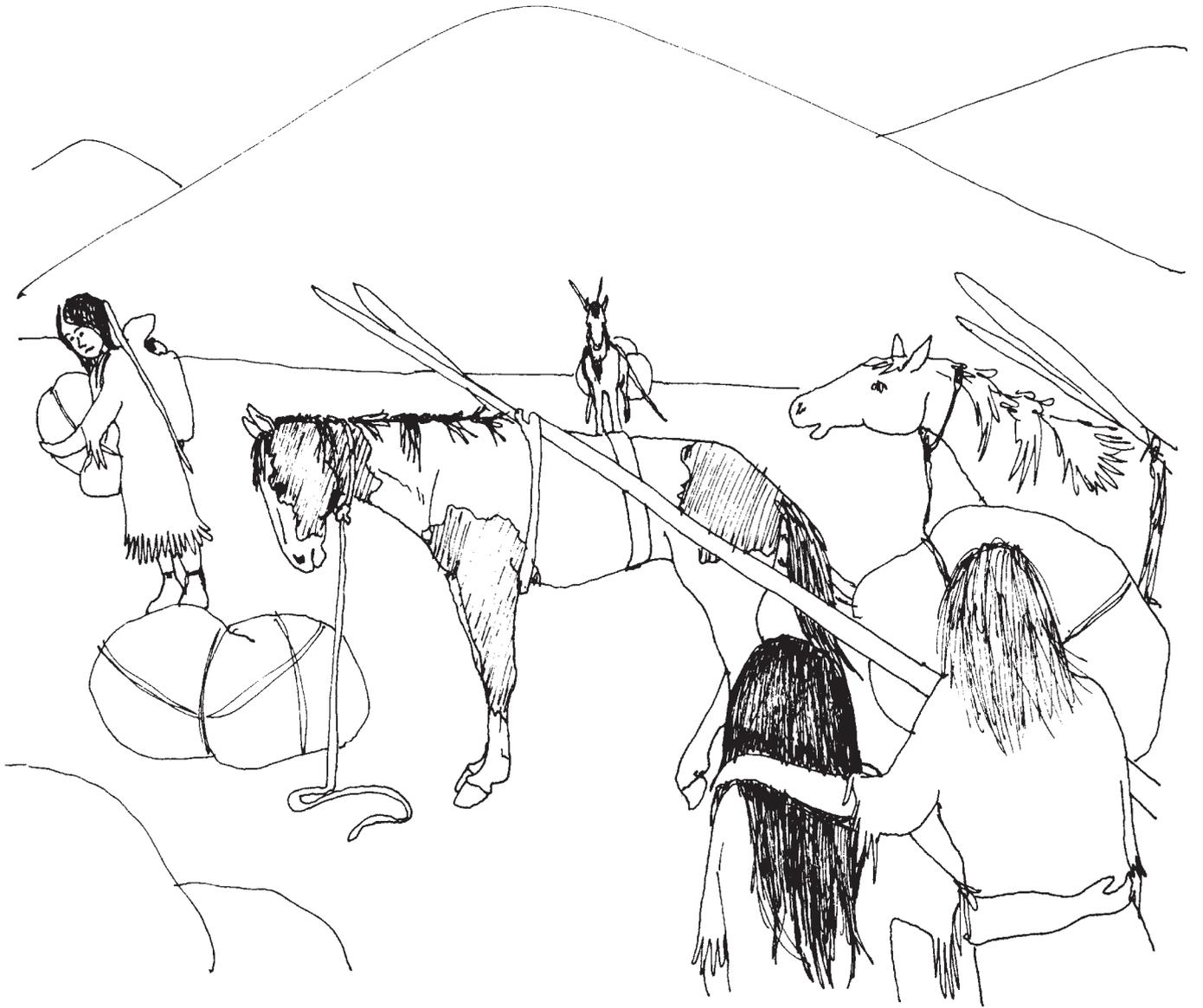
As Mother began to clean the wound, Indian Maiden left the tepee, smiling to herself. All at once, Little Sister began to weep, "That's not what happened. Indian Maiden was lured into the thick bushes by an evil bear. He turned Indian Maiden into a bear for his companion. When I followed her, she caught me and mauled me with her great hand. She said not to tell about this or she will eat us all."

Mother tried to comfort Little Sister saying, "Do not be afraid of the evil bear or your big sister's warning. I will tell your seven brothers about this incident. They will save us. Besides, your oldest brother has stronger medicine than the evil bear. It is good that you told me these things."



As mother and Little Sister waited for the brothers to return, the call from the camp crier came, "It is time to move your tepees. Hurry, or you will be left behind." The brothers did not return and the camp moved on, leaving mother and Little Sister alone.

They watched the long line of the camp move until it was out of sight. The evil bear and Indian Maiden came out of the thick bushes. Indian Maiden, now called Bear Woman, said "Come with us to our tepee where I can keep an eye on you."



For many days Mother and Little Sister were watched carefully by Bear Woman. They were not even allowed to leave the tepee. After awhile, Bear Woman grew lazy and said to Little Sister, "Today, you go after the water and bring me some good food to eat." Little Sister did this, so the next day Bear Woman laughed and said, "I am hungry for soup. Little Sister, go and pick me a basket full of wild turnips and catch me a fat rabbit. If you do not bring me these things for my next meal, I will eat you both." Little Sister left quickly because she knew it was almost time for Bear Woman's next meal. She ran here and there pulling turnips as fast as she could, crying, "Oh, how am I going to gather all these turnips and catch a rabbit too?"



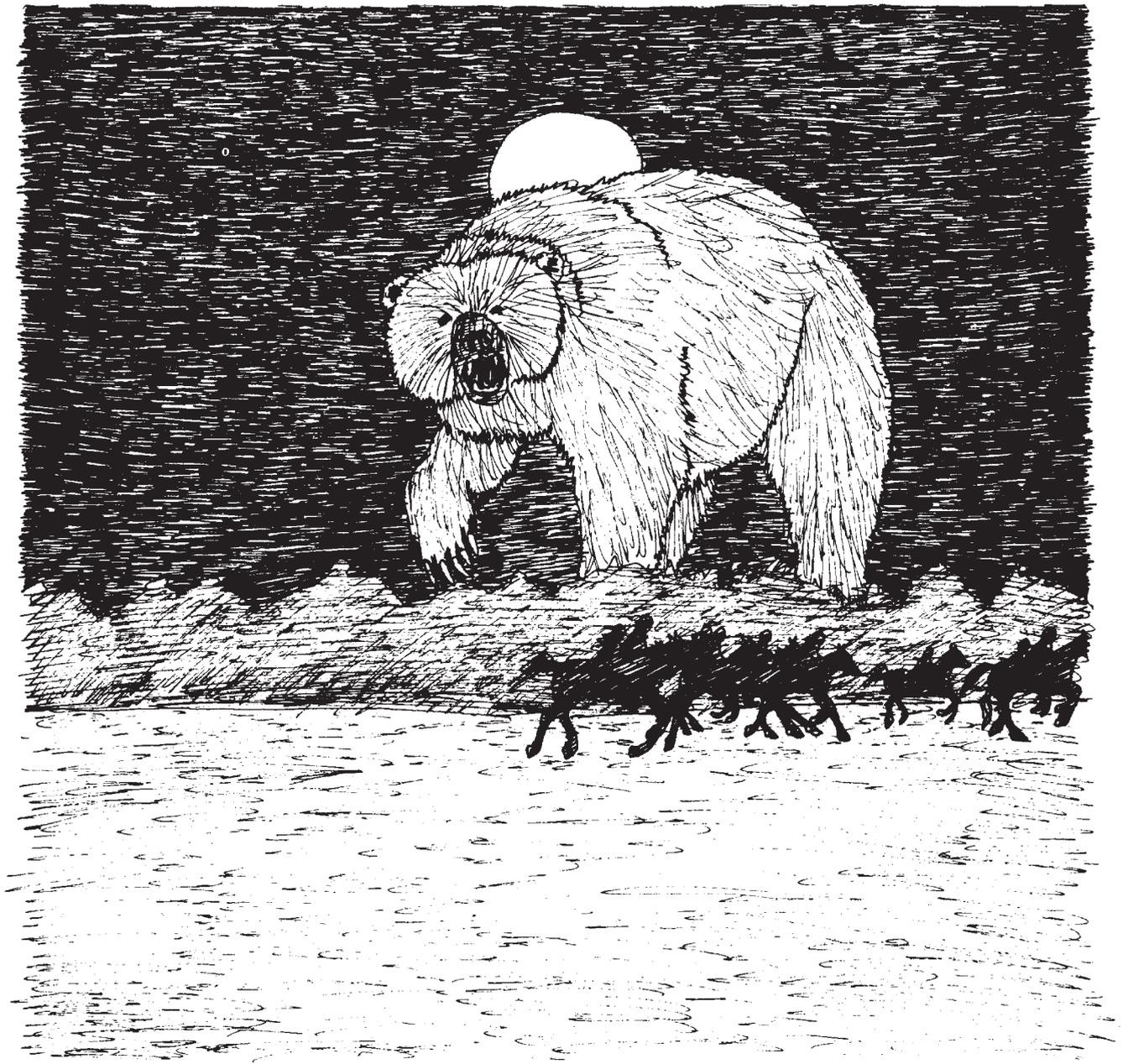
Little Sister was secretly being watched by her seven brothers. When they saw that Little Sister was alone, they stepped out of the woods to greet her. When Little Sister saw her seven brothers, she cried even more because she was happy. She told her brothers about Bear Woman and they helped her pick turnips and catch a rabbit.

The oldest brother has the gift of Bow and Arrow power. He instructed Little Sister, "As soon as Bear Woman is fast asleep tonight, pound sharp sticks around her on the ground. If Bear Woman awakens, she will step on the sharp sticks and be delayed."





Little Sister followed the instructions. She was able to get away with her mother to the place where her seven brothers were waiting for them.



As they looked back, Bear Woman had grown to be a giant bear, and was coming after them. The giant bear chased them and almost caught them, when the oldest brother used his powers.



Shooting his arrows one at a time, the family would disappear and then reappear at the place where the arrow landed. In this way, they reached their destination, which was a great tall rock. The oldest brother shot the last arrow towards the top of this great rock.

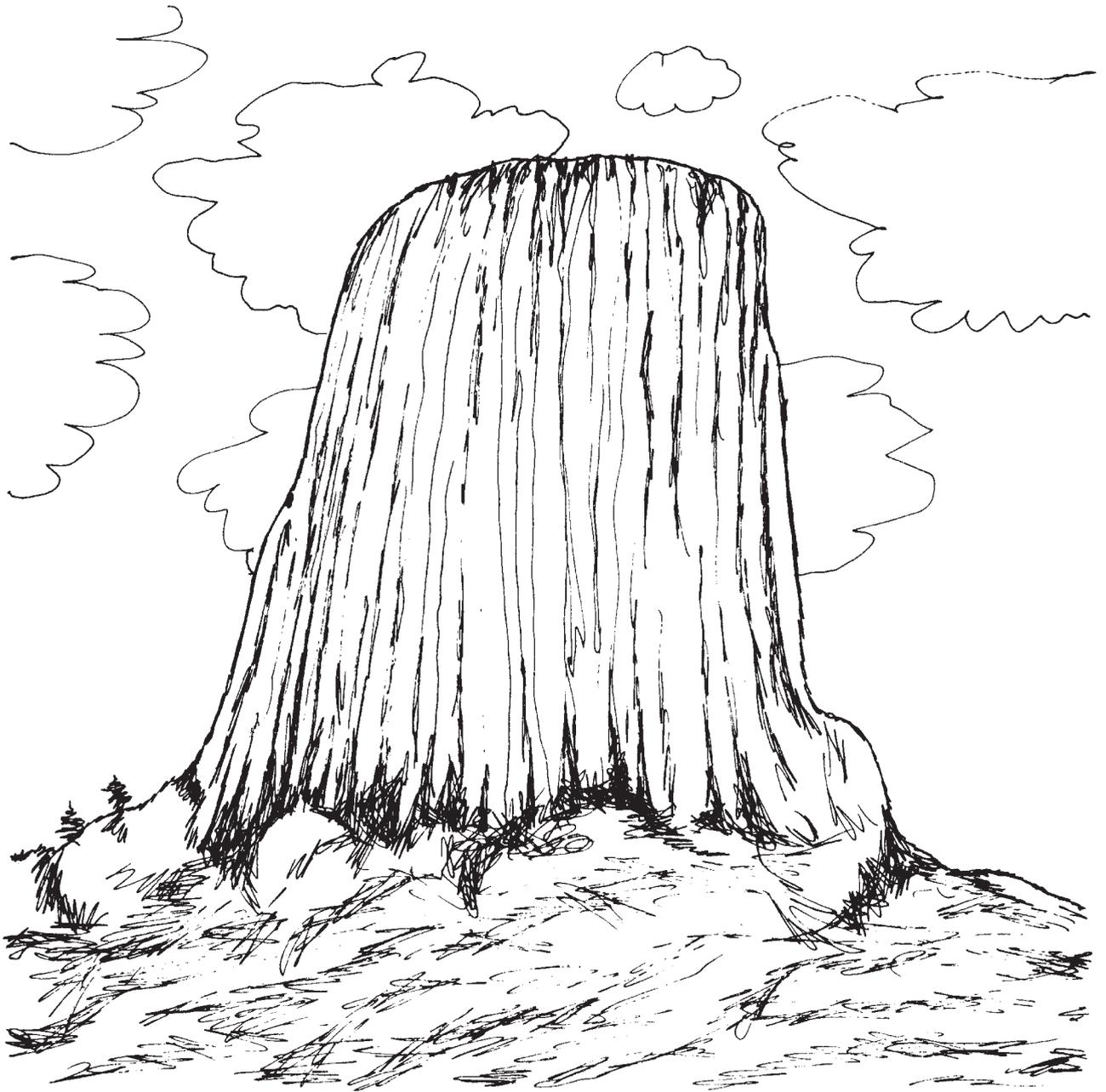


Reappearing on top of the great rock, the family knew they would be safe from Bear Woman.

From the top of the great rock, the family looked down and saw the giant Bear Woman trying to leap towards the top.

Several times she tried, but failed. Bear Woman gave up and said to them, "You have won. From this day, the medicine men shall call this tower the Bear Tepee."

The Bear Tepee is best known today as Devil's Tower, in Wyoming. Even today, the claw marks of Bear Woman can be seen all around the great tower.



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 Tepee*
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. *Tepee Making*
Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead
Reservation
20. *Baskets and Canoes*
Skokomish Tribe
21. *Warrior People*
Blackfeet Tribe



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