

WONGO
and The Wise Old Crow

Grace and Carl Moon



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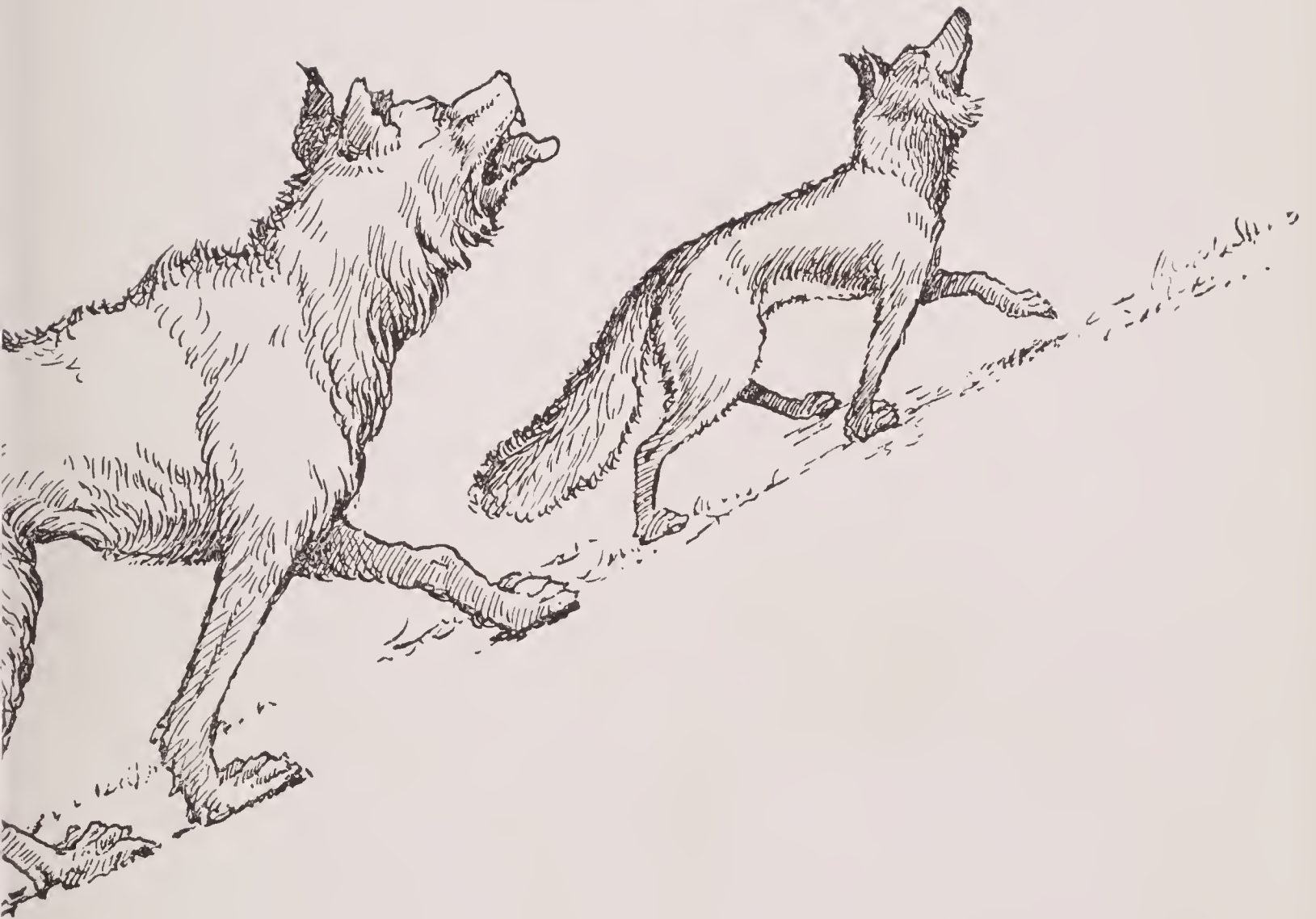
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Wongo and the Wise Old Crow



Wongo, the little brown bear, Cho-gay, the Indian boy-ruler, and Kaw, the wise old crow.



WONGO

and

The Wise Old Crow

by

GRACE ^{A_ND} CARL MOON



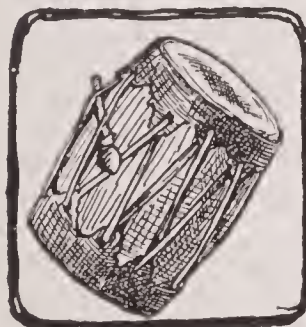
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Wongo and  the Wise Old Crow

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To our most flattering listeners

Francis and Mary Caryl

this book is lovingly dedicated

Grace and Carl Moon

A Daring Plot

CHAPTER 1

IN TIMBERTANGLE

*There's many a tale of adventure told,
Of heroes that do and dare,
But here is a tale of adventure bold,
Of a goat, a crow, and a bear.*

*There's a quarrel and fight,
And a desperate plot,
And a villain as bad as can be.
Oh, it is a tale worth talking about!
Just read it yourself, and see!*

A SUDDEN gust of cold wind swept along the mountain side and rattled the dry leaves and dead branches of some jack-oak bushes that stood at the entrance of a snug little cave. Its sole occupant, awakened by the noise, opened his eyes and looked blinkingly up at the pale dawn-light that shone on the familiar rocks of the roof above him. Once awake, he realized that he was thirsty and hungry, but he hated to get up, it would be so nice to have just a little more sleep.

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While the cave-dweller was deciding between the call of his stomach and his desire to sleep, a big bluejay, with feathers ruffled by the wind, lit on a rock at the cave entrance and, after peering within, called out:

“Sleepy-head! Sleepy-head!” Then, as there was no response from the cave, he called again: “Get up, Wongo. ‘The early bird catches the worm,’ and the early bear may catch the fat sheep.”

“That’s all right about the early bird and the worm,” growled the little bear angrily, “but a bird doesn’t know much and it served the silly worm right for getting up too early. He ought to get caught.”

Then Wongo got to his feet and, as the noisy bluejay flew away, he crawled sleepily out of the cave and ambled down a secret trail that led to the canyon below.

Although the sun was not quite up on this eventful day, a pale dawn-light flooded the mountain side, causing the trees and bushes to look dim and ghostly.

Wongo was in an ill temper. Hunger, thirst, and the desire to sleep, to say nothing of the wind that was bent on blowing his fur the wrong way, made him growl under his breath. And now he must go to the little stream that ran through the dark

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canyon far below and get a drink, and if he met any kind of an animal on the way that was good to eat — well, that animal had better look out for himself!

Suddenly he stopped and sniffed the cool breeze that was now sweeping up from the gorge below.

“Meat!” he ejaculated. “Fresh meat of the young calf.” Then quickening his pace he soon stood on the rim of the canyon, with his nose in the air, sniffing to the right and to the left. It took but a moment to decide that the good smell came from up the canyon, but *up* the canyon was forbidden ground. That tantalizing odor meant just one thing, and that was that old Grouch, the meanest and most feared old bear in all Timber-tangle, had killed a calf, and had, no doubt, enjoyed a hearty breakfast.

Wongo had never seen old Grouch, but he had always been very curious to know what he looked like. The fearsome tales told of the old bear by the many animals who *had* seen him had caused the little bear to leave the upper end of the canyon strictly alone. But on this particular morning hunger and curiosity weighed heavily against his fear. What if the old rascal had eaten all he wanted of the meat, and had gone away for a drink, or an early morning stroll, leaving a part of

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it in his den? Couldn't Wongo creep up close enough to the den to see without any danger to himself? Suppose old Grouch *was* as bad as everyone said he was, couldn't Wongo run as fast as any old bear?

As he argued thus to himself he stood gazing below him where, in the dim light of the dawn, he could see familiar patches of haw and berry bushes that still had plenty of fruit on them, but he was tired of haws and berries. The keen October air sharpened his appetite, and he wanted something more solid and satisfying than berries or the grubs that would be found under the flat rocks when the sun came up.

Again Wongo took long sniffs of the air, and while caution told him to give old Grouch a wide berth, appetite and curiosity got the upper hand and he moved softly up the canyon toward the forbidden ground. More and more tempting grew the smell of the fresh meat, as he neared what his nose now told him must be old Grouch's den. He stopped beside a thicket of jack-oaks and, as the smell seemed to come from just beyond it, he slowly and carefully put his head through them that he might see.

Suddenly there was a rush from behind, followed by a stinging blow on the head that sent

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him tumbling over and over down the hillside. Scrambling to his feet he made off at top speed, catching a glimpse of the great black bear from over his shoulder as he ran.

“I’ll teach you to go snooping around my cave, you little fat thief,” shouted old Grouch, as he glared after the fleeing Wongo.

In mingled fear and rage the young bear ran on as fast as he could, not stopping until he arrived at the little brook at the bottom of the canyon. Here he took a long drink, and while it cooled his temper somewhat, the cold water fairly splashed in his empty stomach.

As the thought of the fresh meat still lingered in his mind, Wongo wondered if there might not be a stray sheep or two down on the plains near the canyon’s mouth. Slowly returning to the rim of the gorge, he started disgustedly along a little trail that led toward the haw and berry bushes. But his thoughts were not of haws and berries. In the fall there was often the possibility of stealing a sheep, as the Navaho Indian women drove their flocks well up into the canyon for water at this season of the year. The thick underbrush caused the sheep to scatter in their passage up the canyon bed, thus giving any brave and cunning young bear a fine chance to make off with a nice meal of

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fresh mutton, provided his bravery and cunning were sufficient to outwit the Navaho dogs.

Twice, of late, he had stolen a nice fat sheep from the scattered flocks, but on both occasions he had been assisted by his friend Kaw, the crow. Kaw had signaled to him from the top of a tall pine tree, where the sharp-eyed old bird could watch the movements of the dogs and could tell him where they were at any moment. As for the Indian women and boys who drove the sheep, he could watch them himself as they were tall enough to be seen above the underbrush, and he had no difficulty in keeping out of their sight.

A queer kind of an old bird was Kaw, but a good friend, as many an occasion had proven. The old crow loved to tease the little bear, and Wongo always pretended to be indifferent to the teasing, yet he secretly liked Kaw best when he was in a teasing mood, as on such occasions he frequently talked in rhyme, or recited some verses that amused Wongo very much.

His first meeting with Kaw had been a strange one, and he remembered quite clearly all that had taken place on that occasion. That was more than a year ago now, when Wongo, who at that time was scarcely more than a fat cub, was on his way home one evening. He had been ambling along

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through the quiet forest, and had chanced to pass the tall stump of a hollow tree that had a great black hole near the bottom of it. Having been born with a great desire to inquire into all things, he suddenly wished to know just what it was like inside of that hole. He therefore walked up to the stump, and had just put his little nose inside when he heard the most fearful squawking and croaking noise that seemed to come from high up in the stump itself.

“Woof!” ejaculated Wongo, as he jumped backward, his little eyes bulging with fright and the short hair on his back standing up like porcupine quills. Stumbling backward for a dozen paces he sat down upon his haunches and gazed wide-eyed up at the top of the stump. There sat a crow who was laughing so hard his black wings were fluttering against his sides. It was quite evident that it was he who had made the unearthly noise, and that he had simply shouted it down through the hollow stump.

“Haw, haw,” laughed the crow, “Well, I do declare, Did ever one see such a curious bear?
He’s so filled with desire
Both to peep and enquire,
He’d poke his young nose anywhere.”

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With growing anger and amazement Wongo cried out, “ You black old croaker, I suppose you think you’re smart.”

At that the crow half fell, half flopped down to the top of a near-by bush, and having straightened



his face into a more serious expression said:

“ Don’t add a hasty temper to your weakness of indulging in idle curiosity. I could not resist so rare a bit of fun, and besides,” he added, “ I taught you a valuable lesson if you will only heed it, my young friend.”

“ Young, indeed! ” snapped Wongo, who was at

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that time very sensitive about his age. “Anyone can see that I am many times bigger than you, so must be much older.”

“Your size has nothing to do with your age,” replied the crow. “Listen while I tell you about the Pebble and the Sage:

“An old man walking o’er the strand,
Picked a pebble from the sand.
‘I wish that I were small,’ sighed he,
‘For I would gay and youthful be.’

“‘Size has naught to do with age,’
Said the Pebble to the Sage.
‘You’re very old, one might remark,
But *I* watched Noah build the ark.’”

Seeing from the rather blank expression on Wongo’s face that he had failed to understand the reference to Noah and the Ark, the crow continued more bluntly:

“And thus, my friend, although you’re big,
So’s a jackass or a pig.
That I am small is very true,
Yet I am older, far, than you.

“I knew old Silvertip, your father, long before you were born, and,” he added thoughtfully, “I suppose you come by your desire to peep and pry

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honestly enough, as it was your father's weakness before you. Had he been less inquisitive, and had he taken my advice, he would not have been caught in the clumsy trap that proved his undoing."

The fact that this old crow had known his father caused Wongo's attitude toward him to change from one of anger to one of respect. He began to listen to the crow's remarks with a more kindly feeling.

"But to go back to the lesson I tried to teach you," continued Kaw, "you should never poke your head inside a hollow tree. If a bobcat or a swarm of bees had been in that hole they could have given you a lot of painful punishment before you could have said scat, and yet, when I come to think of it," he added with a droll expression on his face, "I suppose *you* could make bees stand for you."

"How could I?" asked Wongo. "I don't think I understand how I could make bees do anything except get after me."

"Well," said the crow, as he spread his wings for flight, "if I remember my alphabet lessons rightly, a B always stands for bear."

"That's so," thought Wongo as he watched Kaw wing his slow flight into the darkening forest, and he turned homeward resolved that as soon as

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he arrived he would ask his mother to tell him about Noah and the Ark.

But all this had happened the year before, and since that time the crow had proven to be a delightful friend and companion. And now, on this cool October morning, the little bear wished that his friend Kaw would happen along to tell him if he had seen any stray sheep wandering unguarded in the canyon below.

At the thought of the recent encounter with old Grouch, his hair bristled with anger, and as he walked down the little trail hungry and disgruntled, he mumbled half aloud, "When I am grown I'll whip old Grouch, and I'll certainly give him such a good beating he will be glad to leave the country."

Suddenly a familiar voice, that seemed to come from above him, remarked, "He who wins a fight does not always depend upon size, friend Wongo."

"Hullo, Kaw," said the bear, whose ill temper began to leave him the instant he heard the voice of his friend. "I was just thinking of you a moment ago, and when you spoke I was wishing I were big enough to whip old Grouch, and I'll surely do it when I am grown. I had a fight with the old black rascal a few minutes ago, but it wasn't a fair fight, for he hit me from behind, and I fell down a hill, and when I got up he was too far

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away for me to fight him. But I'll get even with him some day."

"So you would grow more before attempting to punish the old enemy of the canyon, would you?" asked the crow. Then, without waiting for Wongo to reply, he asked, "Did you ever hear the story about the Terrible Turk?"

"No, I haven't," said the bear. "What about him?"

Clearing his throat, which at best was a bit husky, the crow began:

"With a flock of wild turkeys that lived in a pine
Near the top of old Tonka-pah Peak,
Was a whopping big gobbler that measured three feet
From his tail to the tip of his beak.

"This conceited old turkey was greatly puffed up.
Even thought he was too good to work.
As he'd bullied and whipped all the gobblers around,
He was known as the Terrible Turk.

"One night a strange gobbler flew up to the tree;
He looked small in the yellow moonlight.
There was something about him — just what I can't say,
That would cause you to think he could fight.

"Well the two gobblers fought, just as one might expect,
And the Terrible Turk thought it fun
When the fighting began. He remarked to the hens,
'Watch me start this young bird on the run.'

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“ Well they fought all the night; ’twas no everyday fight,
But by the faint light of the dawn
Could be seen the young turkey high up in the tree,
And the Terrible Turk — *he* was gone.

“ So remember, my friend, when you fight for a prize,
That success does not always depend upon size.”

“ Do you advise me to try to whip old Grouch now? ” asked Wongo.

“ Well, not in an actual fight with tooth and claw,” drawled the crow. “ We sometimes have to fight with our wits, and there is usually more than one way to defeat an enemy. I, myself, have long wanted to get rid of that old trouble-maker, and we may hit upon a plan, but hush! ” he ejaculated in a lower tone, “ there he goes now.”

“ Where? ” asked Wongo, excitedly.

“ Down the other side of the canyon,” replied Kaw, “ but you are not high enough up to see him. I saw the old thief steal a young calf last night, and I suppose he has eaten his fill, and is now after a drink.”

“ Yes,” said Wongo. “ I know about that calf meat, and — ” He stopped suddenly, as he thought it might be best not to tell his friend why it was that he had gotten into trouble with old Grouch.

“ You are not hungry, are you, friend Wongo? ”

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asked Kaw, paying no heed to the little bear's sudden stop in his remark about the calf meat.

“ My hunger is all there is in me,” said Wongo, promptly. “ I am more than half starved.”

“ Well,” chuckled Kaw, “ I was thinking that you might take a short cut to old Grouch's den right now, while I keep an eye on him. I think you may find a pretty good feed beneath the big flat rock that is near the front of his cave. Keep an ear open for my call. I will let you know when he turns homeward.”

At the thought of his recent encounter with old Grouch, Wongo hesitated for a moment, but he had great faith in Kaw, and he *must* have something to eat, so he trotted away up the canyon as noiselessly as he could go. A half hour later, just as he had finished the last bit of Grouch's hidden meat, he heard Kaw's faint, far-away “ caw, caw ” of warning and beat a hasty retreat around the mountain side.

After putting a safe distance between himself and the den of old Grouch, Wongo trotted down a slope to a ledge of flat rocks that projected high above a steep cut in the mountain.

From this ledge he had often looked down over the sage-covered plains far below, and one spot in particular had always attracted his attention and



From this ledge Wongo looked down over the plains below

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aroused his ever-present curiosity. It was a tiny place, or so it seemed from the mountain, a place where Navaho Indians lived, and Kaw had told him that it was made of mud-covered trees that were stood up together to make a kind of cave, but, of course, it could not be a real cave, for real caves must be made in rocks or dug into the earth. Often, as he looked down at this strange little house, a thin, bluish cloud arose from the center of it, and when the wind was in the right direction it brought to his nostrils odors of strange things — things good to eat.

The Indian man-house always filled Wongo with wonder, and he desired more than anything else to go up to it and see just what it looked like close at hand. Once, when he had looked down upon it just at nightfall, he had seen something that shone red like a bit of the sun when it sinks in a summer haze. That shining red light was another very curious thing that he must know about, and he must see it up close. He would ask Kaw about that bit of the sun that he had seen shining from the Indian man-house.

Now that his stomach was filled, Wongo seemed to be filled with confidence also. The warm sun shone hot from the desert, its welcome rays adding to his feeling of comfort and self-assurance. Why

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should he have fear of the little place where lived the Navahos? Why fear anything? To-night he would go down the mountain and visit the Indian man-house and see for himself just what it looked like. Nothing, aside from the dogs that he could outwit or run away from, could harm him.

He knew that the Navahos would not so much as touch him. Had not his mother told him that they believed there was a witch — whatever that was — in every bear, and that if they harmed the bear the witch thing would make great trouble come upon them? Neither his mother nor Kaw, the crow, seemed to know what a witch was, but that didn't matter so long as it caused the Indians to have fear, and thus kept them from shooting their arrows into bears, as he had seen them shoot into deer and rabbits. Wongo had observed that when Indian arrows stuck into animals they nearly always killed them.

Turning away from the ledge, he started slowly down the mountain, deciding that he would, that very night, satisfy his curiosity about the man-house. In the meantime he would go down into the canyon and get a cool drink, after which he would visit some berry patches just over the ridge, and explore among the foothills a bit before his nap-time, which always came just after the sun

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had walked past the middle of the sky. At that period of the day the sun's warm rays seemed to cast a sleepy spell over the silent mountain side, so all of the animals, with one accord, had decided it should be the hour for their mid-day sleep.

So Wongo ambled down the mountain and feasted on the berries in the patch over the ridge, after a cooling drink at the canyon spring. Then the little bear went happily to his cave for his nap.

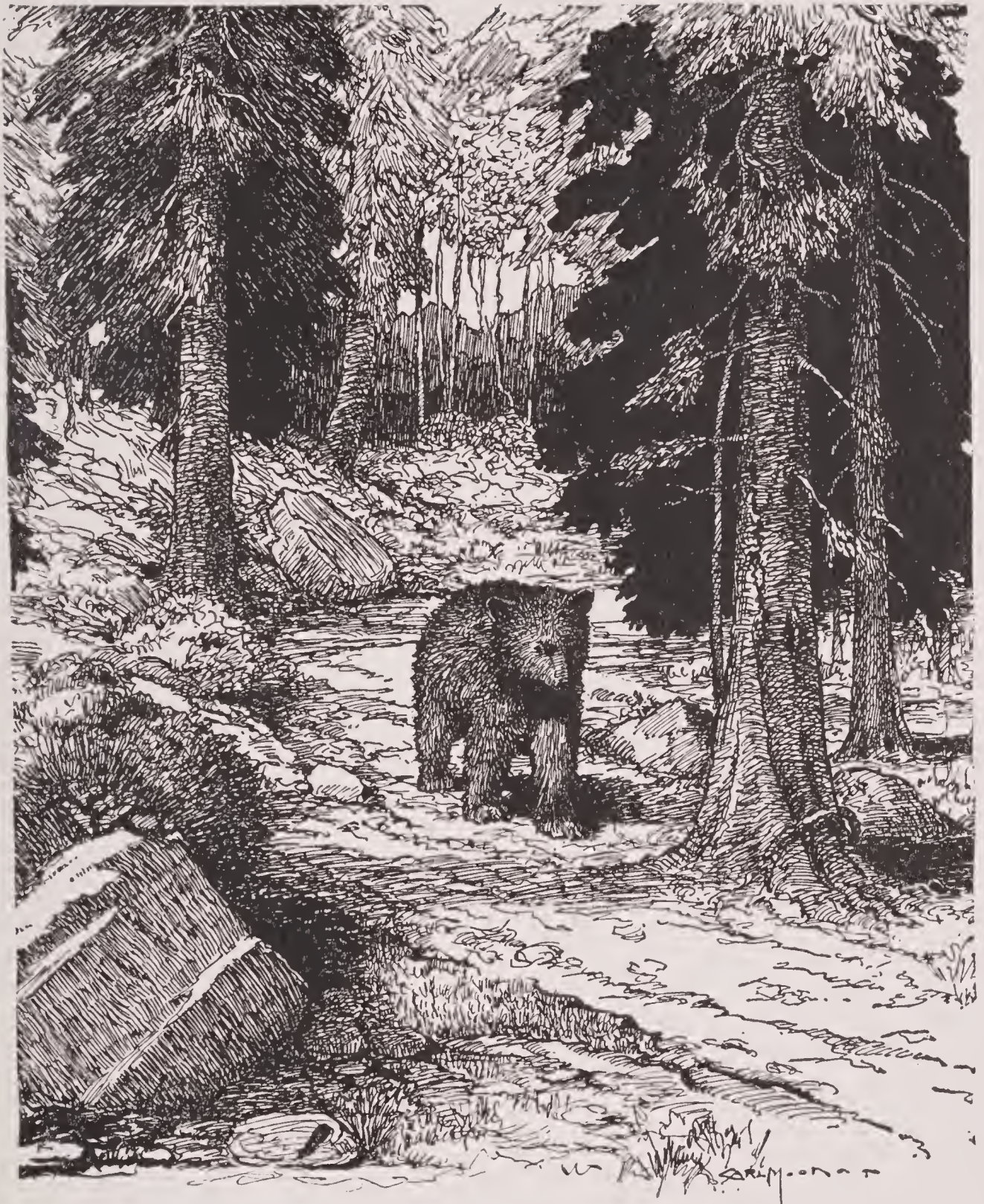
CHAPTER 2

WONGO AND KAW MAKE A PLAN

NAP-TIME had come and gone, the long, warm afternoon hours had slipped away and the sun was just wrapping itself up in a bed of pink and gold clouds that hung on the horizon, when Wongo started, somewhat cautiously, down the trail that led from the mountain through the foothills far below, and on to the open plains. As he was shuffling along, thinking how best to approach the man-house, and wondering if it would be dark enough by the time he reached the sage-covered plains to go into the open without being seen, he heard the slow flapping of wings near by and a voice that sang in Kaw's most teasing manner:

“ Oh, he waddles along with his toes turned in,
His mouth set straight 'twixt his nose and his chin;
His little eyes peep from the front of his head,
And whenever he cries they turn very red.

Very red, so 'tis said,
Very red, very red;
His eyes, when he cries
Turn exceedingly red!



“ He waddles along with his toes turned in ”

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“ In the animal book it shows him as ‘ bear,’
And yet, I observe, he is covered with hair.
Now one never thinks of a berry as bare,
Yet who ever saw one all covered with hair?
 Hairy berry?
 Puzzle contrary,
For here is a bear that’s *not* bare! ”

As Wongo walked on in silence, not even deigning to glance in Kaw’s direction, the latter continued still more teasingly:

“ They say he can scratch, and they say he can hug,
And his skin, so ’tis said, makes a beautiful rug.
His growl and his strength and his looks are his pride,
Yet none of these things are worth half of his hide.
 Hug a bear rug,
 A bug in a jug;
His skin, so ’tis said, makes a beautiful rug.”

“ That’s enough of your poor rhyming wit,” said Wongo, sitting down beside the trail. “ That last string of words is too personal, and besides, your remarks about the rug make me nervous.”

“ Oh! Ho! Little bear, you must be on a nervous errand to-night, eh? By-the-by, I see that you are not headed toward home, and it nears the hour when all honest folk should be on their roosts.”

“ Roosts! ” ejaculated Wongo, with a disgusted grunt. “ Do you think everybody roosts simply

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because *you* have to? A fox or a wolf or a bear would look well roosting out on the limb of a tree, now wouldn't they?" he asked crossly.

"That has no bearing whatever on what I said," replied Kaw, "since I remarked that it was about time that all *honest* folk were on their roosts. It is well that some of us can roost, and roost high, too, when certain night-prowlers are into mischief."

Ignoring Kaw's teasing, Wongo suddenly asked, "What is the little red light that shines from the Indian man-house when it is dark at night? It's like a bit of the sun when it sinks red in the summer haze."

"That is what they call fire," replied Kaw, "and when they make it a little blue cloud comes up out of it, and they call the cloud smoke."

"Well, I want to see it up close," said Wongo.

"So that's where Mr. Curiosity is going to-night, is it?"

"How about your own curiosity?" asked Wongo. "It seems to me you have done a lot of prying yourself to have learned so much about fire and witch, and the Indian man-house."

"Well," said Kaw, with a chuckle, "I have to investigate a lot of things simply that I may be able to answer the foolish questions of some of my ignorant friends. I was down there on a visit

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to the man-house myself to-day," he added, without giving Wongo time to say anything further about his curiosity, "and there is a squaw-man at the hogan."

"What is a squaw-man?" asked Wongo, forgetting Kaw's remarks about foolish questions.

"Well, he's a white-skinned man who has an Indian wife. An Indian woman is called a squaw, so the man is called a squaw-man. No men that



have white skins believe in bear witches, and they like to kill bears, and they kill things with a long stick that shines, and it spits smoke with a loud noise, and it shoots a small heavy thing straight at the animal or bird that it points at. They call the bright stick a gun, and it is surely more to be feared than bows and arrows. You may see an

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arrow coming but you can't see the little thing that the gun stick sends out."

"Whee!" exclaimed Wongo, his little eyes growing wide with mingled interest and fear.

"Yes," continued the old crow, "I've seen this squaw-man before. Met him some years ago away over on the other side of the two ranges, and he certainly can shoot straight with that gun thing, as the loss of one of my best tail feathers bears witness — and I was flying some at the time, too. I didn't get but a few grains of his old corn. But no matter about that now," he said, coming back to the subject in hand, "for I must tell you more about what I saw to-day. This squaw-man came to the Indian man-house yesterday with horses tied to a big thing that moves over the ground without walking."

"Snake?" asked Wongo.

"No!" snapped Kaw. "Don't interrupt me with silly questions. The thing has four round things beneath, where its legs ought to be, and they roll over and over when the horses walk. The man calls it by the name of 'wagon.' On top of it is a thing he calls a cage. It has four sides and each side is like a row of little trees that have grown very close together, only you couldn't get through the little trees on the cage thing, as they

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are fastened into a floor place and into a strong top that is called a roof. I heard him explain it all to the Indians.”

“What is it for?” asked Wongo.

“Well, the squaw-man told the Indian men that something, or somebody called a ‘show’ wants him to catch a bear, and not kill it, but put it inside of the cage thing. Then the Indian men laughed and some looked afraid. When the squaw-man gets a bear into the cage I suppose the horses will walk with it and roll it off to the place where ‘show’ is. Now the reason I tell you all this, when I ought to be at home and asleep, is because I have a plan that you and I must carry out to-night.”

“I guess it’s so late I’ll not visit the man-house,” said Wongo, as he slowly turned around on the trail and headed toward home.

“Tut-tut!” said the crow. “You will have to be much braver than that if you expect ever to punish old Grouch.”

“Who said anything about being afraid?” asked Wongo, pulling himself up short and trying to look very brave.

“I beg your pardon,” said Kaw, gravely. “I was foolish enough to think, for the moment, that you might possibly be going home because you

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feared the squaw-man, but now that I see by your look that you could never be a coward I know that you will be glad to accompany me down to the man-house.”

“Do you mean to say that you are going back to the Indian den to-night?” asked Wongo, trying to conceal his fear.

“That is a *part* of my plan, and we will go together. Listen. Since seeing the squaw-man with his cage thing, I have thought of a scheme, and if we carry it out successfully we will be doing ourselves and everybody in Timbertangle a great service. If you will follow my instructions no harm can come to you.”

“Let me hear the plan,” said Wongo, sitting down again somewhat nervously.

“On the west side of the man-house is a corral,” began Kaw. “There are sheep and goats in the corral to-night. The door of the man-house is toward the east. All Navaho Indians make their hogans with the door toward the rising sun. The horses are hobbled in a bunch on the south side of the hogan. The wind is from the south. We will go up to the man-house from the north, so that the dogs and horses will not smell you coming. There would certainly be trouble if they did,” he added.

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“The moon will not be up to take its night walk for some time yet, but let us be on our way, as we can talk as we go. You are to go to the top of the little hill that you will find close to the man-house, and when you are there wait until you hear me call. Be careful to travel as noiselessly as ever you did in your life. Three of my crow friends will be with me in the sagebrush on the opposite side of the man-house. When I see you come to the top of the little hill my friends and I will make a loud and strange noise that will set all the dogs in our direction, and will, if all goes well, stampede the horses.”

“Why do you scare the horses?” asked Wongo.

“Well,” replied Kaw, “four of the horses belong to the squaw-man, and I just want to make him pay up a bit for the loss of my tail feather.”

“Ho, ho!” growled Wongo, “I understand *that* part of your strange plan at least. Go on.”

“As soon as you hear us,” continued Kaw, “and know that the dogs have run in our direction, you make a jump for the corral and grab a sheep. Don’t make a mistake and get a goat, for there are big ones in that flock that the Indians keep to protect the sheep from the coyotes, and if you should get one of them you might come to grief. Don’t kill the sheep, but make off with it as fast as you

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can travel, taking the shortest cut to the canyon. Hold the sheep around the neck so that it can't make any noise.

“ Make as plain a trail with your feet as you can, by running on soft ground whenever you find any. Go straight up the canyon toward old Grouch's den. You'll be safe enough even though he hears you and comes out to fight, as all you will have to do is to kill the sheep, drop it and run. He will stop quickly enough when he finds the meat, but I hope he will not hear you, and the chances are that he won't, as he has had a big feed to-day and will sleep. However, he is an old glutton and, thanks to your making way with the remainder of his calf meat this morning, he will be keen enough for another square meal before daylight comes.

“ When you've carried the sheep up to the thicket that is near his den, kill it and lay it down. Then walk backwards, *backwards* mind you, to the big vine-covered rock, and when you come to it jump straight over it, and run to your home by the long way round the mountain.”

“ What's all this for? ” asked Wongo, who was confused by the long and seemingly foolish instructions. “ It sounds like a lot of nonsense to me, ” he continued. “ Why in the world should I risk my neck to get a sheep for old Grouch? ”

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“ I am just coming to the explanation,” said Kaw. “ When the squaw-man and the Indians start out early to-morrow morning to catch a live bear, what do you suppose they will do? ”

“ They will find my trail and follow it,” said Wongo promptly, “ and it will be a sorry day for me if they catch me.”

“ Well,” replied Kaw, “ you are right and you are wrong. They *will* follow your trail, but it will be old Grouch and not you that they will catch. The old rascal will probably smell the fresh mutton as soon as you drop it, and when he comes down for it his tracks will meet yours, and will be more fresh than yours when the squaw-man’s dogs come to that part of the trail.”

“ Ho, ho! I see your scheme now,” said Wongo, chuckling at the thought of old Grouch being captured by the terrible squaw-man. “ But,” said he, stopping suddenly as the fearful thought struck him, “ what if the dogs should get off onto my trail when they reach the big rock? ”

“ I have provided for just that possibility,” said Kaw. “ I have engaged an old friend of mine to pick up your trail as soon as you leave the rock and,” he continued with a chuckle, “ they won’t follow *him* very far.”

“ Who is he? ” inquired Wongo.

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“ Well,” said Kaw, whose voice seemed just a shade apologetic, “ he is a polecat for whom I have done a good turn, and he is both anxious to serve me and to get even with old Grouch, who destroyed the polecat’s nest when in one of his mad fits.”

“ I hope he stays some distance behind me,” said Wongo thoughtfully.

“ After leaving the sheep,” said Kaw, continuing his instructions, “ go on around the mountain and I will meet you at the flat-topped rock near your cave. We will then compare notes, and then go out to warn every bear, and all of our animal friends on the mountain side, to leave the country before sun-up — all except Grouch,” he added with a grin.

The two had now come to the sage-covered flat that lay near the Indian hogan, so quickly repeating the most important part of his instructions, and giving Wongo a final warning to use the utmost care, Kaw flew away to the south. Although it was dark, Wongo could see the outline of the man-house some little distance away. He walked toward it very cautiously, noticing that it appeared much larger than it had seemed to be when viewed from the mountain side. Reaching the top of the little hill that the crow had described, he settled

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down in the sagebrush where he could look about him without fear of making a noise. He was now only a few yards from the hogan, and through a little hole in the side came the mysterious red light, while from the top of the house drifted a thin little cloud that looked white and ghostly in the darkness. Strong were the odors it brought, odors of unfamiliar things mingled with the smell of meat. Lost in wonder about all of these strange things, Wongo almost jumped out of his skin when a black object swooped down and alighted at his side.

“Don’t be so nervous!” commanded Kaw. “The dogs are all on the other side. I came over to tell you that you will have time to go up to that hole, through which the firelight is showing, and have a look inside the man-house, if you will go with care. Keep your wits about you and your ears open. I will start the big noise in a very short time,” he added as he flew noiselessly away.

CHAPTER 3

WONGO HAS A WILD NIGHT

L EFT alone, with the Navaho dogs and the Indian man-house so near at hand, Wongo hesitated for a moment before deciding to go up to the hole in the mysterious house, but this mighty appeal to his curiosity overpowered his fears, and he started toward the spot of light.

His heart beating wildly with excitement, he reached the little hole in the wall of the hogan and cautiously put his eye to it. What a sight met his startled gaze! There were several Navaho men in the house, and two or three little men—Kaw had called them boys. The first thing that caught Wongo's wondering attention was the fire. There it was, right in the center of the man-house. It was alive, and was eating sticks and bits of bark that popped and cracked as they died! And as it ate it seemed to leave a white dust that danced up into the light, when the men prodded the fire with a stick. Heat seemed to come from it, like the heat from the sun. Wongo had never seen anything like it before. On the floor around



Wongo put his eye to the hole

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the fire sat the Indians and the voice of one of the boy-men drew Wongo's attention away from the fire. One old man was making something with straight sticks and the boy-man asked, "Why must the feathers be put on the end of the arrows, father?"

"It is the tail feathers of the bird that makes the bird fly straight, and it is the feathers of the arrow's tail that makes it go straight when it leaves the bow string," replied the old man.

"Why do you make long little grooves on the sides of the arrow, father?" asked the boy-man.

"When the arrow goes into the deer the grooves let the blood come out at the sides. If no grooves are there, the arrow fills the wound, and the deer may run far and get away before he is dead."

Wongo drank in this information and put it into the back of his thoughts for future use. Then his eye wandered around the circle of men, some holding long sticks in their lips, from which came little blue clouds like the larger clouds from the fire. This was confusing, and he could not understand it. Then his gaze fell suddenly on a man unlike any he had ever seen before. He sat back on the farther side of the fire against the wall of the man-house. His skin was white, and the lower part of his face had long hair on it, like the hair

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on the throat of the timber wolf in winter, only the man-hair was black.

Just back of the man with the white skin was a long, shining stick, standing against the wall. Suddenly the thought came to Wongo that the white-skinned man was the "squaw-man" and the shining stick of strange shape was the gun thing that could shoot to kill a bear. A little shiver of fear crept over him, when the silence was broken again by the boy-man, who asked, "Would the arrow from a strong bow kill a bear, father?"

"We do not send the arrow at the bear witch," said the man. "It would not kill, but would anger the witch to great madness, and trouble — *big* trouble of much sickness — would come upon us all."

Then came the strange voice of the squaw-man, and all of the others in the hogan listened closely as he spoke.

"Do my red brothers go with me to get the live bear when the sun is up to-morrow?" he asked. No one spoke for some time, and then an old man near the fire replied:

"We will go and make much noise with the drum and rattle, and will beat the ground with the sticks as you wish, but we will not help to catch the bear witch, nor send arrows at him. We do

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not go if you are to kill the bear witch, and we go only near the bear cave; not close.”

“That is all that I ask,” said the squaw-man.

Suddenly there came a great noise from the other side of the man-house, followed by the loud barking of running dogs, and the snort of frightened horses. Running quickly toward the sheep corral, Wongo jumped over the low gate and made a grab in the darkness.

“What luck,” he thought, as he lifted an animal into his arms, and holding it tight around the neck he made off with it at top speed. But he had gone only a short distance when he discovered that there was something wrong with the sheep. It seemed too slick to hold easily and its legs and neck were longer than any of the sheep he had stolen before. Suddenly the animal began to squirm, and to kick and twist about in so vigorous a manner Wongo could scarcely hold it at all. It seemed to be all legs and feet.

It went through such rapid contortions that the little bear was forced to change his hold on it so many times he became confused in the darkness, and could not, for the life of him, tell whether he held the sheep right side up, or upside down. But that point was decided for him a moment later by the animal itself, who, with a sudden twist,

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jabbed its horns so hard into his lowest ribs that he gave a grunt of anger and disgust.

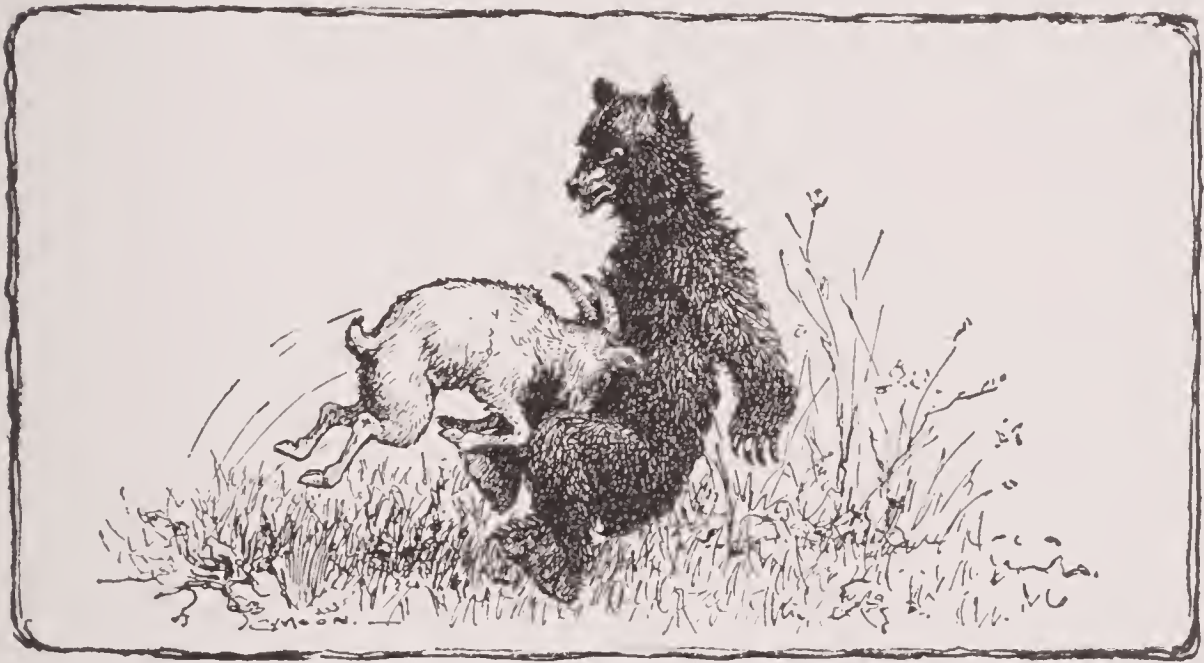
“ You are a common, cactus-eating goat! ” cried Wongo, addressing the animal, “ and it’s too late to take you back, and I can’t kill you here, or turn you loose, ” he added desperately.

“ Ba-ah-ah! ” bleated the goat feebly, but loud enough to frighten Wongo into making a sudden grab for its neck, for he had been holding it tightly about the hind quarters, thinking he gripped it around the throat. With a great effort he swung the animal up on his shoulder, with head well forward where it could do no damage, and had started on with a fresh spurt of speed, when he suddenly tripped over a vine and down went bear and goat in a tumbling heap.

Wongo had sufficient presence of mind to keep a tight hold upon his prisoner when he fell. The goat, having turned a complete somersault, lit squarely on his feet facing Wongo, who, having but three feet to use, had fallen awkwardly in a sitting position on his haunches, one fore-leg extended with the paw tightly holding his prisoner back of the horns. Thus, although the goat could not go backward, nothing prevented him from going forward and, acting on the instant the thought came to him, he gave a lunge, head downward.

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“Woof!” ejaculated Wongo, as the animal’s head landed against the pit of his stomach, and to keep himself from going over backward with the



shock of the blow, he was forced to use all four feet, thus giving the goat the chance it wanted. Off it sped like a white streak through the sage, and in an instant Wongo was in pursuit.

Confused with fear, the goat headed straight for the mouth of the canyon up which lay the trail. Having secured a little start of the bear, the goat was running for his life and making good time. Realizing that they were going in the very direction he would have to carry his prisoner anyway,

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Wongo kept just close enough to the goat to frighten it into greater speed, knowing that once in the canyon the goat would stick to the path where there was fair footing, rather than attempt to plunge into the rocks or thick bushes on either side. On into the canyon sped the two animals; the goat, as Wongo had guessed, keeping to the trail. The goat was becoming less frightened. Had he not butted the bear over? Had he not run for some time faster than his pursuer could run? He was suddenly filled with confidence, and felt that he had a chance — a good chance — to get away from his enemy. As they sped upward, Wongo began to realize that they were nearing old Grouch's patch of forbidden ground, and he had just caught the outline of the big, vine-covered rock, over which he was to jump after leaving his sheep, when he heard a savage growl from just ahead, and he suddenly realized that his old enemy had met them on the trail.

Stopping instantly, Wongo began to walk backward as fast as he could to the big rock, and as he did so he heard a surprised "Woof!" from out of the darkness ahead; a sound of tumbling in the brush; then a sharp clatter of small hoofs that seemed to retreat over the rocks far to the left of the trail.

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Jumping quickly over the big rock, Wongo ran at top speed around the side of the mountain. He had run but a little way when his sensitive nose told him that Kaw's friend, the polecat, had kept his promise.

On ran Wongo, never stopping until he had circled the mountain and reached the flat-topped rock near his cave. He had scarcely stretched himself out for a short rest when he heard the flapping wings of Kaw, who flew up, singing as he came:

“ Two plotters, they plotted a plot,
And their plans were all laid to the dot!
Then they said, ‘ let us meet,
In a chosen retreat,
And see if our scheme works or not.’ ”

“ Well,” said Kaw, as he ended the last line of his rhyme with a chuckle, “ my crow friends and I surely aroused that peaceful little Indian camp in great shape. We flew so low and kept up such an uproar, the dogs followed us for half a mile, and we gave the squaw-man's horses such a scare it is going to take all of the men about the place to round them up if they want to make an early start in the morning.”

Wongo then told Kaw of *his* adventures since

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the crow had left him near the hogan, not omitting a single detail of his experience with the goat, nor of the final meeting with old Grouch.

At the end of the little bear's recital the crow seemed so delighted he could scarcely contain himself for mirth. Dancing around, first on one foot then on the other and keeping a peculiar kind of time by flapping one wing against his side, he sang in a high key:

“ ‘ Oh, Mister Quack, you're out of luck,’
Said the cunning little froggie to the spoon-bill duck,
‘ Excuse my haste, for I must away,
Or there'll be no ceremony on my wedding day.’ ”

“ Old Grouch will surely be out of luck tomorrow unless all signs fail,” he added, as he settled down into a more serious attitude. “ Did you say that after you and the goat met old Grouch you heard the clatter of the goat's hoofs as though he were running away? ” he asked incredulously.

“ Yes,” said Wongo. “ When the goat met old Grouch there was a dull-sounding bump, and the old rascal gave a surprised grunt and seemed to thrash around a moment beside the trail. Then I heard the clatter of the goat's hoofs on the rocks

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at the other side, and he sounded as though he were going like the wind.”

“ Well, well,” said Kaw, shaking again with mirth, “ I never expected to hear anything like that, and I thought I was used to unexpected things, too. There is still work to be done before the night is over. It’s time you were warning the other bears on the mountain, and I must be off to find that goat and tell him how to get back to his friends in the corral below, before some night-prowling timber-wolf runs across him. He certainly has earned his life, and besides,” he added thoughtfully, “ I may want to use him sometime and it’s just as well to do him a good turn as part pay for the service he unknowingly rendered us to-night. Have you many calls to make before your trip of warning is over? ” he asked.

“ A good many,” said Wongo. “ There is old Mrs. Black, who has her cave about a mile above mine, the two Brown brothers who live over on the point, Mrs. Grizzly who lives with her two cubs over on the other side of the hill, and perhaps ten or twelve of our various friends who live across the valley, and I must not forget our friend ‘ Long-ears,’ the crippled jack-rabbit, who lives in the brier thicket. The Indians might try an arrow on him.”

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“Needn’t waste your sympathy on him,” said Kaw. “He committed suicide last week.”

“Why!” exclaimed Wongo in surprise, “I can’t believe it. How did it happen? He was always such a good-humored rascal.”

“Well,” said Kaw, “he found a gray timber-wolf asleep in front of his den and, thinking it



would be a good joke, he playfully kicked him in the ear!”

“Umph!” grunted Wongo sadly. “He was a droll fellow, but too thoughtless, I suppose.”

“Where will you advise our friends to go to-night?” asked Kaw.

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“There is only one good place where there will be food and plenty of water for all of us, and that is over the two ranges to the north.”

“Good place,” said Kaw. “Better than this, in fact. I know every inch of the big valley, and the stream there runs into a beautiful lake far over to the north, beyond the black hills. Let’s see, when the sun is straight overhead to-morrow, you will have reached the big aspen grove on the east side of the second mountain. I will meet you there and tell you all about the squaw-man’s big hunt for the live bear. I expect to watch the fun from the top of the tall pine that stands by the side of old Grouch’s cave, and if you were not so touchy about roosting, I might ask you to join me there,” he added with a grin. “But I will try and give you a full account of all that happens.”

And so the two friends separated, each to continue his night’s work.

CHAPTER 4

THE SAD TALE OF OLD GROUCH

WHEN the sun looked down from over the mountain the next morning it saw an unusual sight. A long, though peaceful, procession of bears, foxes, wolves, and even coyotes, went stringing along a dim trail leading toward the north.

A large herd of timid deer, sensing the fact that there must be danger somewhere, or the other animals would not be leaving the country at this season of the year, trailed cautiously in the rear.

Over the foothills and plains and little ravines traveled the procession, headed by Wongo. Through groves of big clean pine trees and over long stretches of sage-covered hills they went, never slackening the speed of their shuffling trot. It seemed to Wongo that it was the longest morning he had ever spent, and he was just wondering if the sun could be standing still, just by way of playing a joke on him, when on rounding a sharp point he saw the big aspen grove a little way ahead. Then he noticed that he was stepping

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squarely on his shadow as he ran, and he could do that only when the sun was in the middle of the sky.

As they entered the edge of the first group of beautiful white trees, Wongo looked all around for Kaw, but it was evident he had not arrived, as he never waited for Wongo to look for him, as his sharp eyes could see the bear a long way, and he always knew where the bear was long before Wongo knew his crow friend was in the same neighborhood.

Weary with the work of the night before, and the long journey of the morning, the little bear stretched himself out luxuriously on the beautiful yellow carpet of the aspen leaves. He would rest a bit, he thought. He would not sleep — no, sleep was not to be thought of — for Kaw might come along at any moment now, and if he were asleep the crow might not find him. Shielding his eyes from the sun with his paw, he began to think of the experiences of the night before by way of keeping himself awake, but his thoughts wandered into a jumble of Indians with horns, goats on fire, and the squaw-man catching crows with arrows that had wings — a confusion of thoughts that led him into the land of slumber.

How long he slept he did not know, but he sud-

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denly became conscious that someone was speaking to him, or laughing at him, and he sat up with a jerk. On a stump a few feet away sat Kaw, going over his wing feathers with his beak by way of straightening himself up a bit after a long flight. He was mumbling to himself and keeping up, all the while, a low chuckle that occasionally rose to a laugh.

Seeing that Wongo was awake he said, "It is well that you take kindly to sleep, friend Wongo, as it is about the only thing that has ever defeated your curiosity."

"Oh, I was just resting a bit while I was waiting for you to come," said Wongo apologetically.

"Just resting!" remarked Kaw dryly. "So I have observed for the past twenty minutes."

"Have you been on that stump for twenty minutes?" asked Wongo sheepishly.

"Yes," replied Kaw. "Thought I had better let you sleep for a while. You and that goat must have had a ripping hard run last night. I didn't find the poor animal until about daybreak this morning. He was dragging himself slowly down the mountain, many miles the other side of the canyon, and was the most forlorn looking beast I have ever looked upon. Although he looked quite thin and dejected, he still had some fire in his eye."

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When the poor rascal caught sight of me he suddenly changed his limping shuffle into an upstanding walk, and attempted a swagger that was surely funny. I had considerable difficulty in persuading him that I wished to tell him how to get home, for he was going in exactly the wrong direction. After I told him a bit about your experience with him, he was so surprised that I should know of it he listened to reason quite readily. When I finally left him he was still holding to the swagger for my benefit, and as he disappeared in the brush I thought to myself, if he hasn't been the boss of that sheep corral in the past he will be from now on."

Wongo did not wish to be impolite enough to interrupt the crow's recital about the goat, but he was fairly squirming inside with desire to know all about the squaw-man's hunting trip. Seeing that the crow had finished his account of the goat, he asked:

"Did the squaw-man and the Indians go on their hunt? And did they find my trail? And —"

"One question at a time," interrupted Kaw. "Now that you have told all of the other bears about our experience of last night, they will be as interested in the outcome as you are. Go call them, and I will tell the story to all of you."

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Wongo lost no time in rounding up the other bears that had come with him, and all seemed eager to hear what had happened during the squaw-man's hunting trip.

As the bears lined up in a row, Kaw took a commanding position on a low limb of a tree that stood just in front of them and from the half dreamy, half droll expression in his eyes, Wongo could see that his friend had something very interesting and perhaps humorous to relate. Pausing a moment for absolute quiet, Kaw began:

“It was just about daylight when I flew up to the tree near the den of old Grouch. I watched from my lookout for quite a long time and was beginning to get restless when I saw the hunters coming in long, single file. The squaw-man, with his dogs, was in the lead. He was holding the dogs back with thongs that were tied around their necks. The Indian men had rattles and tom-toms, though they made no noise. The boys had clubs and sticks and some had bows and arrows with which to shoot at small game. Far back of the squaw-man came the Navahos. They kept to the trail, and your tracks were very clear, Wongo, for they followed them easily. When they came to the place where you and the goat met old Grouch they stopped for a look. Then they ran back and

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forth, and they whispered and talked. They looked all around and it was plain they were not sure about your tracks. I suspect the goat tracks confused them, for *your* trail stopped at the rock and bear tracks seemed ended while goat tracks went on. It got on my nerves when they started to gather about the high point where you jumped over the vine-covered rock, but just about that time the dogs got the scent of old Grouch and in no time the squaw-man caught sight of his den. He told the Indians to go around the den to the rear. He said, 'When I signal, you start the big noise.' Then he handed the leather rope that led his dogs to one of the boys.

"Well, soon all the Indians were back of the den, all ready to start at the squaw-man's signal. Suddenly there broke loose a most unearthly noise. I have never heard anything like it. Talk about giving old Grouch a scare! Well, he was the most frightened animal I ever saw in my life. At first he let out a half-hearted growl, but that soon changed to a sound that was half whine and half yelp! In a terrible panic he started out of the cave and down the trail, lickety-clip, and I thought, now the hunter will use his gun, but he didn't. He had in his hand what he called a rope. Then I thought, 'Well, old Grouch, you've got a chance

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to get away.' One end of the rope was tied fast to a tree and I soon saw what the squaw-man was to do with the other end. He swung that rope around his head, and just what happened next I couldn't see, for a cloud of dust arose just where the rope and old Grouch met! But when the dust settled enough to see — well!" and Kaw chuckled as he thought of what had occurred, and lapsed into rhyme as the only medium that would do justice to the occasion:

"Well, there was old Grouch, like a cat in a fit;
He thrashed and he tumbled, he scratched and he bit!
But his efforts were vain, the rope held him tight;
Surely never was bear in more comical plight.
Pawing the air, on his hind legs he rose,
But the rope tripped his feet and he lit on his nose.
And then he got up with a look of surprise,
And the fire of his anger blazed up in his eyes.
He growled and he snorted, he kicked up the dirt;
Though he'd had many bumps, 'twas his pride that was hurt.
Well, when he had fought 'till he'd worn himself out,
They tied up his legs with a thong good and stout,
And rolling him onto a thing called a sled,
Down through the bed of the canyon they sped."

By the time the crow had finished, the bears were laughing until the tears ran down their cheeks. They danced with glee, and rolled over on the ground in fits of mirth, all of which was

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thoroughly enjoyed by Kaw, who looked down upon them with a comical twist of his head that showed he felt fully satisfied with his adventure and the outcome.

After the noise of laughter had died down, Wongo, who was still curious as to the fate of old Grouch, asked:

“Do you suppose they got the old rascal into the cage thing, all right?”

“Well, I wanted to make sure of that myself,” replied Kaw, “so after I had had my breakfast, and a bath in the pool at the foot of the canyon, I flew out over the foothills to see what was going on. There were the squaw-man’s horses trailing along over the plain with the wagon thing rolling along behind them in a little cloud of dust. As I neared the wagon thing I saw our old friend Grouch, safely inside the cage, and pacing back and forth like a bee-stung bobcat. I could not resist having a bit of fun with the old beggar, so as I came up alongside I called out to him:

“‘Come outside, my old friend! A bear of your age Should enjoy a walk through the cool, green sage.’”

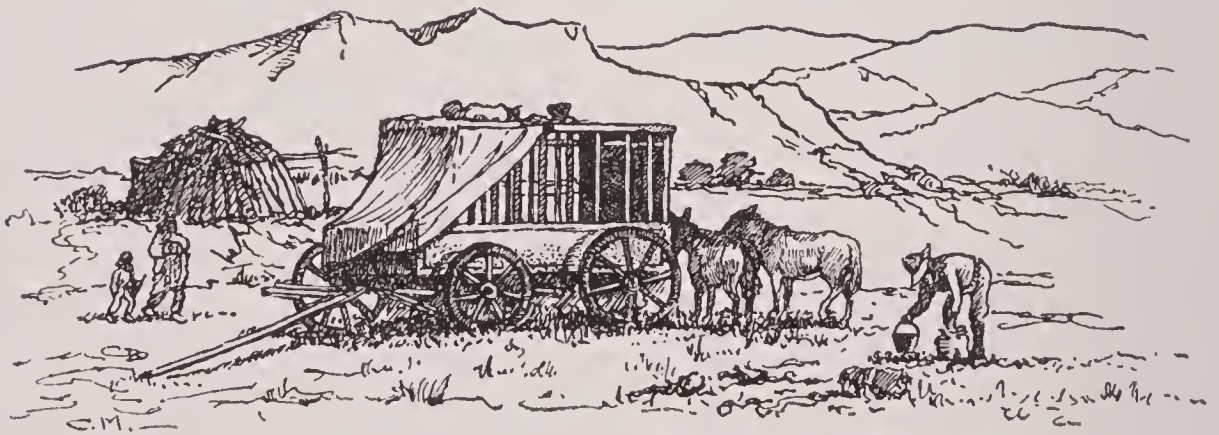
“I had to shout it out pretty loud to be heard above the rumble of the wagon, but he heard it, all right, and the way he looked at me was some-

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thing to be remembered. He growled and butted his old head against the sides of the cage thing in such a temper I said, 'Oh, well, if you must be going, I won't try to detain you any longer.' Then I called out to him as the wagon rumbled away:

“ ‘ Good-bye, my old friend; a dozen good-byes!
To see you depart brings tears to my eyes!
As onward you go, may your speed never slack,
But let me suggest that you never come back! ’ ”

When the crow had finished the account of his farewell to Grouch, he flew slowly out over the hills, and Wongo was to see him no more until they would meet beyond the Black mountains to visit the cave of Cho-gay, the Indian boy.



Cho-gay of Timbertangle

CHAPTER 1

AN INDIAN BOY RULER

*This story, dear reader — in you I'll confide —
Contains a most terrible plot!
Of this I inform you, and you can decide
Just whether to read it or not.*

*It's a tale of a wild and wondrous land;
An account of a man-cub bold,
Whose life is sought by a desperate band —
So here is the tale as it's told!*

THERE were several stories, each supposed to be a true account, of how Cho-gay, the lone Indian boy, came to live among the Black Hills of Timbertangle, a wild, secluded country, where no other man-animal ever had lived.

Probably Kaw, the crow, alone knew the truth. That wise old bird, who seemed to know almost everything, had told the animals how, several summers before, he had seen a curious brown spot float-

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ing down one of the flood-swollen streams, clinging to a mass of brush. Upon investigation, the spot had proven to be a small Indian man-child and, when the brush had caught to a branch overhanging the stream from the shore, the little creature had finally crawled to land. From that day to this, Cho-gay had lived in Timbertangle, seeming to be as much at home among the animals as he could have been among his own people.

Where he had come from no one knew, but he was accepted on friendly terms by all — except the gray-wolf pack. He was looked upon as having strange power, that was, somehow, greater even than the power of tooth and claw, for his hands did many things that clumsy beaks and paws could not do.

Before the coming of Cho-gay, Kil-fang, the leader of the gray-wolf pack, had been the feared and despised ruler of the Black Hills, but Cho-gay had one day put secret fear into his heart. The wolf saw a strange deep look in the eyes of the Indian boy that he greatly disliked and could not understand. Twice had Kil-fang tried to make Cho-gay understand that he alone must rule among all the animal people of the hills, but each time Cho-gay had looked him in the eyes with that strange, steady gaze, and had walked slowly to-

Cho-gay of Timbertangle

ward him until the wolf had lost power to do anything but slink back, and back, and finally turn away. Thereupon this man-child had grunted and had made a quick snapping noise with his fingers, which somehow seemed to mean that he, and not Kil-fang, was the one with power to lead.

All this pleased the other animals greatly, for they loved Cho-gay, because they had learned that he was just, and they despised the great wolf, because he thought of nothing but to kill and eat. And now all knew that Kil-fang had found one who did not fear him — one who had greater power — and all knew that this meant that the wolf must leave the Black Hills with his pack or lose all power over it.

So, with jealous rage in his heart, Kil-fang had taken his followers into the north, vowing that he would return with a mightier pack, that would eat up the thin-skinned Cho-gay, and all others who might be so foolish as to dispute his power, or stand in the way of the wolf-pack.

Two winters had passed and, with these years of added strength and experience, the Indian boy had established a kind of rule and order among the animal people of the hills.

One morning, in the short sunny days of the fall, Cho-gay squatted on a flat-topped rock near the

Wongo and the Wise Old Crow

entrance to his cave — a snug little hole at the base of a mountain — and scraped the fat from a fresh bobcat pelt with a sharp flint knife. As he labored he mumbled under his breath as if addressing the skin:

“ I wouldn’t have killed you, old Short-tail, but the cold of the white frost comes soon, and the warm skin must be changed from your back to mine. Now that you have gone dead, you have no need of it, but as I am alive I can use it with much good. You were filled with the long years of much living, for I find very little fat on your skin, and you could have hunted not much longer — one more season, maybe. But I, I am young. Kaw says that no more than twelve winters have gone since I came to life, and I am filled with strength to hunt, and it may be I will have to fight, if the evil Kil-fang and his miserable pack come from the north to keep the vow Kil-fang has made. But Kil-fang is all growl, and is filled with much bragging talk; in his heart is fear, and it is fear of Cho-gay.”

As a small black shadow flashed across the rock beside him, Cho-gay looked up in time to see a large black crow alight on the limb of an old juniper tree that stood near by. From this perch the bird looked down on the man-child, nodding gravely.



Cho-gay scraped the pelt of a bobcat with a knife

Cho-gay of Timbertangle

“ Welcome, Brother Kaw,” said the boy. “ Many days have passed since you and I have met.”

Kaw made no immediate reply, but looked steadily at the bobcat skin. Then, in a deep, serious voice, he said:

“ So *this* is the end of old Short-tail — the most noble bobcat that ever robbed a grouse’s nest or gobbled up young crows. And Cho-gay, the friend of all animals, the leader of Timbertangle, has slain him.”

Although the Indian boy detected a teasing note in Kaw’s voice, the reference to his friendship for all animals produced an unhappy feeling within him, and rising to his full height on the rock he replied:

“ The cold of winter comes; Cho-gay must have covering for warmth. There was no anger in my heart for old Short-tail. He was both old and lame, and is it not wiser that *I* have his skin for good use than that it should be in the greedy stomach of Yap-kii the coyote? Soon he, or one of his family, would have hunted him down and eaten him.”

“ Yes,” said Kaw, solemnly, “ what you say may be true, but he was *such* a good friend of all birds. He would do most *anything* for them. How he *loved* them!” Then in a sad voice he sang:

Wongo and the Wise Old Crow

“ Oh, here lies the skin of old Bobtail, the cat;
Our loving old friend is no more.
When I think of his life, it surprises me that
Someone didn't kill him before! ”

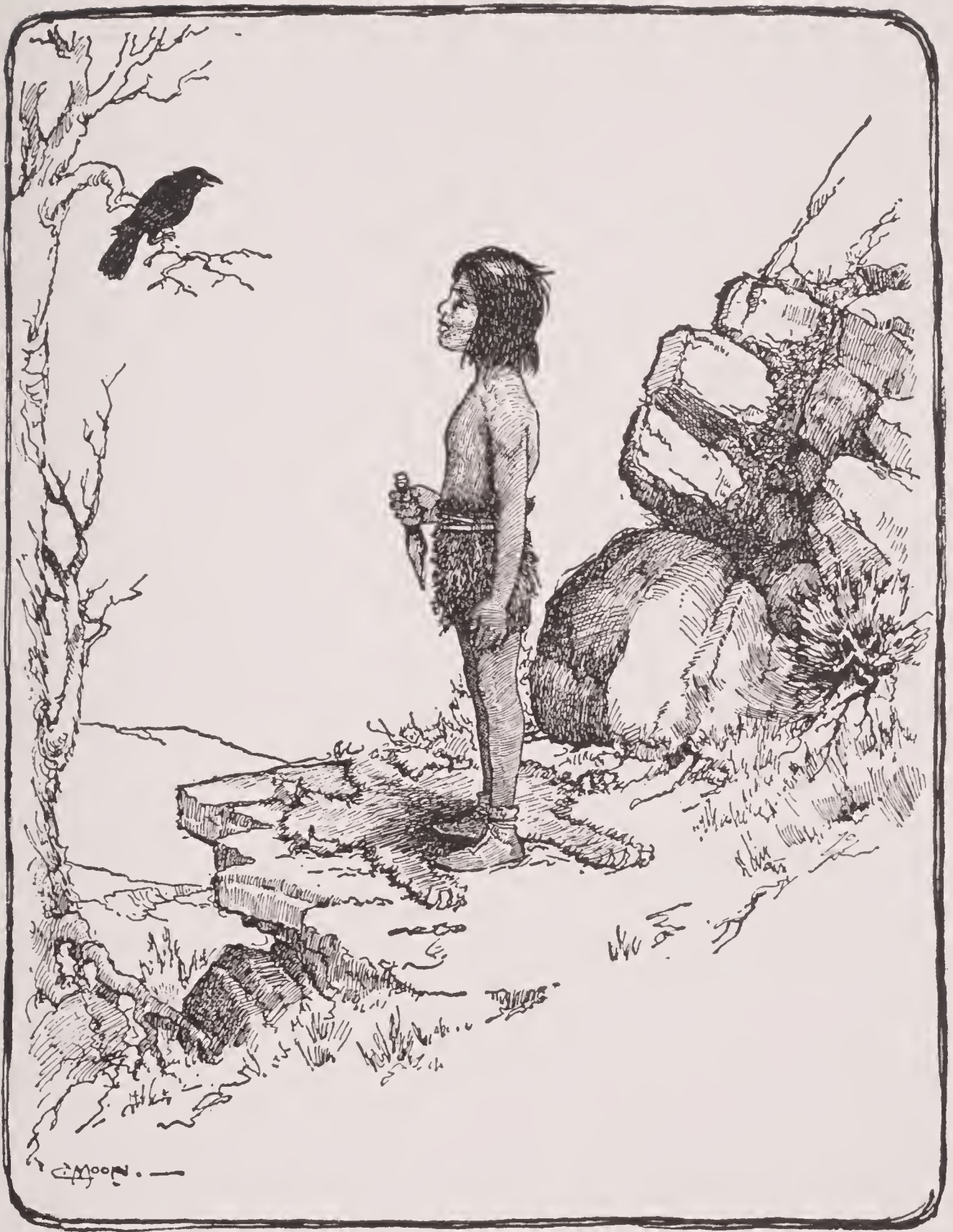
At this Cho-gay grinned, for he had half-feared that beneath the mock sadness of his friend was a rebuke for what he had done.

“ To kill only where there is great need is an old law of the hills. This you taught me yourself when I was yet very little, and I do not break the law,” said Cho-gay.

As he squatted down again to resume his work, a soft pad, pad of broad feet was heard coming down the trail that led along the mountain side, and Kaw remarked, “ Here comes our friend Wongo, the bear. I'll wager that curiosity or hunger brings him here, for he always is filled with curiosity, even when empty of food.”

Cho-gay looked over his shoulder as the little bear came up, and called out, “ Welcome, brother Wongo! Had you come sooner you would have heard a good rhyming talk from the mouth of our friend Kaw. It may be that he will again say it.”

“ If the rhyming talk was the kind he makes about *me*, I don't think I missed much,” said the little bear crossly. Then, as he seated himself



“Welcome, Brother Kaw,” said Cho-gay

Cho-gay of Timbertangle

on the rock, he caught sight of the bobcat skin, and with eyes wide with wonder he exclaimed:

“ Who is it that leaves his hide for another to use? Did you kill him in a fair fight, or in a trap? Was he— ”

But the voice of Kaw broke in before the last question was finished:

“ Did you? Was he? Oh what and who?

How very inquisitive are we.

Oh, we must know all about all that you do,

For we're curious as curious can be.”

“ Well, if *that's* the kind of silly talk you were making before I came, I'm glad I did not hear it,” said Wongo.

“ It's too bad you can't appreciate the work of a real poet,” said Kaw sadly, “ but I suppose when one is hungry his judgment is affected.”

At a sudden noise, half bark and half whine, that came from a point a little above the cave's entrance, Cho-gay rose, picked up a handful of the fat that had been scraped from the skin, and went up to a flat rock on the hillside. Moving the stone ever so little, he called out:

“ Stop the noise, you little sharp-nosed thief! Your whining will bring all the fox family here to ask questions why I have shut you up. Here is

Wongo and the Wise Old Crow

all you get this day," he added as he tossed the fat through the crack. "Many days will go before *you* are out. 'Twice you have been a thief, and this time you will be a long time behind the rock so that you will learn that it is not good to steal the dried meat from Cho-gay."

Kaw and Wongo watched this performance with great interest, and the little bear wanted to ask many questions, but he feared the teasing remarks that would surely follow. As it turned out, he heard all that he wanted to know without asking.

After the fox had been silenced with the scraps of fat, two other prisoners were visited and fed; one an old mountain sheep, and the other a young bobcat. At the hole, or small cave, where the sheep was confined, the Indian boy spoke to his prisoner:

"Old Twisted-horns, three more days and you will again run over the hills as honest people run, but if you again steal corn from me your skin will become a covering for the floor in the cave of Cho-gay." The old sheep made no reply, but ate what was given him in sullen silence.

At the prison of the bobcat the Indian boy peered in through the crack beside the slab of rock that served as a door, and then picked up a rope of stout buckskin that ran into the prison from the

Cho-gay of Timbertangle

outside. As he pulled it there came an angry snarl from within.

“ So! ” exclaimed Cho-gay. “ You are still filled with anger. I will not take the rope from your neck until you speak more softly. I know the hole is too small for you, but here you shall remain until old Twisted-horns is free. Then you will go into *his* house, but you shall not be free until Cho-gay has taught you to keep the laws of Timbertangle.”

As he returned to his work in front of his cave, the Indian boy remarked to his callers, “ While Cho-gay lives in the Black Hills all thieves that are caught will be made to obey the law of the hills. There was great anger in Big-paw, the cat, when he caught himself in the rope trap, yet he was stealing meat from my cave when the rope went round his head. When I came he wanted to fight, but a twist and a quick pull, and Cho-gay had him without breath to snarl. Now he shall not go free until the hunger in his stomach has eaten up his anger. They that steal shall be punished. Is it not a just law, my brothers? ”

“ It is just,” said Kaw.

“ Yes, it has the *sound* of being just,” said Wongo, “ but when there is hunger and poor hunting, the hunter must have food.”

Wongo and the Wise Old Crow

At this remark, Kaw cocked his head on one side and looked keenly at the little bear. Then he said, "About an hour ago, while I was flying over the twin hills, I saw an aged mountain sheep who had been driven from the flock by the young rams."

"Where was that?" asked Wongo eagerly, as he got to his feet.

"On the cliffs above the aspen trees, on the south side of the first hill," said Kaw.

Scarcely were the last words of the crow spoken before the little bear was speeding away toward the place where Kaw had seen the sheep.

"I have sharp eyes," said Cho-gay, addressing the crow, "but how is it that you have eyes that can see hunger in the stomach of a bear?"

"Have you not learned that hunger makes all of us cross? It is only when our friend Wongo is very hungry that he is cross, and we do not have to *see* crossness. We sometimes hear it. Hunger will not take the anger away from Big-paw, the cat. If you feed him and give him more room he will soon lose his anger," continued Kaw, "and it is because he is a captive, and not because of hunger, that he will learn to be honest."

"Your words have the sound of wisdom," said the Indian boy, rising, "and I shall see if they are not true."

Cho-gay of Timbertangle

Going up to the flat rock that covered the entrance to the prison of the old mountain sheep, he



rolled it to one side. A moment later the astonished sheep leaped out and dashed away up the side of the mountain. Kaw watched this performance with

Wongo and the Wise Old Crow

keenest interest. Passing on to the prison of the bobcat, Cho-gay picked up the buckskin rope with one hand and drew his knife from his belt with the other. Then pulling the flat stone from the mouth of the hole he gave the rope a sudden pull. The bobcat came tumbling out, and before it could regain its feet it was dragged to the former prison of the mountain sheep, too dazed to realize what had happened before it was in new quarters and the stone door lifted into place.

“Very quickly and neatly done,” said Kaw, in admiration. Then he added in a low tone to himself, “Our friend Wongo should have good hunting to-day, for if he should miss the old sheep on the cliff, he will surely get old Twisted-horns, who is making for the same place.”

As the Indian boy returned to his cave to get food for the young bobcat, there arose the sound of many yapping voices from the sagebrush below.

“News! News for Brother Cho-gay!” came the voices. A thin, sharp-nosed coyote emerged from the edge of the sage and stood a little in the open, as though he feared to come nearer. Then the heads of three or four of his followers were poked from the brush, as though to lend support to their timid leader, and to see the great man-child to whom their remarks had been addressed.

Cho-gay of Timbertangle.

“ News is of no use until it is told,” said Cho-gay. “ Speak up, Brother Fearful. What is there to tell? ”

“ Is it not a law among us that if one makes a lie, and tells it against a brother, he shall be punished? ” asked Fearful.

“ It is a law,” replied Cho-gay. “ Who is it that breaks the law? ”

“ It is Sandy, the red fox, who has made a great lie, saying that he has flown like an eagle from the valley to the top of Skull-top mountain, and that as he left the top to come down, a rock fell and rolled down to the valley. And that our old cousin, Rip, the outcast wolf, who is very brave, ran in great fear, believing that the mountain was tumbling down. So our cousin Rip is made a coward in the eyes of all, because of the lie.”

“ Where is your cousin Rip that he does not come to accuse the fox? ” asked Cho-gay.

“ He and Sandy hunt together, and he is afraid to make Sandy angry. Why, we know not,” answered Fearful.

At the sound of a chuckle from the juniper tree, Cho-gay looked up to see Kaw shaking with laughter. Paying no heed to this, he again spoke to the coyote:

“ All know that a fox cannot fly through the

Wongo and the Wise Old Crow

air to a mountain top. Go, bring this maker of lies to me and we shall hear his story from his own mouth.”

This order was evidently what the coyotes wanted, for they quickly vanished into the brush.

When they had gone, Kaw could scarce contain himself for mirth. Anticipating the scene that would follow when Sandy, the fox, faced Cho-gay, he hopped up and down as he sang:

“ ’Tis a funny old world, for often I see
The right of a thing turned about,
And when it occurs, then we say ‘it can’t be,’
Till proof makes it true without doubt.”

As the old crow spread his wings to depart, Cho-gay asked, “Does that rhyming talk mean that a fox might fly?”

“It might!” said Kaw from over his wing as he flew away.

CHAPTER 2

THE FOX AND THE WOLF

IN THE afternoon of the day following the visit of the coyotes to the cave of Cho-gay, a dapper little red fox and a gaunt, one-eyed, old timber-wolf trotted over a narrow trail that led along the rim of a canyon.

They were Sandy, or Red-eagle Fox, as he loved to call himself, and Rip, the veteran outcast of a once great pack. Why this strange pair hunted together was a mystery to all but Kaw, the crow. He knew that it was because the conceited little fox, who never tired of boasting of his supposed skill as a hunter, felt it a great compliment to be permitted to hunt with a real wolf, and that old Rip endured the companionship of the boastful little fox for the simple reason that when game is to be found, two sharp, young eyes are better than one old one. In truth, the old wolf knew that his days of hunting alone were gone.

The alert little fox, filled with false pride and great vanity, formed a strange contrast to Rip, for

Wongo and the Wise Old Crow

even a casual observer would have noticed that the old wolf had passed a long way beyond the prime of life. Old Rip's left eye had been lost in one of the numerous battles he had been called upon to fight, but the right eye still retained some of its former fire; a part of one ear was missing, but he could hear with it very well. As he ran, it could be seen that his joints were not just as limber as they once had been. His greatest characteristic was an insatiable appetite; he was always hungry. But, in spite of all this, he was a wolf, and that fact made him great in the eyes of Sandy, the fox.

While on hunting trips, the luck of this strange pair was a very uncertain thing, but usually the little fox managed to catch a rabbit or some birds, and old Rip was always careful to pay his partner some gruff compliment before devouring the larger portion of the game.

Secretly Kaw enjoyed the fox and wolf, as they afforded him many a quiet chuckle, of which they were ignorant. Because of his interest, Kaw frequently helped them to find game when hunting was poor, and the two learned to look upon him as a valued friend.

On this particular afternoon, the hunters were in no pleasant mood, for it was growing late and they had killed nothing since early morning but a



Sandy, the fox, and Old Rip, the timber-wolf

Cho-gay of Timbertangle

small grouse, which did not satisfy their appetite for long.

As they stuck close to the trail, it was evident that, though hungry, they were on some business other than hunting.

“How much farther is it to this bear’s den?” growled Rip, who was beginning to weary of the journey.

“Only a little way now,” replied the fox. “Soon we will go up the mountain side a short distance, and then we are there.”

The old wolf made no reply to this, but trotted doggedly along after his companion. Wishing to turn Rip’s thoughts to less tiresome things than trails and distances, the little fox asked, “How did you learn that Kil-fang and his pack are returning to the Black Hills?”

“I have ears, haven’t I?” growled Rip. “When there is news of a kill abroad, I hear of it, and there will be good hunting for many of us when the pack comes down the north canyon. All animals will run over the hills to the broad valley to get out of the way of Kil-fang, and it is there *I* shall be before them.”

“I also will be there,” remarked the fox, and each of these brave hunters had visions of the great number of rabbits, squirrels, and small

Wongo and the Wise Old Crow

animals that would swarm over the hills and into the valley to the east, as the wolf pack came through the canyon that opened into the Black Hill region on the north.

“ When does the pack come? ” asked the fox.

“ Yap-kii, the coyote, gave me the news,” replied Rip, “ and he says the pack now numbers more than fifty, and that they will come into the Black Hills when the moon is again at the full. I have no liking for this Cho-gay, but I have less for the strutting Kil-fang, and I shall howl the death howl with great happiness if the Indian man-child kills him and drives his boastful pack again into the north.”

“ It is not many days from now that the moon is at the full,” said the fox, “ no more than a dozen, at most. Does anyone but Yap-kii and you know about the coming of the pack? ”

“ No one,” replied Rip, “ for he does not dare to tell Fearful and his brothers, as they talk too much, and the rabbits and squirrels have sharp ears.”

Suddenly a voice that came from the limb of a cottonwood tree above their heads called out:

“ Two bold, brave hunters are we,
As all who will look can see.

Cho-gay of Timbertangle

To fight the fierce rabbit,
With us is a habit;
We fear nothing that's smaller than we —
Let's see —
We mean smaller and *weaker* than we! ”

At the sound of Kaw's voice, for it was he, the spirits of the two hungry hunters began to rise, for *now* there was hope of finding something to eat.

“ Where are we going, so far from home, on so fine an afternoon? ” inquired the crow. Then without waiting for a reply, he continued, “ I'll guess you are just out for a quiet stroll after eating a nice meal of fat mountain sheep and jack-rabbit.”

At the mention of such delicious food old Rip licked his chops, and the little fox squirmed uneasily. As usual he spoke for the two:

“ We certainly *would* have had a fine meal if we had been on one of our regular hunting trips, for as you know I always bag my game, and there is no greater hunter than — ”

“ Then you have had poor hunting to-day? ” broke in Kaw, who did not care to hear the boastful remarks that he knew the little fox was getting ready to make.

“ Yes, that's just it,” replied the little fox. “ As

Wongo and the Wise Old Crow

I was saying, we are on our way to make an important call, and though we have come a great distance, there has been nothing good to eat within sight or sound of us since dawn.”

At that moment the keen eyes of the old crow caught sight of a short line of moving animals far back along the canyon rim, but though his eyes twinkled as he realized that Fearful and his brothers were trailing the little fox, to tell him of Cho-gay's order, he said nothing to the two hunters, who were ignorant of the fact that they were being followed.

“ Well,” said Kaw, “ as I flew over the sage that is just around the point ahead of you, I saw a number of jack-rabbits that were headed up the mountain. If you cut in above the trail you will head them off!

Instantly the two hunters sprang forward toward the place indicated, each trying to be first, and neither remembering to thank the old crow for the information he had given them.

“ So they are making an important call,” said Kaw to himself, as he watched the odd pair loping away up the mountain side. “ It's quite plain who they are calling upon. I wonder what kind of a plot is in the wind now.” Then he looked back far down the canyon trail, where the small line of

Cho-gay of Timbertangle

coyotes were slowly approaching, and chuckled to himself as he flew off over the mountain.

Less than half an hour later, Rip and Sandy had managed to kill two jack-rabbits, and were trotting along the well-worn little trail that led to the cave of Wongo, the bear. Suddenly the fox, who was in the lead, stopped beside some jack-oak bushes and spoke to his companion:

“You can wait here, friend Rip, while I talk to Wongo, for you see he must not know that you are in this plan of ours. If he learns that you are interested in the escape of the mountain sheep, or I should say in eating the sheep after it has escaped, he would tell Cho-gay. If this Indian man-child hears of it, you would never get the sheep, and my brother might not be set free in time to escape Kil-fang and his pack.”

“I keep my word,” replied Rip, who was in a better humor after the meal of the jack-rabbit. “But remember,” he added warningly, “I am to have the mountain sheep in return for telling you the news of Kil-fang and the pack. Go on; I’ll wait for you here.”

Sandy trotted up the trail, leaving his companion, who was glad enough to rest his weary bones after so long a journey.

A few minutes later the fox, after announcing

Wongo and the Wise Old Crow

his presence with a short bark, poked his head into the bear's cave and called out, "A good evening to you, Brother Wongo. I hope I am not interrupting a nap."

"No," replied the little bear, who was suddenly curious to know why Sandy was so far from his own hunting grounds, "but I am just getting ready to take a walk into the canyon. What brings you to the cave of Wongo?"

"I have just been on one of my famous hunting trips," replied Sandy. "I often make long journeys when in search of big game, for, as you may know, I am one of the greatest —"

"All right," cut in Wongo, who had learned from Kaw about Sandy's habit of boasting, "but what brings you here?"

"As I was just saying," replied the fox, "I was passing this way, and thought I'd just drop in to see you, and perhaps ask a question or two that you might be able to answer." Sandy looked anxiously at the little bear.

"Go on," said Wongo, whose curiosity was growing.

"I have just heard that you visited the cave of Cho-gay, the man-child, yesterday, and it may be that you can tell me something about him. They say that he has many animals that he keeps as

Cho-gay of Timbertangle

prisoners in little holes in the rocks near his cave, and that he does not let them out. Is it so? ”

“ He has only three animals,” replied Wongo, “ and he keeps them shut up because they steal, and so have not kept the law. One is a mountain sheep, who stole his corn, another is a young bob-cat, who stole or tried to steal dried meat from his cave, and the third is a fox who has twice stolen from him, but will not steal again very soon.”

The little fox remained silent for a few moments, not knowing just how to gain the real information he had come for, but just as the impatient Wongo was about to ask him to go on, he remarked, “ All say that this Cho-gay knows all animal talk, that he can do strange things, and that he carries a long, sharp claw with which he can kill very quickly when he wishes to. Is it so? ”

“ That he can do strange things is true, and the thing you call a claw is a knife,” said Wongo, and he took on a superior air as he gave this information, for he was quite proud of his knowledge of Cho-gay.

“ Could he kill the gray-wolf pack if it should come? ” asked Sandy.

“ That is a silly question,” replied Wongo. “ No one could kill the pack single handed, unless

Wongo and the Wise Old Crow

he had as many heads and as many teeth as the pack, and of course we know that no such animal lives in Timbertangle.”

“ Would Cho-gay shut *me* up if I went to tell him something he would like to hear? ” inquired Sandy.

“ No, if what you tell is true. But why not tell me, who know him, and I can tell him for you,” suggested the little bear, whose curiosity was now thoroughly aroused.

“ No,” replied Sandy, “ I have reasons why I must tell him myself; I have valuable information to give him and — well, it *may* be that I will ask him for something in return.”

“ Oh, very well,” said Wongo with pretended indifference. “ I can’t see that the matter concerns me, so I will bid you good — ”

“ Yes, yes! ” broke in the fox quickly, “ It *does* concern you, as I want you to take me to this Cho-gay, for I have never seen him except from a great distance and — well, you could tell him who I am, you know, and that we are close friends, and about my reputation as a great — ”

“ Ho, ho! ” grunted Wongo. “ You mean that we are *acquainted* because we both happen to be friends of Kaw, the crow.”

“ Just that,” said the fox, who wished to be very agreeable to the little bear. “ By the way, did you

Cho-gay of Timbertangle

happen to hear Cho-gay say just when he expected to free the mountain sheep and the fox? ”

“ Yes,” replied Wongo, who was anxious to show his caller that he knew a great deal about the doings of the ruler of the Black Hills, “I heard him say that the mountain sheep is to go free in three days, that’s the day after to-morrow, but the fox is to be kept for a long time, as he is a great thief and has twice broken the law.”

The little fox squirmed uneasily when the last statement was made, but his uneasiness escaped the notice of the bear.

“ But what has all that to do with the great secret that you have to tell Cho-gay? ” asked Wongo.

“ You will learn all that if you will just agree to accompany me to his cave, and if you would — well, just tell him that I am Red-eagle Fox, the hunter.”

Wongo made no reply for some time, merely for the impressive effect his silence would have on his caller.

“ Yes,” he said at length, “ although it is a long, hard trip from here to Cho-gay’s cave, and I have no love for long trips, I can see no great reason why I should not do you the favor to accompany you. Then, too, Cho-gay may want my advice.”

Wongo and the Wise Old Crow

Before Sandy could make any reply to this, five silent gray figures suddenly appeared in a semi-circle behind him and Fearful, the coyote, spoke.

“Brother Sandy is wanted by our leader, the Indian man-child. There is a tale that our brother, the fox, has been telling and Cho-gay would hear it from his own mouth.”

At this announcement the little fox began to swell with pride, and all interest in Wongo vanished.

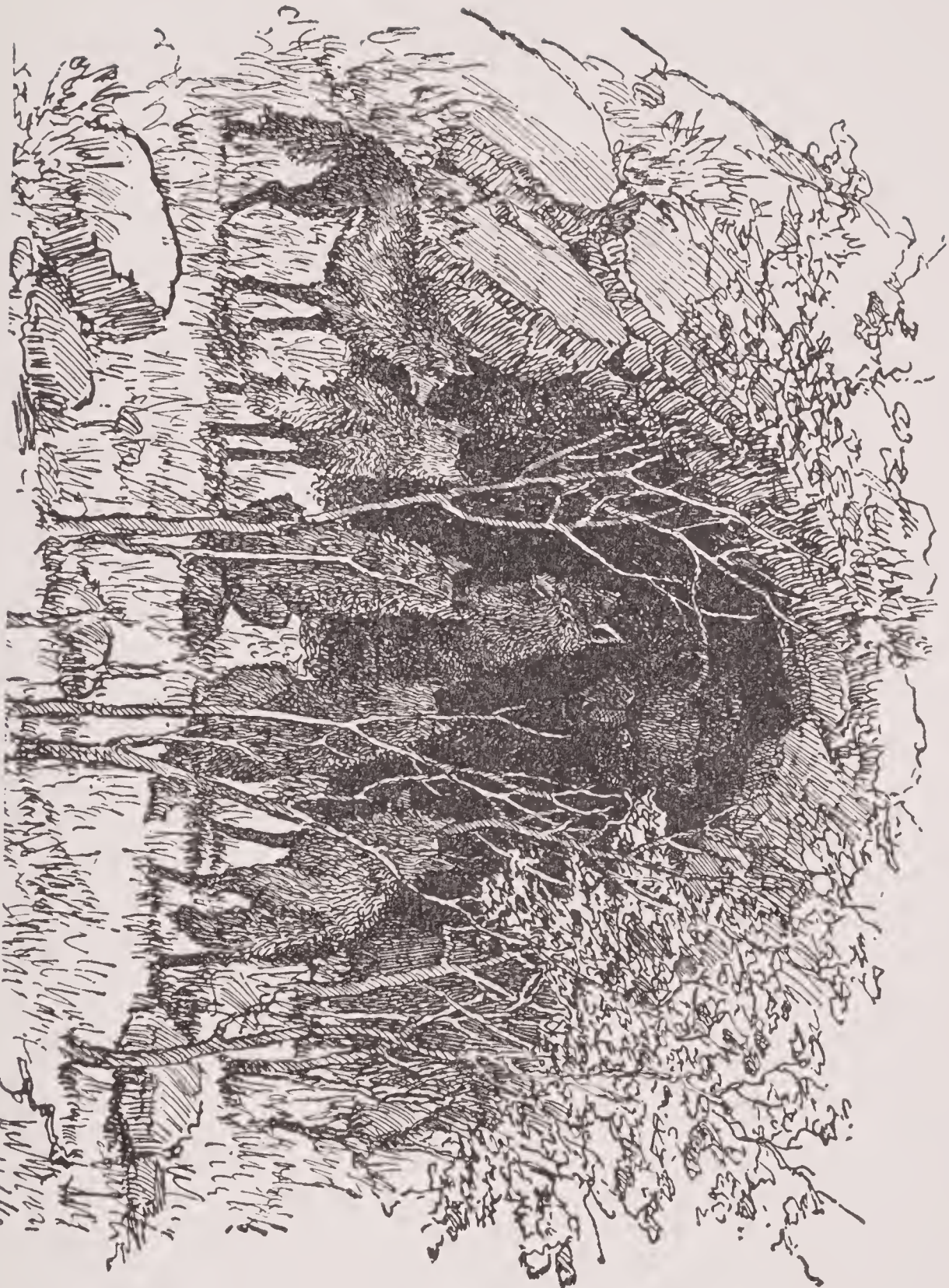
“Ah, it is well that you bring me word from our great leader, Brother Fearful.” Then turning to Wongo, “I will not need your company after all, Wongo, so I will bid you good-day.”

“Well, I will be glad to accompany you anyway,” said Wongo hastily, as he followed his caller out of the cave entrance, for he had no intention of missing the chance to learn what mysterious news Sandy had for Cho-gay.

“It will not be necessary now that he has sent for me,” replied Sandy.

“I fully intended to visit Cho-gay again very soon, anyway, Brother Sandy, and it suits me just as well to go along with you now. Of course,” added the little bear, “he will see no one until the sun is up, and we could not get to his cave much before dawn.”

“Don’t trouble yourself about it,” said the fox



“ Brother Sandy is wanted,” said Fearful

Cho-gay of Timbertangle

coolly, "for I am sure he will not want any but very important members of Timbertangle to hear the news I have for him." With this he started down the trail followed by the five coyotes.

The little bear watched them depart and decided that *he* would be at the cave of Cho-gay before them. After he had given them time to get a good start down the trail, he ambled down the path thinking of all that had taken place and wondering what could be the great news that Sandy had to tell. So occupied was he with his thoughts, he did not notice a black object perched on the low limb of a tree near the trail, but he looked up as a voice sang out:

"Oh, here comes a bear; a pigeon-toed bear,
And *that* is as plain as can be.
He lives in a den, it's really a pen,
And *I'd* much rather live in a tree;
That's me!
It's much nicer to live in a tree.

"Wherever he goes, he turns in his toes,
Except when he scratches and bites,
And it's sad to relate, he's often out late!
Oh, what does he do with his nights?
Just fights!
Yes, *that's* what he does with his nights!"

"I don't either," growled Wongo, pretending to be angry at his old friend, "and my cave isn't a

Wongo and the Wise Old Crow

pen either. But what could a squawking old crow know about caves? ”

“ I believe I smell a wolf,” said Kaw, changing the subject, and he stuck his beak in the air in imitation of animals who sniff for a scent.

“ Yes,” said Wongo, as he too sniffed the air, “ I hadn’t noticed it before, but I too smell a wolf. Sandy the fox just stopped at my cave a few minutes ago to ask me to take him to the cave of Chogay, but that old one-eyed partner of his was not with him.”

“ No? ” queried Kaw, with a chuckle. Then he cocked his head on one side and continued:

“ Well, it’s just as I thought,
There’s a gay little plot;
It’ll be about something to eat,
And there’s some axe to grind,
As we’re sure to find;
No doubt in exchange for fresh meat.”

“ What do you mean by all that string of words? ” asked Wongo.

“ Nothing, nothing very important,” replied Kaw. “ We’ll soon see for ourselves. Did Fearful, the coyote, come to your cave while Sandy was there? ”

“ Yes, he did,” said Wongo. “ There were four

Cho-gay of Timbertangle

other coyotes with him, and they told Sandy that Cho-gay wanted to see him about some important matter. What's it all about? Do you know? "

"I suspect I know something about it," said Kaw, "but not enough to tell. When do Sandy and the coyotes and Rip, the wolf, go to see Cho-gay? "

"I don't know about old Rip," said Wongo, "but Sandy and the coyotes have started to-night and I am going too, but I expect to be there when they arrive."

"Well, you can bet that the old wolf is trailing along after them. The old rascal was with Sandy to-day, and there is some good reason why they did not want you to know that he was around. Did the fox say anything about things they are planning to kill or eat? "

"No," replied Wongo, "he only asked if I knew when Cho-gay intended to free old Twisted-horns, the mountain sheep, and the fox that are shut up in the rocks near Cho-gay's cave."

"What did you tell him? " asked Kaw.

"I told him that the sheep was to be free in three days, and the fox was to be kept prisoner for a long time, as he had twice broken the law."

"By the way," said Kaw, "I see from your good humor that you must have had good hunting

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yesterday. Did you find the old mountain sheep on the cliffs? ”

“ No, I didn’t find him on the cliffs, or near the aspen trees. But I got him. I must have passed him on the way up, for when I had given up hope of finding him, I turned back down the trail and near the bottom of the hills I ran right into him. He was coming up so fast he didn’t see me. Those young rams in his flock must be good at fighting to turn him out of the flock, for he didn’t look like any outcast.” And then the little bear couldn’t understand why Kaw should laugh so long and hard over such simple news.

“ I am glad you found a sheep even if it wasn’t the one I sent you to get,” said the crow, at length, “ and it was lucky for you that I induced Cho-gay to free Twisted-horns when he did.”

“ Do you mean that I got the old sheep that Cho-gay had shut up in the rocks? ” asked Wongo in great excitement.

“ Well, it looks that way to *me*,” said Kaw. Then changing the subject abruptly, he said, “ If you are to be at Cho-gay’s cave by sunrise you will want to amble along. I think I’ll be there, too, but I can sleep half the night first and then be there before the rest of you.”

As the little bear started down the trail Kaw flew

Cho-gay of Timbertangle

along beside him for a little way and as he flew he sang:

“ Mr. Wolf and a bobcat had a fight,
Down in the hollow where the timber grows thick;
In just one minute Mr. Wolf took flight —
He was in a hurry, and lookin’ quite sick!

“ Yes, old Mr. Wolf he ran away,
With a scratched-up nose and a bunged-up eye.
And he’s scared of bobcats to this day,
And he shakes with fear when he hears one cry! ”

CHAPTER 3

SANDY TELLS A TALE

LONG before the dawn of the following morning, Wongo settled himself behind a thick clump of bushes a short distance from Cho-gay's cave and waited.

About the time the first streaks of dawn lighted the east, Sandy, followed by his escort of coyotes, which by this time had grown to include about all of the coyote family, trotted up through the sage below the flat rock and seated themselves in the clearing.

Wongo, who could see without being seen, had decided not to show himself, for, in fact, he did not care to have even a coyote know that mere curiosity had led him on the long night journey.

He looked all about him in the bushes and trees for Kaw, but if the old crow had arrived, he was too well hidden to be seen. Then he looked among the coyotes for old Rip, but he was not there. Had the little bear been in a position to see behind the rocks that stood above Cho-gay's cave, he would have seen the wolf crouched behind one that stood

Cho-gay of Timbertangle

above the little cave in which the old mountain sheep had been confined. The sheep had been kept in this hole long enough to leave a strong scent behind him, and Rip had no difficulty in locating the right spot.

“Here,” thought he, “I will remain until my partner, Sandy, gets Cho-gay into the cave to hear the secret news, and then a strong push will upset the flat rock that imprisons the sheep, and the rest will be easy and satisfying.”

The greedy old wolf licked his great chops, as he thought of the juicy taste of fresh mutton, and could hardly wait for the time when the Indian man-child would come out and invite Sandy into the cave. Surely this would be a great day for Rip and the fox. As for the coyotes, they were nothing, and they knew enough to give their great cousin a wide berth until he permitted them to come and gnaw on the sheep bones that he might leave for them.

Just as the sun peeped over the hills, Cho-gay came out of his cave and yawned as he stretched his arms over his head. Sandy, who had never taken his eyes from the cave entrance since he arrived, mistook the upraised arms for a signal for him to approach and he trotted boldly up to the flat rock.

Wongo and the Wise Old Crow

“A good-morning to you, Brother Cho-gay. I am here to know what you would like to hear from the mouth of Red-eagle Fox, the hunter.”

Cho-gay, who was never in very good humor before breakfast, stared at his caller and then at the row of coyotes seated in the clearing below.

“So you are the rascal who they say is a maker of lies. We will have ears for your strange story when I have had food,” said Cho-gay as he returned to his cave.

This remark had the effect of a dash of cold water on the boastful little Sandy, and the row of grins that faced him from the escort below did not add to his comfort. But he turned his back on them and waited as patiently as he could for the reappearance of Cho-gay.

A few minutes later the Indian boy came out and, seating himself on the flat rock, commanded the now timid Sandy to tell his story about flying like an eagle to the top of Skull-top mountain.

Although he had rehearsed the story again and again during his journey to the cave, the little fox now told it in such a halting manner that Cho-gay, Wongo and the coyotes were very certain that it was untrue.

“You would have us believe,” said Cho-gay, “that you flew through—”

Cho-gay of Timbertangle

“ That I *jumped* into the air,” corrected Sandy, “ from the sage of the valley and did not light until I reached the highest cliffs on Skull-top mountain. And while I was up there, where no fox had ever been before, a big rock rolled down and when Rip, my hunting partner, heard it he ran in great fear up the valley, shouting ‘ The mountain is falling! The mountain is falling! ’ ”

“ You have no wings and can jump but a little way,” said Cho-gay, “ so it is plain to all that your words are not true.” Then he called out to the coyotes below, “ You have heard the words of the fox. Are they true? ”

“ No—No—No!—They are lies! ” came the replies.

Then to the surprise of all present, a loud, “ Yes! They are true!” came from the top of the old juniper tree and Kaw flew down to a bush beside the flat rock.

At this the eyes of Cho-gay went wide in surprise and Wongo, the bear, forgetting that he had been hiding, raised up with a grunt of amazement. Both the Indian boy and the little bear had known Kaw a long, long time and neither had ever doubted his honesty.

Wongo, now that all knew he was there, came forward a bit sheepishly, but the others were too

Wongo and the Wise Old Crow

surprised at the crow's remark to consider him.

“Do you make a joke, Brother Kaw?” asked Cho-gay.

“No,” replied the crow, “the funniest part of Sandy's story is that it is all true.”

“I think I must go now,” said the little fox, who seemed to have been made very nervous by the unexpected appearance of the crow. “Brother Kaw, could I see you privately for a minute before I go?”

“No one shall leave until this matter is settled,” said Cho-gay, as he rose to his feet. “Our Brother Kaw says the words of the fox are true; let us hear *why* he says so.”

“You do not doubt the word of Kaw,” cried Sandy desperately. “Why should he tell —”

“Let Brother Kaw tell! Let him tell! Let him tell!” came the voices of the coyotes.

“Let us hear the proof, Brother Kaw,” added Wongo.

“Our ears are waiting for the proof,” said Cho-gay, as he folded his arms commandingly.

No word or act of the situation had escaped the old crow and he was enjoying himself more than he had for many a day. Clearing his croaking voice, he began:

“It was this way, for our Brother Sandy *did*

Cho-gay of Timbertangle

pass through the air just as he has said. One evening I saw Sandy and Rip coming down through the sage valley on the other side of Skull-top mountain. I could see that they were tired and hungry and I said to myself, 'I shall tell them where to find good hunting.' I flew over to a tree under which they would pass and as they came beneath it I called out:

“ ‘ To the fierce and the strong, we two belong;
That’s why we’re fat and merry.
Oh, we’re out for game that’s strong or lame,
And we always get our quarry!

“ ‘ So give us meat that’s good to eat,
Or we’ll fill you all with terror!
We’re out to kill, and that we will,
If it takes us two together!’

“ Then when they had stopped I said, ‘ Down the valley a little way are some nice fat rabbits and what is still better, there are some nice, big rabbit-hawks circling around just above where they are hiding in the sage.’

“ ‘ Fine,’ said Sandy. ‘ We can catch rabbits but how could we catch a hawk?’

“ ‘ That is easy,’ said I, for I have no use for hawks. ‘ Come along and I will show you.’ When we got almost to the sagebrush where I had seen

Wongo and the Wise Old Crow

the rabbits, I said, 'Now, Sandy. Go and catch a fat rabbit, but do not eat it.' Rip growled at such instruction, but I told him to wait and that if they followed my instructions they would have both hawk and rabbit. Then they both sat quiet while I told them what to do.

“ ‘When you have killed a rabbit,’ said I, ‘drag him to the edge of the sage and lay him down in the open near a sagebrush. Then crouch down beside the brush ready to spring. In no time, as you both know, a hawk will see Mr. Rabbit and make a dive for him. Rip can hide here in the jack-oak bushes to wait for you and I will fly to the top of the tall pinyon tree where I can signal to you when to jump. When I see a hawk about to swoop down for the dead rabbit I will give a loud caw. Then jump for Mr. Hawk and you’ll have both hawk and rabbit.’

“ ‘Fine! Fine!’ said both of the hunters, and it was not long before Sandy—who is really a wonderful hunter—had a rabbit and laid it out beside a big sagebrush just as I had directed him to do. Then as I watched with great joy for the coming of a hawk, there came a sudden black shadow from out of the blue sky above and I almost fell off the limb as I recognized old Baldy, the eagle, swooping down on the rabbit. I gave one

Cho-gay of Timbertangle

loud scream to warn Sandy, but he mistook my scream for the signal to jump and a moment later the claws of Baldy had closed on the hide of Sandy instead of the rabbit. And away he flew to his nest at the top of Skull-top mountain. I don't think that Baldy knew that he had missed the rabbit and caught a fox until he let Sandy fall beside his nest on the cliffs. In the meantime old Rip had eaten the rabbit and run up to the foot of the mountain to see if Sandy would come back.

“ When Sandy found himself free from the claws of the surprised Baldy, he ran behind a rock where the eagle could not reach him and as I flew up the mountain I could see old Baldy scolding and screaming around the rock, and the bushy tail of Sandy sticking out from behind it.

“ Baldy was too angry and excited to notice me and, as it was my advice that had gotten Sandy into his plight, I flew along looking for help. On a trail a short distance from Baldy's nest I found old Grayhead, the bear, and I asked him to go up and keep Baldy away from the rock so that Sandy could run for cover.

“ Grayhead did as I told him and in the mix-up the old bear rolled the stone down the mountain side to scare Baldy. Well, the stone scared someone else more than it did Baldy, for as it rattled

Wongo and the Wise Old Crow

over the rocks and sand I saw Old Rip, the wolf, with his ears laid back and his tail between his legs, dashing madly across the valley in a cloud of dust. I had to fly like sixty to get near him. I shouted to him to stop and that there was no danger, but the louder I called the faster he ran. I stopped when I saw it was no use trying to keep up and the last I saw of him he was running across the third valley and still going like the wind! ”

As Kaw ended his story, and the loud laughter of Wongo, the coyotes and Cho-gay had died down, the Indian boy spoke:

“ Brothers, the words of our Brother Sandy are then true, and though he did not tell us *how* he flew to the mountain top, he made no lie.”

As the laugh seemed to have turned on old Rip instead of himself, the little fox felt more at ease. Then, suddenly remembering that he had important news for Cho-gay, he hastily arose and said:

“ Brother Cho-gay, I had almost forgotten that I have very important news to tell you, and it may mean life or death to many of us. And,” he added nervously, as he glanced up toward the rocks above the cave’s entrance, “ I must tell it to you alone. Can we go into your cave while I tell it? ”

“ Yes,” spoke up Kaw, who now saw what none of the others but Sandy could see — that Rip lay



Rip meets Big-paw, the Bobcat

Cho-gay of Timbertangle

hidden behind a certain rock on the hillside above. "Let Brother Sandy tell his great news privately, but let there be a witness. No doubt Wongo will do. The rest of us will wait outside, for it may be that strange things are about to happen."

"It is agreed," said Cho-gay, addressing Kaw, "but why would *you* not be the witness?"

"I am not used to caves," replied the crow, "but Wongo lives in one."

Kaw's remarks decided Cho-gay to hear the news of the little fox and he said,

"Come, Brother Wongo, we will learn what Brother Sandy has to say."

Scarcely had the three reached the back of the cave, when there came the sound of a falling rock on the hillside above, and a moment later there arose a fearful noise of combat, of wolf howls, screeches, and the snarls of an angry cat.

Then out of a tumbling mixture of cat and wolf, old Rip scrambled to his feet and tore away like mad, and a moment later disappeared in a cloud of dust on the trail below.

When Cho-gay, Wongo, and Sandy ran out of the cave to learn the cause of the awful noise, the angry but triumphant young bobcat was loping away up the mountain.

Kaw, who alone knew what had happened, was

Wongo and the Wise Old Crow

laughing so hard he was unable to answer at once the many eager questions that were asked, but when he could speak, he said:

“ Brother Rip has just had a little surprise party. It seems that on his way to our gathering he must have accidentally upset the stone that stood over the entrance to the cave that housed your prisoner, Big-paw, the bobcat. It may be that he mistook Big-paw for a sheep and jumped at him before he realized his mistake. Anyway, it was a mistake for poor old Rip, and for *some* reason he didn't even stop to explain. And Big-paw has gone away mad, and I fear he will not come back.”

As they realized what had happened, both Wongo and Cho-gay laughed and the coyotes, who had gathered near, took up the laughter in a hundred “ Ki—yi—yi's ” of mirth, but the meek smile on the face of Sandy was made with an effort, for he feared his next meeting with his old hunting partner would not be a pleasant one.

“ But the news! The news! ” exclaimed Kaw. “ What is the news that Brother Sandy has told? ”

“ I didn't have time to tell it,” said Sandy, “ but now that — that is — I may as well tell it here,” he added lamely.

“ The news is that Kil-fang and his pack of fifty wolves are coming from the north to kill Cho-gay! ”

CHAPTER 4

KIL-FANG STARTLES TIMBERTANGLE

THE news that Kil-fang and his pack were returning to the Black Hills was a startling surprise for all who gathered about Sandy, but they showed no fear, for all knew how to keep out of the way of the pack and all had faith in the power of Cho-gay. Now they wanted to hear what he would say.

“Where do you get the news, and where is proof that it is true?” Cho-gay asked.

“Yap-kii, the coyote, got the news secretly from one of the coyotes that live in the north. He told Rip and Rip told me. They say that the pack will come through the north canyon when the moon is again full.”

“Where is Yap-kii?” asked Cho-gay, turning to the coyotes.

“Hunting,” said Fearful, who led the clan while Yap-kii was away. “He has said nothing to us about the coming of Kil-fang, but he has said that before the moon was again full we would all go

Wongo and the Wise Old Crow

over into the broad valley to the east, where there would soon be fine hunting.”

“That is proof enough for me,” said Kaw.

“Why is it proof?” asked Cho-gay.

“Yap-kii knows that with the coming of Kil-fang all small animals will run to get out of the way of the pack, and they will run eastward into the broad valley, as that is the easiest way out.”

“I believe the news must be true,” said Cho-gay, who placed great faith in the wisdom of his old friend Kaw.

“Is it good then that I brought the news to you?” asked Sandy timidly.

“It is good, and all people of the Black Hills will be glad that you have brought me the news,” said Cho-gay.

“Not *all*,” said Sandy. “For what will become of my brother that is kept shut up in the rocks?”

This surprising question puzzled Cho-gay and he scarcely knew how to reply.

“What do you say, brothers?” he asked. “Shall a thief who has twice stolen without cause be freed before he has been punished?”

“Kindness is greater than the law in this case,” said Kaw, “and Sandy has shown kindness to us all by bringing this news. It may be that the thief will be honest and steal no more.”

Cho-gay of Timbertangle

“Free him,” advised Wongo.

“Free him! Free him!” echoed the coyotes.

At this Cho-gay, followed by Sandy, went up to the little cave of the imprisoned fox.

“Will you remember the law and steal no more if I set you free?” asked Cho-gay of his prisoner.

“Yes, I steal no more,” was the reply.

As Sandy and his brother trotted down the trail, Fearful and the remainder of his followers (for most of them had slipped away, one by one, to tell the great news to their friends) vanished into the sagebrush.

When Cho-gay had returned to the rock in front of the cave, Kaw asked, “What will you do about the coming of Kil-fang and his pack? The moon will be full again in fewer than a dozen days.”

“I shall kill him and all his pack,” said Cho-gay. “I will make many arrows and an extra bow, and I will have food and water in my cave to last until the wolves are all dead. I shall have big rocks at the door of my cave and I’ll shoot through the rocks, and cut with the knife all who try to enter.”

“All that might be very well,” said Kaw, slowly, “and you might kill them all. But Kil-fang with a dozen followers, and Kil-fang with a pack of fifty wolves of the north, are two different things. Why have a fight and kill and kill? Why

Wongo and the Wise Old Crow

should we let our old enemy return to our hills to scare all the game away? Why not have a little fun with him and give him such a scare that he and his pack will be glad to go back into the north and stay there? ”

“ That is easy to say, but how could it be done? ” asked Cho-gay.

Wongo, who was for the first time having his ever-present curiosity satisfied without asking questions, looked confidently up at Kaw, for he knew, from past experience, that the wise old crow never suggested a thing unless he himself had thought of a way in which it could be carried out.

“ Well, ” said Kaw, “ my plan would be this: You remember that this end of the north canyon, where it opens into the valley, is very narrow. Kil-fang will come through the canyon because it is the easiest way and the other end is wide and full of small game. We will get a number of bears to help you, and you can roll some big rocks down into the narrow place at this end, until there will be left only a space where one wolf can pass through at a time. That you can do to-morrow, so that any fresh earth that is torn up will look old and dry when the pack comes. Nothing will scare wolves or coyotes like a big noise, if they are not expecting it, so we will make a big drum. ”



Wongo, Cho-gay and Kaw plan to scare Kil-fang

Cho-gay of Timbertangle

“What is that?” asked Cho-gay.

“It’s just the thing?” exclaimed Wongo, who remembered the drums used by the Indian men when old Grouch was captured.

“We’ll tell you what a drum is and how to make it,” replied Kaw. “Up the valley, a little way from here, is a nice piece of a hollow log lying beside the trail.”

“I remember it,” said Wongo.

“Can you roll it down here this afternoon?” asked Kaw.

“Yes, easily,” replied the little bear.

Then, turning to Cho-gay, Kaw continued:

“You will have to kill a young buck — which you will need for meat anyway — for you must have a fresh skin and one large enough to supply a piece of hide for each end of the log. When you kill the buck and Wongo brings the log I will be there to tell you how to finish the drum.

“When Kil-fang and his pack come down the canyon, he will be in the lead. It will be moonlight, for the pack will not travel in our country by day. We will have all the bears and coyotes we can get, hidden behind the big rocks that stand just this side of the narrow passage of the canyon, and it is there you can be stationed with the drum.

“We will let one of the biggest bears stand on

Wongo and the Wise Old Crow

the wall of the canyon just above the narrow passage with some big, round rocks, and after Kil-fang and three or four of the pack have passed through into the valley, the big bear can roll in enough rocks to fill the passage and separate the pack from their leader. *Then* we'll all let loose the big noise and chase Mr. Kil-fang down the valley and over the mountains. A pack without a leader is easily confused and the noise we make will scare them out of their skins."

"It all sounds as if it could be done," said Chogay. "I will hunt for a buck this afternoon and if you are here to-morrow we can make this thing that makes the noise."

"I will be here," replied Kaw, "and as I also have much to do, if this plan is carried out, I will be going."

With this parting remark, Kaw left his companions and flew away down the valley in search of old Rip. As he flew along he talked to himself:

"If I can get the old rascal to do what I tell him to, we'll have more fun than a cat fight. First—I'll find him some food and get him in a good humor. I'll tell him that he'll be looked upon as a hero by all, if he will join in my plan." And he chuckled as he thought of it.

CHAPTER 5

THE ROUT OF THE WOLF PACK

THE days that followed were busy ones for Kaw, Cho-gay, and Wongo, even though they had plenty of help. On the first night that the moon was full, a silent gathering of bears, crows, coyotes, and one wolf, hid themselves behind the rocks at the mouth of the canyon, and waited.

Presently a crow, who had been stationed far up in the canyon, flew down to tell Kaw that Kil-fang and his pack were coming.

Silently the old crow flew around among his helpers to give the final instructions. Then all waited.

It seemed hours before the pack were heard approaching the narrow passage. At last old Kil-fang, with three of his largest followers, trotted through the narrow pass.

Then came a sharp "Caw," followed by the tumbling of rocks that separated the leader from his pack. There followed the most unearthly noise a wolf ever heard.

For a moment the great Kil-fang and his three companions seemed uncertain what to do, and too

Wongo and the Wise Old Crow

scared and confused to decide which way to run.

Then, with the booming of the drum, the growls of running bears, and yapping of coyotes, there came a great snow-white wolf, on whose back sat a black screeching object—a combination fearful to see.

This was too much for Kil-fang and his companions. With howls of terror, they fled down the valley in a panic, followed by a yelping, barking mob. But even the fleetest pursuers could not keep up with them, and soon Kil-fang and his followers disappeared in the moonlight.

Then the noise-makers ran up along the canyon rim to frighten the now leaderless pack. But though the crows flew low and the coyotes ran fast no trace of the wolves could be seen. They had vanished into the north, to return no more.

When the noise-makers had all gathered again in the moonlight, they chattered, yapped and laughed over the scattering of Kil-fang and his pack, and over the fearful appearance of old Rip, whom Cho-gay had skillfully painted with pipe-clay.

Their night's work had been a complete success and all agreed that Kaw's plan had been a great one and that, with the powers of Cho-gay and the wisdom of the old crow, they could now defeat all enemies who might attempt to disturb the happy

Cho-gay of Timbertangle

state of the peaceful hills and valleys of Timbertangle.

As the joyous company prepared to depart for their dens, caves, and nests, Kaw flew up to the top



of a near-by tree and after stretching his wings and shaking the dust from his feathers, he sang:

“ Where, oh where, is the great wolf clan,
That came to fight and kill?
With cowardly hearts, in fear they ran;
I’ll bet they’re running still! ”

Wongo and the Wise Old Crow

“ And so with all who brag and boast,
And try to rule by fear;
They're always scared and frightened most
When no real danger's near!

“ So let us live by justice and
Kill only when there's need.
Then there'll be peace in Black Hill land,
In place of fear and greed! ”



The Thunder Drum

CHAPTER 1

THE YEAR OF THE GREAT THIRST

*The shadows of Timbertangle Wood
Have hidden many a tale
Of wild adventure and treasure trove,
And magic of forest trail.*

*But here is a tale as it came to me,
And I'm told that it's really true
(By the little black bird who told it to me!)
So I'm handing it on to you!*

WONGO, the little bear, stood at the entrance to his cave, his head hanging almost to his paws. He looked and felt very lonely and discouraged. He was weak and hungry and his friend Kaw, the wise old crow, was away. Wongo did not know where he had gone and did not know what to do without him. The world seemed a sad, dark place.

The sides of Wongo's empty stomach seemed to rub together and call for food, but stronger, much

Wongo and the Wise Old Crow

stronger than that was the call of loneliness in his heart. He felt that if he were left this way much longer he would just lie down and die, all by himself. But Wongo did not die, as you shall see. This is a tale of adventure and great Magic, and let it never be forgotten that the little bear did his part in the Magic and did it well.

It was the year of the great thirst in Timbertangle — a year that all animals have good reason to remember, the year of the warm winter, when no snows came to melt into streams and pools in the spring.

All things that should have been green and fresh hung brown and dusty and rattled at the touch. Berries dried on the stem, before they were ripe, and nuts, when they were picked, were found to be just little withered specks in their hollow shells. Most of the streams were merely beds of bleached boulders, white with dust, and only here and there, where water had been a rushing torrent in years past, was there a tiny trickle between the stones — just enough to satisfy the thirst of the many animals of Timbertangle. Even these little streams grew scantier each day and first one and then another dried up altogether.

It had been many, many moons since any rain had fallen and the larger animals were mere ghosts

The Thunder Drum

of themselves, for the smaller animals on which they fed had long ago died, or gone away in search of the green things on which they lived.

It must not be thought that Kaw, the crow, had been idle in all this time. He had flown many a day's journey in every direction to see if he could find water, but always came back with the same tale — no rains had fallen anywhere and everywhere growing things were brown and dry and all living things cried for water.

A sort of watchman of Timbertangle was Kaw, for the little crow seemed never to sleep and there was not much that escaped his bright eyes. It was a mystery to many of the animals why Kaw and Wongo were on such friendly terms, the quick, alert bird and the lumbering little bear, but they certainly were almost always together, for seldom was Wongo seen that somewhere in the tree tops could not be distinguished the sheen of Kaw's black feathers.

Wongo's head dropped lower and lower as he considered these things and he grew more and more lonely and depressed, when suddenly he jerked up with a start! Without preliminary flutter or noise of any kind the voice of Kaw broke sharply in on his sad thoughts:

Wongo and the Wise Old Crow

“ Stand on your head and jig and dance,
Or wiggle your legs and howl and prance;
But *don't* stand there with a hanging head,
As if some friend of ours was dead!
What awful thing has happened now,
That you should wear such a troubled brow? ”

Wongo looked up and heaved a great sigh of relief. There sat Kaw on his accustomed limb, and immediately the world seemed a different, brighter place.

“ Well, I'm glad to see you're alive anyway,” continued the crow. “ You hadn't moved since I landed here. I have been watching you for some time and was beginning to wonder if you had learned to sleep standing up. Anything very terrible happened while I was away? ”

“ Nothing worse than when you were here,” said Wongo. “ Where in the world have you been? Have you found anything? ”

“ Well, y-e-s — and no,” said Kaw, a bit doubtfully, answering the last question. “ I've found an idea and ideas can be very helpful sometimes. You can never tell. Have you seen Cho-gay, the Indian boy, lately? ”

“ Not very lately,” said Wongo. “ Why? ” He sat back on his haunches. Things did not seem so dark now with Kaw back, even though the old

“Just follow me,” cried Kaw, “and you shall see”



The Thunder Drum

crow himself was exceedingly dark, and Wongo's hollow insides did not seem to cry nearly so loudly for food.

“That can wait,” said the crow, and cocked his head on one side. “Not hungry, are you?” asked he, and pretended to jump with fright at the snort let out by the little bear. “Oh, well, don't eat *me*, but I happened to find out just a short while ago where old Chac, the gray wolf, who fell two days ago and broke his neck, kept his meat. There's some there yet.”

Gone was Wongo's despondency. He sprang to his feet and sniffed the air. “Where?” was the single word he uttered, and Kaw, with a great pretense of hurry and bustle, flapped his wings and rose from his limb, crying as he did so:

“Just follow me
And you shall see —
My nose is true,
And yours is, too.
Please use it now,
As you know how;
But don't be long,
The smell is strong,
And may be stronger
If we're longer.
It may meet us —
Even cheat us —
For we'll lose it

Wongo and the Wise Old Crow

And confuse it,
If we meet! ”

“ Oh, hush! ” shouted Wongo. “ You make my head buzz. What are you talking about? ”

“ Oh, I don’t know, ” answered Kaw. “ If the smell should meet us, *which* would be the meat? That’s what I want to know — meet bear or bear meat — I can’t see much difference — ” But he got no further. He had been flying from tree to tree, giving Wongo plenty of time to follow on his rather wabbly legs, and now there was no doubt but that they had come to the place to which he had referred, and Wongo paid no further attention to Kaw for a time. The little bear wondered, as he ate, why the other animals had not found the meat, for, as Kaw had said, the smell was certainly plain and strong. He found a fairly good supply of mountain sheep in the cache, but where old Chac had killed it he could not imagine. It was good, though, and he was thankful to have his stomach again filled.

When he had eaten until he was satisfied and had carefully hidden what remained of the meat, Wongo turned gratefully to his old friend, who sat preening his feathers on a near-by cottonwood tree.

“ Now I am ready to listen to what it was you

The Thunder Drum

were going to say awhile ago," he said. "What about Cho-gay?"

Kaw did not answer for a moment, but continued his cleaning operations. Presently, with a final shake, he settled himself on his limb and looked down at Wongo.

"Have you anything particular to do this morning?" he asked, as if in idle questioning.

"What about Cho-gay?" Wongo asked again. "You had something to tell me about him."

"Patience, patience, my young friend," said the old crow gravely. "I shall come to that presently."

Wongo felt very comfortable and lazy now. He stretched himself out on a warm rock in the sun and waited good-naturedly for what his friend had to say. He grunted with satisfaction and contentment as he fuzzed out his hairy coat and felt the rays of the sun sink down to his skin. When Wongo had eaten his fill he always was sleepy.

"As you evidently haven't anything to do this morning," continued the crow, "I'll go on with what I was going to say."

"Go on," grunted Wongo, and his eyes were nearly closed.

"For goodness sake *don't* go to sleep!" called Kaw, suddenly alert. "There are things to do, and

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to do *now* if we expect to see another winter in Timbertangle — Here! Wake up! ”

“ What’s the matter? ” grunted Wongo. “ Who’s going to sleep? I was never more awake in my life. ” With a great effort, he opened his eyes wide to prove what he said. “ What is there to do and who is going to do it? ”

“ Well, that sounds more like it, ” said Kaw. “ If you really *are* awake, come on over to Chogay’s cave and we will talk there. ”

The little bear got up very slowly, and shook himself carefully all over, beginning with first one leg and then the other and ending with the little flap he called a tail.

“ All right, I’m ready, ” he said, “ only it seems to me the really sensible thing to do would be to take a nap. ”

Kaw chuckled. “ It’s plain to me the nap will soon take you if you don’t take it, if we wait here one minute longer. This is no time for naps, my friend. You and I have work to do. I have a plan, you see. ”

“ No, I don’t see, ” said Wongo, a trifle crossly. “ You mean you know of a place where we can get a good supply of water? ”

“ N-o, not exactly — but — well, come on and you’ll see later. ” Kaw flopped from his tree and

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flew slowly off in the direction of Cho-gay's cave, the little bear following, a bit reluctantly, in his wake. Wongo was still sleepy and not a little puzzled by Kaw's words. Curiosity as to what was meant, as much as loyalty to his friend, now spurred him on.

Kaw soon disappeared through the branches of the trees and the little bear followed slowly, his tongue lolling out of his mouth, as he wished in vain for a cool drink.

CHAPTER 2

GRAYHEAD, THE GRIZZLY

WONGO had gone only a short distance, following Kaw towards Cho-gay's cave, when he heard a voice coming from a little clearing ahead of him and recognized it to be the voice of old Grayhead, an ancient grizzly who had lived long in Timbertangle and had known Wongo's father. The old bear was possessed with the idea that he was chief of the animals of the region and never tired of telling how he won his position, much to the weariness of his hearers, who had secretly nicknamed him "Old Waggle-jaw," but who never dared mention the name to his face. For, though he was old, Grayhead was still easily the biggest and strongest bear in Timbertangle, and none would care to invite a swing from one of his mighty paws. So his tales had to be listened to with grave faces; but once behind his back his listeners would laugh at him and mock him and the name of "Waggle-jaw" was freely used.

Wongo felt too lazy to walk around the clearing and thus avoid meeting old Grayhead, so he went

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straight on, much to his regret a few minutes later. He walked into the clearing, looking neither to right nor left, and attempted to cross it without being stopped, but he reckoned without Grayhead.



The old bear looked up with a grunt of satisfaction and spoke to a group seated about him: "Here is one who knows that I tell the truth, for his father was there. Wongo, I was just about to tell these friends here of the act of daring and courage

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that made me chief of Timbertangle.”

Wongo gave an inward groan and cast his eyes in the direction in which Kaw had flown. He thought he could see him far away, flitting among the trees.

“ I can’t stop now,” he said hurriedly. “ Some other time — ”

Old Grayhead caught him by the leg and pulled him down toward him.

“ Not so fast, my young friend,” he said. “ Who has a better right to your time than I—your chief? Come, it will not take long. I just want you as witness to the truth of what I say.”

A far-off voice came back through the trees:

“ Come on, come on, slow poke! ”

“ I *can't!* ” shouted Wongo. Forgetting himself in his anger at being detained, he called out, “ It’s ‘Waggle-jaw!’ ”

Old Grayhead looked at him and frowned deeply.

“ What do you mean by shouting at me in that way? And who or what is ‘Waggle-jaw’? ” He had evidently not heard the call of the crow, and the other animals (two bears and a gray wolf) looked startled and exchanged strange glances. Wongo was startled, too, and frightened at what he had said in his annoyance. He longed to escape but saw no immediate chance, as old Grayhead

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held him tight by the leg awaiting his explanation of the name "Waggle-jaw."

"It's — it's — it's an animal —" stammered the little bear, and a snicker passed between the two bears and the wolf, and he heard an echo of it from a near-by tree and knew that Kaw had returned to discover the cause of his delay.

"An animal?" repeated Grayhead. "Called 'Waggle-jaw'? I never heard of it. It can't be in Timbertangle."

"Yes," said Wongo, picking up courage, "that's where I was going now. It's a queer animal, and I was going to hunt it."

"Humm-m," said Grayhead. "What *kind* of an animal? Does it look good to eat?"

The bears and wolf gave a queer, smothered yell at this and Grayhead looked up with a threatening frown.

"Silence, there! Have more respect for your elders. If there is an animal in this forest that can be hunted down and eaten, it is for me, your chief, to do it. But tell me where it was that you last saw this — this — 'Wabble-jaw,' Wongo. We will all go and find him."

Wongo wriggled uneasily and cast an imploring glance up at the tree where Kaw sat smoothing his feathers. He was in a trap and he looked

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hopefully to his friend to get him out, as he usually did, but Kaw made no sign.

“ He — he — wasn’t far from here — ” began the little bear uncertainly, when to his great relief and joy Kaw broke in, clearing his throat several times to gain the attention of the group below him, and addressing himself particularly to Grayhead —

“ I believe,” he began, with a little cough, “ that I know more about this ‘ Waggle-jaw ’ than anyone else, and, er — with your kind permission I’ll tell you about him — especially as our friend Wongo seems to be a little short of breath.

Grayhead nodded shortly and Kaw went on:

“ Now, ‘ Waggle-jaw ’ lives fairly near here — that is, at times. Then again he lives quite far away, for he isn’t always at each place — as is the way with most of us. As to how he *looks* — w-e-l-l — ” Kaw began to drawl in a comical way, and a quick giggle broke from the other animals, as Kaw dropped into verse:

“ When once you’ve seen him face to face,
You’ll know him without doubt,
For on his head there’s not a trace,
When he is turned about,
Of any hair — except what’s there —
Nor on his back a spot,
Of fur or skin that’s dark or fair,

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Except where there is not.
And he's a fearful creature, too,
As you will surely find,
For he can bite a tree in two
With only half a mind.
The other half — so I am told —
He uses as a paw,
When enemies get overbold,
To club them in the jaw."

"Now, the reason he is in this neighborhood," continued Kaw slowly, "is that he has heard that *you* want to meet him and then, too, he is *very* fond of bear meat and this is his hungry time of year. I saw him as I passed a little while ago and, thinking to do you a favor, I told him that you were many miles from here — on the other side of the divide, in fact — and he was headed that way when I left him. S-o-o," drawled the old crow, in finishing his tale, "he isn't likely to make you a call to-day!" He looked rather self-conscious, as he ceased speaking, and sat back on his limb with an attempt at dignity as he waited for Gray-head to speak. That old bear was too much confused to say anything. He did not know what to think. He felt as if he should thank Kaw for saving his life, and yet he did not feel just certain about anything. He looked at the other bears, but they would not meet his eye, as they were quivering

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with concealed mirth. All of them, however, felt it wise to keep silent.

Before Grayhead could collect his puzzled thoughts enough to speak, Kaw began again:

“ I thought, as I came near, that I heard you telling of how you became chief of Timbertangle.” That was a safe thing to say, as it was seldom that Grayhead spoke of anything else. “ How well I remember hearing Wongo’s father, old Silvertip, tell of that wonderful time and of your heroic actions.”

Old Grayhead held his head high and looked, with an “ I told you so ” air, at his companions.

“ And I nearly laughed myself sick,” continued Kaw, “ at the picture he drew of the animals scrambling up the sides of the canyon as you held the great boulder against the flood waters that were pouring through the gap. It makes me laugh now to think of it! Haw, haw, haw!” and the other animals, including Wongo, joined with a whoop in his merriment, letting out all the mirth that had been filling them for the last half hour, in shouts of joy, rolling on the ground and clawing at the dry leaves until the tears ran from their eyes and the near-by hills echoed to their shouts. Grayhead joined in, rather feebly at first, but finally he laughed with all the vim of the others, not realizing

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that they were laughing *at* him and not *with* him.

When the wave of merriment had quieted down a little, Kaw spoke again: "That is the finest tale in Timbertangle. That reminds me, as I passed the



cave of the two cinnamon bears a short while ago I heard them speaking about it. I think you have never told it to them and they were wishing they could hear it first-hand." Kaw almost choked on the last words, but he got them out.

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Grayhead rose immediately: "The cinnamon bears, you say? I'll go now. I have nothing particular to do," and he was ambling off through the timber almost before the words were out of his mouth. As soon as Grayhead was beyond earshot the laughter began anew and Kaw almost rolled off his perch in glee. But suddenly recollecting his business of the morning, he attracted Wongo's attention.

"Come, we've lost a lot of time. Let's go," he called, and the two set off as if they had had no interruption to their journey.

CHAPTER 3

AT THE CAVE OF CHO-GAY

WONGO and Kaw found Cho-gay, the Indian boy, in front of his cave, cutting raw-hide into long strips — to make traps, he told them. He was plainly very glad to see them. Cho-gay had lived in Timbertangle since most of the animals could remember, though how he came there was a mystery to all but Kaw, who seemed to know everything. The little Indian boy was at home and on friendly terms with all animals and birds who attended to their own proper business, but it was well known that when a law of the woods or desert was broken, Cho-gay did all he could to hunt down and punish the wrong-doer, so he had some enemies, but many friends, in Timbertangle.

When the two visitors had made themselves comfortable on the rock in front of his cave, Cho-gay brought out a handful of seeds for the crow and for the bear some ripe berries from a little patch he had managed to keep green in spite of the terrible drouth.

After the manner of Indians, the animals were

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silent for some time, and did not immediately come to the reason for their visit, but finally Kaw spoke:

“Chu-ta-win, the eagle, is a friend of yours, isn't he, Cho-gay?”

“Yes,” answered Cho-gay, “the eagle and I are good friends. He really owes his life to me.”

“As I thought,” said Kaw. “Would he do big things for you?”

“I think he would do anything I'd ask,” answered the Indian boy. “Why?”

“Umm-m,” said Kaw, without answering the question. “Do you know where he is?”

“I can whistle for him. We have a signal. If he doesn't hear, there are those who carry the message to him.”

“Suppose you whistle now,” said Kaw. “No — on second thought don't! Chu-ta-win and I are not exactly on friendly terms; he had better not see me, just yet. I have a scheme on foot and it would be best for no one to know just what it is but myself. I'll tell you this much — I'm after water — much water — and I want to know if you two are willing to trust me and ask no questions.”

“Yes!” answered Cho-gay and Wongo at the same moment, and this ready answer plainly pleased the old crow very much. He gave a sigh of relief.

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“ Well, *that's* settled. Now for business. You, Wongo, must go up to the top of Skull-top mountain and on the bald spot that you know of there, make the biggest, thickest bed of leaves you ever made in your life.”

Wongo sat back on his haunches and his jaw dropped open.

“ What on earth — ” he began, and stopped short, for Kaw cocked his head on one side and snapped out:

“ What did I say —
Now there you go —
Just right away,
'Twas ever so.
Instead of going to your task,
You simply sit and gape, and *ask!* ”

“ Well, answered Wongo, a trifle sheepishly, “ you didn't want me to rush right off now, did you? ”

“ Yes,” Kaw remarked dryly. “ It will take you quite a while to get up the mountain and longer to gather the leaves. Make the pile big and deep, mind you.”

“ But can't I hear what Cho-gay is going to do, first? ”

“ No,” said Kaw, “ you'll hear all about that

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later. Run along now, for your job's very important."

Wongo left them, going very slowly, it is true, and with many a backward glance at the two. Kaw chuckled to himself:

"A good, kindly friend, my little bear,
Always good natured and merry;
Anything doing, he's sure to be there;
But curious — ? Very — Oh, VERY!"

He chuckled again and turned to Cho-gay:

"I want Chu-ta-win, the eagle, to take *you* to the Up-above Country. Have you ever been?" pointing to the clouds.

"No, I haven't," said Cho-gay. "Why in the world do you want me to go up there, and what would I do after I got there? You're asking much, friend Kaw."

"You promised to do as I said and not ask questions. Are you going back on your word?"

"No," answered Cho-gay slowly. "Go on."

"I'll tell you what we are going for on the way up," went on Kaw, "and as for what you will do, well, I'll be there too, you see, and I'll tell you that at the time. Tell Chu-ta-win to take you up, as you have important business in the Cloud Country. Suppose you call him now. There



Wongo left them, going very slowly

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is no time to lose, as we are, if we succeed, about to do a service for Timbertangle that will never be forgotten.”

“ If it’s a real adventure,” said Cho-gay, “ I m for it,” and he gave a clear, shrill whistle which was repeated some distance away and then again far off in the forest.

“ I’ll just step inside your cave while you talk with Chu-ta-win,” said Kaw, and suiting the action to the word he hopped into the cave-mouth.

After a short interval, there came a rush of wind, and Kaw knew that the great eagle had arrived.

“ You called for me, little brother,” said a voice, and Cho-gay answered:

“ Yes, Chu-ta-win, I have a great favor to ask.”

“ You have only to name it, little brother. My bones would have been drying on Skull-top mountain, if it had not been for you, and my heart is grateful. What is it that I can do for you? ”

“ I have some important business in the Up-above Country. Can you take me there? ”

“ Why, yes,” answered Chu-ta-win, readily enough. “ I am chief of the Air people, as you know, and have a right to entrance to the Up-above Country. I will tell them that you are my tribe brother and they will welcome you. When would you like to go? ”

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“ Now,” answered Cho-gay.

“ Well,” said Chu-ta-win, “ fortunately I have flown but little this morning and my wings are fresh. Have you a bit of food handy? We’ll both need a meal before we’re back? ”

“ I have a bag of dried goat’s meat and seeds of the pinyon,” said Cho-gay. “ Will that do? ”

“ Fine,” answered Chu-ta-win, “ bring it along. It has been many, many moons since I tasted the meat of the goat.”

So Cho-gay went back into the cave, and while he was getting the bag of goat meat, he whispered to Kaw:

“ The eagle will take me as soon as I get some food. Now, how about you? You say you are going, too? ”

“ Yes, I am going in disguise,” said Kaw in a low voice. “ Hurry just a bit with what you are doing, for you must do something for me before I can show myself to your friend Chu-ta-win.”

So Cho-gay fastened the bag of meat to a thong at his waist as quickly as he could and stepped over to Kaw.

“ Have you some red paint? ” asked the crow.

“ Yes,” replied Cho-gay.

“ Well, get it,” continued the crow, “ and paint me all over with it. Make my beak white. Hurry! ”

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Cho-gay hesitated for a long moment, but seeing that Kaw was very much in earnest, he took a small bag from a peg in the cave wall and went swiftly to work. He had long ago discovered many bright rocks and brilliantly colored bits of earth that could be carefully powdered and, when mixed with water, made wonderful paint. Then he had discovered the need of having something to draw with and had used small pieces of hide with hair attached, which he had tied about the ends of little twigs, and dipping them in his paints made great drawings in color of the animals and birds and trees of the forest, much to the admiration of all Timbertangle. He had never before painted a *living* creature, but he rather enjoyed his task.

When the beak was painted a snowy white, the crow turned gravely round for Cho-gay to examine him carefully to see that the disguise was complete. Cho-gay, almost choking with inner laughter, but afraid to show his amusement for fear of offending his friend, assured him that even his mother would not know him if she saw him now.

“ Are you *sure* I look all right? ” insisted Kaw.

“ Fine! ” answered Cho-gay, and grinned in spite of himself.

“ Well, we’ll go now. Introduce me to Chu-tawin as a friend of yours — Mr. Redskin, suppose

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we say — and be *sure* to say I have a bad cold.”

Cho-gay could not resist asking, “What is the trouble between you and Chu-ta-win?” but he was sorry the moment he had asked, for he could see, strange as it seemed, that the question had made Kaw uncomfortable. He gave the impression of being red in the face, but, of course, that might have been the paint, for he was red all over. He stretched his neck and hesitated for a second. Cho-gay felt he was going to say something sharp, but he seemed to change his mind and cocked his head on one side with a rather quizzical expression.

“What about asking questions?” Kaw said. “I’ll have to tell you about the ‘Why’s.’ Ever hear of them?” and without waiting for an answer he chanted in a low voice:

“There once was a tribe called the ‘Whys,’
Who thought to become very wise;
They went to the crows,
For as everyone knows,
A crow is quite bright — for his size!

“They asked very deeply of laws.
And of words quite too big for their jaws,
But the crows, with a sigh,
Answered every big ‘Why’
Very plainly and simply with — ‘Caws!’”



“The voice too,” mused Chu-ta-win

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The crow stopped and cleared his throat, with one bright twinkling eye on Cho-gay.

“ I thought you had some goat meat in there,” said a voice from the cave entrance. “ Are you waiting for a little kid to grow up and have it killed and dried? And who’s in there with you? ”

“ A friend,” called Cho-gay. “ I’m coming now,” and he stepped out to where the eagle was waiting. Kaw followed without a word.

“ My friend wants to come with us to the Up-above Country,” said Cho-gay to Chu-ta-win. “ His name is Redskin and he is a tribe brother of mine.”

Chu-ta-win eyed Kaw with a puzzled expression.

“ I think I have never seen your friend before. He is the largest red-bird I ever saw. He *reminds* me of someone, though I cannot think who. You are not of Timbertangle? ” he questioned Kaw.

“ No,” answered the old crow in a low voice. “ I am from the other side of the divide.”

“ The voice too,” mused Chu-ta-win.

“ Redskin has been hoarse for days,” spoke Cho-gay hastily. “ He does not sound at all like himself. Shall I get on your back? ” he asked, hoping to draw attention away from Kaw.

“ Yes, we had better go,” said the eagle. “ The wind is just right now.”

CHAPTER 4

IN THE UP-ABOVE COUNTRY

CHO-GAY climbed as quickly as possible to the broad back of the eagle and made himself comfortable between the great wings. He had to lie forward on his stomach, with his arms around the eagle's neck, as the smooth feathers, though warm, were very slick and he had no wish to slide off.

It was a queer sensation to feel the earth drop away from beneath him, as they rose swiftly into the air from the rock shelf of his cave, and the rocks and trees seemed to sink down to the ground. Cho-gay could hardly realize that it was *he* who was rising above the earth, he seemed to stay still and everything else to move.

Presently all Timbertangle lay beneath them, a great mass of tangled, brown tree tops, with here and there a bald knob of mountain rising above them. Even these soon flattened out into a mottled plain stretching far, far away in every direction — a plain that grew hazier and less distinct every moment, as they were flying very swiftly and almost directly up — and soon Timbertangle was

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altogether lost to sight as light, wind-blown clouds drifted between them and the earth beneath.

The eagle flew very easily, with no apparent effort, and his great wings rose and fell with a motion as regular as the beating of a heart.

Long before this, Kaw, feeling that he could not keep up with the strong flight of the eagle, had lighted on the broad back beside Cho-gay, and his bright eyes turned in every direction, taking in the surroundings.

The cool wind whistled by their ears, but Cho-gay's skin was tough from constant exposure to all kinds of weather, and the wind made little difference to him.

Kaw was enjoying himself thoroughly. "I only wish there was a pool somewhere near," he said in an undertone to Cho-gay, "so that I could see how I look. How about this color — will it come off easily?"

Cho-gay stared hard as the realization came to him that from previous experiments he had found that this particular color did *not* come off easily. He whispered this to the crow.

"Well," said Kaw, when this had been made clear to him, "that's nice — a pretty pickle, I call it. I must say I can't blame *you* though. There is some gain in everything, and no matter how old

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I get to be, I will never turn gray!" He chuckled suddenly:

"Who ever heard of a crow that was red?
Oh, bless my poor feathers and bones!
My friends will all think that old Kaw is dead,
And shed many big tears and groans!"

"Well," said Kaw cheerfully, "I'd better give you a few instructions while I have the chance," and he lowered his voice so that Cho-gay could barely hear. "You might as well know now that we are going to the Up-above Country to steal the Thunder Drum." Seeing a startled look in Cho-gay's eyes, he quickly added, "I have it all planned out, so there will be no danger to anyone."

"I was not thinking of myself," said Cho-gay gravely, "but you know if the Up-above people get mad they'll send terrible storms and blow down trees and perhaps do much damage."

"I thought of that," whispered Kaw. "The Thunder Drum was made, long, long ago, by a man-animal of your people, an Indian Chief of great bravery, and was, by some strange magic, stolen from him by the Up-above people. I've no doubt that one of Chu-ta-win's ancestors helped, for it would take an eagle to carry it up, so it's just as well that he helps us now. There have been many

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who have tried to get the Drum back to the earth-people, but they didn't have as good a scheme as I've got. All I will want you to do is to get the attention of old Chaco, the keeper of the Drum, on something else so he will not notice me while I scout around a bit. Ask him if he can tell you where to find the blue charm Wongo lost. It was the great charm of the Bear Clan and he has been afraid ever since that the other bears would discover that he has lost it. You know the Up-above people see everything that happens on the earth."

"What *good* will it do to steal the Thunder Drum?" asked Cho-gay.

"What *good*?" snapped Kaw. "Don't you know that it is the Thunder Drum that brings the rain? Every time Chaco, the rain-man, beats it, the people of the Water Clan pour water through the holes in the clouds and it falls to earth. If we once had the Thunder Drum in Timbertangle, there would be no more dry seasons, for we would beat it ourselves when we wanted rain."

"Look! Little brother," called Chu-ta-win, "there are the sun-clouds, and they guard the way to the Up-above Country."

A great bank of clouds rose before them, so white of themselves and so brilliant with sunshine that Cho-gay had to close his eyes, and when he

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opened them again, though it had been but a second or two, they had slipped through the clouds and were rising above a new and wonderful world. There were hills and canyons and desert, but they were all in the wonderful colors of the sunset and never remained long the same.

The trees were purple, with leaves of gold that glittered like polished flint in the sunlight, and there were lakes and rivers like huge splashes of turquoise. Strange animals ran and crawled among the bushes and the air was full of birds that flew close and talked to them, and others that soared above and below as if curious to see who these visitors to their country might be. A great hawk flew toward them, followed by several old owls and an ugly-looking vulture.

“The keeper of the gateway,” called Chu-ta-win, in a low voice. “He will ask why we are here.”

“Welcome to you, Chu-ta-win,” called out the hawk as he approached, “but who comes with you?”

“Two brothers of the earth born,” answered Chu-ta-win. “I have brought them to see your wonderful country.”

“What do they wish here?” asked the hawk again, and before the eagle could answer, Cho-gay spoke for himself:

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“ We come searching for the blue charm that was lost by Wongo, the bear. None of the Bear Clan knows where it is, but you, of the sky, see all things and can, no doubt, tell us where it may be found.”

“ Um-m-m,” answered the hawk, “ I have not seen nor heard of this charm, but you might go over to those of the Water Clan and ask Chaco. He may be foolish-headed enough to give his time to such things. But remember there are no idlers here and we do not welcome idle questions.”

“ Humph,” came Kaw’s low voice in Cho-gay’s ear, “ that fellow is entirely too full of his own importance. I’ll teach him something when I next meet him below.”

They were nearing the Cloud ground now, and presently landed with a springing jerk. Cho-gay slipped from the smooth back of the eagle and stood swaying a bit, as his legs grew accustomed to standing again.

Chu-ta-win was not at all tired from his long flight and seemed as fresh as when they had started.

“ Come on,” said he, “ we’ll take a look around. Everybody up here has his own particular work to do. Some are of the Water Clan and some of the Ice Clan. They make hail and snow. Over there is the place where the winds come from.

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They make lightning up here, too — all kinds, and eclipses. Ever see one of those? Look around, you can see for yourself, you have eyes in your head.”

Kaw gave a grunt and, in a very good imitation of Cho-gay’s voice, spoke for him:

“ Eyes in my head and ears in my head,
I’ve heard before all you have said.”

The eagle grew red in the face and answered haughtily, “ I was speaking for your entertainment and not to be insulted.”

Cho-gay answered hastily — he saw that it would be useless to explain that he had not spoken — “ I did not mean anything, Chu-ta-win. What I have heard before was not nearly so interesting as what you have told me.”

“ Well,” answered the eagle, somewhat satisfied with this, “ suppose we walk around a bit and see things. You say you are in search of a charm? ” He was looking at Kaw as he spoke, his eye traveling from the tip of the glaring white bill to the last red tail feather, and his searching glance annoyed Kaw exceedingly, especially when, after a moment’s puzzled thought, Chu-ta-win threw back his head and laughed until the tears dropped from his eyes.

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“ Now I have it! ” he cried. “ It is Kaw you remind me of. Except for the color you could be his brother.

“ Haw — haw — ” continued the eagle, “ haw — haw — haw — ! Did I ever tell you, Cho-gay, why it is that Kaw never speaks to me any more? Avoids me, in fact? ”

“ No, ” said Cho-gay, with an uneasy glance at the crow. “ Suppose we go on now. ”

“ Oh, it is too good to keep, ” insisted the eagle. “ It is the only time I ever heard of the laugh being turned on Kaw. ”

“ Kaw is a friend of mine, ” said Cho-gay, “ and a friend of Redskin’s too. ”

“ Oh, that’s all right. You will enjoy the joke. It is because your friend here reminds me so much of Kaw that I thought of it. He looks like him, except for his color, and talks like him. You aren’t related to Kaw by any chance? ” and Chu-ta-win bent down and looked closely at Kaw as he asked the question, breaking into another long chuckle as he did so.

Kaw was furious. Every feather stood on end with anger and his eyes flashed. He quivered from head to tail, and yet, to the amazement of Cho-gay, he did not answer the eagle but turned instead to him and spoke in an icy tone:

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“If your friend insists on telling funny stories when our time is so short, I, at least, do not need to stay and hear him. I will meet you at yonder lake.” He indicated a splash of blue water a short distance in front of them, and he rose into the air with all the dignity he possessed and flew off in the direction of the lake.

“Whee!” said Chu-ta-win. “Such language! Our friend is not very polite,” and he chuckled again. “He certainly reminds me of Kaw!”

“What was the joke?” asked Cho-gay. “I wouldn’t mind hearing it now.”

“Our Red friend did not want to hear it,” mused Chu-ta-win. “Well, here it is, and you will understand why Kaw avoids even the sound of my voice. I was taking a nap one day; it was hot and I had dropped down under a big bunch of sagebrush. I suppose just my head must have been visible and even then I don’t see how he ever came to make such a mistake, but Kaw, coming up, took me for a lady friend of his and proceeded to talk most beautifully, and mostly in verse, something like this:

“Your dainty bill I dearly love,
Its graceful shape is sweet;
But more than all, my Lady Love,
I praise your clawlike feet!

The Thunder Drum

“ There never was a fairer bird
In all this land, I know;
To say there was would be absurd
And ignorance would show.

“ Your little wings are dainty things,
Each eye a midnight pearl;
Your glance a throbbing heart-ache brings;
Oh, be my birdie-girl! ”

“ That’s something like it and there was lots more. I listened for a while without moving a feather, but it finally got too much for me and I just had to laugh, and jumped out of my bush at the same time. It was the first time I have ever seen Kaw really what you might call ‘ flabbergasted.’ He fell over backwards when he first saw me. He didn’t say a word and he hasn’t spoken to me since. I can’t say I blame him, but it *was* funny.”

Cho-gay grinned and looked off in the direction Kaw had taken. Chu-ta-win followed his glance. “ I won’t say any more about it before our Red friend,” he said, and Cho-gay looked at him quickly, but the eagle would not meet his eye.

“ Come on,” said Chu-ta-win, “ there are lots more things for you to see.”

CHAPTER 5

RAIN COMES TO TIMBERTANGLE

CHU-TA-WIN and Cho-gay walked slowly toward a lake that lay like a great turquoise before them. Strange animals hurried, scurrying and crawling in every direction, and birds darted hither and thither.

The eagle indicated with one wing what seemed to be a huge mountain rising high in the east. "The mantle of the night," he said. "It is the blanket that is let down every night over the earth to hide the face of the sun, for if it were not hidden just so often all growing things would dry up. It is very old now, the night-blanket, and holes are beginning to show. We, below, call them stars, and if it wasn't for those holes," he added, "we would have no moon, for when the moon is thin and pale it slips through one of the holes and comes close to the earth to give us light to try to make up for the loss of the sun, for the Moon God has never approved of the night-blanket and is much more gentle toward earth folks than the sun."

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They were now near the lake and Cho-gay could see, near its edge, a little old man, sitting by a huge drum. The old man held a great padded stick in one hand and looked constantly to the east.



“ That is Chaco,” whispered the eagle, “ Keeper of the Thunder Drum. He looks toward the east for the signal of the sun, and when he sees that, he pounds the Drum and that is the signal for the Water Clan — see, those little fairy-creatures sitting all around the lake. They each have a gourd dipper in their hand and, at the signal of the Drum,

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they dip water from the lake and pour it through the water-holes to the earth. That is the rain, and the sound of the Drum is thunder, and the flash of the sun-signal is the torch that we call lightning. We will speak to Chaco. But listen," he added more cautiously, "we must speak in rhyme. It is the only language he knows, and if we speak differently he will grow very angry and send hurricane winds over the earth. That is the way they come. He has lungs of leather and his voice, when he is angry, is louder than the Thunder Drum."

"All right," answered Cho-gay in the same low voice the eagle was using, "you speak to him then."

Chu-ta-win looked at Cho-gay a little doubtfully.

"No, you speak first. It isn't so hard, but I'll probably have to do the real talking, as I've had more practice."

There was a snicker from over their heads and Cho-gay saw a flash of red, as Kaw dropped to a near-by bush, evidently with the intention of overhearing their conversation. The eagle was immediately uncomfortable and spoke to Cho-gay a trifle stiffly:

"Go on, why don't you speak? Chaco is waiting."

The old man had raised his head and was watch-

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ing them as they drew near. He was silent, waiting for the first word to come from them. It did not come very easily. Cho-gay was not quite at ease and cleared his throat two or three times before he began, haltingly:

“ We are from the earth below,
And we’ve come to see if you know
Where’s the charm of Wongo, the bear;
We can’t find it anywhere.
Can you tell us where it is?
Or, if not, then where it was —
Not exactly that I mean,
But where once it might have been? ”

There was a choking sound from Chu-ta-win and an echo of it from the bush, where Cho-gay knew Kaw was listening, and then the eagle gave him a little push to one side and began hurriedly:

“ We have come, he and me,
To find out and to see
If your wisdom can show
Us the right way to go —
Just to see, or find out,
Quite without any doubt,
Just exactly the place,
Or the spot or the space,
Where the blue charm is hid.
Where he lost it — he did.”

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This was too much for Kaw. Such an attempt at rhyming struck him as too funny for words and his voice, subdued but trembling with mirth, came to them from the bush:

“ I have heard a constant rumor
Of the Rain-man’s sense of humor—
Let us hope that it is true—really true—
For of rhymes of man or bird,
That’s the worst I ever heard,
I am shocked, my friends, quite shocked, at both of you.”

Then in a voice mimicking Chu-ta-win’s, he continued:

“ Oh, where is the blue charm hid,
For he lost it, yes he did.
Oh, my goodness, gracious, gumption—what a joke!
For the stone was really his—
Won’t you tell us where it is?
It’s a wonder wise old Chaco didn’t choke.

“ But go on my friends, and ask—
I’m made happy by your task—
And if Chaco, here, can stand it, so can I.
Stand up firm and take your time,
All the air is filled with rhyme,
And, no doubt, you’ll strike a fine one, by and by.”

Chu-ta-win grew red in the face and shot furious glances toward the bush, but Cho-gay, with a self-conscious grin, made the best of the situation and

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kept his eyes on the old man, who seemed not to have heard Kaw's low voice, but was thinking deeply on what the eagle had said. Presently he nodded his head slowly and spoke in answer:

“ Chaco knows of what you speak,
And has seen the blue charm stone
When the clouds from Eagle peak
O'er the mountain woods have blown.
But there was no storm that night,
And the Moon God brightly shone.
It was lost within his light,
He can tell you, he alone.”

The two nodded gratefully to the old man for his words.

“ Come,” said Chu-ta-win, in a low voice, for the Rain-man was again looking toward the east for the sun's signal, and had apparently forgotten that they were there. “ Shall we go to the Moon God now? I doubt if we find him to-day. You see — what's that! ”

Cho-gay jumped suddenly, as Kaw lit on his shoulder and began to whisper in his ear:

“ Now! We are going to do it! Listen — I'll call Chaco over here, I know how. Then you and Chu-ta-win jump for the Thunder Drum and push it through the nearest water-hole. You see that big one, right there? That little water-creature

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cannot interfere. Then jump on Chu-ta-win's back and drop through the hole — both of you. You'll have to be quick and don't look back. The Sun God will blind you with lightning if you do. Tell Chu-ta-win it is for the life of Timbertangle we work — *now!* Quick!"

And Cho-gay breathlessly repeated to Chu-ta-win the directions Kaw had given him. The eagle looked shocked and astonished, but before he could protest Kaw called out in a good imitation of Chu-ta-win's own voice:

“ Chaco, quick! The Sun God's call!
Come! He's calling one and all!
See, his golden arrows fall!
Chaco, quick! The Sun God's call!”

As the old man rose hurriedly and confusedly took a few steps toward the east, Cho-gay leaped toward the Thunder Drum and with a sudden push sent it whirling toward the water-hole a few feet away and then, with another push, down through the opening into which it disappeared.

Kaw was at the hole instantly. “ Quick! Chu-ta-win! Quick! Cho-gay!” he called, and almost before the words were out of his mouth all three dropped down through the hole — first the eagle, who spread his wings instantly, then Cho-gay, who



All three dropped through the hole

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fell on the broad back and held on tight, and then Kaw, flying easily down after them with a chuckle of triumph in his voice.

Several pairs of eyes stared in furious amazement from the hole above, which now looked like an opening in a dark cloud, and great arrows of lightning flashed from it. Just then a loud rumble came from far below.

“The Drum! The Drum!” shouted Kaw in glee. “It has lit on the bed of leaves made by Wongo on Skull-top mountain, and the little bear is beating it with all his might and main. Hurrah! Hurrah! We’ve won! We’ve won!”

Just then great sheets of opal-colored mists began to drift toward the earth from the holes in the clouds and Cho-gay felt wet drops on his face. A little gray hawk, flying from below, began to sing in a high excited voice. As his words came to them more and more clearly the very air seemed to echo the music and all Timbertangle seemed to be singing:

“Oh, brown the earth and gray the sky,
And desert and stream and pool are dry —
But in the east the rain clouds fly.
Ah-heee, little brother, ’twill rain, ’twill rain,
Ah-heee, little brother, ’twill rain!”

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“ I felt a drop on my feathered breast,
The rain clouds come from the east and west;
I felt a drop in my sheltered nest!
Ah-heee, little brother, 'twill rain, 'twill rain,
Ah-heee, little brother, 'twill rain!

“ Now over the world a joyous hush!
Then comes the storm with a sudden rush —
The great drops patter on sand and bush!
Ah-heee, little brother, the rain, the rain!
Ah-heee, little brother, the rain! ”

Then, how it came down! It seemed as if Chaco and the rain-people above were trying to drown them. The rain came in great sheets and floods of water and the three drew in their heads as far as possible and shot down toward the earth almost as fast as the raindrops themselves.

Suddenly there was a cry from Chu-ta-win and he began to moan in a frightened voice:

“ One of the arrows from the Sun God must have struck me! I am bleeding to death! Oh, what shall I do? Oh, what shall I do? ” He began to sink even more rapidly toward the ground. Sure enough, a great, red stain was growing on his back and crimson drops were falling fast. When they reached the earth he lay still with closed eyes while Cho-gay and Kaw bent over him.

Suddenly the crow began to laugh and Chu-ta-

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win opened his eyes to look at him. Then he opened them wider at what he saw, and raised himself up, forgetting for a moment his fright.

“Where did you come from?” asked the eagle, “and where is Redskin?”

“Oh, Redskin,” answered Kaw in a voice that was choking with laughter, “Redskin is dripping off your back! The rain transferred him from me to you. Cho-gay declared the color was fast — but — Oh, haw — haw — haw — I don’t think even he knew how fast!” and then as he saw that the eagle was beginning to understand what had happened, he started to hop up and down in his usual, grave way, and to chant:

“Sometimes very dull is the eye of a crow,
But the eye of an eagle — Oh, never — Oh, no!
Oh, never, Oh, never —
For truly whoever,
Has heard of the eye of an eagle that’s so!”

Chu-ta-win watched Kaw for a moment, while the rain poured in a steady stream from his feathers and dripped from the bush from under which Cho-gay followed their every word. Then a slow grin spread over the eagle’s usually fierce features — perhaps at the comical appearance of Kaw, whose feathers were most wonderfully streaked with red

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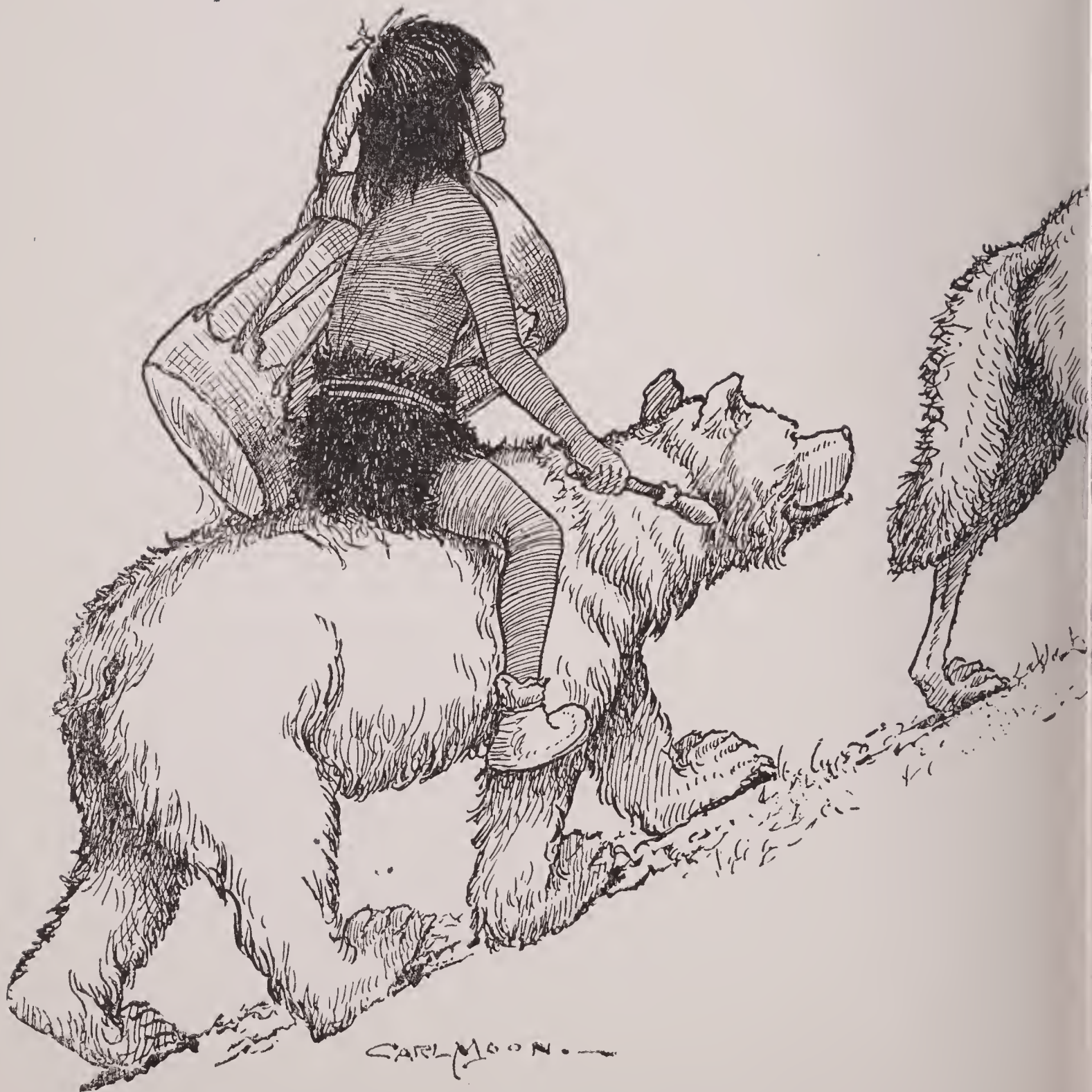
and black, with here and there a smear of white from his bill.

“ Well, we’re even, Kaw,” he said at last. “ I don’t think that either of us can laugh at the other in the future, and I promise not to laugh at you any more if you’ll forget to-day and not laugh at me! ”

“ A *bargain!* ” cried Kaw. “ Ho, all Timber-tangle! Listen to this:

“ The Crow and the Eagle have made a pact!
Oh, sing a song of the Thunder Drum!
This day and hour it becomes a fact!
Oh, sing a song of the Thunder Drum!
Never until the world shall end,
Shall either laugh at the woes of his friend,
But only help him those woes to mend!
Oh, sing the song of the Thunder Drum! ”







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