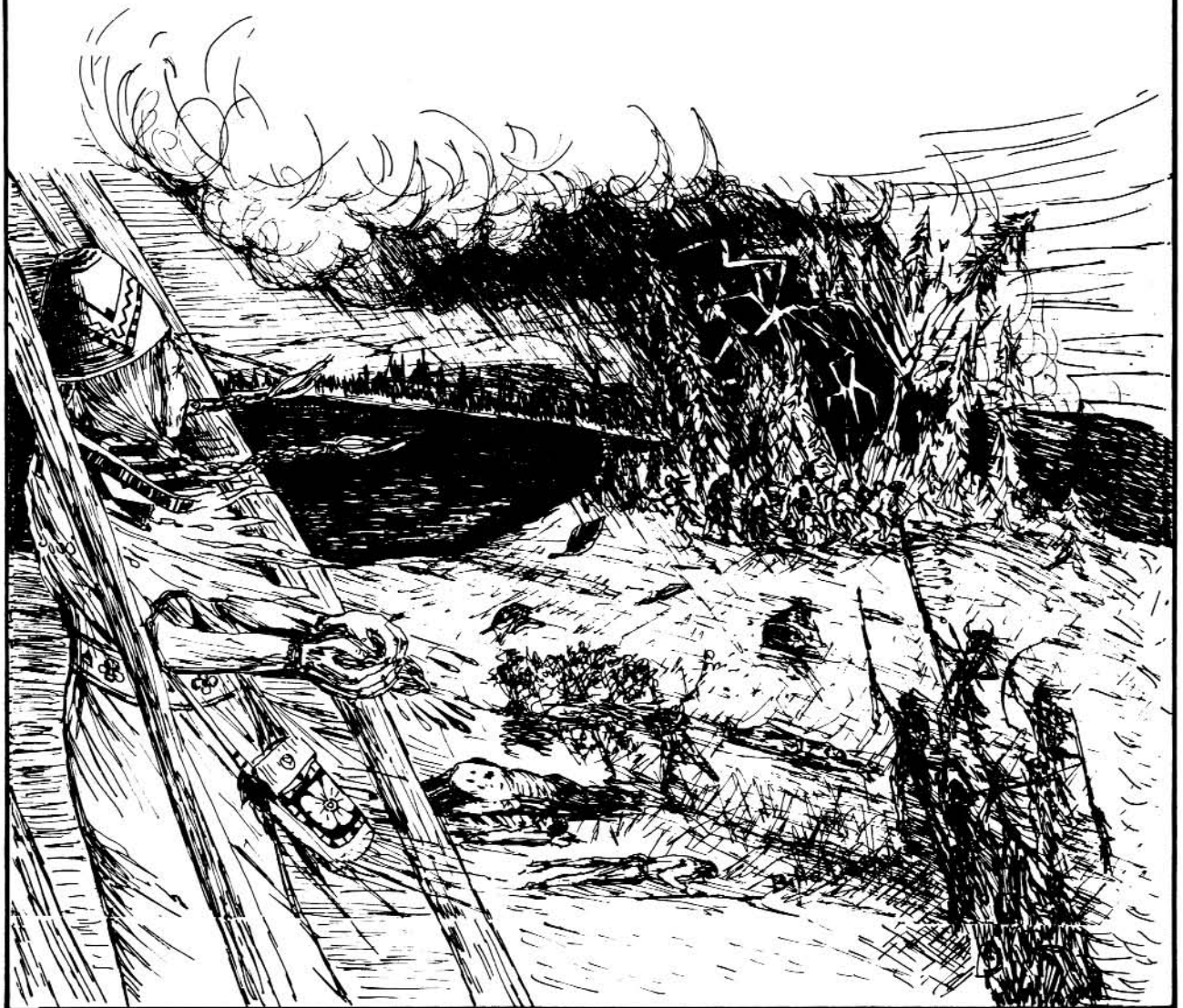


**MEDICINE WOMAN  
SAVES FLATHEADS  
FROM WARRING ENEMY**

(Flathead)



Developed by The Flathead Culture Committee  
of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of Montana

Clarence Woodcock, Coordinator  
Tony Incashola, Assistant Coordinator  
Lucy Skipton  
Mary Linsebigler  
Peter Finley  
Allan Beaverhead

Illustrated by Dwight Billedeaux

Committee Advisors

Agnes Vanderburg  
Christine Woodcock  
Mitch Smallsalmon  
Mose Chouteh  
Louise McDonald  
Louise Vanderburg  
Eneas Pierre

Joseph Coburn, Director  
Pacific Northwest Indian Reading and Language Development Program  
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

Developed by the Pacific Northwest Indian Reading and Language  
Development Program, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory,  
300 Southwest Sixth Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97204

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# MEDICINE WOMAN SAVES FLATHEADS FROM WARRING ENEMY

(Flathead)

There were many Flathead Indians moving camp. As they walked slowly along, they formed a long line. In this line were three friends, "Louie Many Names," his older brother Charlie and one of Louie's friends, "Bitter Bow String".

These three friends walked together. Turning to his friends as they were walking, Bitter Bow String said, "Since this morning when I woke up, my forehead has been twitching. It won't quit. Maybe I'm going to get shot in the head. That is what I think."

"Me, too!" My heel has been twitching all morning. Maybe I'll get shot there," Louie replied. The Indians traveled a long way before they set up camp. Earlier they had captured a woman from an enemy camp who had been hunting buffalo.

The next morning at daybreak the leader of the Flatheads told some of the men, "Turn her loose. Untie her and take her back halfway. Take her off the horse. She can go back to her people on her own. Don't kill her." Several men took her back in the direction of her camp.

In the meantime, the two enemy tribes had unknowingly passed each other somewhere along the way. The enemy, having returned to their camp after hunting buffalo, were told by their people, "One of our women has been captured."

Early the next morning the enemy attacked the Flatheads. The Flathead tepees were close together and the door corners were spread out until they touched. They were tied together. All of their horses had been brought into this circle of tepees.

The Flathead camp was near a lake. At the end of the lake there were some springs and a wooded knoll. The area around this knoll was clear and level. Further beyond this point there was a little knoll higher than the first one. This is where the enemy stopped, dismounted and sat down, completely covering the knoll. Another group of the enemy attacked and started shouting at the Flatheads. The Flatheads then fired back at them.

In the wooded area, Charlie and other members of the tribe were fighting. Louie and two friends hid in a clearing where buffalo had rolled around in the dirt. It was deep and well protected. From here Louie could see the tepees nearby. The horses inside the circle of tepees were running around. Soon horses began to fall and die as they were hit by stray enemy bullets.

Both of Louie's partners had rifles, but he only had a bow and arrows. Just opposite these three men, the enemy advanced. They were led by a man with an Indian flag. He had pulled the flag out of the ground and now jumped up and down as he approached the three men. He then layed down and stuck the flag back in the ground. The rest of the men had to catch up with the man with the flag.

It was frightening for these three friends. The enemy was shooting at them. There were many, many Indians, although some just stood around watching. They weren't shooting at the Flatheads. If they had been shooting, all of the Flatheads would have been killed in a short time.

On one side of Louie Many Names lay a white horse. A man named Swollen Feet was shooting from behind it. Later, Louie looked at Swollen Feet and saw that he was lying there, not moving. He was dead. He had been shot right in the middle of his forehead. Meanwhile, the man with the Indian flag was moving in closer to Louie and his friends.

On the other side of Louie, Bitter Bow String squatted down on the ground and started to imitate a Prairie Chicken. He jumped up and down while squatting on his feet. A shot was heard and Bitter Bow String fell to the ground. He turned over and sat back up. Louie asked him what happened.

"Nothing, I guess. I don't think I got hit," Bitter Bow String said. He had his gun next to him and that is what was hit. The enemy, thinking he was hit, all shouted.

The Indian flag was once again pulled out and moved forward toward the Flatheads. The enemy continued following the man with the flag. The next time they moved they would reach the Flatheads.

Bitter Bow String told his two friends, "Let's run. All the others have run back to camp. There are just three of us here. Come on." He jumped up. "Go on! You take the lead," he told them.

Louie and his friend jumped up. They dodged around. They didn't run straight. Close to the tepees were rawhide bags packed with meat. The bags were piled up high to form a barricade. Louie's friend was in the lead and got hit as they neared the rawhide bags. Louie heard a loud thud when he was hit. He had just jumped over the rawhide bags when he was hit in the heel. That was why his heel was twitching the day before.

Louie had just gotten to where the rawhide bags were piled when he heard a hard striking sound. He looked back and saw Bitter Bow String fall face down. Louie ran back and grabbed him, sat him up and saw blood pouring down his face. "Are you alive?" Louie asked, as he held him in his arms.

"Yes, I am alive," Bitter Bow String answered as he put his hand to his head. He was bleeding pretty badly with blood spilling down onto his face."

"Boy, they had me marked. They hit me in the head." said Bitter Bow String. He looked at Louie and told him, "Go, go, go without me."

Hearing a cry of pain from a nearby tepee, Louie jumped up. The enemy was already close. Louie ran and stopped in the doorway of the tepee. As he stopped, it



felt as though he had been whacked on the back. An arrow struck a pole on the far side of the tepee. Louie had been hit with the arrow. It had gone right through him. Louie looked back and saw the enemy standing behind him ready to shoot him again. Louie ran inside the tepee.

Inside the tepee, there was an old man crawling around moaning. He was the one Louie had heard crying out in agony. The old man's thighs were deeply cut. Louie had seen the material that the enemy used to make their bullets. They had taken long pieces of metal and cut them so that when they were fired from a gun they would twirl. These pieces had hit the old man. He was losing a lot of blood from his wounds but he told Louie to bring the arrow to him.

"You pitiful old man. You are barely alive. You are ready to die," Louie thought as he pulled the arrow from the pole. As he gave the arrow to the old man Louie heard someone yelling. He looked out and saw someone approaching on a white horse. It was Alexander, their leader.

"My children. My children. All you women, children and old people, don't get hysterical! Take your knives and try to get even! Maybe we will all get killed, so we must all fight to the end! We may all be killed but don't cry! Just do your best!" he told the people.

Because the tepees were close together, Alexander could pass behind them and be out of sight. The enemy stopped shooting at him. As soon as he was in the open, they started shooting again. As Alexander passed, Louie watched to see if he got hit. He kept going behind the tepees until he got to the far end of the camp. He turned and came back. He didn't get hit or wounded.

Louie heard someone singing. He saw a woman walking close to the doors of the tepees. He kept looking closely to see who she was. As she got closer, he recognized her as Elizabeth Who Likes to Jump Dance. She was Nez Perce but lived among the Kalispell Tribe. She was holding a long otter skin that was well worn and thin in places. This was her medicine power. She got a pail of water and soaked the otter skin in it. "Rain, hurry and come. I am desperate," she said as she sprinkled water from the skin. "When I was a young girl, you were in animal form when you talked to me. You told me if I ever got desperate that I was to sing this song."

The enemy shot at her every time she came in view between the tepees, but she walked all the way to the lake without being hit. The sky was clear and Louie watched her until she reached her tepee. Suddenly, Louie saw a small cloud coming. It was really low. The camp was immediately hit by strong wind and lightning flashed. The woman commanded the lightning to strike the brush on the little knoll where the enemy was. The lightning struck the knoll and everything split, shattering all over.

Alexander mounted his horse and told his people to start burying the dead. The Indians dug graves just deep enough so that when they covered the dead, they wouldn't be visible. A woman whose husband had been killed moved the ashes from where they had built a fire under the meat drying racks. She put her dead husband in this hole then covered him up with ashes. She then built a fire over him. There were over twenty men and one woman dead.

It was late when all the dead were finally buried. It was foggy and dark after the rain had passed. The Flatheads hurried away, fearing they would be attacked again. Bitter Bow String sat on his horse as Louie led it. He was still able to speak and his wound was already drying up. The Flatheads had loaded the rawhide bags filled with meat on their horses. If a rawhide bag slipped to one side as they were hurrying to escape, they would just cut the bag loose and take the horse. All along the trail there were bags packed with dry meat.

It was late evening when the enemy finally caught up to the Flatheads again, but the enemy was now few in number. Those Flatheads who were still well and able stayed to fight off the enemy. Louie kept going. He saw a string of horses moving along. Many still had bags on their backs and moved slowly. He saw his older brother Charlie's horse. He cut the rawhide bags off and started herding the others. It was at this point that Louie fell behind.

It was getting dark when the enemy quit shooting and turned back. Louie kept going. He was all alone and didn't know which way the rest of the Flatheads had gone. He continued herding all the horses that were left behind. The horses moved along on their own with Louie following. He traveled late into the night and figured he was lost for sure. If his people went some other way, he wouldn't be able to find them again. Yet he continued. He heard dogs barking and knew for the first time that he was on the right trail. Finally, he reached the camp.

"Are you Louie Many Names?" someone asked.

"Yes," Louie said.

"Your brother just got here!" someone yelled to Charlie.

"Thank you," Charlie said, "thank you, my brother. You are alive."

The Flatheads were short on food. They had left most of their supply behind when they had to run from the enemy. Early the next morning they started for home with the chief in the lead. They were really quiet. All the great warrior leaders had been killed. About midafternoon the chief began to cry. Then everyone down the line cried, too. Crying loudly, they called out the names of their dead fathers, husbands and brothers. The mourning for the loved ones lasted all day. They rode on until late that night before they stopped. Everyone was sad and tired. Silently, they did whatever had to be done before they went to sleep.

The next morning they continued on their journey. Anxious to get home, they rode without stopping until they reached home. It was good to be in familiar, safe surroundings at long last again.