

INDIAN GIANT & INDIAN MOTHER

(Burns Paiute)



Developed by the Burns Paiute Reservation

Story by Eleanore Capps

Illustrated by Jim St. Martin

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

Copyright © 1982 by the Burns Paiute Reservation
All rights reserved.

The work upon which this publication is based was performed pursuant to
Contract No. 400-80-0105 with the Educational Equity Group/Multi-
cultural/Bilingual Division of the National Institute of Education. It does
not, however, necessarily reflect the views of that agency.

Printed and bound in the United States of America

INDIAN GIANT & INDIAN MOTHER

(Burns Paiute)

While the Indian people were gambling (nah-yah-qui) Indian Giant (Numa-Tsa-Hua) approached. One Indian Mother heard the Giant and tried to warn her people but they wouldn't listen to her. They kept on gambling.

Indian Mother took her baby and hid under a big bowl. Indian Giant came and took all the people away from their homes. The only ones to survive were Indian Mother and her baby.

After several days of hiding, Indian Mother and her baby came out to dig for some yapa roots. Indian Mother left her baby leaning by a tree and started digging. Indian Giant returned and saw the Mother digging roots in the distance, so he began by pinching her baby. He tried to call the Mother by saying, "Your baby's crying," but she kept on digging, moving farther and farther away. She knew Giant would eat her baby and then come for her.

She came to a flat rock and began to dig a hole underneath it with her digging stick. She got into the hole under the rock and put dirt all around. When Indian Giant came, he tried to get her out but the rock would not give in to him. He told Indian Mother he would come back for her tomorrow and swallow her.

Indian Mother waited and waited until she knew for sure that Indian Giant was gone before she came out and started walking. Soon she came upon a mother beaver (hah-ii-sha) playing by the edge of the water (pah). Indian Mother told Mother Beaver how she had escaped Indian Giant. Mother Beaver told Indian Mother that her children had all gone fishing (pah-qui) and would not return until evening. Mother Beaver told her they also eat people. Mother Beaver gave Indian Mother some fish to eat and hid her.

Later that evening Mother Beaver's children returned, all saying the same thing, "Why does it smell like Indian?"

Mother Beaver said, "Why do you keep saying the same thing? You are only smelling my willow work." The next morning the children left again. Mother Beaver gave Indian Mother more fish to eat and told her, "There is an Indian Father by the mountain, but there is an Indian skull by which you will be passing. Don't disturb it."

Indian Mother left, and just as Mother Beaver had said, she came upon the skull. She went up to it and kicked it because she didn't believe Mother Beaver's warning. She then started toward the mountain again. After she got a little way from the skull, she heard a loud noise behind her. She looked back and saw that the skull was coming. She hurried along and came upon a family of rats (tue-ka-wah). She hid with them in the rocks. The skull kept hitting the rocks, saying,

“Where are you? Are you in there?” The skull tried and tried to get her but instead the head broke into pieces!

The rats said to Indian Mother, “That is the way to Indian Father, but before you get there, you will come to a cave where you’ll spend the night. You can’t lie down. You’ll have to stand up all night. There will be evil spirits (tsa-upa) talking to you. Stand still and don’t move. The evil spirits will say to you, ‘Where are you?’ as they pass by. Do not speak or move.” Indian Mother thanked the rats and traveled on.

Late in the afternoon Indian Mother came upon the cave. She remembered what the rats had told her and went into the cave. Just before sunrise, the last evil spirit felt her all over and named all her body parts. She kept still and the evil spirit left her alone because she had done all the things the rats had told her.

When morning came Indian Mother continued traveling toward Indian Father on the mountain. She came to a tepee where Indian Father (Numa-nah) lived. She went to the fire pit and put her foot prints in the ashes. Then she hid under some dry hides. When Indian Father came home, he noticed footprints in the ashes. Indian Father looked all around his camp and then said, “Who has been in my fire ashes? Come out, whoever you are.” Indian Mother did not come out.

The next day Indian Father went hunting and brought his pack of meat home. Again he noticed footprints in the fire ashes and said, “Who are you?” This was repeated until Indian Mother finally came out after five days of hiding.

Indian Father placed some meat by the fire to roast but Indian Mother would not enter the tepee. She stayed near the door. When the meat was done, he offered her some with the tip of his spear. After two days, she finally entered his tepee because the deer meat tasted so good to her. When evening came, they went to bed.

A rock, shaped like a platter, was placed between them. They would find babies on the rock every so often. The babies were of many different tribes. The babies were soon children who continued to grow and play. The boys learned to make bows and arrows, while the girls learned to make mahogany sticks (puh-tob), root digging sticks. The boys would fight each other with the bows and arrows, and the girls would poke each other with the digging sticks. After a whole day of playing war (nah-kog) with each other, they returned home in the evening, bleeding. The children kept fighting even though their parents were present.

Finally, Indian Father became angry with them and got up and he threw them in all directions. He picked up his spear and walked to the big water. His wife picked up a rock platter and followed her husband. They both walked on the water. The children began crying but they couldn’t catch their parents.

This is how Indians became divided people of many tribes.