

The Man Who Turned Into Buffalo Bones
by Laura Rockroads¹

naa náto'séhóséhósémo hóhta'heo'o hetane tsésto'séhéhotóa'koná'öse.
I'm gonna tell another story, about a man who turned into buffalo bones.

náto'séhósémo hétsetseha. éhvée'hoo'o. móstaéee'aseehevóhe hetane naa hē'e.
I'm going to tell it now. He was camped. They moved camp, the man and (his) woman.

naa móxhekáse'éehéhehéhaméhevóhe, móxhoháemo'onàhehevóhe. hákó'e móstaée=
And they had a teenage (daughter), she was very beautiful. They were

tósa'e=no'óhtó'e=no'keaméehéhevóhe. naa nēhéóhe móhvéehevóhe. nēhe'še
traveling by themselves away from the others. And they were camped there. Then

hó'ótóva é'òhketsèhetóhoono tsévéstomose néhe hetane, "náto'séhoháehótoanávo'omenehe
at times he would say this to his wife, this man, "I'm gonna have a hard life

hétsetseha a'e. náto'séhotóa'koná'o," é'òhkèhetóhoono.
now soon. I'm gonna turn into buffalo bones," he said to her.

ésáa'éenēšéhóvotséehesétamaehésesto. hévámóhe móstaéšého'áhéhenotóhe³
She didn't pay much attention to him. And here (perhaps) he was falling in love

hestónaho. mó'oseemo'onátamaahéhéhe kàse'éehe.
with his daughter. She was very beautiful, the young lady.

nēhe'še hó'ótóva éhnohtséstósesesto né=tsévéstomose, "hénáá'e tséohkenèhestomo?
Then one time she asked her husband, "What do you mean?

héne mé'éstse néamenéheve. "náto'séhotóa'koná'o," néohkéheve.
You keep repeating that. 'I'm gonna turn into buffalo bones,' you say.

"hénáá'e héne tséohkenèhestomo? éohketónéstao'o
What do you mean by that? What do they look like,

tséhotóa'koná'öse," éxhetaehoono.
those who turn into buffalo bones?" she said to him.

"hee éohkenaéo'o," éxhéhoo'o. "náhtsenaa'e. hó'ótóva náhtseméonaa'e,
"Well, they die," he said. "I will die. Sometime I will die early in the

náhtsésáa'evaméo'amentanéhe. naa tae'eotššéhéne tãháóhe hoéhose náháóhe,
morning, I will not be alive in the morning. Take me up there on the hill,

náháóhe náhtsenéveóhtáóó'e," éxhéhoo'o. naa ma'éše=náháóhe=néveóhtáóóeto
there I will be on a scaffold," he said. After I'm on the scaffold there

néhéne'ena náohkeoseehoháo'ahe ame," éxhetóhoono tsévéstoemose.
you know I'm very fond of pemmican," he told his wife.

"ma'xenovo'é'sěše'o, ame ma'xemanéstseo'o naa vetšěške. tseheta'éšenáto
"Take along a big lunch (for me), make a lot of pemmican and fat. By my head

néhéóhe énanomeo'o!" éxhetóhoono.
Put it right there!" he told her.

"héehe'e," é'òhkèhetaehoono.
"Yes," she would tell him.

"néhe'she névéé'ěše ma'éšenaéto ma'taěšee'eotšě(šěto) névéé'ěše
"Than four nights after I die, after I am taken up four nights

néstsev'éévàhéve'hooméme," éxhéhoo'o.
don't come and look at me," he said.

"héehe'e," é'òhkèhetaehoono.
"Yes," she said to him.

"naa néhe'she ma'tanévééno'e mähvóona'o hátáháóhe tsenéhmé'eanóhóeóó'e
"And then after four nights the (next) morning you will see a young man there

kásovááhe, tsetáhoenoto váotseváhne," éxhéhoo'o. "náhtona né=tsetáhémanóhóho
looking down from the hill, he will be mounted on a deer," he said. "My daughter

naa tsevéstoemóho né=kásováaheho," éxhéhoo'o.
will take water to him and she'll marry that young man," he said.

"héehe'e, héehe'e," é'òhkéhéhoo'o néhe hē'e. éstapéhévátséstánóse.
"Yes, yes," this woman would say. She agreed with that.

néhe'she móstaněšeeé'amevo'éstanéhevèhevóhe. mó'òhkema'xého'o'xéhéhe
Then they lived on as usual. He would bring in a lot of deer,

né=hetane. naa mó'òhkema'xeó'ěsívàhevóhe néhe. hestónaho hē'e
that man. And they (wife and daughter) would cut a lot of drymeat. The woman's daughter

mó'òhkevéstàhémaehévóhe.

would help her.

nèhe'she hó'ótóva tséhméovóona'otse éssáato'éehoo'o hetane néhe.

Then one time early in the morning he didn't get up, this man.

éxòhtóohkésé'hanóhoono né=hé'e heéháme. éssáamo'otséheséstse

This woman tried to wake her husband. He didn't move,

éxxaehe'ketó'oméshenaséstse. éhno'he'amena'évaooeséstse, o'xe he'ahtse

he was just motionless. His arm was sticking out, one side of his arms

éxhe'ametšéhešéóétsénése. éxòhtóohkeanovanomóvónóse, éxhótseanovanomóvónóse.

was up in the air. She tried to put it down, she couldn't put it down.

"náoo, naa ééshenèhevo'o," hó'ótóva éstàhéhoo'o, móstamé'etanóotséhéhe héne

"Oh my, he did say this," she said, she thought of what (he said) that

tséto'séhešéhotóa'koná'otsése. "táaxa'e, naa nàhtatónéšé'tovóneséstse. naa

he was going to turn into buffalo bones. "Let me see, what shall we do with him? Well,

móéšého'nèhe'xóvéhanetséhe tséto'séhešéhotóa'koná'ose," éxhetaehoono

the time must have come for him to turn to buffalo bones," she said about him,

tsévéstoemose.

his wife.

nèhe'she mó'osáneéepèhévanaehévóhe. "naa néto'seéee'eotséhone tséhéóhe

Then they prepared him (for burial). "And we are going to take him here

hoéhose. néstavovóhémanéstóvonone tsésto'senévéóhtáó'èse,

on the hill. First let's go make his scaffold, let's first go make

néstavovóhémanéstóvonone," éxhetaehoono. éstaosáanéhóenootaehoono. nàháóhe

it," she said to her (daughter). She exited, leaving him in (the tepee). There

móstae'enetséhetanenèhevóhe éšeeva naa nèhéóhe móskánome- mó=héva

they were busy working up (there) all day. And there he probably

-éahtse'hósema'xeméséhéotséhéhe tsétàho'éhohtatse.

ate a lot while they were gone.

éstaosáanemá'semanéstséhénovoho tsésto'senévéóhtáó'èse. nèhéóhe

They finished making his scaffold. (They used to

mó'òhketáxèšenàhevóhe mó'òhke- "four poles" mó'òhkèsé'ho'énèhevovóhe. naa
lie on there, they would stick four poles in the ground. And

nèhe'she he'ama mó'òhkèhótòxovéstóonèšemòhevovóhe hoto tsétótšèšketátsese heva
then on the top they would crisscross those which are little, maybe

méno'ko hová'éhe. naa nèhe'she nèhéóhe mó'òhketáxeéanàhevóhe tsénaese.
willows, whatever. And then there they would put the dead.

mó'òhkèhe'konèho'xó'oehehevóhe. "énéveóhtáóó'e," mó'òhkèhestóhehevóhe.
They would tie them securely to the scaffold. "He is on the scaffold," they

mósto'senèheškévèhéhe tsé'tó=hetane. nèhe'she é'osáanemá'tanenéhoono.
used to call them. He was going to do likewise, this man. Then they got done.

móhne'osáaneévaanòheohtséhevóhe.
They came back down.

nóoo, éstaxae'áhanenèšéševóhevóhe né=hé'e.
My, she was really mourning, that woman.

éstaóhkèxae'ama'xèhanéohtseséstse. éstano'séva'énàhtséhoo'o.
She would be crying as she was walking. She let down (unbraided) her hair (in

éstaosáaneévàho'hóo'òhtséhoono. é'osáanepèhévanóhoono -pèhévanóvòhoono.
mourning). They came back home. She got him ready, -they got him ready.

éssó'he'amena'évaooeséstse. móhma'évoéenenòhevovóhe. mó'e'sésanénohevovóhe.
His arm was still up in the air. They put red paint on his face (and) dressed

nóoo, naa nèhe'she mósto'sevé'hanòhevovóhe hea'e hotóavoemàhéva.
him up. My, and then they were going to wrap him up, maybe with a buffalo hide.

mósto'sèhóxe'etòhevovóhe. he'ahtse éxòhtaohkeanovanomónonoho,
They were going to tie him up. She would try to put his arm down, (but)

éssáatónèšeanoehe'onáohtséhehoo'o. náoo, "táaxa'e, naa he'ahtse
his arm couldn't come down. My, "Let's see, what shall we

nèstatón'ešé'tomónónónèse, éssáatónèšeana'óhanéhetse," éxhéhoo'o. "táaxa'e
do with his arm, it just won't come down," she said. "Let's see,

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nátaxae'é'èxomóvo," éxhetóhoono. mósto'seé'èxomóvohéhe.
I'll just cut it off," she said about him. She was going to cut it off.

tséstaéšééeto'sèhe'šéééšetsése tséstaéšééé=hová'èhéva=to'sevé'šetsèhetaxetsése
As she was preparing to cut with something, to cut,

éxhe'keanoena'évaohtséhoo'o. éstávásáatšéškeóehanéhetséneho⁴ he'ahtse.
his arm slowly went back down. His arm was no longer sticking out.

nèhe'se mó'osáanèhohpo'óetòhevovóhe. móstae'eotsèhohevovóhe. naa
Then they wrapped him up. They took him up. And

móstaéšema'xemanéstóvohéhe henovo'estótse tséhoháe'ahto. nèhéóhe
she had already made a lot (of) his take-along food (lunch), what he really

móstaéšého'kóéšee'anòhevovóhe tsésto'senévéóhtáóóétsése. hénéhéóhe
liked to eat. They finally managed to get his body on the scaffold. They put

móxho'tóvòhenovóhe tséheta'ešése.
it (lunch?) there by his head (where his head was facing).

éhne'osáaneévaanòheohtséhoono. náoo, éstaohkéxaeto'seéšéáhana'xanéhoo'o
Then they came back down. Oh my, she cried so much she almost collapsed,

néh=hé'e. móstáhoháenèševátamòhevóhe móstáhoháe- heéháme
that woman. She really felt pity for her husband

tséstavé'nèhešeto'sèhotóa'koná'otsése tséstaosáaneé'e'ame-
because he was going to turn into buffalo bones. ??

nèhe'se móstaosáanèho'névééno'éhanetséhe móstaosáaneéehéve'hoomòhevovóhe
Then four nights came, they went to see him after

névée'éše. éstaméhaeho'èhnéhoono nèhéóhe tséhméhae'too'eese
four nights. When they got there he was gone where

éxxaehováneehéhoo'o. hotóá'e he'konótse hótàhtse⁵ éhma'xéhóne'tanóhoonótse,
he had been tied up. There was a pile of buffalo bones,

hénéhéóhe móhma'xéhóvo'otséstséhenótse. hotóame'ko éhno'mámetáho'tátseneho
he must have gathered them there. There was a big buffalo head

nèhéóhe tséhméhaeho'a'ešése. éhmahehová'àhanéhétsénése tséto'seméhae'amemesése.
where his head had been. And all his take-along lunch was gone too.

mó'ésě=heva=áahtse'=heva=máha'hahtséhéhe. nóoo, "naa ééseněhevoo'o,
He probably ate it up already. Goodness, "Well, he did say this,

ééseněhevoo'o," éstaohkěxaeheta'xanéhoo'o né=hé'e. éto'sěhotóa'koná'o,
he did say this," she would say as she was wailing, this woman. "He was going to turn into

éněhevoo'o. éto'se- kóóhe éhótoanávo'oméetse," é'òhkěhéhoo'o.
buffalo bones, he did say. Poor thing, he's in a pitiful state," she would say.

něhe'sě éhne'osáaneévaanóheohtséhoono. éhne'osáaneéváho'eohtséhoono něhéóhe
Then they came back down. They came back down to

tsěhvěévóse.
where they were camped.

naa éněhevoo'o, "máhvóona'o táháóhe énésto'setáhoeóó'e kásovááhe.
And he said, 'In the morning over there you will see a young man.

vátseváhne éto'setáhoenoto. naa nétao'sěhemanóho," éxhetóhoono hestónaho.
He will be mounted on a deer. And you are to take him a drink," she told her daughter.

"naa néto'sevéstoemo né=kásovááhe. éeněheševéstse, éepěhévátséstótse eho
"And you are to marry that young man. Do that (and) agree with

tsěévěheto'emaněse," éxhetóhoono.
what your father wished," she told her.

né=káse'éehe móxho'nótaéšěéehoto'etanótse. éstáxae'éesstéstovóhoono,
That young lady was reluctant. She (mother) would talk to her, she talked

éstáxaepopěhévemóhoono.
real good to her.

"naa nómoněhe'sě," é'osáaněhetaehoono.
"And, let's go (let's do it)," she (daughter) said to her.

nóoo, éstano'tó'hovéhonenóse vee'e vó'héé'ěse. héněhéóhe móstao'sěhoehé=
My, she put up a tepee a good distance away. That is where he was going to

něhe tséto'sěho'eohtséstse kásovááhe. něhéóhe móstao'sevéstoemóhevóhe
live, the young man who was going to come. That is where he was going to marry

né=káse'éeheho.

that young lady.

éstaosáneémá'senéheto'eétáhéhoono. néhe'še tsé'osáméovóona'otse
They finished all that (work). Then very early the next morning

móstáhóva'xéhéhe né=hé'e. nóoo, éhne'eéšeáhtse'me'táhoeoeséstse nevá'eséstse
she went out, that woman. My, he was already in sight riding, someone,

váotseváhne éstáhoénóhoono.
he was mounted on a deer.

"venáto'éotséstse, éhne'éšeme'táhoeóó'e kásovááhe tsénéhestoestse.
"Get up quickly, he is already mounted, the young man who was spoken of.

tae'eotséstse, táhémanóxeha, mahpe tae'no'eotséstse," éxhetóhoono hestónaho.
Go up, go give him a drink, carry the water up," she told her daughter.

é'osáaneto'évonéhnéhoo'o káse'eehe. é'osáanepéhévanàhtséhoo'o.
The young woman got up from bed (rolled over up from bed, sitting up). She

éhnoohánóse mahpe. éstaamee'eotséstsenóse. éstaosáanemanóhóhoono
prettied herself. She dipped water. She took it on up. She gave a drink to him,

né=kásovááheho. é'a-ene=náháóhe=něšeé'e'a'enenéehoo'o. hó'ótóva
that young man. She stood up there for a time. Finally

móhne'osáaneanóhev'é'òhtsémóhevóhe.
she came down with him.

naa tsé'tó=hé'e móstáxaemá'sepéhéveéxanóhéhe héne vee'e.
And this woman finished preparing that tepee.

móstáhestoomanéhéhe. netao'o hová'éhe móstamáso'popéhévanóhéhe nēhéóhe
She made the bedding. She fixed everything up really nice where

móstao'séhevéxahehéhe. éstaosáneévaseéstséhnehoo'o mó'améhnéhevóhe.
was going to have her son-in-law. She then went back in (to her tepee) as they

náháó=móstaéstséhnehéhevóhe vééno.
came by. They went into (their) tepee over there.

é'osáneévaésta'xéhoo'o né=káse'eehe. nóoo, móhma'xema'évoénéhéhe néhe
She came back in, that young lady. My, he put a lot of paint on his face, that

hetane. mó'ée'onétáhévanàhtséhéhe, -onetáhévenenàhtséhéhe. móxho'nónanóo'èstse man. He tried to change himself, changed his looks. She did not recognize him,

hestónaho. mó'osáane- mósta(ohke)osáanéhéověšenáhéhe, naháóhe his daughter. She would go lie down, she would go

móstaohketséhe'òhtséhéhe taa'ěva. é'òhkésáaxaepéhévevé'hoomóhehoono. over there at night. She never did quite get a good look at him.

òhtšěšea'enó'netótsee'èstse móstaohkého'èhnéhéhe né=kàse'éehe. naa She would always get there after dark, this young lady. But

mó'òhkeéšěhoehéhe néhe. naa moméno é'òhkésáahoéhesèstse, he would already be (there), this (man). And sometimes he would not be (there),

mó'òhkemóného'o'xéhéhe hoháa'ešě taa'ěva. naa móstaohke- naa né=kàse'eehe he would later return with game, late at night. And while that young lady

tséssó'méohé'ěšenomése heva òhnéstó'séhósevóomanó'etsee'èstse was still asleep in the morning, maybe before dawn,

mó'òhkeéšěáhtse'hoseméoto'éotséhé=néhe, kàsovááhe. he would already have gotten up, that one, the young man.

móstatšěšěéé'amenéheto'eétàhehevóhe. They continued on this way for some time.

nóoo, éstaoseehoháhevéxahé'tanóhoo'o né=hé'e.
My, this woman really had a lot of respect toward her son-in-law.

éstaohkésáatóněš'ěexaeho'eohéhehoo'o⁶. móstaohketanéhetsèstovòhevóhe hevéxaho. She didn't dare go near there. She had in-law respect for her son-in-law.

néhe'se hó'ótóva móstaoseeháano'xéhéhe
Then one time after he lost a lot of sleep

néhe'se tséhvóona'otse móxho'nóšě'šéotsevótse, móhma'xenaóotséhéhe. then that morning they didn't wake up, they were in a deep sleep.

mó'ěšěáhtse'vóona'óhanéhe, mó'ěšěáhtse'ma'xéháaeho'táhanetséhe. naa tsé'tóhe It was already morning, it was already very hot. And this one

móstaéšamá'sepo'e'ovòhevóhe ma'etomono tséméhaevé'šemo'òhtávóxe'énàhtsesése.
had rubbed off all his paint with which he had darkened his face.

tósa'e tséhéóhe hevo'tanotse móhvovéhenéhéhe. nèhe'še né=kàse'éehe
Somewhere on his cheek he had a scar. Then this young lady

móxho'nótséhe'šképéhevé'hóómòtse né=tsévéstomose.
never did get a good look at this one, her husband.

nèhe'še mó'éépéhevé'hoomòhevóhe, móxxaeévèhe'keonémoomòhevóhe. nóoo,
Then she finally took a good look at him, she really scrutinized him. My,

éstàsó'hovenanovóhoono heho. mónéséhanevóhe. héne tséhvovéhenetsése
she suddenly recognized her father. It was him. By means of his scar

móstavé'senanovòhevóhe. éxxaehe'keto'éotséhoo'o, éhnèxhóva'xéhoo'o.
she recognized him. She quietly got up, she came out (of the tepee).

"náhko'e," éxhetóhoono. éstaésta'xeséstse nèhéóhe tséxhoetsése.
"Mother," she said to her. She came into (the tepee) where she (mother) was.

"hénová'éto?"
"What is it?" (her mother said).

"ótahe tavé'hoomeha tsévéstomemo. ésó'naóotse. tá'séháma nea'háanéhe
"Just go look at my husband. He is still asleep. I think that is

ného'éehe," éxhetóhoono.
my father," she told her.

"nóoo, ého éhotóa'koná'o. éoseehótoanávo'omenehe."
"Your father turned into buffalo bones. He turned into a pitiful state."

"naa ótahe néxhéve'hoomeha."
"Just go take a look at him."

éhne'osáanéhóva'xéhoo'o né=hé'e. éstàxaehe'keésta'xéhoono nèhéóhe vééno.
She then came out, that woman. They quietly went into the tepee.

nóoo, éhma'xenésó'enoméhoo'o. hótàhtse mónéséhanéhe né=hetane.
My, he was really snoring. Here, that was him, that man.

é'éveonémoomaesesto hestse'emo. éhnèxxae'évèhe'kéhóva'xeséstse né=hé'e. naa (?)
His wife really took a close look at him. She quietly slipped back out, that woman. And

móxho'hohevóhe vónkeveto naa hetóhoo'o, móhne'évähéesevaenóhéhe.
She had a (sharp) horn and her club. She went back and got them.

éstaévaésta'xeséstse. hestovóótse éstáho'a'o'tsenóhoono. náoo,
She came back in. She placed it on his ear. My,

éstamásóesevo'óhnótsenóhoono nēhéóhe. no'ka oha⁷
she really pounded it in. Just once

éstáxaetšéšééevá'nevávàhkeoesta'xéhoo'o.
he stirred.

"taa'enéhotóa'koná'oo'o, taa'enéhotóa'koná'oo'o," éxhetaehoono.
"Now turn into buffalo bones, now turn into buffalo bones," she said of him.

éstamónena'xévaenaehoono éstàheto- tósa'e nēhéóhe móhéva-
She just now killed him. She probably came and

éxòhtaééhéanàha'hamaehevóhe. mó'émàhaetaehevóhe ho'neho naa mato ó'kòhomeho.
threw him over a cliff. He must have been eaten up by wolves and coyotes.

naa énéhe'éstóséše. móhnešeo'e'kèhévo'eétàhéhe néhe hetane héne.
And that's the way (the story) lies. That's how he deceived, that man.

móhtaomého'áhéhenotóhe a'e hestónaho. naa móxho'nótamá'sésóhpèhoneto'eétaestse.
He wanted his own daughter. But he didn't make it all happen.

hena'háanéhe. énéhe'éstóséše.
That's it. That's the way it (the story) lies.

FOOTNOTES:

¹This story was narrated to tape by Mrs. Rockroads in the spring of 1975. It was transcribed and translated August 1985 under the Phillips Fund grant to the editor. Paragraphing guesses are by the editor. Minor proofreading and revisions were made April 1987, but, for lack of time, notation of pause structure was not added. A few hesitations or restarts are also not indicated.

²Mrs. Rockroads also narrated an English version of this story, which appears on tape following this Cheyenne version.

³This word literally means 'maybe he already wanted her'. This is the only text of which

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the editor is aware which contains the theme of incest. Its rarity as a theme was suggested to the editor by a knowledgeable Cheyenne elder.

⁴The usual order of the first four morphemes of this word is *éstásáa'éva-*.

⁵The usual position of this epistemic particle would be sentence-initial, preceding *hotó'a'e* 'buffalo'.

⁶The preferred order of morphemes through the preverb boundary would be *éstaohkésáaxae'éetóněš-*.

⁷The usual order of these two particles is *_oha no'ka_*.