## The Absent-Minded Indian<sup>1,2,3</sup>

#### Unknown Narrator

Hé'tóhe na'estse máto hová'éhe ta'se tsééemaehéne'enátanó'tomo vá'nehóhta'heonotse vo'estane tsé'éveó'osetanose heva tséstaéveó'osenétahévo'eetaese na'estse ma'háhkése taháóhe évaveto. Nánexhéne'enövo ohméseestse é'ohkehestohe. Vétanovéo'hé'e éhvo'estanéheve.

Nėhe'xóvéva é'öhkeosée'évèhoháeméoto'eo'o tsééšèhátaa'éhahese. Mósto'seméoasèto'eohtsèhevóhe tsé'öhkèsó'hoxomevöse tsèhéóhe méave'ho'eno vó'aehéo'hé'e.

Ta'méo'éxaneneo'o, nähtsenexhého'eoha'ovoo'o mo'éhno'häme, éxhetósesto he'óho tséá'enose.

Mó'osáaneotá'méoto'éotsèhéhe tsésto'seéševó'neotsetse. Móstáho'eohtsé'tovóhevóhe hestotseho tséhnéetsèse. Na'estse móhnáha'enöhevóhe. Mó'osáanetáxevonehnehnotóhe. Móstaosáaneasehoemöhevóhe tséhestöxetsese hestotseho. Éxaeno'tšehováneehésesto na'estse.

Ttséstaéšetšešehóvo'ooha'ovose éstasenohtséoohé'tovosesto néhe né = tsétáhoese. Éhvóhpe'xoénėsesto. Täháóhe tséstamé'a'xèse tsésta'óma'o'etse éssáavóomóhesesto. Nèhe'še mó'asetá'hasó'hehéhe nonó'hónó'e háá'èše éstähešenohtsé'ovosesto. Nèhe'še nonó'hónó'e móstanèšeno'nèševeohtsèhéhe. Nèhe'še tséhne'éšemé'èhnetsèse éše'hóho éhnéhnetameotsesèstse. Nèhe'še móhnèšèhóohta'ovo'hamèhéhe.

Éstaho'a'ovo'hamesestse hevenotse tséxho'tatse. He'óho tséá'enose anósema é'amóeóesesesto. Móhnehnohtsevóomaehevóhe. Éstaho'etáhoeotsé'tovósesto.

Éxaeno'kėhovánee'e na'ėstse mo'éhno'ha. Ta'se éxamae'éstsėhévoeotse vóhpe'xoénéhe, éxhetósesto.

Naa néváéso né = tsétáhoeto? éxhetaesesto.

Éstamónèhéne'enánòse. né = tséno'kèhováneehétsese móstáhoehénotóhe. Éstatšèšeánòhetsèheta'éotsesèstse. Tsèhéóhe hemé'kóne he'ama tsèhéóhe néhmäsóoomèstse! Éxhetósesto hestse'emo. Hená'hanehe né = ma'háhkése tséhešeó'ösetänöse.

### **English Translation:**

This is just one more of those regular stories that you want to know. Long ago, one old man who was not very observant did something stupid. I knew him; his name was Eater. He lived at Tongue River.

At that time, the older people would get up very early. They would go after rations very early in the morning here at the agency in Lame Deer.

"Get ready early, I'm going after the horses", he told his wife.

He must have gotten up early, just before daylight. He came to where his horses were standing. He caught one. He got on it. He started counting how many of his animals there were. One was simply gone.

After he rounded them up, he started looking for it (the missing horse) – the one that he was riding. It was grayfaced. There, when he came over the hill where it had been obscured, he didn't see it. Then he started loping his horse. On and on, quite a ways he went looking for it. Then more and more he was galloping his horse. Then, after the sun had come up, he gave up. He drove his horses home.

He drove his animals to where his tepee was. His wife was standing outside. She was looking for him. He rode up to her.

"One horse is just missing. It's just like Grayface vanished" he told her.

"And who is this one you're riding?" she said to him.

He came to his senses. He was riding the one that was missing. He lowered his head down. Here on the top of his head (he indicated), "here, hit me hard!" he told his wife. That's the way that old man was not observant.

# Morphological Glossing:<sup>4</sup>

(1) Hé'tóhe hová'éhe na'ėstse máto ta'se Hé'tóhe na'ėstse máto hová'éhe ta'se this.INAN also something one HEDGE

> tsééemaehéne'enátanó'tomo vá'nèhóhta'heonòtse tsé-ée-mae-héne'ená-tanó-'t-omo vá'nè-hóhta'heon-ot CNJ-around-all-know-want-TI-CNJ.2 just-story-PL.INAN

vo'ėstanetsé'éveó'ösetanösehevavo'ėstanetsé-h-éve-ó'ösetanö-shevapersonCNJ-PST-about-think.wrongly- CNJ.3HEDGE

tséstaéveó'ösenétähévo'eetaese

tsé-h-ta-éva-'o'ose-nétahev-o'eetahe-s

CNJ-PST-TRL-around-mistake-different-do.something-CNJ.3

na'estse ma'háhkése taháóhe évaveto na'estse ma'há-hkése taháóhe évaveto one old-DIM there.DIS back.then

'This is just one more of those regular stories that you want to know. Long ago, one old man who was not very observant did something stupid.'

(2)<sup>5</sup> nánėxhéne'enövo ná-nėh-héne'enöv-o 1-CIS-know.AN-DIR 'I knew him.'

(3)<sup>6</sup> *öhméseestse é'öhkèhestohe* öh-mésehe-t é-h-ohke-hestohe CNJ-eat-3.SG 3-PST-HAB-be.called

'He was called Eater.'

(4) *vétanovéo'hé'e éhvo'ėstanéheve* vétanové-o'hé'e é-h-vo'ėstanéheve

tounge-river 3-PST-live

'He lived at Tongue River.'

(5)<sup>7</sup> nėhe'xóvéva é'öhkeosée'évėhoháeméoto'eo'o

nėhe-'xóvé-va é-h-ohke-osée-'évė-ho-háe-méo-to'e-o'o

that-time-OBL 3-PST-HAB-very-about-REDUP-very-morning-get.up-3.PL.AN

*tsééšėhátaa'éhahese* tsé-éšė-hátaa'éhahe-s CNJ-PRF-old-CNJ.3

'At that time, the older people used to get up very early.'

(6)<sup>8</sup> mósto'seméoasėto'eohtsėhevóhe

mó-h-to'se-méo-asè-to'e-ohtsè-he-vó-he

INF-PST-going.to-morning-start-get.up-PCS-Q<sup>?</sup>-3.PL-Q<sup>?</sup>

tsé'ohkėso'hoxomevose tsėhéohe tsé-h-ohkė-so'hoxom-e-vo-s tsėhéohe CNJ-PST-HAB-get.rations-PSV-3.PL-CNJ.3 here

méave'ho'enovó'aehéo'hé'eméa-ve'ho'e-novó'aehé-o'hé'egive-whiteman-placeantelope-river

'They must have gotten up very early in the morning to go after rations here at the agency (lit. Whiteman giving place) in Lame Deer (lit. Antelope Creek).'

(7)<sup>9</sup> ta'méo'éxaneneo'o, náhtsenéxhého'eoha'ovoo'o ta'-méo-'éxanene-o'o, ná-h-tse-néh-hé-ho'eoha'o-vo-o'o

INT-morning-prepare-DEL.IMP

1-PST-CAT-CIS-PURP-go.after-3.PL-OBV

mo'éhno'häme, éxhetósesto mo'éhno'häm-é, é-h-het-ó-sest-o

horse-PL 3-PST-tell.AN-DIR-RPT-OBV

he'óho tséá'enose he'ó-ho tsé-á'en-o-s

woman-OBV CNJ-own.AN-DIR-CNJ.3

"Get ready early, I'm going after the horses", he reportedly told his wife 10.

(8) mó'osáaneotá'méoto'éotsehéhe

mó-h-osáane-otá'-méo-to'é-otse-hé-he

INF-PST-begin-EMPH-morning-get.up-RES.PCS-Q<sup>?</sup>-Q<sup>?</sup>

tsésto'seéševó'neotsetse tsé-h-to'se-éše-vó'ne-otse-tse

CNJ-PST-going.to.be-day-light-RES.PCS-CNJ<sub>1</sub>

'He must have gotten up early, when it was almost daylight.'

(9) móstáho'eohtsé'tovóhevóhe hestotseho

mó-h-ta-ho'e-ohtsé-'tovo-he-vó-he he-stotse-ho

INF-PST-away-come-PCS-TA-Q<sup>?</sup>-OBV-Q<sup>?</sup> 3.POSS-pet.of-OBV

*tséhnéetsèse* tsé-h-née-tsè-s

CNJ-PST-stand.up-CNJ<sub>⊥</sub>-CNJ.3

'He came to where his horses<sub>1</sub> were standing.'

(10) na'estse móhnaha'enohevóhe

na'ėstse mó-h-naha'en-o-he-vó-he One INF-PST-catch-DIR-Q<sup>?</sup>-OBV- Q<sup>?</sup>

'He caught one'.

- (11)<sup>11</sup> mó'osáanetáxevonéhnéhnotóhe mó-h-osáane-táxevonéhné-he-not-ó-he INF-PST-commence-get.on-Q<sup>?</sup>-FTA-OBV-Q<sup>?</sup> 'He got on it'.
- (12) *mó-s-ta-osáane-asė-hoem-ò-he-vó-he* mó-s-ta-osáane-asė-hoem-ò-he-vó-he INF-PST-DIR-begin-start-count-DIR-Q<sup>?</sup>-3.PL- Q<sup>?</sup>

tsé-hestòxe-tsè-se hestotseho tsé-hestòxe-tsè-s hestotseho

CNJ-be.so.many-CNJ<sub>1</sub>-CNJ.3 3.POSS-pet.of.x-OBV

'He started counting how many of his animals there were.'

(13)<sup>12</sup> éxaeno'tšėhováneehésesto na'ėstse é-xae-no'-tšėšė-hováneehé-sest-o na'ėstse 3-simply-also-now-gone-RPT-OBV one

'One (of them) was simply gone'

(14) *tséstaéšetšėšėhóvo'ooha'ovose* tsé-h-ta-éše-tšėšė-hóvo'ooha'ov-o-s

CNJ-PST-away-PRF-now-round.up-OBV-CNJ.3

*éstasenohtséoohé'tovósesto*é-h-ta-ase-nohtséoohé'tov-ó-sest-o

3-PST-TRL-start-look.for.AN-DIR-RPT-OBV

it it=CNJ-ride-CNJ.3

'After he rounded them up, he started looking for it [the missing horse] -- the one that he was riding.'

(15) éhvóhpe'xoénėsesto é-h-vóhpe-'xo-énė-sesto 3-PST-light.color-face-RPT-OBV 'It was grayfaced.'

(16) taháóhe tséstamé'a'xèse tsé-h-ta'óma'o'etse tsé-h-ta'ma'o'e-tse there.DIS CNJ-PST-TRL-appear.quickly-CNJ.3 CNJ-PST-obscure-CNJ

*éssáavóomóhesesto.* é-h-sáa-vóom-ó-he-sest-o. 3-PST-NEG-see-DIR-NEG-RPT-OBV

'There when he came over the hill where it had been obscured, he didn't see the horse.

(17) *nėhe'še mó'asetáhasó'hehéhe* nėhe'še mó-h-ase-táhasó'he-hé-he then INF-PST-start-ride.horse-Q²-Q²

'Then, he started loping his horse.'

(18) nonó'hónó'e háá'ėše éstähešenöhtsé'ovósesto.

nonó'hónó'e háá'ėše é-h-ta-heše-nöhtsé'ov-ó-sest-o.

bit.by.bit far 3-PST-TRL-how-look.for.AN-DIR-RPT-OBV

'On and on, quite a ways he went looking for it.'

(19) nėhe'še nonó'hónó'e móstanėšenó'nėševeohtsėhéhe

nėhe'še nonó'hónó'e mó-h-ta-nėše-nó'-nėševeohtsė-hé-he then bit.by.bit INF-PST-TRL-keep.on-also-go.fast-Q<sup>?</sup>-Q<sup>?</sup>

'Then, more and more he was galloping his horse.'

(20) nėhe'še tséhne'éšemé'ėhnetsėse

éše'h-óho

nėhe'še tsé-h-ne'-éše-mé'ėh-ne-tsė-s

éše'h-óho

then CNJ-PST-CIS-PRF-appear-walk-CNJ<sub>+</sub>-CNJ.3

sun-OBV

éhnéhnetameotseséstse.

é-h-néhnetame-otse-sest-e.

3-PST-discouraged-become-RPT-EP

'Then, after the sun had come up, he gave up.

(21) nėhe'še móhnėšėhóohta'ovo'hamėhéhe

nėhe'še mó-h-nėšė-hóoht-a'ovo'-hamė-he-he

then INF-PST-continue-home-drive.livestock- Q<sup>?</sup>-Q<sup>?</sup>

'Then he drove his horses home.'

(22) é-s-tà-ho'-a'ovo'-hame-sestse

é-h-tà-ho'-a'ovo'-hame-sest-e

3-PST-DIR-arrive-home-drive.livestock-RPT-EP

he-venotse tsé-x-ho'ta-tse. he-venotse tsé-h-ho'ta-tse.

3.POSS-tepee CNJ-PST-be.at-CNJ

'He drove his animals to where his tepee was.'

(23)<sup>13</sup> he'óho tséá'enose anósema é'amóeóesesesto he'óh-o tsé-á'en-o-s anóse-ma é-h-amóeóese-sest-o woman-OBV CNJ-own-DIR-CNJ.3 outside-LOC 3-PST-stand.there-RPT-OBV 'His wife was standing outside.'

(24) *mó-h-nėh-nòhtse-vóom-ae-he-vó-he* mó-h-nėh-nòhtse-vóom-ae-he-vó-he INF-PST-CIS-look.for-see.AN-INV-Q<sup>?</sup>-3.PL-Q<sup>?</sup> 'She was looking for him.'

(25) éstáho'etáhoeotsé'tovósesto.
é-h-tá-ho'e-táhoeotsé'tov-ó-sest-o.
3- PST-TRL-arrive-EP-ride.AN-DIR-RPT-OBV
'He rode up to her.'

(26)<sup>14</sup> é-xae-no'kė-hovánee'e na'ėstse mo'éhno'ha é-xae-no'kė-hovánee'e na'ėstse mo'éhno'ha 3-simply-one-gone one horse

> ta'se éhxamae'éstsèhévoeotse vóhpe'xoénéhe, ta'se é-h-xamae-'-éstsèhévoeotse vóhpe-'xoéné-he, like 3-PST-simply-EP-sink light.color-face-AGT

> > *éxhetósesto* é-x-het-ó-sest-o 3-PST-say.to.AN-DIR-RPT-OBV

"One horse is just missing. It's just like Grayface vanished" he told her.'

(27) naa néváéso né=tsé-táhoeto? éxhetaesesto.
naa néváéso néhe=tsé-táhoe-to? é-h-het-ae-sest-o.
and who it=CNJ-ride-CNJ.2 3-PST-say.to.s.o.-INV-RPT-OBV
"And who is this one you're riding?" she said to him.'

(28) éstamónèhéne'enánòse é-s-ta-mónè-héne'ená-nòse 3-PST-TRL-newly-know.INAN-RPT.INAN 'He came to his senses.'

(29) né=tséno'kėhováneehétsese móstáhoehénotóhe
néhe=tsé-no'kė-hováneeh-étse-s mó-h-táhoe-hé-no-t-ó-he
it=CNJ-one-gone- CNJ.OBV-CNJ.3 INF-PST-ride-Q²-TA-EP-DIR-Q²
'He was riding the one that was missing.'

(30) éstatšėšeánohetsėheta'éotsesėstse.
 é-h-ta-tšėše-ánohe-tsėheta'éotse-sest-e.
 3-PST-TRL-now-down-position.head-RPT-EP
 'He lowered his head down.'

(31) tsėhéóhe he-mé'kó-ne he'ama tsėhéóhe he-mé'kó-ne he'ama here 3.POSS-head-? up

> tsėhéóhe néh-mäsó-oom-ė-stse! tsėhéóhe néh-mäsó-oom-ė-stse! here CIS-in.a.burst-hit-2:1-IMP

> > *éxhetósesto hestse'emo.* é-h-het-ó-sest-o he-stse'em-o.

3-PST-say.to.AN-DIR-RPT-OBV 3.POSS-woman-OBV

'Here on his head on the top (he indicated), "Here, hit me hard!" he told his wife.'

(32) hená'hanehe né= ma'há-hkése tsé-heše-ó'osetäno-se. hená'hanehe néhe=ma'há-hkése tsé-heše-ó'osetäno-s

that.INAN.SG it=old-DIM CNJ-how-wrongly.think-CNJ.3

<sup>&#</sup>x27;That's the way that old man was not observant.'

### **Abbreviations**

- morpheme boundary

= clitic boundary

. meaning part boundary, e.g.: walk.to

First Person Second Person

2:1 Second Person acting on First Person

3 Third Person

ahte reflexive/reciprocal verbal affix

AN Animate

AGT Agentive suffix, like '-er' in English

CAT Cataphoric preverb

CIS Cislocative CNJ Conjunct

DEL.IMP Delayed Imperative DIR Direct Voice 15

DIS Distal
DIM Diminutive

EMPH emphatically, very much

EP Epenthetic sound

FIA Final Intransitive Animate FTI Final Transitive Inanimate

HAB Habitual

HEDGE Hedge/discourse filler, e.g. 'like' or 'uh' in English

IMP Imperative INAN Inanimate

INF Inferential/Dubitative Evidential

INT Intensifier INV Inverse voice 16

IRR Irrealis
IT Iterative
OBL Oblique
OBV Obviative
PCS Process
POSS Possessive
PRF Perfective

PST Distant past (recent past/present is not marked)

PURP Purposive RCP Reciprocal RFL Reflexive

RPT Reportative Evidential

RES.PCS Process, with focus on the result state

SUB subjunctive TRL Translocative

<sup>1</sup> This text has been reformatted, more loosely translated, and morphologically glossed by Sarah Murray with the help of Wayne Leman and Dr. Richard Littlebear. I am very grateful to Wayne Leman for his help in glossing some particularly tricky sentences, and general assistance in becoming familiar with the Cheyenne language. Support for this work was provided by a Phillips fund grant from the American Philosophical Society.

<sup>3</sup> WLW: "In Croft's fieldnotes the transcription continues from this point with an account of another episode of absentmindedness, and with no indication of a major break. This next episode is about when a man called Squint Eye got irritated because he kept finding a gate open. (He, of course, was the one who kept leaving the gate open.) Following that text is yet another episode, again with no major break indicated, about forgetfulness on the part of Squint Eye. Croft was able to collect many interesting texts, many are humorous, others are of historical importance. His entire collection deserves to be retranscribed and made available to the public."

<sup>4</sup> The abbreviation key is located in a separate file.

<sup>5</sup> The morpheme DIR here is a directional; it can be used to mean 'hither' or 'toward', or 'here' in 'He came here'.

<sup>6</sup> CHEYENNE DICTIONARY: "Ôhméseestse is the name of a Northern Cheyenne person, and can be a tribal label. Literally, it means 'eater'. The word-initial oh- is a conjunct prefix; it is commonly used on proper names and on other conjunct verbs referring to action which takes place habitually; when the prefix is used on conjunct participles, the participle acts much like a regular noun; note that some of the following entries, for example, ôhmésêhé'késo 'young Northern Cheyenne girl', even inflect like nouns (in this case, taking the noun diminutive suffix /-só/), not as the usual conjunct participles, which take conjunct (of the participle subclass) inflection. see discussion under méseestse. Variant: Notaméohméseestse. Plural: Ôhmésêhese. Some popular spellings for the pl. have been Ohmeses or Ohmisis or some may even prefer to underdifferentiate the first syllable and spell the word as Omisis. Each of these spellings does not allow one to tell that the first /s/ of the word is aspirated (because the root for 'eat' actually contains three phonemic syllables, -mésehe), but the popular spellings are acceptable for most non-technical writing and have the advantage of being easier to typeset and easier for the person who is not well-versed in the modern linguistic means of expressing aspirated ("complex") syllables of Cheyenne, an important part of the sound system of the language, but a feature which is so different from English literacy which most readers of Cheyenne are more familiar with. A common folk etymology given is that this historical Cheyenne band was called "Eaters" because they had plenty to eat, especially of buffalo. It may be that this etymology arose especially after half of the Cheyenne people took up residence in Oklahoma and they looked upon Cheyennes to the north as having access to the buffalo, which they, in the south, did not have. The plural of this term, often with the addition of the preverb for 'north', Notaméohmésêhese, is the term used when a distinction is desired to refer those Cheyennes who preferred the northern part of the Plains area where the Cheyenne bands roamed; the group usually contrasted when such a distinction is made are the Heévâhetaneo'o, which is now used for Cheyennes who live in Oklahoma. This term seems to be used mostly by Chevennes in Oklahoma for their fellow tribes people in Montana. See: Ôhmésêhéno; mésehe; oh-. AlternatePlural = Notaméohmésêhese"

The suffix -va, glossed -OBL, may be the -OBV allomorph used with nouns; they are homophonous. This sentence could also be glossed as 'they would...', as in the introduction.

<sup>8</sup> The suffix –he appears in questions, negation, and these 'dubitative' or 'inferential' constructions. I need to come up with an appropriate gloss. Leman glosses them as -NEG in his stories, but the meaning here is not 'negation' as normally construed. Possibly a modal – possibly not containing the actual world.

<sup>9</sup> WLW: "Literally, 'the woman (obv.) that he owns', which used to be a common way to designate a wife. It is not used as commonly today, perhaps due to its paternalistic connotation. Similarly, the common term hestse'èmo 'his woman' for 'his wife' has fallen into disuse. A neutral substitute for both terms has been tsévéstoemose 'his/her spouse', literally, 'the one he/she sits with'."

Wife, he'óho tséá'enose, is literally 'woman that he owns'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> From the notes on Wayne Leman's Website ( =: WLW): "This text was first recorded and transcribed by Kenneth Croft, 1948, under a grant from the American Philosophical Society. We retranscribed and retranslated the text in September 1986. This text was first published in Náévâhóo'ôhtséme / We are going back home: Cheyenne history and stories told by James Shoulderblade and others, edited by Wayne Leman. Memoir 4. Winnipeg: Algonquian and Iroquoian Linguistics. Copyright 1987. Croft's title of this section of his fieldnotes was "Absent-Minded Indians" (see fn. 5, below). Croft did not note the name of the Cheyenne narrator, but it would appear to be a Montana Cheyenne, quite possibly John Standsintimber who enjoyed telling such stories, as can be seen from accounts which appear in Stands In Timber and Liberty (1967)."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> The meaning of this preverb 'commence' varies contextually: it can mean so; commence; accordingly; or begin. I think in this case it is noting the elaborating relationship of getting on the horse to catching it; "accordingly" might be appropriate.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> WLW: "The narrator occasionally palatalizes Cheyenne k before e, a mark of an old style of male speech. Today a few male speakers pronounce palatalized forms, and then not always consistently. Others pronounce this word in the unpalatalized form, éxaeno'kêhováneehésesto."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> The verb 'stand there' may be stative. The Cheyenne dictionary says, in the entry for 'amóeóó'e': "One difference between this verb and -néé'e is that this verb indicates standing for a period of time. -néé'e has no implication of time, either a short amount of time or a longer period of time."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> WLW: "Literally, 'it's just as if Grayface vanished' is 'It's just like it went under water, Grayface'."

<sup>15 1</sup>st or 2nd person subject acting on 3rd person object in the conjunct order

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Cheyenne Dictionary: "Inverse voice means that a third person subject is "acting upon" a first or second person, or that an obviated third person is acting upon a proximate third person."