



# *Mistakes of Old Man*

Frank Bird Linderman

Native AmericanNorth American

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*Easy*  
*3 min read*

All night the storm raged, and in the morning the plains were white with snow. The sun came and the light was blinding, but the hunters were abroad early, as usual.

That day the children came to my camp, and I told them several stories that appeal to white children. They were deeply interested, and asked many questions. Not until the hunters returned did my visitors leave.

That night War Eagle told us of the mistakes of OLD-man. He said:

“OLD-man made a great many mistakes in making things in the world, but he worked until he had everything good. I told you at the beginning that OLD-man made mistakes, but I didn’t tell you what they were, so now I shall tell you.

“One of the things he did that was wrong, was to make the Big-Horn to live on the plains. Yes, he made him on the plains and turned him loose, to make his living there. Of course the Big-Horn couldn’t run on the plains, and OLD-man wondered what was wrong. Finally, he said: ‘Come here, Big-Horn!’ and the Big-Horn came to him. OLD-man stuck his arm through the circle his horns made, and dragged the Big-Horn far up into the mountains. There he set him free again, and sat down to watch him. Ho! It made OLD-man dizzy to watch the Big-Horn run about on the ragged cliffs. He saw at once that this was the country the Big-Horn liked, and he left him there. Yes, he left him there forever, and there he stays, seldom coming down to the lower country.

“While OLD-man was waiting to see what the Big-Horn would do in the high mountains, he made an Antelope and set him free with the Big-Horn. Ho! But the Antelope stumbled and fell down among the rocks. He couldn’t man called to the Antelope to come back to him, and the Antelope did come to him. Then he called to the Big-Horn, and said:

“You are all right, I guess, but this one isn’t, and I’ll have to take him somewhere else.’

“He dragged the Antelope down to the prairie country, and set him free there. Then he watched him a minute; that was as long as the Antelope was in sight, for he was afraid OLD-man might take him back to the mountains.

“He said: ‘I guess that fellow was made for the plains, all right, so I’ll leave him there’; and he did. That is why the Antelope always stays on the plains, even to-day. He likes it better.

“That wasn’t a very long story; sometime when you get older I will tell you some different stories, but that will be all for this time, I guess. Ho!”

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