The Adventures of Yaabaa Teeshaay

2

The Journey Ts’í Xáathe Dishyah
Yaabaa Teeshaay Shax Ts’ani’elt’eh Stá’edzá’

Ahh . . . Yaabaa Teeshaay
Tatelch’eegh¹ meedzi’qá neexon Mendees Cheege.

Wu’aat two elt’ehe.
(neexendeegh ch’exandeegh edaay ch’exadah edaay)
Wułenh xey naxtedeeck tah,
Ey nidaytneltéq eł² denaa eł detaa eł naxaldek.

Wunaa wuta’ eł “Nah’og lli tsaa’ desheth gha datl’anitkaay.”
Xdets’eniin exeneuy eł ey ts’eniin xudi’etshaak.
Ey naghíhxéq t’aaan ey eł wu’aat “Ts’eniin tsoxnindiig diigha ch’e xu’ edeneuy?”
“Lii tsaa’ eł sheth nadatl’a’didekqá.”

Ey eł,

“Nde,’ “ yehnih ts’i’ yitelts’eeek.
Eshege ts’enh t’eeey k’a xíhhheey.

Naghíhxéetl t’oo t’eeey,
na’exeetl tininshaay ndee tihháal t’eeey k’a de’aat edehneey.
Ti’ilch’eex.
Ey gha Tatelch’eegh miísi’ in léé.

¹ Ellen frequently uses the names Yaabaa Téeshay and Tatelch’eegh interchangeably when referring to the cultural hero in the stories.
² Ellen’s pronunciation of the postposition and conjunction eł, like other speakers of Tanacross, varies between eł and é. We write it as Ellen pronounced it.
The Adventures of Yaabaa Teeshaay

2

The Journey Begins
Yaabaa Teeshaay Leaves Home Angry

Ahh . . . Yaabaa Teeshaay
we Healy Lake people call him Tatelch’eegh.

He has two wives.
(Our language is the one that sits up there, over there.)
His brother-in-law, during winter camping,
whenever his brother-in-law comes to visit, he [brother-in-law] says to him, “Bring a container of
snow in for me.”
He got tired of the same old story from Tatelch’eegh.

So his mom and dad told him, “He brings in dog poop and snow.”
They told their child and then the child did that.
He melted it, and his wife said to them, “That child isn’t very smart—why did you say that?”
“He brought in dog poop and snow.”

And then,

“Give it to me,” he tells him, and he drank it down.
From that time, he didn’t speak.

Although it’s evening,
he left when it was dark but he did not tell his wife where he would go.
He went out angry.
That’s why his name is Tatelch’eegh.³

³Tatelch’eegh literally means “the one who went away angry from having been disrespected or insulted.”
The Adventures of Yaabaa Teeshaay

Tininsih ts’i’ ndege teeshah de’,
dek’eh nah’og nen’ k’et all . . . nexceljede, ey
dek’eh all ey k’a ḥa’a īieey,
niὶ dēge xi’enuljede gha,
xu’nuney k’eh.

Ey eł kode x”neehaal eł,
wu’aat ch’exeandege eedaay “Nt’i shke’y’ na’ihtsjį” diiney̱h,4
“Nts’e’ ch’e dhindaay?” Yehney̱h e,
“Oh, dook’ah,” inde’.

Dets’eniin t’a’el’l’u u tl’aan dekey̱’ k’eh teeshah,
ey ch’eşiiege all ḥi’en e neljet ts’i’ xaanitshah.

Daa’įtsaay e n’t’i “Nts’e tind’e’ę?”
“Ena’ shke’y’ ndege niinshah deh ḥa’a t’eej edzi’
kax”diht’eh.”
“Ges eł en’ meejuńnexege daa!”

“Shke’y’ gha ihtsjį”’ diinih tl’aan chitiiniih”,
and na’etl’u ṭs’i’ ts’eniin t’a’el’l’u u,
tl’aan dekey̱’ k’eh teeshah.

---

4 The following section primarily involves the two wives, one who follows Tatelch’eegh and one who stays behind.
He went out and where he went,
throughout the land they are all afraid of him,
But that wasn’t true;
they are afraid of him in turn,
the way they think of you.

And then they camped, and . . .
his second wife says to the first wife, “I thought you said, ‘I love my husband’;
you say you love your husband but you are still here.”
“In that case, okay,” [says first wife].

She strapped her baby on her back and followed her husband [first wife does].
She saw all of the ghosts, was afraid, and turned around.

She returned and someone [the second wife] asked her, “What are you doing?”
“Oh no, my husband went where it is very frightening,”
[the second wife says]. “You should jab it out of the way with a stick.”

“You said, ‘I love my husband,’ and then you said you’re afraid.”
So she dressed and strapped the child on her back again,
then followed her husband [again].

---

5 *Yaabaa Teeshaay* placed fierce-looking animal skins on his back trail to discourage anyone from following him.
The Adventures of Yaabaa Teeshaay

Ałts’ey deetaan gha k’eh t’eey teddh eł dzeen eł na’eha’.  
Ey chenh chox teth k’et nininshaay eł ts’eexeh wut’ey k’od k’edalneyh.

Dintsjį eł edlih eł,  
daadaadz ehts’eyh.  
X’week’ethh.

Tatelch’eegh du’ tah edint’ah kon’ dįhk’ąą.6  
Tuuthel deltseyh ey eł t’eey

Tininshah ts’į’ jiithth’ege eł,  
įłt’eey koxt’een k’eh t’eey wu’eł daxdeltsiį.  
En’ thede nininshah ts’į’ jiithth’ege eł,  
koxt’een tehtee xedetnih wushuh’ xatdedeegh.

Ey eł de’aat enideltheyh ts’į’ chenh chox teth t’eey na’atshah.  
Wu’aat k’od tehtee wuts’eniin.

Eł dets’eniin eł de’aat eł kon’ dehk’en’ deh nixuh’ilshah tuuthel neethel eł  
ey tl’aan shege x’neeahał.  
K’ahmen’ ts’enintheede.

De’aat ts’į’ xninheeyh:

---

6 The scene shifts here from the wife to Tatelch’eegh.
7 The word wushuh is a specific Healy Lake word for “breath.”
Fifty days and nights she traveled.  
After she made it over big snow-covered flats, the woman lost her strength.

She is hungry and cold.  
There is a north wind.  
It's cold weather.

Meanwhile, Tatelch’eegh build himself a fire.  
He makes soup for himself.

Then he went out to listen;  
it really sounds like people to him.  
He went out a little ways and stopped to listen;  
[it sounded like] dying people pleading as they take their last breath.

Suddenly he thought of his wife and went back over the big flats.  
His wife and child were almost dead.

He brought his child and wife back to where he has a fire burning and hot soup on  
and then they spent the night there.  
He woke up in the morning.

He speaks to his wife:
The Adventures of Yaabaa Teeshaay

3
Yaabaa Teeshaay
Iin Ch’eshaan’ Kon’ Kee Nixnindeetl

“Nts’e’ tuhde’ yinįhthenh?” de’aat ehnih.
“Naa ihtsi’ . . .”
“K’a t’ee yaxdhuuxeh yinįhthen,” de’aat ehnih.
Wu’aat dadihney.

Dek’ęy’ theenxundiik ts’į’ “Naa ihtsi’ t’ee yax xu’ di’inden?”
“N’ęł t’ee tihhaat ts’į’ n’ęł t’ee shaxtdhahxeh,” dek’ęy’ ehnih.
“E’ną’,” yehnih t’ee yą’ą sidinuy n’ęł tees’hah.”

Dekey’ ęł teeshah.
Xaadel, xaadel.8

Ch’enda’ denihleyh ey k’et xaadel.
Ey ęł tenh ndu’ t’ee yax xanet-tseth.
“Ii . . . dii ch’e ntu’eh nashog’,” de’aat ehnuy ęł
ndee ęł xunłęč wu’aat nininşaay ęł
ch’eshaan’ k’eh sixunt’eh.

Ch’eshaan’ tenh ndu’ łuug xa’elsheek.
“Wuk’ęh ts’uudeeq łuug eht’eędh neetl’atahchel sint’eh.”
Xik’ęh xaadel teddh ęł dzeen ęł nach’axghindeedł ęł tah.
Ey ch’eshaan’ xaxninindeetl eedah.

8 Though the wife is not mentioned in the following section, the verb xaadédl [canonically xaadèl] is used with plural subjects.
“What do you think you want to do?” he asks his wife.
“I love you very much.”
“I don’t want them to kill you,” he tells his wife.
His wife is quiet.

She put her arms around her husband’s neck [and says], “I love you, but why are you doing that?”
“I’ll go with you and they will kill me along with you,” she says to her husband.
Even though her husband told her, “no,” she said, “I’m telling you the truth. I’ll go with you.”

She left with her husband.
They are going along, going along.

They go on to where the creek flows.
Blood is seeping up through a hole in the ice.
“Oh, what is that down there?” his wife said, and
his wife went to where the blood is.
It was an eagle sign.

Eagle takes fish out of the hole in the ice.
“Let’s follow him, he’ll give us fried fish,” [Tatelch’eegh says].
Day and night they went along following him.
They finally got to where eagle stays.
The Adventures of Yaabaa Teeshaay

Łuug eht’eedh əł
Xuh tah xi’e’udelth’ih ch’eshaan’9 du’ k’a t’ee yxhrheey.
Ey łuug eet’eh ts’i’ nayghindlah ts’i’ wutth’enn’ all . . .
ghiuhs’.
Ey Tatelch’eegh k’ode wuk’ege xuŋlęę dintsji;
xałtey yinint’henh.

Ey əł,
ch’eshaan’ k’i’i th’aak shii deyghindlah all . . .
Detleq e how many elt’eh ts’i’ t’ee yetth’aaq shii yighind-
lah daxuhshqę.

“All . . . t’ee yildeeł,” detleq ehnih.
“Ła’q’a ch’etegdeel.”
“K’a t’ey in’aadl de’, k’a t’ee Łuug xaatdhegteel,” yehnih.

Ey əł,
de’aat əł ey łuug xunch’aaggh t’ee xghin’aatl.
Ey t’o t’ee yntsúul ey,
“i’ . . . jaan deghogchuuq k’ahmen’ kah.”
“Ena’ ch’enedihneyh.”
“K’ode ch’iit’ey nach’ih’aatl.”

Ey əł,

---

9 Ellen says “eagle” here, but the context appears to require “wolverine.”
He is frying fish.
They stay expectingly but still Eagle does not talk.
He took down the fried fish and cleaned all the bones.
Finally, Tatelch’eegh gets really angry because he is hungry.
“Hurry,” he thinks.

And then,

Eagle put it all in a birch bark basket.
And then he put it in his friend’s plate (really).

“Eat all of it,” he [Eagle] told his friend.
“Really, I’ll eat it,” [he told Eagle].
“If you don’t eat it all, I’m not going to fish for you anymore.”

And then,

he and his wife ate a lot of fish.
But then a small bit,
“I’ll save this for myself for morning.”
“I’m telling you, no,” [Eagle says].
“Enough—I ate too much.” [Tatelch’eegh says.]

And then,
The Adventures of Yaaba Teeshaay

4

Nahtsįįth Shax Ninxindeetl

“Aq” yehnih eł, xuh yidelchuut.

Ch’eshaan’ t’el k’ahme . . . n’ ts’eninθet ts’į’ t’eeey naghuuxęę ts’į’ t’eeey naghun’aał de’. “Aq” yehnih.
Wuchaagh t’eeey shaxtahkol.

K’ahme . . . n yikah titeeshah dą’ą tah t’eeey ch’eshaan’ teeshaah. Luug edetdi . . . h, edetdih du’ tah ey łuug.
Tatelch’eegh yidelchuude ey naghin’aatł.
Ey eł shege ts’enh da’en’ ch’eshaan’ łuug xa’edeex.

Xik’eh teedeedl e k’a t’eeey xiyexdih’aal. Shege dandedh xaadedl eł.

Nahtsįįth k’ee xunléę ey k’eexaadle e, ey eł nahtsįįth deshax, xʷneethɛł ts’į’ t’eeey xuh’aą.
Dech’e’ eł t’eeey deshax xuhtsin ts’į’ ey shii xʷneethɛł det’eey eedah.
Ey eł t’eeey nahtsįįth [ch’eshaan’] Tatelch’eegh yidaninshah.

Ey eł,

nahtsįįth wunetshąą ts’į’,
The Adventures of Yaabaa Teeshay

4
They Arrive at Wolverine’s House

He [Eagle] says to him, “Yes,”
[Tatelch’eegh] stashed his food.

The arrogant Eagle [says to Tatelch’eegh] wake up really early and right away you should
thaw it, and eat it.
[Tatelch’eegh] says to Eagle, “Yes.”
I’ll be gone while you are asleep.

It’s just dawning when he goes out, and then Eagle left.
Eagle is having a really difficult time fishing.
So, Eagle ate the food Tatelch’eegh had saved.
From then on out Eagle had an easier time fishing.

They followed, but did not find him.
From there they proceed onward.

Now, there are wolverine tracks they are following,
and then Wolverine’s house.
He keeps it quite warm.
He made his house with his tail.
He is living where it is quite warm.
He [Eagle] blocked Wolverine in.

And then,

Wolverine is embarrassed and,
The Adventures of Yaabaa Teeshay

“tl’eę, tl’eę”
“Aą’, na’aa,”
ey shii xee nelten.
“Ey na’in’aał,” Yaabaa Teeshay ehnih.

Ey eł,

wunetshąŋ tsįį “tsets kol” e Yaabaa Teeshay ehnęy, eł
yaa tsots ahlet nidenindlah tl’aan,
ey xee daa’itkąą.10

Ey nahts’įįth ndee dą . . . ’ą tah Tatelch’eegh yine’e’in ey yishi’i t’eey yitl’aghįįhchuut
ey Tatelch’eegh yineh’e’en e
“ii . . . jah shshi’i ey łaan yikol” yinįįthenh.

“Tl’eę xuh t’eey dhintęę,” nih.
Tatelch’eegh neetęę xʷneetų̗ n̓ l e tnet-te’.

K’ahme . . . n’ tah nahts’įįth dech’e’ naadjheetl tsįį’ yi’eł na’et-tl’ųų tsįį’ teeshah
Tatelch’eegh elih n̓ leen eł ts’eninθhe.
Sheth k’et eetęę—didekol.
Nakon’ dįįh’ąą tsįį’ xuh diigaay ghin’aatl tl’aan.

10 The verb daa’įtkąą indicates that the grease is in a container.
“Friend, friend . . .”
“Yes, out there . . .”
There is frozen grease.
“Eat that,” he tells Yaabaa Teeshaay.

and then,

embarrassed, “I have no wood,” he told Yaabaa Teeshaay, so
he piled wood together for him and
after that he brought the grease back inside.

From a long time before, the food Tatelch’eegh had stolen is the same food as he was given
and Tatelch’eegh looked at the food and
he thought, “Oh, this is my food that was missing.”

“Friend, sleep right there,” he [Wolverine] said.
Tatelch’eegh fell asleep. It is so warm that he slept soundly.

Very early in the morning, Wolverine took his tail down, dressed with it, and left.
The cold woke up Tatelch’eegh.
He is sleeping on the snow—nothing is left.
He built a fire and ate a little bit.
5

Wukee’ K’ee Kol Nenn’

Yik’eh teeshaay ey el k’a t’eey yik’e’iendaal,
ey tl’aan shege ts’enh aahaal el chih.

Niiduuy iin gha chih ninshah.
Niiduuy iin ahlet deltth’iiy.

Nehxon Mendeescheege “wuk’ee kol” meedzih’aq
dah jah ug du’ “niiduuy” el xe’ehnih.

Ey,

niiduuy iin ndlaan int’eey deltth’ih gha chih ninshah
shege chih xu’eł eedaay el,
“Tl’ęq neeshi’j t’eey kol ch’etindeen, dii neets’uual gha?”
“Ey, t’ogh” xi’eehnih t’o t’eey.

Ey,

wuk’ee kol\textsuperscript{11} iin
nah’en tixghindeetl ts’įl “gah ts’atl’a’ gah ts’atl’a’ ” xenih ts’į’ tixindeet.
Ndlaan iin t’eey tinindeetl,
xuh kol.

\textsuperscript{11} The term \textit{wuk’ee kōl} for lynx is also used in the Mansfield dialect.
He followed him but did not catch up
and then he continued walking from there.

He came among the lynxes.
They are all living together.

We Healy Lake people call it “No Tracks.”
Around here, they call it *niíduyu*. 

Anyway,

he comes to where there are lots of lynx staying.
He stays there with them and,
“Friend, our food is gone, what can we feed you?”
“That’s okay,” they told him, but,

and . . .

The lynxes,
as they were going out, they chant “*gah ts’aatl’á*, *gah ts’aatl’á*. “
A lot of them went out.
They disappeared.

---

*The phrase *gah ts’aatl’á* is chanted in this story as a way of bringing hunting luck. This phrase is not used in everyday conversation.*
The Adventures of Yaabaa Teeshaay

6

Yaabaa Teeshaay El Tiikaan Łdziikeey Elt’eh

Tatelch’eegh tininshah ts’į’ jiitth’ege e nandodh ndu shii ts’į’ tah ṣha’ee’aqā
gah exetdek ts’į’,
gah ndlaan t’eey xghinxaq ts’į’ gah daxilshah.
Xuh ghįhdląq ts’į’ t’eey xiyehsu’ ts’į’ xiyet’eeth kon’ ts’į’,
eet’eh tl’aan el Yaabaa Teesshaay xuu’e niyghin’aatl.
Xunsuq’ t’eey xi’ech’į’h’aatl, ts’į’

Xuu’eł teddh ghinthet
ey tl’aan k’ahmen’ el kode teesshah
teddh el dzeen el t’eey nach’e’ha’ jah nen’ Ɂa’q nteey nchaax.¹³
Xuu diideen el ch’e jah nen’ xughįhchaax ts’į’ t’eey yik’i’eeshah.
K’a t’eey eteegh ts’į’
dzeen el teddh el nilchii t’eey na’edaak.

Ey el shege ts’enh kode aahaał

Ey el du’ kode tiikaan Łdziikeey elt’eh
menh nchaagw wutaatl’ede ndu ee’aqā
ey chii ts’į’ tiikaan Łdziikeey eeteets niļdiixa’ ts’į’
one dat’sey ts’į’ one delgeyh k’e’eltsįį
dendeh eldeeř
Tatelch’eegh shog’ xnjįh’eent e dendeh ttixaa’ el tth’enh el xu’eedlah
ey el ey tiikaan de’edetxaade ts’į’ k’e’ilddiik.

¹³ This section is an interlude between adventures as Ellen explains how Tatelch’eegh could do all these things.
The Adventures of Yaabaa Teeshaay

6

Yaabaa Teeshaay and the Two Wolves

Tatelch’eegh went out and heard a commotion ahead in a stand of trees on an island. They are driving rabbits. They killed lots of rabbits and brought them home. They cleaned all of them and fried them to an open fire. After it was fried Yaabaa Teeshaay ate with them. They fed him really well.

He spend the night with them, and then early in the morning he left. He traveled day and night; to the ends of the earth. That’s how he traveled all around the wide world. He does not sleep at all; he keeps traveling continuously.

From then on, he is going along,

and then he came upon two wolves. In the center of a big lake there is a tree-covered island. At the tip [of the island] two wolves are sleeping end to end. One looks black and one looks gray. [They are] Eating people. He looked down to see human hair and bones scattered around. A wolf shakes himself off and he [Tatelch’eegh] suspects . . .
The Adventures of Yaabaa Teeshaay

Ey eł de’aat gha xaneljet ts’i’
de’aat gha dahdzel di’ee’aq ts’i’ ey k’et de’aat di’ehtée.

Ey tl’aan,

tsets łaq’a dinchaa . . . gh t’eeey xnideghin’ah.
Ey yettheel, yettheel
kode tnetxuudl.

“Jah wut’aagh tihhaal ts’i’ wutthilaghgethet de’
“nde’ tiikaan one tdhekxeey,” de’aat ehnih.

Wu’aat k’a xeenihthe . . . nh t’o t’eeey “kode ha’” de’aat ehneyh eł

De’aat ts’i’ ey yech’eninshël ey eł
ey tnetxotl yit’aagh niil’ke’eshek dindah t’eeey yitsila’ehshaatl ts’enh
“Kode ch’e tiikaan tdhekxeëh,” yinintoshëh
wudalak’ey detxodl ey t’eeey tiikaan y’i’eł uuxaan gha ey t’eeey ehtsiį.

De’aat dahdzel k’et di’ehtée tl’aan,
tiikaan ts’i’ kode tiikaan ts’i’ teeshah.
so he is afraid for his wife.
He put up a platform and set his wife up on it.

And then,

a really large piece of wood is standing upright.
He is chopping it, chopping it;
finally it is starting to fall.

“I’ll go behind the tree and when I run out
I will kill one wolf,” he tells his wife.

His wife really did not like that.
“It’s enough,” he told his wife.

He pushed it toward his wife;
it broke and fell over and then he jumped back and forth under it until he got to the end.
He thought, “Now I’ll kill that wolf.”
He makes a spear out of wood to kill the wolves.

He put his wife on the platform and
he went after the wolves.
The Adventures of Yaabaa Teeshaay

Yediixah xa’edaak ey t’o t’eey tiikaan eł niłdiixah ts’į’ Ɂa’q t’eey xunaat’ey xunłeq.

Ey t’o t’eey,

Tatelch’eegeh k’a t’eey xedihtsedl xu’ t’eey. Du’ tah one thichii ch’įhtl’eth.14 Ey dindah t’eey yidhehxeq.

Ey tl’aan ts’ehłege chih xu’ di’eh’eq. Ey eł ey łdiikeey t’eey ghinłaq.

Wujah jah xigha naxaldiik de’ey Yaabaa Teeshaay jah nen’ k’et Ɂa’q mexneljede. Mexuntsaadh xuh ey t’eey niłtth’idehttheyh.

Snowshoe hare
Photo courtesy of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

14 The verb ch’įhtl’eth implies that Tatelch’eegeh used some kind of implement, presumably the spear previously mentioned.
They keep passing each other; they are both very strong.

But even so,

*Tatelch’eegh* did not let go. He finally knocked one over the head. He finally killed one.

And then continued with the other one. And then killed both of them.

This is how they tell the story. To show that throughout the world *Yaabaa Teeshaay* was fearless. Those frightening, difficult things, he straighten it out.