

Pythagorean Tales

Tale 1:

A Native American chief had three wives, each of whom was pregnant. The first gave birth to a boy. The chief was so elated he built her a teepee. A few days later, the second gave birth, also to a boy. The chief was very happy. He built her a teepee made of antelope hide. The third wife gave birth a few days later, but the chief kept the details a secret. He built this one a two-story teepee, made out of a hippopotamus hide. He challenged the tribe to guess what had occurred. Many tried, unsuccessfully. Finally, one young brave declared that the third wife had given birth to twin boys. Correct, said the chief. How did you figure it out?

The warrior answered, It's elementary:

The value of the squaw of the hippopotamus is equal to the sons of the squaws of the other two hides.

Tale 2:

Three Navaho women sit side by side on the ground. The first woman, who is sitting on a buffalo skin, has a son who weighs 70 pounds. The second woman, who is sitting on a deer skin, has a son who weighs 80 pounds. The third woman who weighs 150 pounds is sitting on a hippopotamus skin.

The moral: the squaw of the hippopotamus is equal to the sons of the squaws of the other two hides.

Tale 3:

A tribe of Native Americans generally referred to their woman by the animal hide with which they made their blanket. Thus, one woman might be known as Squaw of Buffalo Hide, while another might be known as Squaw of Deer Hide. This tribe had a particularly large and strong woman, with a very unique (for North America anyway) animal hide for her blanket. This woman was known as Squaw of Hippopotamus hide, and she was as large and powerful as the animal from which her blanket was made.

Year after year, this woman entered the tribal wrestling tournament, and easily defeated all challengers; male or female.

As the men of the tribe admired her strength and power, this made many of the other woman of the tribe extremely jealous. One year, two of the squaws petitioned the Chief to allow them to enter their sons together as a wrestling tandem in order to wrestle Squaw of the Hippopotamus hide as a team. In this way, they hoped to see that she would no longer be champion wrestler of the tribe.

As the luck of the draw would have it, the two sons who were wrestling as a tandem met the squaw in the final and championship round of the wrestling contest. As the match began, it became clear that the squaw had finally met an opponent that was her equal. The two sons wrestled and struggled vigorously and were clearly on an equal footing with the powerful squaw. Their match lasted for hours without a clear victor. Finally the chief intervened and declared that, in the interests of the health and safety of the wrestlers, the match was to be terminated and that he would declare a winner. The chief retired to his teepee and contemplated the great struggle he had witnessed, and found it extremely difficult to decide a winner. While the two young men had clearly outmatched the squaw, he found it difficult to force the squaw to relinquish her tribal championship. After all, it had taken two young men to finally provide her with a decent match. Finally, after much deliberation, the chief came out from his teepee, and announced his decision. He said...

"The Squaw of the Hippopotamus hide is equal to the sons of the squaws of the other two hides."

Tale 4:

There were three medieval kingdoms on the shores of a lake. There was an island in the middle of the lake, which the kingdoms had been fighting over for years. Finally, the three kings decided that they would send their knights out to do battle, and the winner would take the island. The night before the battle, the knights and their squires pitched camp and readied themselves for fight. The first kingdom had 12 knights, and each knight had five squires, all of them busily preparing for battle. The second kingdom had 20 knights, and each knight had 10 squires. Everyone at that camp was also busy preparing for battle. At the camp of the third kingdom, there was only one knight with his lone squire. This squire took a large pot and hung it from a looped rope in a tall tree. He busied himself preparing the meal, while the knight polished his own armor. When the hour of the battle came, the three kingdoms sent their squires out to fight, as this was too trivial a matter for the knights to join in. The battle raged, and when the dust cleared, the only person left was the lone squire from the third kingdom. He had defeated the squires from the other two kingdoms.

This proves that the squire of the high pot and noose is equal to the sum of the squires of the other two sides.