

"Four Worlds: The Dine Story of Creation"

Before this world existed, there was a First World far below the world where we are now. In that world everything was black. There was darkness everywhere, and in that darkness there were six beings. Those beings were First Man, the son of Night and the Blue Sky over the sunset; First Woman, the daughter of Day Break and the Yellow Sky of sunset; Salt Woman; Fire God; Coyote and Begochiddy. Begochiddy, who was the child of the Sun, was both man and woman, and had blue eyes and golden hair.

There were no mountains or plants in that first world, so Begochiddy began to make them. Begochiddy made four mountains. To the east Begochiddy made a white mountain. To the south Begochiddy made a blue mountain. To the west Begochiddy made a yellow mountain. To the north Begochiddy made a black mountain. Then Begochiddy created the ants and other insects and made the first plants. But things were not right in that First World. One Story is that Fire God became jealous and started to burn everything up. According to another story, the First Beings were just not happy in that dark world. Whatever the reason was, they decided to leave the First World.

"Gather together the plants and the other things I have made," said Begochiddy to First Man.

First Man did as Begochiddy said. Then he and the other beings came to the red mountain which Begochiddy created in the center of the First World. There Begochiddy planted the Big Reed. As the hollow Big Reed began to grow, the first Beings climbed into it. Up and up it grew, leaving the First World behind. It grew up and up until it came to the Second World.

In the Second World Begochiddy created even more things. Begochiddy created the clouds. Begochiddy created more plants and mountains. The color of the Second World was blue, and there were other beings in it – Swallow People and Cat People. The Cat People tried to fight Begochiddy and the others, but First Man used his magic and overcame them. For a time, everyone was happy. Then things began to go wrong. Once more Begochiddy planted Big Reed. Once more Begochiddy told First Man and the others to put all the things created into Big Reed. Big Reed began to grow. Up and up it went and carried them all to the Third World.

The Third World was yellow. Though there was no sun and no moon, the mountains gave light. It was the most beautiful of the worlds they had seen. In this world Begochiddy created rivers and springs. Begochiddy made water animals and trees, birds and lightening. Then Begochiddy created all kinds of human beings. In this beautiful Third World everything spoke one language. All of the things and beings in creation understood each other. But

everything was not perfect in the Third World. Yellow and red streaks appeared across the eastern sky. They were placed there by First Man and represented the diseases about to come to the people through evil magic. Before long, the men and women began to quarrel with each other. The men said that the women were causing trouble. The women said that it was the men. Coyote came to Begochiddy and told him that men and women were always quarreling. Begochiddy decided to put a stop to it.

“All of the men,” Begochiddy said, “must stay on the right bank of the river. All of the women must stay on the left bank. Neither may cross the river to be with the other.”

So it was done. The men and women lived apart for some time, but they were not happy without each other. Finally they went to Begochiddy. Some say it was the women who came first, but others say it was the men.

“We are not happy by ourselves,” they said. “We wish to be reunited.”

So Begochiddy brought men and women back together.

“If there is more trouble,” he warned them, “this Third World will be destroyed by a flood.”

All of this time, Coyote was roaming around. Wherever he went he was curious about everything, including things he should have left well enough alone. One day, Salt Woman went walking by the two big rivers Begochiddy had made in this Third World. When she came to the place where the rivers crossed, she saw something strange in the water. It looked like a baby with long black hair. She went back and told the others about it. Coyote decided to go and see for himself. Sure enough, there where the rivers crossed was a baby with long black hair in the water. Coyote lifted it out of the water and hid it under his blanket. He told no one what he had done.

Four days passed and then a great noise was heard all around the Third World. Begochiddy knew what it was, knew what was going to happen. Someone had done wrong. Now this Third World was about to be destroyed by flood. From the east a black storm came. From the south a blue storm approached. From the west came a yellow storm. From the north a white storm swept. Once again Begochiddy gathered all the beings and things created. Once again Big Reed grew up and up. It lifted up all the beings and things as storm waters rose beneath them. This time, though, was not as easy as before. Big Reed stopped growing before it entered the next world. The Spider People wove a web to bring them closer, but they could not break through into the new world. The Ant People tried to dig through, but they could not do it. Finally Begochiddy told the Locust to try. Using his hard head, the Locust broke through into the Fourth World. Now Begochiddy climbed up through the hole the Locust made. He found himself on an island with only water to be seen in all directions. Begochiddy saw right away that there were others in this Fourth World who had great power. To the east was Talking God. To the south was First Bringer of Seeds. To the west was House God. To the north was Second Bringer of Seeds. Begochiddy waved to each of them. Then the four powerful beings made the waters recede, leaving a world covered with mud. Begochiddy went back down Big Reed to the others.

“Grandparent,” said the others, “how is it in the new world?”

“The new world is good,” Begochiddy said, “but it has not yet dried. Someone must

try to walk up there. Who will try?"

"I will go," said Badger. Then he went up through the hole and tried to walk on the new Fourth World. His feet broke through the surface, though, and became covered with mud. To this day all badgers have black feet.

"This will not do," Begochiddy said. "How can we dry this new world?"

"We shall dry it," said the winds. Then the winds went up to the Fourth World. The cyclones and the whirlwinds and the small dust devils went up to the Fourth World. They swirled about and dried the surface well so the people could walk. Then the Ant People went up and walked on the dried surface of the Fourth World, and all the other people and created things followed.

Begochiddy, though, looked back down through the hole to the Third World. The water there was still rising.

"Who is the one who angered the Water Monster?" Begochiddy said.

No one answered, but Coyote pulled his blanket tighter around himself.

"Open your blanket," Begochiddy said.

Then Coyote opened his blanket and Begochiddy saw the water baby.

"You must give the Water Monster back its child," said Begochiddy.

Coyote did as Begochiddy said. He dropped the water baby back down to the Third World, and the waters receded.

Now Begochiddy went around the Fourth World and placed things in order. The mountains were put in their places. The Sun and Moon and Stars were put into the sky. Fire God tried to keep all the fire to himself, even though the people needed it to keep warm and cook their food. One night, though, as Fire God slept, Coyote stole fire from him and gave it to all the people. Then Begochiddy told the human beings the right way to live, how to give thanks, how to care for the plants such as corn and squash and beans. Begochiddy gave them many different languages, then, and sent them to live throughout the world. It was now, in this Fourth World, that Changing Woman came to be. She became the greatest friend of the human beings, helping them in many ways. It was Changing Woman who gave birth to the Hero Twins, who traveled throughout the world doing great deeds, destroying the monsters that threatened the people.

So the Fourth World came to be. However, just as the worlds before it were destroyed when wrong was done, so too this Fourth World was destined to be destroyed when the people do not live in the right way. That is what the Dine say to this day.