



# *Dance in a Buffalo Skull*

Old Indian Legends

Native American

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*Intermediate*

*3 min read*

It was night upon the prairie. Overhead the stars were twinkling bright their red and yellow lights. The moon was young. A silvery thread among the stars, it soon drifted low beneath the horizon.

Upon the ground the land was pitchy black. There are night people on the plain who love the dark. Amid the black level land they meet to frolic under the stars. Then when their sharp ears hear any strange footfalls night they scamper away into the deep shadows of night. There they are safely hid from all dangers, they think.

Thus it was that one very black night, afar off from the edge of the level land, out of the wooded river bottom glided forth two balls of fire. They came farther and farther into the level land. They grew larger and brighter. The dark hid the body of the creature with those fiery eyes. They came on and on, just over the tops of the prairie grass. It might have been a wildcat prowling low on soft, stealthy feet. Slowly but surely the terrible eyes drew nearer and nearer to the heart of the level land.

There in a huge old buffalo skull was a gay feast and dance! Tiny little field mice were singing and dancing in a circle to the boom-boom of a wee, wee drum. They were laughing and talking among themselves while their chosen singers sang loud a merry tune.

They built a small open fire within the center of their queer dance house. The light streamed out of the buffalo skull through all the curious sockets and holes.

A light on the plain in the middle of the night was an unusual thing. But so merry were the mice they did not hear the “king, king” of sleepy birds, disturbed by the unaccustomed fire.

A pack of wolves, fearing to come nigh this night fire, stood together a little distance away, and, turning their pointed noses to the stars, howled and yelped most dismally. Even the cry of the wolves was unheeded by the mice within the lighted buffalo skull.

They were feasting and dancing; they were singing and laughing—those funny little furry fellows.

All the while across the dark from out the low river bottom came that pair of fiery eyes.

Now closer and more swift, now fiercer and glaring, the eyes moved toward the buffalo skull. All unconscious of those fearful eyes, the happy mice nibbled at dried roots and venison. The singers had started another song. The drummers beat the time, turning their heads from side to side in rhythm. In a ring around the fire hopped the mice, each bouncing hard on his two hind feet. Some carried their tails over their arms, while others trailed them proudly along.

Ah, very near are those round yellow eyes! Very low to the ground they seem to creep—creep toward the buffalo skull. All of a sudden they slide into the eye-sockets of the old skull.

“Spirit of the buffalo!” squeaked a frightened mouse as he jumped out from a hole in the back part of the skull.

“A cat! a cat!” cried other mice as they scrambled out of holes both large and snug. Noiseless they ran away into the dark.

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