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## Lesson Legends

### ***George Kiesickquayash***

#### The Child in the Moon

If you look at the moon, you can see, standing there, someone holding water pails. There was a child whose parents died, and other people adopted that kid, and told the kid to get some water in the evenings. They really treated that kid badly. They hit him if he didn't do what he

was supposed to do, and they spanked him. One night, the lady told the kid to get some water. The moon was shining outside, just like daylight. He was scared to go to the hole in the lake for water. He took an axe, and then watched some stars, saw the clouds blowing, and saw the moon coming closer. The moon took that kid. That's the kid in the moon, holding the pails. Those people who kept that kid lost him. They only found the axe. In a few days and nights, they saw the kid standing there in the moon, and they knew it was that kid. That's a true story.

### Why the Days are Short in Winter

This one is about a boy and a girl. There were two of them. Around November the boy, who was called Pitchananeese, was hunting with bow and arrow, shooting for partridge and rabbits. He walked a long way into the bush. As he was hunting, he saw something that almost looked like a shadow making a track. He went running back home, and asked his sister if she could give him some string. She wanted to know what he wanted the string for, and he told her it was for making another bow and arrow. He went back to where he had seen that thing, and made a snare with the string. She hadn't given him string, but instead she had taken a hair off and given it to him. He made the snare, and that morning, just as the sun was going into the long days of summer time, it got caught in the snare. That's why the days are short in November and December. Nobody can go close to the sun, because it's really hot. So to free the sun from the snare, you have to grab a small wee mouse and throw it over there to bite that hair. Then the sun goes up, and long days begin again.

### The Two Sisters and the Stars

I will tell a story about stars. It will be a short story. Two girls were walking around in the evening and they got really tired. The sisters lay down on top of a rock. They looked above them and saw the stars. One was really bright. Another one was red. They looked at them, and saw clouds go over them. Sometimes under the clouds, they noticed the wind blowing. Then the older girl asked her sister a question. "Of those stars," she asked, "which one is yours? Mine is that really bright one." The younger sister said, "Mine is the red one." Then they fell asleep on the rock, and before they woke up, they were gone. They had disappeared.

Two stars picked up those two girls. The oldest girl slept with an old man. The younger one slept with a teenager. They never came back. They walked around in space and saw an old lady sitting there. They asked her, "Which way is it to go back?" The old lady said, "I can take you back if you want to go home." She was busy fishing, and suddenly she caught something. Sometimes you see a hawk flying around in the air. The old lady caught that hawk on a hook. She put those two girls on the tail of the hawk. She said, "It is a long ways. Don't look, just go down." But the oldest girl wanted to see where she was going. She looked down and saw the earth. At that the thing broke down, the tail fell off, and the girls fell into the hawk's nest. They still can't get down. There are no branches, and they are stuck in there too high to jump.

I heard this story a long time ago. Our parents told us never to look at the stars and moon, especially in the evening.

## **Tommy Spade**

### The Gifts of the Animals

Long ago when animals lived on this island there were all kinds of animals: moose, beaver, bear, wolf, dog, fox, otter, mink, squirrel and weasel. The animals had a meeting to figure out what they could contribute to the Anishinabe, what their job was on this earth. The mink spoke and said, "I will let Anishinabe use me for his pants and mitts. That's my gift to the Anishinabe."

Then the rabbit spoke. "I'll give my body to Anishinabe to eat and my fur for warm mitts, coats and covers."

The beaver was asked what he was going to do. The beaver said, "My gift is for Anishinabe to eat my body and for clothes."

They didn't give their fur to be sold. Today man goes around [selling] animal fur. The animals were given for Anishinabe to use, not for any thing else. The squirrel was asked what his job was. The squirrel said, "I will run around the trees so the Anishinabe can see me and be happy and not get lonely. That will be my job as long as they live."

The moose was asked what his gift to the Anishinabe was. He said, "I will give my body for food and clothes."

Then the wolf and dog were asked what they were going to do. The wolf was doubtful of what he was going to do. The dog and wolf were told the animals would decide for them. "One of you will work for Anishinabe while the other will run free in the wild and be free." The wolf was asked if he would stay with the Anishinabe and work for them. The wolf said no, so the dog said, "Then I will work for Anishinabe; I will pull their sleighs or whatever they need me for."

The wolf and dog went their separate ways. The dog pulled sleighs for Anishinabe and was fed very well so he could be strong to pull sleds. The wolf was hungry. When he saw how the dog was treated, he started to cry, saying he wished he had worked for the Anishinabe. Today when the dogs travel, then rest, you can hear the wolf howling; he's crying because he's sorry he didn't work for the Anishinabe. The dog today doesn't do anything. He thinks his being around is enough.

## **Francis Muckuck**

Spring, 2001

Translated by Marjorie Nelson

### The Legend of Mashosh - The Story of the Shoes

Mashosh did not like his son-in-law. He wanted to kill him. While the son-in-law was busy, Mashosh sat down for a long time without talking. His daughter asked him, "Why are you not talking?" He said he didn't feel like talking. He was planning to kill his son-in-law. He asked his son-in-law to go on a trip with him. Mashosh made all the arrangements. So they got ready. It was a very cold winter. Mashosh said they would travel far. The son-in-law took two pairs of shoes while Mashosh took one pair. Mashosh was thinking of killing his son-in-law and letting him freeze.

They traveled for a long time. It was very cold, so cold their shoes froze. The son-in-law hid his second pair of shoes which Mashosh didn't know of. The son-in-law knew what Mashosh was up to, that's why he took two pair of shoes. When they were going to sleep, Mashosh was standing when the son-in-law lay down to sleep, but he was pretending to sleep. He watched Mashosh switch shoes when Mashosh lay down to sleep. The son-in-law got up and switched Mashosh's and his shoes. Mashosh got up in the morning but the son-in-law stayed in bed watching Mashosh. Mashosh switched shoes and threw what he thought were his son-in-law's shoes in the fire. It was freezing cold when the son-in-law got up. He took his shoes. The son-in-law knew Mashosh didn't like him. His son-in-law had out-smarted and beaten him (maybe that's the reason he didn't like him).

The son-in-law left Mashosh sitting by the fire. His feet were not frozen. He circled around and watched Mashosh. Mashosh was talking and singing while he was rubbing his feet. Singing, "I wish I would have thought about this first. I wish I looked like a little caribou, thought like a caribou." He rubbed charcoal on his frozen feet and started to run in the snow. He came to a rock and grabbed the rock. He started to sing again. He sang of the earth. "I should have thought," he sang. The son-in-law was watching. Mashosh started walking with a stick for a cane. He fell in the snow. He didn't know what to think. His feet were frozen.

### **Francis Muckuck**

Translator: Marjorie Nelson

## **The Swing**

I will talk about the legend of Mashosh. Mashosh didn't like his son-in-law. He always tried to trick him into making mistakes for which he would kill him. Everywhere they went he tried to kill him but he couldn't. One time he locked his son-in-law in a swinging cage so the son-in-law would die when it fell. The son-in-law stood steadily in the cage and then the swinging cage stopped and the son-in-law stepped out. "It is your turn," said the son-in-law. Mashosh happily stepped into the cage, thinking he would win. The swing went back and forth, but then on the next swing he fell down. You could hear him fall. He lost again to his son-in-law. The earth opened and he hurt his head. The son-in-law took some medicine from a tree and bandaged his head with it. That's why Mashosh is alive.

## **The Giant Fish**

When Mashosh got better, he again planned to kill his son-in-law. He told his son-in-law, "There's game over there. We can spear them. Wooden spears." The son-in-law agreed because he knew he could beat him. He always beat him before. They went in a boat, and Mashosh guided the boat to where he wanted it to go. They came to a big lake, where there was sturgeon-like fish, but giant-like. Mashosh pushed the boat alongside these fish, then he told his son-in-law to stand up and spear the fish. The son-in-law was spearing when Mashosh let the boat turn over, thinking his son-in-law would drown. Mashosh got on the boat and went home thinking his son-in-law was eaten by the big fish. But instead the fish took the son-in-law home. The

son-in-law's children were there to greet him. They cooked the sturgeon he had brought home. The son-in-law made spears from the fish bones for his children.

While the children were spearing, Mashosh noticed the fish bones and asked the children where they got them from. "Our father brought a surgeon home and that's where we got them from," the children said. Mashosh went to where his son-in-law was sitting. Mashosh stared at his son-in-law for a long time. His daughter asked him why he was staring at his son-in-law. Mashosh said he was looking at the creatures climbing around his forehead. His daughter said she couldn't see anything on his head but the reason he was staring at his son-in-law was he was very mad at his son-in-law.

### Feeding the Son-in-law to the Seagulls

Mashosh sat down to think. He spoke to his son-in-law and said, "We will go to the place where the seagulls stay. Where our ancestors used to go a long time ago." The son-in-law agreed to go, knowing he would win again. They got in the boat and went. They lay down in the boat, not sitting up. The boat was fast. They soon saw where they were going. They saw what they were looking for on an island. While Mashosh was talking, the son-in-law listened. "This is where we will get out," said Mashosh. Mashosh let his son-in-law jump off the boat. He, Mashosh, didn't get out. The son-in-law was not fooled; he knew he would win. Mashosh told him to keep walking farther on the island where the seagulls stay. The son-in-law came to the seagulls and looking back, he saw Mashosh going away. Mashosh left his son-in-law, thinking the seagulls would eat him up. The son-in-law asked the seagulls to take him, so the seagulls took him home. The son-in-law's children greeted him; he brought the big egg home and his wife cooked it and they ate it. The shell of the egg didn't break so the children played with it. It was so hard it didn't break. There was no sign of Mashosh. When he finally appeared he was thinking he had won because he fed the seagulls his son-in-law. When he saw what the children were playing with he asked them, "Where did you get those?" The children answered, "Our father brought them."

### ***Eva Skunk***

### The Importance of Washing the Dishes

The first thing I ever did for my mom was wash the dishes. I was told to wash the dishes as soon as we were done eating, and there was a reason we were told to do that. (To wash the dishes doesn't mean only dishes; it includes pots and pails, too.) This thing was told to us by our great grandma. Her name was Mariah and her last name was Keeshenayash. She used to tell us, "Let me tell you a story." She used to make us sit down around her. "Listen carefully to what I'm going to tell you," she said. "This happened long, long ago. I'm telling you the story because it shows why you should wash the dishes next time." She used to say, "I don't want you to laugh," when she told us stories. This is how the story goes.

They had mystical powers in those days. A certain elder had two daughters. These young ladies used to pile up all the dishes in one spot, and not wash them. Nobody knew about this, but

after a while all the elders got suspicious of the young women because all the young men got sick after every time they ate, especially after breakfast. They started puking and stuff like that.

The father began to wonder if his daughters did anything at night – snuck out or did anything with the dishes. Why were the young men getting sick? Some were even dying. One day a young man died right there, and the father decided he would find out what was going on. He sent his two daughters to bed early. “I will try and find out what’s going on,” he said. He sat close to the fire and lit up his pipe. While he was sitting there smoking his pipe, the fire died down.

It was then that he saw his vision. There was a person being transformed from the smoke. He heard footsteps going to the teepee. The man opened the doorway and there was a young lady, walking into the teepee. She was very tall and she was wearing something big on her head – a big cowboy hat. He saw her lining up the bowls, plates and pots. She looked at them. Then she lifted up her dress and she would pick up a plate or sit down and rub her bottom against the plates or pots.

The father immediately knew who she was and he made her say her name – Mutcheequaywus. That was her name. She goes around at night rubbing her bottom against dirty dishes. So you better wash your dishes every evening.

After they found out her name, Mutcheequaywus walked out. After she walked out of the teepee you could hear a weird noise around the area; it was like the bugs that light up at night. As she left, all those sounds went with her. That’s when that medicine man knew he had beaten her. Now that he had found out why all these young men were getting sick, he told his two daughters, “That is why people are getting sick and dying: because you never wash your dishes!” And he also went out and told everyone in the village what he had seen, what the lady did, and why everyone was getting sick.

The reason why our grandmother told the story was so we’d always wash the dishes and not be lazy. That’s why the young people should at least hear about this story. That’s the only reason behind this story. People should keep their plates and pots clean. Also that’s the reason after people eat that they get heartburn. That’s who’s doing that. Mutcheequaywas. That’s the end of the story about Mutcheequaywas.

## **Creation Legends**

### ***Carrie Lastheels***

Paraphrased by Mary Masakeyash

### **Why the Squirrel Looks as though He’s Crying**

This is the legend about a squirrel (Cheetamoo). Have you ever seen the look of a squirrel’s eyes? The squirrel looks like he was crying. One day, some other animals saw the squirrel and asked why he was crying. “Did he tell you why he’s crying?” they asked themselves. The squirrel answered that he was crying because he wanted to wear some of the stuff that the bear is wearing. “I want to look a little bit like the bear,” the squirrel said. The animals agreed to give the squirrel a little bit of the bear’s nails, so that his hands could look a little bit like the bear’s. “Just the nails,” they told the squirrel, “that’s all we’ll give you. We’ll give you the nails so you

can climb up on the trees.” Then the squirrel started crying again. He wanted to be as big as a bear and look like a bear.

The squirrel got really mad afterwards because he couldn't get everyone to agree to make him look like a bear. So he went way up on a tree. The animals tried to get him to climb down, but he wouldn't move. “Come down, squirrel!” they yelled at him. He was at the top of the tree, and he was crying away. While he was crying he'd say, “I wanted to be a bear, I wanted to look like a bear.” But still the other animals wouldn't agree. They said he could have a bear's claws and nothing else. The squirrel wouldn't come down out of the tree, so the animals at the foot of the tree decided that they should chop down the tree and make sure it fell in the water. Everyone went to look for an axe. While they were all gone, the squirrel came down.

They all came back and started looking for him in the tree. They were going to chop down the tree so it would fall in the water, but they couldn't find him. They finally found a hole. He used to live in a hole in the ground. That's what he went down into. If you ever look at the squirrel, he has some white spots around his eyes. Those were his tears from crying too much because he wanted to be a bear.

### How Chipmunk got his Stripes

This is a story about Chipmunk (Gippeshgondaway). The story begins with a snake. He was getting worried that winter was coming and he was worried about where he would get wood for the rest of the winter. There was no way he could get wood for himself because he had no arms to hold anything. It is impossible for a snake to hold an axe. There is nothing a snake can do except crawl around. As the snake was lying there wondering what to do, he saw a chipmunk in front of him, so the snake asked him a question. “Do you think you can make wood for me,” the snake asked, “because I don't really know how to do it. Winter's going to be here pretty soon. Not that I have anything with which to pay you. The only thing I can pay you is a jacket for you to wear while you cut wood. The jacket would have stripes just like mine.” The chipmunk agreed to cut the wood, and he wore the jacket as he chopped. After he was done making wood, the snake gave him the jacket.

We hardly ever see chipmunks around. “The only time you we will see me,” said the chipmunk, “is when it's really nice and hot. That's when I will come out of my house. Snake asked me to guard outside his door so he won't crawl all over the place.” So we still see that today, because he still stands by the door of the snake and doesn't allow him to crawl around that much. We only see the snake crawling around when it's nice and hot in the summer. The chipmunk stands by the door and doesn't let snake out. He's more like a doorman. That's the end of the story of Chipmunk.

### ***Josie Kaminwaish***

### Why the Rabbit has Narrow Shoulders

Nanabush was very hungry when he woke up. It was the summer time, so he was walking down a trail, out looking for food. As he was walking, he thought he saw something. He

stopped and wondered what it was he had seen. He retraced his steps backwards. You know how sometimes you feel that something isn't right? He sat there looking into the big, thick brush, and suddenly he did see something lying there, but the person looked so odd. "My brother," he said, "what are you doing there?" No answer. He said it again. All of the sudden he saw one eye open and the person started moving around, and he found it was a rabbit. And this rabbit started crawling out, and Nanabush started laughing. "What happened to you?" Nanabush said. "You look so strange!"

The rabbit said, "I did something very foolish last night." So they walked together a little ways, found a boulder and sat there. And slowly the story came out. It seems the rabbit had asked this girlfriend of his to meet him by a lake, at a big boulder by the lake, on a certain night, at a certain time. He waited there, and finally the girl came. She sat beside him on the boulder and they were talking and talking, when suddenly another girl came and sat beside him on the other side. That's when it clicked with him what he had done. He had completely forgotten he had invited another girl. The two girls didn't like it at all, because as they say, three is a crowd. They started snuggling up to him quite tightly, one on each side. At first he really liked it and said to himself, "They love me." But after a while it started to get uncomfortable. They got closer and closer to him and when he started really hurting, he finally knew that they were both mad at him.

### Why a Rabbit has Long Ears and Long Feet

It's the same thing again with Nanabush - he was really hungry again when he woke up and decided to go out for a walk and look for food. He came upon a stream, and thought "Oh, I can catch some fish here." He tried to look into the stream to see if he could catch any fish with his bare hands. "Oh, I'm not going to be able to catch fish here," he thought, because the water was really deep and it was very hot. Fish go deep when it's hot. He came upon some berries. He wanted to see if he could eat those because he was really hungry. Just before he started picking them, he found they were very dry because it was hot, so he left them alone.

He came upon a tree with a beehive in it. He thought it was so quiet in there so he said, "I'll take some honey." He made a hole in there and looked inside and found everyone was sleeping in there. But one bee woke up and saw this eye looking at him and then everyone woke up and started chasing him. He got away from them, but he was still hungry. "What am I going to do? I'm so hungry, I'm getting weak. How am I going to get some food?"

Suddenly a thought came to his mind: "I shall call all my brothers!" So he called the owl, the fox, bear, goose, skunk, mouse, everybody, and they came, wondering what he wanted. (They didn't trust him either because they knew him as a trickster.) He said, "The reason why I'm calling you is because I will teach you to sing a new song. But you have to sit in a circle." He sat on a boulder with all his brothers sitting around him in a circle and he got ready to teach them a song.

The last one that came was a rabbit and there was only room for him beside Nanabush. "Before I teach you this song, you have to have your back towards me - you're not supposed to see me," said Nanabush. They want to learn the song, so they did this. Nanabush started singing, and they started listening, trying to pick up a note here and there. The owl, very curious, moved his head this way and that because he wanted to see what was going on. They were not



supposed to look, but he's so curious, he can't help it. As he moved his head around trying to see what was going on, he finally turned his head right around and saw Nanabush just about to grab the rabbit. "It's a trap!" hollered the owl. All the animals ran away, but Nanabush managed to catch the rabbit who was sitting by him. A long time ago rabbits had short feet and short ears, just like a little puppy. This particular rabbit wanted to get away and it wriggled around desperately. Nanabush had him by the feet, and then also grabbed him by the ears. The more the rabbit wiggled, the more Nanabush hung on. Finally, when the rabbit managed to get away, he had long ears and long feet.

## **Wees kay jac and Nanabush**

***Roy Kaminwaish***

### Looking in the Wrong Direction

Wees-Kay-Jac was going for a walk and on his walk he decided to have a smoke. He had his smoke and when he finished his smoke he went on. Then he realized he'd left his tobacco somewhere. He had dropped it along the way. So he retraced his footsteps and came to a river, a creek. He looked in the water and sure enough, there was his tobacco. So he stuck his hand in the water and felt around and felt around and muddied up the water, but he couldn't feel his tobacco. He couldn't find it. He waited till the water settled and he looked again into the water and sure enough, there was his tobacco. He could see it. He rolled up his sleeve and stuck his hand again and stirred around again and muddied up the water. Getting somewhat discouraged and upset, he tossed his head and looked up, and there was his tobacco hanging in a tree.

***George Kiesickquayash***

### About Nanabush

One story I know is about a guy named Nanabush. I heard about it in Winnipeg Manitoba. He's short, somewhere over three feet tall, and wears a headband. He doesn't really eat, and only eats when hunting something. When he wants to catch something, he goes into the lake, then goes inside a beaver or muskrat house. When he catches a muskrat he eats everything. He doesn't cook it, just eats it, like the Eskimo. He doesn't carry any weapon like a gun, knife, or axe. Maybe he just has sharp nails on his hand, I don't know. They call him Nanabush. He goes along the river looking for a muskrat or beaver house. When he swims and sees some ducks or geese, he goes under water and catches them from underneath. He pulls them under, and they sink when he catches them and then he eats them. Nanabush has no home, either. He goes all over the place.

## ***Eva Skunk***

### Why Geese Have Long Necks

This is a story about Canada Geese. Everybody has a different version of the story about how geese came to have long necks. This version is the one that I've heard my parents tell. A long time ago, Wees kay jac asked all the fowl to fly in for a powwow dance. At the powwow dance, he sang while the rest of the ducks and geese danced. He asked them to dance with their heads down. I guess he was sitting in front of a teepee or wigwam. As they danced by, Wees kay jac grabbed each one and broke their necks. After he broke their necks, he threw them behind him. You would see these geese really flap their wings fast so he couldn't catch them. He pulled their necks really hard to kill them. That's what I heard that explains why geese have long necks.

### Adventures (and Mis-adventures) of Wees kay jac

One day Wees kay jac was walking along, hungry, when he came upon some ducks. One of the ducks knew what he was up to. He screamed, "Wees kay jac is going to kill us – he's up to his tricks again!" Everyone took off. Before they knew what he was up to, he caught himself a lot of ducks and geese anyway. Then he went to look for a place where there was nice sand. He made a fire there with a whole bunch of logs on top of the sand. He put all his ducks and geese under the sand with their feet sticking out. He was very happy he had killed that many.

He was getting sleepy, and he was getting ready to take a nap. Then he pulled down his pants and was talking to his ass. He told his ass to look out for people. Wees kay jac made sure his ass was sticking out towards lake. He said, "Twitch if you see anything coming." After that, his ass would twitch once in a while. He would look around, but wouldn't see anything. The second time his ass twitched, he slapped it many times. "Quit lying to me," he said.

He finally got his ass mad. Meanwhile, people were coming around, and the ass could see a canoe. But the ass didn't twitch anymore because it was mad at Wees kay jac for hitting it. He didn't want to twitch. Then the guys came ashore with their canoe. They took out the ducks and geese that Wees kay jac had put in the sand. Then they put the duck and geese feet back to make it look like they were still there. Wees kay jac finally woke up, and by then his food was already long gone. He went to check up on his ducks, and grabbed a duck foot but it came off. He checked the other feet, and thought he'd over cooked them. So he did that to all of them, and then he knew that something was wrong. He got really mad and went to look for a big rock. When he found one, he threw it into the fire. He was mad at his ass. When the rock was really hot, he sat on it so he could burn his ass. After he had punished his ass, he was really sore so he started to walk along the shore.

As he was walking, he slashed birch bark trees because he was so mad. He met up with a whole bunch of partridges. He asked the little baby chicks what their mom's name was. "What is your mom's name?" he asked them. They told him that her name was Push go quay sa (person that surprises someone). Wees kay jac was really cocky. He said, "She wouldn't surprise me," and then turned around and took a shit on them. That's why partridges have a patch on their chests.

After Wees kay jac shit on them, the little chicks turned around and ran to where their mom was. She asked what had happened. They all said that Wees kay jac had shit on them. Their mother asked them why he had done it, and one of the chicks said, "He was in so much pain, I think that's why he did that. He also asked us what our mom's name is, and we replied 'person who surprises someone'." The reason she is called that is because of the noise the partridge makes when it's surprised. It gets puffed up and starts flapping wings. So the mother got really mad at Wees kay jac.

"I'm going to go look for him," she said, and her kids pointed in the direction he was going. He was going towards a cliff by a really high, rocky shore. He was going up there because he wanted cold air for his ass. She finally saw him lying near a cliff. She went closer to where Wees kay jac lay. He was taking a nap. She snuck up to him and flapped her wings and made that noise. He was so startled that he fell off the cliff. When he got up from down below, he looked up and saw the partridge looking down on him. She saw his scab sticking to the top of the cliff. It looked like mushrooms-mossy (walk wanurk). "I guess people will eat there later on in life," she said.

We usually had a big laugh about Wees kay jac stories. Sometimes we dream about them because we told so many stories about Wees kay jac.

So he went wandering again. A person is called Wees kay jac if they try and fit something too small for them. He made himself a bow and arrow. He was getting hungry, so he went around the shores of this big lake. As he walked, he kept on slashing these birch bark trees and twisting them. He was still kind of mad. (They are usually straight, but Wees kay jac was still kind of mad at people, and thought if the trees were straight they would be too easy to chop down.)

As he walked along the shore, he saw this tiger or lion. Wees kay jac took a shot at it with his bow and arrow. He got him on its side. He had done it by the rocky shore. The tiger or lion went over to the rocky shore with an arrow sticking out of his ribs. The arrow in his ribs was the only one Wees kay jac had. He was wondering where he would get another one. As he was standing around there, he heard someone coming his way. Then, Frog hopped towards him. Frog was singing, and holding a little kettle in his arms. Wees kay jac met up with Frog and asked what he was looking for. "I'm looking for medicine for the lion," Frog said. "The evil Wees kay jac has shot him, so I'm looking for medicine to fix his wound," said Frog. Then Wees kay jac hit Frog in the head, and opened up his guts. After that, he skinned the frog, and then put the frog skin on. He grabbed the kettle and off he went to see the wounded lion in its den. The lion was moaning in pain. Wees kay jac, in frog skin, said, "I'll do my best to fix you up. I've already made medicine for you." Then he told the lion that he would pull out the arrow. He told him to relax so he could pull the arrow out. The lion finally let him get hold of the arrow. Instead of pulling it, Wees kay jac shook it around, and pushed further inside his chest. The lion died right there. Wees kay jac was really evil.

## ***Tommy Spade***

Translator: Marjorie Nelson

## Stories about Wees kay jac

Again I will tell a legend, the way the Anishinabe elders told them. I think he was a strong man. He was given a life term, not like the Anishinabe who was given eighty, ninety or a hundred years to live; Wees kay jac was given life till the end of earth. He was like Anishinabe. He is a legend. He traveled this earth where today we walk, but he was here in the first, when the earth was young. That's when Wees kay jac walked the earth.

When the earth was flooded long, long ago, Wees kay jac didn't have a boat; he floated and walked the earth. When he met the Anishinabe, they had boats.

The same kind of animals, birds, fish, and creatures that are here today were here in the beginning. Wees kay jac had the power to talk to all creatures, plants and trees. They in turn talked to him, no matter how big, small or furious they were. Once while walking, he came upon some baby birds sitting in a row. He asked them what their mother's name was. They said the startling bird. Wees kay jac laughed. "You can't startle me," he said. Making a sound of disrespect he pulled his pants down and did a bowel movement on the baby birds. The mother came to find her babies all dirty. She asked who did this to them. One bird said, "Wees kay jac did this to us. He asked us what we were called, and we told him the startlers." (All birds and animals knew Wees kay jac by name.) The mother asked her babies where Wees kay jac was going. One of the baby birds said, "He's going to the cliff." The mother went to lie down by the cliff, waiting for Wees kay jac. When Wees kay jac came along, singing, to look over the cliff, suddenly the mother bird flew up with a yell, startling Wees kay jac. Down the cliff he fell, into the water below. Wees kay jac had sores and scabs on his bum. On the way down, his bum brushed a rock, smearing it with his sores. When he looked back he saw the rock. Then he named the rock. "Your name will be Whakonack as long as there are Anishinabe."

Wees kay jac went on his way. He came upon a moose which he killed. The moose was fat. He fixed the hide and meat; he made some moose fat. There were many creatures around wishing for his moose fat. The rabbit asked for some of the fat, but Wees kay jac said, "You can't have any because the Anishinabe will be slippery if you have too much fat (he meant when the Anishinabe eat rabbit). He gave moose fat to the beaver, mink, muskrat and martin; these animals have fat in their bodies while the rabbit has only a little, because the rabbit only touched the stick that was used for stirring. That's what Wees kay jac did to the animals. He gave fat to all those animals that have fat in their bodies.

Wees kay jac traveled everywhere. While walking he became hungry. He hunted for caribou. He killed one and cooked it. He sat to eat, but when he opened his mouth to eat the caribou meat, the willow tree bent over to stop him by making a loud noise. Each time he opened his mouth to eat, the willow stopped him. He didn't like the willow for doing this to him. So he climbed the willow tree to break the branch that was making the noise. The willow tree told Wees kay jac to use his other hand to break the branch, so he did. The branch grabbed him and held him. Wees kay jac couldn't get away. The willow told the animals to feast on Wees kay jac's cooking. While he looked on, the wolf, fox, and others ate his cooking. When the food was gone, the willow let him go.

When Wees kay jac got to his cooking, there was the skull, and he was trying to get at the brain. The willow spoke to him and said, "Why don't you turn your head into a snake head so you can get at the brain?" Wees kay jac's head turned to a snake head and he was able to eat the

brain. When he had eaten all the brain, his head turned back to normal and got stuck inside the caribou skull. He tried and tried to get the skull off but couldn't, so he started to walk again.

Because he couldn't see where he was going, he kept bumping into trees. He asked the tree, "Who are you?" "I'm the birch tree." He kept walking then bumped into another tree and asked "Who are you?" He bumped into each tree, till he bumped a swamp tree and he knew he was in the swamp. He kept walking till he bumped the cedar tree. He knew that there was a lake close by and went to the lake. He asked the muskrat to come. There was Anishinabe living across the lake. Wees kay jac wanted to cross the lake. The muskrat was swimming along and Wees kay jac asked him to make a bow and arrows. The muskrat set to work to make the bow and arrows. When the muskrat finished he took them to Wees kay jac and said, "I have finished what you have asked for." Wees kay jac was going to cross the lake when half way he heard the Anishinabe. They said, "There's a caribou swimming down the lake." They jumped into their boats to go after the caribou. They tried to catch up with the caribou, breaking some of their oars, bows, and arrows. They couldn't catch up with Wees kay jac. When Wees kay jac came to the other side and ran up the hill and came to the rocks, he broke the caribou skull on the rocks. When the Anishinabe found out it was Wees kay jac, they were glad they did not kill Wees kay jac, because it would have been the end for us, they said.

Wees kay jac went on his way again. When he met some geese, he said, "I will go with you wherever you go." He killed one of them. He skinned the goose, but did not pluck it. He dried the skin or body of the goose and wore it and practiced to act like a goose. The dried goose fit him good. He traveled south with the geese, and stayed in the south where the geese go for winter. The head goose said to Wees kay jac, on the way back north, "If you see any Anishinabe, do not look down at them or you'll fall down." You know Wees kay jac, he did not listen. When they came by the Anishinabe camp, he looked down and fell down. He fell down where they were working. They chased him with sticks. As Wees kay jac ran, his goose outfit split. The Anishinabe stopped when they saw who it was. "It would have been the end of Anishinabe if we had killed him," said the Anishinabe.

Wees kay jac went on his way. While he was walking he heard somebody crying. He followed the sound down to the river. He found the fisher sitting on a stump crying. He asked him, "Why are you crying, my brother?" The fisher said, "I can't get anything when I hunt, that's why I am crying."

"Come, tell me where the lions live. I'll make your bill sharp so you can hunt," Wees kay jac said. The fisher told Wees kay jac where the lions lived. Wees kay jac sharpened the fisher's beak and told him to try it. The fisher waited, and when he saw a fish he speared it with his beak. That's why the fisher has a sharp beak. Wees kay jac made him that way.

Wees kay jac crossed the water looking for lions. He found them by the river splashing and diving in the water like the beaver. The lions got out of the water and lay down on the ground. Wees kay jac said, "I'll wait till tomorrow to get him, now that I know where the lions are." When morning came, he went there. There was a stump with an owl's nest, a stump with a hole in it. He took the stump to where the lions were and got into it and waited for the lions. When the lions got out of the water, they lay down and stretched on good ground to sleep. One lion looked at the stump that was standing close by. He kept looking at it and said, "That stump wasn't there before." The other lions said that it was there a long time, so the lion tried to pull it

down and couldn't pull it down. Wees kay jac was inside the stump waiting for the lions to sleep. Then Wees kay jac started shooting arrows from the stump. The lions dove into the water and got away, so Wees kay jac took the stump back to where he got it. He told the owl, "I'll give you a stump for your home."

Wees kay jac went on his way. While walking he heard somebody rattling dishes. He went looking to see what was make the rattling sound. Wees kay jac found a frog singing, dragging red willow trees. He asked, "What are you doing dragging those red willows?"

"I'm going where Wees kay jac shot those lions." Then Wees kay jac grabbed a stick and hit the frog over the head, killed and skinned him. He wore the frog hide, jumping like a frog. Wees kay jac started dragging the red willow, singing like the frog. When he got to where the lions were, he found the baby lions yelling, "Our grandma has come!" It was Wees kay jac in the frog skin. The lions he shot were lying down. He said he would fix or doctor them. He wanted the place blinded. The lions blinded their place but Wees kay jac was killing the lions; instead of pulling the arrows out he pushed them and killed them one by one. The last lion peeked at what Wees kay jac was doing and said, "Grandmother is killing us." Then the lions jumped at Wees kay jac. Wees kay jac jumped out of the frog skin. The lions told him, "We will always be scared of you. There will be flood; later on you will drown." Wees kay jac ran away.

While Wees kay jac was running, he came to a groundhog's home and asked him, "Where is the highest mountain?" The groundhog told him where to go. Wees kay jac climbed this mountain. When looking down from the mountain he noticed the lake coming up. He built a boat, and any of the animals that came, he took in the boat. The flood came and all living things and beings drowned. It was the end of the earth. Wees kay jac had let all the animals into his boat. Now he was thinking of what they would do. He wondered if they could get some earth, but there was only water. He asked the animals who would be able to reach the earth and bring back a piece of earth. He asked the caribou for his coat so they can make a rope of it to try to reach the earth. The caribou agreed, so he skinned it.

Like the unraveling of a sweater, Wees kay jac unraveled the coat of the caribou and rolled it into a ball. When he finished, he asked the animals who would swim down to earth taking an end of the caribou rope. The otter was told to go first, so the otter jumped into water taking the end of the caribou rope with him. The ball of rope hadn't unraveled all the way when the otter drowned. Wees kay jac re-rolled the ball of caribou rope with the otter on its end. He blew life into the otter and the otter became alive. Wees kay jac sent the beaver next. The beaver almost unraveled all the caribou rope but he also drowned. Wees kay jac rolled the ball of the caribou rope back again and blew life into the drowned beaver. Wees kay jac couldn't find or get any birds like the ducks or good swimmers to go and get a piece of the earth. Finally he saw, sitting at the end of a floating log, the muskrat. The muskrat was the only one left to try to swim down to earth. All the animals had tried except the muskrat.

Wees kay jac got the muskrat ready and the muskrat went down. The caribou rope unraveled all the way. When Wees kay jac rolled the caribou rope back up, there at end of it was the muskrat with clutched fists crossed on his chest. When Wees kay jac opened the muskrat's fists there was earth in them. Then Wees kay jac blew life into muskrat. "We will now have land," said Wees kay jac. He dried the earth. While the earth was drying Wees kay jac took the caribou rope and put it back to its original shape and put it back on the caribou and blew life into the

caribou. Where the earth dried Wees kay jac took it and threw it into the water and blew on it in the directions of the wind. As Wees kay jac blew, the island grew.

Wees kay jac spoke with the goose and told the goose to fly around and see how big the island was or if it was big enough. But when the goose came from flying around the island too soon, Wees kay jac said it was not big enough. So Wees kay jac blew into each direction the winds come from. As Wees kay jac blew, the island grew and grew. The goose said, "I will fly around again and see how big the island is. If I don't return the island will be big enough." So the goose flew away and didn't return. So Wees kay jac said, "That's how big the island will be." The goose never returned.

Then Wees kay jac let the animals onto the island and these are the animals we see today. The old earth is gone with the flood. This is the new earth which Wees kay jac made. This is the earth we walk on today. Wees kay jac was here on this earth in the legends. In the north he is talked about in the legends. We also see signs of Wees kay jac here when we go hunting. It is true. We see signs like where Wees kay jac split the hill. The sights are a wonder. Wees kay jac's cooking kettle is still where he left it. His pipe is still there. Wees kay jac traveled south to California. He will get up again and walk this earth using the things he left behind, like his kettle and pipe and other things he left behind. There will be an ending to all living things. Wees kay jac will find life for another earth.