Tobaan

Atsah
TOBAAN ATSAH
Central Koyukon Athapaskan
written by
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Tobaan Atsah
Tobaan Atsah is the most popular Indian story. It is as well-known as Little Red Riding Hood or Goldilocks and the Three Bears.

There are also different versions of Tobaan Atsah. This partly depends upon which village the story is told in and who is telling the story.

The author was born and raised in Cutoff and moved to Huslia as a young girl when the village was moved. She later moved to Koyukuk when she married Benedict and began raising a family.

Kusga - David Henry
Once upon a time there was a man porcupine and his wife living in a camp. The young lady was carrying a baby. One day the young man went out hunting. And he never came back.

Soon she had her baby. And so she just sat home with her baby. She got tired of staying home. And she started thinking what she could do with her baby.
Soon the baby was crawling around. So she gave the baby a piece of punk to play with. She left her while she was playing with the punk. The baby was rolling the punk around. She rolled it round and round the spruce tree. She grew big while she was doing this. Then she found out there wasn't anybody around.
So she started walking around. She went over to the bank. She looked across the river and saw all kinds of trees over there. So she started thinking, I wonder how I could get across to the other side. So she started crying while she was sitting on the beach. The porcupine was crying on the beach, crying on the beach.

Then along swam a muskrat. "What are you crying for, Friend?" he asked the porcupine.
"I want to go across to where there are all kinds of trees growing," said the porcupine. "Where there are spruce, birch, cottonwood, alders and willows, all growing together."

"Then get on my tail," said the muskrat.

"No thanks," she said. "Your tail is skinny as an awl."

"Then what is the old tunnel nose crying for anyway?" said the muskrat as he swam away.

"Yooaan dikin neełtaaghnaalyon dahuk'aat," nee go dikahona. "Ts'ibaa yił, k'ee yił, t'aghát yił, k'as yił, ts'itł yił, neełtaaghnaalyon ho."

"Eeda' donee sika' k'a doleehoy," nee go taaghgoodza.

She was crying on the beach, crying on the beach, crying on the beach. Then along swam a mink. "What are you crying for, Friend?" he asked the porcupine.

"I want to go across to where there are all kinds of trees growing," said the porcupine. "Where there are spruce, birch, cottonwood, alders and willows all growing together."

"Then get on my tail," said the mink.
"Nideen, nogh nika' kun' gastł k'ant'a," yiñnee. "Honikitł totsiyook, dodnee ahaa?" nee go taahgoodza dahoon yak'ots'a hanodeedibaan.

Ts'uh tobaan atsah, tobaan atsah, tobaan atsah. Huyił doogh hun bilaazon ghabaał. "Ganaa', dodeenee?" go dikahon ałnee.

"No thanks," she said, "your tail is as skinny as a stove poker."

"Then what is the old tunnel nose crying for anyway?" said the mink as he swam away.

So she was crying on the beach, crying on the beach, crying on the beach. Then along swam an otter. "What are you crying for, Friend?" he asked the porcupine.
"I want to go across to where there are all kinds of trees growing. Where there are spruce, birch, cottonwood, alders and willows all growing together."

"Then get on my tail," said the otter.

"No thanks," she said. "Your tail is as skinny as a stove poker."

"What is the old tunnel nose crying for then?" said the otter as he swam away.
So she was crying on the beach, crying on the beach, crying on the beach. Then along swam a beaver. "What are you crying for, Friend?" he asked the porcupine.

"I want to go across to where there are all kinds of trees growing," he said. "Where there are spruce, birch, cottonwood, and willows all growing together," she said.

"Then get on my tail," said the beaver.
"Oho', oho', tləa, sik'iłaaats oołok oko notaghasdol," nee go dikahon. Ts'uh k'udaa dik'iłaaats oołok oko nołyo. Dak'udaa go noya' ka' k'a dolyo. Ts'uh k'udaa yoonaan hadeebaan go noya-a.

Dahoon k'udaa k'itł k'aat didiyoh go dikahon. Ts'uh k'inotaatłneek, hudeel k'on huyił, "Atlibaa! sika'!" daadiyoh go noya-a. Dahoon kiłlit'ah.

"Okay, Okay, Wait! I'll get my cooking pot. So she went and got her cooking pot. Then she got on the beaver's tail. The beaver started to swim across the river.

While they were going across, the porcupine got hungry. She built a fire and started cooking. Then the beaver said, It's hot! My tail!" And flapped his tail.
Ts'uh taadal'gots go dikahon.
Ts'uh taah kaatl'ogh neeghoneeyo.
Ts'uh go noya-a diylnnee,
"Neenkitl ti too nagheebinee'?
yiłnee.
"Nideen," nee go dikahon.
"Nilo too nagheebinee'?
yiłnee.
"Nideen," nee.
"Nidzeey too nagheebinee'?
yiłnee.

The porcupine sank to the bottom. She walked along the bottom of the river. So the beaver asked her, "Did water go in your nose?"

"No," said the porcupine.

Then he asked, "Did water go in your mouth?"

"No," she said.

"Did water go in your ears?" he asked her.
"Dzo! Dzo! Sitł'its hool dla-aa," nee go dikahon.


"Dzo! Dzo! Bakaanlees, bakaanlees," yiłnee go dikahon eehoo Dahoon neeneelit go tłaaghuza.

"Ha! Ha! I don't have a gall," said the porcupine.

"Scoot! Or I'll kick your liver," he told her. So he started to kick the porcupine. And the porcupine just hit the bear's foot with her tail. "Ouch! My foot!" said the bear and he started jumping around.

"Ha! Ha! Wet it, wet it," said the porcupine. And so the bear died.
The porcupine made a song while she was walking back and forth through the portage. "Here I go dropping my droppings on my brother's trail; here I go dropping my droppings on my brother's trail."

I thought the winter just started and here I've chewed off part of the winter.