



Beaver and His Tail

Kayas, long ago we are told that Amisk, the beaver, loved to brag about his tail. In those days Amisk had a thick, full fluffy tail with long hair like silk on it. One day while taking a walk, Amisk stopped to talk to Kahkako, the crow. The beaver said to Kahkako, "Don't you love my fluffy tail?"

"Why, yes I do Amisk," replied Kahkako.

"Don't you wish your feathers were as fluffy as my tail? Don't you wish your feathers were as strong as my tail? Don't you wish your feathers were just as beautiful as my tail?" Amisk asked.

"Why do you think so much of your tail, Amisk? A lot of other animals have nice tails," said Kahkako. This insulted Amisk and he put his nose in the air and walked away.

After walking for a while, he stopped for a drink by the river and saw a Wacask, the muskrat. He walked to Wacask and said, "Hello little Wacask. What do you think about my tail? Isn't it the most beautiful of all tails?"

"Well, it is very beautiful and big and fluffy," answered the Wacask. "Is it also a strong tail?"

"Why, yes it is," Amisk answered. "Do you wish you had a tail like mine?"

"I didn't say I wanted a tail like yours. I just asked if it was strong," the Wacask replied with a disgusted voice.

A bit further down the river Amisk noticed Apiscimosos, the deer. Amisk walked close to Apiscimosos and loudly said "Ahem! Hello Apiscimosos, don't you think I have the most beautiful tail of all? It's so fluffy and strong! There's no other tail that compares to mine, don't you think?"

"Well, it is a nice tail Amisk, but I think there are plenty of others with nice tails out here. In fact, I think mine is pretty nice as well." Apiscimosos said smugly.

Amisk quickly turned and began walking back to his dam. He was angry because he felt that the animals were being rude to him. He was very upset and decided to take out his frustration by cutting down trees. After cutting down a couple of trees, he came to a very large one. He knew that it would be a great challenge for him. So he went to it. But as he was cutting, he kept thinking about his tail and didn't notice that he was cutting at a bad angle. Before he knew what was happening, the tree began to fall toward him.



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He jumped to get out of the way, but he didn't jump fast enough, and the huge tree fell on his beautiful tail! He tugged and pulled and finally dug away the earth to free himself. When he finally pulled his tail from under the tree, he was horrified to see that it was flat and all his beautiful hair had been pulled off! Amisk was very sad and started to cry. As he was crying, he heard a voice. It was the Creator.

"Why are you crying?" asked the Creator.

"A tree has crushed my beautiful tail," Amisk cried. "Now no one will like me."

The Creator told him that a beaver is not liked for his tail but for his kindness and wisdom. He also told him how to use his flat tail. "Now your tail will help you swim rapidly," the Creator said. "And when you want to signal a message to a friend, all you have to do is slap your tail on the water."

Hearing this made the beaver happy again. When the animals saw his flattened tail they were shocked! But the Amisk said, "It's better this way. I know now that it was wrong of me to be so proud of my tail and to brag about it. Now I see that my tail is there to help me live easier, not just for showing off!"

From that day on, Amisk never bragged about his tail, and all the animals liked him.

That's how Amisk got his flat tail.