



How Buffalo Got His Hump

Kayas, long ago, we are told that buffalo didn't have a hump and that he held his head high all the time. In fact, he was seen as a bit of an arrogant bully because of his size. One thing buffalo liked to do most was to run! He thought it was great fun to run, enjoying the sound of his own hooves hitting the ground like a drum beat.

Coyote knew about buffalo's love of running and one boring day coyote decided to have some fun. He knew a place nearby where a huge flock of birds was nesting, preparing to lay their eggs in a few days. It was in a large open area covered lightly in grass.

Coyote approached buffalo and presented a challenge to him. "Hey Buffalo! I bet you can't run to the other end of this clearing and back before this stick hits the ground when I toss it up high." Coyote said, pointing directly across the clearing straight through where the birds were nesting.

Buffalo, being proud of this running ability, accepted the challenge and readied himself to run as fast as he could. Coyote smiled to himself and tossed the stick as high as he could. As soon as the stick left coyote's paw, buffalo started running his fastest!

Coyote couldn't wipe the grin off his face as buffalo approached the birds' nesting area at top speed and he almost laughed out loud as buffalo got closer and closer to the area. Buffalo was so set on winning the challenge that he didn't bother looking where he was running. As he stomped through the nesting area at a full run, the birds all flew up in a frenzy trying to get out of the way.

It was only then that buffalo noticed he was running through the nesting area, but he thought to himself it was even more fun seeing the birds scatter and seeing them bounce off his body at a full run. He reached the end of the clearing and without slowing down, spun to run back in the same direction. He didn't care one bit about the birds' nesting area and ran directly through it once again, laughing to himself as the birds once again flew up in a frenzy!

When he finally returned to where coyote was standing, both buffalo and coyote went into a fit of laughter. They were still in a fit of laughter when Trickster walked up.

Trickster had been watching from a distance and had seen all that had happened. He was not impressed and looked sternly at the pair.



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When buffalo and coyote noticed Trickster, they immediately stopped laughing and gave Trickster a nervous smile.

Trickster said angrily, "I've been watching you two and I don't like what I see! You're both responsible for the destruction of the birds' nests! Where are they supposed to have their babies now?!"

Trickster was holding his walking stick in his hand and struck buffalo on the head so hard his head grew a large bump on the top. Trickster went to hit him again and buffalo ducked his head low to ground hunching his shoulders up to avoid the stick. Buffalo found that his head was now stuck in this position, hanging low to the ground and his shoulders hunched, causing a hump on his back.

Trickster looked down at him and said, "For the mean things you did to the birds, from now on you will forever hang your head in shame so everyone will see what happens to someone who is mean to others. This will be the same for all buffalo from now on so no one ever forgets this lesson."

Trickster then turned to coyote, "And you. For all time, you and all your kind will forever make your homes in the ground so you will know what it's like when someone walks over top your home!"

We are told that even today buffalo holds his head in shame, coyote builds his home underground and that most birds now nest in the trees so that buffalo can never again run through their homes.

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