



# Napi and the Gophers

## *Napi kii Omahkokata*

**By Carl Brave Rock**



*There were these 4 gophers, and they were playing a game, there was gopher number one, gopher number two, gopher number three, and a pregnant gopher. They were all playing this game where one would lay on the hot embers of the fire and the others would put sticks on them, until they had had enough and jumped out of the embers. They took turns, giggling and laughing the whole time.*

*Napi was walking along the bank of the river and could hear the giggling, he looked around and found where the giggling was coming from. He watched as the gophers played their silly game. Napi was always hungry in those days, so he thought up a devious plan. On down to the gophers, he went and asked if he could play the game with them. The gophers knew about Napi and his tricks but agreed to let him play.*

*They took turns laying on the embers, when it came to Napi's turn he layed on the embers for just a half a second. He jumped up and told the gophers, "How about all of you lay on the embers at the same time and I'll put the sticks down?"*

*The gophers agreed and lay on the embers, the four of them. Napi put on the sticks and the gophers began to giggle, then he began to put on more sticks and more sticks, soon he was putting down logs on the gophers and the giggles turned to screams, they were being cooked. The pregnant gopher made its way out of the logs, and Napi agreed to let it go saying, "You can go because you are pregnant and will make more gophers for me to eat". And off it went.*

*Once the gophers were cooked Napi had himself a good meal, he was full. And he was tired, so he told his bum, "Hey Bum! Wake me up if anyone tries to steal my food!"*

*His Bum said, "Okay Napi, no problem!"*

*Napi had a good stretch and a yawn, then lay down to rest. Soon a bobcat, **Nata'yo**, came prowling through the trees, smelling the cooked gophers that Napi had not eaten. The bobcat approached the gophers, and Napi's bum began to yell for Napi to get up shouting, Wake up, there's a bobcat stealing your food! Wake up!" "Napi! Wake up, there's a bobcat stealing your food! Wake up!"*





No matter how loud his bum yelled Napi would not get up, and off the bobcat went after eating all Napi's food. Now when Napi got up, he had a good stretch, and was happy because he thought he had food. But when he looked, he saw that his food was gone, he looked at his bum and shouted, "Hey Bum! You were supposed to wake me up if someone came along to take my food."

His Bum pleaded with him, "But Napi, I was trying to wake you up! A bobcat took your food into the forest and ate it."



Off Napi went into the trees to find the bobcat, **Nata'yo**. When Napi found the bobcat, it was fast asleep from the big meal it just had. Napi took the bobcat by the head and said, "Now you will have a mark that everyone will see because you stole my food." And he smashed the bobcat's face on the rock it was sleeping on giving it the flat face we know it to have now, in those days the bobcat had a long nose.

Napi went back to his camp, and he was still mad at his bum for not waking him up, he said, "Hey Bum! I'm still mad at you for not waking me up and losing my food."

Napi grabbed a stick from the fire, a hot poker and burnt his bum. That's why our bums don't talk good no more. Now Napi is not that bright, it was his bum, so he felt the pain, and began to run around screaming in pain, trying to fan and cool his bum. He called on the west wind to blow as hard as it can to cool his bum, and it did.

The wind was so strong Napi went rolling across the prairies, trying to grab a hold of anything he can to stop. This west wind is today's Chinook, **Si'kssopo**. Finally, Napi got hold of a birch tree, and these trees are strong, there he held, flapping in the wind like a flag. Soon, the wind calmed and Napi got down off the tree. He told the birch tree, "Now you will have a mark everyone will see because you helped me in the wind." He took out his knife and put notches in the tree you can see today.

**This is the story of how the bobcat got its face, how we got the Chinook, Si'kssopo, and how the birch tree got its notches. And why our bums don't talk good.**



From: Windy Talker