

## Three Cousins

### Wiisakaychak Goes West

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It was time again for the three cousins to go to their meeting corner where they always wished one another a safe and pleasant journey. Nanabush was going to the great white north, Chi-Jean was going back east, and Wiisakaychak was going west.

Wiisakaychak started off thinking of the wonderful time that he had had at his aunt's house. The only thing he regretted was hugging her too tight. He wished that she would get her voice back and be to speak Michif again.

As Wiisakaychak looked up, he was slowly approaching the foot hills. A squeaky little voice inside his head said, "Remember the last time Wiisakaychak?"

Wiisakaychak stopped in his tracks and slapped the side of his head, and said to himself, "Think Wiisakaychak Think!" He sat there for a long time, then slowly he looked up and his eyes began to roll. They got bigger and bigger. Finally, he said to himself, "Yes! Yes!" The sun had just set and he started his plan. One last time he looked up and started to climb the hill made of rock. He was almost at the top when an owl hooted, "Whoo-who." "Oh be quiet!" Wiisakaychak whispered to the owl.

Wiisakaychak had to climb to the top without waking the sleeping rocks. He made himself as light as a feather as he climbed and climbed and climbed. As he neared the top of the hill, he saw the first signs of daylight. He reached the top just as the sun rose. In a big deep voice the Sun said, "Good morning Wiisakaychak!" Wiisakaychak rolled his eyes in acknowledgement, puckered out his big lips, and

motioned to the Sun to be quiet. He waved at the sun and went down the other side of the hill as light as a feather.

Wiisakaychak walked for a little while enjoying the salt breeze coming from the big lake. As he turned around to look at the Rockies, his eyes rolled and a big grin appeared on his face. He began to sing loudly "Yes! I fooled you! I fooled you!" Just then a rock flew by and a squeaky voice said "We will be waiting Wiisakaychak."

The big boats were there shining like mirrors in the big lake. Wiisakaychak was on the long bridge when he heard the loud horn from the boat. Wiisakaychak started to run, and as he got near the end of the bridge he could see his Big Buddy waving, "Hurry little buddy! Hurry!" The boat was a few feet away from the end of the bridge, but Wiisakaychak went full speed ahead right over the water and into the hands of his Big Buddy.

The captain shook hands with Wiisakaychak and said, "Welcome aboard! Oh that reminds me Wiisakaychak I have something for you." They went below to the captain's cabin where he gave Wiisakaychak some medicine. "Take this and you won't turn green or throw up" said the captain. "Thank you so much," Wiisakaychak said. "Tonight, we will have good music, stories, songs, and dance."

The next day, Wiisakaychak did his daily chores. This time he didn't go close to the edge of the boat. The last time those big fish with a zillion teeth were so hungry they ate his bucket and almost his arm.

Later on, Wiisakaychak asked Big Buddy where they were going. "Gee," Big Buddy replied, "We are going to the *City of Love*, Paris. We will be there late tonight." That evening, Wiisakaychak couldn't believe his eyes, there were lights all over like stars in the sky. Wiisakaychak admired one light; it was high in the sky. Big Buddy told Wiisakaychak that they would go and see the lights in the morning.

Wiisakaychak was excited as they ventured into Paris. He saw a tall building made of glass and stone. Many people sitting on the ground eating cheese and long bread. They drank wine from bottles. He saw many people looking down at the little bridge throwing coins into the water.

“Well little buddy before it gets to dark, I have to go into this store and buy my mom a gift,” said Big Buddy. “Finish your food and I will be right back” Wiisakaychak nodded his head, OK.

Wiisakaychak quickly ate his food, and followed a walking crowd of people. He knew where they were heading. They were going to a place he wanted to see badly.

As it became evening, he saw the tall ladder, the beautiful red lights at the top. “Oh my! These people must go up there to speak to the Lord.” Wiisakaychak thought to himself, “I must go too.” Wiisakaychak started to climb the giant ladder. People called to him to come down, but he only went higher and higher.

As he went higher, he began to feel the wind blow harder and harder. The beautiful red lights were getting closer and closer to him. Wiisakaychak decided to look down to see what all the commotion was about. He looked down and the people looked like ants. He watched them moving quickly. This made him nauseous and dizzy. As he turned, he lost his footing. There he was dangling in the wind, and he was hanging on for dear life. Finally, he was able to get one foot back in place. The wind was powerful, and one of his feet was still dangling. Wiisakaychak was wiggling. He was struggling trying to get back on track. His backpack slid off him. He let go of one hand to catch it. There he hung on with one hand in the vicious wind. He was finally able to get both his hands to hold on, but in the movement, both his feet slipped off the ladder. Wiisakaychak was hanging on for his life. His knuckles began to get cold and white, so he decided to call for help.

“Help! Help me! Someone please help me!” Just then the guards heard him. As the guards rescued Wiisakaychak, he was shaking like a leaf on a tree. They gave him some hot tea to drink, and he sat there, facing the elevator. After drinking most of his tea, Wiisakaychak felt much better. He watched the people passing by; they looked sad. So he began to play his fiddle to cheer them up. It worked; they passed by smiling and started putting coins in his backpack which lay on the floor.

Wiisakaychak watched the people carefully. He saw them go into a wall that opened up. The moment they stepped in, it closed and swallowed those people up. The wall would open and another bunch of people would come out. And the same thing would happen to them, too. Wiisakaychak was wondering how he could get back to the ground. As he played, he kept thinking, "How am I going to get back?" The guards came by and asked Wiisakaychak, "What are you playing?"

Wiisakaychak looked up at the guard and replied, "Show me the Way to Go Home." "Oh sure!" said the guard, "Follow me."

Wiisakaychak did just that. They went to the wall where the guard pressed a button, and the wall opened. Wiisakaychak went in. The guard pressed a button again, and all you could hear was Wiisakaychak holler, "WHOOOOOOOO!"

The door opened, and Wiisakaychak was out of there like a flash of lightening, and smack into the arms of his Big Buddy. Both friends wandered off into the park, where they sat down and talked. Wiisakaychak had a lot of questions, but once again, he was distracted by the funny looking birds flying in and out of the airport nearby. "Hey Big Buddy, what kind of birds are those?" pointing his finger towards the airport.

"Oh those are jets. People ride inside them."

It was early next morning, Wiisakaychak and Big Buddy made their way to the airport. He would be with the funny-looking birds that give people rides.

Wiisakaychak asked Big Buddy what the men were doing with those big hoses. "Oh," Big Buddy said, "they are just gassing up." Wiisakaychak rolled his big eyes and thought to himself. No wonder they fly far.

As Wiisakaychak reached the opening of the big bird, he turned and waved farewell to his Big Buddy. "See you again!" he shouted.

He would be flying above the hills. As the big bird started running faster and faster on the runway, Wiisakaychak heard its knees bend, and he knew that he was flying in the air. Wiisakaychak heard a man's voice saying "Please fasten your seat belts."

A few minutes later, he heard the man's voice again saying, "Please fasten your seat belts. We will be experiencing turbulent weather." As Wiisakaychak looked around, he saw everyone fastening their seat belts, so he did too.

As he looked out his window, Wiisakaychak was totally caught off guard; he saw one big eye looking at him. "Oh my!" Wiisakaychak thought at first, and then the big bird went down really quick. "Oh gosh!" they are trying to catch the big bird because they see me in him. They went down real quick again. Wiisakaychak thought that they were going to crash! Then the man's voice said, "We are out of the storm. Thank you for your cooperation."

Wiisakaychak looked out the window again. He saw a pair of lips saying, "We will be waiting Wiisakaychak."

As the big bird landed, Wiisakaychak went to see how injured he was, but there were no marks of any kind. "What a tough old bird," Wiisakaychak thought.

Wiisakaychak was very happy. He had a lot of stories to share with the people that would be at this Auntie's house. His cousins would soon be at the corner where they always meet. Wiisakaychak was waiting.

## Nanabush Goes to the Great White North

After Nanabush said farewell to his cousin at the corner, he headed north. He was on a mission to fulfill his dream.

As Nanabush came near the heavy wooded area, he began to feel uneasy. He felt like someone or something was stalking him. Nanabush began to hum to himself. He then heard the crackling sound of a branch breaking and rustling leaves.

He looked quickly to his sides, and there stood the ugliest creature he ever saw. Its eyes were red as fire. It had a very big mouth, long sharp teeth, and a long tongue hanging from its mouth. Its fur was grey and shabby looking, and it had mean and hungry written all over it. A little farther in the woods was more of its kind. Nanabush couldn't tell how many there were.

The hungry old beast was about to attack Nanabush, when a loud sound of voices echoed through the bushes. The hungry old beast ran away. It looked at Nanabush with fire in its eyes, saying, "I'll eat you later."

Nanabush was extremely happy to see his northern cousins. They told Nanabush about the mean old wolf pack. It had killed a few of their people when they were by themselves. "They're very smart and mean," they told Nanabush. Nanabush agreed. One cousin told him, "Gee cousin, you look tired, and a bit hungry! You must have walked a long way."

"Oh from the corner," Nanabush said. "You come over and camp now," said a northern cousin.

"We will eat and rest, and you can tell us all about our cousins, Wiisakaychak and Chi-Jean."

As Nanabush told the stories, and showed them the new dances, they were all very happy. "We come to camp up here to get our winter supplies of meat, berries, and medicine. We'll be leaving when the weather gets cold."

Nanabush told them that he was on a very important mission to go way up north. They told him many people tried to go far north but never returned ...

So early the next morning, they all shook hands with Nanabush, and wished him a safe journey. The leader of the hunt gave Nanabush a wooden staff. "Use this on that crazy wolf if he should bother you." He didn't tell Nanabush that he saw those fiery eyes following Nanabush's every move last night. "Come see us when you get back safe, cousin."

As Nanabush approached a narrow pathway, he could feel and hear heavy breathing. Nanabush knew who it was. As he turned into a narrow wooded area just before the opening to the barren, the vicious wolves attacked Nanabush. He fell to the ground as the wolf sunk its long sharp teeth into his pant leg, ripping it right off. Quickly, Nanabush jumped to his feet and smacked that ugly old wolf in the jaw with the stick that his cousin gave him. The wolf backed off quickly, and began to laugh hatefully, saying to Nanabush, "I'll eat you later." Nanabush had quite a long way to go, but at least he didn't have to worry about the wolves for a while.

Nanabush was almost to his destination, when he saw a polar bear and two cubs coming full speed. They were coming right toward him. Holding his staff in his hand, a horrible odour followed the bears. Nanabush was nauseous, and sick. Mama stopped seconds to put her cubs in a snow shelter. Telling them to stay, the odour was worse than ever. "Oh my gosh! It's the ugliest, stinkiest creature that roamed this far north."

Mama Polar Bear was fighting this creature. As she backed up toward Nanabush, he quickly hit himself with his stick, and was turned into a wood tick. He climbed up on Mama Polar Bear, and hung on for his dear life. The battle went on for quite some time. As Mama Polar Bear came closer to the water's edge, she stood up, claws in air, growling. She was very angry. The stinky monster reached over to grab her but she was too quick. She caught it by its legs, and dumped the monster into the water. Down, down went the stinky monster. When the monster resurfaced, it got to its feet and ran far away from Mama Polar Bear. Mama Polar Bear then washed her paws in the ice water, catching four fish. She then made

her way to feed her cuddly cubs. Nanabush stuck on her until she had finished feeding. She then looked down at the fish that were left. She stood up and sent her cubs off to play. She brushed the side of her ear, Nanabush jumped off her. He was himself again.

All that was left were the bear tracks. He thought that the odour from the monster knocked him out, and this was just a dream. Until he saw the one fish that Mama Polar Bear left for him to eat. As he ate, he looked up and thanked the Creator for his day. Early the next morning, Nanabush continued his journey.

It passed midday when Nanabush finally reached his destination. Happy as he was, he made himself a snow shelter. He had a quick cup of tea. He was so tired that he thought he would lie down for a few minutes. With his eyes closed, he drifted off into a deep sleep. Nanabush felt coldness and a mist all around him as he began to wake up. He felt a feather-like motion around him. He opened his eyes, and there they were, so beautiful, colourful, full of light, and guidance.

Nanabush quickly jumped to his feet, and began to play his flute. He played and played all night long for the Northern Lights. At dawn, they disappeared. On the following night facing south, he played his flute until dawn. On the third night, all the Northern Lights were all around him, touching the ground. He felt so clean and peaceful inside. He was so happy and full of energy. On the last night, Nanabush stood up to play for the last time.

As he played, he could feel his feet lift off the ground. He could feel himself floating in the air, dancing as he played his flute like never before. He was dancing with the Northern Lights. Round and round as they all danced. The feeling he had was so great he didn't want it to ever end. "I wish I could play and dance forever." It was over. Nanabush now felt like a person with a clean soul as he got up to search for his footprints. He could only find one. The others who were there when he started to play were gone. Nanabush went on his knees, and looked up thanked the Creator. He felt fulfilled and happy like a new person.

As Nanabush reached the narrow pathway, what he expected was there. The ugly wolf just stood there. Nanabush heard its hateful laughter and saw the fire in its



eyes. With its long tongue hanging between its long sharp teeth, the wolf was blocking the passage. "Let me pass," said Nanabush.

Nanabush was now surrounded by the wolf pack. They really wanted to eat him. Quick as a wink, with his staff held high, he whacked the leader down, and with a flash of speed, swept around and whacked the rest of the wolf pack. As Nanabush passed beside the leader, the wolf jumped on Nanabush. With the wolf on his back, Nanabush quickly turned around and smacked the wolf harder this time. He told the wolf, "From now on you will not laugh at anyone. You will howl to let people know you are around."

As Nanabush continued home, he was happy to see his northern cousins didn't leave yet. As they sat around to eat, Nanabush told them about his quest. They listened with their eyes closed, silently thanking the Creator for sending Nanabush home. When Nanabush was ready to leave, he handed the staff back to the leader, and thanked him. "With your help, I might not have returned." He also told him about the ugly old wolf. Smiling, he waved farewell and was on his way to the corner.

## Chi-Jean Goes East

As Chi-Jean said farewell to his cousins, he felt rather depressed, but somewhat happy. As he tapped his way down the road, he started to think of his friend. He didn't say anything to his cousins because they would only tease him, and he knew his face would get as red as an apple.

Patee, she was a very pretty young girl. She lived by the longest bridge he had ever seen. Today, she would come to meet him in her little red car. As he walked in the forest, he saw many animals, both big and small. Farther along, he saw the big boats in the huge lakes, and close to them was the Great Falling Water. You could hear it for miles. Chi-Jean was going to go there. As he got closer, he changed his mind. It was just too big for him. He saw people going inside what seemed to be a cave and not coming out. So Chi-Jean continued to tap along his merry way. He glanced over his shoulder looking north, where all the big rocks were. He could see the image of a sleeping giant. "Boy! Does it ever look real!" he thought.

Miles later, he looked straight ahead, thinking that he caught a glimpse of something shiny. He rubbed his eyes and looked again. Sure enough, it had to be his dear friend, Patee. He waited for a while, and then started to walk again. In a short while, Patee drove up beside him. "Get in, Chi-Jean, you must be tired." She turned around in the middle of the road, and started for home.

"I have a lot of places to take you to see. It will be nice to tell your family about them." Chi-Jean just smiled and nodded his head affirmatively.

"Hey! Chi-Jean! We're almost at my house! But first I must take you to this place. Look! Chi-Jean! This is our magic hill, I can turn my car off at the bottom of the hill and the hill will carry us up!" When they reached the top, Patee turned the car back on. Surprised, Chi-Jean asked, "What do they call this hill?"

“I call it Magic Hill,” said Patee, “but others call it Magnet Hill. No one really knows what happens. Now we will go, and I will make us a big supper, and you can rest up a bit.”

Supper was almost ready when Chi-Jean came to keep her company. She poured him a cup of tea and said, “This should hold you awhile. I have one more thing to do.” As Patee mixed her “looseskinagin,” she began to sing and dance. “Looseskinagin,” “looseskinagin,” she sang as she moved her hips from side to side. As she moved her foot right left right, her buttocks began to shake like jelly. Then she would chuckle to herself. Chi-Jean laughed and clapped his hands.

The skillet was hot and ready as Patee put her “looseskinagin” into it. Chi-Jean was really happy: he knew what she was making. “Looseskinagin” was fried bannock. When finished, Patee put the “looseskinagin” on the table. She then put two plates full of round potatoes, fiddle sticks, and baked salmon. At the table, Chi-Jean asked Patee why she called green veggies, “fiddle sticks.” She replied, “They’re shaped like a fiddle head, you see.” “Oh,” Chi-Jean said.

A few hours later, Chi-Jean fell asleep quite quickly. Suddenly, he was awakened by a creepy sound that seemed to call out every few minutes. “Come home, come home,” it would repeat itself. As daylight approached, Chi-Jean fell asleep.

The next time Chi-Jean opened his eyes, the sun was shining. Chi-Jean decided to go for a walk by the lake. As he walked on the warm, red sand, he began to get real hot. He looked into the green water. It looked cool and inviting. He decided to take a swim. While swimming, he noticed a tall white house with a red roof floating in the water. He came out of the water all cool and fresh. He looked at the tall white house with the red roof floating on the water. It sure looked like a beautiful picture.

He decided to take another dip before starting off for the house. He swam into the deep water. When he looked up, he saw it was a short way from him. So he decided to go to the house. He was very close to it when he heard a splash of water behind him. When he looked back, he saw a big fish with a large mouth and a zillion teeth swimming fast towards him. Chi-Jean’s feet went full speed ahead

like propellers. He reached for the ladder that went to the door. As Chi-Jean bent down in a split second, the fish jumped up with its sharp teeth, biting Chi-Jean right on his arse cheek, ripping his pant pocket.

Very quickly, Chi-Jean was at the door. He opened it and yelled, "HELLO! Is anybody home?" There was no answer, so Chi-Jean walked in. He went to wash out the wound with water. Ouch! Did it ever sting! The water was salt water. Chi-Jean didn't care as long as he washed the wound. He jumped around dancing until the pain subsided. He then looked out the door, there were three or four of those fish. Maybe there were more swimming round and round. Closing the door, Chi-Jean said to himself, "I won't be going down there." Chi-Jean's butt cheek started to throb so he decided to lie down for a while.

It was past midnight when Chi-Jean was awakened by a bright flash of light. At first, he thought someone came home. Just then, he heard the eerie low pitched sound, followed by a flashing light. Chi-Jean was really frightened. He couldn't get up right away. His sides were stiff and sore. Finally, he managed to get to his feet. He made his way to the window.

As he looked out the window, he saw nothing. It was too foggy. Again, the light flashed, the eerie sound came, but all he could see were images of something large. He could hear people talking, but couldn't make out what they were saying. When the flash of light came again, Chi-Jean saw a few lights. His leg began to hurt, so he made his way to a chair. He would check the window early in the morning.

When Chi-Jean opened his eyes, he saw a man in a white shirt and cap. "Hello," the man said.

"How did you get here?" "I swam," said Chi-Jean. "Oh! Let's look at your injury." "A big fish with lots of teeth bit me," said Chi-Jean. As he got up to show where he got bit, he fainted. When he regained consciousness, he was in a boat to shore. His friend Patee was there with an ambulance.

Later that day, Chi-Jean was released from the hospital. Patee was so happy when she saw Chi-Jean coming towards her. "Oh! Chi-Jean, I forgot to tell you not to

swim in the deep water. Gee, I'm so sorry!" All Chi-Jean could say was, "Let's go to your house. I'm so hungry."

A few days later, Patee asked Chi-Jean if he felt like going for a ride. "Oh sure! Fresh air is good for wounded pride." So off they went in her little red glass car. They went riding beside the great big lake, and to the long bridge. They drove and drove on this long bridge. Chi-Jean asked, "Are we almost to the land?" He didn't feel as safe being so close to the water. "Yeah," Patee said. They went down the road for a little while, the Patee said, "We will have lunch here."

It was so beautiful, full of green grass, and flowers. She picked a nice shady place by a big tree, and told Chi-Jean to lie down for a while, throwing him a blanket. After lunch, they started out again. They came to another bridge, only this one had a roof on it. "This is one of the oldest closed bridges left," Patee said to Chi-Jean.

As they drove on it, they followed the road that led to a factory. "What's this?" Chi-Jean asked. "Oh this here is a maple sugar factory, the oldest of its kind. It was accidently found long ago by a Native couple who lived here. One evening when she went to get water in her two buckets, she got close to the trees, but she fell, and yelled for her husband to come. When he came to get her, one bucket was empty, so she carried it. When they got to where he threw his tomahawk, she looked at the tree, and said it is crying. He took his tomahawk out, but the tears kept coming. So she took the empty bucket and placed it under the slice of the tree and the tears fell into the bucket. Later that evening, when they came back to check on the bucket, it was full. The young woman placed her finger by the bucket where the tears kept falling. She licked her finger, and found it to be really sweet. They got another bucket, and the young woman went into the house and boiled that sweet water. She soon found out that it hardened, she did that all night. Next day, they told their families about the sweet water that came from the trees. So they too started to boil the sweet water. That was the beginning of Maple Sugar."

"When I go back home, I will make sure I tell my people the story you told me," said Chi-Jean.

A few days later, Patee said farewell to Chi-Jean. Tears rolled down her rosy cheeks. Chi-Jean held her for a while, and told her he would come back as soon as he could. Chi-Jean tapped pretty quickly on his way home. In a few minutes, he would meet his cousins at the Corner. This time, he would tell his family about Patee.

The three cousins met at the corner. You could hear their laughter as they left to go to Auntie's house.