



STORY NUMBER 4

Yamoria

When the world was new, a lot of strange things happened. A lot of people possessed medicine power. Some possessed a lot and some very little. The majority of the people had no medicine power. They were normal people, just like you and I, but they were able to hear and see what medicine power could do. That is why the aboriginal people believed in medicine power when the world was new.

We believed that medicine power is a creation of the Creator. Some individuals have too much. There must be a reason for that, but we don't know. It's a mystery. When the world was new, there was one individual who had too much medicine power. His name was Yamoria.

Yamoria was perhaps the most powerful medicine power person throughout history. Because of that, his legendary feats are hard to understand sometimes. He was able to fly anywhere with the spirits. He was able to go from place to place very quickly. He could talk to any animal or bird with no problem. He could make himself into an animal if he wanted to.

This story is about Yamoria turning himself into a beaver. He was interested in the beaver because he thought the beaver was a smart animal. So at one time, he turned himself into a beaver and wandered around beaver country.

Yamoria came to a big beaver lake. It was late fall and the beavers were busy. He went to a beaver house and there he met the male and female heads

of the beaver family. Playing his role as a beaver, Yamoria told the other beavers about his problem. He related to them how he had lost his beaver wife and that he got so lonesome that he just took to wandering around. "It's getting late in the season now. That is my problem," Yamoria said to the beaver family.

The head beaver told Yamoria, "You can stay with us for the winter. There is still a lot of work to do yet." Yamoria thanked the beavers for their hospitality. He stayed with them and began to study them.

Beavers are very busy animals and smart. Like human beings, they plan far ahead for the future. They know that winter is approaching and that they are going to be frozen over. They also know that they can save food and survive under the ice.

They start by building a house. They make their house so that animals like bears and wolverines cannot break it up and kill them. The beavers pile a lot of mud, stones and dry wood, and then mix this with wet mud. It then freezes, making it hard for any predatory animal to break. The beavers are quite safe in there and that is where they sleep and eat. They also have a place where they can sit.

This particular beaver family had three kits. All together, there were six beavers, including Yamoria. To store up food, they would go into nearby bushes to chew down willows and birch, aspen and poplar trees. They would pull these to the vicinity of their house. They cut bigger timber into smaller pieces with their teeth and hauled them to the front of the house. Here they stored them underwater, far down from the ice. This was their food storage and all winter long they could eat from here. The lake also provides other beaver foods that grow underwater.

So Yamoria worked like a beaver, helping to carry and store food for the coming winter. Six beavers in one house is pretty crowded, but the house was not the only place where they could

eat and rest. All around the nearby lakeshore were dens that the beavers had made. They were dugout passages leading from the lake to under the banks of the lakeshore. The beavers had chewed and clawed places where they could eat foods from the bottom of the lake and also rest.

Small, young beavers are like human kids – they get into mischief. Their mother spansks them a lot with the flat of her tail. The beavers, like humans, will also ration their food if it is going to be a long winter and springtime is far away. The mother beaver will even chew off a short length of willow and tell the baby beavers to eat only that for today because they are short of food. Beavers watch carefully over their food to make sure they have enough under the ice until it thaws and the shores are ice-free. Then they can go on land to the bushes and eat there.

This was the life of the beavers that Yamoria studied. He also found out that the beavers have an agreement with the robins, sparrows and loons. They will squawk a lot to warn the beavers if there are animals or someone around who might harm the beavers. If this happens, the beavers rush to their hiding places and stay there all day. They are safe. So this is the story.

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