



They say Raven used to live high up in the upper Skagit River country.

Yú Yéil, Skagit Héeni yóo duwasáagu wé déinx' áyú ku.úxx'un yú.á.

He was very lazy.

Yéil kúnáx oodzika.

In the summer when the other animals were busy gathering food for the winter he would be flying from rock to stump to rock making fun of them.

Kutaanx' áwé, wé tléix'.aa atgutu.ádeech ku.aa atxá yéi daanéi ganúgún táakw niyís, yú Yéil ku.aa ch'as atgoowú kaadé áwé kdaḱinch; tsu guna.aa kaadé, tsu guna.aa kaadé, a kíknaḱ ch'u tle has akashóok.

Raven just laughed when Crow (his cousin) urged him to follow Squirrel's example-

Ts'axweilch áwé Yéil áa shukoojeis' kenels'áak yáx yéi jinganeit.

but Raven never prepared for the cold months, when the snow would drift over the ground and cover the remaining food.

Yú Yéil ku.aa, tlél wé a yát kuwus.áat'i dís niyís atxá koocháḱx, wé aagáa dleit at káx ayakadan yé.

But now Raven was in trouble.

Yéil kaxéel' tóo daak uwagút ásiwé.

Winter had come and the snows were deep. He was hungry and Raven loved to eat.

Táakwt koowaháa, wé dleit kaawadlaan. Yéil ku.aa du éet yaan.uwaháa ka ch'a tlákw at gaḱaat tutée nuch.

He had to find someone who would share their food with him.

Á áwé, «K'e a x'éitx at kwaaxaayi káagaa kushee kḱwagóot s'é,» yóo tuwditaan

Raven went to see Squirrel.

Áwé Kenels'áak xánde woogoot

He had a huge supply of pine nuts and seeds and other food hidden all over the place

Aatlein s'óos'ani ka at x'aakeidí áyú Idakát yéix' seen tóox' amlisín

Raven poked his head into Squirrel's nest in an old fir tree

Yéil ku.aa du kúdi tóode yawdzi.aa

Squirrel had lots to eat. Raven politely begged for some food.

Aatlein atxá kenels'áak x'axáni kei wdígát. Á áwé ch'a a yáa awooné tin du éex aawaxoox Yéilch.

Squirrel scolded him –

Kenels'áak ash yaadé yawdzidáy.

that was always Squirrel's way –

Yéi áwé nateech kenels'áak

“You refused to learn and save for winter and you poked much fun at me. You deserve to starve!”

«Tléi sh x'adaa yoo kayda.aadí kíknaḱ xat keeyashóok. Hachgwá' ikgwaláaxw s'é,» yóo ayawsiḱaa.

Raven went looking for Bear but he was sound asleep in his cave and could not be awakened.

Á áwé Xóotsgaa kushee woogoot. Wé Xóots kwá de táach uwaják du koowú yeex'. Tléi aadé kei ooxsigeedi yé Yéilch.

Raven looked around for some food but it was all in Bear's belly.

Á áwé ch'a daa sá oogaaxaayi átgaa át wudlinook du koowú yeex'.

He had already eaten it all and was sleeping till spring.

Ch'a Idakát wé atxá ku.aa de yú xóotsch yax yawsik'it'. Kúxde kundahéineedé kgwatáa.

Raven was now very hungry.

Yáax' de yaan du kaanáx yaa natéen.

He thought, “Who can give me something to eat? Everyone is either stingy like Squirrel or sleeping like Bear and Marmot, or they have gone south for the winter like the snowbirds.”

Yéi tuwditaan, «Aadóoch sákushéwé ax x'éix at gwaatee? Ch'u yé káa áyá k'e kenels'áak yáx dax shigeik kaach'oo Xóots Ka S'aax yáx de táach yax yawlijáḱw. Wé tléix'.aa hás ku.aa yú ixkéex' kustáakw, k'e T'aawák.»

Then he thought of Crow.

Aagáa áwé Ts'axweil káa daak tuwditán.

He would be easy to fool.

Kut liyéilch'án shákdé. (He's probably easy to trick.)

Raven ignored his response.

Yéil kwá tlél du x'adaat tooshtí.

“Crow, everyone is talking about your potlatch. Will you sing at it?”

Adax áwé yú Yéil wé Ts'axweil yéi ayawsiḱaa, «Ha ch'u yé káach i ku.éex'i daa yoo x'ali.átk. Áa kei at gageeshée gé?»

“Sing?”

«Kei at kukashée gé?»

Crow had not known that anybody cared for his singing voice, even though in those days his song was much more like that of Wood Thrush than it is today.

Ts'axweil kwá tlél awuskóowun wé aagáa tsu aadóo gúkgaa teeyí sáwé du satú. Wé aagáa tsús du satú ku.aa tlél unalé thrush yáx du.áxji.

Raven continued to talk of Crow's potlatch.

Ch'u du ku.éex'i daa yoo x'ayatánk Yéilch.

“You are very talented and possess a beautiful voice. Everyone will be so disappointed if you don't sing at your potlatch.”

«Kúnáx ix'akaajáḱwk ka i satú tlaḱ x'éigaa kaa gúkgaa yatee. Tléi at geeshéeni i ku.éex'ix' áwé kaa toowú akaguxlawáal'.»

“What potlatch?” Crow inquired.

«Ku.éex' ági? Wáa sá x'ayeeká?» yóo ash x'awóos'.

“Do you really like my singing?”

«X'éigaa ágé i gúkgaa yatee ax satú?»

“We love your singing, Crow,” Raven answered.

«Aaá, tle yankáx' haa gúkgaa yatee i satú,» yóo adaayaḱá Yéilch.

“The winter's cold has chilled the forest. We're cold and hungry and singing will help us forget our cold feet and empty stomachs.

«Táakw áat'ich atgutu wsi.át'. Uháan tsú, haa seiwa.át' ka haa éet yaan.uwaháa. At.shéech ku.aa yá haa x'óos aadé wsi.at'i yé ka haa l koodi.edi yowwú kaax yéi aguxsanéi haa tundatáani shákdé.»

“Now you get started fixing the food – looks like you have plenty there – and I will go invite the guest to your potlatch. You can practice your songs as you cook!”

«Góok, atxá yan saní de. De aatlein á i jeewú xá. Xáach ku.aa yei kukḱwa.éex'. Sh tóo x'akakgidligóok i x'asheex'i at yisa.eeyí tin.»

Crow's hesitation now overcome, he began to prepare all the food he had collected for winter and as he prepared it, he practiced his songs.

Adax áwé tlél tsu kúxde yóo wdatee. Gunéi yánde yaa anasnein ch'a Idakát wé táakw niyís akaawachagi atxá ch'u tle du x'asheeyí tsú sh tóo ax'akalgúkch.

The more he thought about the feast and how everyone wanted to hear him sing, the more excited he became.

Yáa du ku.éex'i daa yootutánk ka aadé saxdu.aaxít saduwahéiyi yé daat áwé du toowú wditúx.

Meanwhile, Raven was offering invitations to all the animals of the forest.

Yáax' áyá yú Yéilch ku.aa Idakát yá atgutu.ádi éex'.

Of course Marmot and Bear and Beaver were sleeping, and Robin and Goose had gone south).

Ha ch'a ayáx áwé, s'aax, s'igeidí ka xóots ku.aa xéx'w. Shóox' ka t'aawák ku.aa de ixkéede yóot kawdliyich.

To each he said the same thing, “Come to MY potlatch! I have worked hard to prepare it.

Yéi kwáawé kuwanaskéich yú Yéil, «Ax ku.éex'eedé nay.ál T'éex'déin a daa yéi jixwaanei xá!

There will be much food at Raven's potlatch and Crow is helping and will sing for us.

Aatlein atxá áwé yee x'ayeex' áa yéi kgwatée, ka Ts'axweil ax éex dashee. Kei at gugashée tsú gatoo.aaxít.

There will be fern roots and wild potatoes, dried berries, fish and meat. Come to MY potlatch! It will be a great occasion.”

S'aach xaadí, k'únts', tléikw kaxook, x'áxw ka dleey áa yéi kgwatée! Kei guxlakoodzée xá yá yoo at kooteek.»

Raven did not invite Squirrel however, since he had refused to share his food with him, but all of the other animals were invited to Raven's Potlatch.

Tléi ku.aa Kenels'áak awu.éex', wé du x'éide yaa ashagéiyich du atxaayí. Tle ch'a Idakát tsu daa sá ku.aa áwé wduwa.éex'.

When he returned to Crow, he was still busy cooking and singing.

Kux dagóot áwé ch'u at sa.ée ka at shí Ts'axweil.

Raven told him, “Everyone is coming – be sure and fix all your food – they will be hungry after their journey. Your songs are sounding good. Crow's potlatch will be a great feast!”

Yéilch yéi daayaḱá, «Haadé yaa s kunatín, tle ch'a Idakát i atxaayi yax wusani x'wán! Tlaḱ kúnáx hasdu eedé yaan gugaháa shákdé. K'idéin isaduwa.áxch xá. l ku.éex'i kei guxlakoodzée xá!»

As the guests arrived, Raven welcomed each in to his potlatch.

Át aga.ádín áwé yú Yéilch áwé neil kaa jeel.aatch ch'a hú du ku.éex'ix siteeyéyáx.

There was Deer, Mountain Goat, Mouse, Rabbit, Grouse, and Jay.

Guwakaan, jánu, kuts'een, gáx, káax' ka x'éishx'w áwé át kawdik'it'.

The guests were seated and the food was brought out.

Yax kuwadaxduskée áwé atxá kaa x'éix wuduwater.

Crow started to sit and eat but Raven asked him for a song first.

Ts'axweil tsú at gaḱaat wunoogú Yéilch at.shí du éex woxxoxx.

“It's not good to sing on a full stomach, Crow,” he encouraged.

«Tléi i ée ushk'é at yisheeyí ishawuheegí,» yóo adaayaḱá.

Crow began to sing.

Ts'axweil kei at kaawashée.

Every time he would stop to eat Raven would insist that he sing another song.

Ax'aganágín du x'asheeyí at gaḱaat Yéil ku.aa at.shí du éex yei axoxxch.

“You can't sing with your mouth full, Crow!”

«Tléi aadé at gageeyasheeyi yé atxá i lakáa yéi teeyí!»

Encouraged again and again by the guests who were busy stuffing themselves with his food, Crow sang song after song after song

Du wáx ayadulx'éys'ich wooch eetíx' áwé aawashee du x'asheex'í.

– all day until night –

Tle tsu taat niyaadé ch'u at shí.

and Crow's voice became hoarser and hoarser until all he could do was “Caw – Caw”.

Wáa nanée sáwé aadé at shí yéich du satú kawlikís'. Ts'as «Gáa! Gáa!» yóo du.áxji nuch.

As was the custom, the leftover food was collected by the guests and taken by them for their homeward journey.

Ch'a at yáx wé l wuduxaayi atxá yú wuduwa.éex'i aach kaawachák éenwu sákw.

Even Raven had taken his share and left as crow was cleaning up. Crow had nothing left to eat.

Tsu Yéil tsú aax tóot yéi aa wsinéi.

“At least”, Crow thought,

Á áwé yéi tuwditaan Ts'axweil, «Ch'a k'át

“I won't be hungry. I will be invited to their feasts”.

tlél ax eedé yaan gugahaa. Yei xat gaḱdu.éex' xwaa.éex'i aach.»

For it was the custom that having been entertained, each guest was now obliged to return the favour and invite the host for a return potlatch.

Ch'a ayáx áwé kundunúkjeen ch'áakw; kugaaxdu.ix'in áwé ch'u tle ách woo.éex'i káa yei akgwa.éex'.

But the invitations never came.

Tléi ku.aa tsu tléix' wudu.éex'.

Since all the guests thought it was Raven who hosted the feast, Raven was invited to enough dinners to keep his belly full for several winters and he never went hungry.

Wé koowa.éex'i aa áwé Yéilx duwajée, ách áwé tlaḱ x'ondahéen sáwé wduwa.éex'. Aadáx áwé x'oon táakw kaanáx sáwé tlél atxá eetínáx unateech.