

FOREST ANIMAL STORY

WHY THE BEAR IS STUMPY-TAILED

(Norwegian Folk Tale)

The foxes are noted for their long, bushy, beautiful tails. The bears are noted for their short, stumpy tails. But there was a time when the bears had tails just as long, (if not longer) and just as bushy (if not bushier) and just as beautiful (if not more beautiful) than any fox in the forest. And that is the time of this story - the time when all bears had long, bushy, beautiful tails.

A certain fox, whose tail was especially bushy and especially beautiful, lived in a forest. There was a lake in the forest, full of all kinds of fish. Around the lake grew many trees, some large and some small. It was summer, so all the trees looked fresh and green.

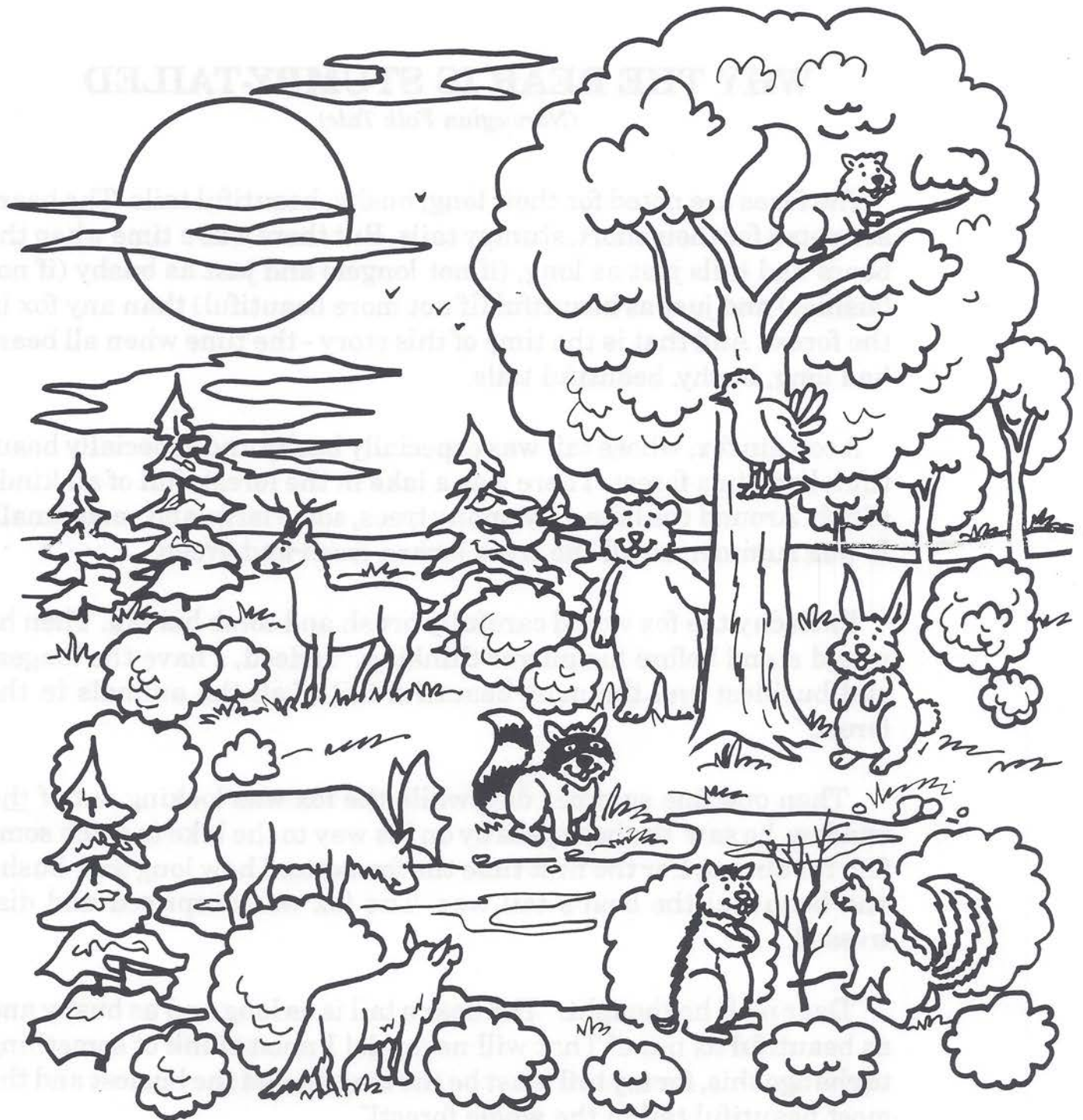
Each day the fox would carefully brush and comb his tail. Then he would stand before his mirror thinking, "Indeed, I have the longest and bushiest and the most beautiful tail of all the animals in the forest."

Then one fine summer day, while the fox was looking out of the window, he saw the bear pass by on his way to the lake to catch some fish for dinner. For the first time the fox noticed how long and bushy and beautiful the bear's tail was. The fox was surprised and distressed.

"Dear me!" he thought. "The bear's tail is as long and as bushy and as beautiful as mine! That will never do! I must think of something to change this, for my tail must be the longest and the bushiest and the most beautiful tail in the whole forest!"

So the fox thought and thought all summer long, but he could not think of a plan that would work. Then autumn came and the leaves turned bright red and yellow and orange. Still the fox could think of

Hidden Forest Animals



Find and color the Skunk, Rabbit, Bird, Squirrel, Bear, Raccoon, Moose, Deer, Wolf, Beaver. Can you draw some other forest animals?

STORY CONTINUED

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nothing but how long and bushy and beautiful the bear's tail was. No matter how hard he thought, he still could not think of a way to get rid of the bear's beautiful tail.

Then the winter winds blew and the leaves were all blown away. Soon snow fell and covered the ground. The north wind blew so hard the water in the lake froze. No longer did the bear pass the fox's house each day on his way to the lake to catch some fish for his dinner. He could no longer fish, for the lake was covered with a thick layer of ice.

The fox noticed that the bear did not go to the lake each day to catch fish for his dinner. "I wonder what the bear eats for his dinner in the winter time when the lake is frozen and he cannot catch fish?" thought the fox.

Then he jumped to his feet and gave a cry of delight. At last he had thought of a plan!

The fox hurried to the store and bought a string of fish. Then he walked in front of the bear's house, dangling the fish in front of him, until the bear saw him and came out.

"Where did you get the fish?" the bear asked the fox.

"From the lake," the sly fox replied.

"But the water in the lake is frozen," said the bear.

"That's no problem," the fox told him. All you have to do is go down to the lake and cut a hole in the ice. Then put your tail through the hole and down into the water. Hold it there as long as you can. Don't worry if your tail begins to smart and tingle a little. That means the fish are biting. The longer you hold your tail in the water, the more fish you will catch. When you think you have caught enough, just pull your tail out of the water with a strong cross-pull sideways and a quick, hard pull upward."

"Oh, thank you, Fox!" cried the bear. "I shall have a delicious dinner once again!" And the bear hurried straight to the lake.

STORY CONTINUED

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The fox followed close behind, keeping well out of sight. When they came to the lake, the fox hid behind a tree to watch. The bear set to work and soon had a large round hole sawed through the ice.

He put his long, bushy, beautiful tail into the icy water, just as the fox had told him to do. Then he stood on the ice, waiting patiently for the fish to bite. He stood there for a long time until his tail began to smart and tingle all over as if a hundred fish were biting all at once.

"Now it is time to pull my tail out," he thought. "Let me see. Fox said to pull it out with a strong cross-pull sideways and a quick, hard pull upward."

And that is just what the bear did. He pulled his tail out of the water with a strong cross-pull sideways and a quick, hard pull upward. But instead of his tail coming out of the water covered with fish, his frozen tail snapped off, leaving him nothing but a short stub where his long, bushy, beautiful tail had been.

When the bear realized what had happened and how the fox had tricked him, he was so unhappy he decided to curl up and go to sleep the rest of the winter. "When spring comes around again I am sure I'll feel much better about this whole matter," thought the bear.

That is just what he did. He curled up in his den and slept all through the long, cold winter. And ever since that time bears are stumpy-tailed, and they hibernate all winter until the beautiful spring days arrive once more and they can go fishing in a pond or a lake or a river - whichever happens to be near their home.

*From; Story Telling With The Flannel Board, Book Three
by Idalee Vonk
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THE END

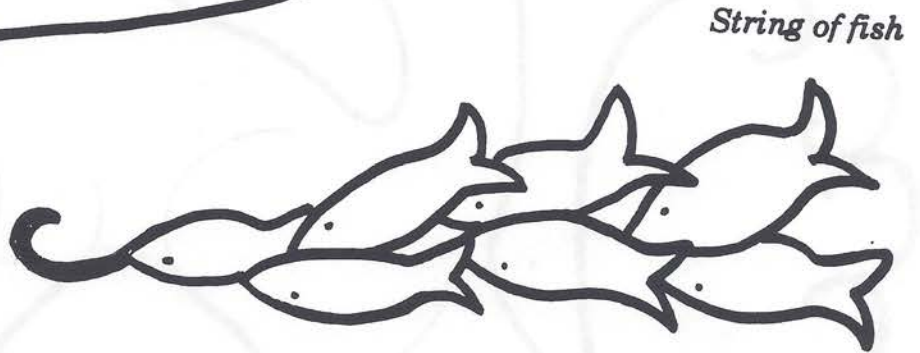
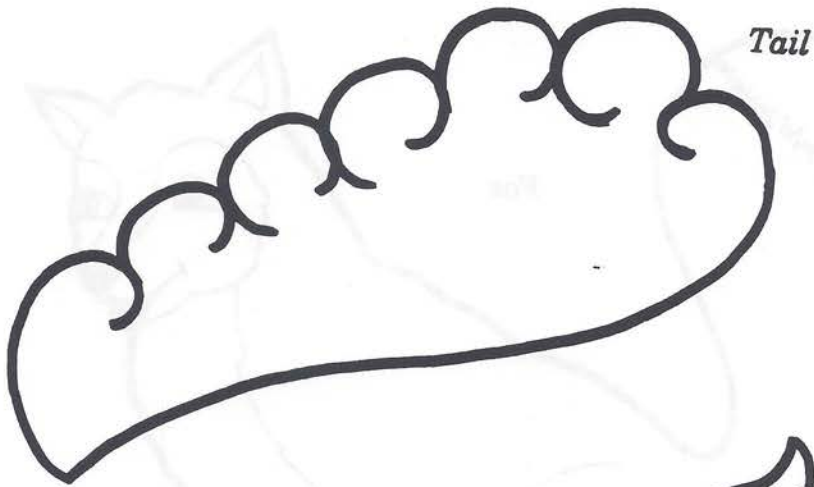
STORY PATTERNS

*Patterns for the story, "Why The Bear Is Stumpy-Tailed"
found on pages 110 -112*



STORY PATTERNS CONTINUED

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found on pages 110 -112*



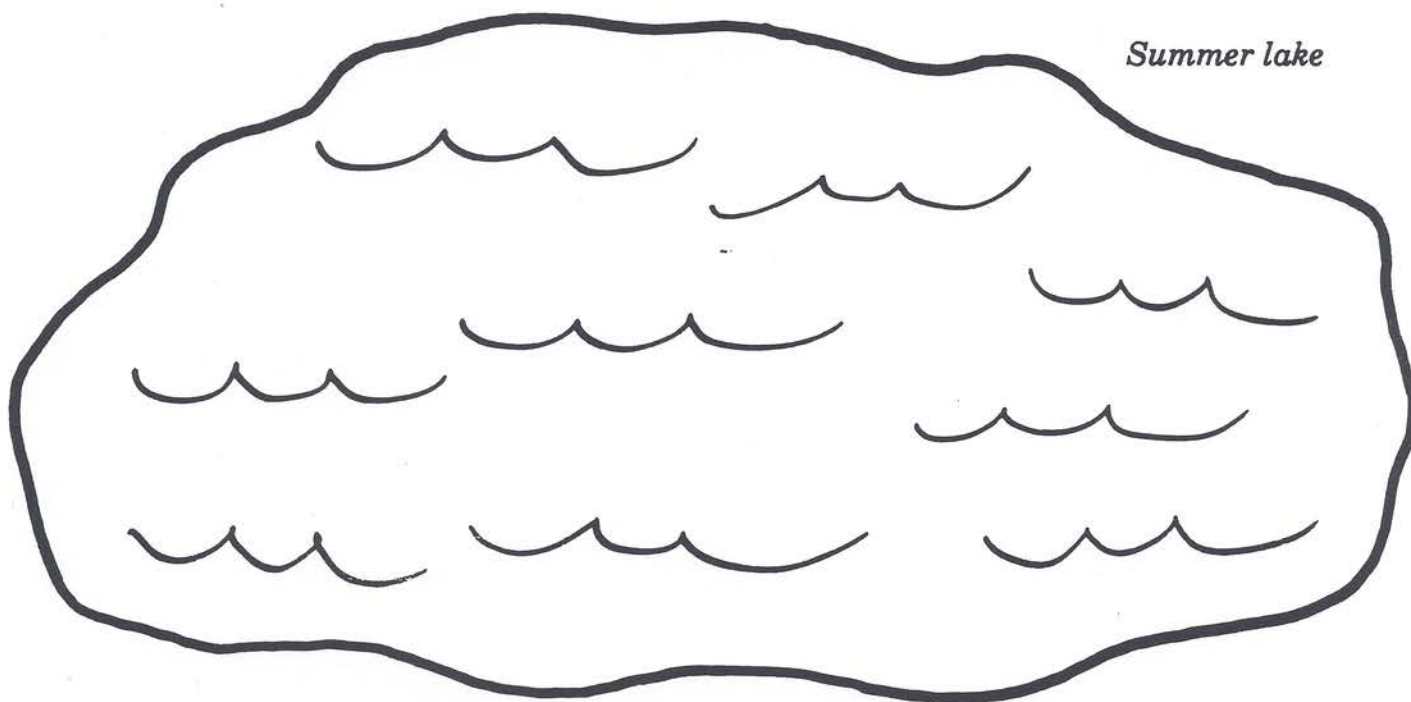
Bear with no tail



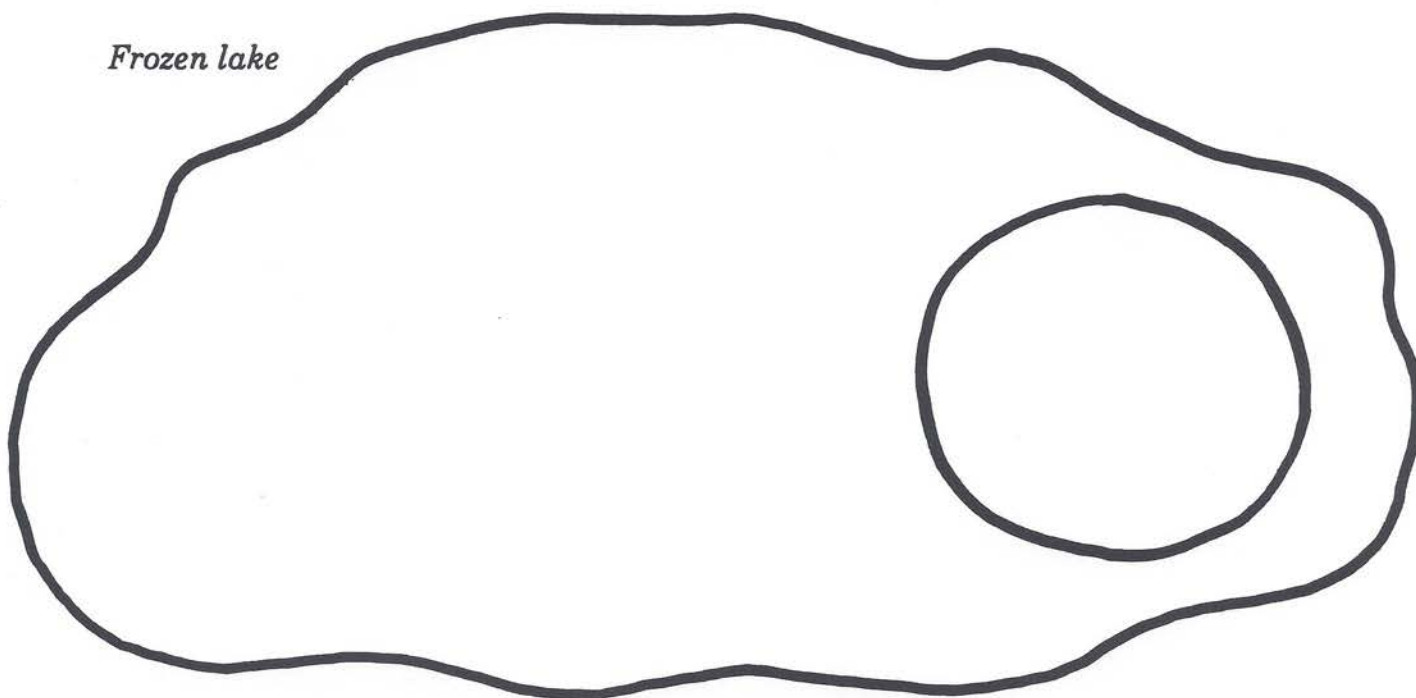
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Summer lake



Frozen lake



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