

Long ago, Gluskabe and his Grandmother Woodchuck, lived alone in a small lodge near the water. One day his Grandmother said to him, "My Grandchild, it is sad that we have no tobacco." "What is tobacco, Grandmother?" Gluskabe asked. "Ah, Grandson, tobacco is a great gift from Tabaldak, our Maker. If you are sick, you need only tobacco out in the woods, and you will find the medicine plants. Then, when you place some tobacco on the Earth, you can pluck those plants from the root and use them. Tobacco is a great comfort to the old. They can smoke it in their pipes and see all the happy days of their lives in the smoke as it lifts up. When you pray and burn tobacco, that smoke carries your prayer straight up to our Maker. Tobacco is a very good thing indeed, when it is used as Tabaldak intended."

"Then we should have tobacco," Gluskabe said. "Where can I find it, Grandmother?" "Ah, Grandson," Grandmother Woodchuck said, "it is not easy to get tobacco. It is on a big island far out in the water. A person with great magic lives there. He raises tobacco and will not share it because of selfishness. He is very dangerous. Those who go to steal tobacco never return." "Huunh!" Gluskabe said. "I will go and get tobacco, and I will share it with everyone." Then Gluskabe went to the edge of the water. There was a hollow log there, and Gluskabe shaped it into a canoe. He put it in the water. "Now," he said, "let me see if this canoe will go." He pushed it with his foot, and the hollow log canoe shot out across the water. It went one whole look, as far as a person can see.

"This canoe is not fast enough," Gluskabe said. The Gluskabe took a big white birch tree. He stripped off the bark and fashioned it into a canoe and put it in the water. "Now," he said, "let me see if this canoe will go." He pushed it with his foot, and the birch bark canoe went very swiftly over the water. It went two looks, but Gluskabe was not satisfied. "This canoe is not fast enough," he said. Then Gluskabe fashioned a boat with ribs of cedar and the skin of a moose. He put it into the water and pushed it out and it went three looks. But Gluskabe was not happy with the moose hide canoe. "This canoe," he said, "is not fast enough." Gluskabe looked around. There at the edge of the water was a great white boulder. Gluskabe turned it over, shaped it into a canoe and put it into the water.

"Now," he said, "let me see if this canoe will go." He pushed it with his foot, and it shot out across the water with Gluskabe inside. It went four looks almost as quickly as one could think, leaving a great white wave behind it. Gluskabe was very pleased. "Now I can go and get tobacco." He went back into the lodge. "Grandmother," he said, "I am going now to steal tobacco. But first you must tell me the name of my enemy, the magician who will not share the tobacco." Grandmother Woodchuck shook her head. "Who will hunt for me and bring me wood for my fire and water for my cooking if Grasshopper kills you? No, Gluskabe, I cannot tell you his name." Gluskabe laughed. "Oleoneh1, Grandmother," he said. "When I return, you will be the first one to smoke tobacco in your pipe."

Then Gluskabe climbed into his white stone canoe. He pushed off from the shore, and the canoe shot over the waves towards the island of the magician, Grasshopper. As the canoe sped along, Gluskabe sang: Grasshopper, you are going to travel, Grasshopper, you are going to travel, You must leave your home now, Grasshopper, you are going to travel. He sang his song four times. By the time he was finished, he had reached the island, and, sure enough, just as he had wished in his song, Grasshopper was not there. The cooking pot was still on the fire, and the beautiful clay pipe decorated with bright stones was beside the fire, with smoke still rising from the bowl, but the magician was nowhere to be seen. Gluskabe picked up the pipe.

"Grasshopper," he said, "you are not going to need this anymore." Then he placed the pipe in his own pouch. Inside the lodge on many racks, tobacco bundles were drying. Gluskabe took them all and placed them in his canoe. He took all of the tobacco and did not leave a single seed. All around the fields were the bones of those who had come to steal tobacco and were killed by Grasshopper. Gluskabe gathered all the bones together and then shouted. "Get up!" Gluskabe yelled. "Your enemy is coming back." Then all of the bones came back together, and all of the people came back to life. They were very happy, even though some of them had been in such a hurry to return to life that they had gotten the wrong bones. Some of them had legs or arms that were too short or too long.

The old people say that is why there are crippled people today. Gluskabe shared the tobacco among them. He mended their boats, which had been broken by Grasshopper, and sent them back to their homes. "Tobacco is for everyone," he said. "You must always share it and give it freely or it will not do you good." Then Gluskabe climbed back into his white stone canoe. He pushed it with his foot, and it flew back across the waves to the place where his Grandmother Woodchuck waited. "Grandmother," he said, "I have brought tobacco. Never again will it be scarce." Grandmother Woodchuck was very happy. She filled her pipe with the tobacco and smoked it and gave thanks to Tabaldak. She began to sing a song in praise of her Grandson, Gluskabe. But as she sang, the magician, Grasshopper, came. He came across the sky in a magical canoe.

"YOU!" he shouted in a loud and terrible voice. "You have stolen my tobacco!" "That is not so," Gluskabe said. "It was not right for you to keep it all to yourself. Now my children and my children's children will have tobacco to enjoy." Then he rubbed Grasshopper between his hands, and Grasshopper became very small. "Please," Grasshopper said in a small voice, "give me seeds so I can grow tobacco for myself." But Gluskabe shook his head. "No longer can you be trusted to grow tobacco. That will be the job of my children and of my children's children. But since you were the first to grow tobacco, I will give you enough to enjoy in your lifetime. Open your mouth." Grasshopper opened his mouth and Gluskabe filled it with tobacco. Grasshopper was pleased, but he spoke again. "Give me back my canoe so that I can fly across the sky."



But Gluskabe shook his head. "It is not right for you to have such a magical canoe. I will split the back of your coat and give you wings. Now you will be able to fly on your own, but you will no longer be able to frighten the people." So it is that to this day tobacco is used by the children of Gluskabe and their children's children, and when they use it as Tabaldak intended, always giving it freely to others, it does them no harm. As for Grasshopper, he flies about with the wings Gluskabe gave him and chews his mouthful of tobacco which will last all his life. And he remembers the lesson taught to him by Gluskabe. If you ever pick up any grasshopper it will immediately spit out its tobacco as if to say, "See, I am willing to share."