’NAMGIS STORY OF HOW WE GOT THE HAMAƛSA

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Four brothers, the sons of a powerful chief, found the house of the man-eater, Baxwbakwalanuksiwe’. They are allowed into the house, but once inside realize that those living inside intend to make them into a meal for the supernatural being. They shoot arrows out the door of the house and walk out as if they were simply chasing the arrows…. and then run for home. The cannibal chases them, but they are able to get away by creating a mountain (from a whetstone), a lake (from mountain goat tallow), a thicket (from a comb), and a fog (from the fuzz of mountain goat fur). All of these obstacles slow down Baxwbakwalanuksiwe’ and the brothers reach home safely.

Knowing that the cannibal is close behind, the brothers and their father prepare for his arrival. They greet the cannibal politely and encourage him to return to his house at the north end of the world and come back with his wife and child. This gave the chief and his sons time to dig a pit in the floor of the house, over which they placed a seat.

When Baxwbakwalanuksiwe’ returns with his family, the chief invited him to sit on the new seat while the sons entertained them with stories. Eventually, the guests fell asleep. The four sons quickly pulled the seat apart, so that the cannibal family fell into the hole. Red hot stones and boiling water were poured into the pit, killing the cannibal and scattering ashes in the air. These ashes became the mosquitoes and biting insects of our world who consume human blood just like the cannibal Baxwbakwalanuksiwe’.

Finally, the young men returned to the home of the cannibal and gathered up the masks of Raven and Huxwhukw, which became their property and an essential part of the Hamaƛsa ceremony.