

## Why The Bear Is Stumpy-Tailed

by Sir George Webbe Dasent  
from *Popular Tales from the Norse*

One day the Bear met the Fox, who came slinking along with a string of fish he had stolen.

'Whence did you get those from?' asked the Bear.

'Oh! my Lord Bruin, I've been out fishing and caught them', said the Fox.

So the Bear had a mind to learn to fish too, and bade the Fox tell him how he was to set about it.

'Oh! it's an easy craft for you', answered the Fox, 'and soon learnt. You've only got to go upon the ice, and cut a hole and stick your tail down into it; and so you must go on holding it there as long as you can. You're not to mind if your tail smarts a little; that's when the fish bite. The longer you hold it there the more fish you'll get; and then all at once out with it, with a cross pull sideways, and with a strong pull too.'

Yes; the Bear did as the Fox had said, and held his tail a long, long time down in the hole, till it was fast frozen in. Then he pulled it out with a cross pull, and it snapped short off. That's why Bruin goes about with a stumpy tail this very day.