

How Grandmother Spider Stole the Sun

A Native American Legend portraying the concept of the inter-connectedness of all life.

When the earth was created the people and animals were in darkness. Finally, the animals gathered together and decided to do something about it. Bear spoke up and said, "I have heard there is something called the Sun. It is kept on the other side of the Earth, but the people there will not share it. I believe we can sneak over there and steal a piece of it."

Every one of the animals agreed it was a good idea. The big question was who would be the one to go and steal the Sun? The first one to try was the Fox. He crept to the place where the Sun was kept. When no one was looking, he grabbed a piece of it in his mouth and ran. But the Sun was so hot, it burned his mouth and he dropped it. That is why to this day foxes have black mouths because the first fox burned his mouth carrying the Sun.

The next animal to try was the Possum. Possums, during that time, had bushy tails. So, the Possum sneaked up to the place where the Sun was kept, snipped off a piece, and hid it in her tail. Then she ran, taking the Sun back to the animals and people. She lost her grip on the Sun when it started to burn away all the hair on her tail. To this day, all possums have bare tails because the Sun burned away the hair on that first possum.

Finally, Grandmother Spider tried. She was smart and clever. Instead of trying to hold the Sun herself, she wove a bag out of webbing. She put the piece of the Sun into her bag and brought it back to her people. The big question now was where to put the Sun. Grandmother Spider felt it should be high in the sky so everyone would be able to see it and benefit from the light.

The animals agreed, but not one could reach high enough to place it there. They thought about taking it to the top of the tallest tree, but that wouldn't be high enough for everyone on the Earth to see the Sun. They decided that one of the birds could easily carry the Sun to the tip of the sky. Buzzard volunteered to go since he could fly higher than any bird.

Buzzard placed the Sun on top of his head where his feathers were the thickest, for the Sun was still very hot, even inside Grandmother Spider's bag. He flew higher and higher. The Sun grew hotter and hotter. The higher he flew, the hotter the Sun became. The Sun began burning through Grandmother Spider's bag, but Buzzard just kept flying. Up and up he went and the Sun grew hotter. The Sun was burning away the feathers on top of his head, but he continued on. Now all his feathers were gone, but he continued to fly upwards. His skin on his head began to turn red, but he continued to fly. He flew until he reached the top of the sky where he placed the Sun so it would give light to everyone.

Buzzard was honored by all the birds and animals because of his heroic deed of placing the Sun in the sky. Even though his head was naked and ugly because he was burned carrying the Sun, he is still the highest flyer of all. He can be seen circling the Sun to this day. Since Grandmother Spider brought the Sun in her bag of webbing, the Sun honors her by making rays across the sky which are shaped like the rays in Grandmother Spider's web.

These rays are there to remind everyone of what Grandmother Spider did for all the animals and the people. They also remind us that we are all connected like the strands of Grandmother Spider's web.