



# The Dance of the Deer

There once was a man named Walking Star who lived in the country, far from any village. The man made his living as a hunter but was always very respectful of the animals he hunted. Walking Star knew how special the wilderness he lived in was, so he always kept his eyes and ears open to everything around him. Walking Star knew that in the wilderness was where people had dreams that guided them throughout their lives.

One day, as Walking Star made his way through a thick forest, he heard the sound of antlers clacking. Walking Star knew that in the fall, during the time of mating, male deer would bump their antlers together and fight, making clattering noises that echoed throughout the woods. The gentle breezes that blew through the forest and the first buds on the trees told Walking Star that it was not the time of year for the deer to fight. Furthermore, the sound he heard seemed softer than the loud clatter of dueling deer. He searched for source of the sound, but found nothing.

The next morning, as Walking Star sat on a fallen log giving thanks for another sunrise, he heard the clacking sound again. Not far from where he sat, he saw two large deer. They both had huge antlers and were circling each other. Near the spot where the two deer clashed, sat a young deer. Walking Star watched as the young deer lifted its head and then lowered it. It began to leap from side to side. Walking Star sensed that the young deer was happy. Suddenly, he remembered his grandfather telling him the story of the secret Dance of the Deer. The dance was very special and very few people ever got to witness it. Walking Star knew that while the deer were distracted, he could easily use his weapons to kill them for food. However, since he respected the animals, he simply continued to watch the special dance.

And so it was that the Deer Dance came as a gift to the Indian People from Mother Nature.