



## Why Animals and Man Can No Longer Talk Together

Many moons ago, the animals and the Native People could talk to each other. They worked and played together in peace and harmony. They sat at council fires together. The animals taught the Native People many useful life lessons.

Otter showed the Native People how to catch fish called Northerns. Beaver taught them how to build homes that would keep them safe from the cold winters and hot summers. From Bear and Wolf, the Native People learned to follow the forest trails. Panther showed the people where to hide in case of danger. Horse trained the Native People to run swiftly. Fox coached them to enjoy life and laugh at themselves.

Time passed, and the Native People learned as much as they could from the animals. Before long, the animals became very frightened. They were afraid that the Native People would no longer need their help and would try to make servants of the them.

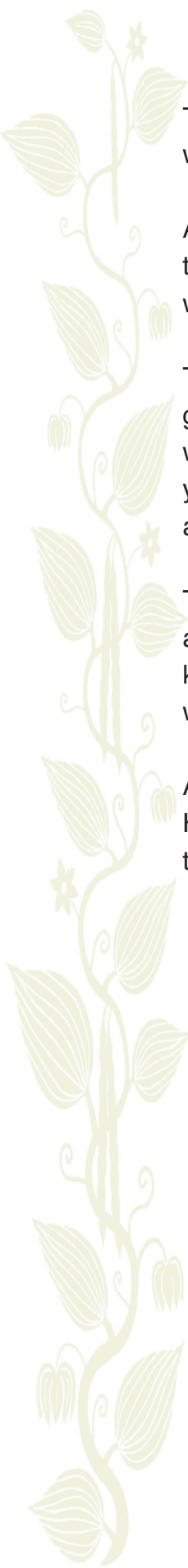
One harvest moon, when all the Native People were sleeping, the animals broke the rules of friendship. Secretly, they called a great council fire with only the animals.

Jealous Wolf spoke first at the council fire. "The Native People are our enemies," he growled. "Let us rush into the village and kill all the Native People!" Panther also wanted to kill the Native People. But Bear had another idea. He wanted to challenge the Native People to a battle of strength.

No!" said Beaver. "We could wait until the winter moon comes and tear down their houses at night. Then they will freeze."

Old Fox said slyly, "Let us pretend to be their friends and secretly rob their corn fields at night while they sleep. Then they will starve."

"Men and animals have always been brothers," said Horse. "We must not hurt them now. Why not invite them berry picking and lead them so far away that they will get lost and not be able to find their way back to us?"



Then Dog spoke up bravely. “Man has always helped us. If war comes, I will go with the Native People.”

As the animals talked, they grew louder and louder. They argued so loudly that their voices reached the ears of the Great Spirit. The heart of the Great Spirit was very sad when he heard the animals’ plans.

The Great Spirit spoke to the animals. “You have broken the friendship of the great council fires. As a punishment, you can never again speak with man as you would a brother. Because of your heartless plan Beaver, you will be hunted for your fur and used to keep man warm. Traps and snares will be set for you Fox and Wolf. Panther will be an enemy and will be killed by man.”

The Great Spirit also said, “Horse remembered old friendships, so he will still be able to understand man, but will not be able to talk with him. Dog has also broken the law of the council fire, but because of his friendship to man, he will always be welcome in the homes of man and will guard man’s children.”

And this is why the Native People say that animals cannot talk to man today. However, Horse and Dog can understand every word man says, even though they cannot answer.