

The Origen of Strawberries

A Cherokee Legend



(As told by Rick Runningbear)

A very long time ago, around the beginning of things, there lived a man and his wife. They were very happy together most of the time. But one day they began to quarrel and became angry with each other. The woman, in particular, was very angry and she walked away from the man to put some distance between herself and him. The woman walked towards the land of the rising sun in the east. She walked very fast because she was very angry.

By this time the man had cooled down and realized it was foolish of him to quarrel in such a way with his beloved wife. So the man began to follow her hoping that he could catch up with her and persuade her to return to him. But she set such a blistering pace that it seemed he could not gain on her and she remained well ahead of him as she continued to march towards the east. The man began to feel sad and helpless.

But then The Great One appeared before the man and began to speak: "Are you still angry with your wife", he asked? "No", replied the man, "I want her to come back to me and not be angry with me anymore".

"I will help you get her back", said The Great One.

So The Great One caused a patch of the finest ripe huckleberries to spring up along the path in front of the woman. But she she only glanced at them and continued on at a rapid pace towards the east. Then ahead of her The Great One placed a patch of ripe blackberries, but these also she paid little attention to.

Then he put other kinds of fruit bushes and even trees with attractive fruits on them, but the woman passed them all by. At last The Great One placed several bushes of red luscious strawberries directly in the path of the woman in front of her. These caught her eye, as she had never seen such attractive looking fruit before in her life.

The woman bent down and picked some juicy strawberries and and began to eat them. As she ate them, as if by magic, her anger began to melt away and she realized how foolish it had been for her husband and her to quarrel and become so angry with each other. The strawberries were so delicious that she decided to pick some and carry them to the west where she had left her husband so that he could enjoy eating them also.

The woman started back home and soon found her husband who had followed her part way towards the east. Together they ate and enjoyed the strawberries as they walked home. After this whenever the man and woman would start to quarrel they would remember the strawberries and they would forget their anger. And so, strawberries have been with us ever since to make us happy and not angry when we eat them.

