

## How Day and Night Came to Be

Gather around, children and open your ears for a story — a Chickasaw story.

There was a time when day and night were not divided. So all the animals gathered together for a great council to decide how to divide day from night. The great council was presided over by Bear, the chief.

He said, “Everyone quiet. Everyone quiet. We must decide what to do with night and day. All will have a chance to speak.” At Bear’s news, a quiet murmur fell upon the council, like the low rumbling of distant thunder. The animals talked and talked and talked; you see, they’re just like people when they get together and talk.

Owl hooted from the high branch of a sycamore, “Well, I think we ought to have night all the time.” Next, Turtle poked his head out from his shell and said, “I think we ought to have day all the time.” And the commotion carried on like that for quite some time until finally, little Ground Squirrel spoke up. “I have been looking at Raccoon’s tail. It has a dark ring, and a light ring, and a dark ring, and a light right, that goes all the way up and down his beautiful tail. I think we ought to divide day and night the same way — just like the rings on Raccoon’s tail.”

After Squirrel spoke, the great council once again fell into a quiet murmur. Owl turned his big bushy head toward a nearby Meadowlark and said, “Now that’s an idea! Little Ground Squirrel should speak more often.” Rabbit turned to Turtle and said, “That Squirrel sure is something. If only I were that clever!” Well, as this was going on, Bear began to get jealous. He did not like to hear such high talk about little Ground Squirrel. How could such a little squirrel outdo the great Chief

of the Council, he thought. Much to Bear's disappointment, the council agreed to adopt Squirrel's plan, thinking it ought to satisfy all the animals. Bear, on the other hand, was not satisfied, now he was even more jealous that Squirrel had thought of such a fine solution.

As the council ended and all animals went back home, Squirrel dashed by Bear, who reached out with his great claws and scratched at Squirrel's back.

Now, all the little Squirrels have stripes on their back, even to this day, and it makes them so handsome.

And that is the end of that story.