

The Cherokee Legend of the First Strawberry. Adapted by Allison Galbraith

In the beginning, First Man and First Woman lived happily together. They built a wooden house beside a river and planted a vegetable and herb garden. First Man and First Woman had everything they needed and loved each other very much.

One day, First Man came in from the forest and complained that his dinner was not ready. First Woman replied angrily that she had not been able to cook because he had not brought her wood for the fire. They argued and went to bed without saying goodnight or giving each other a bedtime kiss. This was the first time they had fallen out.

Over time, they argued and bickered with each other every day. One morning, First Woman and First Man had a disagreement over who should use the bathroom first; First Man won. Then he complained that his breakfast was cold. First Woman told him he could make his own breakfast in the future, and First Man yelled back that he would make his own breakfast, as her cooking was terrible!

First Woman burst into tears. She was so upset that she stormed out of the house and ran into the forest.

First Man went to the door and shouted after her, 'Keep on running! I don't want to see you again. Good riddance!'

First Woman ran through the trees until she was far from First Man. She continued on with tears in her eyes and anger in her heart.

Before the sunset that evening, First Man became hungry. He ate a handful of nuts and thought of First Woman's nut and syrup pancakes. Then he thought of her bright eyes and how she sang like a bird when she was happy. First Man was no longer angry with her. He had calmed down, and now he missed First Woman. He looked out at the forest. The sun was still shining on the treetops. He decided to find her and ask her to come home. He followed her tracks deep into the forest but realised he might not reach her before dark. First Man looked up at the sun and asked Father Sun to help him find First Woman.

Father Sun felt pity for the Man. He could see how sorry First Man was for falling out with First Woman. Father Sun agreed to help him. Father Sun saw First Woman slowing down as she walked through the trees.

'Ah, she is tired and hungry.' Thought Father Sun. 'I will put something beautiful and tempting on the path to stop her.'

Father Sun made a new plant spring up in front of First Woman. It was a small white flower with a delicate yellow centre.

First Woman glanced at the lovely little flower but didn't stop.

Father Sun tried again, filling the plant's leaves and flowers with big red berries.

First Woman stopped to look at the plump, red, shiny berries. She picked one. The scent of the berry was sweetly fragrant; she put it to her lips and tasted it. Heavenly pink juice squirted onto her tongue. She was amazed at how delicious the fruit was. First Woman sat next to the berry patch and ate hungrily. As she bit a large juicy berry in two, she noticed it was heart-shaped. She no longer felt angry with First Man. She filled her pockets with berries to take home and share with him.

At that moment, First Man appeared through the trees. He ran to hug her, and they said sorry to each other. Then, First Man tasted the wonderful Strawberries that Father Sun had made for them. Hand in hand, they returned home, taking a few of the strawberry plants to grow in their garden.

First Man and First Woman always kept a bowl of strawberries in their house to remind them of

their love for each other.

Even today, the Cherokee people keep fresh berries or a picture of strawberries in their homes to remember the importance of love and forgiveness.

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