



STORY NUMBER 16

General Meeting of Humans and Animals

When the world was new – in the very beginning of life for animals, birds and humans – life was not the same as it is today. Communication between the species was no problem because there was a lot of medicine power. We were able to talk to each other easily.

At that time, it was decided to have a big assembly to make an agreement, similar to one between policy makers. The raven was recognized as the most powerful in regards to possession of medicine power. So it was decided that the raven would coordinate the assembly. All the birds and animals were called to come to this particular place for the assembly. Everything proceeded quickly because of the use of medicine power.

When everyone had arrived, the raven got to work. He rubbed each animal and bird to give them the colour they wanted for their fur or plumage. When he finished with each animal or bird, he gave a law and advice to each. For example, to the moose he gave the colour brown, just like moss, and told him to “feed in the bush so that hunters will have a hard time finding you”. The raven coloured every animal and bird, and gave each one advice on how to live on this earth.

It was a lot of work, but because the raven was using medicine power, the work proceeded along very quickly. He gave colours to every duck and all land birds, and advised them on how to live and behave. The job took the raven all day to complete, even though he had great medicine

power. He finally finished late in the afternoon.

He talked to the human beings, saying, "You are very lucky to be human beings as you are smarter than the animals and birds. You will have great knowledge and you will live long. So try to be good people. I, myself, don't trust you human beings. You think you are smart, so you will probably cheat each other. You will possibly commit crimes too."

The Elders asked, "How can we eat in the future? On this earth, we know that we have to use animals and fish and ducks for food. But we need an agreement so that there are no bad feelings." So the raven made a big speech to the animals and birds, asking them, "Is it okay for the human beings to use you for food?"

All the animals answered, "It is okay, provided they treat us with respect." So an agreement was made. Everything was okay. Now everybody was ready to depart, but the raven yelled to the ducks, "Wait, wait! I painted you so very lovely. Now it's your turn to paint me the loveliest bird in all the world." So the ducks decided to paint the raven. They also decided to fool the raven. "All the ducks are lovely," they said, "but we promise that you will be the most lovely bird in the world. We will blindfold you first, so that when you see yourself later you will be surprised."

The ducks blindfolded the raven and went to work. They took black coal from the fireplace and rubbed it all over the bird until he was completely black. Only his eyes showed as white spots. When they were finished, all the ducks took to the air making a lot of noise as they flew off together. The general meeting was over too, so all the other animals and birds left, running off in different directions.

The raven was left alone. He tore off the blindfold and yelled for help because some black coal dust got into his eyes. He could not see for awhile. It took a bit of time for his eyes to adjust to seeing at a distance. When he looked at himself

he was completely black. He was roaring mad. He wanted to vent his anger at someone, but everyone was gone. There was no one around. Then, above in the tree, he saw a stupid little owl looking down at him with its big eyes. The raven yelled at him to help clean his eyes.

The owl in the tree answered, "When you were fixing everybody, I was the last. You told me there was a shortage of brains. That is why I don't know what goes on. That is why I just sit here." The raven yelled at the owl, "Get lost!"

There was a loon swimming not far away. The raven took some gray clay and hit the loon in the head with it. The loon's head became gray. That is why the loon's head is gray today. The raven continued venting his anger. He still wanted to get mad at someone. He saw a moose standing a short distance away. "I thought I told you to hide in the bush all the times! Get lost!" he yelled at the moose. So that is the story about the general meeting and what happened to the raven.

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