

How The Tobacco Was Brought Back

Many years ago the tobacco was kept by the animals and used as a very high medicine for Man. The great cranes were jealous of the Tobacco Keepers and stole it. They flew way high in the mountains and hid the tobacco among very sharp rocks on a tall mountain.

The animals held council to get the tobacco back, and everyone was anxious to try. The first to go was the great Falcon, the Warrior Bird, who could soar and dive so fast his enemies didn't know what hit them. So he flew way high above the mountain peaks, and when he spotted the tobacco, he dove to retrieve the plant. The cranes were waiting and attacked him with great vigor as he was trying to pick the plant. The Great Blue Heron was the leader of the cranes and is a vicious hunter himself. The Falcon did not stand a chance and was killed.

When the other animals heard of this, they were so afraid that they decided there was no way that the tobacco could be recovered. The Panther, the Great Night Hunter, said he would go under the cover of darkness, when the cranes were asleep. He would get the tobacco and bring it back. The cranes were smart and left guards at night to watch the pathways up the mountain. The panther did not stand a chance, so many cranes descended upon on him - he never even got halfway up the mountain.

In the Council House, the animals said it was no use. A little voice from the corner said that she would go. This was the Hummingbird. They asked, "How are you going to do this?"

The little Hummingbird said, "Look over here." As they were watching her, she suddenly disappeared and was behind them, saying, "I'm over here." They were so impressed at her speed, they said she might be able to do it. They wondered how she would make the long journey to the mountain, and she told them she would store energy and sleep at night, as the hummingbirds do when they migrate to South America.

Off she went towards the mountains, and each night, she slept safely in a tree while she stored her energy for the next day's flight. When she got to the mountain, she darted so fast that the cranes did not spot her. She found the tobacco, clipped a seed pod off, and began to leave. She could not resist the temptation to taunt the cranes. She darted back and forth around their feet, saying, "I'm over here! No, I'm over here!"

This confused the cranes so much, they began pecking at the ground around their feet trying to get the Hummingbird. The Hummingbird flew away and brought the tobacco back to the Council House, and we have had tobacco ever since. The cranes, to this day, stand in the water looking at their feet, still trying to find the Hummingbird.



