



THE CHIPMUNK'S STRIPES

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Long Ago animals could speak to one another and sometimes their conversations caused great heated debates. Here is a tale of one such debate that forever changed the playful Chipmunk.

It is a well known thing that the great bear prides himself as being the strongest animal of the forest, but this strength was put to the test by one of the smallest; the chipmunk. The great bear said to little chipmunk on one fine autumn day; "there is nothing I can not do, I can rip apart the biggest trees to get Bee's honey, I can swim fast and catch the quick salmon, there is nothing I can not do".

Chipmunk did not enjoy such bragging, so he replied, "You are great and strong, but I know something you can not do", Bear roared, "Tell me of this feat and I will do it" and he smashed a small tree to dust with his huge paw to show his power. Chipmunk knew he had opened the bear to a challenge, so he replied:

"Can you stop the Sun from rising?" Bear answered "of course, I am the strongest animal and all fear me, even the Sun". Chipmunk told bear that he would meet him on the same spot tomorrow before dawn so that Bear could prove his great strength. Bear agreed and the following morning before the singing of the birds, the bear and chipmunk met.

The bear ready himself, he looked to the east where the Sun started its daily journey; he stared hard at the slow rising glow of morning sun, but it still continued to climb into the eastern sky. Bear could not stop the Sun and Chipmunk laughed and teased Him: "See, the Sun is stronger than you and still is rising to bring the light of day". Bear grew angry as Chipmunk danced around his feet sing a little song: "Oh great Bear could not stop the Sun, stop the Sun".

As the Chipmunk continued his taunting, Bear caught him up in his great paw and said, "Chipmunk, I may not have stopped the Sun, but you will never see it rise again", Chipmunk being a cleaver little one replied to Bear, "Great Bear you are the strongest and surely can out do all others, but I beg of you to allow me to give one last prayer to the Creator before you kill me". Bear held him firmly and said, "speak your prayer quickly", Chipmunk acted as if unable to breath and asked Bear to please loosen his grip. Bear was fooled into opening his paw to allow the Chipmunk to finish his last prayer. Chipmunk took advantage of this and broke free, running as fast as the wind, but Bear swung his mighty paw and his long claws raked the back of the small chipmunk leaving three long cuts from head to tail.

The Chipmunk lived, but now wears these scars as strips. This is his reminder to be kind and treat others well. Bear of course still walks the woods roaring about his strength and watches the sunset with displeasure.