

DEER AND JAGUAR SHARE A HOUSE

A tale from Brazil

One day, while Deer was wandering, he contemplated his life and thought it would be nice to settle down. He found a beautiful spot near a river and left so he could make plans for his new home.

At just about the same time Jaguar was contemplating about his life. He too thought it would be nice to settle down. He then saw the very same spot that Deer had and became excited at the prospect of building a new home on it. Then Jaguar left so he could make plans for his new home.

The next day Deer returned to the spot where he made a clearing for his new house. After spending all morning on this, he left to make more plans for his new house.

No sooner did Deer leave than Jaguar came to the spot. He was surprised, yet pleased that a clearing had been made for his new home. He thought the gods were helping him, so he spent the remainder of the day building a floor. Once completed, Jaguar left to make more plans for his new house.

The next day Deer returned to the spot. He was surprised, yet pleased that a floor had been built for his new house. He thought the gods were helping him, so he built walls for his new home. After spending all morning on this, he left to make more plans for his new house.

No sooner did Deer leave than Jaguar returned to the spot. He was surprised, yet pleased that walls had been built on his new house. He spent the remainder of the day putting a roof on the house. He then left to make plans for moving into his new house.

The next day, Deer returned to the spot. He was pleasantly surprised to see a roof on his house. He divided the house into two rooms; one for himself and one for the gods who were so generous with him. He then went to his side of the house and fell asleep.

That night Jaguar returned to his house and he saw that it had been divided into two rooms. He heard snoring from one side and assumed it was the gods, so he took the other room.

It's hard to say which animal was more surprised the next morning when they woke up and saw each other. It didn't take them long to realize that the house was built by the two of them. Neither animal wanted to give up their house so they agreed to share it. Neither Deer nor Jaguar slept well

that night, because they didn't trust each other. Shortly after sunset, Deer's great antlers hit the wall when he fell asleep and his head bent down. Jaguar jumped in fear when he heard the noise made from Deer's antlers hitting the wall. As he jumped, he roared out loud. When Deer heard Jaguar's great big roar, he leapt up in fear.

The two animals ran out of their new house as quickly as they could. Deer ran east and Jaguar ran west. Neither of them ever returned to the house; and after that, Deer and Jaguar have never lived together.

Adapted by Kathleen Simonetta.

Inspired by the following tales:

"Deer and jaguar share a house" found in, More ready-to-tell tales from around the world. Edited by David Holt and Bill Mooney. Little Rock: August House Publishers, Inc., c2000, pp. 163-167

"The deer and the jaguar share a house" found in, Best-Loved Folk-Tales of the World, selected and with an introduction by Joanna Cole. Illustrated by Jill Karla Schwarz; NY: Anchor Books, c1982, pp 774-776

