

## THE CARIBOU MAN

Son: (Thoughtfully to Father) - Father, in your early hunting days, did you ever have any strange dreams about yourself and caribou?

Father: I sometimes dreamt about little happenings while hunting caribou but nothing really - only when I was to be successful I would have a special dream and I would most likely have another dream when the hunt was not to be successful. Why do you ask?

Son: I had a real strange and disturbing dream. I just cannot get it out of my mind.

Father: Do not let dreams become your master, son.

Son: I feel that there is something about to happen to me on the next hunting trip.

Narrator: The next day the young man went caribou hunting. After climbing a hill, he saw a large herd of caribou on the ice of a pond. As he approached the animals he witnessed an unbelievable spectacle or occurrence. One of the herd was, yes - standing on his hind legs.

Caribou: (walks slowly toward man)

Man: steps backward a step - then steps forward again. He then prepares to shoot.

Caribou: Don't shoot. Don't shoot. Would you live to come and live with us?

Man: (speechless, stands and stares) I-I-I-I have no fur on my body and I do not eat moss.

Caribou: Do come and live with us. You would make a good caribou,

Man: Huh? How? No. No. I cannot, I cannot.

Caribou: My father will see about that.

Man: How? I will. I will.

Caribou: (running to father) Father. Father. He is coming to live with us.

Young man: (walks toward caribou with bow and arrow)

Old caribou: Leave it where you are standing.

Narrator: The time had come when the young man was to be dressed as a caribou.

Old Caribou: Get down on all fours and I will make you a caribou. I will put horns on you.

Narrator: The young man had now become a caribou.

Young Man: I am now one of you. I will take the daughter of the old caribou to be my mate.

Narrator: The young man lived as one of them and stayed with them for the rest of his life.

Old Caribou: You must eat moss as we do. It is the main food of the caribou.

Young Man: I have never eaten moss in my life. I cannot do it now Mr. Caribou.

Narrator: In winter caribou must dig to get their food when they want it. The young man could not eat moss and so he became very thin.

Old caribou: You are getting thinner every day, every hour, every minute. You must try to eat our food, moss.

Wolf howls. Caribou scatter and finally huddle together. Young man stands up and gets his bow and arrow.

Old Caribou: (coming out in front of others) I think we are safe now. We must stand together

Young Man: I am becoming weaker. I cannot eat moss.

Old Caribou: Very well! Keep your bow and arrow, hunt for your food, eat as before, but live with us.

Young man: Very well I will do that!

Narrator: The caribou man fetched his bow and arrow. He continued to hunt for his food. He didn't have to eat moss after all. He didn't live like the other caribou but like a human being. Once in a while he yearned to see his father but he could not go back to him because he might be shot.

The ritual of being dressed as a caribou and supplied with horns was surely part of the initiation of every caribou hunter and was performed with solemn religious ceremony.

THE CARIBOU MAN

He walked around with caribou  
He went to get a bucket of snow  
House I sleep, I was  
My long coat, there never was  
He could not and would not eat moss  
He grew thinner and thinner from weight loss  
The old caribou said, hunt again my son  
The young man used his bow and arrow gun  
For his mater he took the caribou's daughter  
He amused her with fun and laughter  
Many a time they had a mukashan  
The real caribou and the caribou man  
Bones they are crushed  
Caribou hides are used  
Last meat is eaten  
Then pemmican was made  
Last meat is eaten  
Then pemmican is made