Medicine Man Helps Buffalo Hunters
by Eneas Pierre

On hunting trips scouts were sent out to look for buffalo. During one hunting trip the scouts got tired and disappointed. They had seen hardly any signs of buffalo. They had only seen six bulls.

The chiefs chose their best shooters and sent them to kill these six buffalo. They told them to pile the meat in one place after they came back so they could divide the meat. That way each camp would receive a share of the meat.
Buffalo were scarce. There were only the six that the scouts had killed. The scouts kept looking each day. Every day each man would go a different direction but the buffalo were hard to find.

Finally, the chiefs gathered in one camp. They said, "We should ask Grizzly Bear Tracks to help out. We are hungry."

One of the chiefs was chosen to go see Grizzly Bear Tracks. He told Grizzly Bear Tracks they had talked about the buffalo and the people were in need of food.

"Yes, we will try it," Grizzly Bear Tracks told him. "We may have some help. We might see some buffalo. This evening you have the chiefs come and see me."

That evening the smartest chiefs, those great leaders against the enemy, went to see Grizzly Bear Tracks.

He told them, "Build a lodge with the door facing toward the rising sun. Put it up tomorrow."
In the morning they built the lodge. It was a big lodge.

After two days Grizzly Bear Tracks came to the camp. "This evening we will go in the lodge," Grizzly Bear Tracks told them.

That evening all the people gathered and went into the lodge.

"Are we all here now?" Grizzly Bear Tracks asked.

"Yes," the Chiefs answered.
"We are going to do the jump dance. We are going to imitate the buffalo."

The people had their robes with them. Even the children had baby buffalo robes. The older ones had robes made from the yearlings. The adults all owned large buffalo hide robes.

"Okay, now we will begin," Grizzly Bear Tracks told them. "I will start to sing and when I change to a different song, you all mix together. That is the way buffalo do it. You children get into the middle."

He sang a special song for the buffalo. This was Grizzly Bear Tracks’ song for imitating the buffalo.

When dawn approached, the people stopped dancing and went back to their lodges. Grizzly Bear Tracks stayed in the lodge and slept. The next night they would dance again.

Daylight came and Grizzly Bear Tracks remained in the lodge. When it grew dark, people returned to the lodge.

"Okay, we are all here," he said. "We will begin. When I lay down last night, I heard the sound of many buffalo hoofs. It sounded as if we’re going to be helped."

The people sang and danced late into the night. The smart chiefs also sang. Late that night Grizzly Bear Tracks said, "In the morning everyone is to be very still. The buffalo are going to be right here among us. You are not going to kill any yet. Wait! You will be told when. There will be many buffalo very close to us."
When the morning light came, the scouts saw the buffalo. They reported there were many.

"This evening I will choose those who will be the first to go," said Grizzly Bear Tracks.

That evening six men were chosen. Grizzly Bear Tracks told them to go to the edge of the herd and kill five cows. "Bring them all back and we will fix them for a feast."

The chosen ones went out on their horses. It was true. There were many buffalo. They killed the five from the edge of the herd as they had been told. They tied the buffalo to their horses and brought them back to camp.
The smartest women were picked to cook the buffalo for the feast.

In front of the lodge a place was prepared for the buffalo meat. The meat was unloaded there. Throughout the day, the women were busy preparing and cooking the buffalo.

That evening when everything was ready, the camp crier went out among the camp. Everyone was told to gather at the lodge to eat.
When they finished eating, Grizzly Bear Tracks sang again. "When the morning light comes, you can kill the buffalo. All of you can kill what you need," he told them. The people were happy.

The next morning the camp crier told the people to get ready. "Get your buffalo horses and go. We have been saved."

Everyone prepared to go. The wives who knew how to skin out a buffalo were going along. There were several women traveling with the men.

When the people reached the top of the hill and saw the buffalo, the chief leading the hunt told them to get off their horses to pray. They gave thanks before the chief told them to go.
When they neared the herd, the chief signaled and they charged. Many buffalo were killed. The women began skinning. Hunters who could skin quickly killed two at a time. As soon as they finished them, they killed some more. Those who were not as fast killed only one but kept busy skinning during the rest of the hunt.

The cries of happiness from camp were loud. There was plenty of food. The women got very little sleep during the next few days. They were busy cutting meat to dry preparing for the winter. The women said, "Our parfleches are full. We can't pack anymore."

The chief told the camp crier to go out and tell the people, "When the morning light comes, prepare to move camp. We are going home."