The Jaguar

A long time ago, Jaguar, the Master of Fire, ate cooked meat, while people had to eat their meat raw. Jaguar used bows and arrows to hunt his food, while the people had to chase and catch animals that they wanted to eat.

Jaguar had a broad, strong face and long, sharp teeth. He was a formidable being. But one day in the jungle, he took pity on a hungry man who was having trouble catching an animal to eat. Jaguar took the man back to his home, where the man was able to warm himself before a dancing fire. Jaguar gave him grilled meat to eat. It had a delicious, unfamiliar smell, and the man gobbled it up. Then Jaguar shared his weapons with the man. He taught him how to use bows and arrows to catch animals to eat. In return, the man killed Jaguar’s wife and stole his fire.

Ever since, people have been afraid that the angry Jaguar will attack them, and they avoid the big cats. No longer trusting people, jaguars live solitary lives in the jungle, waiting for their chance at revenge.

Did You Know?

A myth is a traditional story passed down through generations of people, telling the story of their history, or explaining nature. Myths often include the supernatural. This myth is from South America.
Answer the questions below.

1. Myths often tell about the history of a people (their origin story), or offer an explanation about why things in nature (weather, animals, landscape, etc.) work the way they do. Which of these things do you think the story The Jaguar is doing? Write your answer on the line below.

   a) Telling about the history of the South American people
   b) Explaining why nature works the way it does.

2. Underline any passages in the story that support your answer.

3. Below, write the sentence that explains what happened that turned the jaguar and man into enemies.