Why Bat hangs upside down

Long ago, when the world was new, all the creatures got together and decided that they would go out and explore the Earth's wondrous places and look for a place to call home.

So all the creatures went out and at first, all the animals decided to live together in one place, and all the birds decided to live together in another place.

To celebrate their new home the animals decided to have a party. Word went out that the animals would all gather that evening in a nearby clearing. When Bat heard about the party he was very excited. He got busy brushing his fur and shining his wings. When he finally arrived, Bat fluttered to the branch of a nearby tree and looked down at the clearing. All the animals were having a good time!

There were all sorts of tasty foods and sweet drinks laid out for everyone. The animals were making their own music. Some were playing drums and reeds, roaring, barking, bellowing, howling and trumpeting–everyone singing. They were dancing in a line and stamping their feet. The place was hopping! Bat shivered with anticipation and fluttered down to the entrance where Zebra stood guard.

"Evening Zebra," Bat squeaked. "Fine night for a party!"

"Stop right there, Bat!" neighed Zebra. "Where do you think you're going?"

"W-w-well to the animals' party..." stammered Bat.

"Oh no you don't! This party is ONLY for animals and YOU are NOT an animal!"

"Oh, but I am!" insisted Bat. "See, I've got fur and teeth–only animals have that."

"And you've got wings! Only birds have wings. Now get out of here before I stomp on you!" Zebra raised his hoof and Bat quickly fluttered out of the way, back up to the tree.

He sadly watched the animals feasting and singing and dancing. As he watched tears

began to run down his fur, all the way to his feet. And Bat began to slip this way and that... until he slipped all the way around and hung upside down. Bat was too sad to care. He just stayed upside down and his tears fell to the ground.

When the birds heard about the animals' party, they thought it sounded like a great idea. They decided to have a party of their own. When word went out that all the birds would gather that night in a nearby clearing, Bat thought, "Now's my chance to have some fun!" He spiffed himself up, buffed up his feet–he was ready!

He fluttered over to the clearing and landed in a nearby tree. The party was already in full swing. There were tables of wonderful seeds and berries and big seashells filled with sweet nectars to drink. The best singers of the bird kingdom were hooting, cawing, whistling, warbling and crooning away. The long legged birds were high stepping with the smaller birds dancing between their legs. Everyone was shaking their wings so there were feathers flying everywhere.

Bat couldn't wait to get in. He fluttered down to the entrance where Vulture stood guard.

"Evening Vulture," Bat said nonchalantly as he hurried inside.

"Stop right there, Bat! You can't go in there!"

Why not? It's the birds' party and I'm a BIRD! See, I've got wings–one, two, one on each side!"

"You also have dark fuzzy fur and sharp little fangs," hissed Vulture. "Birds have feathers and beaks–not fur and teeth. Now get out of here before I peck you!"

Bat barely missed being pecked by Vulture as he quickly fluttered back up to the tree.

Bat was still trembling as he sadly watched the birds feasting and singing and dancing. The tears began to run down his fur, all the way to his feet. Bat began to slip this way... and that way... until he slipped all the way around and... hung upside down. But Bat was too sad to care. He just stayed upside down and his tears fell down to the ground.

Ever since that day bats have always kept to themselves. They only go out late at night when most of the other creatures are asleep. And to this very day they still hang upside down so their tears will fall to the ground.

Source: Jacobs Sife, D. (2007) *Living in Harmony: Stories for Life* (CD)