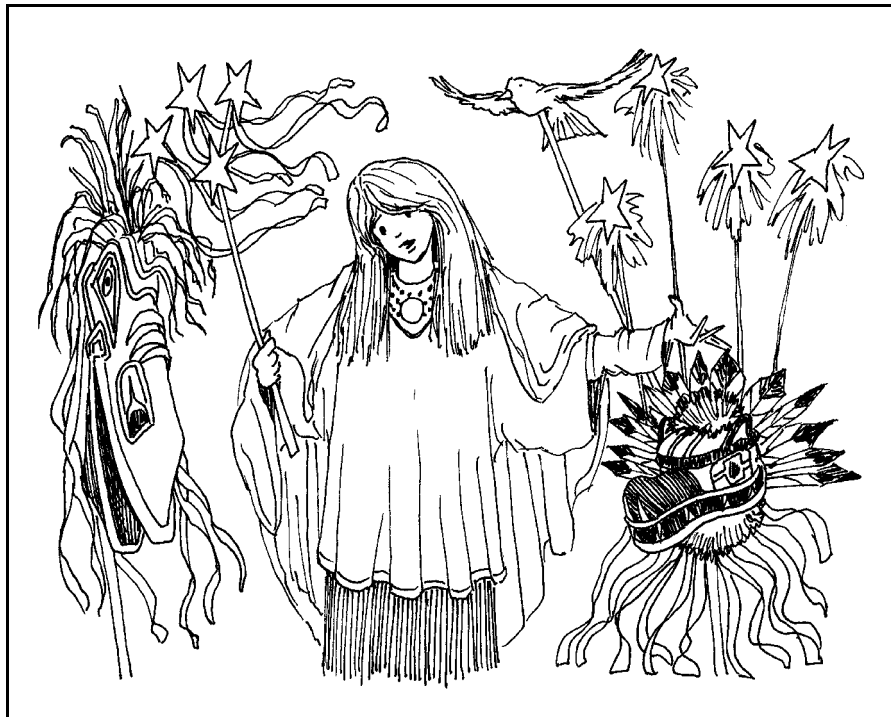


Resource B

Play Scripts

**The Shoshoni
Grandfather
of
Nations**



CAST

Charbonneau
Maiden
Whistling Swan
Warriors
Rattlesnake
Red Arrow
Chief of the Strangers
Warrior Scouts
Another Warrior Scout
Mourning Dove
Wolf Warrior
Wolves
Spider Warrior
Salmon
Brown Snake
Meadowlark
Salmon's Wife
Emily Peone
Grandmother
Sisters
Girls
Youngest Sister
Young Sister
Young Star Man
Old Star Man

B. THE SHOSHONI - Grandfather of Nations

Sources

- James Atheran Jones, *Tales of an Indian Camp*, London, Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1830.
- Bella E. Clark, *Indian Legends from the Northern Rockies*, Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966.
- Emily Peone, oral histories with Richard Scheuerman, Nespalem, Washington, 1987.
- Jay Miller, editor, *Mourning Dove, a Salishan Autobiography*, University of Nebraska Press, 1990.

Background

Native Americans passed their history, legends, tribal ways, rituals, and beliefs from one generation to another through oral stories. Story tellers would gather their audiences around a campfire at night when the dark sky was brilliant with stars or moonlight. The story tellers would dramatically retell a sacred story from a long ago time impressing the details of the event on the listeners' imaginations and memories.

Planning

Read through the play and the playwright's notes. Based on decisions you make concerning the playwright's notes and the following questions, you will be able to plan what you need to do to prepare for this exercise.

- What will be the scope of the production? For example, will the three acts be presented as short separate skits or will they be presented as a play? Will they be presented at one time or at several different times?
- Will the skits or play be presented in the classroom, in an auditorium, or in another suitable location?
- How much student participation do you want in preparing to present the play?
- Will the actors read their words or speak them from memory?
- Will you use the masks the students made in previous exercises and will they make additional masks now?
- Is performing the play with shadow puppets an option? Would the students construct the puppets?
- How elaborate will the scenery be? Will the students help make the props?

Note: The list of materials assumes that (1) the students have completed their papier mâché masks and Yakima root bags (Fine Arts 2.5 and 9.5), (2) they will have to make rattles and will help you construct scenery, and (3) the presentation will be made in the classroom.

The script was written and annotated as three complete acts under the assumption that the actors will memorize their lines and you will coach the actors in their presentations.

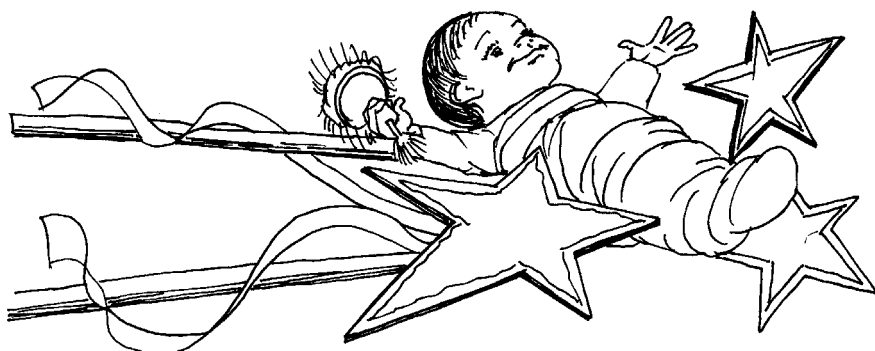
Suggested Materials

- Papier mâché masks and Yakima root bags. While they are on stage, the actors can keep their masks and rattles in their root bags.
- Long and short sticks, such as bamboo garden sticks.
- Crepe paper streamers
- Various sizes of star-shaped objects. You might also need one moon and one sun. The students can make stars, sun, and moon from cardboard and cover them with aluminum foil, colored paper, or spray them with glitter paint.
- Noise makers
 - Sheets of metal for thunder.
 - Rattles for rattlesnakes (for example, a matchbox filled with gravel).
 - Rattles for water sounds.
- Cellophane and a light bulb for a campfire.
- Recordings of Native American music.
- Costumes (for example, white t-shirts and jeans for everyone and capes and feathers cut from paper).
- Blue paper for a background of sky and white paper for cloud cutouts.
- Pictures or masks of the animals mentioned in the script (deer, fish, rattlesnakes).

Procedure

Encourage the students to participate in the planning and production of the play. Together decide, for example

- How to present the play.
- Who will play which parts.
- What the scenery will be.
- What the costumes will be.
- Whether additional masks or other preparation is necessary besides the rattles.
- How to set up the area in which the performance will be given.



Decide with the students how you intend to use this material. This is not a Hollywood movie, so it is not realistic, but it could be filmed if someone has a video camera. Live theatre is always better than film. This performance will most likely require a small budget, but it will be a work of imagination by both the audience and the players.

Soft sounds of water with rattles. A sun on a stick rises above the head of an Charbonneau.

***Fish** on sticks are raised and swim.*

***Birds** on sticks are raised and flutter.*

***Deer heads** raise and turn around looking into the audience.*

***The maiden** stands wearing her cape.*

***Whistling Swan** wears a swan headdress.*

***The maiden** spreads out her arms to show the vista before them.*

***Whistling Swan** stands.*



***The Warriors'** song fills the air.*

Charbonneau: My name is Jean Baptiste Charbonneau. My long-ago mother was Sacagawea. This is one of her stories. A long time ago, the Shoshone, who were the Grandfathers of Nations, were resting in their lodges along the banks of a shallow and noisy river. Their homes were far away, toward the rising sun. The river was full of sleek and juicy fish. The branches of the chestnut trees and the hickory held many birds singing soft songs. The forest was full of great bucks, which browsed on the green meadow. One night a young warrior dreamed a dream. This young warrior was brave and could follow the trail of a snake from sun to sun. He could see the wake of a fish deep below the surface. He excelled in war and perilous pursuits. He was often the winner in games that warriors in times of peace and rest played to while away the tedious hours. Thus, it was that Wangewaha, or Whistling Swan, was sleeping on his bed of skins when he saw strange things in his slumber. In the dream, a young maiden, who was as beautiful as a straight tree in a meadow of flowers, wore a cloak of tender bark of the mulberry tree interwoven with white swan feathers. She spoke in a soft voice. As she spoke, Whistling Swan began to have a vision. Whistling Swan saw before him beautiful lands at the sunny ledge of a mountain.

Maiden: Warrior of the Shoshoni, how do you like the land, which I place before you? The rivers are beautiful, are they not? The forests are tall, are they not?

Whistling Swan: They are as you say they are.

Maiden: I give these lands to your nation.

Charbonneau: The maiden turned into a white swan and flew away. Visions danced before Whistling Swan's eyes. He saw valiant warriors of his land assembled as for warfare. The food was all prepared the dried corn and pemmican were ready. The Shoshoni folded their tipis and put on their travel moccasins.

Warriors:

Honored Master of the Earth. Great Spirit of Thunder and Wind.

You who bid the Earth shake and the hills be thick with snow.

Shall we arise and take our ancestors' bones from their burial places?

Shall we depart?

Will you guide our feet?

Shall we possess the lands the dreamer saw?

Charbonneau: Scarcely had the song of the warriors ceased, when the maiden's voice was heard.

Maiden: Gather the bones of your fathers. Burn them and take the ashes. Load your people with provisions. Make your moccasins of bearskin for it will be many suns before you will finish your journey. Go to the great prairie beyond your hunting grounds. There you will meet a mighty wise man of low stature. This man will be both cross and passionate. He will wear a robe of many colors and carry a bag of rattles. This man will guide your footsteps.

Charbonneau: The Shoshoni obeyed. Far and away the Northern Lights danced, and the sky became lit all over. The stars were brighter than those which glimmered in the path of the Great Spirit. When the Shoshoni had traveled far, they came to a wide prairie and they heard a shaking sound in the grass. They saw a little head with open jaws and a tongue moving quicker than the firefly, eyes peered at them through the grass. The Shoshoni did not know what this creature was. A warrior named Red Arrow raised his club and drew near, the unknown creature. It raised itself up and its body swelled with rage. Its beautiful skin became speckled and rough. Its head and neck flattened and its cheeks swelled with uncontrolled anger. Its lips were drawn showing dreadful fangs, and its eyes burned as red as coals.

Rattlesnake: Back. Back. I shall bite you. If you value your safety, go back before I make you sorry that you raised your war club to me.

Charbonneau: But Red Arrow was not afraid.

Red Arrow: Who are you?

Rattlesnake: I am the leader of the Rattlesnake Nation. I am the mighty wise man of low stature, cross and passionate, wearing a colored robe, and carrying a bag of rattles. Were you not told to look for me?

Red Arrow: Yes. We were told to find such a leader. We are the Shoshoni.

Rattlesnake: Then you are expected. I alone possess the means of conducting you to safety. You are too hasty, Shoshoni.

Red Arrow: We are sorry that the war club was raised. Can there be clear sky between us?

Rattlesnake: The hatchet will be buried. From now on there will be clear sky between us.

Charbonneau: The cunning old Rattlesnake guided them on until the Shoshoni had moccasins that were torn and useless. The women and children were tired. One day, when the Shoshoni reached a large meadow, they met another band of Indians encamped, and there was a great council fire.



Sticks with colored crepe paper streamers are raised and shimmer across the sky.

Many stars are raised and twinkle.

Rattlesnake must be a large and fierce mask or puppet on a tall stick.

Rattlesnake words are spoken slowly and with great menace, consider making words with the s sound drawn out, for example: ssssssssss-afety.





Stars rise slowly, one by one.

Whistling Swan and the maiden approach each other from opposite sides of the stage.

The maiden leaves.

Speaking loudly.

Chief of the Strangers: Our tribe has come from a distant country. We are also bound for the land of the setting sun. We will assist you. We will draw the thorns from your feet. We will lift each other up from this place. The peace we make will last as long as the sun shall shine.

Charbonneau: So the league was made, and there was no war. But the fastest and craftiest warriors who had been sent out to scout returned with grave news.

Warrior Scouts: We have seen many strange things. There are mountains with snow covering their peaks. The summits of these mountains breathe fire.

Another Warrior Scout: There is a mighty river where lives a nation of warriors whose size is great.

Another Warrior Scout: There are powerful people who dwell in great villages across the River of Fish. These people are tall and strong.

Whistling Swan: Will we be overcome? Or will we conquer? We have great war medicine. Let us prepare the medicine from the ashes of the bones of the wildcat. Have we not been told that the mountains whose summits breathe fire will belong to us? Come Warriors. We will overcome the giants.

Charbonneau: The giant people threatened the Shoshoni with extinction. The Shoshoni were determined to conquer or die. The night before the battle, they sang songs and the great old snake showed himself. As the stars rose, Whistling Swan slept but was aroused by the soft tread of a light foot.

Maiden: I have come to help you, Whistling Swan, brave warrior.

Whistling Swan: You have appeared in my dreams before. Why have you ventured into our war camp in the dark hours of night?

Maiden: Listen to me, fierce warrior. Although the fighting will be violent, you have fearless warriors. Before the Sun sets, you will own the land of grass and glory.

Charbonneau: After a terrible battle, the Shoshoni became the owners of the land beyond the big river. But the story is not quite finished.

Rattlesnake: Shoshoni warriors, hear me. What do you propose to give me for my services? I have been a true and faithful guide and have brought you safely through many dangers. I deserve recompense.

Whistling Swan: You do deserve recompense. What about a pair of moccasins?

Rattlesnake: What would a snake do with moccasins? Do not joke with me!

Whistling Swan: I am cross, and I will strike. I wish to return to my people with a Shoshoni wife.

Charbonneau: The Shoshoni gathered to discuss Rattlesnake's request. There were many arguments on both sides. At length they came to agreement: The old Rattlesnake chief could choose a Shoshoni wife. The nations divided the lands they had conquered, and many ages passed away. The people continued in peace, and the war cry was banished. Their number became great. The river was full of sleek and juicy fish. The birds fluttered in the forest. The stately bucks browsed in the flowery hills. The Northern Lights burned in the night sky, and the Milky Way glimmered on as the Path of the Great Spirit. The people prospered.

ACT II

Mourning Dove: My name is Mourning Dove. I was born in a canoe crossing a great river. My first clothing was the shirt of the Kootenay warrior who was paddling to reach the other side of the river. I am proud that I was born a descendant of the first Americans who lived in the ancient way. My grandmother, who was with my mother when I was born in a canoe, was a medicine woman. Her stories of our people will remain with me until I die. This is one of my grandmother's stories.

A well-behaved maiden lived near the river. Salmon decided he would like her for his wife so he traveled up the river. The maiden lived in the young women's hut, and Salmon knew that she was there and that she was alone. A short distance away many wolves were tending a fire and taking sweat baths.

Wolf Warrior: Behold. Who comes to visit the young women's hut? It is a stranger.

Mourning Dove: The maiden heard Salmon when he arrived at the women's hut.

Maiden: It seems he came to see me. Who can he be?

Mourning Dove: The maiden fell in love with Salmon immediately. The maiden wrapped together her various possessions and followed Salmon. The wolves were angry.

Wolves: It is Salmon, and the maiden is following him.

Mourning Dove: The wolves were angry because they had desired to marry the maiden themselves. The wolves went to Rattlesnake.

Whistling Swan laughs.

Rattlesnake becomes very fierce!

Fish rise and swim.

Birds rise and flutter.

Deer heads walk.

Streamers on sticks.

Many stars on sticks.

An actor wearing a salmon headdress stands.

Several male actors rise; each is wearing a wolf headdress.

The wolves freeze in position looking at the young woman.

Maiden and Salmon walk out together away from the wolves.

Spider is wearing a headdress.

Brown Snake rises hissing.

Maiden begins to cry silently.

Brown Snake rises hissing and striking.

Brown Snake responds proudly.

Wolves: We are angry, Grandfather. Salmon is taking her away. Bite him so he will die."

Rattlesnake: Salmon is my nephew. Why should I do that to my nephew?

Mourning Dove: So the wolves went to spider.

Spider Warrior: What do you want my friends?

Wolves: Grandfather, we wish that you would go and kill Salmon. He is taking our maiden away.

Spider Warrior: I cannot do that. Salmon is my nephew. How could I be so treacherous?

Mourning Dove: So the wolves went to the Brown Snake and begged him to kill Salmon. They promised to reward Brown Snake handsomely.

Wolves: Hide yourself in the bow of the canoe. When Salmon steps in, bite him. We will do the rest.

Mourning Dove: In the meantime, Salmon had been watching the wolves.

Salmon: If the wolves kill me, they will pound me into pulp. Nevertheless, you must throw my body into the water. Though they mix my flesh with sand, find even the smallest piece of my body and throw it into the water.

Mourning Dove: When Salmon stepped into his canoe, the Brown Snake bit him. The wolves crushed his body into a pulp. But Salmon's wife threw his body into the water before the wolves carried her off.

Brown Snake: With my one single tooth, I can cause Salmon to die.

Mourning Dove: Brown Snake was secretly afraid because he knew somehow Salmon would seek revenge. In fact, Salmon came to life and began his trip up the river to seek revenge. He swam for awhile and then went ashore and walked along the valley. Here he saw a lodge with smoke wafting from it. An old man was spinning. It was Spider.

Salmon: What are you spinning, Old Man?

Spider Warrior: I am making a fishnet.

Mourning Dove: Salmon knew he was a good man so he told the other salmon to swim past here and stop for this old man. Salmon continued up the river, but he accidentally stepped on Meadowlark and broke her leg.

Salmon: Oh, my Aunt. Tell me where my wife is. If you tell me, I will make a leg of brushwood for you.

Meadowlark: Thank you. I will be happy if you can make me a new leg. The wolves have taken your wife as a slave, and they are far upstream. They are never off guard. You must be careful.

Salmon: Thank you, Aunt You have informed me well.

Mourning Dove: Thereupon, Salmon made a leg out of brushwood for Meadowlark. As he left, she gave him some flint.

Meadowlark: You can challenge Brown Snake with this. He fears you greatly, yet he sings with bravado about you.

Mourning Dove: Salmon left Meadowlark and continued upstream. Salmon knew that Brown Snake was hiding somewhere. Salmon called upon his powers, and the rain fell and the thunder and lightning crashed. Hiding in his lair, Brown Snake became cold and stiff. When the sun came out, Salmon saw Brown Snake come out to warm himself. Salmon, who was armed with his flint, pounced on Brown Snake, who writhed in agony.

Brown Snake: Nephew. If you will spare me, I will give you my tooth. The same tooth I bit you with. The wolves are far upstream and they are very afraid. A woman carries water for them. I do not know how you can avenge yourself because they are careful. But if you free me, you shall have my dangerous tooth.

Salmon: Very well, I will spare you.

Mourning Dove: Salmon took the tooth of Brown Snake and traveled far upstream where the wolves were. He hid himself in the shallow water. When his wife came to dip the water for the wolves, he said, "Oh, there you are." She began to cry because she was so glad to see him. She attempted to go into the water.

Salmon: No! Do not come into the water! I am here seeking revenge. Here is what you must do. Because the wolves do not come to the water, you must tell them that you hurt your foot gathering firewood and did not get water today. They will then come to get a drink. The eldest wolf will be the first to arrive. As they come, one by one, I will kill them.



Sounds of falling rain.

Thunder sound effects.

Sun rises.



Birds flutter, fish swim, deer raise their heads and turn to look at the audience. Stars rise and twinkle.

Five Sisters with headdresses stand.

The grandmother rises.



Salmon's Wife: I am afraid, but I will do as you say. Please, my husband, be careful of the youngest wolf. He has the keenest sense of smell and vision.

Mourning Dove: It all happened as Salmon said it would. Salmon's wife bandaged her foot and lay down in the lodge. When the eldest wolf came to the lodge, he went straight to the water and there was none.

Salmon's Wife: There is no water. Soon after you went out this morning, I hurt myself while gathering wood. Why are you so afraid? Where would Salmon come from? Go get yourself a drink.

Mourning Dove: The wolf went out and toward the water. He stared at the river. He would take a step forward and then stare again at the water. Slowly he approached and thrust his head down, and then he would shy away. Finally he lowered his head to the water. Salmon's wife saw him drink and then throw his head backward because Salmon had bitten him on the mouth with Brown Snake's tooth. The wolf fell dead.

This happened again and again until the youngest and strongest wolf approached the water warily. He gazed intently at the water. Then even he bent down but he threw his head back immediately. Salmon's wife knew Salmon had been discovered. She ran to the river and plunged into the water where she was joined with her husband and the youngest wolf ran yelping into the forest.

Birds sang in the trees. Sleek and juicy fish swam in the river. Deer browsed in the green meadows. Stars twinkled overhead. The people prospered.

ACT III

Emily Peone: My name is Emily Peone. This is a story my grandmothers told me. In the long, long ago, grandparents were raising five sisters. Their grandmother was strict.

Grandmother: You must be careful and obey your grandparents. When you must stay overnight as you gather roots, do not look at the stars when you lie down to sleep. Above all, DO NOT TALK TO THE STARS!

Sisters: We promise, Grandmother.

Emily Peone: One day in early spring, the five sisters gathered their root diggers and bags and prepared to gather fresh roots. They told their grandmother they would be going some distance and would be gone overnight.

Grandmother: Now, girls, you remember what I told you. Don't look at the stars at night. Sleep on your sides so you cannot see them.

Girls: We promise, Grandmother.

Emily Peone: But, in spite of what they had promised, that night the two younger sisters lay down on their backs and whispered about the sky that was bright with starlight.

Youngest Sister: Look at that small twinkling star. It is winking at me.

Young Sister: Wouldn't it be lovely to live in the sky with a fine star husband.

Youngest Sister: A star husband, what a thought! I would have a star chief! He would take us through the heavens in his chariot. What a foolish wish! Oh, go to sleep, Sister, star chiefs are far away!

Emily Peone: The sisters went to sleep. Now many of the stars are actually good people, put in the heavens by the Creator in ancient times for their protection. These Star People would peer down upon the Earth and were able to descend and steal anyone who wished to live above, which is exactly what happened. Two Star People came down to Earth and took the sisters. Imagine the surprise of the sisters when they woke and found themselves in a camp among the stars. There was an old one, and a handsome young one. The sisters were frightened.

Youngest Sister: Where are we? What has happened?

Young Star Man: You wished for me, and you have been granted your wish. Your new home is in the stars. You will be my wife.

Younger Sister: No! I want to go home. Let me go back.

Old Star Man: You also have your wish, my dear. You are now my wife and will remain here forever. It is impossible for you to return to your camp below.

Emily Peone: As time passed, the youngest sister fell in love with her husband and was content to stay with the star brothers, but the other sister longed for her home and her grandmother. Every day the two sisters went out with their root diggers to gather food.

Young Star Man: Do not dig this plant, my wife. It is forbidden. You are free, however, to roam through this beautiful camp. Just don't touch this plant.

Old Star Man: Remember. Do not dig this root for it is a dangerous plant.

Stars rise and twinkle!

Sisters laugh

Youngest sister laughing.

*Young man and old man
masks appear.*

*Young Star Man
speaks kindly.*

*Old Star Man speaks
crossly.*

*Screaming sounds, falling...
a long way down...*

*Grandmother shielding her
eyes.*

*Youngest Sister carries a
stick puppet of a child lying
on a star or the star can be
worn on the front of a vest.*

Fish swim.

Deer heads appear and turn.

Stars come up and twinkle.

Emily Peone: One day while the sisters were exploring, they found a beautiful meadow and noticed right away that the plant they had been forbidden to dig was there. The wife of the old husband decided to dig it up in spite of her husband's strong warnings. When she pulled out the plant she saw that it had a long taproot, which left a hole that pierced a cloud. She looked down the hole and saw the Earth. She saw her grandmother weeping for her. She saw her home.

Youngest Sister: Oh, look you can see our camp. I am longing for home.

Younger Sister: Oh, Grandmother, you are crying for me. I want to see you. Please, Sister, help me. We must see our grandmother again.

Emily Peone: So the two sisters worked quietly each night for weeks to weave a long ladder. Finally one day while their husbands were away, they gathered the ladder and returned to the meadow. They quickly lowered the rope ladder, and the youngest sister climbed down. The other sister began her descent, but just then their husbands came into the meadow. The old man was so angry that he took his knife and cut the rope.

Emily Peone: The youngest sister who had been near the end of the ladder lived, but the other did not. The rope that fell was turned into a pillar of white stone that is still visible today.

Youngest sister: Grandmother, oh, Grandmother, we have been with the stars. I have a star husband, but my sister is dead and has been turned to stone.

Grandmother: My granddaughter, my child, I am so happy to see you, but I must hide my eyes for you glow with the light of the stars. I can hardly look upon you.

Sisters: Sister, oh, Sister, you shine like a star. What has happened to you?

Emily Peone: The sister glowed so brightly from within because of the baby she carried. Later that year the child was born. The Star Child grew quickly into a powerful and handsome boy who was strong enough to defeat Grizzly Bear and smart enough to outwit Coyote. He was fearless and forded rivers filled with fish. He ran in the forest with the deer. At night he looked into the black sky where his ancestors looked down on him. Eventually, he grew into a legendary chief and became the leader of the clan. His people prospered.

