



Upriver to Morning

A JOURNEY TO WISDOM

by Tish McFadden

Cultural • Environmental • Bilingual • Educational

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Character Biographies

Animal Characters:

With SALMON, we experience a river that pushes against us, day and night, in the opposite direction of our swim. Through Salmon, we learn about perseverance and strength, when to accept help, the importance of giving back, setting goals, and how to express gratitude.

COYOTE is an altogether different character. With him we strut, boast, and dramatize stories. Throughout our journey, Coyote's dogged devotion to Salmon and his friends is absolute. With Coyote we laugh, we are entertained, and we discover the meaning of loyalty. He keeps us chuckling with his unpredictable humor, and we laugh at his exaggerated charm and all too familiar foibles.

Consistent with DEER WOMAN, community and homeland are important to us. We retreat with her into the mountains when life in the valley feels out of balance. We seek protection among the Old Ones, the Rock People, and Tree People. We offer kindness, patience, and comfort at every opportunity.

The world of RED-TAILED HAWK is the sky. We fly alongside her. She is the selfless Winged-Watcher who oversees the passage of those traveling below. As Guardian, she keeps her travelers informed of what lies ahead. She demonstrates qualities of responsibility, caregiving, foresight, and communication.

With the DALDAL BROTHERS, we live in a world full of chaos. They are like two walls of a canyon, two paths in a forest, two sides of a stone, like day and night, wet and dry, full and hungry, fire and ash, wise and foolish. These brothers use these powerful dualities to transform everything around them. As opposites, they bring balance to the world – along with a lot of bickering! Whether young or old, we too experience opposing thoughts and emotions from time to time, which are represented by the Dragonfly (Daldal) Brothers.

RIVER HAWK saves the life of Salmon when it's the right thing to do. We learn with River Hawk that selfless acts of kindness can involve personal sacrifice and benefit the greater whole.

EEL: With Eel, we know that life is a beautiful thing if we can put some music to it. With music we celebrate events, increase energy and focus, unify with our surroundings, and bring good to the world. Eel shares her music as her most precious gift.

JACKRABBIT: With Jackrabbit, we are in tune with the surface of the world: its dirt, foliage, flowered meadows, wildfire scars, burrows, and boulders. We get around with ease. Our ears are quick to sense life and weather stirring around us. We learn that we possess the ability to inspire others to do the right thing, such as becoming a friend, which will nourish us much longer than a single meal.

BEAR: With Bear, we dream – which invites many long naps – but we also understand the importance of dreaming. We know our dreams have much to teach us. With Bear, we live in the real world and the dream world, equally, because Bear is both a land animal and a sky animal. By land we love to eat ripe huckleberries, and in the celestial world, we are responsible for circling the seasons around the North Star.

MORNING STAR represents universal wisdom and the good sense and warm heart that lives inside each one of us. When we finally meet her at Boundary Springs, she tells us that we have gathered essential teachings along the way. From now on, these teachings are part of who we are. Along the journey, we too became the wisdom keepers and will pass on these trusted truths to all who come after us. Like any elder, Morning Star is a good teacher because she unlocks the wisdom already within us.

Traditional Takelma Earth Element Characters:

WIND & WATER PEOPLE have important chores to accomplish each night, keeping stars afloat in the sky, and the ocean stirred.

ROCK PEOPLE are good listeners, and offer stability in an otherwise dynamic world.

TREE PEOPLE (the ONE-LEGGEDS) pass information through the forests on the wings of birds, and clean the air we breathe.

FIRE PEOPLE keep Creatures warm inside their shelters during the dark of winter, and keep the forests healthy and uncluttered.

GRASS PEOPLE are light-hearted souls who love to dance in the wind. Without a worry in the world, they live in the present, and celebrate every moment with no concerns of what is to come.