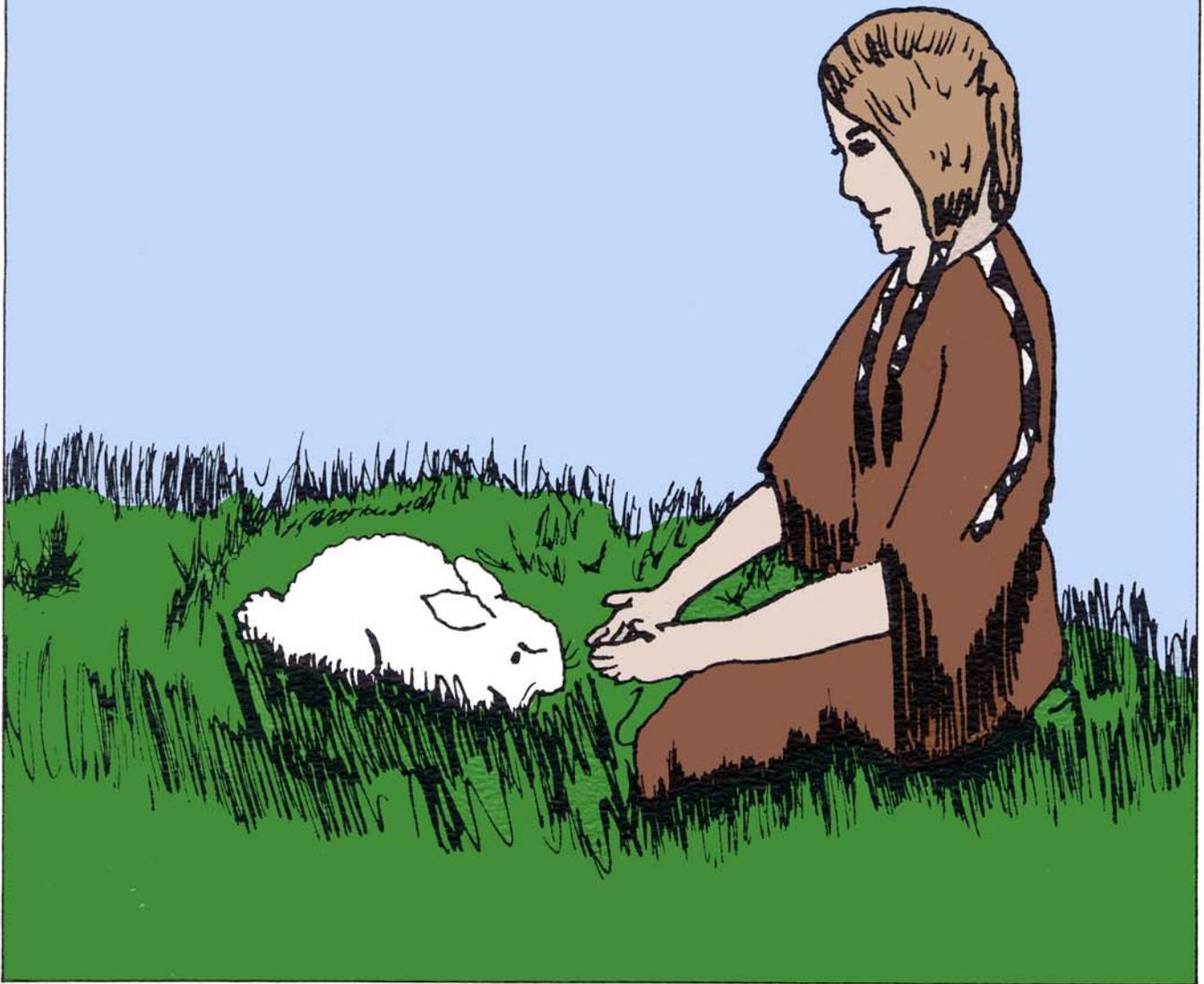


White Rabbit

The Indian Reading Series



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THE INDIAN READING SERIES:
Stories and Legends of the Northwest

White Rabbit

Level V Book 16

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*By
Joe Albany*

Long ago there lived a chief and his wife. The chief's name was Mad Bear. He was big, strong and quite handsome. Mad Bear was a very wise and kindhearted chief. His wife's name was Gives Away White Horses Woman. Everyone in the tribe called her White Horse Woman. She was very small and beautiful with long pretty hair the color of midnight. White Horse Woman was very quiet. When she did speak, her voice was so soft that the words were almost a whisper. She was a very kind and gentle woman.



The chief and his wife longed to have a child. White Horse Woman would often become very sad when she watched the children in the camp playing. Their joyful laughter often made her weep. She loved the children very much. Great Spirit, however, had not given her and Mad Bear a child to love and care for. White Horse Woman's unhappiness caused Mad Bear to feel great sadness. He tried to comfort her, but she seemed to become more lonely as the seasons passed.



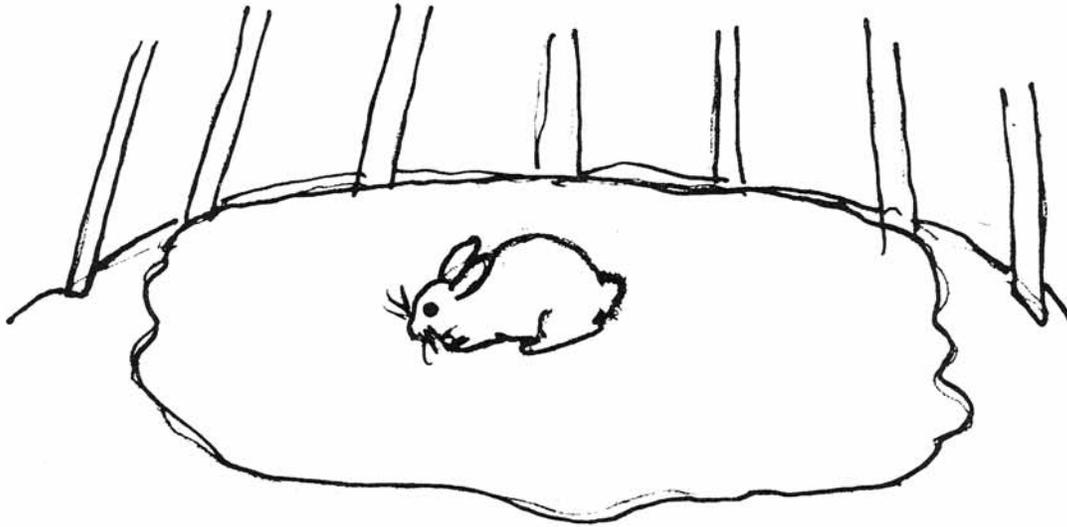
One beautiful summer day, as White Horse Woman and the other women of the camp were picking chokecherries, she saw a little white rabbit. The little rabbit sat beside the chokecherry bush and did not move. The little animal seemed to be lost and very much afraid. "Poor little rabbit, have you lost your mother?" White Horse Woman asked as she knelt down beside it.

The little white rabbit slowly lifted its head and sadly gazed at White Horse Woman. A tear began to trickle down from the corner of the rabbit's eye. The little rabbit seemed to say, "Yes, White Horse Woman, I am lost and very much afraid." White Horse Woman said, "Poor little rabbit, I shall take you back to our camp. I will feed you and care for you. You will bring much joy and laughter."



As she spoke to the little rabbit, it hopped toward her. White Horse Woman began to laugh. The little white rabbit sensed her kindness and seemed no longer afraid. White Horse Woman picked up the little white rabbit and cuddled it in her arms. "I shall show you to the chief and the children." she said. "They will be so pleased that I have found you."

Many of the children were playing by a stream. White Horse Woman called to them, "Come and see what I have found." The children became very excited. "Don't frighten the little rabbit." White Horse Woman told the children.



They followed White Horse Woman and the Rabbit back to the camp. As they approached, their laughter could be heard by the elders, who were always pleased when they saw the children in a happy and playful mood. White Horse Woman told the children, "I will take the little white rabbit into my tepee and feed it and after the poor little animal has rested, we shall let it become familiar with its new home and friends."

White Horse Woman took the little white rabbit into her tepee and gently laid it on a soft buffalo robe. The little rabbit seemed to smile at her with its big eyes. "Little white rabbit," she said, "how I would love to have a child as beautiful and gentle as you."



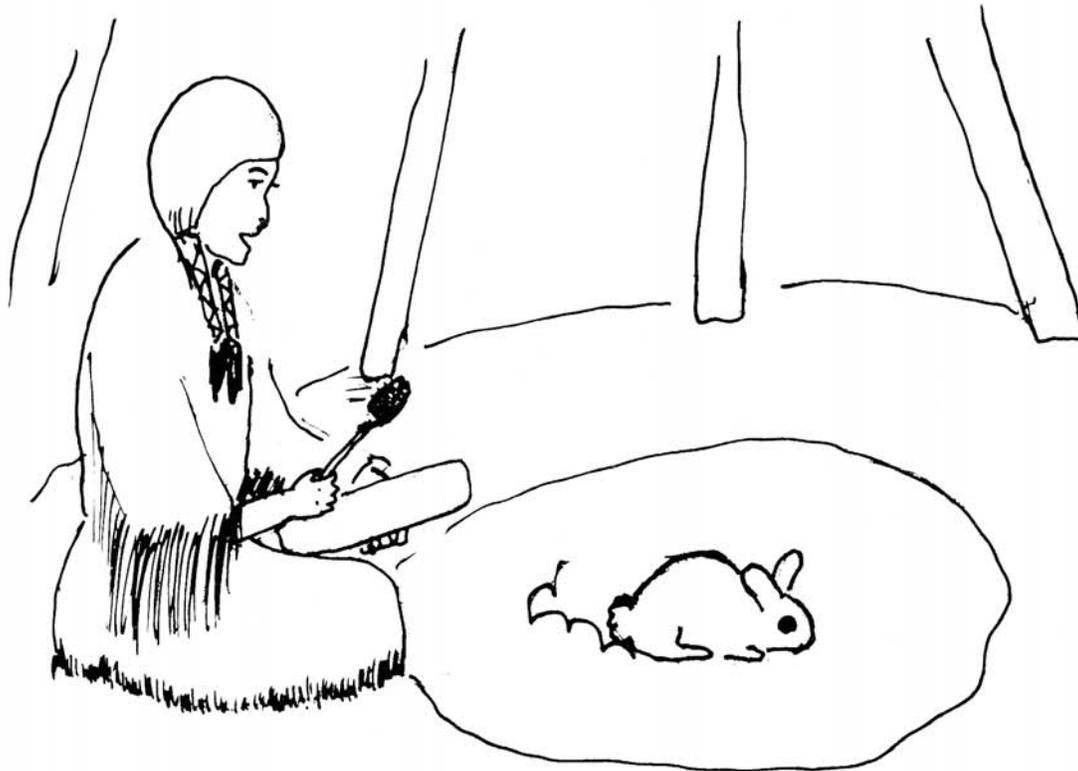
As she spoke the chief walked inside. "My wife, what have you found?" he asked.

She told him the story of how she and the little white rabbit had come to meet. Mad Bear saw the happiness in White Horse Woman's eyes. Many seasons had passed since he last saw her display so much joy. His heart filled with loving happiness. How he hoped and prayed that the Great Spirit would soon bless them with a child who would bring them so much happiness.



As the days passed, the little white rabbit came to know the children. They played with it but were careful not to hurt it. The little white rabbit grew as fast as the days passed.

One day White Horse Woman told the children, "Because little white rabbit has grown, we shall have to call it White Rabbit. It is not a little white rabbit anymore." The children thought it should be so. From then on the rabbit was called White Rabbit.



One beautiful autumn evening, White Rabbit hopped into White Horse Woman's tepee. White Rabbit began to hop and dance on the soft buffalo robe. White Horse Woman began to laugh and sing. She and White Rabbit had come to love each other very much. White Rabbit had become her special friend.



White Rabbit laid down on the buffalo robe and looked sadly into White Horse Woman's eyes. The rabbit sensed that her heart was still filled with sadness. White Horse Woman spoke to White Rabbit. "Yes, my friend, I am still very sad. The Great Spirit has not yet answered our prayers. Mad Bear says that we must be patient and that the Great Spirit will choose the time to give us our child. But so many seasons have passed. White Rabbit, you must help me be patient."



White Rabbit hopped on White Horse Woman's lap and snuggled into her arms. "What a true friend you are." she told White Rabbit. "I will be patient and continue to pray to the Great Spirit."

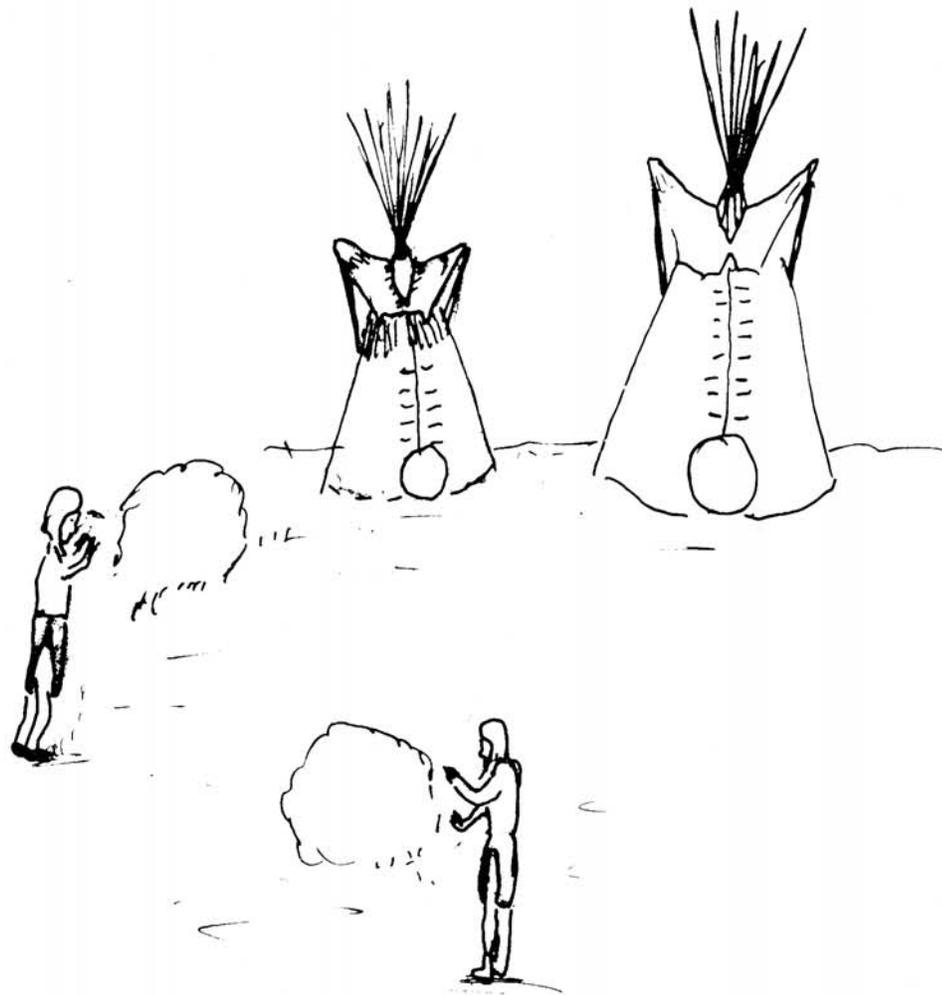
One season had passed since White Rabbit was brought to the camp. For a reason she could not explain, White Horse Woman sensed that White Rabbit soon would leave them. A great sadness filled her heart, but she knew that the animals and birds were meant to be free. Every living being needed some freedom. The Great Spirit said it was so, and for this reason, she could not force White Rabbit to stay.



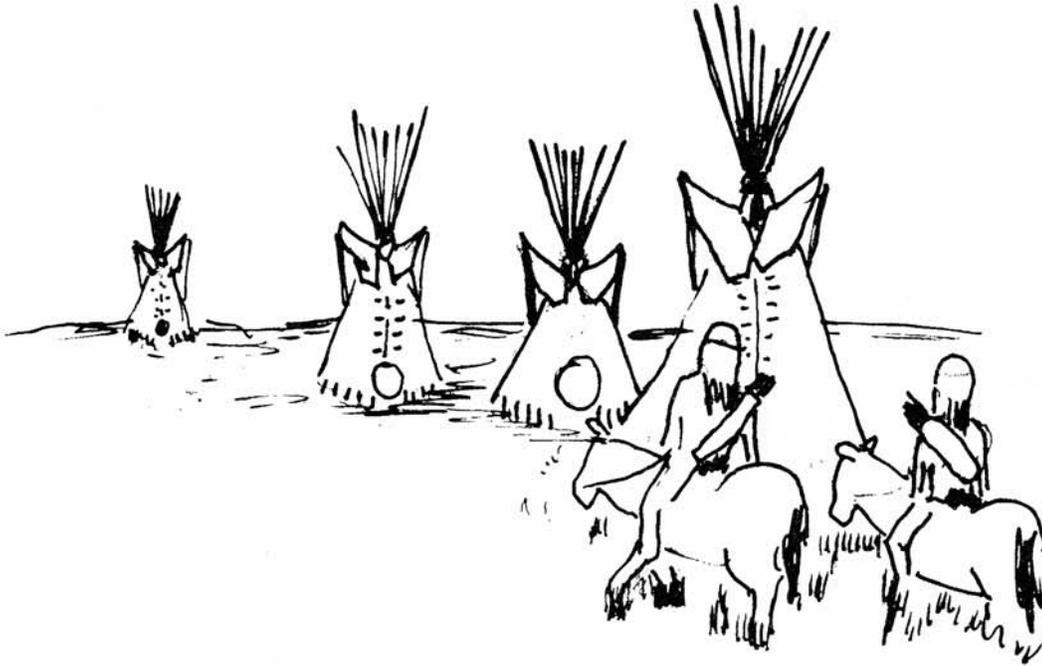
The following night, as White Horse Woman slept, she dreamed of White Rabbit. In her dream White Rabbit was playing with the children. White Rabbit was hopping and dancing with the children. The children began dancing in a circle around White Rabbit. As White Rabbit joyfully hopped, a cloud formed around it. It was very difficult to see White Rabbit.



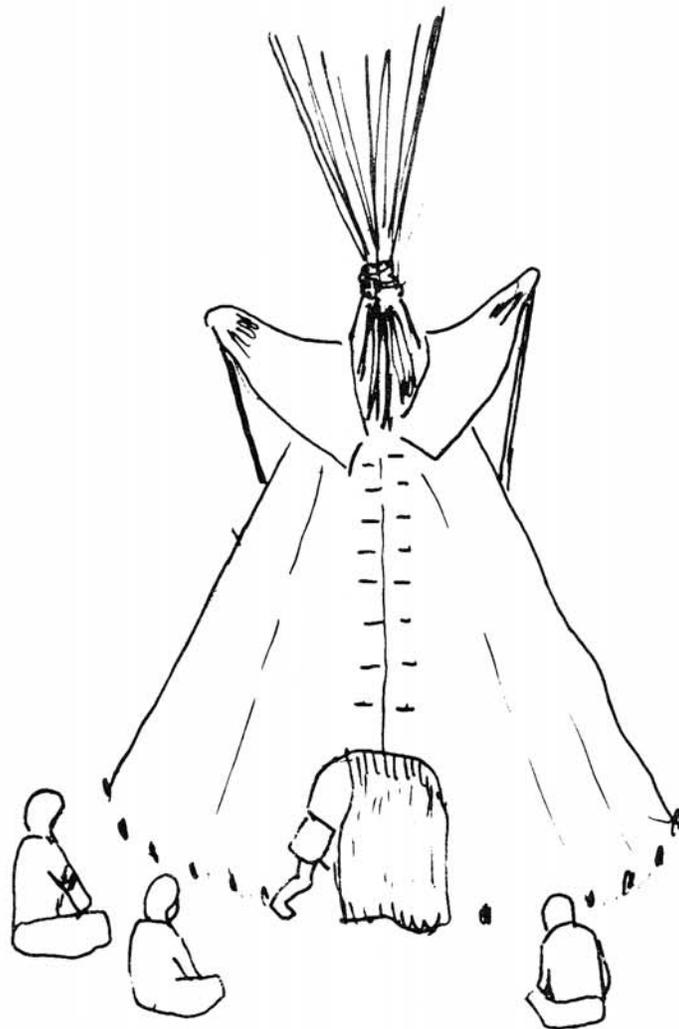
Suddenly, the children's laughter became louder and louder. As they drew away from the circle, White Horse Woman saw the figure of the most beautiful little girl that she had ever seen. The little girl wore a white buckskin dress with long fringes. Her hair was long and the color of midnight. Her eyes were very large, brown and filled with happiness. The little girl turned and looked at White Horse Woman. She called her "Mother" in a tone that was but a whisper. White Horse Woman awakened Mad Bear and told him of her dream. It had made her so very happy.



The sun was rising and people began their daily activities. Some of the children began looking for White Rabbit. But White Rabbit could not be found. White Horse Woman and the children became very sad. They knew their friend would never return. White Horse Woman whispered, "Be safe White Rabbit. You have been my true friend. I shall not forget you."

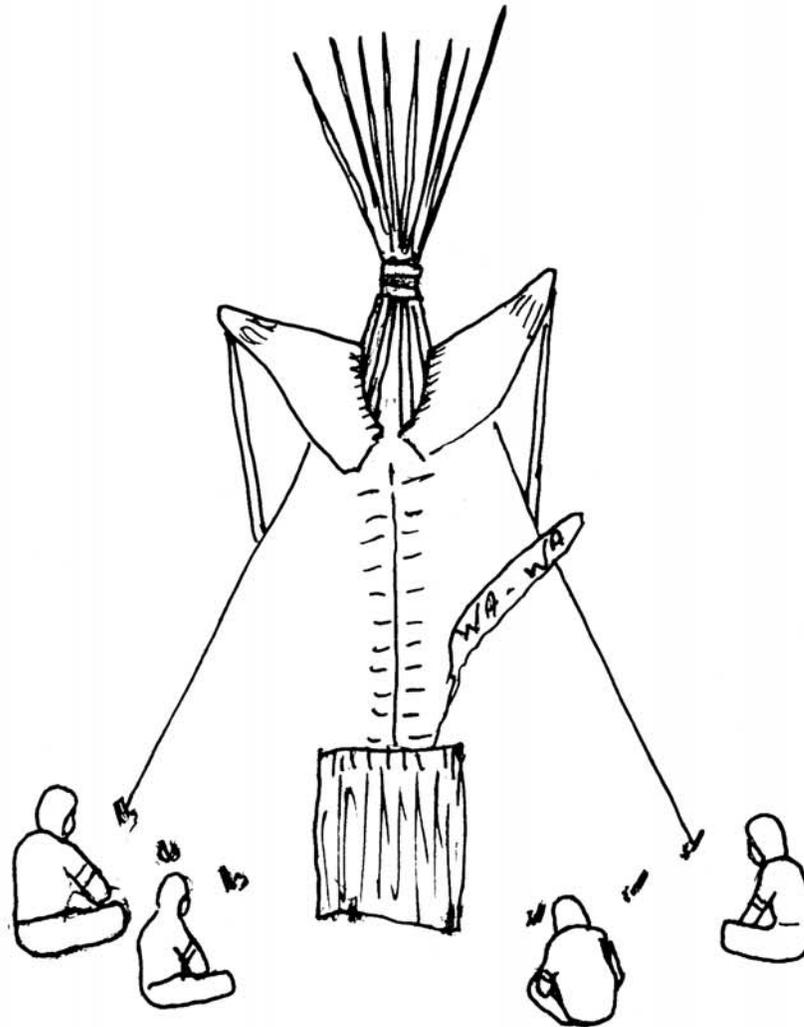


Another season passed. The long winter was over and spring had now shown the signs of a beautiful year. Mad Bear and his hunting party were leaving to hunt game for the people. The women, children and elders stayed in the camp and attended to their daily duties. Several days passed. Mad Bear and his hunting parties returned to camp. As they approached, they could hear joyful laughter. The men hurried to reach the camp.



Many women were gathered at Mad Bear's and White Horse Woman's tepee. Mad Bear rushed inside and found White Horse Woman sitting on her soft buffalo robe.

"My wife, what is the reason for all this joy?" he asked. Her face glowed with happiness as she spoke. "The Great Spirit has chosen this time to give us our child."

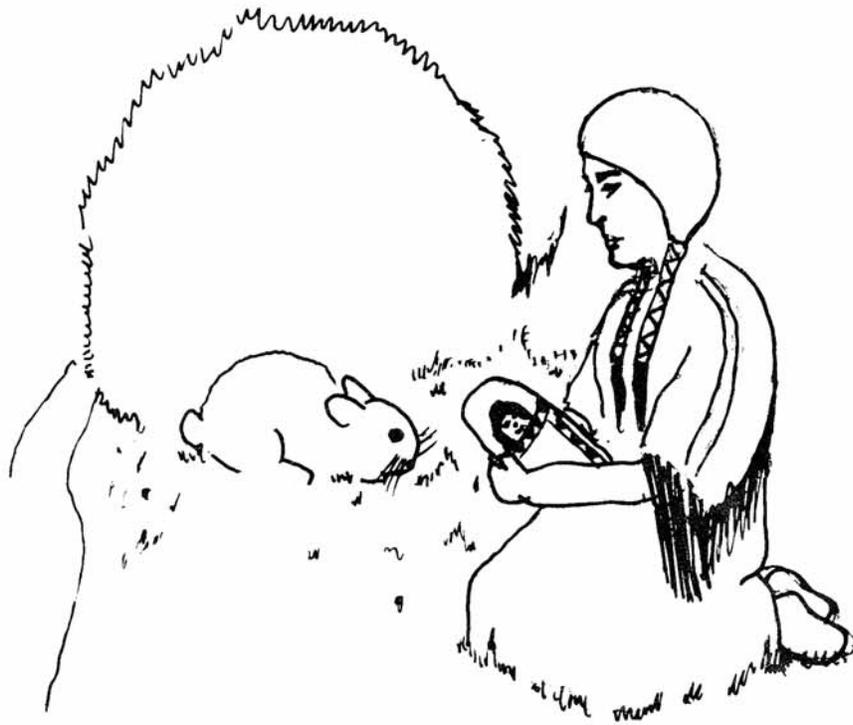


She and Mad Bear began to laugh and cry with joy. The Great Spirit would soon bless them with a child. So many seasons had passed and now they would soon have their long awaited child.

It was now late fall, and three of the elderly women were caring for White Horse Woman inside her tepee. The child would soon be born. Outside, Mad Bear and the other members of the tribe waited patiently. Suddenly, they heard a faint, then louder cry. Mad Bear was now a father.



Mad Bear was allowed to go into the tepee and join White Horse Woman and their new daughter. How beautiful she was with hair the color of midnight and eyes very large and brown. Together, Mad Bear and White Horse Woman prayed and gave thanks to the Great Spirit.



Several mornings passed and White Horse Woman decided to take her daughter for a walk along the stream. As she approached the stream, she noticed a white rabbit sitting beside a chokecherry bush. White horse Woman slowly walked toward the rabbit.



“Yes, my friend, the Great Spirit has been good to us.” she spoke softly. She held the child beside the rabbit. “You see how beautiful she is? Her name shall be White Rabbit Woman. Your story shall be told to her children and all their descendants.” The rabbit looked up at her and seemed to say, “Yes, White Horse Woman, you are kind and gentle. You were patient.”



White Horse Woman stood up and began to walk away. She then whispered softly, "Be safe, White Rabbit, you have been my true friend. I shall not forget you."

White Horse Woman did not turn around. She knew that White Rabbit was no longer sitting there, but it had heard her, just as the Great Spirit did.

Booklets available in the Level IV sequence are listed below. Numbers refer to the Planned Sequence of use in the *Teacher's Manual*. Materials developed by these tribes and others in the Northwest are included in the Levels I, II and III sequences.

1. *Warm Springs Animal Stories*
The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs
Reservation of Oregon
2. *Snail Women at Sq³a'le*
The Suquamish Tribe of the Port Madison
Reservation
3. *Blue Jay – Star Child/Basket Woman*
Muckleshoot Tribe
4. *Assiniboine Woman Making Grease*
Assiniboine Tribe of the Fort Peck Reservation
5. *Coyote*
The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs
Reservation of Oregon
6. *How the Summer Season Came*
Assiniboine Tribe of the Fort Belknap
Reservation
7. *Little Weasel's Dream*
Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead
Reservation
8. *Fort Hall Stories*
Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall
Reservation
9. *The Bear Teepee*
Northern Cheyenne Tribe
10. *Sioux Stories and Legends*
Sioux Tribe of the Fort Peck Reservation
11. *Kootenai Stories*
Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead
Reservation
12. *Chief Mountain's Medicine*
Gros Ventre Tribe from the Fort Belknap
Reservation
13. *Coyote the Trickster*
Burns Paiute Reservation
14. *Running Free*
Shoalwater Bay
15. *Salish Coyote Stories*
Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead
Reservation
16. *Coyote and the Cowboys*
Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall
Reservation
17. *Napi's Journey*
Blackfeet Tribe
18. *Warm Springs Stories*
The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs
Reservation of Oregon
19. *Teepee Making*
Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead
Reservation
20. *Baskets and Canoes*
Skokomish Tribe
21. *Warrior People*
Blackfeet Tribe



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