

To Rain Maker he presented the greatest gift of all, a hunting knife, like no one had ever seen before. Its handle was intricately designed in silver and inlaid with the turquoise stones that only a great man or a chief was allowed to have. Its steel blade was sharper than any of the knives the warriors carried.

Rain Maker lit his beautiful, carved, soapstone pipe and after raising his arms to the four winds and praying to the Great Spirit, they smoked in peace. Happiness was upon the village.

Before the brave could call out his warning, his blood spilled on the river bank. The Hurons, silent, powerful swimmers that they are surrounded the Mohawk camp. A small war party crept in from the forest and untethered the horses. A bloodthirsty war cry echoed through the camp. The Mohawks, just before dawn, were caught unaware. Laughing Water grabbed the cradle board, a gourd of water and a bag of corn and thrust it in Running Bear's hands. Pressing her fingers to his lips she motioned for him to follow her.

Running Bear, already with his quiver full of arrows and his bow across his shoulder, grabbed Morning Star and they silently followed their mother. The baby, in fear of all the noise, began to wail. Running Bear pressed the baby's nose together and silenced it.

His father and Comes So Far were fighting side by side. As a ferocious Huron grabbed his mother, Running Bear saw her raise a tomahawk and bring it down across his shoulder. Screams of terror filled the grey skies. The corn field was suddenly ablaze. Fire seemed to be all around. Running Bear pulled Morning Star into a bush near the lodge. He knew he had to get them to safety. Praying to the Great Spirit and running with all his might,

Running Bear brought his sisters to safety.

He pulled the shrub aside, and into the old oak tree took his charges. Not a ray of light filtered in. It was cool and dry. The cries of the dead and dying filled them with pain.

Morning Star, silent tears streaming down her face cuddled the new, small baby in her arms. She would not cry out. She was a daughter of the Mohawks.

When the sounds of battle had died away, Running Bear carefully parted the bushes. Instructing Morning Star not to leave the hide-a-way till he returned for her, he crept out, moving slowly and silently back toward the camp. Never had such carnage assailed his eyes. He knew his boyhood had gone. Pain and frustration cut through him like a knife.

Many brave warriors had died defending their village. The death song was being sung all through the camp. Come So Far was gone to the Great Spirit, his wife captured by the Hurons. Black Thunder was singing his death song. Half of his scalp had been hacked away. He had many wounds. Rain Maker went through the camp, shaking his rattles and calling on the Great Spirit, driving the evil spirits from the village of the Mohawks. Their corn fields were just smoldering ashes. Running Bear and Many Horses locked arms and looked deep into each other's eyes. They would begin again, Warriors of the Mighty Mohawk nation.

White Eagle held Laughing Water in his arms. She was badly wounded. Running Bear brought the healing herbs to his father. White Eagle kept vigil for many moons over his woman. Slowly Laughing Water regained her strength. Her body healed, but her eyes never laughed again.

Morning Star grew in strength and beauty. The horror of the Huron raid never

left her. Her baby sister, too frail and weak, died that winter. Her name was Little Bird, never to be spoken of again. Her grandmother Shining Moon, had died in the raid. Much sadness was in the hearts of this mighty nation.

Many Horses and Running Bear grew strong and tall and became great warriors. In their stories of battle they had counted coup many times. They took out many war parties. They avenged the Mohawks many times over for the deed done to them, by the hands of the bloodthirsty Hurons. Their great dugout canoes silently moved through the river many times during the next few years.

Many Horses became big in brave deeds, among his nation. He had a large herd of horses. When he came to ask White Eagle for Morning Star, he brought with him seven horses. These horses he had captured and broke. One was a black and white pinto, a war pony. Many gifts were sent to the lodge of White Eagle and Laughing Water.

Morning Star stepped out of the lodge into the bright morning sun. Holding the most beautiful stallion Morning Star had ever seen, was Many Horses.

Many Horses, looking deep into her eyes said, "this appaloosa is my gift to you, Daughter of the Mohawks."

Many Horses lifted his bride onto the stallion. Morning Star sat proud. She knew the whole village was watching. The blue and red beads on her white doeskin dress glittered. Her moccasins, made from the same white doeskin, had small fringes around them. The beading of a beautiful star was intricately done on the top. Many Horse's heart beat loud and strong in his chest. Never had he seen anything so beautiful as his wife, woman of the Mohawks, Morning Star.

A Seneca Indian Praise by Twylah Nitsch (Yeh-Wen-Node)

Oh Great Spirit, We Awake
To another sun
Grateful for the gifts bestowed
Granted one by one —
Grateful for the greatest gift
The precious breath of life;
Grateful for abilities
That guide us day and night.

As we walk our chosen paths
Of lessons we must learn —
Spiritual peace and happiness
Rewards of life we earn.
Thank you for your Spiritual Strength
And for our thoughts to praise;
Thank you for your infinite Love
That guides us through these days.