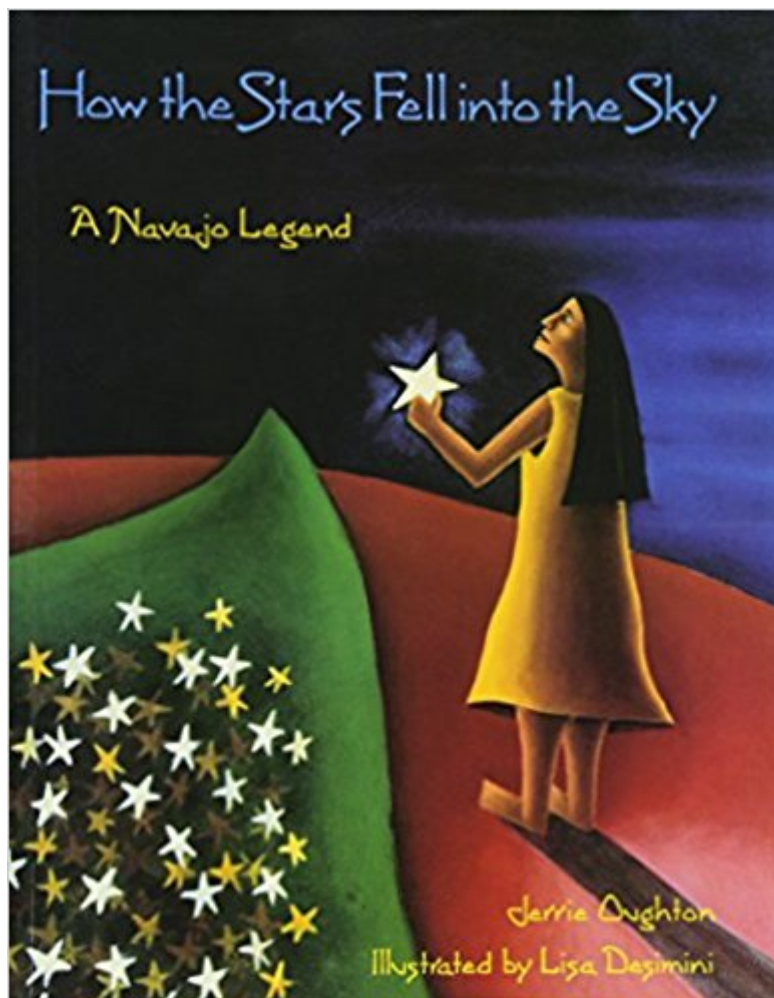




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How The Stars Fell Into The Sky: A Navajo Legend (Sandpiper Houghton Mifflin Books)



Synopsis

This retelling of a Navajo folktale explains how First Woman tried to write the laws of the land using stars in the sky, only to be thwarted by the trickster Coyote.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 780L (What's this?)

Series: Sandpiper Houghton Mifflin Books

Paperback: 32 pages

Publisher: HMH Books for Young Readers; Sandpiper Houghton Mifflin Books edition (March 3, 1996)

Language: English

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Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 32 customer reviews

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Age Range: 4 - 7 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

Customer Reviews

According to the Navajos, the jumble of stars in the night sky reflects the disorders and confusion of life itself. In this lyrical retelling Oughton--in her first children's book--paints a picture of calm deliberation as, at the beginning of the world, First Woman determines to write the laws in the sky for all to see. So she positions her jewelry "crafting her careful mosaic on the blackberry cloth of night." Coyote offers to help with this important task but becomes impatient and sends a cascade of stars hurtling into the night, creating chaos for all time. Oughton's text echoes First Woman's self-confidence and is sprinkled throughout with deft turns of phrase. Desimini's somber yet luminous art evokes nature's solemn beauty as it captures the silent mystery of the "rim of night." Her solid, slightly static figures firmly place this fantasy-like world of the desert in reality. Ages 4-8. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Kindergarten-Grade 3-- At the end of the first day, First Woman tries to convince First Man that "The people need to know the laws." Impatiently, he tells her to write them in the sky. She takes a blanket full of her jewels (stars) and with infinite patience begins "designing her pattern so all could read it." Coyote asks to help, but when he sees the magnitude of the task he grumbles, then flings the remaining stars into the night sky, forever obscuring the pattern. As the second day dawns, the people go about their lives, ". . . never knowing the reason for the confusion that would always dwell among them." This Navajo tale acknowledges the common human feeling that there IS a message in the stars--the laws of a clear and orderly universe--if it could be read. It absolves humans of guilt (Coyote did it) and provides a First Woman who is a strong, positive, and beneficent figure. The concise and graceful text is matched with illustrations in a primitive but dramatic vein, marked by simplified shapes, saturated matte colors, and desert-stark composition. The claret-sandstone earth and deep lapis sky, meeting at a curved horizon, dominate most pages; the white of eyes and starlight punctuate the design. This handsome book might well fit into a myth or Native American collection, but it can stand on its own timely and attractive merits as well.- Patricia Dooley, Univ. of Washington Extension, SeattleCopyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc.

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I actually purchased this book because I loved the cover art, and the title, "How the Stars Fell into the Sky," intrigued me. The image of the Navajo woman, star in hand, gazing up thoughtfully into the dark, "new" sky really captured and held my attention. I wanted to read this book! :) I also felt that it would be worth sharing and discussing with my students. The illustrations are amazing; they feel warm, soft, and alive--not harsh or garish at all. Each image underscores the emotions and actions of this story of First Woman who wants to communicate laws to her people---present and future--in such away as the laws would always be accessible and always be remembered. She carefully places stars in certain patterns until the impatient, meddling Coyote offers to help--which eventually brings the woman grief and human beings confusion. What's interesting about this story is the dynamic comparison / contrast that occurs with the main characters: First Man, First Woman, and Coyote. The First Man and the Coyote (Man and animal) are both extremely impatient to be getting onto other here and now "Life" activities while the First Woman considers the future, believing that writing the laws is necessary. Writing the laws requires time and careful efforts. It is a sacred duty she takes seriously. Thus, in this tale, the woman is the respectable, responsible, beyond-the-moment person and the dedicated law giver. (Some world legends and myths tend to

place women in subservient roles and / or vilify them.) Her only mistake is trusting the Coyote to help her. [Perhaps, this is the warning embedded in the story: beware of "animal instincts," "urges," and haste because they can cause unhappiness, discord, and disorder.] "How the Stars Fell into the Sky" contains the following collection of universal themes that can be examined and discussed in group / class settings: First Woman is compelled to write the laws of her people. (Her mission, her divine calling) First Woman cares for her people and their welfare. (Identification with a Group) Coyote enters the scene (Animals with human characteristic--talents and flaws.) First Woman trusts the Coyote at first. (Innocence) First Woman witnesses the Coyote's tragic deed. (Experience) First Woman respects the world, nature, and all its cycles (Acceptance) Humanity has often looked to the heavens / stars for guidance. Stars are jewels of the sky trust / distrust impatience and haste darkness and light organization; chaos (confusion)

I teach preschool. I luv this story for my daughter who was in kindergarten when I bought this story.

Very entertaining!

I like it.

Honestly, this is the kind of book I would have read once as a child and then never looked at again. But my daughter loves it and asks for it every night at bed time. I do like the color and style of the pictures. I do like that the vocab steps it up a bit so that my child asks what a word means and thus learns a bit when I read to her.

I had to buy this for my sons K12 curriculum and it was actually a really neat story. We had never read it before, but we enjoyed it. It's something I can see us reading again and most likely passing on to others.

Exactly what I was looking for in a bilingual book!

Excellent book...can make many connections to today.

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