

# The Turtle Who Went to War

The Indian Reading Series



Level III Book 19

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THE INDIAN READING SERIES:  
Stories and Legends of the Northwest

## The Turtle Who Went to War

Level III Book 19

A Sioux Story

As told by Lavina Perry

Illustrated by Lisa Ventura

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Developed by the Pacific Northwest Indian Reading and Language Development Program  
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 710 Southwest Second Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97204

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This publication is not printed at the expense of the Federal Government.

Published by Educational Systems, Inc., 2360 Southwest 170th Street, Beaverton, Oregon 97005

Printed and bound in the United States of America

**This Sioux story tells how once, long ago, the Turtles decided to go on a warpath against the Indians. The Indians had been greedy and had killed too many Turtles to eat, which made the Turtle chief very angry. So, the Turtles went on a warpath and killed the Indian chief.**

There once was a large camp of Water Turtles.  
One day, the chief of the Turtles  
sent around the pipe  
to all the friendly tribes—  
the Grasshoppers, Butterflies, Frogs,  
Snakes and Rabbits.

The chiefs smoked the pipe.

Then they sent their young men  
to the Turtle chief, who spoke to them.

“There are many Indians camped nearby,” he said.

“Let’s go on the warpath and kill their chief.”

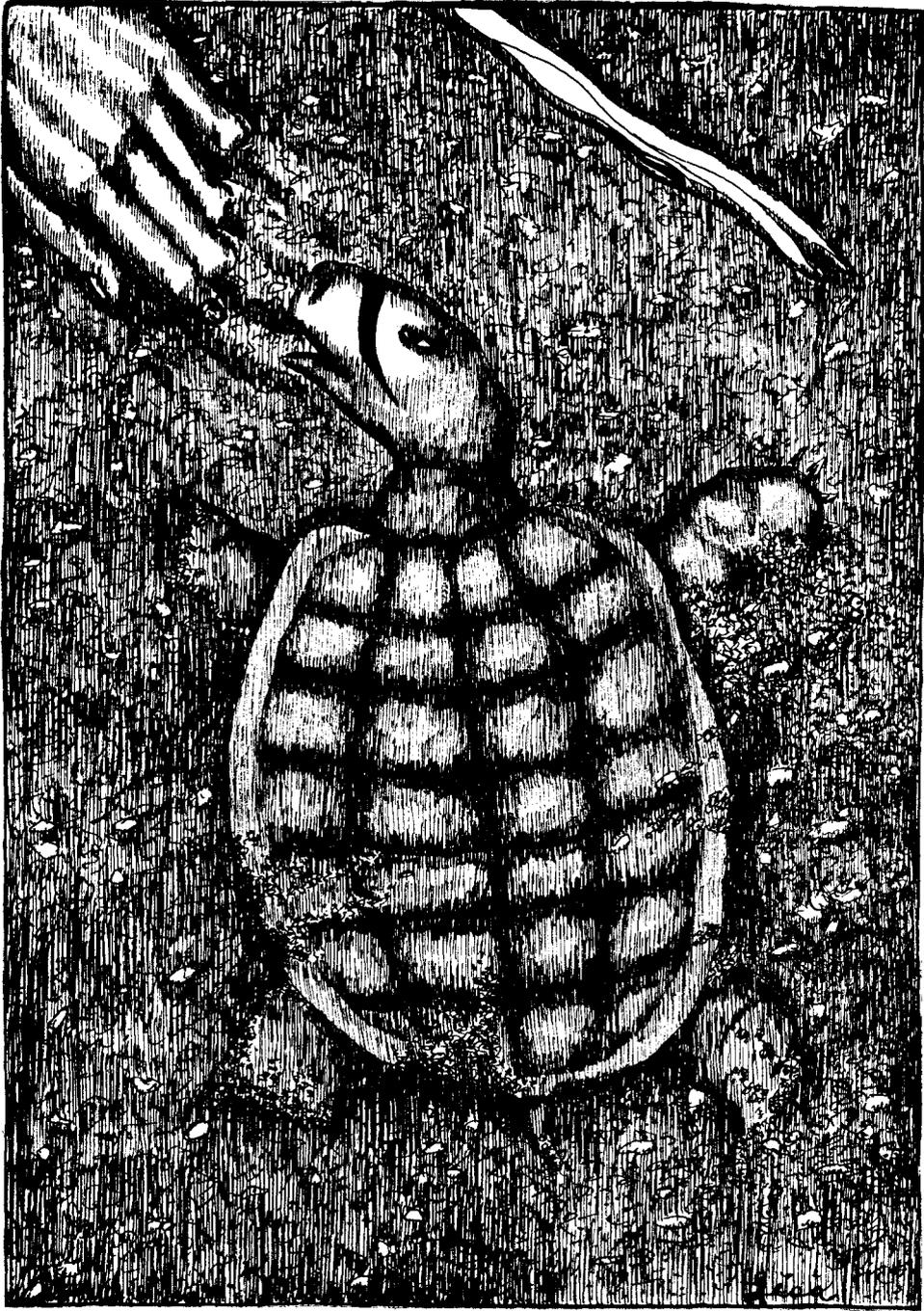
They all said they would go on the warpath.



The warriors walked  
    around the inside of the camp circle  
    and went out the opening to the east.  
Then they walked around the outside of the camp  
    and started off, carrying their war bonnets  
    and war clothes.  
They walked all night.  
Just before the sun came up,  
    they reached the Indian camp.  
The warriors attacked.  
The Turtle chief went  
    into the Indian chief's lodge.  
The Turtle took the Indian by the throat  
    and choked him until he was dead.  
He bit off the scalp  
    and slipped under the dead chief's bed.



Later that morning,  
the Indians found their dead chief.  
A crier went through the camp,  
telling the people to watch out for enemies.  
Later, someone moved the chief's bed  
and saw a spot of fresh earth under it.  
Pushing a stick into the earth,  
he felt the Turtle.  
Then the Indians knew that the Turtle  
had killed their chief.



The people wondered what they should do  
with the Turtle.

“Put him in the fire,” said one man.

“No,” said another, “we can’t burn him.  
His shell is too hard.  
Let’s hang him.”

“No, let’s cut off his head,” said another.

“No,” said a fourth man, “let’s drown him.”  
Everyone thought that was the best way.



The next afternoon, the Indians took the Turtle  
to a pond.

A crowd of people followed,  
for they wanted to see him killed.

A man was chosen to drown the Turtle.

The man was painted with war paint.

Carrying the Turtle, he waded out to the center  
of the pond.

The Turtle shook and acted  
like he was very frightened.

But as the man started to put him into the water,  
the Turtle turned his head and bit him!

The man jumped and fell into the water.

The Turtle drowned the Indian  
and bit off his scalp.



When the man didn't come to the top of the water,  
the people didn't know what to do.  
They were afraid to go into the water,  
so they left.  
The Turtle stayed in the pond until night came.  
Then he went back to the Indian camp  
and hunted until he found the chief's scalp.



The Turtle was glad that he had taken  
the two scalps by himself.  
He started home.





### JEROME FOURSTAR

Jerome Fourstar is an Assiniboine Indian who was born and raised on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation in Montana. He attended elementary school in Frazer, Montana, and received his G.E.D. from Glasgow High School. He served in the Montana National Guard and for many years worked as a carpenter and supervisor of electrical, plumbing and construction work. After taking college coursework in bilingual education, he served as a bilingual teacher at Wolf Point (Montana) High School. For the past five years he has taught Indian culture and religion in the Wolf Point public schools. He has served as a cultural and spiritual leader for both on-reservation and urban Indian groups and for Morning Star, Inc., which trains rehabilitated alcoholics. He also taught youth and served as a spiritual and cultural leader at an ecumenical conference of medicine men in Morley, Alberta, and each summer he is director of a youth camp in Billings.



### EUNICE BIRTHMARK

Eunice Birthmark is a Sioux Indian who was raised on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation in Montana. She spends much of her time teaching Indian singing, dancing and culture, and serves on the Plains Area Curriculum Development Committee for the Pacific Northwest Indian Program. For three years she also worked as a bilingual teacher in Brockton Public School, in Poplar, Montana.



### LAVINA PERRY

Lavina Perry, who told the story *The Turtle Who Went to War*, is a Sioux Indian. She has lived most of her life on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation in Montana and spends much of her time sewing and beading. She is married and lives in Poplar.

Booklets available in the Level III 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 and II sequences.

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|--|---|
| 1 <i>Story of the Seasons</i><br>The Confederated Tribes of the<br>Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon  | 11 <i>How the Milky Way Got into the Sky</i><br>The Confederated Tribes of the<br>Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon  |
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| 7 <i>How the Morning and Evening Stars<br/>Came to Be</i><br>Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes of the<br>Fort Peck Reservation                            | 17 <i>The Man Who Loved Shell Money</i><br>Skokomish Tribe  |
| 8 <i>Raccoon's Black Eyes and Ringed Tail</i><br>Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of the<br>Fort Hall Reservation   | 18 <i>Old Man Napi</i><br>Blackfeet Tribe   |
| 9 <i>Coyote and Old Lady</i><br>Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of the<br>Fort Hall Reservation  | 19 <i>The Turtle Who Went to War</i><br>Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes of the<br>Fort Peck Reservation  |
| 10 <i>Coyote and Trout</i><br>Kootenai Cultural Committee of<br>The Confederated Salish and<br>Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead<br>Reservation        | 20 <i>Coyote and the Mean Mountain Sheep</i><br>Salish Cultural Committee of<br>The Confederated Salish and<br>Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead<br>Reservation |

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