**An Inuit Creation Story**

*This story is about Sedna, the Inuit goddess of the sea.  The Inuit (Eskimos) depend on the sea for food, so no god or goddess is more important to them.*

At the beginning of the world there were giants.

They lived on the land and ate the fruits of the land. One year, as the days began to get shorter and colder, a baby girl was born to two of the giants. They named her Sedna.

Day by day, as the sun became weaker and smaller, Sedna grew stronger and bigger. She grew and grew very quickly until, in no time at all, she was huge. Soon she was bigger than her giant parents.

The bigger she got the more she ate and the more she needed to eat, but there were not enough plants on the land to satisfy her hunger. One night, ravenously hungry, she began to gnaw her parents legs.

‘Owww!’ they cried, ‘that's enough of that.’ With a great struggle they bundled Sedna up in a blanket and carried her to their canoe. It was dark but they paddled out to sea in the light of a hazy moon. When they reached the middle of the ocean, they pushed Sedna overboard into the icy waters.

And that, they thought, was that. They started to paddle back towards the land, shivering for the cold and also for shame at what they had done to their own daughter. Yet before they had gone far, the canoe stopped - no matter how fast they paddled, the canoe would not move forward. To their horror they saw two hands, Sedna's hands, reaching out of the water to grip the canoe and then to rock it from side to side.

The giants felt the boat shaking. Soon they would be tossed into the ocean they would surely drown, unless they did something quickly.

Simply to save themselves, they pulled out sharp knives and chopped off Sedna's fingers. One by one the fingers splashed into the sea and, as they sank, they changed into swimming creatures. One became a whale, one a seal, another a walrus, another a salmon. The fingers changed into all the creatures of the seas.

As for Sedna, she drifted through new shoals of fish to the bottom off the ocean. There the fishes built her an underwater tent. Above her, the cold waters formed a crust of ice and sealed Sedna in her wintry, watery world. She still lives there, and whenever the Inuit are short of food, they call on Sedna and she provides it, even in the depths of winter.

***TSIMSHIAN*(Pacific Northwest Coast) (copyrighted)**

**RAVEN & NOO HALIDZOKS (MOTHER EARTH)**Raven burst from the mountains. He stretched out his wings. West Wind swooped in and lifted him off his rocky perch.  Soon he had mastered how to fly.  One day as he was flying up the coast he spied a woman standing on the land near the great waters [Pacific Ocean].  He flew down, and called, "Woman, who are you?" "I am Noo Halidzoks [Mother Earth]," she replied. "I have been waiting for you, there is much to do."  Raven looked at her a little skeptically, "Work, you want me to work? I've been entombed in the mountains for so long, I just want to fly free."  The woman raised her hand, and immediately one of Raven's wings folded, she raised her other hand, and his other wing folded, sending him crashing to the ground, where he squawked in a most indignant manner.

"Take this basket of water", she said. "I haven't time to create the rivers, ponds, lakes and streams. You can do it much faster."  Soon, Raven returned with many stories about his adventures. "Take these seeds," she said, placing another basket in his beak, and fly north; stay near where the land meets the water, and scatter the seeds, take them a little inland as well." Raven sped away to do as he was asked.  Soon giant fir trees and many other kinds of vegetation began their travels towards the sun.

Noo Halidzoks had always understood the Air, Fire and Water were already part of her heart and were the strongest of everything in her world. She then created the second most powerful of her children:  the standing people [trees], plants, grasses and vegetables; she then created her third most powerful children: those that walk on four legs, those that swim, those that crawl and those that fly. Much time had passed, and Noo Halidzoks was beginning to slow down, she was quite aged and very tired from all her work.  She stood talking with Raven one day, who told her she had done a good job, "Of course, without me," he crowed, "it never would have happened."  Noo Halidzoks just sighed, "it would have happened a lot sooner, if you had not gotten into so much trouble."  Raven looked a little chastened.

Noo Halidzoks had one task left. She laid wood on the ground, and lit it on fire; west wind came in an fanned the fire until it was blazing.  She then boiled some water and into it put some red things, at the end of day one, she created a red male and female; on day two she mixed together some yellow things, and created a yellow male and female; on day three she mixed black things and created a black female and male and one day four she mixed white things and created a white female and male.  She looked at how wonderfully the four colours went together, and spoke a long time to her children about their place in the world, how they were the weakest of all she created because they would need everything to live.  She gave them many teachings about looking after her, and then sent them away to populate: red children to the west, black children to the wouth, white children to the north and yellow children to the east. The story continues...........

**Plains Natives Creation Myth**

Long ago, the earth was just a big island, floating in a bigger ocean. The earth was hanging from four cords coming down from the sky, which was made of solid rock. It was dark all the time and the animals couldn't see where they were going, so they got the sun and set it in a track to go over the island every day, from east to west, as it does now.

Now there were days and there were nights. God told the animals and plants to all stay awake for seven days and seven nights. But most of the animals and plants couldn't do it. They fell asleep. God rewarded the animals who stayed awake and let them see in the dark, so they could go around all night - these were the owls and the panthers.

And God rewarded the plants that had stayed awake, and let them keep their leaves all year - these were the pine trees and laurels and cedars. God told the other trees that they would have to lose their leaves every winter.

Last came people, after all this. But once there were a few people, they had too many children and there were too many people. So it was decided that each woman would have only one child a year.

When the world gets old and worn-out, the people will all die and the cords that hold the earth up will break and let the earth sink down into the ocean, and it will all be water again.

**Iroquois Creation Myth**

Long before the world was created there was an island, floating in the sky, upon which the Sky People lived. They lived quietly and happily. No one ever died or was born or experienced sadness. However one day one of the Sky Women realized she was going to give birth to twins. She told her husband, who flew into a rage. In the center of the island there was a tree which gave light to the entire island since the sun hadn't been created yet. He tore up this tree, creating a huge hole in the middle of the island. Curiously, the woman peered into the hole. Far below she could see the waters that covered the earth. At that moment her husband pushed her. She fell through the hole, tumbling towards the waters below.

Water animals already existed on the earth, so far below the floating island two birds saw the Sky Woman fall. Just before she reached the waters they caught her on their backs and brought her to the other animals. Determined to help the woman they dove into the water to get mud from the bottom of the seas. One after another the animals tried and failed. Finally, Little Toad tried and when he reappeared his mouth was full of mud. The animals took it and spread it on the back of Big Turtle. The mud began to grow and grow and grow until it became the size of North America.

Then the woman stepped onto the land. She sprinkled dust into the air and created stars. Then she created the moon and sun.

The Sky Woman gave birth to twin sons. She named one Sapling. He grew to be kind and gentle. She named the other Flint and his heart was as cold as his name. They grew quickly and began filling the earth with their creations.

Sapling created what is good. He made animals that are useful to humans. He made rivers that went two ways and into these he put fish without bones. He made plants that people could eat easily. If he was able to do all the work himself there would be no suffering.

Flint destroyed much of Sapling's work and created all that is bad. He made the rivers flow only in one direction. He put bones in fish and thorns on berry bushes. He created winter, but Sapling gave it life so that it could move to give way to Spring. He created monsters which his brother drove beneath the Earth.

Eventually Sapling and Flint decided to fight till one conquered the other. Neither was able to win at first, but finally Flint was beaten. Because he was a god Flint could not die, so he was forced to live on Big Turtle's back. Occasionally his anger is felt in the form of a volcano.

The Iroquois people hold a great respect for all animals. This is mirrored in their creation myth by the role the animals play. Without the animals' help the Sky Woman may have sunk to the bottom of the sea and earth may not have been created.

Plateau Natives: Creation of the Animal People (Okanogan Creation myth)

The earth was once a human being: Old One made her out of a woman. "You will the mother of all people," he said. Earth is alive yet, but she has been changed. The soil is her flesh, the rocks are her bones, the wind is her breath, trees and grass are her hair. She lives spread out, and we live on her. When she moves, we have an earthquake.

After taking the woman and changing her to earth, Old One gathered some of her flesh and rolled it into balls, as people do with mud or clay. He made the first group of these balls into the ancients, the beings of the early world. The ancients were people, yet also animals. In form some looked human while some walked on all fours like animals. Some could fly like birds; others could swim like fishes. All had the gift of speech, as well as greater powers and cunning than either animals or people. But deer were never among the ancients; they were always animals, even as they are today.

Besides the ancients, real people and real animals lived on the earth at that time. Old One made the people out of the last balls of mud he took from the earth. He rolled them over and over, shaped them like Indians, and blew on them to bring them alive. They were so ignorant that they were the most helpless of all the creatures Old One had made. Old One made people and animals into males and females so that they might breed and multiply. Thus all living things came from the earth. When we look around, we see part of our mother everywhere.

The difficulty with the early world was that most of the ancients were selfish and some were monsters, and there was much trouble among them. They were also very stupid in some ways. Though they knew they had to hunt in order to live, they did not know which creatures were deer and which were people, and sometimes they ate people by mistake.

At last Old One said, "There will soon be no people if I let things go on like this." So he sent Coyote to kill all the monsters and other evil beings among the ancients and teach the Indians how to do things. And Coyote began to travel on the earth, teaching the Indians, making life easier and better for them, and performing many wonderful deeds.

Creation Myth: An Algonquin Story (Beothuck)

 The great Earth Mother had two sons, Glooskap and Malsum. Glooskap was good, wise, and creative; Malsum was evil, selfish, and destructive.

When their mother died, Glooskap went to work creating plants, animals, and humans from her body. Malsum, in contrast, made poisonous plants and snakes.

As Glooskap continued to create wonderful things, Malsum grew tired of his good brother and plotted to kill him. In jest, Malsum bragged that he was invincible, although there was one thing that could kill him: the roots of the fern plant. He badgered Glooskap for days to find the good brother's vulnerability.

Finally, as Glooskap could tell no lies, he confided that he could be killed only by an owl feather. Knowing this, Malsum made a dart from an owl feather and killed Glooskap.

The power of good is so strong, however; that Glooskap rose from the dead, ready to avenge himself. Alive again, Glooskap also knew that Malsum would continue to plot against him.

Glooskap realized that he had no choice but to destroy Malsum in order that good would survive and his creatures would continue to live. So he went to a stream and attracted his evil brother by loudly saying that a certain flowering reed could also kill him.

Glooskap then pulled a fern plant out by the roots and flung it at Malsum, who fell to the ground dead. Malsum's spirit went underground and be-came a wicked wolf-spirit that still occasionally torments humans and animals, but fears the light of day.