

SKY WOMAN

An Iroquois Tale of Creation



The Core Story

Long ago, there were no lands, only an endless ocean stretching in all directions flourishing with various sea creatures. Up above, in a realm of light and harmony was the Sky World, a place filled with powerful beings who lived in peace. At the heart of this celestial realm stood a grand Tree called the Tree of Life. Its vast branches laden with blossoms and fruits stretched towards heaven while its roots were deeply entwined in the sacred ground.



One day, a pregnant woman in the Sky World craved a special tea made from the roots of the Tree of Life. Her husband, wanting to fulfil her wish, began digging around the roots. As he dug, the ground gave way, creating a hole in the Sky. The woman approached the edge to look, some say she lost her balance, while others think she jumped to fulfil her destiny. As the woman fell from the hole in the sky she came to be known as Sky Woman.

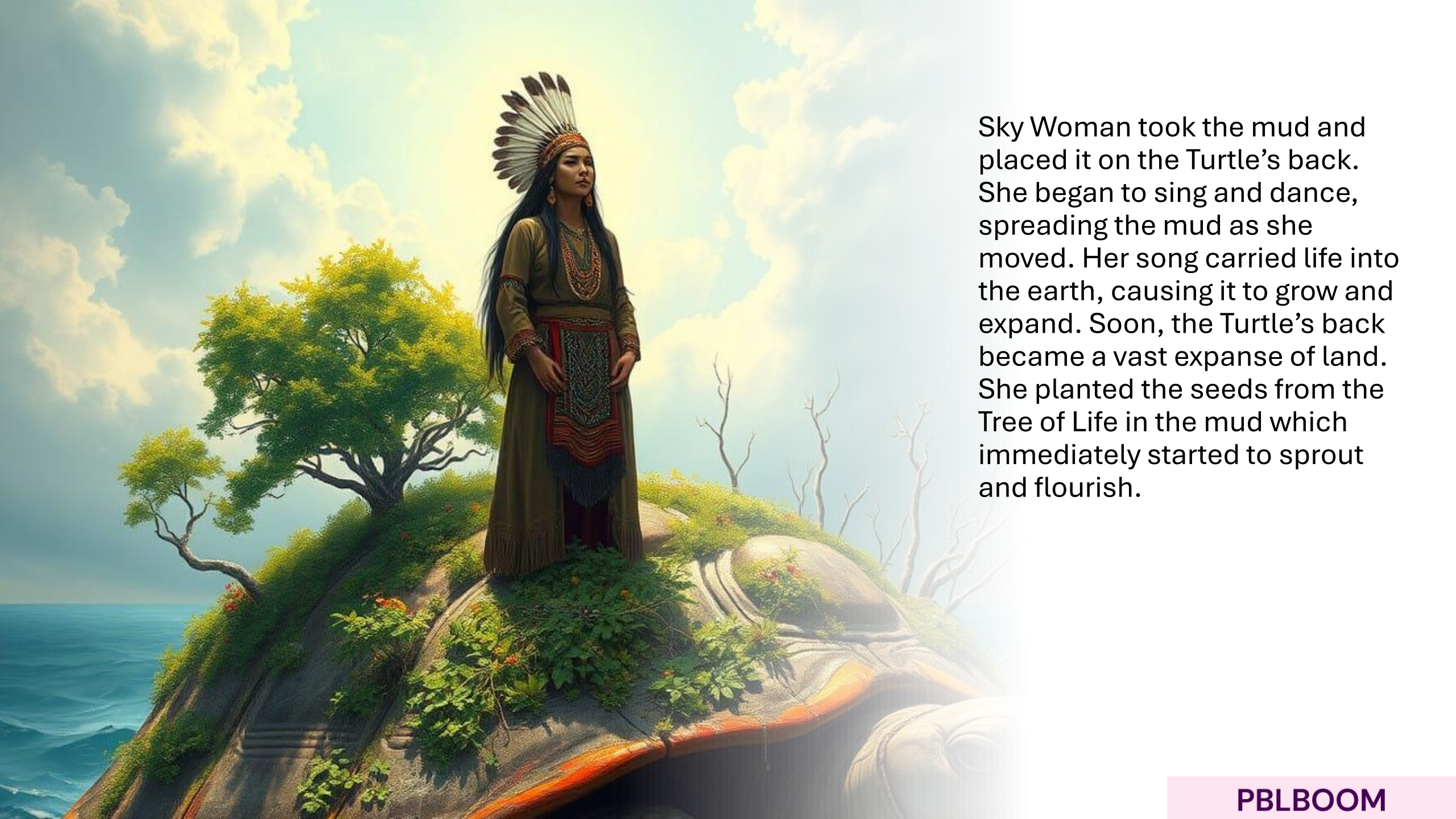




As she fell, she managed to grab a handful of seeds from the Tree of Life. A flock of birds soaring through the skies saw her descent and rushed to help. They flew beneath her, forming a living blanket to carry her back to the Sky World. But she was heavy, and they couldn't lift her back to the Sky World. So, they gently lowered her toward the water below where the sea creatures lived. But there were no solid grounds to hold Sky Woman.

Sea creatures were puzzling over how to help the Sky Woman when a great Turtle surfaced and offered his back as a place for the Sky Woman to rest. Sky Woman while grateful, informed the sea creatures that she could not survive without mud. Recognizing her need, many animals of the ocean decided to help. One by one, they dove deep into the waters in search of mud from the ocean floor. Many tried and failed, but to everyone's surprise, a very small but determined muskrat surfaced with some dirt.





Sky Woman took the mud and placed it on the Turtle's back. She began to sing and dance, spreading the mud as she moved. Her song carried life into the earth, causing it to grow and expand. Soon, the Turtle's back became a vast expanse of land. She planted the seeds from the Tree of Life in the mud which immediately started to sprout and flourish.



In time, Sky Woman gave birth to a daughter. Together they roamed the Earth, nourishing the soil and tending the plants and animals. The daughter grew into a beautiful and wise young woman who, one day, travelled west and became the bride of the West Wind. Soon she was pregnant with twins.



The first twin, Sapling, was born in the usual way. But the second twin, Flint, chose to be born through his mother's armpit. This unusual birth killed their mother. Stricken with grief, the twins buried her. From her head grew corn, beans, and squash—known as the Three Sisters, the staple foods of life. From her heart grew sacred tobacco, a gift for communication with the Creator. From her feet sprouted wild strawberries, a symbol of love and connection. Sky Woman's daughter became known as Mother Earth, the provider and sustainer of all life.

The twins grew up to shape the world. Sapling, thoughtful and deliberate, created things that brought order and harmony, while the Flint, creative and unconventional, added elements of challenge and chaos. Together, they balanced the natural world, creating everything we know today, including humans.

To this day, Mother Earth supports all living beings, and Grandmother Moon's gentle presence reminds us of the bond between the Earth and the Sky. The legacy of the Sky World and the Tree of Life lives on, in every seed, in every wave, and every breath of wind.



Let's Explore



Nature's Balance and Human Responsibility

- How do you think human actions impact the delicate balance of ecosystems? Can you give examples of both positive and negative impacts?
- Why do you think nature thrives on diversity, and what can humans learn from this?

Interdependence



- What are some examples of mutual relationships in nature (e.g., pollinators and plants), and how can they inspire human practices?
- How do natural resources like water, air, and soil connect every living being on Earth? What would happen if one of these elements was depleted?

Sustainability and Harmony

- Can you identify practices in your daily life that disrupt or support harmony with nature? What can you change?
- Why is it important to consider future generations when making decisions about using natural resources?
- How can traditional or indigenous knowledge systems teach us about living in harmony with nature?