



How Eagle Became the Leader of All the Birds

Years ago, birds were much like people. They walked around and they talked just like humans. In addition, birds were special because they could fly. However, the birds had a problem. Things did not always run smoothly for them because no one was in charge.

The native people of the land did not have this problem. The native people had their parents as leaders and their parents had their parents before them. They also had a chief and holy men and women as leaders. The native people each had someone to follow and the birds admired them greatly.

One day, the birds decided to hold a council meeting. They chose Owl to lead the meeting because he was the wisest of birds. The old Owl got up in front of all the birds and thanked them for coming to the meeting. He talked about how tough it was not to have a leader and suggested that it was time to choose a leader among the birds of the world. All of the other birds agreed and started discussing different potential leaders. Finally, they chose two birds that they thought could be leaders, Hawk and Eagle. Owl announced that these were both very fine birds. However, they still needed to determine who would be the best leader between the two of them. One of the birds spoke up and suggested a contest of skill to determine who would be the best leader.

“All right, a contest it is!” yelled the Owl. “Both Hawk and Owl shall prove themselves in flight.” Owl went on, “The one that can fly the highest will be our leader. Eagle and Hawk, you both have five days to prepare for the contest. In five days, we will hold the contest to determine who will be our leader.”

After the meeting broke up, the two birds began preparing themselves, just as Owl had suggested. They both knew they not only had to be physically fit, but also mentally fit to be the leader of the birds.

Soon, the day of the contest arrived. Both contestants were ready. Hawk was chosen to be first and all of the birds gathered around him. Up he flew, higher and higher until he was almost out of sight. Soon, Hawk began to fly in circles



as he descended to the earth. Finally, he landed in front of the judges, and the crowd cheered.

Next, it was Eagle's turn. Off flew Eagle to try to beat the height of Hawk. Up he flew, higher and higher, until he was almost out of sight. Finally Eagle was completely out of sight. He came back into view as he circled and descended back to earth. After a long time, he landed in front of the judges and the crowd cheered. "Well, well," said the old Owl. "That was quite a flight, and for showing us your mastery of flight, you are now our leader." Owl then added, "As for you Hawk, you are still very important to us, so do not feel left out." From that day on, Eagle became a great leader for the birds. He is also used in Indian ceremonies, rituals and gatherings. In later years, he was chosen to be the National Bird of the United States of America.