

The First Paddle
1st Book
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The late spring sun laid across the lake, arching at its peak early in the afternoon. Grandmother invites the young one for a canoe paddle to the other side of the lake. After many quiet minutes of paddling across the vast lake, Grandmother chimes in enthusiastically, "Let's have a race! Let's see if we can make this thing soar to the shore!"

As they pick up the pace and finally reach the shore and a loud crash of thunder rolls across the lake, they turn to see a massive bank of storm clouds bearing down on them. "It's time to seek protection from the elements, young one. Follow me quickly, please." As the two curl themselves under a rock formation that offers shelter from the storm, the heavens open up and the rains pour down around them. "Grandmother, why did you not see the storm coming?" "Oh, I noticed when we were much too far across the lake to turn back." "Why didn't you tell me?" asks the young one.

There is a moment of silence between them before Grandmother responds. "I decided to make it a fun, memorable experience of a race to the shore rather than fill you with fear. I made a better choice, wouldn't you say? That is what life is full of... opportunities to make better choices every day." Thunder crashes overhead startling them. As if to form a ring of protection, fairy folks briefly encircle them...appearing and disappearing before the young one's eyes. In a blink, they are gone.

"Grandmother, how can you remain so calm? Aren't you afraid?" "No, young one. I am full of trust, faith and gratitude. Just a few of the characteristics I pray you embody as you walk gently on Mother Earth." "What is faith?" asks the young one. "It is a belief in a higher power, my child." "Where do I find a higher power, Grandmother ?" "That is a personal choice all people must make for themselves. I choose to find my connection through nature. Whatever higher power you choose, as long as it is based in love, I encourage it."

Another close boom of thunder explodes while lightning crashes nearby. "Grandmother, please tell me a story about where to find a higher power so I may pretend the storm is not upon us." "As you wish, young one."

"There is a legend, from long ago, that speaks of a rebalancing for Mother Earth. A kind of reboot button. An opportunity for humans to realign our intentions with what is best for our planet. It is said that these individuals will be known as Earth Stewards. When enough healthy individuals surround our world with the prayers of peace and well-being, she shall regain her alignment." "Grandmother, how do you know she is out of balance?" "Well, today's weather is a perfect example. It is Spring time, such a violent storm at this time of year is unusual and is a sign she is sorely out of balance."

"How can we restore her balance?" "When I was young, my great-grandmother offered me a challenge. There are 13 honorable characteristics you may choose to be guided by. As you acquire each attribute you become a better version of yourself. This is your only job at this point. Becoming your best you, my young one." "What is the first lesson Grandmother ?" "Ahhh, yes, the most important one, in my opinion. The Golden Rule."

"Treat each other the way you'd prefer to be treated." "That sounds easy," replied the young one. "Maybe toward those around you, but what about yourself? How often do you criticize yourself? Or tell yourself you're not doing it right? All this internal chatter needs to be peaceful and kind. Kindness starts in the heart. Treat yourself kindly and we will live in a different world." "What are the other 12 characteristics to live by, Grandmother?" "That is a story for another time, young one. The storm has passed and it is time to make our way across the lake. We must return before dark descends."

As they paddle back in quiet solitude, a loon's cry pierces the silence. "What was that Loon saying, Grandmother?" "I imagine she's asking her young ones to get home safely, before the sun sets on our portion of the earth." "Grandmother, I would like to accept the challenge your great-grandmother laid before you. I pledge to become the best version of myself, in hopes of one day becoming an Earth Steward." "So mote it be, mitakuye oyasin, Aho" Grandmother responds, as she gazes skyward spotting the first star of the evening.

As the bedtime routine unfolded that evening, the young one musters up the courage to question her grandmother about the adventure they had shared that day. "Grandmother, during one of the lightning strikes today....did you notice anything?" With a smile across her face, and a twinkle in her eye she said, "Yes." The young one whispers in almost stunned silence, remembering the small faces that flashed before them in the forest, "How is this possible?" "All things are possible. The only thing holding you back is your lack of faith. Your limitless imagination is your ticket through the stars."

Reaching across the bed, Grandmother pulls a Turtle quilted blanket over the young one. A kiss is placed upon the forehead. "May your dreams and inner peace flow freely around you and out into our Universe. For the Greater good of all involved, including Mother Earth."



Global Golden Rule

Buddhism

Hurt not others with that which pains yourself.

Christianity

Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you.

Hinduism

Treat others as you would yourself be treated.

Islam

Do unto all men as you would wish to have done unto you.

Judaism

What you yourself hate, do to no man.

Native American

Live in harmony, for we are all related.

Sacred Earth

Do as you will, as long as you harm no one.