

THE LEGEND OF THE LENNI LENAPE

Cast of Characters

Reader, who reads legend	First Stranger
Medicine Man	Second Stranger
Chingachgook	Chief Black Hawk
First Indian	Four Dancers as Seasons
Second Indian	Braves
Third Indian	
Uncas, son of Chingachgook	

Setting: Indian Village Scene
A tom-tom is heard in the distance as Indian party approaches on foot or in canoes to take places behind the Council Fire and facing the audience. Tom-tom in four-four beat. Four dancers dance in large circle around council fire. Each dancer carries a torch. As speaking starts dancers take positions North, East, West, and South of the fire.

Reader: Many years ago, in the dim ages of the past, the Lenni Lenape tribe of Indians inhabited a peachful river valley. Here they pursued the deer, the bear, the panther and wild geese. Their villages were numerous and powerful and their hunting parties were strong. They tilled the fields and followed the chase. They were a peachful people, never warring with other tribes unless first attacked. The smoke arose from their wigwams and they returned from the hunt, their Council fires blazed brightly as around them they smoked the pipe of peace.

(Enter Four Seasons)

Many moons they lived in this blissful state of happy contentment. No other Earth's happy awakening heralded the yearly arrival of Spring.

Medicine Man: (Facing South)
Oh, Spirit of Spring, bring nourishment to our soil so that our crops may prosper.

(Dancer of South approaches fire and then returns to his position)

Reader: Springtime blossomed into summer

Medicine Man: (Facing West)
Oh, Spirit of Summer, bring gracious winds and sunny days. Bring joy to our hearts and prosperity to our people.

(Dancer to West of fire dances toward fire.)

Reader: Summer matured into autumn

Medicine Man: (Facing East)
Oh, Spirit of Autumn, you who bring bright colors to our village-- fill the woods with deer and bear, and the rivers with fish.
(Dancer to east of fire dances in toward fire.)

Reader: Autumn faded into Winter, in what seemed a never-ending succession of seasons.

Medicine Man: (Facing North)

Oh, Spirit of Winter, be gentle in your anger. Bring gentle winds and light snows so that our people will not suffer. (Dancer to North dances toward fire and returns.)

Medicine Man: (Pacing Council fire with both hands upraised.)

Oh, Spirit of the wind of the four seasons, smile upon our council fire so that we may draw warmth, strength and comfort from its flames.

Reader: But a cloud arose on this peaceful scene. (Pause) Neighboring tribes and distant enemies began to raid their hunting grounds. Chief Chingachgook, Chief of the Lenni Lenape, called together his chiefs and medicine man and made inquiry.

Chingachgook:

Who will go and warn the villages of the Delaware of the danger which threatens?

Reader: But none wished to go . . . one said:

1st Indian: Let them look to themselves . . . we are happy here.

2nd Indian: Why should we concern ourselves as long as we are safe?

3rd Indian: Chingachgook grows old and worries about his neighbors . . . it would be better if he worried more about us.

Uncas: My father, here as I, send me. All of these villages are of our blood, the Lenni Lenape. What is danger to one is the affair of all. They are six to our one, and if we are to survive as a nation, we must stand together. Meanwhile, let us urge on our kinsmen the necessity of unselfish devotion to each other and the cause in which we are enlisted; and as they catch this higher vision, send them forth on their errand of cheerful service.

Reader: Then Chingachgook, the chief, and his son Uncas, set to work to warn the kindred of their impending danger and to join them together to drive away their enemies. (Chingachgook and Uncas circle council ring and stop before strangers.)

Reader: In every village some were found who were willing to give of themselves cheerfully in the service of others.

1st Stranger: Uncas, what brings you so far from your own hunting grounds?

Uncas: The Senecas, Mohawks, Iroquois, and Hurons have gone on the warpath, have invaded our hunting grounds, and are preparing to attack us. I have come to warn you and to enlist your help in warning our friends of the approaching danger. Will you help us in this task?

1st Stranger: That would be foolish. I will take care of my own people and let the others shift for themselves.

2nd Stranger: I will help you as I know that what is danger to one of us is danger to all.

(Second stranger joins Uncas as they return to the Council of Chiefs. Drum keeps up war dance beat--loud as action takes place and softly while characters speak.)

Reader: Their enemies were soon compelled to return to their own hunting grounds and peace was declared between them. (Drum fades and becomes more peaceful.)

Action: (Chingachgook places war bonnets on the heads of three chiefs)

Reader: Chingachgook speaks to his new chiefs.

Chingachgook: The servant of all is the greatest of all. In this manner do we elevate those who have unselfishly given of themselves in the service of others, though by so doing, they themselves suffered privation and misfortune.

Reader: And these warriors became so convinced of the truth of this message that they besought him to perpetuate it in some manner. Chief Black Hawk speaks for them:

Black Hawk: Chingachgook, your words of wisdom linger in our hearts. We wish that you would bind us together in an Order which shall keep alive your message of service to others.

Reader: So Chingachgook bound them together into a great brotherhood into which only they can be admitted who can forget their own interest and advancement while looking out for their brothers. And they must be so considered and recommended for membership in the Order by their associates.

Uncas: Great Chief, I would like to suggest a totem for our Order--the red Arrow! It is straight so that its flight may be true. Its point is keen so that it will pierce its mark. Aimed high, its course is un-deviating, and its course is onward and upward. It therefore, becomes a token of leadership and as such I propose that we adopt it.

Reader: And so we, the followers of the early Indians on this soil, become heirs to the Order of the Arrow, inherit its traditions and ideal, as well as the Red Arrow, symbol of unselfish devotion in the service of others.

Black Hawk: Let us search the trails to see if there are Scouts in these Tribes who are worthy of recognition by their fellows and have been chosen as candidates to our Order.