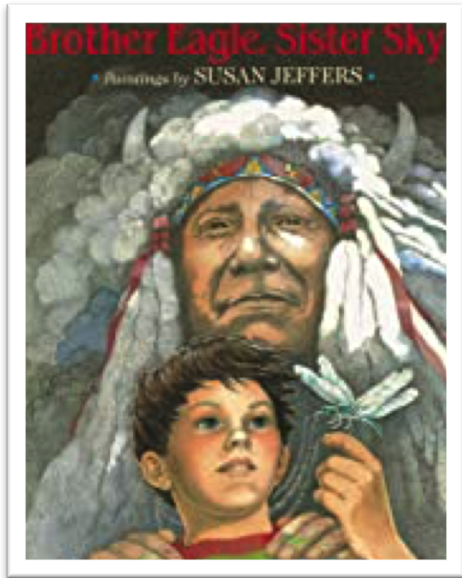


Read for Pleasure

Brother Eagle, Sister Sky

By Chief Seattle and Susan Jeffers



“We did not weave the web of life.
We are merely a strand in it.
Whatever we do to the web, we do to
ourselves.”

Over 150 years ago, Chief Seattle, a respected and powerful leader of his people, delivered a message to the government in Washington that wanted to buy his land.

He believed that all life on Earth, including the Earth itself, is sacred and that man's abuse and disregard of nature will ultimately lead to his own destruction.

With a commanding presence, Chief Seattle rose to his feet to speak to the gathering before him, and in a resounding voice gave a speech that is as relevant today as it was when it was first given.

It is in this context that we must consider this book.

Title Talk

The title of this story is: Brother Eagle, Sister Sky.

- Here we read four words. Pair them up so that each pair is more closely related. Which two words did you pair together and why?
- Yet the writer chooses not to do this. Instead, they choose to describe an eagle as being their brother and the sky as being their sister. What might this suggest about their relationship with the natural world? Discuss.



Cover Chat

Now look at the cover of this picture book.

- Which of these characters is more likely to be the one who gives the speech we are about to look at? Why do you think this?
- If the boy isn't the one giving the speech, why do you think he appears on the cover?
- What is the boy doing? Might this be significant?
- The winds of change are blowing the boy's hair and dark ominous clouds appear on the horizon. Why might this be?
- What do you think Chief Seattle is thinking and feeling at this moment? Why would this be? Discuss.

Page 1-2

- Chief Seattle begins his speech by asking two questions. Which two questions does he ask?
- Does he expect these questions to be answered? Why not?
- He then remembers what his mother said to him as a child. What was this?
- Considering Chief Seattle's old age, how significant are these words? Discuss.
- How is this memory reflected in the image that accompanies Chief Seattle's words?
- Does anything in this illustration remind you of the front cover?
- Why do you think the illustrator included the dragonfly?

Page 3-4

- He then remembers what his father said to him as a child. Again, is this significant considering that Chief Seattle was quite old when he gave this speech?
- How did Chief Seattle's father connect human life with the natural world that surrounds us?
- How is this reflected in how this part of his speech has been illustrated?

Page 5-6

- Which word does the Chief use that infers all nature is related?
- Can you spot the three creatures listed by his father: the bear, the deer, and the eagle?
- Which of these dominates page 6? Might this be significant, especially when we think back to the book's title?

Remember, the eagle is also a national symbol of the USA because of its strength, its power, and its beauty.

- Who do you think is depicted on page 5?
- Is this a happy memory for Chief Seattle? Discuss.



Page 7-8

- Which word does the Chief use to continue his idea that all nature is related to each other?
- How is the idea of FAMILY depicted in the illustration? Discuss.
- Who might the other two children be? Why might they also be riding ponies?

Page 9-10

- Chief Seattle now talks about rivers. Why are rivers important to him and his people?
- Can you spot his ancestors in the river itself? Why would this be an important image to Chief Seattle?
- Why do you think he says that we 'must give to the rivers the kindness you would give to any brother'? Discuss.

Page 11-12

- Who was it that told Chief Seattle that the air is precious? Might this be significant? Why?
- Do you think his use of the word PRECIOUS was deliberate? Why might this be?
- How many faces of Chief Seattle's ancestors can you spot? Why do you think the illustrator chose to depict them in this way? Discuss.



Page 13-14

- How are Chief Seattle's ancestors now depicted? Where are they and why are they all dressed in white and riding white horses?
- Which line do you think is the most important on this page? Read it out loud.
- Why do you think these words are so important? Discuss.

Page 15-16

- We read that Chief Seattle's grandmother once told him that he must teach his children 'the earth is our mother. What befalls the earth befalls all the sons and daughters of the earth.' How stark a warning is this?
- Describe what Chief Seattle and his people are looking at in this scene. Why is this important with regards to his message?
- Interestingly, nobody is talking. Why might this be? What might they be thinking?

Page 17-18

- What do we cast our eyes upon in these pages? Why is this significant?
Notice that there are no people, animals or birds in this illustration. Might this have been deliberate?
- Again, Chief Seattle asks many questions to those who are listening. Which of these questions do you think is the most important? Discuss.
- Again, does he expect those listening to his speech to answer these questions? Why not?
- The word GONE is repeated. Might this have been deliberate? How does this impact us as we listen to Chief Seattle's words?

Page 19-20

- Here we see a spider's web in a meadow where a family sits together. What is the family doing? Why is this important when we consider what surrounds them?
- How does the delicate beauty of a spider's web reflect the message in Chief Seattle's words on page 19?
- Do you agree with this message? Discuss.



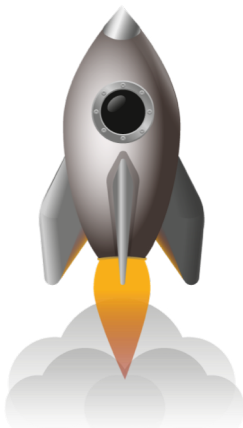
Page 21

- Here we see the same family as we saw on page 19, but this time they are surrounded by saplings. Why is this significant?
- How does this make you feel? Why?
- Is Chief Seattle and his family really in this scene or are they there as a memory of times long ago? Discuss.
- Which member of the family has turned to try and remember Chief Seattle and, in doing so, reminds us of his plea to love the earth as his people loved it?
- Does this character remind you of the front cover? How so?

Think about the speech as a whole:

Chief Seattle made this speech over 150 years ago.

How important is it that we listen to his words today?



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