

The Eagle (I)

We used to see the bald eagle every once in a while. It's a big, beautiful bird, but the Seminoles are kind of superstitious about it. To us, the eagle is a rare bird with a lot of power that could cause you trouble. The Seminoles don't wear the eagle feathers like the Indians out west. Every tribe has a different belief about this. To us, the panther was the strong medicine.

—Betty Mae Jumper

One day a man went out hunting and killed a deer. As he was skinning his kill, he heard noises up in the sky. There he saw a big bird flying around. Quickly he dragged the deer under a log to hide it. But the eagle was so large, and it came down, moved the log, and carried off both the deer and the hunter to her nest.

The little birds in the eagle's nest began eating the deer but had nothing to do with the hunter. Every time the mother eagle brought back kill, the hunter would tear off part of the meat for himself and dry it out to eat. He found water where rain fell in.

All the while, Mother Eagle was perched up on the mountain above, watching her chicks growing bigger and bigger. Soon it was time for Mother to teach her young chicks to fly.

At that point the hunter realized that one day the birds would all leave the nest. He wondered what would happen to him then.



There were days when the mother came back less and less to the nest. This was because her chicks were now grown and ready to leave the nest. The hunter took out a rope he had hidden. When the time came for the chicks to leave, he tied the rope around one bird's neck. When the bird took off to fly, the hunter jumped on its back, and away they flew. He also had a stick to hit the bird with so he could go down.

When they reached an area the hunter recognized, he hit the bird hard on its head so it would land. After the hunter jumped off, he told the bird to go, but he had to push on the bird until it got up and flew away.

The hunter then walked until he came upon the camp where he lived. Everyone was surprised to see the hunter again. When he didn't return from his hunting trip, they had thought he had been killed. He took them back to the tall tree to show them where he had been all this time.

