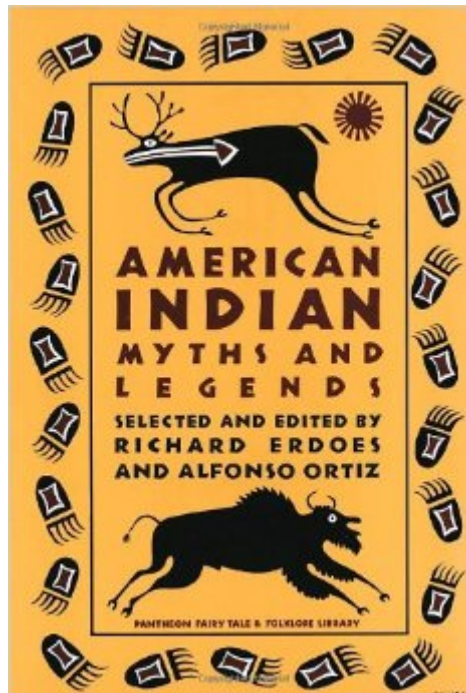


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American Indian Myths And Legends (The Pantheon Fairy Tale And Folklore Library)



Synopsis

This magnificent collection gathers 160 tales from 80 tribal gathers to offer a rich and lively panorama of the Native American mythic heritage. From all across the continent come tales of creation and love, of heroes and war, of animals, tricksters, and the end of the world. Alfonso Ortiz, an eminent anthropologist, and Richard Erdoes, an artist and master storyteller, Indian voices in the best folkloric sources of the nineteenth century to make this the most comprehensive and authentic volume of American Indian myths available anywhere. With black-and-white drawings throughout Part of the Pantheon Fairy Tale and Folklore Library

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (71 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #18,443 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #12 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > Mythology & Folk Tales > Fairy Tales](#) #26 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Specific Demographics > Native American Studies](#) #44 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Folklore & Mythology](#)

Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 7 - 12

Customer Reviews

"American Indian Myths and Legends" is a collection of 166 stories selected and edited by Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz that represent the heart and soul of the native people of North America. In contrast to the more familiar classical myths of ancient Greece and Roman, the genesis for these stories is much more organic, rising from the animals, plants and herb that made up the every day world of the people who told these tales. These tales also reflect the diversity of the peoples group under the name of American Indians, from the Seneca and Alconquian of the East to the White

Mountain Apache and Navajo of the Southwest to the Brule Sioux and Nez Perce of the Plains. Using an admittedly artificial system of organization, Erdoes and Ortiz present ten sections: (1) Tales of Human Creation; (2) Tales of World Creation; (3) The Eye of the Great Spirit; (4) Monsters and Monster Slayers; (5) War and the Warrior Code; (6) Tales of Love and Lust; (7) Trickster Tales; (8) Stories of Animals and Other People; (9) Ghosts and the Spirit World; and (10) Visions of the End. I have been reading my copy again to consider its inclusion in a Contemporary Mythology class I am toying with teaching, and it certainly offers students an impressive collection of myths and legends in fairly pure form. There is some commentary, but the point here is not to analyze the stories but to preserve them and present them to new readers. However, teachers at any level who are studying myths can certainly find stories that can be used to create fascinating comparison/contrasts with tales on similar subjects from classical, Celtic, Hindu, African, or any other mythology they can get their hands on for class.

Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz really did a wonderful job putting together this compilation. Taking various stories from North America, the duo covers traditional tales of everyone from the Aleut to the Toltecs and pretty much everything in between. Every region and culture group is represented, and tales from well known Nations such as the Cherokee, Lakota, Dine (Navajo), Apache and Iroquois appear beside those of less well known (but no less vibrant and culturally active) Nations such as the Miwok, Caddo, Metis and Shasta. Hopefully this will help expand people's views of Native American culture. After all, stereotypical views of "Indians" rarely include the Nations of California or the Pacific Northwest, or even the Southern Woodlands (the original homeland of the Cherokee and their neighbors). Obviously not every Nation could be represented, but this is still an excellent survey of the continent. It does a wonderful job showing how common cultural themes have woven their way across this entire continent, helping to reinforce the culture and customs of the First Nations. And at the same time, it also shows how each culture was different, having its own beliefs, customs and practices unique to themselves. Each chapter was divided into a different theme, so the book covers the Creation of People, the Creation of the World, Stories about Celestial Bodies, Monsters, War Heroes, Love, Tricksters, Animal People, Ghosts and the End of the World. Hence the book goes full circle in exploring major themes in North American belief. Each chapter includes the stories of numerous Nations from different regions, linguistic families or "cultural groupings", allowing the reader to see them in a much broader light.

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