

Lakota Star Story

Long ago, two Lakota maidens were out one night looking at the stars. One young woman said, "See that big beautiful star, I wish I would marry it." The other woman said the same about another star. Suddenly, they are transported into the star world, and then these two stars become their husbands. The wives become pregnant. They are told this star world is theirs but also warned not to dig any wild turnips.

Eventually one of them does and as she pulls out the turnip a hole opens in the star world. She is able to look down and see the earth and even her own village. She becomes homesick and decides to return to earth. She braids more and more turnips to make a rope and lets herself down through the hole. But the braid doesn't reach the earth and she falls. The crash kills her but her baby is born. The baby is raised by a meadowlark. Since meadowlarks speak Lakota, the baby, now named "Fallen Star," grows up speaking it too.

Fallen Star matures rapidly, in days rather than years. He is taller than normal and a light emanates from him. The meadowlark grows old and takes him to a Lakota band where he settles for awhile.

Fallen Star, the protector, the bringer of light and higher consciousness, travels from one Lakota band to another and everywhere he is recognized, expected and revered.

One year a band of Lakota is camped near Harney Peak in the Black Hills. Every day a red eagle swoops down and steals a girl-child and carries her to the mountaintop and kills her. The men try to shoot the red eagle but fail. They pray for Fallen Star and after seven days (and after seven little girls have been killed) he arrives. He shoots the red eagle and places the spirits of the seven girls in the sky as a constellation – Pleiades; in Lakota it is called Wicincila Sakowin, the Seven Little Girls.

At another time while a band is camped near the site of Devil's Tower, a brother and a sister are playing and are chased by some bears. A voice directs them to a knoll. The bears, however, surround the children and close in. Fallen Star (as a voice of power) commands the earth to rise up out of reach of the bears, who claw at the hill as it lifts. The clawed hill becomes Devil's Tower. Later an Eagle carries the children to safety, back on Mother Earth.