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# Old Father Story Teller



## Synopsis

Born and raised at Santa Clara Pueblo near Santa Fe, Pablita Velarde has achieved national and international recognition as one of the greatest American Indian artists. She has selected six of the most memorable Santa Clara tribal stories she heard as a child for her book *Old Father Story Teller*. They are simply written, much as Pablita related them to her own children. For each story she has created natural earthtone paintings in the unique style that has become her hallmark. This book reveals the artist at her best and will delight old and young alike.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 56 pages

Publisher: Clear Light Books; First Edition edition (June 1991)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0940666103

ISBN-13: 978-0940666108

Product Dimensions: 9.3 x 12.3 x 0.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 5 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #699,518 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #53 in [Books > Children's Books > Fairy Tales, Folk Tales & Myths > United States](#) #426 in [Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Multicultural Stories > Native North & South Americans](#)

Age Range: 9 - 12 years

Grade Level: 4 - 7

## Customer Reviews

Pablita Velarde is one of the very best artists of the Southwest. I was happy to get this book with her paintings and stories. My only complaint is that I wanted pictures on every page, and less of the line drawings which looked like sketches (illustrated in one of the stories). I feel like more of her really good ones could have been added, as she did so many in her life. However, several of her most famous are included in this book, beautifully reproduced. I recommend this book for anyone who appreciates the amazing vibrancy of Velarde's work, and is interested in the legends of the Tewa and Hopi.

Beautiful! I'm an Indian storyteller - this is our worldview

Beautiful book!



"The magic of Pablita Velarde is all here in this book." --R.C. Gorman (acclaimed Navajo artist)"Pablita Velarde has told the story of her Santa Clara people throughout her career and has become a legend in her own time." --United Features SyndicateThe cover and title page painting -- titled Old Father Storyteller -- may be Pablita Velarde's best known work. The elder is shown telling people of the pueblo stories about the stars and constellations, which march in an arc across the sky. This painting, which Velarde was inspired to by her father's stories, won the Grand Prize at the 1955 Gallup Inter-Tribal Indian Ceremonial.It is also recognized by archaeoastronomers (scholars studying pre-contact native star lore) as one of the few records in which pueblo constellations can be identified, and star lore is told. (Long Sash is basically the familiar Orion, for example.) So that story has uses in Native-centered science. Beautiful uses.

There are 6 stories in the book, each with several of Pablita's fabulous paintings. "Turkey Girl" is the Tewa version of a Zuni storyteller's remake of Cinderella. Turkey Girl -- clad in finery by her flock of turkeys, instead of a fairy godmother -- goes to a dance, and is not recognized as the ragged orphan, courted by many men. But when she is found out by her mean stepmother, there's quite a different ending from Perrault's (and Disney's).She doesn't wind up with any of those Indian men, indeed, those Prince Uncharmings are all chasing her to kill her for a witch! Some kind of big turkey spirit hides her; she disappears into a canyon with her flock. Turkeys are found no more by people hunting them for food. The moral and ethical meanings in this Indian transfiguration are very different from Cinderella. The only moral of that one is that nice clothes get you in anywhere. The Indian storytellers disagree.Velarde says in her preface: "I was one of the fortunate children of my generation [she was born in 1918] who were probably the last to hear stories firsthand from Great-grandfather or Grandfather. I treasure that memory, and I have tried to preserve it in this book so that my children as well as other people may have a glimpse of what used to be."Velarde's father was a respected Tewa storyteller in the Santa Clara Pueblo. She and her sisters as children had heard these stories during summer nights when they returned from Indian boarding school (where Native children were forced to go in US government attempts to destroy Indian culture by separating children from their families, language, and homes) to help their father farm his fields. In the late 1950's, when her marriage to Herbert Hardin, a non-Indian policeman, was breaking up, she returned to the Pueblo, recorded her father's stories and translated 6 of the most memorable into English for this book, which her paintings illustrate. The stories are told simply and clearly, as Pablita told them to her own children, and had been told them, as a child, by her father.At that point

in her life she was already an acclaimed artist, with the Bandolier National Monument murals, many prizes, and paintings in museums to her credit. In 1954, the French government had awarded her the Palmes Academiques for her outstanding contributions to art, the first time a European government had recognized Indian art as fine art, rather than primitive craft. Dale Stuart King, who had hired her as to paint the accurate -- and artistic -- murals of traditional Pueblo life at Bandelier National Monument, liked the stories and published them in 1960. The book was chosen as one of the best Western books of 1960. This handsome reprint, 35 years later, uses improved color printing techniques to make Velarde's art available to children and others in highest quality. It's one of Clear Light Publishers' best-selling books, and they have (not on .com) a special slipcased, signed gift edition for \$200, for rich folks with art-loving friends. You can see some of Velarde's murals. at [...] These murals in the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center are explained and shown, large and in details. In addition, see a painting by Pablita's daughter, artist Helen Hardin, who died untimely young, in 1984 at [...] Content and art reproductions and quality are identical in the paperback and hardcover versions of this book. Schools may need to get the paperback for cost reasons; parents and art-loving adults interested in Indian culture should get the hardcover, for permanence. Reviewed by Paula Giese, editor, Native American Books website, [...]

This is really an amazing book. Velarde's work is magnificent and worth seeing in person if you ever get the opportunity, and the vitality of her paintings comes right through in this volume. It is impossible to imagine the story without the art, or vice versa. The stories are beautifully recounted in a traditional style that is nonetheless easily accesible to readers who aren't at all familiar with the Tewa people. It's a great introduction to an oral literary tradition that most of us would never encounter otherwise--certainly not with so much beauty and attention to detail. I wish she had written more books, because this is one of the best storytime options I can think of--I remember being fascinated by it as a child, and it's still worth a very good read as an adult.

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