

James Madison

Village Savior

Once, in days of old, a young chief was walking on a beach near his village. He was thinking of the successful fishing trip he had that morning. Suddenly, the silence of the shoreline was interrupted by a loud noise in the woods nearby. When the chief got closer, he saw that a magnificent eagle was trapped by a piece of old fishnet. The eagle's feathers were tangled in the brush and his eyes were sad. The young chief knelt down and began to free the great bird. Very carefully, he loosened the knots of the net and gently cleared away the brambles. Suddenly, the bird flew up to freedom. In those days, there was a spirit in everything: in animals, in trees, even in the rocks along the shoreline. The chief, when he performed his kind act, did not know that this eagle was special. He came from the world of the spirits.

Later that year, times were hard for the young chief's village. Food was scarce and many people began to go hungry. The young chief was very worried, because he did not want his people to starve. One day, the chief was walking along the beach, wondering what he should do. Suddenly, a beautiful salmon dropped at his feet in the sand, alive, its silver sides flashing. When the chief looked up, he saw Eagle gliding away into the distance. For many days thereafter, Eagle brought fish and left them on the beach for the villagers. Then, Eagle began to bring seals. As time went on, he brought larger and larger animals to feed the people of the village. Eventually, he even delivered a whale onto the beach.

The eagle was a spirit, and nothing was too difficult for him to do. Because he brought food to the people of the village, the villagers passed safely through the time of famine and rejoiced in days of plenty. All this was done because the young chief had once saved Eagle's life. When the chief acted kindly, the eagle later paid him back with kindness, but magnified a thousand times.

*From Totem Pole by Diane Hoyt-Goldsmith, Holiday House, New York, 1990.

Certificate of Authenticity

This print is a limited edition original serigraph. Working from James' drawings and a large wooden panel with a similar design, I cut rubylith stencils for the two colors. The colors are then hand-printed onto archival paper. The paper size is 18.5 inches wide and 25 inches tall. The image size is 14 inches wide and 20 inches tall. The inks used were black and red. This design was printed in two editions; 80 made on Arches Cover Cream paper, and an edition of 23 on Sugikawashi Cedar Bark paper.

These editions were printed by Paul Nicholson of Bellevue, WA in 2003 with the assistance of the artist, James Madison.

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