

Answer: She dreams that she sees the Great Tree uprooted.

Literary Analysis

Origin Myths and Oral Tradition

- Students should read aloud the paragraphs in which various animals dive down in the ocean.
- Students should be invited to identify the unusual aspect of the animals' names. If necessary draw students' attention to the "generic" quality of each name.
- Students should look to ask the question "Why might characters have generic names like "Loon" or "Muskrat"?"
 - Answer: Often characters in oral literature are symbolic or archetypal figures that embody important cultural ideas rather than complex personalities.

Critical Reading

1. Question: If you had been the Great Chief, would you have pulled the Great Tree? Explain your answer.

Answer: Students may say they would be obliged to take the dream seriously and tradition, as the chief did; others may say that they would not have let a dream persuade them to alter or remove a sacred tree.

2. Questions. Explain what happened to the wife of the chief when the young men uprooted the Great Tree? Why did this action generate concern among the animals?

Answers: In trying to look down the hole left by the uprooted tree, she leans too far and falls into the hole.

After the animals rescue her, they realize that she cannot live in the water, as they do.

3. Question: Describe the actions of the swans, the beaver, and the duck. How do these actions exhibit the best aspects of human nature?

Answer: Each animal attempts (and fails) to dive deep enough to retrieve some earth.

As they take actions, the animals exhibit concern, kindness, generosity and heroism. None of the animals is fearful or selfish.

4. Question: Whom do the Onondaga credit with bringing Earth into existence? For this myth, what you can conclude about the relationship between the Onondaga and their natural environment? Explain.