

Read-Aloud Play/Folktale



The **Girl**
and the
Chenoo



When a giant people-eating monster shows up, Tala fights back with a secret weapon

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A Native American legend of
the Passamaquoddy people

Characters

Circle the character you will play.

**Indicates large speaking role*

*Narrators 1, 2, 3
(N1, N2, N3)

Children 1, 2, 3

Auntie: the
children's aunt

Uncle: the
children's uncle

*Brothers 1, 2, 3:
Tala's older brothers

*Tala: a Native
American girl

Spirit Wolf

Beavers 1 & 2

*Chenoo: a man-
eating monster

Hawks 1 & 2



Theme As you read, look for how Tala treats the Chenoo. What big idea, or theme, can you learn from her actions?

LOOK FOR WORD NERD'S 6 TERMS IN BOLD



Scene 1

A campfire by a river in Maine

Narrator 1: Under a sky of shooting stars . . .

Narrator 2: . . . three children beg their aunt and uncle for a story.

Narrator 3: They love hearing legends about their ancestors.

Child 1: Tell us one from long ago, about our people!

Auntie: First let's hear what you know about our tribe.

Child 2: We are called the Passama . . . quo . . . oh no, I can't say it.

Child 3 (proudly): I can. Passamaquoddy [pass-uh-muh-KWAH-dee]!

Child 1: Our people were here before this land was called North America.

Child 2: Each of us had a spirit animal.

Child 3: A person couldn't see or hear their spirit animal. But they could feel its power.

Child 1: A spirit animal would help guide a person and give them courage when they needed it.

Auntie: Uncle, will you tell them about the brave girl Tala?

Child 2: Doesn't Tala mean wolf? Is her spirit animal a wolf?

Auntie: Yes. Spirit Wolf walks unseen by Tala's side. He gives her courage.

Uncle: And Tala will need courage when she meets the Chenoo!

Children 1, 2, and 3: What is the Chenoo?

Auntie: Well, listen and you will find out!

Scene 2

Deep in the snowy forest

N1: Tala's three brothers set up a hunting camp.

N2: Every winter they leave their people to hunt for food and gather pelts.

Brother 1: Did you lash the poles together tightly on our wigwam?

Brother 2 (teasing): No, I made them loose so they'll crash down on our heads.

N3: Tala appears, holding out their hunting gear.

Tala: Time to head out, brothers. I fixed the feathers on your arrows.

Brother 3: Good, I'll be back with a dozen rabbits.

Brother 1: Rabbits? I'm coming back with a bear!

Tala (laughing): Just don't let him chase you into our camp!

N1: Tala waves farewell as her brothers depart.

N2: Then she trudges through the deep snow to collect firewood.

Tala (spying two beavers): I should follow those beavers. They'll know where to find wood!

N3: But as she gets closer, she see the beavers are shaking with fear.

Beaver 1 (looking down): What beast has a footprint the size of a boulder?

Beaver 2: And claws the size of antlers?

Beaver 1: Only one terrible, monstrous thing.

N1: Tala sees the footprints and freezes with terror.

N2: She knows exactly what made those tracks.

Tala (fearfully): No! It's the Chenoo!

N3: The Chenoo is a fearsome man-eating monster.

N1: Spirit Wolf stands close beside Tala, though she cannot see him.

Tala (to herself): The Chenoo will kill us! My brothers and I must fight this beast, or we must run away.

Spirit Wolf (howling): No, Tala! There is another way. Let your heart guide you.

N2: Tala suddenly knows what to do.

Scene 3

Inside the wigwam

N3: The next morning, the brothers prepare to hunt.

Brother 2 (whispering): Yesterday I saw giant footprints with massive claws.

Brother 3: Those were just from bear cubs rolling in the snow with sticks.

Brother 1: Don't be a coward. Let's go!

N1: When they leave, Tala does not begin her usual chores.

N2: Instead, she fills an enormous pot with all the food they have to make a thick stew.

N3: Then she gathers bearskins into a great pile.

Spirit Wolf (looking on): This is a dangerous plan, but Tala has chosen the right path.

N1: Suddenly, there is a crashing in the woods.

N2: Animals cry. Birds shriek.

N3: A huge shadow looms over the wigwam.

Spirit Wolf: Tala, I am right beside you.

N1: A hideous head peers through the doorway.





N2: It has jagged teeth, wild eyes, and matted hair.

Spirit Wolf: Tala, be brave! It's the Chenoo!

N3: Tala feels strong and confident.

N1: She calmly smiles and holds out her hand.

Tala: Hello, Grandfather, welcome.

N2: Tala knows the Chenoo is not her grandfather. Both her beloved grandfathers died years before.

Tala: Would you like some **venison** stew, Grandfather?

N3: The Chenoo is stunned and baffled. Tala coaxes him inside.

Chenoo: I'm here to eat you. Aren't you afraid?

Tala (gently): No, Grandfather. I see you are tired and hungry. Here, eat this instead.

N1: Tala motions to the enormous clay pot.

N2: The Chenoo lifts it like a teacup and downs the stew in one gulp.

N3: Then he climbs onto the bearskins to sleep.

N1: His snores rattle the walls.

Scene 4

Outside the wigwam

N2: Tala waits outside until her brothers return, carrying geese and a boar.

Tala (whispering): Brothers, I must tell you something. The Chenoo is here.

Brother 2 (alarmed): What? What will we do?

N3: Spirit Wolf stands by Tala.

Tala: You must call him Grandfather. Greet him and be polite.

Brother 3 (confused): Tala, don't you think we should run?

N1: Just then the Chenoo steps out, jaws open, ready to eat one of them.

Tala (softly): Grandfather, my brothers are here to greet you.

N2: Trembling, the brothers manage a welcome.

N3: The Chenoo is surprised by their kind words.

N1: He reaches for them, but snatches the geese and the boar and gulps them down instead.

Chenoo (roaring): More! More food!

Tala (whispering): I'm sorry, brothers, there is nothing left. I gave the Chenoo all we had.

Brother 1: We're doomed.

N2: The Chenoo eyes the brothers hungrily.

Chenoo: Why don't you scream and run away like the others?

Brother 2: That is not our way, Grandfather.

N3: The Chenoo stares, then runs off and returns with a moose under each arm.

N1: That night they feast as never before.

Scene 5

At the camp

N2: Over time, Tala and her brothers grow less fearful of the Chenoo—and even come to appreciate his help.

Brother 3: Lately, we have almost *too* much food.

Brother 1: And more pelts than we can carry.

N3: But one day, Tala sees that the snow is melting.

Tala: Grandfather, it's the time when we must return to our people.

Chenoo (pleading):

Take me with you!

Tala: As you wish, Grandfather.

N1: Just then two hawks swoop and shriek overhead.

Hawk 1: Chenoo!

Hawk 2: Chenoo!

Chenoo!

Chenoo (sadly): I had forgotten how others will see me. Tala, I need help.

Tala: What can we do?

Chenoo: Build me a sweat lodge.

N2: Tala and her brothers do as the Chenoo asks, filling a small hut with a raging fire and hot stones.

N3: The Chenoo enters and sits amid the smoke.

Chenoo: Oh, oh, how it burns!

Tala: Grandfather, it's time to come out!

Chenoo (shouting): No, give me more wood, more fire!

N1: Finally, the Chenco staggers out, choking.

N2: He coughs out a piece of ice in the shape of

a man.

Chenoo: Here, Tala, it is my heart. Chop it up and toss all the pieces into the flames.

N3: Tala and her brothers watch as the shards of ice crackle and melt in the fire. When

they look up, they are shocked to see that the Chenoo is no longer a hulking beast.

N1: He is but a frail man with white hair and kind eyes.

Chenoo (holding out his arms):

Children, my heart of ice has been melted. I am ready to meet your people.



Scene 6

Around the campfire

Child 3: I wish I could be brave like Tala.

Child 1: Spirit Wolf helped Tala be brave.

Uncle: But it wasn't just bravery that changed the Chenoo.

Child 2: I know. It was Tala's kindness and acceptance.

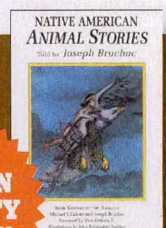
Auntie: Yes, Spirit Wolf helped her realize that the power of kindness could melt the coldest heart.

Spirit Wolf (howling): Ahhhhoouooooooo! ■

WRITE TO WIN

Imagine a Chenoo has been spotted near your school. Using ideas and details from the play, write a letter to your classmates advising them how to react. Send it to "Chenoo Contest" by June 1, 2017. Ten winners will each receive a book of Native American tales. See page 2 for details.

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