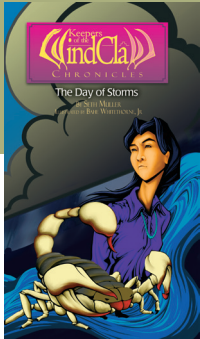


## Teacher's Keepers of the Windclaw Chronicles The Day of Storms

Written by Seth Muller

Illustrated by Bahe Whitethorne, Jr.



**\$12.95**

978-1-893354-10-4

### About the Book

The Day of Storms is a beautifully written and illustrated story that draws young readers into a world that feels both magical and familiar. Navajo and Hopi landscapes—red mesas, high desert canyons, summer monsoon skies, and sacred peaks—come alive through the words of Seth Muller and the artwork of Bahe Whitethorne, Jr. This story follows Ellie Tsosie, a young Navajo girl who can communicate with birds, and Rachel Whitehorse, a Hopi girl who speaks with insects. Their journeys connect them to the land, to each other, and to their responsibility to bring balance between the human and animal worlds.

For Navajo students in grades 1–3, the story's setting will feel close to home. The canyons, peaks, and desert storms are part of their lived environment. These familiar elements—dusty trails, juniper trees, and the cool air before a storm—make the story personally meaningful. Teachers can invite students to share their own experiences with summer rains, butterflies, or birds to connect text to life. The story also introduces cultural teachings about respect for animals, the sacredness of the land, and the harmony between people and nature.

Bahe Whitethorne, Jr.'s illustrations play an essential role in supporting young readers' understanding. His artwork captures light, shadow, and movement in the desert, helping children visualize the changes in weather and the emotions of the characters. The soft colors of sunrise, the swirling clouds of a summer storm, and the deep greens of canyon forests guide comprehension by showing what the text describes. These illustrations help readers track the mood of each scene and anticipate what may happen next—an important part of developing reading fluency and story sense.

When teachers share The Day of Storms as a read-aloud or guided reading, students can use both the text and the pictures to explore meaning. The illustrations invite prediction ("What do you think is about to happen when the dark clouds roll in?") and observation ("What colors do you see in the storm?"). In this way, the book supports early literacy skills while honoring place-based knowledge. Above all, this story reminds young Navajo readers that the environment around them—its wind, water, and creatures—is alive and connected to their identity. By seeing a Navajo heroine who listens to the voices of birds and respects the sacred land, students learn that their home landscapes are not just settings but living teachers.

## Readability

Flesch–Kincaid Grade Level: 2.3

Flesch Reading Ease Score: 86.5 (Easy to Read)

Common Core Grade Band: K–2 (Read-Aloud); 2–3 (Independent Reading)

Recommended Age Range: 6–8 years

## 6 Day ELA Unit Plan: The Day of Storms — Learning from Land, Birds, and Insects

AZ ELA Standards: Reading Literature: 3.RL.1, 3.RL.2, 3.RL.4, 3.RL.7; Writing: 3.W.3, 3.W.8; Speaking & Listening: 3.SL.1, 3.SL.4; Language: 3.L.4, 3.L.5

Cross-Curricular Connections: Science (3.L2U1.6); Social Studies (3.G1.1); Diné Standards (A: Language, B: Culture, C: Community, D: History)

### Day 1: The Release / The Secret (pp. 1–58)

Focus: Setting, Character Introduction, Listening to the Land

SWBAT: Identify the setting, main characters (Ellie, Rachel), and describe how the land influences the story’s beginning.

Activities:

- Read aloud excerpts from The Release and The Secret.
- Discuss how storms, birds, and butterflies appear in the early chapters.
- Examine illustrations of desert skies and mesas.
- Create a “Map of the Land” showing Ellie’s home and the storm’s path.

Vocabulary:

English	Navajo	Meaning
storm	níłtsá	rain with thunder/lightning
canyon	tsékooh	deep rock valley
bird	tsidii	winged creature
butterfly	póli	colorful insect
wind	níłch’i	air/spirit moving

Writing: Journal – “What happens when storms come to my community?”

## Day 2: The Ambush / Butterfly Girls (pp. 59–90)

Focus: Friendship and Transformation

SWBAT: Explain how Ellie and Rachel connect through nature and what butterflies symbolize in both traditions.

Activities:

- Guided reading: Rachel’s connection to butterflies.
- Discuss Navajo stories about butterflies and pollination.
- Compare Ellie’s bird songs and Rachel’s butterfly talk—how do both listen to nature?
- Science link: Butterfly life cycle (draw & label).

Vocabulary:

English	Navajo	Meaning
friendship	k'é	caring relationships
wings	ats'áá	used for flight
transformation	hózhqogo át'éego	change into balance
	bee hasht'e	
garden	tó bikéyah	watered land, field
pollination	łichíí' łeezh	helping plants grow

Writing: Create a mini-book “The Life of a Butterfly” with Navajo and English labels.

## Day 3: Notion of Names / The Story of the Bees (pp. 92–115)

Focus: Identity and the Language of Nature

SWBAT: Understand how names and language show identity and respect for living beings.

Activities:

- Read The Notion of Names aloud; discuss how Ellie learns the meaning of names.
- Read The Story of the Bees; connect bees' work to Navajo values of cooperation.
- Class chart: "How Each Creature Helps the World."
- Compare Navajo teachings with Western science on bee pollination.

Vocabulary:

### English

name  
bee  
respect  
honey  
community

### Navajo

béésh bizaad  
tó bee'azee'í  
k'é  
tó bee azéé'  
k'é bee hasht'e

### Meaning

something you are called  
pollinating insect  
caring and honor  
sweet from bees  
working together

Writing: "If I had an animal name, it would be..." (students explain meaning).

## Day 4: Kingwind / The Other (pp. 116–150)

Focus: Conflict and Cooperation Between Peoples

SWBAT: Describe how Ellie and Rachel must work together to understand the storm and their gifts.

Activities:

- Read selected pages describing Kingwind’s power and Ellie’s courage.
- Discuss “The Other”—how misunderstanding causes fear.
- Act out a short scene between Ellie, Rachel, and Kingwind.
- Discuss how cooperation restores balance.

Vocabulary:

### English

wind  
courage  
enemy  
peace  
thunder

### Navajo

níłch’í  
éí t’áá hózhó  
doodá dine’é  
hózhó  
diłhił

### Meaning

life force, breath  
inner strength  
one in conflict  
balance, harmony  
sound of the storm

Writing: Students write dialogue showing two friends solving a problem together.

## Day 5: The Knowledge from Within / Stormbreak (pp. 152–182)

Focus: Wisdom, Balance, and Understanding Nature

SWBAT: Explain what Ellie learns about herself and the power of nature.

Activities:

- Read “The Knowledge from Within” aloud; discuss what Ellie discovers about listening.
- Art connection: Paint the storm’s path using watercolor.
- Compare Navajo teaching of hózhó (balance) with Western weather cycles.
- Reflect on how storms bring renewal.

Vocabulary:

English	Navajo	Meaning
knowledge	bee haz’á	understanding
spirit	ch’íidii	life or energy
rain	níłtsá	life water
balance	hózhó	harmony and beauty
renewal	yá’át’ééhgo hasht’e	starting again well

Writing: Reflective journal – “What lesson does Ellie learn from the storm?”

## Day 6: Waterfalls and Prophecies (pp. 183–212)

Focus: Renewal and Cultural Continuity

SWBAT: Summarize the story’s message and create an original nature story showing wisdom from the land.

Activities:

- Read “Waterfalls and Prophecies.”
- Discuss the ending—how does balance return?
- Review vocabulary from all lessons.
- Culminating Project: Create a bilingual illustrated page titled “My Story of the Sky.”

Vocabulary:

English	Navajo	Meaning
prophecy	naach’aa’	vision, teaching for future
waterfall	tó tsoh	flowing water from cliffs
journey	naalnish	path or work completed
wisdom	bee nihiji’i	deep understanding
harmony	hózhó	balance, peace, beauty

Culminating Task: Class “Voices of the Sky” book: Each student contributes one illustrated bilingual story page linking environment, identity, and tradition.

Assessment Overview

Type	Description
Formative	Daily vocabulary use, reading discussions, illustration interpretation
Summative	Bilingual nature story project (Day 6)
Language Support	Navajo/English word walls, sentence stems, visual aids, partner retelling

## Animals, Birds, and Insects in The Day of Storms

This list includes the key animals, birds, and insects mentioned in the story with example sentences from the text. Each word includes its Navajo translation, a contextual sentence, and page reference to support bilingual reading and vocabulary instruction.

English	Navajo	Sentence from Text	Page
Raven	tsídii łigai / tsídii	Stone, the raven, perched himself on Ellie's right shoulder. One claw clutched a small bundle of her shirt.	p. 39
Hummingbird	tsídii bits'íí' kichíí'í	Buzz zoomed in and flew all around everyone. 'Look at that!' the ranger announced. 'Check out that hummingbird!'	p. 26
Red-tailed Hawk	ats'á'í kichíí'í	One day, after a few weeks, he finally asked if they could speak to the red-tailed hawk. Ellie took Kyle to her, and he marveled at all that he learned.	p. 43
Mockingbird	dólii	A group of mockingbirds flying in the direction of the young woman landed along the stream. They all looked similar to the mockingbird Ellie knew: Wide-sky.	p. 55
Stellar's Jay	tl'oh tsídii	She thought of the Stellar's Jay she met in the spring. He shared with her how he spoke to trees and learned from them.	p. 62
Butterfly	póli	Rachel knew it to be a viceroy butterfly. The two followed the signs and banners that led them to the butterfly exhibit.	p. 7
Bee	tó bee'azee'í	Ellie looked closer to see a bee climbing around the flower. She moved in closer to watch the bee.	p. 70
Caterpillar	t'óó yishłóó'í	People came to admire the butterflies, but they also watched the caterpillars. Sometimes, they could watch them spin cocoons or emerge as butterflies.	p. 11

<b>English</b>	<b>Navajo</b>	<b>Sentence from Text</b>	<b>Page</b>
Coyote	mą'ii	It was a coyote. Ellie did not want to move. She only wanted to watch the path of the coyote.	p. 31
Sheep	dibé	A herd of sheep appeared at the bank of the stream, where two dogs herded and kept watch over them.	p. 53
Dog	lééchaą'í	Two dogs herded and kept watch over them.	p. 53
Badger	náshdóí	It reminded her of her Hopi clan, the Butterfly and Badger Clan.	p. 12
Eagle	atsá	The book is blessed by the hawks, eagles, ravens, and all of the blue birds.	p. 57

## Free Digital and Printable Handouts: Birds, Insects, and Pollinators

This handout provides open-access, public-domain, or teacher-friendly digital resources to accompany The Day of Storms. Each resource includes a brief description and direct link. Teachers can use these materials to extend learning about the birds, insects, and animals featured in the text for Grade 3 Navajo students.

Resource	Type	Description / Classroom Use	Link
Cornell Lab of Ornithology — All About Birds	Website / Species Profiles	Comprehensive species accounts with photos, songs, maps, and printable handouts. Use to identify birds like ravens, hawks, and hummingbirds from the story.	<a href="https://www.allaboutbirds.org/">https://www.allaboutbirds.org/</a>
BugGuide.net	Website / Insect Image Database	Photo identification and natural history information on North American insects. Great for identifying butterflies, bees, and caterpillars.	<a href="https://bugguide.net/">https://bugguide.net/</a>
USDA Forest Service — Pollinators Field Guide (PDF)	Printable Guide	K–12 field guide introducing pollinators such as bees and butterflies; includes diagrams and regional info.	<a href="https://www.fs.usda.gov/">https://www.fs.usda.gov/</a> (Search: 'FS Pollinators Field Guide PDF')
Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center — Plant and Pollinators Resources	Web Pages / Downloadable PDFs	Information about native plants and pollinators, classroom worksheets, and activities.	<a href="https://www.wildflower.org/">https://www.wildflower.org/</a>
Project Noah	Citizen Science Platform	Global photo-sharing and species identification site for animals and insects. Encourage students to document wildlife near their homes or schools.	<a href="https://www.projectnoah.org/">https://www.projectnoah.org/</a>
US Fish & Wildlife Service — Pollinator Fact Sheets	PDFs / Web Pages	Fact sheets and maps describing pollinators native to different U.S. regions. Excellent visual references for lessons on bees and butterflies.	<a href="https://www.fws.gov/">https://www.fws.gov/</a> (Search: 'pollinators fact sheets pdf')

<b>Resource</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description / Classroom Use</b>	<b>Link</b>
Smithsonian National Zoo & Conservation Biology Institute — Insects & Spiders	Web Pages/ Multimedia	Short educational articles and images about insect groups and life cycles. Supports cross-curricular reading and science connections.	<a href="https://nationalzoo.si.edu/animals/insects-spiders">https://nationalzoo.si.edu/animals/insects-spiders</a>
Audubon Bird Guide (App / Web Resource)	Digital App / Online Field Guide	Interactive bird guide with photos, range maps, and audio of calls. Students can explore native species from the Navajo Nation region.	<a href="https://www.audubon.org/">https://www.audubon.org/</a>