



# DAKOTA STORIES: THE WOMAN IN THE SKY

**NOTE:** “It is very important to not make any assumptions when considering the individual’s experience and practices with respect to cultural teachings and practices. Because different people are taught different practices, it is important to be curious about which teachings they connect with, so as to not make assumptions about their beliefs and values.” (From the Klinik Community Health Center, Manitoba, Canada).

*“This is part of an epic story, told by my grandmother.” – Katherine Akipa*

There were two beautiful maidens lying on a prairie looking at the night sky.

“Sister, if I were to get married I would marry that star,” one of the maidens said.

The other sister agrees and picks out her own star.

Suddenly two tall, handsome, Dakota men appeared. They show the women the spirit world, and took them to two tipis.

Now, in our tradition, there is a taboo for women who are with child: don't pick your own tipsula.

The woman's sister came in and asked if she could get her anything.

"I'm really wishing for some tipsula," the woman said.

The sister replied, "Just wait, I'll get some."

The woman waited, but was getting impatient. She decided to get the tipsula herself. She was not supposed to do this, because pregnancy is a time to take care of your child and yourself.

So the woman found the tipsula roots and got her stick. There is a very specific method of getting the tipsula, and she leaned on the stick to dig it out. But there are consequences when things are not done as they should be.

The stick struck the ground, and the woman popped open her pregnant belly. The ground cracked beneath her. Because they were still in the sky world, the woman fell through the sky down to the earth. The women went falling down through the sky.

Shortly after, a wolf mother found the woman dead, but the baby was still alive. She took the baby and raised him on her own. But that is another story.

*Shared by: Katherine Akipa, SWO tribal member*