Many moons ago, when the Narragansetts planted for the whole village, large plots of cornfields, there lived a squaw with her family, who sought to be “matron of the fields.” This was a position for all women to try for and an honor bestowed upon the chosen one. The chosen one each year, was one who had gained the love and esteem of the whole tribe, through noble unselfish deeds. Like the warriors who tried to excel in bravery, so the squaws, must excel in loving kindness. But as now, so was it in those days, often kind considerate and helpful persons do not see their immediate reward, and so, become critical of others.

The more this squaw, Morning Star, did for others and sacrificed herself, without being chosen for the coveted position, the more sensitive, sarcastic, and sometimes very angry and hypocritical she became. This made her more and more unpopular, while each year, some sweet natured, unassuming matron, with no such laurels as hers to flout in one’s face, would be chosen in spite of Morning Star’s efforts.

Morning Star did not wish to lose her symbol from her husband’s mantel, so she was all loveliness, kindness and loyalty to him, and in his presence. Bye and bye he began to realize Morning Star was never chosen by the tribe, and year after year she had labored and platted for others. Because of her sweetness to him, he could see no fault in her. He saw, for sure, her disappointment after the election. So he schemed in his heart how to put his squaw to the front, since all the tribe was blind. He trusted his wife and would not question others of her deeds out of her hearing. He worried and became thin. Morning Star forgot her disappointment in her concern for him.

“I will go into the forests to meditate,” said her brave, Thunder Cloud. And he went away. All the tribe missed him for Thunder Cloud was a wise councilman. They knew he would not return until he had received council from the Great Spirit. No one guessed his real mission; no one knew his heart was heavy for his Morning Star who had labored so faithfully for him. He prayed for a sign or a happening that would give Morning Star her chance to prove her worth to the tribe.

As he prayed a great plague came upon the Narragansetts and Thunder Cloud received a message. He started home.

No rain for days, and the hot dry weather brought fever in its wake. The corn fields withered. The people were sick.

Morning Star in her sorrow for her missing brave, forgot herself, in the service of others. Fearlessly she arose at dawn, when the morning star spread its glory about her, and went away up into the hills to fetch water for the fevered tribe and fields. The more she brought, the lighter it grew; and bye and bye her steps, which she took back and forth to the fountain, and to the bedside, became rhythmic, for all this time Morning Star’s heart was praying. Not for self but for others, and for the field of corn she had so wanted to superintend. The young matron of the fields was very sick, and at Morning Star’s mercy. At election, Morning Star thought she hated her; but now she pitied and attended her with all the kindness of her sorrowing heart, for she too, had suffered. The beautiful young matron was filled with pain and her parched lips could not give commands.

Unconsciously, Morning Star rose to the occasion, while others fainted. She attended with willing hands, the beloved matron of the fields, endangering her own life, she went in and out wigwams and long houses administering to the sick, praying for rain.

Bye and bye the thunder clouds gathered and the sky grew dark, the wind fanned the dry earth and finally the rain came. Then Thunder Cloud, her brave started home, rejoicing for the Great Spirit had answered his prayers and bade him return. His footsteps also were graceful and rhythmical. When he reached the village, seeing no one he danced around the cornfields, which Morning Star had tended during his absence. But where was she, why did she not come to join his dance and share his thanksgiving?

Morning Star had completed her last task and the Great Spirit had taken her to the regions of the Unknown, to shine through the doorway of heaven. And every day before the sun is up, Morning Star breaks from the portals of Night to shed a blessing on Day. Then men do the corn dance, in honor of her who worked unpraised on earth, but now shines in heaven, blessing the cornfields everywhere.