

HIAWATHA & MINNEHAHA

by

Steven Lisberger

Inspired by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's
poem, THE SONG OF HIAWATHA, and the original
Chippewa legends of Winnebojo.



Technical consultant:

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Chippewa and official Historian for the Leech
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FADE IN:

Two wisps of sweetgrass smoke drift upwards across the screen as a symbolic offering meant to carry the story that follows to the Great Spirit and to our Mother Earth.

PROLOGUE:

A chanting V.O. tells the tale. We feel the resonance and wisdom of IAGOO's elderly Chippewa voice.

IAGOO (V.O. CHANTING)
THE SPIRIT OF THE WEST WIND
CALLED TO OUR NATIONS, THE
CHIPPEWA AND THE DAKOTA.

We pan down the smoke trails to a series of beautiful Native American Chippewa paintings done on large scrolls of white birch bark. The heroic Native American figures and landscapes are colored with brilliant dyes made from sumac and butternut trees and the colored juice of bloodroot.

IAGOO (V.O. CONT.)
FROM THE NORTHERN LAKES AND
RIVERS, OUR TRIBES JOURNEYED TO
HIS COUNCIL IN THE WEST.

The birch bark paintings are turned by an ancient hand. A SQUIRREL helps turn them and looks at each painting with keen interest.

IAGOO (V.O. CONT.)
WITH THEIR WEAPONS AT THE READY,
THEY STOOD THERE ON THE RED
STONE MOUNTAIN, PAINTED IN THEIR
WAR-PAINT, WILDLY GLARING AT
EACH OTHER. IN THEIR FACES,
STERN DEFIANCE. IN THEIR EYES,
THE LOOKS OF HATRED.

The comical squirrel continues to reveal the bark paintings as Iagoo chants.

IAGOO (V.O. CONT.)
THE WEST WIND TOLD THEM THAT THE
GREAT SPIRIT, GITCHE MANITO, THE
CREATOR OF THIS WORLD, LOOKED
UPON THEIR WARS AND BLOODSHED AS
MERELY THE FEUDS AND FIGHTS OF
CHILDREN!

IAGOO (V.O. CONT.)

LISTEN TO THE WORDS OF WISDOM
FROM THE GREAT SPIRIT, THE WEST
WIND TOLD THEM, FROM THE MASTER
OF LIFE WHO MADE YOU. HE HAS
GIVEN YOU LANDS TO HUNT IN,
FILLED YOUR MARSHES FULL OF WILD
FOWL, YOUR RIVERS FULL OF FISH.
WHY THEN ARE YOU NOT CONTENTED?
WHY THEN DO YOU HUNT EACH OTHER?
HE IS WEARY OF YOUR QUARRELS.

HE WILL SEND A HERO TO YOU. A
DELIVERER OF PEACE, WHO SHALL
GUIDE YOU AND SHALL TEACH YOU.
IF YOU FOLLOW HIM AND HIS
ACTIONS, YOU WILL MULTIPLY AND
PROSPER. IF HIS WARNINGS PASS
UNHEEDED, YOU SHALL PERISH!

BUT THE TRIBES BEGAN THEIR
WARRING WORDS ANEW. THE HERO
WILL BE OURS, NOT YOURS, EACH
SAID. THE GREAT WEST WIND
HOWLED IN ANGER. FROM THE
MOUNTAIN SIDE HE CAST THEM, LIKE
THE DRY LEAVES OF WINTER, THE
CHIPPEWA AND DAKOTA.

Pull back to reveal a sliver of golden morning light
illuminating HIAWATHA, the recipient of the story. Hiawatha
is a fifteen year old Chippewa. He is bold, strong and
brave.

HIAWATHA

Who could this hero be,
Grandfather?

In front of him, under the domed roof of their birch bark
wigwam, sits his dignified grandfather, IAGOO, the voice
we've been listening to. Iagoo's head is crowned with a
regal HEADDRESS of EAGLE FEATHERS, each of which represents
an act of bravery or sacrifice. Behind him, hangs an
ancient carved IRONWOOD BOW.

The helpful squirrel is ADJI, Hiawatha's little buddy.
Hiawatha holds his breath waiting for Iagoo's answer.

IAGOO

Look to the river.

HIAWATHA

When?

IAGOO

You will know him when you see him.

HIAWATHA

I will tell the others.

IAGOO

No! The voices of the Spirits are not to be repeated.

HIAWATHA

You told me.

IAGOO

Hiawatha... when your father left this world he became the Spirit of the West Wind. He is the one on the Red Stone Mountain.

Hiawatha's eyes go wide, his heart beats loudly. He jumps up unable to contain his pride.

HIAWATHA

My father is the Spirit of the West Wind?

IAGOO

You have much to live up to.

HIAWATHA

He is the mightiest of the four winds.

IAGOO

He is also the wisest.

HIAWATHA

I'll make my great Father proud... and you and Grandmother too. I will be the first of my friends to win my Eagle Feather.

IAGOO

The hero will not think of getting, he will dream of giving.

HIAWATHA

(shaking his fist)

But, I will get from the Dakota and give to our people.

IAGOO

When I was your age we won our
Feathers for helping all the
tribes of man.

Iagoo shakes his head and has to take a deep breath. This isn't going well. Hiawatha has too much young Warrior in his veins.

IAGOO

I have brought you to the brink
of understanding. Now you must
discover on your own.

Iagoo casts his gaze out the wigwam door, across this beautiful land they call Minnesota. He looks far beyond the thick pines and cedars to the other side of nearby river, the home of the Dakota tribe.

EXT. THE DAKOTA SHORE - DAY

A teenage Dakota maiden sits in her teepee. This is MINNEHAHA. She is energetic, industrious, kind, beautiful and clever.

Next to her, on the woven bullrush matting, sits her father CHIEF TEKUMAH, the proud and dignified leader of the Dakota tribe.

The Chief marks wooden arrows with designs by sprinkling a dark powder into their campfire. The reddish smoke, rising from the powder, stains the wood like paint. When Minnehaha removes the grass wrappings from the arrows, symbols and designs remain in white.

TEKUMAH

With these markings I bestow
special powers.

MINNEHAHA

(whispering to the
arrows)

You should be grateful for this
honor.

To our surprise, the magic arrow in the Chief's hand coughs. The three arrowheads are made from STONE, BONE and HORN. Each arrowhead is carved into the face of a character, each has its own personality.

STONE HEAD

(admiring his design)

Thank you, Chief Tekumah.



BONE HEAD
We will fly straight...

HORN HEAD
...and true.

TEKUMAH
Now you are sanctified. One day
a Dakota Warrior with a pure
heart will use you to defend our
village when its peril is
greatest.

MINNEHAHA
But Father, you taught me how to
shoot with these arrows...

TEKUMAH
They are destined for more than
target practice, Minnehaha.

MINNEHAHA
No one will ever shoot them
truer than me.

TEKUMAH
Do not think I am not proud of
you. But your future lies in
other things.

Through the doorway we see a young man approach at a full
run. This is Minnehaha's older teenage BROTHER. He pokes
his head in and shouts out his urgent news.

BROTHER
The Chippewa have stolen our
fish nets!

TEKUMAH
Their greed is worse than war...
there is no honor in the ways of
greed.

BROTHER
Tell the others I'll be on the
river. I'm going to stop them
before they steal again.

Tekumah carefully hangs the quiver with the magic arrows on
the teepee wall.

Minnehaha's Brother and Chief Tekumah rush off. She watches
them go, then grabs her father's magic arrows from their
spot of honor on the wall.

STONE HEAD

But your father said we're
waiting for a important battle.

MINNEHAHA

Every battle is important to
those who fight it.

Minnehaha heads out, confidently slinging the quiver with
the three magic arrows over her shoulder.

INT. HIAWATHA'S WIGWAM - DAY

Hiawatha watches his grandfather start to draw another scene
on a birch bark scroll. Iagoo uses a piece of charcoal
taken from the last embers of the fire.

Outside the wigwam, voices shatter the quiet of the Chippewa
village.

VILLAGERS (O.S.)

Our wild rice was stolen last
night -- again the Dakota took
what's not theirs.

Hiawatha steps out the wigwam door, where his grandmother,
the elderly NOKOMIS, is standing hanging up whitefish to dry
on a rack. Two young men about Hiawatha's age come running
over. These are FRIENDS of Hiawatha's. One of them is BIG,
the other LITTLE.

LITTLE FRIEND

Lets go after them. Sink their
canoes.

BIG FRIEND

Hiawatha, we need you.

Hiawatha looks towards his grandmother. She too is angered
at the news and doesn't hold back her feelings.

NOKOMIS (GRANDMOTHER)

First our treasures, now our
food. I can remember when your
Grandfather and I worked
together with the Dakota tribe
to clear the river of the Great
Swamp between us.

Iagoo's voice echoes from the darkness of the wigwam.

IAGOO (O.S.)

Forgiveness is the way to
healing.

NOKOMIS

(to Iagoo)

We Chippewa have to take back
what is ours, or this winter we
will go hungry.

Iagoo looks out from the wigwam.

IAGOO

Before long, there will be war,
the worst war we have ever seen.
Unless...

(only to himself)

...a hero comes.

HIAWATHA

Unless... we stop them. They
won't be so ready to cross the
river when they see my new
canoe.

BIG FRIEND

When will it be ready?

HIAWATHA

Today. Wait for me by Slippery
Rock, I will meet you there.

Hiawatha grabs his canoe paddle and takes off like a shot.

BIG FRIEND

This could be our day!

LITTLE FRIEND

Eagle Feathers for all of us.

The young men stare spitefully across the river and wave
their war clubs towards the distant Dakota shoreline, then
they run off calling out their war cries.

IAGOO

He's in the wigwam whispering to himself.

IAGOO

(chanting to himself)

BUT THE TRIBES BEGAN THEIR
WARRING WORDS ANEW. THE HERO
WILL BE OURS, NOT YOURS, EACH
SAID. THE GREAT WEST WIND
HOWLED IN ANGER, FROM THE
MOUNTAIN SIDE HE CAST THEM, LIKE
THE DRY LEAVES OF WINTER, THE
CHIPPEWA AND DAKOTA.

His charcoal drawing reveals a tortured image of a great battle with villages laying in ruin.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

SLIPPERY ROCK, a massive stone outcropping situated in the sheltered narrows of the river.

Mysteriously, the monolithic "ROCK" begins to move, rising slowly out of the water. Two horrific eyes scan the waterline. The hunched over rock rises, revealing a massive moss-covered body decked out in shiny stolen wampum belts. These wampum bands, made of shells, represent money and power to all Indians.

This demon ravenously eats the stolen Chippewa wild rice and fish taken from the Dakota nets.

His name is SWAMP FEATHER, he is the supernatural Lord and Winndigo [Monster] of the Swamp Waters, his chiseled brutal face a mask of war paint in slashes of crimson, blue, and yellow. Coiled around his muscular arms are his FIRE SERPENTS, which are, in fact, one enormous snake body with a head at each end.

SWAMP FEATHER

I can remember when this part of
the river was once all mine...
part of my Great Swamp.

One serpent head hisses and swoons agreement with feverish steam, the other shivers an appropriate "no" with an icy stutter. Swamp Feather feeds fish to his Fire Serpent pets.

SWAMP FEATHER

Right here stood my dam holding
the stagnant festering waters
that we loved.

SERPENT

(hissing)
Yessssss.

SWAMP FEATHER

Till it was destroyed by the
Chippewa and Dakota.

SERPENT

(hissing)
Nononono.

SWAMP FEATHER

(looking down)

I hate this clear water. I need
water with some body to it.
Some mosquitos, leeches, worms -
- something that gushes and
oozes under my feet.

He looks left and right. Through the mist in the distance
he spots canoes approaching.

SWAMP FEATHER

How beautiful this land will be
when it's all my putrid swamp
again.

SERPENT

Yesssssss.

SWAMP FEATHER

My new dam will be bigger, much
bigger -- and up river, so they
can't get at it. We'll take
their river away from them --
every crystal drop. Steal their
food, steal everything!

SERPENT

Yesssssss.

SWAMP FEATHER

And make sure they stay too busy
warring with each other to ever
notice us.

Swamp Feather gobbles the last of his stolen food then
submerges part way, crouching down into his "Slippery Rock"
position.

EXT. RIVER'S EDGE, CHIPPEWA SIDE - DAY

A BIRCH TREE talks to his neighbors on the shore. He spots
Hiawatha in the distance running over the hilltop towards
him. Adj, the squirrel, sits on Hiawatha's shoulder.

BIRCH

Hiawatha says he's going to make
the perfect canoe out of me.

SPRUCE

We've been listening to you two
all summer. Wigwams are made
out of birch bark.

CEDAR

Canoes are made from hollowed
out logs... get it?

SPRUCE

Why are you so restless, Birch?

BIRCH

(trying to scratch
himself)

My bark itches -- I think it's
too tight, and these limbs are
no help at all. Errrr... can't
move my limbs, can't move my
feet. I'm stuck here forever.

Birch tries as hard as he can to pull free. A WOODPECKER
lands on one of his branches and begins to peck at Birch's
trunk with his needle sharp beak.

BIRCH

Ahhhh! Thank you Woodpecker.
It's the bugs... down a bit and
left -- you got em!

WOODPECKER

Glad to help, hold still.

BIRCH

(to the trees)

Perhaps you two are satisfied to
stay here and get eaten by bugs,
but I want to make something of
myself -- go places, see things.

CEDAR

What about your leaves, they
always end up going everywhere.

Hiawatha arrives ready to get to work. Adjì makes himself
comfortable on Hiawatha's shoulder. He calmly munches on
one of Cedar's pinecones.

HIAWATHA

You haven't changed your mind
have you?

BIRCH

I don't want to wear this
overcoat all summer.

HIAWATHA

You'll be the fastest canoe on
the river -- if you're as good
as I think you are.

From his deerskin pouch, Hiawatha quickly grabs his tomahawk, a black obsidian knife, and his ironwood wedge.

BIRCH
I'll be as good as you make me.

HIAWATHA
Then you're going to be the best. Now shut your eyes, I'll tell you when I'm finished.

BIRCH
This won't hurt will it?

HIAWATHA
You've got to be brave if you want to be my canoe.

Hiawatha takes out his knife. Birch shuts his eyes, as Hiawatha starts to make the very first birch bark canoe.

CUT TO:

EXT. GLADE, DAKOTA SIDE - DAY

Minnehaha rushes through the Dakota woods headed towards the river.

BONE HEAD
Where are we headed?

MINNEHAHA
To join my Brother.

Minnehaha flexes her Osage wood bow. A leaf drops towards the forest floor. She takes Stone Head between her thumb and knuckle and places his tail-nock on the deerhide string.

MINNEHAHA
That's a Chippewa over there.

BONE HEAD
It's just a leaf...

MINNEHAHA
Just pretend, till we find a real one.

Minnehaha SINGS as she aims Stone Head at anything that moves. RABBITS and GROUSE see her prowling amongst the trees and head for cover.



MINNEHAHA

(singing)

HEAR THE BIRDS SING OUT ROUND
ME, "DO NOT SHOOT US,
MINNEHAHA!" SINGS THE ROBIN, THE
OPECHEE. SINGS THE BLUEBIRD,
THE OWAISSA, "DO NOT SHOOT US
MINNEHAHA!" AND THE RABBIT FROM
HIS PATHWAY LEAPS ASIDE, SAYING,
"DO NOT SHOOT ME, MINNEHAHA!"

Minnehaha looks around, her eyes narrowed, her mind
conjuring up imaginary enemy Warriors.

MINNEHAHA (CONT.)

FEAR NOT MY LITTLE FRIENDS, MY
THOUGHTS ARE ON A CHIPPEWA FOE;
ON HIS TRACKS MY EYES ARE
FASTENED, LEADING DOWNWARD TO
THE RIVER, BY THE SHORES OF
GITCHE GUMEE, BY THE SHINNING
BIG-SEA-WATERS.

HIDDEN IN THE ALDER BUSHES, HERE
I WAIT, TILL I SEE HIS BOW AND
ARROW LIFTED, SEE HIS EYES LOOK
FROM THE THICKET, SEE HIM COME
DOWN THE PATHWAY, FLECKED WITH
LEAFY LIGHT AND SHADOW.

A ROBIN, feeling safe, drops a leaf from her nest.

MINNEHAHA (CONT.)

THEN I AIM MY ARROW; SCARCE A
TWIG MOVES WITH MY MOTION,
SCARCE A BOUGH IS STIRRED.

Minnehaha fires Stone Head, whose caught up in Minnehaha's
song.

MINNEHAHA (CONT.)

WINGED WITH FEATHERS, TIPPED
WITH STONE, SWIFT FLIES MY
ARROW.

STONE HEAD

LIKE A WASP I BUZZ AND STING!

WHOOSH! The leaf flutters to the ground in two pieces,
cleanly cut in half by Stone Head. The arrow buries itself
into a nearby tree.



MINNEHAHA (CONT.)
THEN HE REELS AND STAGGERS
FORWARD, LIKE A BUFFALO, WHEN
THE SNOW IS ON THE PRAIRIE.

Minnehaha pulls Bone Head from her back quiver before the halves of the leaf hit the ground.

MINNEHAHA (CONT.)
SWIFTER FLIES MY SECOND ARROW,
IN THE PATHWAY OF THE OTHER.

BONE HEAD
SEE HIS KNEES SHAKE AND TREMBLED
LIKE THE REEDS AND RUSHES.

WHACK! Both halves of the falling leaf are skewered pinned to the tree trunk -- an seemingly impossible shot.

A CHIPMUNK drops his pine cone joining the fun of Minnehaha's shooting gallery.

MINNEHAHA (CONT.)
BUT MY THIRD AND LAST ARROW,
SWIFTEST FLEW.

Minnehaha releases Horn Head.

HORN HEAD
SEE HIM WHIMPER AND BEG FOR
MERCY, AS I FLY TOWARDS HIM.

WHUMP! The pine cone is nailed to the tree. Minnehaha proudly retrieves her arrows.

She pulls Horn Head free, but the pine cone is stuck over his head. Minnehaha pretends his muffled pleas come from her vanquished enemy.

MINNEHAHA (CONT.)
HARK YOU WARRIOR YOU ARE A
COWARD, AND NO WARRIOR AS YOU
PRETEND, ELSE YOU WOULD NOT CRY
AND WHIMPER. YOU GO SNEAKING IN
THE FOREST, YOU GO HIDING IN THE
MOUNTAINS. HAD YOU CONQUERED ME
IN BATTLE NOT A SOUND WOULD I
HAVE UTTERED, AND YOU SIT HERE
AND WHIMPER, AND DISGRACE YOUR
TRIBE BY CRYING LIKE A COWARD.

She pulls the cone off, throws it back to the chipmunk and slips her arrows back into the quiver. The robin, grouse, and rabbits clap and cheer.

MINNEHAHA (CONT.)
HONOR BE TO MINNEHAHA CRIED ALL
THE WARRIORS, CRIED THE ELDERS,
WHEN I COME HOME IN TRIUMPH FROM
THE GREATEST BATTLE THE SUN HAD
EVER LOOKED UPON, THAT THE WAR
BIRDS HAD EVER WITNESSED.

EXT. CHIPPEWA FOREST - DAY

The Birch's bark coat lies on the ground at Hiawatha's feet.
The other trees are suddenly jealous.

CEDAR
What about us?

HIAWATHA
You've got to be brave if you
want to be my canoe.

Cedar shuts his eyes to show he's ready. Hiawatha splits a
stout frame from the white wood of the Cedar tree.

SPRUCE
Can't you use me too?

WOODPECKER
You've got to be tough if you
want to be his canoe.

The Woodpecker punches small holes in the loose bark with
his beak. Hiawatha sews threads made from the Spruce's
roots through the little holes.

He seals the seams with sticky pine resin -- what a mess!
Adji watches, munching on his pine cone.

ADJI
You've got to be... sappy if you
want to be his canoe.

Adji scampers into the half finished craft like he owns it.

HIAWATHA
Nobody ever even thought of a
canoe like this before.

ADJI
When the Dakota see this they're
going to split their buckskins.



HIAWATHA
(daydreaming)
I wonder what kind of canoe the
hero will have?

WOODPECKER
(looking around)
Who are you talking about?

HIAWATHA
Never mind -- it's a secret.

ADJI
Whoever he is, his won't be as
good as this one.

HIAWATHA
(as he works)
He probably has lots of Eagle
Feathers... a whole Headdress
full. Each feather from a
battle more dangerous than
before.

WOODPECKER
You've got to tell me who this
is?

HIAWATHA
I don't know, but...
(singing as he works)
HE MUST HAVE FOUGHT ALL THE
MONSTERS WE CALL WINNDIGOEES AND
GRIZZLIES, ENDURED ALL SORTS OF
EVIL MAGICIANS AND MISERIES.

ADJI
Who could this hero be, where
could I find him?

Being a bird, the Woodpecker breaks into song next.
Hiawatha keeps working on his canoe.

WOODPECKER
OR JUST STAND BESIDE HIM, WHO
COULD HE BE?

HIAWATHA (CONT.)
 HE'D BE SKILLED IN THE CRAFT OF
 HUNTERS, LEARNED IN ALL THE LORE
 OF OLD, WOULD KNOW OF EVERY BIRD
 ITS LANGUAGE, LEARNED THEIR
 NAMES AND ALL THEIR SECRETS,
 TALK WITH THEM WHENE'ER HE MET
 THEM, HOW THE REINDEER RAN SO
 SWIFTLY, WHY THE RABBIT WAS SO
 TIMID.

ADJI
 I haven't seen him.

HIAWATHA (CONT.)
 ALL THE SPIRITS WOULD BE HIS
 ALLIES; WITH THEIR HELP, HE'D
 CLEANSE THE EARTH FROM ALL THAT
 HARMS IT, CLEAR THE FISHING
 GROUNDS AND THE RIVERS OF THEIR
 SWAMPS. A HERO WHO HAS LEARNED
 TO GIVE HIS ALL, NOT FOR HIMSELF
 BUT ALL THE TRIBES OF MEN, THEN
 FINDS A WAY TO GIVE AGAIN.

Adji, sitting on Hiawatha's paddle, sings backup for Hiawatha, who continues to work. The trees join in. BEARS, MARTINS, LYNX, PORCUPINES and MUSKRATS watch from the woods, drawn by the singing and the strange canoe. The canoe keeps his eyes shut but peeks.

ADJI
 He wouldn't shoot us, would he?

HIAWATHA (CONT.)
 HE'D ONLY TAKE ON AN IMPOSSIBLE
 FOE. AS FOR THE DAKOTA? HE
 DOESN'T CARE AN IOTA. NO MATTER
 THE HUNTING SEASON, HE'D RATHER
 TANGLE WITH A CHARGING DEMON.

Elated, the animals come over and add their melodic accompaniment. Hiawatha accepts the porcupine's offer of quills and uses them to weave a face design on the bow of the canoe.

ADJI & ANIMALS
 (singing together)
 THE WOLVERINE WOULD HAVE TAUGHT
 HIM CUNNING, THE BEAR HOW TO
 CLAW, THE PANTHER HOW TO POUNCE,
 THE BEAVER HOW TO SAW.

HIAWATHA (CONT.)

HE'D ASK ME TO JOIN HIM ON A
JOURNEY PAST WHERE OTHERS DREAM
TO GO. TO FIGHT IMPOSSIBLE
DEMONS IN THE BLACKEST NIGHT AND
THE WHITEST SNOW.

All singing together; Hiawatha, Adjì, Woodpecker, Porcupine,
the trees, and the other animals of the woods. Some are
already sitting inside the finished canoe.

ALL (CONT.)

WHO COULD THIS HERO BE, WHERE
COULD I FIND HIM, OR JUST STAND
BESIDE HIM, WHO COULD HE BE?

HIAWATHA

Brimming with pride, Hiawatha lifts his new lightweight
craft into the river. He and Adjì slide back in.

CANOE

Hey! I'm drowning!

ADJÌ

Hiawatha, we got company!

CANOE

This is your canoe speaking, can
I open my eyes now?

HIAWATHA

Oh! I forgot. Look around.

Adjì hangs over the bow to see the canoe's dumb-struck
expression. The birch bark canoe, enjoying the cool caress
of the river, is euphoric. Hiawatha can't help but smile as
he digs his paddle into the sparkling cold river. The
animals race along the shoreline.

CANOE

It works! Everything's moving.
I'm floating. Oh! Thank you
Hiawatha! How will I ever repay
you?

HIAWATHA

By always taking me where I want
to go. CHEE MAUN, I'll call
you... my canoe.

CHEE MAUN ("CHEA")

Just point the way.

Adji puts his foot on the bow of the canoe and points into a grand vista rife with adventure. It's yet another heroic pose for the chubby squirrel. His friends onshore wave.

ADJI

Make way for "CHEA" and the
mighty chieftains of the river.

HIAWATHA

HE'D ASK ME TO JOIN HIM ON A
JOURNEY PAST WHERE OTHERS DREAM
TO GO. TO FIGHT IMPOSSIBLE
DEMONS IN THE BLACKEST NIGHT AND
THE WHITEST SNOW.

ADJI & CHEA

WE'LL FIND HIM, STAND BESIDE
HIM, WHEREVER HE MAY GO.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Minnehaha's Brother and his sidekick, another YOUNG DAKOTA, are readying their traditional dugout canoe. They find it extremely difficult to launch the massive log canoe into the river.

BROTHER

Let's go before my sister
comes... Oh, no!

Minnehaha arrives. The sidekick drops the craft on his moccasin-covered toes.

MINNEHAHA

I'm ready.

YOUNG DAKOTA

This is not going to be a Pow-
Wow, Minnehaha. There could be
blood on the water before the
day is done.

MINNEHAHA

Then you'll need my help.

BROTHER

Not today... another time.

MINNEHAHA

What if there is no other time?

YOUNG DAKOTA

We've been fighting the Chippewa
our whole lives, it will not end
today.

MINNEHAHA

(feeling disappointed)
The way you both shoot, I won't
argue.

BROTHER

I've heard enough. Head for
Slippery Rock.

They shove off into the current. The young Dakota eyes
Minnehaha walking away.

YOUNG DAKOTA

I wonder... how many times I'd
have to leave a deer in front of
your father's tepee to win her?

BROTHER

Many have tried... many have
failed.

MINNEHAHA

I heard that. I can get my own
deer... thank you.

Frustrated, Minnehaha turns back and heads into the woods.

MINNEHAHA

We'll guard the village. That's
more important anyway.

BONE HEAD

Yeah, it might get attacked by
leaves at any moment.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Little Friend and Big Friend are hiding behind Slippery
Rock.

Minnehaha's Brother and his sidekick have them pinned down.

A hail of Dakota arrows land on Hiawatha's friends. One
hits Big Friend in the arm. He tries to return fire but the
pain is too much. Little Friend comes to his aid. He pulls
the arrow out and begins to bandage his buddy's muscular arm
with bullrush leaves.

LITTLE FRIEND

(yelling out)

What makes the Dakota think they
can steal our wild rice?

BROTHER

(yelling back)

What makes Chippewa thieves
steal our fish nets?

BIG FRIEND

We should have waited for
Hiawatha.

LITTLE FRIEND

And let them get away?

BIG FRIEND

(looks up)

Hiawatha!

It's Hiawatha in Chea going flat out -- what a sight!
Hiawatha is paddling Chippewa style, standing up, so he can
get maximum speed and power out of each stroke.

HIAWATHA

You're wounded!

Enraged, Hiawatha drops his paddle and starts firing arrows
in rapid succession. The Dakota don't like the look of his
bizarre birch bark canoe. Bewildered, they still fire back.

YOUNG DAKOTA

What strange craft is that -- a
floating wigwam!

BROTHER

And a fast one -- paddle back to
shore!

LITTLE FRIEND & BIG FRIEND

(yelling out)

After them Hiawatha!

Hiawatha is relentless in his pursuit. But this is the
narrowest part of the river and the Dakota are quickly
swallowed up by the misty fog bank on the opposite
shoreline.

EXT. THE DAKOTA SIDE - DAY

Hiawatha beaches on the Dakota side of the river. A pair of enormous moose stride majestically along the misty bank, their massive antlers held high above the fog. Hiawatha pushes his nervous canoe up on the mossy bank. He gives Chea a pat, then shoulders his bow and arrows.

HIAWATHA

Just because they found their way to their side, that doesn't mean we won't follow them.

ADJI

I'm not letting any of these guys get away either.

Adji scoops up more acorns then he can possibly carry. The intrepid team heads deeper into the Dakota woods.

MINNEHAHA

She spots Hiawatha and Adji as they prowl through the glade.

MINNEHAHA

(whispering)

There's a Chippewa Warrrior now!

STONE HEAD

This is not pretend, young lady.

MINNEHAHA

Have no fear, the Spirits must be with us.

In one lighting move, Minnehaha has her arrow Stone Head loaded and aims in Hiawatha's direction.

BONE HEAD

(objecting)

Why does he get to go first?

STONE HEAD

Because I'm sharper than you.

MINNEHAHA

Shhh!

Hiawatha hears the arrowhead and spots Minnehaha. He ducks behind a tree before Minnehaha can fire.

ADJI

Hiawatha, lets run while we can.



But, he quickly decides he needs another look at this pretty Dakota girl. Hiawatha pokes his head around the tree.

MINNEHAHA

Minnehaha begins to stalk her prey.

MINNEHAHA

Stone Head, see if he's alone or
with a War Party.

She fires. Stone Head flies like a rocket and sticks into the tree near Hiawatha. Hiawatha and Adjì are flabbergasted to see Bone Head yelling his report back to Minnehaha.

STONE HEAD

(as loud as he can)
Alone ... except for one very
fat squirrel!

MINNEHAHA

Minnehaha readies Bone Head.

HORN HEAD

Dibs on the squirrel.

HIAWATHA

Hiawatha grabs Stone Head out of the tree.

HIAWATHA

(to Stone Head)
What's her name? I have to
know.

ADJÌ

What for?

STONE HEAD

I'll never talk to a Chippewa,
you're lucky to still be alive.

Hiawatha notches Stone Head up on his bow.

STONE HEAD

I'm her arrow, you can't shoot
me back. Put me down!

HIAWATHA

Tell her I mean no harm, I just
want to meet her.

Hiawatha fires Stone Head back and hits the tree next to Minnehaha.

STONE HEAD

Sorry Minnehaha, this was his idea.

MINNEHAHA

Who does this Chippewa think he is?

STONE HEAD

He says he wants to meet you.

MINNEHAHA

He's supposed to attack or at least run away like a thief.
Meet me?!

STONE HEAD

They're so sneaky.

Hiawatha pokes his head around the tree for a second and waves. Minnehaha is incensed. Angrily, she takes aim with Bone Head. Hiawatha appears again, a smile on his face.

Something about Hiawatha's smile gets Minnehaha to shift her aim. In spite of their feuding tribes, the teenagers feel an immediate chemistry.

BONE HEAD

Where are you aiming? You're going to miss him.

MINNEHAHA

Bone Head, doesn't he have a nice smile... I mean for a Chippewa.

BONE HEAD

No he doesn't! Shoot him!

MINNEHAHA

It's no victory if he makes it too easy. Look! He's waving again, and his hands are empty - find out his name and what he's after.

BONE HEAD

What do you think he's after... anything he can steal.

She fires a frustrated Bone Head into the tree next to Hiawatha.

BONE HEAD

Minnehaha wants to know your name, so she can send you to the hereafter.

HIAWATHA

Tell Minnehaha, Hiawatha is my name...

(proudly)

...son of the Mighty West Wind.

He fires Bone Head back hitting the tree next to Minnehaha.

BONE HEAD

He says his name is Hiawatha, son of the West Wind. Looks more like son of Prairie Chicken to me.

Hiawatha steps completely out from behind the tree. He strikes a suitably impressive Warrior pose.

Minnehaha isn't taking any chances and prepares her Horn Head arrow. Hiawatha can't stop looking into Minnehaha's dark languid eyes even if they are aiming an arrow at him.

HIAWATHA

(teasing her)

I thought since you missed me twice, I'd come a little closer.

MINNEHAHA

I wasn't trying to hit you.

HIAWATHA

(sarcastically)

I understand.

Minnehaha knows she should shoot and ask questions later, but this is her side of the river and maybe she should teach this Chippewa with the nice smile a lesson.

MINNEHAHA

Haven't you stolen enough from us?

HIAWATHA

I leave stealing to old man Raccoon.

MINNEHAHA

So you prefer lying... I see.

HIAWATHA

I leave that to my brother
Mocking Bird.

MINNEHAHA

So what's left for you to do?

HIAWATHA

Teach you how to use that bow,
then if you still want to
fight... we can. At least then,
it'll be a little more fair.

MINNEHAHA

Many thanks, but I can out-shoot
you without any help.

HIAWATHA

I doubt it, but if you do, I'll
promise we can fight.

MINNEHAHA

With no talking and waving.

HIAWATHA

(grinning mischievously)
Agreed. And if I out-shoot you,
don't you want to know what I
want?

MINNEHAHA

You won't, so it doesn't matter.

Adjji is lounging in the crook of a nearby pine, watching the
action as he munches on a pinecone like it's popcorn.
Hiawatha flexes his bow back to the limit and aims in Adjji's
direction.

HIAWATHA

Hold up your pinecone, Adjji.

ADJJI

(to himself)
Why didn't I stay with Chea?

HIAWATHA

He steals a glance at Minnehaha to make sure she's not
missing any of his technique. Adjji nervously holds his
pinecone over his head.

Hiawatha's arrow (camera POV) flies towards the terrified
Adjji and pins his pinecone to the tree trunk with a twang.
Adjji breathes out a sigh of relief.

HIAWATHA

Like that!

Minnehaha wants to impress this young man. She wants him to know how good she really is and to discover if he can handle it when he does. Minnehaha draws back her bow and aims at Adjì.

HIAWATHA

Adjì, rest easy.

(turning to Minnehaha)

Minnehaha, try and hit the tree for starters... you seem to do well with those.

Adjì isn't taking any chances, he mutters and chirps as he sprints through the branches, holding the pinecone clenched in his teeth. He leaps towards another branch yards away.

Minnehaha releases her arrow, Horn Head, who lets out a war cry on the way to his airborne target. Adjì sees the arrow's grimacing war face and shuts his eyes in fear.

Horn Head slams into the pinecone in mid-air with so much force that it carries the cone and Adjì, still hanging on by his teeth, all the way back to the tree where it sticks solid. It all happens so fast, Adjì doesn't know which way is up.

MINNEHAHA

She smiles coyly. Hiawatha's jaw hangs agape. Hiawatha has met his match... and then some.

MINNEHAHA

(coyly)

You mean that tree?

ADJÌ

The squirrel pulls himself up on onto the arrow, which sags under his weight.

HORN HEAD

Get this fuzz-ball off me.

MINNEHAHA

She laughs at Adjì, the sweetness of her infectious giggle is downright intoxicating. Like no laugh we've ever heard, it's nothing short of music.

HIAWATHA

What evil magic is this? No one
can shoot like that.

MINNEHAHA

It's Tekumah magic -- he's the
greatest arrow maker who ever
lived.

Proudly, she strides away to retrieve her arrow, bow in
hand. Hiawatha runs enthusiastically just ahead of her as
she walks to get her arrow.

MINNEHAHA

He's our Chief... and my father.
"Nobody can shoot these magic
arrows unless their heart is
pure". Chief Tekumah's words.

Minnehaha pulls Bone Head out of the tree trunk. Hiawatha
stares at her in rapt admiration.

BONE HEAD

(to Hiawatha)

And we know what thoughts are in
your head, so that leaves you
out.

Hiawatha blushes. His heart in his hand, he reaches for the
arrow in hers. Their hands touch.

MINNEHAHA

What about our battle?

HIAWATHA

I can return tonight. Imagine,
walking... I mean stalking each
other through the moonlight,
just the two of us...

MINNEHAHA

Yes, yes... ahem, but if I let
you go, how do I know you will
return?

HIAWATHA

I give you my word, as a fellow
Warrior.

MINNEHAHA

And you have mine as a fellow
Warrioress.

HIAWATHA

I'll be by the river's edge,
when the moon is straight up in
the sky.

Hiawatha turns to go.

MINNEHAHA

Before you leave, what were you
after if you won?

Hiawatha comes back and takes her hand, he leans towards her
as if to kiss.

MINNEHAHA

We're enemies, or have you
forgotten?

HIAWATHA

You won't hold back will you?

Minnehaha nods.

HIAWATHA

Then I guess I have no chance.

Minnehaha looks up at him. Hiawatha gazes into Minnehaha's
dark eyes, enthralled. They move towards each other drawn
by a force much stronger than either of them.

MINNEHAHA

...you are not bothered by your
loss today, are you?

Hiawatha pulls her close. Their mouths touch. Her feather
earring tickles his cheek as they kiss.

HIAWATHA

No... because I won.

Hiawatha turns and flashing a grin, he runs into the woods,
heading for the river. Whooping as he goes.

STONE HEAD

He stole that kiss!

BONE HEAD

I told you they were sneaky.

EXT. RIVERS EDGE - DAY

Chea sees Hiawatha and Adjí.



HIAWATHA
The Dakota aren't what I
expected, they're...

ADJI
...prettier.

HIAWATHA
Adji, what will I do now? I
have to see her tonight.

ADJI
First time across the river and
he's fallen.

MINNEHAHA

She walks merrily along the river bank.

MINNEHAHA
Now keep this secret from my
father. Unless you mean to
start a war.

STONE HEAD
We do, but not with your father.

Minnehaha looks through the trees and sees Hiawatha in his
strange birch bark canoe. She marvels at the sight.

MINNEHAHA
Farewell, O Hiawatha. His canoe
is white, like the clouds.

HORN HEAD
And clouds bring the rain. He
is Chippewa, Minnehaha.

MINNEHAHA
I wanted to fight! He didn't.

BONE HEAD
Then you must make him fight.

EXT. RIVER'S EDGE - DAY

Iagoo follows a trail of wild rice in the mud by the river.
In his hand is his war club, PUGGAWAGUN, ("PUG") a hefty
hunk of maple stick with a burled head carved in the end.

IAGOO

I can't seem to find Hiawatha,
Pug, but my old eyes are still
good enough to follow a trail of
stolen wild rice.

"PUG"

Is this a trick or are those the
tracks of Swamp Feather?

IAGOO

They are.

PUG

He wouldn't dare come back would
he? Not after his defeat all
those years ago.

IAGOO

Maybe that's why he has
returned.

Iagoo reaches down and picks one of the broken stalks of
wild rice.

INT. CHIPPEWA VILLAGE - DAY

Hiawatha is back in his wigwam with his grandmother Nokomis.

NOKOMIS

Iagoo is out looking for you --
we're both sick with worry.
Everyone is talking about you
crossing the river.

HIAWATHA

I will always come home to you
Grandmother.

NOKOMIS

I'm going to burn that birch
bark canoe tonight when I cook
dinner.

HIAWATHA

Why? It brought me back, didn't
it?

NOKOMIS

This time. I see your friends
got the fear of the Dakota put
in them today.

HIAWATHA

The Dakota don't scare me, not
the ones I talked to.

NOKOMIS

Talked to! Why do you always
have to be so different
Hiawatha?

HIAWATHA

(defiantly)

The canoe was a good idea.
Maybe talking to the Dakota is
too.

NOKOMIS

You have enough people to talk
to in your own tribe.
(looking to Adjì)
I even taught you how to talk to
the animals...

ADJÌ

I told him not to talk to her...
oops!

Hiawatha looks at Adjì, so does Nokomis. The cat is out of
the bag.

NOKOMIS

HER! When I think of all the
lovely Chippewa girls I've
introduced you to, daughters of
our friends, you will not insult
them like this. What do you
know of Dakota girls. They're
all useless and scared of hard
work.

HIAWATHA

She is not useless and she knows
no fear... she's the daughter of
an arrow-maker.

NOKOMIS

An arrow-maker's daughter?!
They're too fierce. That's why
we gave the Dakota the nickname
"Sioux".

ADJÌ

(to Hiawatha)

Don't forget, it means
rattlesnake.

HIAWATHA

She's the prettiest rattlesnake
I've ever seen.

NOKOMIS

You see a pretty face in the
sunshine and years of feuding
just fly away? Life is not that
easy, there are too many wounds
that have to heal.

HIAWATHA

You talk as if I asked her
father to marry us.

ADJI

He could too! He's their Chief.

Nokomis explodes.

NOKOMIS

CHIEF! Where is Iagoo? Iagoo!
He must hear these words. Go to
the river and find him, right
now.

HIAWATHA

Yes, Grandmother.

In a huff, Hiawatha chases Adjì out the door of the wigwam.

EXT. THE RIVER - DUSK

Iagoo is standing on the rocks off shore, staring out at
Slippery Rock. He points with Pug.

IAGOO

That rock has moved.

Grandfather wades bravely into the brisk current, holding
onto a branch that goes over the water.

He picks up a stone and throws it, bouncing it off the
hunched over back and head of Swamp Feather. Swamp Feather
growls in anger and rises up majestically. Water pours off
his massive moss-covered shoulders.

SWAMP FEATHER

It was.... right where the old
dam once was. I see the years
have added a few feathers to
your Headdress, Iagoo.

IAGOO

Swamp Feather! We left you
enough swamp upstream, why did
you bring your greedy ways back
here?

SWAMP FEATHER

I'm not interested in what you
think is enough.

Swamp Feather calls out an eerie whistle. Iagoo and Pug
turn back to shore. The Fire Serpents are already circling
behind him by the shoreline, responding to his call.

PUG

I see you brought your family
with you.

SERPENT

Yesssss.

HIAWATHA

He's searching the shoreline, calling out Iagoo's name.

UNDERWATER POV

The Fire Serpents dive along the bottom. They slither up
Iagoo's legs, one each. Their bodies are as thick as the
old Warrior's waist.

On the surface, Iagoo smashes Pug into the water, sending up
mighty splashes with each blow. The Serpents don't stop.
Iagoo looks up, Swamp Feather looms over him. Easily two-
and-a-half times Grandfather's size, he taunts Iagoo,
staying just out of his war club's range.

SWAMP FEATHER

Doesn't look good for making it
to great-grandfather.

PUG

You've got to get me closer.

Pug is jerking at Iagoo's arm.

IAGOO

Aim for their shadows -- these
creatures get their strength
from darkness.

PUG

There are no shadows!

SWAMP FEATHER

Too late, I'm afraid the sun is
setting... on both of you.

Grandfather lunges at Swamp Feather but the Serpents hold him back. The tree branch he's holding onto snaps off in his hand. He almost goes under. His Headdress slips.

Iagoo finds his footing and throws the broken branch at Swamp Feather like a spear. Enraged, Swamp Feather lifts his mighty arms like a conductor. The Serpents take his cue and coil further up Iagoo's body.

Iagoo lands a couple solid hits with Pug. The Serpents live up to their name -- Iagoo quickly grows weak with swamp fever brought on by the Fire Serpents. He alternates between reeling with fever and shivering with the chills, his teeth chattering uncontrollably.

IAGOO

Pug... I'm burning up with
fever. Tell Nokomis and
Hiawatha -- I did not fear the
end, I walk the Path of Souls to
the Land of Peace.

SWAMP FEATHER

You're ill -- let me feel your
head.

Now that his Serpents have done the dirty work, Swamp Feather moves in for the kill. He throws a Dakota fish net over Iagoo and begins to pull him under.

SWAMP FEATHER

I'm afraid it's Swamp Fever.
Let the water cool you down.

Heroically, Iagoo manages to free his arm and prepares to throw Pug to freedom.

IAGOO

Go on without me.

PUG

But we've always been a team.

IAGOO

You must try and warn the
others.

Iagoo uses the last of his strength to throw Pug clear.

GRANDFATHER'S POV

We see an up angle through Swamp Feather's fish net. Swamp Feather lifts away Iagoo's Headdress, smiling.

SWAMP FEATHER (O.S.)

This Headdress must be treated
with respect... wouldn't want it
to get wet.

FIRE SERPENT

Nonono.

SWAMP FEATHER

And they say it takes a lifetime
to win a Headdress of Eagle
Feathers. Ha!

Down stream, Pug, swallowing his heart and mouthfuls of
river water, screams out each time he bobs up.

PUG

Iagoo! Iagoo!

On shore the war club passes right by Hiawatha and Adjì, who
can't hear him over the rushing current.

HIAWATHA

Hiawatha's heart fills with dread as he sees Iagoo floating
downstream by the river's edge.

Iagoo's still form catches on a log. Hiawatha rushes into
the current to pull Iagoo free, untangling the fish netting.

HIAWATHA

Iagoo! Adjì... get Grandmother,
quick!

An Eagle Feather ripped free in the fight is laying on
Iagoo's chest, held there by the netting.

HIAWATHA

Dakota fish nets! Why did they
do this? Why? Why?

Hiawatha chokes back his tears. The shock is more than he
can take. He hugs Iagoo in disbelief. The wind storms, the
river water has white caps. The music score howls with
Hiawatha's pain.



CUT TO:

A small crowd of Chippewa mourners outside the wigwam.

CHIPPEWA MAN

Are we going to let this
bloodshed go unanswered,
Brothers?

CHIPPEWA WOMAN

The Dakota wanted his Headdress
and took his life to get it.

BIG FRIEND

The Chiefs and Elders must agree
to war now.

NOKOMIS

All hope of peace has vanished.

Hiawatha listens to his grandmother, heartbroken.

NOKOMIS

Iagoo's last Eagle Feather
belongs to the Warrior who will
lead us against the Dakota.

The crowd hoots its approval as Nokomis holds up the
Feather.

CUT TO:

INT. MINNEHAHA'S TEPEE - NIGHT

Ready to go to sleep, Minnehaha, her father Tekumah and her
Brother are spreading cedar boughs on the tepee floor and
covering them with bull-rush mats. Chief Tekumah lays down
some bear-hide bedding, then checks his deerskin quiver...
it's gone.

TEKUMAH

Where are my magic arrows?

MINNEHAHA

Here, I was just returning them.

TEKUMAH

These arrows are not to be
treated lightly, Minnehaha. We
must be ready for the Chippewa
day and night.

He takes them back and carefully hangs up the decorative
quiver, then lies down.

BROTHER

One followed me today in the
strangest canoe my eyes have
ever seen.

This news isn't lost on Minnehaha.

TEKUMAH

If I had known what thieves they
would become, I would have let
the dam stand. At least the
Great Swamp kept us apart.

BROTHER

You did what was right, Father.
Swamp Fever was worse than the
Chippewa -- there was no choice.

TEKUMAH

Yes, the fever that crawled out
of the swamp didn't care; women,
children, elders... your mother,
it took them all.

Chief Tekumah rolls over, trying to go to sleep.

EXT. CHIPPEWA VILLAGE - NIGHT

Hiawatha is sharpening stone arrowheads outside the wigwam.
From the look on his face, Hiawatha must think he's the only
teenager with a life that makes no sense. Adjii keeps him
company, offering him some hickory nuts.

Across the village, Elders and War Chiefs are formulating
battle plans. They have hatred in their faces. A war drum,
painted with designs of turtles and lightning, is being
beaten very slowly, methodically warning of battles to come.
Hiawatha looks soulfully towards the river, glistening
silver in the moonlight.

INT. MINNEHAHA TEPEE - NIGHT

Minnehaha sneaks out of her tepee past her father and
brother taking her bow and the quiver with the arrowheads.

EXT. RIVER'S EDGE - NIGHT

Minnehaha walks towards the moonlit river.

STONE HEAD

What if someone sees you?



MINNEHAHA

I am getting water for my father.

She holds up a birch bark bucket, and looks across the river. The moon is straight overhead in the night sky.

MINNEHAHA

The moon is high -- we must hurry.

HORN HEAD

I warn you, the night can hold many dangers.

MINNEHAHA

I gave my word as a Warriress.

DISSOLVE TO:

Time has passed; the setting moon is reflected in the water.

Minnehaha is trying to stay awake as she stares across the river into the mist.

MINNEHAHA

Perhaps something happened to him.

HORN HEAD

He's sitting with his war council telling them the position of our village.

MINNEHAHA

If he's a spy, I'll end his...

Suddenly, Minnehaha feels an ominous rush of wind on her face.

MINNEHAHA

Here comes a canoe -- it must be him!

Iagoo's Headdress rises out of the mist in front of her, revealing the imperious Swamp Feather. With some of his green algae and moss washed off, his blue, yellow, and crimson war paint glows eerily in the dark. Countless strands of violet wampum, worn like armour, drape across his muscular shoulders. His Fire Serpents lay coiled at his feet.

SWAMP FEATHER

(to his Fire Serpents)
 My faithful, put your heads at
 ease, our long journey to the
 swamp will be over with the
 night... wait! What have we
 here?

Swamp Feather's lascivious eyes fall on Minnehaha -- he
 obviously likes what he sees.

Minnehaha stands in the shadow of the moonlight, frozen at
 the spectacle of the mighty demon Warrior in his war canoe
 piled high with treasures. Stolen heaps of wampum and a
 quiver with bright Silver Arrows, all gleam magically in the
 pale light.

MINNEHAHA

(to Stone Head)
 Those Silver Arrows, aren't they
 Dakota treasures?

STONE HEAD

Let's not stay and find out.

HORN HEAD

Minnehaha, if I had your legs, I
 would run.

MINNEHAHA

I will not run, I am the
 daughter of Tekumah... this is
our territory.

(curious)

Who is this Warrior with all
 these riches?

HIAWATHA

Hiawatha keeps glancing back across the river. Adj
 notices.

ADJI

I see your thoughts keep
 wandering across the river.

HIAWATHA

It is wrong to leave Minnehaha
 standing alone in the middle of
 the night. The grief I feel is
 not her fault.

ADJI

She can defend herself.

EXT. DAKOTA SIDE OF THE RIVER - NIGHT

Swamp Feather paddles closer to Minnehaha, revealing the full length of his great war canoe, made from a single massive dugout tamarack log. With its enormous twisted root ball still attached, the canoe's bow looks like a Medusa head. As he steers towards her, the water flows in the root ball's ghoulish mouth.

SWAMP FEATHER

What brings you down to the river, my Sister of the Moonlight?

BONE HEAD

(quietly)

She's not your sister.

MINNEHAHA

My father, Chief Tekumah is thirsty.

SWAMP FEATHER

He's a fortunate man to have such a thoughtful daughter. Tekumah? Wasn't he the one who... Yes! I remember now, a great man, Chief Tekumah, crafted the battle plan to destroy the dam and clear the Great Swamp, brilliant.

MINNEHAHA

(proudly)

Yes, that's my father.

SWAMP FEATHER

Who could forget his deeds. I certainly can't. I feel honored to meet his beautiful daughter.

Minnehaha bows her head, slightly. She proceeds to fill her bucket.

HORN HEAD

(whispering)

Say thank you and let's go!

Swamp Feather moves closer, smiling darkly. At first, Minnehaha doesn't see his Fire Serpents laying so still they are camouflaged by the twisted thick roots.

HIAWATHA

He and a reluctant Adjii, are sitting in his canoe, Chea, just offshore of the Chippewa river bank, inscribing a small birch bark scroll with an arrowhead.

HIAWATHA

What harm is there in sending
her a note?

(writing)

"We were born to be enemies.
Farewell, Hiawatha."

Hiawatha wraps the bark note around the shaft of the arrow, and begins to paddle his sleepy canoe a little closer to the opposite bank.

EXT. DAKOTA SIDE - NIGHT

Swamp Feather is as charming as he is deadly. Although grotesque, he has a certain powerful majesty.

SWAMP FEATHER

Let me help you with your water
bucket.

MINNEHAHA

I can do it...

Before she can move away, Swamp Feather has her bucket in his hand.

SWAMP FEATHER

...on these hot summer nights, a
maiden as lovely as you should
be having fun.

BONE HEAD

(whispering)

But not with the likes of you.

SWAMP FEATHER

Perfect night for a canoe
ride...

With his other hand, Swamp Feather pulls back a sacred Buffalo Robe, as if offering her a seat, revealing more piles of shiny sea shell wampum. Enough strands to make any Dakota rich beyond his wildest dreams.

Minnehaha stares at his stolen treasure trove. The Fire Serpents inch closer.

MINNEHAHA

What use does a Warrior have for
so much treasure?

SWAMP FEATHER

Oh, a battle here, a battle
there, you know... it mounts up.

Swamp Feather SINGS to Minnehaha in his most ingratiating voice. As an inexperienced warrior, her curiosity gets the better of her instincts.

SWAMP FEATHER

(singing)

SHOULD YOU ASK WHENCE THESE
TREASURE? WHENCE THIS WAMPUM
AND FINERY. I SHOULD ANSWER
YOU, I SHOULD TELL YOU, FROM MY
BATTLES, FROM MY VICTORIES, FROM
MY COUNTLESS SACRIFICES. I
SHOULD TELL OF HOW I FOUGHT.

He lavishly starts to show off his loot.

SWAMP FEATHER (CONT.)

FOUGHT THE WINTER, SWUNG ALOFT
MY WAR CLUB, SHOUTED LOUD AND
LONG MY WAR CRY, SMOTE HIS
MIGHTY NORTH WIND, BROKE HIS
SKULL, LIKE THE ICE ON THE
RIVER. BEAT HIM INTO SURRENDER
SO THE SUMMER WAS FREE TO WARM
YOU.

FOUGHT WITH ALL THE VILLAINS,
FOUGHT WITH ALL THE WARRIORS,
FROM THE MOUNTAINS AND THE
VALLEYS, FROM THE RIVERS TO THE
SKY, ALL MY ENEMIES SHAKE AND
TREMBLE WHEN I WALK BY.

His Fire Serpents reveal themselves and join in as they sway
back and forth like cobras.

FIRE SERPENT

YESSSSS.

SWAMP FEATHER (CONT.)

SHOULD YOU ASK WHERE I WON THIS
HEADRESS SO SPLENDID, I SHOULD
ANSWER, I SHOULD TELL YOU,
FOUGHT THE NIGHT SO THE DAY
WOULD RETURN.

SWAMP FEATHER (CONT.)
HAND TO HAND BEGAN OUR DEADLY
CONFLICT, TILL CRASHING FELL THE
DARKNESS, RETREATING WESTWARD
O'ER THE MOUNTAINS, TO THE
EARTH'S REMOTE BORDER. THUS I
FOUGHT THE FAMOUS BATTLE AGAINST
THE NIGHT, SO THE SUN COULD
SHINE UPON YOU.

STONE HEAD
He's been working hard.

SWAMP FEATHER (CONT.)
IN BETWEEN, I STRAIGHTENED OUT
THE RIVERS, TOOK OUT ALL THEIR
BENDS. SMOTE AND CRUSHED THE
ROCKS OF THE PRAIRIE, BROKE THEM
INTO FRAGMENTS. MADE THE ROCKY
MOUNTAINS OF THE WEST.

BONE HEAD
I'm impressed.

SWAMP FEATHER (CONT.)
PIERCED THE CLOUDS WITH MY GREAT
ARROWS SO THE RAIN WOULD FALL.
NEVER HEARD I OF AN ADVENTURE,
WHERE MY OWN WAS NOT GREATER,
NEVER ANY DEED OF DARING THAT I
HAD NOT OUTDONE.

Minnehaha steps closer to his canoe to examine the Silver
Arrows.

MINNEHAHA
Strange, I thought the Chippewa
stole these from my tribe?

SWAMP FEATHER
Ahem... your father asked me to
retrieve them. You know, some
of those Chippewa thieves dare
call themselves Warriors. Ha!

MINNEHAHA
I know.

Swamp Feather holds out the Silver Arrows as if offering
them back. Minnehaha reaches for them. Like a spider with
a fly, Swamp Feather yanks her into his canoe.

SWAMP FEATHER.
Come here, my little treasure.

MINNEHAHA

Let go!

Minnehaha knocks the bucket of water into his face. Swamp Feather gets more than he bargained for with Minnehaha. She's fighting like a wild cat, lashing out at him with everything she can get her hands on.

HIAWATHA

Hiawatha hears Minnehaha struggling and surges ahead with a flurry of lightning strokes.

MINNEHAHA

Minnehaha has no idea Hiawatha's near, she's too busy fighting to get free. She manages to stab Swamp Feather in the arm with one of the Silver Arrows. He loosens his grip for only a split second, that's all the time she needs to dive into the water. Swamp Feather grabs her ankle, and starts to pull her in, toying with her like a fish on the line. The Serpents attack, flicking their tongues. Swamp Feather waves them off.

SWAMP FEATHER

I've got her. This one's mine to keep. She goes so well with my Headdress and my wampum.

Minnehaha continues to try desperately to swim away.

SWAMP FEATHER

She can bring me swamp water in the night. She can be my loving daughter.

MINNEHAHA

Never!

FIRE SERPENTS

Yessssss.

SWAMP FEATHER

I will have their river, their treasures, and their daughters. I will be the Chief of all Chiefs.

HIAWATHA

Through the parting mist, Hiawatha clearly sees the battle.
He drops his paddle and arms his bow with an arrow

HIAWATHA

Adji keep paddling!

ADJI

(seeing what lies ahead)

Towards that?!

Hiawatha aims and releases his arrow in one smooth move. We follow its lethal flight across the water.

The arrow slams home in Swamp Feather's shoulder. In agony, Swamp Feather lets out an ungodly SCREAM. He releases Minnehaha. She swims for shore. The Fire Serpents check their screaming master first, then lunge after her, but Minnehaha is too fast. Still unaware that Hiawatha's arrow has saved her, she disappears into the woods like a deer.

Swamp Feather yanks out Hiawatha's arrow, rubs his shoulder, and squints into the darkness. Seething, he notices the bark scroll message on the arrow meant for Minnehaha.

SWAMP FEATHER

(reading)

Who dares... "We were born to be enemies. Farewell, Hiawatha."

The Fire Serpents start to head in Hiawatha's direction.

SWAMP FEATHER

No! I'll take care of whoever shot that arrow. You watch for her.

Swamp Feather, boiling with hatred, begins to paddle across the river in Hiawatha's direction. Hiawatha doesn't retreat, instead he carefully readies his last arrow. Then bravely, he starts to paddle towards Swamp Feather.

ADJI

I don't think he liked your note.

The canoes are closing at full speed, each boat held on a collision course. Chea is terrified of Swamp Feather's charging dugout.

CHEA

Roots and all.

Hiawatha holds his fire until Swamp Feather is almost on top of them, then lets loose. The arrow is harmlessly deflected off Swamp Feather's wampum covered chest.

At the last moment both boats veer off, scraping hulls as they pass. Chea's bark coat is torn by the sharp roots of the dugout.

CHEA

You waterlogged bean-pole!

Hiawatha and Swamp Feather use their paddles as clubs, each trying to knock the other out of his canoe. The fighting is brutal. Hiawatha is obviously overpowered, but he is quicker, and between dodging and using his paddle as a staff to parry blows, he manages to hold his own.

But Swamp Feather lands a back-breaker, knocking Hiawatha clean out of Chea and into the river, where he lands with a splash. Swamp Feather paddles to the spot. Hiawatha surfaces for a breath only to be beaten under. Satisfied that Hiawatha has drowned, Swamp Feather finally turns upstream and paddles off into the mist.

But the battered Hiawatha surfaces as the current begins to sweep him downstream, towards a roaring waterfall.

MINNEHAHA

She's still running through the dark woods like a blur. Finally she slows, her chest heaving.

BONE HEAD

How could that demon know your father?

MINNEHAHA

I'm certainly not going to ask him and neither are you three. What I want to know is where was Hiawatha?

STONE HEAD

Probably asleep in his wigwam.

MINNEHAHA

He gave his word. I guess that isn't worth much to a Chippewa Warrior.

Minnehaha heads home, weary and scared, moving quickly through the moonlit woods. She fights back her tears.

STONE HEAD
Don't cry, Minnehaha.

MINNEHAHA
I'm not! I wanted a battle, now
the first one is behind me.

She's trying to rationalize herself out of her misery. This wasn't the glory she hoped for.

EXT. RIVER - NIGHT

Adji, paddling Chea with a makeshift stick, is desperately searching for Hiawatha. Chea is half flooded and leaking badly.

ADJI
There he is.
(calling out)
Hiawatha! Be strong!

Adji and Chea reach Hiawatha just as all three of them go over the falls. They plummet into the tumultuous pool below. The current carries them into a backwash by the side of the river. This little side inlet is a catch basin for driftwood and whatever else goes over the waterfall.

Combining all their efforts, they fight their way to shore.

HIAWATHA
Every bone in my body is calling
out in pain... but you're still
afloat Chea.

CHEA
Must be all the holes in me --
lets the water out.

Crawling up on the bank, all three collapse.

HIAWATHA
What I wouldn't have given for
more arrows or a good war
club...

PUG
Did I hear someone call me?

In the pile of driftwood lies Pug. A smile crosses Hiawatha's weary face.

HIAWATHA
Pug, what brought you here?

PUG

I took the same path you did...
How is Iagoo?

HIAWATHA

With his ancestors -- ambushed
by the Dakota.

PUG

I was afraid of that. And I
don't mean a Dakota War Party.
Never feared one yet.

Hiawatha affectionately picks up Pug.

PUG

It was Swamp Feather and his
Fire Serpents who took your
Grandfather from us, but when I
heard that demon scream, I knew
you hurt him to the bone.

HIAWATHA

(amazed)

My arrow... wounded the
legendary Swamp Feather?

PUG

Iagoo would be proud of you,
but one arrow is not enough,
what you have started we must
finish.

HIAWATHA

His canoe was full of treasures
and sacred objects... ours and
the Dakota's.

PUG

This was once all his Great
Swamp. When we war with each
other... we are blind to his
evil plans. But we won't be
fooled Hiawatha.

HIAWATHA

The village must be warned,
before they call an attack on
the Dakota.

Hiawatha winces when he tries to move.

PUG

Rest tonight, weary Warriors --
you fought well. Pug will stand
guard and wake you in the
morning. The real fight is yet
to come and when it does it will
be a battle of legend.

Hiawatha and Adjii curl up inside Chea and are soon drifting
off to sleep. Chea smiles happily at the sight of his
family curled up in his hull. He closes his sides around
them like a sleeping bag. Pug scans the misty river, his
wooden features a mask of grim resolve.

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE UP FROM BLACK:

INT. WIGWAM - DAY

Hiawatha and Nokomis are in the middle of an argument.

NOKOMIS

You crossed the river last night
to see that Dakota maiden,
didn't you? And they beat you,
didn't they?

HIAWATHA

No! Swamp Feather is our enemy,
not the Dakota.

NOKOMIS

(barely hearing him)
She's not worth your lies. She
means nothing. The Elders have
decided to go on the war path.

HIAWATHA

Their don't know what they're
doing.

NOKOMIS

And you do? With the next full
moon -- you'll join the first
War Party.

HIAWATHA

Grandmother, Swamp Feather took
Iagoo. All this misery is his
doing.

NOKOMIS

What wild thoughts fill you your
head.

ADJI

I saw him!

The squirrel does a startlingly good job imitating the Swamp
Feather's grotesque face.

NOKOMIS

Hiawatha put you up to this.

(to Hiawatha)

I should have burned that canoe
when I first thought of it.

HIAWATHA

That canoe is going to take me
upriver, to his swamp.

NOKOMIS

Hiawatha, no one has ever come
back from the Pitch Water Swamp,
no one!

HIAWATHA

I will.

NOKOMIS

I lost my daughter, Wenonah.
And now Iagoo. I will not lose
you too.

HIAWATHA

But you ask me to join a War
Party.

NOKOMIS

That's not the same.

HIAWATHA

If I remain to fight the Dakota,
I won't survive the battle. I
will be weak, because I know
they are innocent.

Nokomis purposefully walks out of the wigwam.

HIAWATHA

(to Adjii)

Where is she going?

PUG

To make her plea to the
Spirits... as you should too, if
you're about to take on an
impossible foe.

HIAWATHA

Since I was on my cradle board,
she told me to make great plans.
Now she won't listen. Why
didn't you say something?

PUG

She knows the truth -- it's her
heart that won't believe it.

HIAWATHA

She has no choice. Neither do
I.

PUG

Swamp Feather is the mightiest
of all the evil Magicians. He's
the one who sends fever from the
marshes -- sends poisonous
vapors across the wet lands.

ADJI

Is that all?

PUG

He breaths the vapor of death.

Adji coughs.

PUG

And, I almost forgot, Swamp
Feather is guarded by a giant
Fire Serpent with two heads.

Adji faints.

HIAWATHA

I hope the Spirits will listen.

EXT. WIGWAM - DAY

Over a hundred Chippewa Warriors and Elders are seated around an immense circular war drum, methodically beating out their war song. One Warrior, covered in Eagle Feathers and war paint, climbs up and dances a war dance on the drum skin, which acts as a trampoline, bouncing him high into the air to the beat of the chant. Their dancing, drumming and wailing will continue until the day of the inevitable battle.

Grandmother Nokomis walks by wearing an outfit we haven't seen before, a highly decorated dress with a shawl covered with bird symbols. In her hands she carries an ancient ironwood bow, taken from the wigwam.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE SHORE - SUNSET

With the sounds of the great drum reverberating behind him, Hiawatha and Adjì sit at a campfire on the edge of the woods. They gaze upwards. The blaze from the fire illuminates the pale smoke which swims into the purple sky. Hiawatha CHANTS his plea to the heavens.

HIAWATHA

(chanting)

HEAR MY VOICE ABOVE THE FLAME ON
THE SMOKE OF THE SWEETGRASS.
CARRY MY MESSAGE TO THE MIGHTY
WEST WIND. TELL HIM OF MY
JOURNEY, ASK HIM FOR HIS
GUIDANCE.

Adjì puts more sweetgrass on the fire.

HIAWATHA (CONT.)

IF THE SPIRITS PUT BOLDNESS IN
MY SOUL, THANKS I GIVE AND HOPE
TO FIND IT.

IF EARTH MOTHER, PARENT TO US
ALL, LET SKILL DWELL IN THIS
BODY, THANKS I GIVE AND HOPE TO
USE IT.

IF MY FATHER PUT TRUTH IN MY
THOUGHTS, THANKS I GIVE, AND
HOPE TO KNOW IT.

A sudden gust of wind spirals the smoke into the shape of SMOKE BIRDS. Adjì scoots behind Hiawatha.

HIAWATHA (CONT.)
 HARDSHIPS ARE MY BLESSING, ALL
 VICTORIES IN THEIR HONOR. WHAT
 I AM AND WILL BE, MY HOPE IS TO
 DISCOVER.

The Smoke Birds begin to SING LONG EERIE NOTES as they spiral up to the moon.

NOKOMIS

From a shadowed knoll that overlooks Hiawatha, Nokomis watches. There is an aura of the medicine-woman about her that portends great mysteries.

The Smoke Birds wing skyward. As they approach Nokomis, they increase in size as smoke does when it rises.

NOKOMIS
 Fly my prayers... along airy
 currents... through transparent
 clouds and vapors.

Hiawatha is unaware of Nokomis above him. Eyes flashing, his grandmother reverently holds up the ironwood bow. In front of her the Smoke Birds continue to grow, soaring on the hot air like gargantuan eagles.

NOKOMIS
 Spirit of the West Wind, hear
 what is in my heart. If
 Hiawatha must go, empower this
 gift, your ancient bow.

Nokomis SINGS her own mystical song, adding her voice to Hiawatha's.

NOKOMIS
 (singing)
 THROUGH THE SEASONS I WATCHED
 AND HELPED YOUR SON LIKE HE WAS
 MINE. IN HIS FACE I SEE YOUR
 STRENGTH, IN HIS EYES I SEE YOUR
 SPIRIT SHINE.

SEND HIS BROTHERS, SEND HIS
 SISTERS, IN THEIR FUR AND
 FEATHERS. DON'T LET HIM WANDER
 ALONE. SANCTIFY THIS VENERABLE
 BOW TO PROTECT HIM FROM WHERE HE
 IS ABOUT TO GO.

Her trembling hands hold the carved weapon in the column of smoke. The bow-string glints in the golden firelight.

NOKOMIS (CONT.)

HIS HEART HEEDS NOT MY WOMAN'S
WARNINGS, IT WILL NOT LISTEN.
ONLY YOU KNOW WHAT THOUGHTS FILL
HIS HEAD WITH VISION. ONLY YOU
KNOW WHAT DREAMS OF BEAUTY FILL
HIS HEART. I BEG YOU, DON'T
TEAR US APART.

DON'T LET HIM FALL AS THE
SNOWFLAKE ON THE RIVER, AS THE
LEAF DROPS FROM THE TREE, AS THE
THISTLE TO THE GROUND. BRING
HIM HOME TO ME.

YOU HAVE MY DAUGHTER WENONAH,
BESIDE YOU IN THE SKY. I ASK
YOU TO TAKE ME, IF ONE OF US
MUST DIE.

I AM OLD. HE IS YOUNG.
LET HIM LIVE. LET HIM LIVE.

An immense Smoke Bird wings around and snatches the ancient
bow from her hands with his hooked talons. The Bird
descends, passing down the smoke column.

Far below, Hiawatha sits chanting with eyes shut. Adjì
watches wide-eyed as the Smoke Bird dives, placing the
weapon at Hiawatha's feet and re-entering the fire with a
flash of light that opens Hiawatha's eyes, but the bird is
gone. A shudder runs up Hiawatha's spine when he sees the
ironwood bow lying in front of him, radiating in the light.

HIAWATHA

(awed)

Adjì look, my father's ironwood
bow! What more of a sign do we
need.

We cut back to the knoll. The Smoke Birds are disappearing
into the last light of the sunset. Nokomis turns and moves
away into the shadows.

INT. MINNEHAHA'S TEPEE - DAY

Minnehaha sits inside her wigwam, painting a dress. The
arrowheads watch from their quiver on the wall.

She weaves brightly dyed porcupine quills though the dress
and dabs on yellow and turquoise designs made from plum and
dogwood sap.

Outside the doorway, the Dakota War Party dances and weaves around its war drums, dressed in full regalia, including eagle feather bustles and animal hides.

MINNEHAHA

I had a dream -- it was my wedding... then that Demon appeared.

BONE HEAD

He gives me nightmares too.

MINNEHAHA

In my dream I knew who he was... Swamp Feather.

STONE HEAD

We must tell your father.

MINNEHAHA

No, legend says if you paint a dress with your dream it will come true and in my dream all ends well.

HORN HEAD

But that's just a dream.

Minnehaha ignores him and carefully continues painting her dream dress.

STONE HEAD

At this "wedding", who was the husband?

MINNEHAHA

Hiawatha. Together we made our lives come true.

STONE HEAD

If you respected your father you would tell him and destroy this dress.

MINNEHAHA

I cannot destroy what is in my heart.

EXT. THE RIVER - DAY

Paddling across the river, Hiawatha has loaded down Chea with bundles of arrows. The sound of the war drums from Minnehaha's village are even more urgent than those on the Chippewa side.

ADJI

Why journey all the way to the
swamp when we can be massacred
right here?

HIAWATHA

I have to say good-bye.

ADJI

Maybe we should say good-bye to
you too?

HIAWATHA

Minnehaha has to know that Swamp
Feather is responsible.

ADJI

I agree, but couldn't this wait
until dark?

HIAWATHA

They won't look for what is easy
to see.

Adji turns his worried look towards the village as Hiawatha pulls a timber wolf skin over his head and body.

ADJI

(turning back)
Yikes!

HIAWATHA

We'll fit right in.

EXT. MINNEHAHA'S TEPEE - DAY

From her doorway, Minnehaha watches the Dakota war dance and listens to the songs of bravery that fill the air with dread. She wears a shawl around her shoulders partially covering her dream dress.

Completely engrossed, she doesn't notice Hiawatha stealing his way past the war drums on the far side of the village.

Adji is reluctantly following Hiawatha at a distance, carrying Pug over his shoulder.

PUG

Come on, he might need our help.

Hiawatha spots Minnehaha across the three big drums in the center of the village. He begins to dance his way once around the ring of Warriors to get to Minnehaha. But suddenly, one of the Dakota becomes suspicious of Hiawatha's disguise and begins to follow him.

Adji, seeing the danger, hits one of their war drums with Pug as a distraction. The force of the rebound sends them bouncing up onto the drum skin. The Dakota Warriors find his antics very amusing, and continue to beat on the drum.

Aided by the diversion, Hiawatha sneaks towards Minnehaha.

Behind him, Adji and Pug, against their wishes, are being bounced from one drum to the next, flipping wildly head over heels with every drumbeat.

DAKOTA WARRIORS

(chanting)

HEYA - HEYA - HEYA - HEY!

ADJI

Hey! Hey! Let me down!

PUG

I'm warning you -- we're rough
and tough.

Adji swings Pug at the laughing Dakota, threatening them to stay back, but with each "HEY!", they find themselves airborne again.

HIAWATHA

He sneaks up to Minnehaha, and stares into her eyes through the wolf hide. She stares back, wondering who this could be. Hiawatha takes her by the hand and moves her into the tepee. She resists until Hiawatha lifts the wolf hide revealing his face. Minnehaha gasps, staring at him in disbelief.

MINNEHAHA

There are a hundred Warriors
behind you, all eager to end
your life.

HIAWATHA

None of them is as deadly as the
one who attacked you.

MINNEHAHA

How do you know about that?

HIAWATHA

The scream when he let you go...

MINNEHAHA

Yes?

HIAWATHA

That was my arrow going into his shoulder. That demon was...

Minnehaha hugs him tight with love.

MINNEHAHA

...Swamp Feather.

HIAWATHA

(shocked)

You know?

MINNEHAHA

Dreams can tell many truths.

HIAWATHA

He's behind all the stealing and murder that lead to this war.

STONE HEAD

All that treasure was stolen!

MINNEHAHA

From both sides of the river.

HIAWATHA

I'm journeying to his Pitch Water Swamp to prove it.

Hiawatha starts to kiss her good-bye.

MINNEHAHA

You would go alone to the Pitch Water Swamp and fight Swamp Feather to stop this war?

HIAWATHA

I will.

MINNEHAHA

That's courageous of you, but you will not succeed alone.



HIAWATHA

All your Warriors couldn't stop me.

MINNEHAHA

They're not going to stop you, because I'm going with you.

Minnehaha can barely contain her excitement. She grabs the quiver with all three arrows and picks up her bow.

HIAWATHA

You're coming with me in spirit, but that's all.

MINNEHAHA

I can out-shoot you... or did you forget that?

Hiawatha puts his hands on her shoulders to really make his point. It's then he clearly sees the painting on her dream dress.

HIAWATHA

Hey, that's me! Minnehaha, you look too beautiful in that dress to fight.

MINNEHAHA

This is as much my battle as yours. My mother fell with swamp fever when I was born.

HIAWATHA

I'm sorry.

Over her shoulder, Hiawatha notices the Chief approaching the tepee in full war dress.

HIAWATHA

Is this your father?

Minnehaha wheels around in panic.

MINNEHAHA

Yes, and don't you hurt him.

She tries to hide Hiawatha. For a brief moment Tekumah doesn't notice.

TEKUMAH

Minne, have you seen my tobacco?

MINNEHAHA

In the porcupine quill box.

Tekumah does a double take and reaches for his war club instead.

TEKUMAH

Oh yes, it's right here -- next to this Chippewa scalp!

Tekumah screams out his best war cry and swings at Hiawatha. Minnehaha is caught in the middle.

TEKUMAH

Did he harm you? We'll skin him alive.

MINNEHAHA

No! He's my friend.

TEKUMAH

You can have his hide.

Hiawatha ducks twice and sweeps Minnehaha off her feet and into his arms. She holds onto his neck as he explodes out the door of the tepee.

Tekumah looks for a weapon. He grabs his bow, reaches for his quiver of arrows... it's gone.

TEKUMAH

My arrows? He took my arrows!

Drawn by the noise, the excited War Party looks over. With Minnehaha in his arms, Hiawatha jumps on the first big drum and uses it to bounce clear over the line of charging Dakota Warriors. Adj, Pug in hand, grabs a hold of Minnehaha's skirt as they vault into the woods towards the river. Hiawatha and Minnehaha hit the ground running, hand in hand.

TEKUMAH

(shouting)

That Chippewa muskrat stole my daughter and my magic arrows.

The Dakota take off after them. These Warriors are not teenagers, these are men, and now we see, feel, and hear the terrifying difference. They're after blood.

Hiawatha squeezes Minnehaha's hand tightly as they sprint through the woods. Adj, lugging Pug, brings up the rear.

They reach the glade where Hiawatha's canoe is hidden and stop. Adj wastes no time and jumps into Chea.

HIAWATHA

I couldn't let go of your hand, not without a kiss good-bye.

MINNEHAHA

And I hung on, because I won't
let you go alone.

Minnehaha jumps into his canoe and grabs a paddle.

MINNEHAHA

Get in, we don't have much time.

HIAWATHA

We may never return.

Minnehaha's paddle is already in the water.

CHEA

Can't you see she belongs with
us?

Hiawatha leaps into the canoe. The Dakota arrive on the
shore but Hiawatha and Minnehaha are already paddling around
the bend.

STONE HEAD

We will win this battle!

PUG

You can help win it.

MINNEHAHA

We'll be heros together... no
one can defeat the Dakota and
the Chippewa when we fight for
the same side.

TEKUMAH

The outraged Chief straightens out his Headdress.

TEKUMAH

He thinks this is a game,
entering our village in the
middle of the day and stealing
my daughter and my arrows.

They man their heavy dugout canoes and head up river in
pursuit.

TEKUMAH

Minnehaha is bringing shame on
all of us.

BROTHER

She had on a dream dress.

TEKUMAH

It didn't protect her from his
evil Chippewa spell.

HIAWATHA AND MINNEHAHA

Hiawatha and Minnehaha paddle hard to get away.

HIAWATHA

Past the white waters, we'll be
safe.

They beach near some rapids. Minnehaha follows Hiawatha's lead as he picks up Chea, turns him upside down and carries him overhead, stepping from rock to rock along the shoreline.

The astonished Dakota see them walking over the rapids. Two of the Dakota try to lift their heavy dugout log canoes and fall over into the water. The others don't even try, just stare hatefully after Hiawatha and Minnehaha.

Hiawatha and Minnehaha know they are safely on their way as they put Chea back in the water and disappear upstream.

EXT. SWAMP FEATHER'S WIGWAM - DAY - POURING RAIN

On the far end of the swamp, Swamp Feather oversees the building of his immense dam, fashioned from enormous logs and boulders. His giant war canoe is tied off at the base of the dam, still heaped with treasure.

Around him an army of BEAVERS slave away at the gigantic structure. Acres and acres of the surrounding forest are leveled, riddled with freshly gnawed beaver stumps.

SWAMP FEATHER

If you want to live on my side
of the dam, the one with the
water, you better keep your
tails working.

On a corner of the top of the dam, sits his towering wigwam, like an immense turret, covered in all manner of animal skins. Beavers, wolves, and foxes, their faces frozen in grotesque death masks, are tacked to his walls with arrows, spears, and tomahawks.

SWAMP FEATHER

Now move it... or I'll have your
pelts on my wigwam.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE RIVER - DAY

Hiawatha and Minnehaha journey through rapids and across crystalline pools. The river flashes and gleams among the oak trees, making the sound of laughter as it courses along.

Each of their paddle strokes is synchronized perfectly. Hiawatha and Minnehaha have quickly become a perfect team. Chea feels it and beams with satisfaction.

As they glide by, animals watch from the shoreline, peering curiously from their burrows and nests at the young lovers. Adjì waves. The sounds of birds ringing out their song of approval fills the air.

DISSOLVE TO:

AN ORANGE SUN

Beckoning them on, the celestial ball looks down upon them through the palisades of trees and branches. Both Hiawatha and Minnehaha are growing weary.

HIAWATHA

There is no time to camp --
we'll take turns resting.

Each turn of the river reveals another glorious vista on the way to the swamp.

DISSOLVE TO:

Hiawatha is paddling. It's his turn. Minnehaha rests her head in his lap. Adjì lies nestled happily by her side. Minnehaha feeds Adjì acorns and tickles him. Hiawatha lovingly looks down at Minnehaha.

HIAWATHA (V.O.)

Let me be strong for her.

(singing V.O.)

IF ONLY THIS PEACE COULD LAST
FOREVER, WITH OUR HANDS CLASPED
SO CLOSELY, AND OUR HEARTS
UNITED. LAUGHING WATER IS HER
NAME, MINNEHAHA. HEAR THE
WATERS CALL HER NAME, HEAR THE
LAUGHTER IN MY HEART. IF ONLY
THIS PEACE COULD LAST FOREVER
AND THE BATTLE NEVER START.

Adji has a crush on Minnehaha too, he sighs as he nuzzles close.

DISSOLVE TO:

Minnehaha takes her turn paddling. Hiawatha naps, his head on her lap.

MINNEHAHA (V.O.)

(singing V.O.)

LIKE THE STRING IS TO A BOW, A
WOMAN IS TO A MAN. SHE PULLS
HIM SOFTLY AND HE FOLLOWS. HE
IS STRONG. THE STRING BENDS HIM
EVEN SO, BUT WHERE HE AIMS SHE
MUST GO. THEIR STRENGTH IS IN
THEIR CONNECTION, EACH TO THE
OTHER, LINKED IN PERFECTION.

She touches her hand to the painting over her heart.

MINNEHAHA (V.O.)

Let my dream dress come true.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SWAMP - DUSK

The dark, dank entrance to the Pitch Water Swamp. Minnehaha and Hiawatha are paddling together again. The river is a twisted meandering vein of bogs and slime. Pug looks as determined as ever. The faces of Adji and Chea reflect their fears.

PUG (V.O.)

Let me be as brave as Iagoo.

CHEA (V.O.)

Let me move swiftly for
Hiawatha.

ADJI (V.O.)

Let me go home.

Ominous vapors and shadows float ahead. The sounds emanating from the swamp are equally horrific. The surroundings close in, getting darker and more evil with every foot they paddle.

The river becomes so full of green algae slime that they have to pole through it using their paddles. Their pace slows to a crawl.

Suddenly, the canoe starts to move as if pulled along by an invisible force. Hiawatha and Minnehaha turn to each other, each thinking the other is somehow responsible.

CHEA

Help!

One of the Fire Serpent's two heads suddenly surfaces directly in front of Minnehaha. She's looking back towards Hiawatha and doesn't see it, but she does see the horror on Hiawatha's face.

HIAWATHA

Minnehaha!

Minnehaha turns around in terror and beholds the horrible spectacle of the giant viper looming over her.

The Serpent snaps his jaws at her. Minnehaha bravely fights back with her paddle.

UNDERWATER

The coils of the Serpents wrap around Chea. The canoe quickly picks up even more speed.

THE SURFACE

They're pulled through a batch of cat tail reeds which act like whips and clubs, hammering our crew and forcing them to duck down. The Serpents whip the canoe back and forth, thrashing it like a terrier with a rat. Hiawatha reaches for his bow and arrow, but has to hold on at the same time.

The Serpent snaps at Minnehaha again, breaking her paddle into kindling. Protecting Minnehaha, Adji bravely bites the Serpent in his neck, and is thrown clear out of the canoe when the beast strikes him down with a flick of its head.

Pug is rolled out when the entire canoe is turned upside down for a moment. Hiawatha manages to get one arrow locked and loaded, but he can't shoot for fear of hitting Minnehaha, who is now in the grip of one of the Serpent's writhing coils. The other Serpent continues to pull the canoe along, gaining speed. Minnehaha pleads to Hiawatha.

MINNEHAHA

Save yourself!

The lead Serpent leaps clear out of the water. As the whiplash of his leap works back down his sinuous body, it snaps Chea high into the air. Chea screams. Hiawatha tries to hold on but it's like trying to hold onto the end of a bull whip. He drops his bow and arrows as he's thrown far off into a clump of reeds, where he lands with a sickening smack on a rotted log.

One Serpent continues to hold Minnehaha tightly in his coils, as his partner drags Chea into the distance.

Hiawatha watches Minnehaha disappear in horror, helpless.

MINNEHAHA

She holds her hand out to Hiawatha in desperation.

MINNEHAHA

Hiawatha!

The constrictions of the Serpent are crushing Chea. Just before he breaks in half, they drop him. Minnehaha looks back helplessly as the free coil is wrapped around her arms.

Hiawatha tries to slosh through the swamp after Minnehaha. Half swimming, half running, he fights his way a short distance through the gloppy water before he slows, exhausted. The dark sky cracks open and it starts to pour rain.

EXT. MINNEHAHA - DUSK - POURING RAIN

The Serpents intertwine, forming into a long scaly boat, engulfing Minnehaha while they swim along. Gliding through the swamp with their prisoner they look like a gondola from the Netherworld.

Minnehaha lies across their muscular backs, her arrows still in her quiver on her back.

EXT. HIAWATHA, ADJI, CHEA, PUG - DUSK - POURING RAIN

As night closes in, each terrified member of the crew is alone and desperately lost.

Chea floats amongst the reeds and dragon flies, listing over dangerously close to capsizing. In his hull lies Hiawatha's ironwood bow.

Pug is stuck in a bed of water lilies.

Adji tries to find shelter for the night and curls up in a water-logged stump. The sound of an owl hooting in the darkness makes Adji's tail twitch in terror.

HIAWATHA

He's pushing ahead through the moonlit swamp, using a log as a crude boat and a stick to pole along. It takes great effort to move just a short distance. Colored swamp gas and thick vapors lie on the water, adding a surreal impenetrable backdrop.

HIAWATHA

They're all gone. Minnehaha,
Adji, Chea, Pug... my bow.

The pole snaps, he throws it away in frustration, and begins to wade. The slimy water sparkles with phosphorescent water spiders.

EXT. THE VILLAGES DOWNSTREAM - NIGHT

A Dakota War Party looks at the low water level, illuminated by their torches. The river is dropping from Swamp Feather's new dam up stream. War drums pound on both sides of the river.

BROTHER

Now they're taking our river
water, the top half -- leaving
their muddy bottom water.

TEKUMAH

We cannot live without the
river. I have seen much, but
this war will be the end... for
both our tribes.

Tekumah looks across to the other side, resolved to war.

NOKOMIS

Standing by the gigantic Chippewa war drum, she listens to the Elders make final war plans. The tempo of the drum is quickening. War is imminent. The great Moon in the west is almost a circle, Nokomis looks at it anxiously.



NOKOMIS

Oh Wenonah, my Moon Daughter on high, slow your journey through the evening sky. Hiawatha is your son as well... give him time. Let him live.

CUT TO:

EXT. MINNEHAHA - NIGHT - POURING RAIN

She is still draped across her Fire Serpent canoe. The cooling rain is no match for her already high fever. Her world is filled with the croaking, screeching sounds that emerge from every corner of the quagmire, filling her head with fevered nightmares.

INT. MINNEHAHA'S QUIVER - NIGHT

The arrowheads feel the heat from her fever.

HORN HEAD

She's burning up.

STONE HEAD

Hold on Minnehaha.

BONE HEAD

We're here beside you.

EXT. SWAMP - NIGHT

The rain has stopped. Adjì snaps at fire flies.

PUG

The war club nervously watches a nearby beaver gnawing on a stick.

CHEA

The canoe mumbles in fear, trying to keep up his courage.

CHEA

(to himself)

I feel so empty... if only I had someone who could move me.

HIAWATHA

He sees the Northern Lights, first as a shimmering reflection in the water, then in the sky overhead.

HIAWATHA

(in desperation)

Iagoo! I can see your distant campfire in the Heavens.

(his voice dying off)

I can't find Minnehaha, I can't find my friends... I never found that hero...

Hiawatha looks back down at his reflection in the glinting water.

HIAWATHA

(weakly)

I have nothing left to give...
Swamp Feather has taken it all.

CUT TO:

EXT. SWAMP FEATHER'S WIGWAM - DAWN

The Fire Serpents arrive proudly with Minnehaha. She is so weak, Swamp Feather has to drag her limp body across the muddy embankment in front of the dam. Her quiver of arrows is still on her back. Swamp Feather is almost unable to contain his joy as he pulls her towards his wigwam.

SWAMP FEATHER

Of course I hoped you'd make it
-- I've fixed everything up
special, but it's not the same
without a woman's touch.

Minnehaha's weary gaze takes in the immense dam and wretched wigwam.

SWAMP FEATHER

Feast your eyes. Spectacular
isn't it?

(sarcastically)

Think of it as your new home.

As she is dragged by slaving beavers on each side of her, sympathize with her plight.



SWAMP FEATHER

A Chief is not a Chief without a loving daughter to look up to him and stand in awe before his great accomplishments.

CUT TO:

HIAWATHA

Dawn finds Hiawatha crawling through the morass of the swamp like an animal. The river water has dropped considerably. He collapses against a dead tree and slides down into the murky shallows.

HIAWATHA

(delirious)

I have failed, but now I know who I am... or was.

He stares vacantly at his blurry reflection swimming in the murky water, then shuts his eyes. He starts to mumble a song unaware of what he is even saying.

HIAWATHA

(mumbling his song)

WHAT I AM AND WILL BE, MY HOPE
WAS TO DISCOVER.

A HERO WHO HAS LEARNED TO GIVE
HIS ALL, NOT FOR HIMSELF BUT ALL
THE TRIBES OF MEN... THEN FINDS
A WAY TO GIVE AGAIN.

Hiawatha understands he has one last thing to give.

HIAWATHA

My thanks to the Great Spirit
for this test.

Hiawatha is just about to open his mouth to let the swamp rush in, when very faintly, he hears someone calling his name. Slowly, the sound builds. Hiawatha's eyes open a fraction. He presses his ear to the wood.

Above him on the dead tree the Woodpecker is tapping out Hiawatha's name. Nearby a LOON joins in, then an EGRET starts calling his name out too. It doesn't stop there, a HAWK and an EAGLE are next. A CRANE calls it out loudly.

HIAWATHA (CONT.)

(his last gasp)

WHO COULD HE BE...

The call is in the wind and soon everything that flies is chanting HIA-WATH-A. One by one, the voices of Mother Nature and the Great Spirit join in. On the edges of the swamp, LYNXES, OTTERS, MARTINS, MINKS, SABLES, and WOLVERINES all cheer Hiawatha on.

ALL
(chanting)
HIA-WATH-A, HIA-WATH-A...

HIAWATHA
Hiawatha... ME?

Suddenly, Hiawatha makes out a gruff familiar voice... it's Pug floating nearby.

HIAWATHA
Pug!

Hiawatha reaches out for him.

CHEA

His canoe is calling "HIA-WATH-A" too, caught up in the song.

For the first time, Chea strains to move on his own, with a great deal of effort he "swims" ahead by wagging his stern.

CHEA
I do have someone who can move
me... it's me!

Chea stares down into the water directly ahead of him to see an "arrow" pointing the way. It's the reflection of a gaggle of GEESE flying overhead in their "V" formation. They honk HIA-WATH-A. Chea bravely struggles ahead.

HIAWATHA

Hiawatha sees Chea approaching in the distance. He waves Pug overhead and they both call out to the canoe.

HIAWATHA & PUG
Over here, Chea.

CHEA
I'm trying!

HIAWATHA
You can do it!

Hiawatha happily crawls back into his canoe and find his ironwood bow still wedged across Chea's hull.

HIAWATHA

You brought my bow!

CHEA

I knew you would need it.

Hiawatha starts to pole along with strength he never knew he had. Up ahead, he spots Adjí jumping up and down on his tree stump.

ADJÍ

Hiawatha, where have you been?

HIAWATHA

Lost, but now we're all back together -- we have to find Minnehaha. We can't stop the war without her.

ADJÍ

But where do we look?

HIAWATHA

She's either with Swamp Feather or in heaven. We'll find her in one of those two places I'm sure. Chea, follow what's left of the river.

As Chea pushes off, the birds and animals continue their chant, cheering them on.

ANIMALS

(chanting)

HIA-WATH-A, HIA-WATH-A...

HIA-WATH-A, HIA-WATH-A...

CUT TO:

EXT. SWAMP FEATHER'S WIGWAM - DAY

Minnehaha hangs her quiver on the wall, hiding it behind a deer skin. She is dressed up as Swamp Feather's little princess, otter furs and stolen wampum necklaces cover her dream dress. On the floor are heaps of hides.

She is lugging half-full buckets of bug infested swamp water into the wigwam. She whispers to her faithful arrowheads, who poke their heads out from behind the hide.



MINNEHAHA

We'll never see Hiawatha again.
Those Beavers are the only hope
we have to destroy his dam.

She doesn't notice Swamp Feather is silhouetted in the doorway behind her. He's dressed up too, in his best suit of wampum. The tough wampum beading serves as beautiful body armour.

STONE HEAD

(whispering)

He's right behind you!

MINNEHAHA

(misunderstanding)

Hiawatha!

SWAMP FEATHER

My Serpents said he's sorry he
can't make it.

(he rubs his shoulder)

I'm sure he wanted to send
another note. He was dying to
come.

Minnehaha fights back her tears. Swamp Feather feigns concern.

SWAMP FEATHER

You'll feel better when you see
all your treasures.

MINNEHAHA

All you know how to give is
fever and pain.

SWAMP FEATHER

That's a little price to pay for
all this. You're the Princess
of the river... what's left of
it. Great Warriors have died to
get these treasures, now they're
all yours without a fight.
Well half yours... for awhile
anyway... And you're not happy?

Minnehaha picks up a long heavy strand of wampum as if
admiring it, then whips it across Swamp Feather's face.

MINNEHAHA

I don't want them!

Enraged, Swamp Feather slaps her down. Minnehaha falls onto the pile of hides. Swamp Feather kicks the bucket of swirling swamp water over her.

SWAMP FEATHER

Nothing is going to change
around here except how you feel
about me.

Swamp Feather storms out. Minnehaha looks down at her dream dress now covered in dirt. She pours out her heart to her arrowheads.

MINNEHAHA

He's won. Swamp Feather has
destroyed us all.

(she sings)

I USED TO THINK OF BATTLES AND
VICTORIES, FOUGHT SO BRAVELY IN
MY HEAD. GOOD WOULD BE
REWARDED, THE BAD WOULD FALL
DEAD. THE SPIRITS WERE JUST AND
FORGIVING, IT MADE PERFECT SENSE
TO BE LIVING.

THE SPIRITS SENT A DREAM TO ME.
I PRAYED AND THE FEELING GREW.
THE DREAM SEEMED TOO GOOD NOT TO
BE TRUE.

I PAINTED THE DREAM IN BRIGHT
COLORS ON THIS WHITE REINDEER
DRESS. NOW IT WOULD HAPPEN, THE
WEDDING. THE LOVE, ALL THE
BEST.

BUT THE WORLD IS A BATTLE AND
LIFE IS A FIGHT, AND NOW WHAT IS
LEFT SEEMS ENDLESS NIGHT. THE
DREAM IS GONE, NOTHING BUT PAINT
ON A DRESS. A FIGHT AND A
BATTLE ALL THAT'S LEFT, BOTH
IMPOSSIBLE, I MUST CONFESS.

The arrowheads are in tears from her shining sweetness.

MINNEHAHA (CONT.)

I DARED TO DREAM THAT LIFE WAS
FAIR, THAT PAINTED DREAMS CAN
COME TRUE, AND THE SPIRITS WOULD
CARE ABOUT ME AND ABOUT YOU.

Her hand falls across her heart, over the painting of
Hiawatha.

CUT TO:

HIAWATHA

He wears his Ironwood bow at an angle across his back as he makes new arrows. On the stern next to Hiawatha sits the Woodpecker. In the canoe at his feet he finds one of Minnehaha's feather earrings. He moves it across his cheek, remembering a kiss so long ago.

HIAWATHA

This is a sign -- she's alive.

Hiawatha ties the feather to his arm-band. The landscape they're moving through is decimated, only stumps remain.

CHEA

(horrified)

All the birch trees... they're gone!

HIAWATHA

His dam must be just up ahead...

INT. SWAMP FEATHER'S WIGWAM - SUNSET

Swamp Feather storms in looking for Minnehaha, but she's nowhere to be found.

MINNEHAHA

She's rallied the beavers. They're following her instructions, pulling logs and sticks from the immense dam, in a desperate attempt to destroy it.

SWAMP FEATHER

He struts along the top of the dam. Beavers stop what they're doing and sound the alarm by slapping their broad tails on the water. Minnehaha tries to hide, but Swamp Feather spots her. The beavers dive away in panic. Swamp Feather whistles his EERIE CALL.

Suddenly, his Fire Serpents rear their heads above the water right behind where Minnehaha is hiding. They close in, herding Minnehaha back towards Swamp Feather. He reaches down and grabs her. She tries to resist, but he pulls her back to his wigwam.

INT. WIGWAM - DAY

Luxuriating, Swamp Feather lies across his heap of animal hides. Minnehaha tries to crawl away.

SWAMP FEATHER

I know young maidens get nervous
their first time away from home,
so I'm willing to forgive you...
(rubbing his cut cheek)
...if you make it up to me.

Swamp Feather pulls her close.

SWAMP FEATHER

There's room here both of us.

Minnehaha, is too busy pushing him away to notice an arrow rip through the bark wall above her, but Swamp Feather sees it.

EXT. SWAMP FEATHER'S WIGWAM - SUNSET

Hiawatha, standing in Chea, unleashes a volley of arrows at the wigwam.

CUT TO:

INT. SWAMP FEATHER'S WIGWAM - SUNSET

Swamp Feather is furious. He lifts Minnehaha off the ground, hooking her dress on a bearhide's tooth, high up on the wigwam's wall near her quiver of arrows. Her feet dangle in space.

EXT. SWAMP FEATHER'S WIGWAM - SUNSET

Ready for a fight, Swamp Feather marches out across his dam. Below him, Hiawatha looks small and vulnerable, in spite of his bow and arrow. Chea is dwarfed by Swamp Feather's dugout and the huge dam beside it. Swamp Feather sneers when he recognizes Hiawatha.

HIAWATHA

Where is Minnehaha?

MINNEHAHA

She hears Hiawatha's voice and lights up.



MINNEHAHA

Hiawatha!

The arrowheads are overjoyed.

STONE HEAD

Hiawatha! He's alive!

She claws at the bearhide's jaws that hold her off the ground, scratching her hands on its razor sharp teeth.

SWAMP FEATHER

He stands up to his full height. To say he's horrifically statuesque, as he looks down at Hiawatha, is an understatement.

SWAMP FEATHER

Go home, boy, you're all alone
and your mother must be worried.

HIAWATHA

(looking up)
If you don't tell me where
Minnehaha is, I'll destroy you.

SWAMP FEATHER

I don't have time for this, I
have dam to finish.

Hiawatha fires off three quick arrows. Swamp Feather calmly crosses his wampum-covered forearms over his face. The first two arrows bounce off the wampum chest armour, the third hits the forearm protectors.

SWAMP FEATHER

Fire Serpents, I'm afraid this
boy is lost. A dam is a
dangerous place, if you fall in,
you might end up part of it!

He whistles their call. From behind their master, the Fire Serpents, one on each side, rear up, holding their heads high over the wall of the dam -- it's a hellish tableau.

Hiawatha is stunned. He takes a second to find his courage.

The Serpents, tongues flicking and fangs bared, move in front of Swamp Feather and begin their attack on Hiawatha.

Hiawatha fires off a burst of arrows, all of which ignite and burn up as soon as they get close to the Fire Serpents. Some charred arrows fall harmlessly into the water. Other smoldering arrows ignite the dam.

PUG

Hiawatha hears his war club calling from near his feet.

PUG

Hiawatha!

Hiawatha looks down at his club.

PUG

Iagoo said, "Darkness is their power." You must shoot their shadows.

SWAMP FEATHER (O.S.)

I suppose that war club is going to help you like it helped that sick old man?

HIAWATHA

(looking up)

...you mean my Grandfather.

SWAMP FEATHER

Oh! From the way he fought, I thought he was your Grandmother.

Hiawatha can see the Fire Serpents' shadows stand out starkly against the water and the dam.

His arms a blur, Hiawatha scores direct hits with arrow after arrow, sending up clouds of steamy vapor from the wounded shadows. Before one arrow hits, he's already got ten more in the air.

The Fire Serpents start to sink to the bottom in agony, licking their smoldering wounds with their flicking tongues. Some smoke begins to rise from the dam. Hiawatha paddles towards the Serpents, shoulders his bow, and angrily grabs one by the head.

HIAWATHA

Is Minnehaha here?

The shivering Serpent doesn't answer. Hiawatha threatens him with Pug.

FIRE SERPENT
(shivering)
Nonono.

Hiawatha drops him and grabs the other steaming Serpent.

HIAWATHA
Is she here?

SERPENT
(hissing)
Yesssss.

Hiawatha drops the huge head and watches it bubble under the green water. He hears Swamp Feather SCREAM the same gruesome yell from the night he shot him.

SWAMP FEATHER

SWAMP FEATHER
My faithful water moccasins!
What have you done to them?

In a rage, Swamp Feather reaches down and digs a barrel-sized boulder out of the muck of his dam. Grimacing, he hoists the massive rock over his head and launches it at Hiawatha.

Hiawatha tries to push Chea to safety, but Swamp Feather's boulder smashes into Hiawatha and drops onto Chea submerging the canoe completely.

UNDERWATER

Chea's overturned hull serves as a diving bell for the terrified Adjì.

CHEA
The air is keeping us up!

Adjì begins to madly exhale, as if trying to make sure they don't sink any further.

SWAMP FEATHER

Swamp Feather watches the surface of the swamp water. Hiawatha doesn't appear. The Woodpecker circles overhead in alarm.

MINNEHAHA

She manages to cut herself free with Stone Head. Shouldering her quiver, she steps out of the wigwam without a bow. Minnehaha looks around desperately for Hiawatha but sees nothing.

MINNEHAHA

Hiawatha!

Finally, Hiawatha emerges from the water. The impact from the rock has left him battered and shaken. He looks up to see Minnehaha backlit on top of the dam; pillars of smoke, from the smoldering logs, drift skyward around her.

SWAMP FEATHER

(to Hiawatha)

If you were a man, you'd understand, Dakota girls need a real Warrior to look up to.

Swamp Feather pries another large boulder from the dam. He's showing off -- it's larger than the first.

Minnehaha starts to climb down the dam get to Hiawatha, but moving across the tangle of logs and branches is difficult. Hiawatha runs towards her. They meet just as the shadow of Swamp Feather's upraised boulder falls over them.

Swamp Feather launches his rock through the air. Hiawatha and Minnehaha, helping each other, barely have time to jump aside. The boulder craters the ground next to them.

Swamp Feather grabs another rock to throw -- the biggest of all. He sweats and strains to lift it. The boulder is almost as big as he is.

Hiawatha reaches for Stone Head, pulling him from Minnehaha's quiver. He aims and fires. Swamp Feather easily blocks the shot with his rock, which is so large it almost covers his whole body. The Woodpecker swoops down and begins to peck Swamp Feather on his head. Swamp Feather ignores him and keeps on lifting.

HIAWATHA

Maybe Horn Head can do it.

Hiawatha quickly notches up Horn Head and fires. But the arrow is also blocked by Swamp Feather's rock. From this angle, the boulder in his arms might as well be a wall.

Swamp Feather continues to hoist his huge rock, it's taking all of his considerable strength. He has it half way up, his muscles and blood vessels are bulging from the effort.

Somehow, they are going to have to get an arrow up and over the rock before Swamp Feather throws. Only one of Minnehaha's magic arrows is left.

MINNEHAHA

I can do it. Give me your bow.

HIAWATHA

But it's a Chippewa bow, my father's!

MINNEHAHA

And this is a Dakota arrow, my father's.

Hiawatha makes a heroic decision. He hands her the bow.

HIAWATHA

I know you can do it.

But in her weakened state, Minnehaha can't get her last arrow and the bow string pulled all the way back.

MINNEHAHA

(struggling)

I need you to help me pull!

Minnehaha is a left handed archer. Hiawatha is right handed. They both suddenly realize, because of this fact, they can share the bow standing face to face. Hiawatha steps close and puts his cheek to hers, his left hand next to her right on the bow, his right hand next to hers on the string. They look like two dancers with a bow between them.

HIAWATHA

You're aiming too high!

MINNEHAHA

Never!

Hiawatha helps pull. Minnehaha aims and decides when to release.

MINNEHAHA

Now!

Bone Head rockets almost straight up into the sky.

Swamp Feather manages to lift his gargantuan rock over his head, protecting himself. If this last arrow deflects off the rock, it will be over for Hiawatha and Minnehaha.

MINNEHAHA

He's blocked our shot. Run!

HIAWATHA

Never!

Hiawatha heaves Pug at Swamp Feather like a thunderbolt. The war club flies towards its target, vengeance on its face.

PUG

"You're sick, let me feel your head."

Smacked squarely in the forehead, Swamp Feather starts to lose his control over the gigantic boulder.

High up above, Bone Head reaches the apex of his climb and begins to arc sharply back down towards Swamp Feather, screaming like a dive bomber.

HIAWATHA & MINNEHAHA

They watch as their arrow speeds towards its target -- the top of Swamp Feather's head.

SWAMP FEATHER

He loses his grip and drops the giant rock behind him, just in time for Bone Head to embed squarely in the top of his now exposed head.

Swamp Feather falls over stone dead, his cry of pain stuck in his throat. The wigwam-sized boulder rolls back down the wall of tree trunks, knocking a few out of the dam. The smoking structure starts to give way like a leaking flood gate. Pure water bursts through. Beavers run for cover.

The dam explodes, a wall of sparkling water thunders downstream, pushing the great war canoe and its treasures in front of it and driving away the swamp water and the misty vapors.

Hiawatha sweeps Minnehaha up in his arms and tries to outrun the onrushing wall of water. They're not going to make it, the water is just too fast. The evil face of the war canoe is moving towards them like a battering ram.

But the rushing water also has swept up Chea. With Adjì at the helm, he speeds by the dugout and enables Hiawatha and Minnehaha to tumble in.

They fly along, riding the wave of pure flood waters. With the death of Swamp Feather the spell of sickness seems to be lifting from Minnehaha, washed away with the clear water, to Hiawatha's and Adjì's great relief.

But Minnehaha and Hiawatha haven't a moment to give to each other, their beaver friends are fishing out Pug and Minnehaha's arrows and thankfully bringing them over to the canoe.

Around them, the wall of water brings life to the wretched swamp every where it touches.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOWNSTREAM - NIGHT

Hiawatha and Minnehaha hold each other tightly, propelled by the rushing high water. Adjì is nestled happily in Minnehaha's lap.

HIAWATHA

How did you know where to aim?

MINNEHAHA

A little bird told me.

She smiles at the Woodpecker from the swamp, who sits on top of Chea's head.

Hiawatha takes Minnehaha's red feather earring, which he has kept on a rawhide arm-band and places it on the head of the Woodpecker as a badge of courage.

HIAWATHA

For your courage.

WOODPECKER

Glad to help.

They watch him fly away.

Suddenly, the root ball face of Swamp Feather's war dugout glides up right behind them, close enough to touch. Adjì YELLS OUT in terror.

But his fears are quickly put to rest when they see the dugout is merely adrift in the current, empty except for the piles of tribal treasures and Iagoo's Headdress.

As Hiawatha and Minnehaha happily take the treasures on board Chea, they are interrupted by the sound of distant war drums. The full moon looms overhead.

HIAWATHA

We may be too late...

They both grab their paddles and help Chea race for home as fast as they can go.

MINNEHAHA

...If we are, promise me we
won't stop.

HIAWATHA

We'll go on till we find a place
where people live in peace.

Along the shore line their animal friends CHEER on the
speeding heros. Adjì leads their CHANT like a coxswain.

ANIMALS

(chanting)

HIA-WATH-A, MINN-E-HA-HA...

HIA-WATH-A, MINN-E-HA-HA...

Chea passes his old friends Cedar and Pine, who join in.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOME TERRITORY - DAY

Back home, the two tribes line the shores with bows drawn,
seconds from the apocalypse. Tekumah's War Party listens to
his final words.

TEKUMAH

(chanting to his Warriors)

EACH DAY I SAY, IF TODAY IS THE
LAST DAY, I AM READY. GLAD TO
JOIN THE GHOST WARRIORS OF THE
BATTLES THAT WENT BEFORE. LEAD
ME TO THEIR SIDE, LET ME TAKE MY
PLACE BY HEAVEN'S DOOR.

HIAWATHA

He and Minnehaha, along with Adjì, are paddling flat out.
The cheering of the animals blends with Tekumah's chanting
words.

ANIMALS

(chanting)

HIA-WATH-A, MINN-E-HA-HA...

HIA-WATH-A, MINN-E-HA-HA...

TEKUMAH

Close ups of the Warriors faces covered in blazing war
paint.

TEKUMAH (CONT.)
 THROUGH THE AGES LET PEOPLE SAY,
 THE DAKOTA WERE THE CHOSEN ONES,
 FIERCEST OF THEM ALL, READY TO
 LEAD THE WAY, OR READY TO FALL.

Cheers and howls, Tekumah's Warriors are ready to explode.

NOKOMIS

Grandmother is running to the river's edge. Not far off, Hiawatha's buddies, Little Friend and Big Friend notch up their arrows. Nearby, groups of Chippewa Warriors are poised to shoot. Others man canoes ready to attack. Their anger and hatred is at a fever pitch. The war drums stop, the silence is deafening.

BIG FRIEND
 This arrow is for Iagoo.

LITTLE FRIEND
 This one for Hiawatha.

Along the shore, Nokomis sees the river start to surge. She hears the sounds of the wild animals chanting, ever so faintly, the names Hiawatha and Minnehaha.

NOKOMIS
 Wait! Listen... hear their
call.

The Warriors ignore her and start to pull back on their bow strings. She frantically runs up stream.

On the other shore, Minnehaha's Brother prepares to fire the first arrow. He waits for his father's spear to drop, the signal to attack.

BROTHER
 For my sister.

He aims at the distant running figure of Nokomis, but just before he shoots, Tekumah hears Nokomis shouting and holds his spear steady.

NOKOMIS
 HIAWATHA!

All eyes turn to see Chea rounding the bend, riding the wave of the onrushing clear pure water.

Hiawatha holds the ancient Ironwood Bow high over his head. He's wearing Iagoo's Headdress. Next to him, Minnehaha proudly displays her tribe's quiver of Silver Arrows and wears their sacred Buffalo Robe.

As both sides put down their bows and wade out into the rising river to greet them, their war paint washes off, turning the muddy river into a sea of sparkling rainbow colors.

ADJI & CHEA

(singing)

THEY'D ASK ME TO JOIN THEM ON A
JOURNEY PAST WHERE OTHERS DREAM
TO GO. TO FIGHT IMPOSSIBLE
DEMONS IN THE BLACKEST NIGHT AND
THE WHITEST SNOW. WE'LL FIND
THEM, STAND BESIDE THEM,
WHEREVER THEY MAY GO.

The reflection of Hiawatha and Minnehaha sparkles in the rainbow waters. Nokomis wades out and, smiling at our heroes, places the last Eagle Feather back into his Iagoo's Headdress.

Minnehaha proudly hands their Silver Arrows to her father Chief Tekumah. The Chief takes one of the arrows and bends it around the clasped hands of Minnehaha and Hiawatha. A shining symbolic bracelet of unity and peace.

Hiawatha kisses Minnehaha. As he does he throws Pug high into the sky with his free hand. The war club soars upwards sparkling like a comet, flying into the cloud hands of Iagoo, who stands shoulder to shoulder with the Mighty West Wind in the sky above. Hiawatha and Minnehaha look up at the vision.

HIAWATHA

The hero is... US!

Little Friend, Big Friend, Minnehaha's Brother and all the Chippewa and Dakota cheer.

NOKOMIS

(laughing with Hiawatha)

Why do you always have to be so different?

CHIEF TEKUMAH

(to Minnehaha)

I knew you were destined to be a special Warrior.

HIAWATHA

Warrioress.

Minnehaha's lilting giggle can be heard the length of the river.

EPILOGUE:

Birch bark paintings fill the screen. The art depicts the wedding of Minnehaha and Hiawatha, far above them tower the visions of Iagoo and Pug made of clouds and the Mighty West Wind. Paintings of joyous feasting and dancing follow. Two wisps of sweetgrass smoke drift upwards.

ALL SING
THEY'D ASK ME TO JOIN THEM ON A
JOURNEY PAST WHERE OTHERS DREAM
TO GO. TO FIGHT IMPOSSIBLE
DEMONS IN THE BLACKEST NIGHT AND
THE WHITEST SNOW. WE'LL FIND,
STAND BESIDE THEM, WHEREVER THEY
MAY GO.

THE END

