**The Popol Vuh**

Characters

* Narrator 1

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| * Narrator 2
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* Plumed Serpent
* Heart of Sky
* Grandmother of Light
* Grandfather
* Dog
* Turkey
* Grinding Stone
* Fox
* Coyote
* Parrot
* Crow
* Chorus of animal, mudmen, woodmen, and human sounds

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| **Narrator 1:** | The ancient world had its beginnings here in this place named |
|  | Quiché. The sea was calm. The sky was empty. Silence. Darkness. |

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| **Narrator 2:** | There was not, then, anything in fact |
|  |  | That was standing there. |
|  | Only the pooled water, |  |
|  |  | Only the flat sea. (3) |

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| **Narrator 1**: | There were no people, no animals, no fish, no birds, no moun- |
|  | tains, no forests. The god of the sea, Plumed Serpent, and the god of |
|  | the sky, Heart of Sky, were both great knowers and great thinkers. |
|  | They talked, they thought, they worried. They joined their hearts and |
|  | their thoughts. |

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| **Plumed Serpent**: | We will create life! |

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| **Heart of Sky:** | But how? How will we make the earth? |

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| **Plumed Serpent:** | If we remove much of the water, the earth will rise from the sea. |
| **Narrator 2:** | So then this the earth was created by them. |
|  |  | Only their word was the creation of it. (4) |
| **Narrator 2**: | Then the mountain was asked to come from the water. |
|  |  | Straightaway there were great mountains. |
|  | Just their power, |  |
|  |  | Just their magic |
|  | Caused the making then, |  |
|  |  | The invention |
|  | Of mountains |  |
|  |  | And valleys. (5) |
| **Narrator 1:** | And the trees spread across the mountains, and great woods and |
|  | forests were formed. |

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| **Narrator 2:** | Then they thought further |
|  |  | Of the wild animals, |
|  | Guardians of the forest, |  |
|  |  | And all the population of the wild. (6) |
| **Heart of Sky** | DEER. BIRD. PUMA. JAGUAR. SERPENT. RATTLESNAKE. |
|  | FISH. SEA TURTLE. MONKEY. DOLPHIN. DOG. TURKEY. | FOX. COYOTE. PARROT. CROW. |

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| **Narrator 1:** | And the animals filled the earth and the sea. They raced to the | mountains, to the forests, to the rivers. The birds flew into the trees. |

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| **Plumed Serpent**: | Wild beasts of the fields, drink from the lakes and sleep in the |
|  | meadows, rest in the canyons. |

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| **Narrator 2:** | And so the homes |
|  |  | Of the animals were the earth. (7) |

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| **Plumed Serpent**: | Look at the wonderful animals we have made! Now it is the duty of |
|  | these creatures to thank us. |

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| **Heart of Sky:** | They must tell our great story to the other gods so we will be |
|  | honored. |

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| **Choru**s: | (animal sounds) |

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| **Plumed Serpent:** | (raising his voice) Talk! Speak! Stop moaning! Stop crying! |

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| Heart of Sky: | (shouting) Name our names! Praise us! Speak now! |

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| **Narrator 2**: | But they did not succeed in talking like men. |
|  |  | They just pretended to. |
|  | They just rattled; |  |
|  |  | And they just croaked. (8) |

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| **Plumed Serpent:** | Oh no! What have we done? |

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| **Heart of Sky**: | Who will tell our story? Who will remember how the earth began? |

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| **Plumed Serpent:** | (angrily) You will serve each other since you cannot serve us. Your |
|  | flesh will be eaten, the strong among you will kill the weak. |

\_\_\_\_***(animal*** ***sounds stop)***

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| **Heart of Sky:** | We must try again. |

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| **Plumed Serpent:** | We will try to make a human being who will give us praise and |
|  | respect. A provider. A nurturer. |

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| **Heart of Sky**: | But how? With what? |

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| **Plumed Serpent**: | Look around us. Surely we can use material we have created. |

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| **Narrator 1**: | And they talked and they thought and they decided to make men out |
|  | of the mud that remained when earth and sea were divided. |
| **Narrator 1**: | Together they made a body, but it wasn’t right. |
| **Chorus:** | (mudmen sounds) |

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| **Plumed Serpent**: | (raising his voice) Talk! Speak! Stop moaning! Stop crying! |

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| Heart of Sky: | (shouting) Name our names! Praise us! Speak now! |

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| Plumed Serpent: | Oh no! What have we done? Who will tell our story? Who will |
|  | remember how the earth began? |

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| Heart of Sky: | Careful! It’s starting to separate and crumble! What a lopsided and |
|  | twisted mess! |

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| Plumed Serpent: | It’s loosening! It’s softening! |

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| Heart of Sky: | Oh no! It’s disintegrating! |

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| Plumed Serpent: | It’s dissolving in the water! |

\_\_\_\_(mudmen sounds stop)

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| Heart of Sky: | We must try again. |

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| Plumed Serpent: | Let us consult the great god and goddess, Grandfather and |
|  | Grandmother of Light. They will be able to guide us. |

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| Heart of Sky: | Yes! They are both very wise. They will count the days in lots of |
|  | four and seek an answer for us. |

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| Narrator 1: | So they journeyed beyond the heavens tovisit Grandfather and |
|  | Grandmother of Light. |

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| Grandfather: | Welcome, Plumed Serpent and Heart of Sky. |

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| Grandmother | You both look very worried. How may we help you? |
| Plumed Serpent: | Great god and goddess, we have tried to make creatures who will |
|  | speak our names, honor us and give us praise. We have failed so |
|  | far! The animals growl and hiss, the mudmen babble. |

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| Heart of Sky: | Who will tell our story? Who will remember how the earth began? |

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| Plumed Serpent: | We truly need your great wisdom. |

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| Grandmother: | (moving her hands slowly over seeds in groups of four) |
|  | Wood! Wood! You must carve mouths and faces in wood! |

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| Grandfather: | Let them sing your praises and give you the respect you deserve! |

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| Grandmother | :Let them be your providers, your nurturers, these men of wood! |
| Narrator 2: | Their legs were not filled out, |
|  |  | Nor their arms. |
|  | They lacked blood |  |
|  |  | And serum. |
|  | They lacked sweat |  |
|  |  | And fat. (9) |

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| Chorus: | (woodmen sounds) |

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| Plumed Serpent: | (raising his voice) Talk! Speak! Stop moaning! Stop crying! |

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| Heart of Sky: | (shouting) Name our names! Praise us! Speak now! |

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| Plumed Serpent: | What a horrible noise! There is nothing in their minds! |

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| Heart of Sky: | There is nothing in their hearts! |

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| Plumed Serpent: | They do not remember us! |

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| Heart of Sky: | Who will tell our story? Who will remember how the earth began? |

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| Narrator 1: | And so, Plumed Serpent and Heart of Sky harnessed the waters |
|  | and a great flood covered the earth. The creatures of the forest |
|  | came into the dwellings of the woodmen. |

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| Dog: | You have chased us from our homes, so we will take yours now! |

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| Turkey: | You have caused us pain, so now we shall eat you! |

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| Grinding Stone: | You have pounded on us. Now, we will do the same to you! |

\_\_\_\_(woodmen sounds stop)

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| Heart of Sky: | What are we to do? The animals cannot sing our praise, the mudmen |
|  | dissolved, and the woodmen had no hearts or minds. |

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| Plumed Serpent: | Look at the mountain in the distance. What do you see coming |
|  | towards us? |

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| Chorus: | (animal sounds - fox, coyote, parrot, crow) |

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| Heart of Sky: | Four animals, but I don’t know which ones - they are too far away. |

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| Plumed Serpent: | I can see clearly now! Fox, coyote, parrot, crow! |

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| Fox: | We bring you great news! We have found ears of yellow corn and |
|  | white corn. |

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| Coyote: | This is the ingredient you have been looking for to create human |
|  | flesh! |

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| Parrot: | The mountain we have just come from is thick with corn. |

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| Crow: | Hundreds of plants grow there, strong and straight and tall. |

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| Narrator 2: | And they rejoiced then |
|  |  | Over the discovery |
|  | Of the marvelous mountain, |  |
|  |  | Filled |
|  | With quantities |  |
|  |  | And quantities |
|  | Of yellow corn ears, |  |
|  |  | And white corn ears. (10) |

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| Plumed Serpent: | Let us grind the corn nine times! |

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| Narrator 2: | And then the yellow corn was ground |
|  |  | And the white corn. (11) |

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| Heart of Sky: | Let us add water! |
| Narrator 2: | The food came |
|  |  | With water to create strength, |
|  | And it became man’s grease |  |
|  |  | And turned into his fat. (12) |

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| Chorus: | (human sounds) |

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| Heart of Sky: | The story of our beginnings will be told! |

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| Narrator 2: | Only yellow corn |
|  |  | And white corn were their bodies. |
|  | Only food were the legs |  |
|  |  | And arms of man. |
|  | Those who were our first fathers |  |
|  |  | Were the four original men. |
|  | Only food at the outset |  |
|  |  | Were their bodies. (13) |

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| Plumed Serpent: | We will be honored by the gods! |

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| Narrator 2: | These are the names of the first men who were made, |
|  |  | Who were shaped: |
|  | The first man was Jaguar Quiché, |  |
|  |  | And the second in turn was Jaguar Night, |
|  | And the third in turn was Nought, |  |
|  |  | And the fourth was Wind Jaguar. (14) |

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| Heart of Sky: | Our praises will be sung! |

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| Narrator 2: | Red Sea House was the name |
|  |  | Of the wife of Jaguar Quiché; |
|  | Beauty House was the name |  |
|  |  | Of the wife of Jaguar Night; |
|  | Hummingbird House was the name |  |
|  |  | Of the wife of Nought; |
|  | Parrot House was the name |  |
|  |  | Of the wife of Wind Jaguar. |
|  | And these were the names of their wives, |  |
|  |  | Who became queens. |
|  | They were the bearers of the little tribes, |  |
|  |  | The great tribes, |
|  | And this was the root of us |  |
|  |  | Who are Quiché people. (15) |

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| Chorus: | (human sounds get gradually louder) |

The End