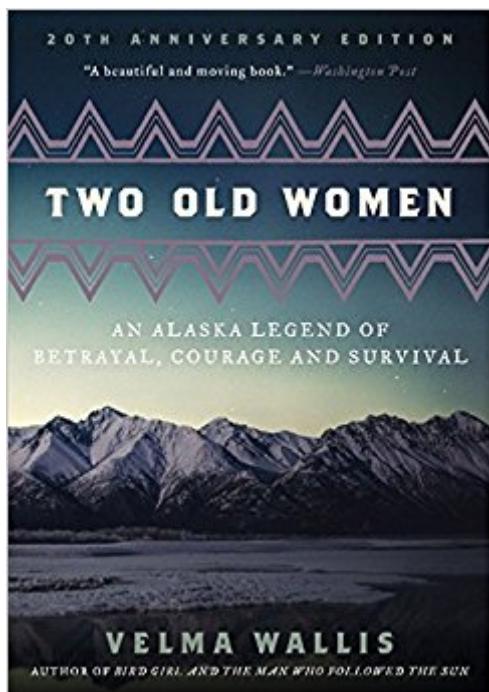


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# Two Old Women, 20th Anniversary Edition: An Alaska Legend Of Betrayal, Courage And Survival



## Synopsis

Based on an Athabascan Indian legend passed along for many generations from mothers to daughters of the upper Yukon River Valley in Alaska, this is the suspenseful, shocking, ultimately inspirational tale of two old women abandoned by their tribe during a brutal winter famine. Though these women have been known to complain more than contribute, they now must either survive on their own or die trying. In simple but vivid detail, Velma Wallis depicts a landscape and way of life that are at once merciless and starkly beautiful. In her old women, she has created two heroines of steely determination whose story of betrayal, friendship, community, and forgiveness "speaks straight to the heart with clarity, sweetness, and wisdom" (Ursula K. Le Guin).

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Velma Wallis is one in a family of thirteen children, all born in the vast fur-trapping country of Fort Yukon, Alaska, and raised with traditional Athabascan values. A writer and avid reader, she lives in Fairbanks.

I loved this book. I can't wait to give it to my 88-year-old mother to read. It's such an affirmation of the dignity and wisdom of older age. My review may spoil the story for you so proceed cautiously from here. Two Old Women is based on an Athabascan Indian legend. A starving tribe of Alaskan natives leaves two old women alone in the freezing cold to die, because every mouthful of food is precious, and these two are unhelpful. They don't contribute to the tribe; they take from it. People

have to help them. They complain constantly. Once the tribe leaves them, though, they must decide whether to accept the death sentence or not. The younger woman, 75, says we might die anyway, but if that is so, let's at least die trying to live. So they adopt that motto. At least let's die trying. They manage to avert death by recalling long-unused knowledge of survival skills. In spite of their old, achy bodies, they thrive and bond with each other, but they are lonely and sad. Eventually, there's a happy ending, which I'll let you discover for yourself. If you're like me, you'll reread it, crying with joy each time. But the message of this book is multi-faceted. Elders can and should continue to contribute until the end. Youth should respect the elders for their valuable knowledge. All people benefit from this synergy. *Two Old Women* is a short book. I read it in one evening. I heartily recommend it, particularly to those who are older and feeling ignored, useless, or confused. This book will get you up and moving, and it will make you happy.

I love this story. It is a wonderful lesson for everyone. In every conflict there is more than one person. The community in the book lives on in harsh conditions and everyone has to be in harmony for everyone to survive. When the animosity between two women becomes too disruptive, they are given a punishment and to survive they need to come together. One woman is the obvious villain but the other has to learn to accept her role in the conflict. On the surface, she appears innocent but after careful consideration, her flaws emerge. She never once tried to defuse the situation or help the other woman. This is a wonderful book for discussion.

Although very short, this is a very absorbing tale. A tale that anyone over 60 should read. Too many times, older people give up on life, thinking they are too old to participate. This tale should be an awakening. This story is one that has great meaning and influence at a relevant time in my life. I truly recommend it!

This little book about two old women, left by their tribe to die, is an example of courage and resilience. Having to fend for themselves in the Arctic cold, they dig deep down to survive. While doing this, they find themselves becoming stronger and younger and prouder than they have been in years, maybe ever. The methods used to survive give us a look back into the lives of Native Americans everywhere. The message is clear: stand up and be counted, until the last day you are here on earth, especially if you are a woman.

Velma Wallis lives in Ft. Yukon, Alaska, a small native community just above the Arctic Circle. She

has written a story based on an old native legend. Survival of The People in a difficult environment is played out sensitively and compassionately as the small group faces starvation during a particularly brutal winter. Whatever decisions are made by the group and by individuals will affect everyone's life. This is a story to be read again and again. It's a small but powerful book which will stick in your mind for years. Read it aloud to children, or have them read it to you. The names are Inuit, but you'll get around that. This is a real gem.

Purchased this book for a training class at work. Was pleasantly surprised by how much I enjoyed reading this book. It's a quick read (approx. 2 hours) and has valuable lessons for all walks of life including leaders, followers, young and old.

No wonder this book has been a best seller since it first came out 20 years ago. My book club and friends raved about it and said it changed their life. No more whining About our 'lot in life' when you read what these two ladies went thru to survive. Such a marvelous story!

I appreciated the theme of old age in a very unique and surprising way. The story is based on folklore from an Athabaskan Indian legend, passed down for many generations on the upper Yukon River in Alaska..

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