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Stand on the Sky

Taylor Nelson

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In Kazakh culture, it is the men who train and hunt with eagles. But Aisulu’s brother, Serik, is ill, and a baby eagle has imprinted on Aisulu. When she hears of an eagle hunter competition with prize money enough to get Serik treatment and keep her family from having to abandon their nomadic way of life, Aisulu determines to train her eaglet to become the finest eagle hunter there is. With the help of her intimidating uncle and foreign aunt, Aisulu must earn her eagle’s trust and fight for her right to fly.

This book is startlingly powerful and rich with bittersweet emotion. Aisulu’s determination, naïve trust, and guarded heart make her a compelling heroine. Her voice is strong and empathetic, and the reader will love growing alongside her as she finds her voice and her heart. The exploration of life in Mongolia as a modern Kazakh nomadic family is fascinating, and the culture and traditions are treated very respectfully. This is not an “own voices” story, but the author clearly did her research. Overall, this book is a wonderful look into the life of a courageous and loving young woman in a little-known culture.