



Ririro

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The Moon and the Thunder

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The Sun was a young woman who lived in the east, while her brother, the Moon, lived in the west. The young woman had a lover who came to court her every month in the darkness of the Moon. He would come at night and leave before daylight, and although she spoke to him, she could not see his face in the dark, and he would not tell her his name, but she wondered all the time who it could be.

Finally, she came up with a plan to find out. So the next time he came, while they were sitting together in the darkness of the night, she slyly dipped her hand in the fireplace ashes and rubbed it on his face, saying, "Your face is cold, you must have suffered from the wind." And she pretended to have great pity for him, but he did not know that she had ash on her hand. After a while, he left her and went away again.

The next night, when the Moon appeared in the sky, his face was covered in spots, and then his sister knew that he was the one who had come to see her. He was so ashamed that she knew that he stayed as far away as possible on the other side of the sky all night. Since then, he tries to stay far behind the Sun, and when he sometimes has to come near her in the west, he makes himself as thin as a ribbon so that he is hardly visible.

Some old people say that the Moon is a ball that was thrown into the air during a game a long time ago. They say that two towns played against each other, but one of them had the best runners and had almost won the game, when the leader of the other side picked up the ball with his hand - something that is not allowed in the game - and tried to throw it towards the goal. But the ball hit the solid sky vault and got stuck there, to remind players never to cheat. If the Moon looks small and pale, it is because someone has treated the ball unfairly, and for this reason, they used to play only at full Moon.

When the Sun or the Moon is eclipsed, it is because a big frog in the sky is trying to swallow it. Everyone knows this, even the Creeks and the other tribes. In the past, eighty or a hundred years ago, before all the great medicine men died, people would gather around a fire whenever they saw the Sun eclipse and beat the drum, and this would quickly scare off the big frog and the Sun would be okay again.

The common people call both the Sun and the Moon Nunda, one is "Nunda who stays during the day" and the other "Nunda who stays during the night," but the priests call the Sun "Sutalidihi the Six Killer" and the Moon "Geyaguga" although no one knows what this word means now, or why they use these names. Sometimes people ask the Moon not to let it rain or snow.

The great Thunder and his sons, the two Thunder Boys, live far in the west above the sky vault. Lightning and the rainbow are their beautiful dresses. The priests pray to the Thunder and call him the Red Man, because that is the brightest color of his dress. There are also other thunderbolts that live lower, in cliffs and mountains, and under waterfalls. These thunderbolts travel on invisible bridges from one high peak to another where they have their mansions. The great thunderbolts above the sky are friendly and helpful when we pray to them, but these other thunderbolts always plot mischief. And one must not point to the rainbow, or the finger swells up at the lower joint.



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