

The Man Who Walked in the Light *a myth*

Once upon a time, a man went on a search for the Sun. He did this because he was confused—as were many of his people. The Sun had always flown before; for all of his life, without fail, her warm arms would reach out and bring light to the Earth. But one day, she did not make her daily climb. Never had he seen darkness like the one that had now descended. The season was still supposed to be warm; the Earth had not even turned bitter and cold toward her mother as she did in the winter, during which the Sun brought light, but little heat. So the man set out from his home at the encouragement of his few friends to find out where the Sun had gone.

The man traveled to the west, for it was the only place he could think to go. He spoke to people along his journey in search of a destination, and was directed to a mountain that seemed to hold light within it, a brighter source than the small white pinpricks shining in the all-black, unfamiliar sky. When he set foot on the stone, he felt heat emanating from the pale stone. He looked to the summit, which glowed brightest of all, and began climbing.

As he ascended, the man saw the rock of the mountain growing more and more luminous, until it shone white beneath him. When he reached the very top, he found the source of the light: the Sun, sitting on the ground, dejected. Her golden eyes were downcast, and her brightness dimmed just slightly with her every exhale.

The man stood for a moment behind the Sun, but she did not acknowledge him. Not knowing what else to do, he sat down beside her. He asked her why she was so sad, and for a while, she did not respond. The man was about to give up trying to speak with the Sun when she finally responded, her voice quiet and weak. She said that she was worn out from flying and shedding her light all the time, but she was afraid to disappoint her father, the Sky. The man could find no way to relate to this, so he just nodded along sympathetically as the Sun spoke.

As the Sun continued her story, the man learned that she had descended from her usual position to visit her stubborn daughter, the Earth. She had been intending to rise up again the next day, but now she was so tired that she just could not bring herself to go. Flying all the time was exhausting, she said. The man looked above him now, at the tiny lights twinkling through the black. He could see that they had light, but not enough. The man sat with the Sun and thought. Sullen, the Sun heaved such a breath that the white rock beneath her blazed. The man looked around at the rock. He saw how the Sun's radiance reflected off the stone in the mountains and made it glow, and he thought of something.

If they could persuade the Sky to accept it, they could give him a large rock, hewn from this mountain, off which the Sun could reflect her brightness without having to be flying herself. There would be light to guide people through the darkness while the Sun had her rest!

Thrilled with his idea, the man shared it with the Sun. She was cheered immediately, and agreed with his plan. The idea of rest for half of a day lifted her spirits so much that she sang when she called out to her father, the Sky.

At the Sun's call, the wind coalesced into the form of a man, standing before the two on the mountain. He was blue-eyed, dark against the bright mountain, his skin ink-black and dotted with tiny white specks. He turned his stern gaze on his daughter, who took his hands and explained herself as she had to the man. The Sky's face softened as he heard the Sun's case, and then filled with surprise when she told him the man's idea. For the first time, the Sky actually seemed to notice the man. The man tried not to shrink under the piercing blue stare. Then, much to the man's astonishment, the Sky began to laugh. The Sun joined in with her melodious voice, and soon it sounded like the very earth was shaking with mirth.

The ground shook so much that the man was nearly thrown off his feet. The Sun steadied him as she literally beamed at a crack that was forming in the rock where the man had been standing. All three of them watched as a young, bronze-skinned girl pulled herself out of the ground. The Sun gave a shout of

joy and embraced the girl, who the man realized must be her daughter, the Earth. The Earth told her mother and grandfather she had heard their ideas and was willing to give a portion of herself for the Sky to keep. The Sun was so joyful she blazed when she smiled, lighting the world up like in daytime.

Laughing, the Earth went down the mountain, carving out the white rock until she hefted a sphere so enormous it left behind a valley where the mountainside had been. The Sky was so pleased with this rock that he threw it up and spun it in the air when they gave it to him.

His happiness with the rock, which he christened “Moon”, was so great that he commanded the winds to keep it spinning forever, so his granddaughter and the people all around her could see every one of its faces. The Sun, joyful and thankful, always returned to the same spot to rest, at the very top of the carved mountain.

The Sun, Sky, and the Earth were all so grateful that they insisted they bestow gifts upon the man that had helped them so. The Sun, the most thankful, gave him a pouch of her light, for him to call upon in dark places. The Sky gave him favor with the winds, who would aid him when he called. The Earth gave him the steadiness of a rock and her blessing on any overland journey he might take.

And so the man, marveling at these gifts, thanked the Sun, Earth, and Sky, and went on his way. He traveled back through the mountains, walking in the light this time. He always carried the Sun’s pouch of light in his pocket, from whence it gave him warmth and strength. With the aid of the Earth, the man’s journey home was faster than one to the mountain. She showed him the best paths to take, what game to hunt, and even sat by his campfire with him at night, when he rested with the Sun.

When he finally returned home, his few friends welcomed him and asked how he had found the Sun. He told them the story, and they were awestruck. They all marvelled at the new night, at the Moon. The man told them all about meeting the Sun, the Sky, the Earth. The only things he did not share were his gifts, which were private, special to him alone. However, it was frequently remarked by his friends and the people of his village that he did not ever seem to get cold. And that he became a skilled

woodsman and hunter uncommonly quickly. They whispered. Journeys that should have taken two weeks took him one. He would go back into the mountains every year at the same time, claiming to be visiting a few old friends.

Through the years, long after the man died, his story evolved, becoming legend. But in every version of the man's tale, it is always remarked that he seemed to glow, just slightly. *The man who walked in the light*, he is called. Look up at the Sun, the Sky. Feel the Earth. Thanks to them, he is in the light still, and will be, always.