



Hótho Conquers

Shagodyoweg Gowa

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Native AmericanNorth American

Easy
4 min read

A MOTHER and her two daughters lived in an opening in the woods. When the daughters became women the mother said, “You must marry. Make twenty loaves of green corn bread, tie up the bread in husks and go to the house of two brothers, who live not far from here. Their house has a partition; you, my elder daughter, go in at the first door and say to the man, ‘This is marriage bread, I have come here to be your wife.’ You, my younger daughter, go in at the other door and say to the man, ‘This is marriage bread, I have come here to be your wife.’ The brothers will take your bread and tell you to stay.

“Before you come to the house a trail branches off. Be sure to keep the straight trail.”

The sisters started. When they came to the branch trail they mistook it for the straight one and followed it till they came to a bark house. Looking in through a crack they saw a number of men, SHAGODYOWEG GOWAS, and were so frightened that they ran toward home.

The men followed. When they were near, one of the sisters threw down her basket of bread. The men stopped, ate the bread, then followed again. The second sister put down her basket. Piece by piece the sisters threw off their clothes, the pursuers stopped and examined each piece. In this way the girls kept a little ahead and finally reached home.

“You didn’t do as I told you,” said the mother, “you must try again.”

They made bread and the next morning started again. This time they reached the right house. The elder sister went in at the first door and placing her basket of bread before the man said, “I have come here to be your wife.” He ate the bread, and thanked her.

The younger sister went in at the second door, placed her basket in front of the man, and said, “I have come here to be your wife.” He ate the bread, and thanked her.

In the morning one of the brothers called, through the partition, to the other, “I am up.”

“So am I,” answered the other.

“We are eating.”

“So are we.”

“I am going to hunt.”

“So am I.”

Before starting, each brother said to his wife, “You must stay in the house ten days. If you don’t, our brother, SHAGODYOWEG GOWA, may come and carry you away.”

For nine days the sisters stayed indoors, then the younger said, “It is bright and pleasant, let us sit outside a little while.”

The elder sister consented and they sat down near the house, but they hadn’t been there long when SHAGODYOWEG came. The sisters didn’t see him as he was and when he asked them to come and eat with him they went.

When the men came home and didn’t find their wives they knew that their brother had captured them. The

elder brother went to SHAGODYOWEG, and said, "I have come to ask you to give us our wives; watch over them, but let them stay with us."

At last he consented and the women went home with their husbands.

HÓTHO (Cold Weather) was a brother of these men and lived not far away. HÓTHO always went naked, his only weapon was a hatchet that he carried in a hole in his hip. It is HÓTHO who, in winter, makes the trees crack with such a loud noise; he is striking them with his hatchet,

The two brothers went to HÓTHO and asked him to protect their wives.

Some time after this, the two again went hunting, SHAGODYOWEG GOWA came to the house and said to the sisters, "Come and eat with me. You can eat and be back in a little while."

Not seeing him as he was they went. He took them to his house in the forest and shut them up. The younger sister escaped but had not gone far when her brother-in-law found it out and followed, screaming as he ran.

The woman was terribly frightened and ran straight to HÓTHO. He said to her, "Go home, I will meet my brother."

They met and began a terrible battle. SHAGODYOWEG GOWA fought with his rattle; HÓTHO with his hatchet. As they went toward the East, fighting, they tore up all the trees and bushes. But at last HÓTHO conquered his brother and made him promise not to steal the sisters again.

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