



# *Two Young Men Who Went to "The Blue", Speaker and Definer*

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Native Americannorth American

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*Easy*

*28 min read*

In a village, in olden times, lived two young men who were such great friends that they cared for no one else, on that account everybody disliked and shunned them. They could find no home to live in so they said to each other, "Since everybody dislikes us the sooner we go away from the village the better," and they started toward the South.

When night overtook them they looked around for a dry place, where leaves had fallen, for they wanted to sleep comfortably.

At first the friends had only evergreen and roots to eat, but afterward they made bows and arrows and killed birds and small game.

When they were out of the forest, they came to opening where there was swampy ground, but they traveled on. Once in a while one said to the other, "I am afraid we will never get across the swamp"; but the other said

encouraging words, and they went on.

One day the two young men came to a tall hemlock tree. "Climb up and look around. See if there is a house in sight," said one to the other.

The limbs of the hemlock came almost to the ground and the young man climbed up easily. When he reached the top of the tree and looked off, he saw a beautiful trail leaping from the tree into the air. He called to his companion, "Throw down our bows and arrows and come up here and see what a splendid trail I have found."

The other climbed the tree and looking at the trail, said, "Let us find out where it leads to."

They looked in every direction, but saw no forest or trees on any side.

It had always been necessary that whatever the two friends undertook they should be of one mind. They were now of one mind and they started off together.

The trail from the tree seemed as solid as if upon the ground, and extended as far as eye could see.

The young men traveled along the trail and never knew they were going up till they had reached another world. It seemed pleasant there, but the leader said, "Don't stop here, let us go on and see where the trail ends."

Along the trail there was plenty of game, but the young men paid no heed to it. After a time they came to a bark-house out of which smoke was rising. One of the young men said, "It is customary for travelers to stop at any house near a trail and find out who is living there. Let us look in here."

The elder went first. The house was of bark with bark suspended for a door. They pushed the door open and saw an old man sitting inside; he saluted the young men, and said, "I know the trouble you have undergone, I know that people dislike you. I have called you and you have come from the lower world, you often spoke of the world above. I caused you to follow the trail that leads up here. Come into my house, but you cannot stay long for I must go elsewhere."

The man, who seemed to be about middle age, said, "People down in your world often speak of a brother whose home is in 'the Blue.' I am that brother. I am he who makes light (the sun). HÁWENIYO commands me, says I must give light to the world. This is my resting place and I can stay here but a short time. When you come this

way again you must stop. I am always here at midday. I go under the earth and come out in the East. When you come to the next house you must go in and speak to the woman who lives there,” said the man as he started off toward the West.

The two young men traveled on till they came to second bark house, then the leader said, “We must stop here for our friend told us to.”

The house looked exactly like the first one. The young men went inside and saw an old woman sewing skins together. They said to her, “We have come, Grandmother.”

“I am glad,” said she. “It was your brother who seat you here. Now you must eat, for it is a long time that you are without food.”

In one part of the house they saw a bark bowl full of boiled squash, evidently just from the kettle. They sat down and the old woman gave each of them half of a squash and a quarter of a loaf of Indian bread, saying, “This will be enough for both.”

“No,” said one of the young men, “there is no more here than I can eat.”

“It is enough,” said the woman, “when you come back, stop and I will give you more, I am the woman whom people down below call the ‘Moon.’ Be on your guard; the trail is full of danger, you must be brave. Don’t look at anything outside of your path for an enemy is there. Don’t heed anything you see or hear; if you do you are lost. After a while you will pass the dangerous part and come to a house where you can stop.”

As the friends traveled on they saw all kinds of fruit and game. It called to them “Stop! Come and eat, I am good!”

But they remembered the old woman’s words and paid no heed. Each fruit had words of its own with which it begged the young men to come and eat of it. After a while the fruit stopped calling, and the friends thought, “Maybe we are out of trouble now and will soon come to the house where the old woman told us to stop.”

But they came to a second place. The first fruit was full of witchcraft. If they had eaten of it, they would have died, but at the second place they ate of the fruit and were refreshed. After a while, they saw a house in the distance and one said to the other, “We are coming to a place where we may be in danger, we may have no

mind of our own. We wanted to come and now that we are here we must endure what we meet.”

They talked in this way till they came to the house. In the house they found a man who called himself their uncle and said, “I am glad that your brother has sent you. You are going to a large assembly, but you cannot join it unless I change you.”

One of the young men was frightened. He asked, “Why should we be changed? We are men, we have come thus far in our own form.”

“You have come here in your own form, but now you must be made ready to enter the assembly of this world.”

The other young man looked steadfastly at his uncle and was not frightened or discouraged.

The old man went to another part of the house and brought out a long wide strip of bark, set it up slanting, and said, “The first that came shall be transformed first,” and he called to the young man to come and lie on the bark. He did so; then the old man asked, “Are you ready?”

“I am ready.”

The uncle blew through his hand on to the young man’s head, and bones and flesh separated and fell into two heaps.

The other nephew looked on, saw how the uncle took every joint, separated the parts, wiped and put the bones aside, and he thought, “My luck is hard. I am alone here; my friend is gone.”

After the bones had been cleaned the old man put them in place again then saying, “Be ready!” he blew through his hands on to the skull of the skeleton. The force of the blowing sent the skeleton a long distance, but again it was a man. This was the way in which each man had to be purified.

The second nephew did not want to be treated in the same manner. He did not go forward willingly, but when the uncle was ready he gave the word and the young man could not hold back. He lay on the bark and was treated as his friend had been treated, while the friend in his turn looked on. Because he had been unwilling, his body was more difficult to purify.

The old man washed and wiped each bone. He took more uncleanness from this nephew than from the first

After he had put the bones in place, and said, "Be ready!" he blew on the skull with such force that the skeleton shot off a long distance, but it became a beautiful young man.

Then the old man said, "You are purified. Now I will try your power."

They went outside and stood in the opening. A deer was feeding on the grass. The uncle said to one of the young men, "Catch that deer." To the deer he called out, "Be on your guard, my nephew is going to kill you!"

The deer sprang off, but had made only a few bounds when the young man was at its side. The uncle saw how he caught the deer, and, knowing that he was fit for any race, he said, "You are ready now."

Then he told the second nephew to catch the deer calling out to the deer, "Be on your guard, my nephew is going to kill you!"

The deer sprang away, but the young man overtook it and brought it to the old man, who said, "You also are ready. You can go to the assembly and see what you can accomplish."

The young men started. They had not gone far when they saw a man coming toward them. There was a little hollow ahead. They saw him go down into this hollow and come up, walking very fast. As the three men met, the stranger said, "You have come, brothers. Your elder brother wanted you to come. Now you must go with me to the great assembly. He who has charge of the assembly is the same who made the world from which you all come. As you could not go to the assembly alone I have been sent to conduct you."

The stranger turned and the young men followed him at what seemed to them incredible speed. Soon they heard the noise as of a multitude of voices and the sound grew louder and louder. The stranger said, "It is the sound of mirth and it comes from the assembly."

When they approached there seemed to be an immense settlement and the stranger said to one of the young men, "Your sister's house is off at the end, and your brothers' are there too. You cannot go into their houses for you did not die before you came here. You must pass through the same that they have to enter their homes."

As the young men went along, they felt a great desire to go into the houses, but they knew they could not. As they walked they inhaled the odor of beautiful flowers that grew along the path.

After a while the guide pointed to a long house, and said, "That is where HÁWENIYO lives, he who made the world below and allowed you to come here. We will sit down by the door and afterward go in."

The long house was built with low walls and hung inside with green boughs that gave out a delightful odor. As the air moved, a strong perfume came from the flowers and herbs that were inside the house. As the young men entered, they saw a great many people, who had come to praise HÁWENIYO and have the Green Corn dance. These people did not notice that two men were there in human flesh—for the two had been purified.

A man came out of the crowd and proclaimed what things had to be done. The guide said, "This is the one whom you call HÁWENIYO. It is here that those who are good in the lower world come when they die. When you reach home you will tell your people what you have seen. Now I will go back with you."

The three started. When they came to the place where he had met them, the guide left them and the young men went on alone. They traveled very swiftly, calling at each place where they had stopped when coming, but only to return thanks.

When they reached Sun's house, Sun said, "You are going home. I caused you to come hither. You have been ten days traveling, but what we call a day here is a year in the lower world."

When the young men got back to the lower world they were about thirty years old. The ten years they had been gone seemed no longer than going in the morning and coming back in the evening.

Sun took them to the hemlock tree where the trail began. They found that their bows, which they had left on the ground, were covered with moss. Sun reached for the bows and arrows, took them in his hands, rapped off the moss, and they were as new as if just made. He said "Long ago the people moved from the village where you were born."

It was twelve looks from the hemlock tree to where the village had been. When they came to the end of twelve looks Sun said, "Here is where the village was." Clearings and little hillocks where corn had been were to be seen, but grass was growing everywhere.

Sun said, "You will find your people twelve looks farther on. When you come to the first house ask the old man you will find there, if years ago he heard of two young men who disappeared from his village. If he gives you no

information, go to the next house, you will find an old woman there, ask her the same question. Now we will part.”

Sun turned back and the young men went forward, After a time they came to an opening in the woods and saw a village. They entered the first house and called the old man sitting there “Grandfather” and one asked, “Do you remember that once two young men were lost from the village where you were living?”

The old man held his head down, as if thinking, then raised it and said, “Why do you ask the question? Two young men did disappear. It was said that they were lost, but it was never known in what way.”

“How long ago did this happen?”

“At the time they were lost the village was forsaken. It was ten years ago. The old chief told the young men that they must not stay any longer in that place; their children or grandchildren might disappear in the same way the two friends had. But,” said the old man, “there is a woman in the next house, who can tell you more than I can.

They went to the second house and said to the woman they found there, “How do you do, Grandmother, we have come to talk with you.” Their first question was, “Why did your people desert the old village?”

“Two young men disappeared,” replied the old woman. “The place was blamed for it; people thought it must be inhabited by some evil thing which took off their children.”

The young men thought they had done as Sun instructed them to do, so they said, “We are the two who were lost. We have returned.”

“Where have you been?” asked the old woman.

“We cannot tell you alone, but let an assembly be called and we will speak of all we have seen. Notify the people that there will be dancing, then they will come. There was nothing but mirth where we were.”

The old woman said, “It is the duty of the man who lives in that house yonder to notify the people of such gatherings. I will go and tell him.”

“Very well,” said the young man, “the account of our journey is important, none of our people will ever see what

we have seen and return to tell about it.”

The old woman told the messenger that two men had come to the village with important news and a meeting of the people must be called.

The messenger started and when he came to a certain spot he called out, “Gowe! Gowe!” and continued to call till he reached the end of the village.

The people assembled and the chief went to the old woman’s cabin and said to the two strangers, “Let your work be done.”

When the young men came to the assembly, people looked at them with curiosity, for they seemed to be a different kind of people. They did not recognize them.

The chief said, “These men are here with a message. Whence they have come no one knows, for we know of no other people living in the world but ourselves.”

The chief sat down and one of the young men rose, and said, “Listen!”—He was the first one purified, he had been first in all things afterward and was now the first to speak—“I want to ask you a question. Did you, while living in your old village lose two young men?”

A woman rose up, and said, “I will answer that question. Two young men, despised and shunned by all, disappeared and have not been seen since.” And she sat down.

Then the old man whom the two friends had visited rose, but he couldn’t say much.

The last man purified stood up, and said, “We are the two who disappeared, nobody cared for us and we ‘were grieved. We have been to the other world, have been in the Southern world, and have returned to you. A guide came with us to our starting place. Your own wickedness caused you to leave your village and homes. You are like animals in the forest; when their young are old enough they desert them. As soon as we were large enough, you deserted us. The birds build homes for their young, but soon leave them. You will see that whenever the young bird meets its mother it flutters its wings, but the mother passes it by. We, like the young bird, were happy to meet you, but you didn’t want to see us. When we went away we were young; we are now men. What is your opinion? Will it be customary hereafter to desert homeless children?”

(The two wanted to be received into the gens [clan].)

The young man’s companion listened to his speech and then said, “Let this be a starting point. Whenever a poor family are rearing children, never forsake them. When parents die, care for their fatherless and motherless children.”

The two friends told how they had visited the long house in “the Blue” and seen HÁWENIYO; how they had been directed to describe to their people in the lower world all they had seen. Then they told the people they must learn the dance that HÁWENIYO wished them to know, the Green Corn dance.

One of the young men sang the song he had heard in the world above; the other taught the people how to dance to the song. He said to them, “Let it be that whatever we saw done up there will be done here.” The people adopted the rules laid down for them at this time, and their religion was formed.

The friend, who was last to be purified, became HADENTHENI (Speaker), the first to be purified became HANIGONGEnDATHA (Definer), to explain the meaning of everything touching HÁWENIYO.

After a time, the two young men said, “Let us continue our journey.” They went on. They found many villages and spoke to the people. This is why the Indians are religious to-day. Those men were good in all things and the people followed their example.

They traveled till they had finished their work in the North, then they said, "We have spoken peace to all the tribes of the North, now we will return to our birthplace."

After they had been at home a while, they said, "Let us travel South from the hemlock tree and let our food be the game we kill."

When they had traveled a few days they camped and began to hunt, going in different directions in quest of game. During one of those expeditions, the Speaker saw a man dodging around the trees. As he approached the dodger stopped, and said, "Grandson, I am glad to see you. I have been sent to tell you that you and others are in great danger. This is all I can say, but come with me to my chief, he will answer your questions."

The Speaker followed the stranger for he wanted to find out if there were really people living near.

The two soon came to a high cliff and the stranger said, "We live down there."

Looking closely the young man saw an almost invisible trail. They followed the trail to the bottom of the ravine and came to an opening in the rocks. When about to enter the stranger said, "Leave your bow and arrows, as you do when you go into other houses."

They went through the first opening and into a second. In the second was an old man and an old woman. The stranger said to them, "I have brought your grandson."

"We have met many times," said the old man, "but you have never been able to know it. Now I have sent for You for I want to tell you that you are in great danger. Your companion has gone far into the forest and the NYAGWAIHE GOWA is on his trail. At midday to-morrow the enemy will be at your camp. He is full of witchcraft and if you do not act as I tell you he will kill you and kill us. We have many times tried to destroy NYAGWAIHE GOWA, but he is so full of magic that we cannot kill him.

"Go back to your camp, your friend is there now. Cut some basswood sticks and make them into mannikins. When the mannikins are finished put them down in front of your brush house, near the door, and give each one a bow and arrow. When NYAGWAIHE GOWA approaches, you will know it by the roar. Fell trees in the path and be ready with bow and arrows.

“NYAGWAIHE GOWA’s life is in his feet. When he raises a foot to cross the trees you have felled you will see a white spot in the sole of the foot; there his heart is. Hit it if you can, for there only will a shot take effect.”

The young man went back to camp, cut down basswood trees, and, with the aid of his friend, made two mannikins. He obeyed the old man in everything.

The old man who lived among the rocks was of the GADJIQSA (Husk False Face) people.

The young men sat in their brush house till midday. When they heard NYAGWAIHE GOWA roaring, far off in the ravine, they grew weak. GADJIQSA had told them to keep on the leeward of NYAGWAIHE so he might not scent them.

They were frightened, but said, “We cannot run away, we would not escape. Our only chance is to stay here and kill the enemy. If he kills us he will go to our village and destroy everybody.”

As the creature came in sight it was furious. Whenever it came to a tree it sprang at it and tore it to pieces; the smaller trees fell at its touch.

Every time the creature roared, the young men lost their strength and were ready to drop to the ground. When the Bear passed their hiding place and went toward the mannikins and raised his feet in crossing a tree one of the men shot at the white spot and when he was going over a second tree the other man shot him through the other foot. This made NYAGWAIHE rage fearfully. He seized one of the mannikins and bit it through the body, then tore the house to bits, but a little farther on he fell dead.

The young men cut the Bear’s hind feet off, for GADJIQSA had said that if they failed to do this NYAGWAIHE would come to life. As they cut off the feet the whole body quivered.

The ribs of this Bear were not like those in other animals, they formed one solid bone. They cut the carcass into pieces and burned the pieces to ashes, together with all the bones, for GADJIQSA said, “If even one particle of bone is left, NYAGWAIHE GOWA will come to life, and the hide must be hung over a fire and smoked, otherwise it will retain life and become NYAGWAIHE GOWA himself again.”

The young men did exactly as they had been told, then they continued to hunt.

Again a man from the GADJIQSA met one of the friends, and led him to the old man among the rocks, who said, "By killing the Great Bear you saved my people as well as your own. HÁWENIYO (The Great Spirit) has given us power to aid men. It is my wish that you and your people should prosper. There is another enemy to conquer. When you leave your camp, you will go on till you come to a river. There you will camp again, but be on your guard."

The young men set out again. When they came to a river they camped, put up a bark cabin, and while one was building a fire, the other went to look for game.

Soon the man building the fire heard somebody talking loudly, as though making a speech. He went toward the voice and saw the speaker in a valley beyond a low hill. He crept forward cautiously so as not to be seen. On a slight elevation stood a man surrounded by many people. The man said, "To-morrow we start for the village from which the two friends came. At the journey's end we will have a great feast."

The young man, who was listening, knew that these people were GÉNONSKWA (Frost and Cold) and that they were going to his village to eat all the people. He was frightened at their great number; he went back to the bark cabin, scattered the brands and put out the fire. When his friend came and asked why he had no fire, he said, "Don't talk so loudly, there are many GÉNONSKWA under the hill; they are going to destroy our people."

"We must hurry home," said the other, and they started at once.

The next morning they heard the approach of the GÉNONSKWA. The sound was like heavy thunder. It was evident that they traveled much faster than the two men,

One of the friends said to the other, who was a swift runner, "Run to the village and warn the people!"

He ran to the village, and said, "The GÉNONSKWA are coming. You may die, but do not die without a struggle." Then he hurried back to his comrade.

The comrade said, "I will stay near the enemy and detain him all I can."

That night the GÉNONSKWA chief said, "No one must go far. If he does and is away when the feast begins he

will lose his share of it.”

The two men listening heard what the chief said. They couldn't think of any way to save themselves or their people. The people of the village were so frightened that they ran from place to place not knowing what to do.

When the GÉNONSKWA were near the village the chief said, “Let us halt and rest.”

The two friends sat in a sheltered place near the bank of a river. All at once they saw a man with a smiling face. When he came up he said, “I will save you and your people. I will conquer the GÉNONSKWA. HÁWENIYO has sent me to aid you. You must stay here and listen, I will go alone and fight the enemy.”

With a smiling face and telling the people, who were running for their lives, not to be frightened if they heard a terrible noise, the stranger went into the valley where the GÉNONSKWAS had halted to rest.

Soon a noise as of a desperate battle was heard and the two men, who had been told to listen, saw steam, from the sweat of the GÉNONSKWA people, rising above the hill.

The sound came at intervals, but decreased in volume. At last it ceased altogether and the men saw the stranger coming. When he was near, he said, “I am thankful that I was able to destroy them. The GÉNONSKWAS are dead and your people are safe. HÁWENIYO sends me to aid his people. Wherever there is witchcraft I am sent against it. I am sure to kill whomever I pursue. If a witch crawls into a tree, I shoot the tree; it opens and the witch comes out. I am he whom you call ‘Lightning.’ ”

The stranger disappeared and the two men went to where the GÉNONSKWAS army had been. Only piles of stones were left. The stones of the earth are from this battle and the killing of the GÉNONSKWAS.

It was through the two purified young men that our forefathers were saved from death and lived to great old age. They foretold what would be. And to this day we hold to the teachings of those men. They obtained their religion in the upper world.

Lightning is the forerunner of Spring. Warm weather destroyed the GÉNONSKWAS (Frost and Cold).

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