

The Story of the Earth and the Sky

From *Book of Nature Myths* by Florence Holbrooke

The sky used to be very close to the earth, and of course the earth had no sunshine. Trees did not grow, flowers did not blossom, and water was not clear and bright. The earth did not know that there was any other way of living, and so she did not complain.

By and by the sky and the earth had a son who was called the Shining One. When he was small, he had a dream, and he told it to the earth. "Mother Earth," he said, "I had a dream, and it was that the sky was far up above us. There was a bright light, and it made you more radiant than I ever saw you. What could the light have been?"

"I do not know, my Shining One," she answered, "for there is nothing but the earth and the sky."

After a long, long time, the Shining One was fully grown. Then he said to the sky, "Father Sky, will you not go higher up, that there may be light and warmth on the earth?"

"There is no 'higher up,'" declared the sky. "There is only just here."

Then the Shining One raised the sky till he rested on the mountain peaks.

"Oh! oh!" cried the sky. "They hurt. The peaks are sharp and rough. You are an unkind, cruel son."

"In my dreams you were still higher up," replied the Shining One, and he raised the sky still higher.

"Oh! oh!" complained the sky, "I can hardly see the peaks. I will stay on the rough rocks."

"You were far above the rocks in my dream," replied the Shining One.

Then when the sky was raised far above the earth and no longer touched even the peaks, a great change came over the earth. She, too, had thought the Shining One unkind, and she had said, "Shining One, it was only a dream. Why should you change the sky and the earth? Why not let them stay as they were before you had the dream?"

"O Mother Earth," he said, "I wish you could see the radiant change that has come to pass. The air is full of light and warmth and fragrance. You yourself are more beautiful than you were even in my dream. Listen and hear the song of the birds. See the flowers blossoming in every field, and even covering the rough peaks of the mountains. Should you be glad if I had let all things stay as they were? Was I unkind to make you so much more lovely than you were?"

Before the earth could answer, the sky began to complain. "You have spread over earth a new cloak of green, and of course she is beautiful with all her flowers and birds, but here am I, raised far above the mountain peaks. I have no cloak, nor have I flowers and birds. Shining One, give me a cloak."

"That will I do, and most gladly," replied the Shining One, and he spread a soft cloak of dark blue over the sky, and in it many a star sparkled and twinkled.

"That is very well in the night," said the heavens, "but it is not good in the daytime, it is too gloomy. Give me another cloak for the day." Then the Shining One spread a light blue cloak over the sky for the daytime, and at last the sky was as beautiful as the earth.

Now both sky and earth were contented. "I did not know that the earth was so radiant," said the sky. "I did not know that the sky was so beautiful," said the earth. "I will send a message to tell her how lovely she is," thought the sky, and he dropped down a gentle little rain.

"I, too, will send a message," thought the earth, "and the clouds shall carry it for me." That is why there is often a light cloud rising from the earth in the morning. It is carrying a good-morning message from the beautiful earth to the sky.



Main Idea

1. This is an origin story about:
 - A. the earth
 - B. the sky
 - C. the earth and the sky
 - D. the earth, the sky, and weather

2. According to the story, the earth and the sky are positioned as they are now because of:
 - A. the earth
 - B. the sky
 - C. the Shining One

Significant Details

5. Before the Shining One raised the sky there was no:
 - A. stars
 - B. light
 - C. life on earth
 - D. all of the above

6. The Shining One did what he did because:
 - A. his mother asked him to
 - B. he had a dream
 - C. he was afraid of the dark

Context Clues

3. The earth's "new cloak of green" is:
 - A. plants
 - B. birds
 - C. mountains

4. The sky's "soft cloak of dark blue" is:
 - A. the day
 - B. the stars
 - C. the night

Drawing Conclusions

7. Who do you think the Shining One is?:
 - A. a god
 - B. the sun
 - C. the moon

8. Which of the following is a secondary message of this story:
 - A. the sky is a complainer
 - B. the earth has no imagination
 - C. people don't always know what they want until someone shows them what is possible.

