



The Most Precious Light of All

South African Tale

The picture was painted by a volunteer of the Lesedi Waldorf School.

Long, long ago, the old people of Africa say, before there were human beings, UMHLABA, The Earth, was dark – for she had no light of her own. And so the Great one UTATAWEZULU, Father of the sky sent ILANGA, the sun and INYANGA the moon, and INKWENKWEZI, the stars to live for a time with UMAMA WOMHLABA, Mother Earth. Oh, how she blossomed and flourished while starlight, moonlight and sunlight were dancing and shining in harmony together. Oh, how Mother Earth flourished with the gifts that Starlight, Moonlight and Sunlight brought down to her. Oh, how she felt her heart light up with love.

And then one day, out of the far, far nowhere, behind the deepest darkness ISITHUNZI the great shadow appeared. It came like a great hungry beast and tried to devour all the shining light with its mighty power. Never before had there been such a war the old people say between dark and light, between day and night. But at last, it came to an end. ISITHUNZI did not eat that day and slowly the great shadow disappeared into the distance. But after that time, the old people say, things were never the same again. Starlight, Moonlight and Sunlight began to go their own ways. No longer could the Earth, feel and hear their joyful dancing. And

when they did pass each other by, they would keep their light to themselves and would only argue whose light was the best and brightest.

"My light is better than yours," said UKUKHANYA KWENKWENKWEZI (Starlight). "All the secrets of the universe are revealed to the Earth through me, through my sparkling starlight." "Oh no!" cried UKHANYO INYANGA (Moonlight), "My moonlight is much more important than yours. Through my light, all the rhythms of the Universe through the Earth are flowing." "Both of you are wrong," said Sunlight. "Mine is the most powerful. All that is alive and grows upon the Earth, the greatest force in the Universe shines through me, UKHANYO ILANGA (Sunlight)."

Now the Earth, Mother's heart was filled with such sorrow. No longer could their light warm and nourish her, and slowly she began to die. When they saw how weak and ill UMAMA UMHLABA had become they were truly sorry – and although they shone so bright, so bright for her, still she hardly moved at all. "Oh what shall we do for you?" they cried. And she answered: "One light alone, the most precious of all - only that light will save me" and then she faded away from them. "Well we must ask all the creatures of the world who live in our light, which light is the most precious of all," said ILANGA the Sun. And so they left then the southern regions and promised to return, once they had an answer. They each went their separate ways, East, West and North.

Wandering over the great lakes of the East, Starlight came upon ISELE, the frog, who was

hopping over the stones of a pond. "Croak, Croak" and so she asked: "Dear creature of the waters, of the sparkling AMANZI, which gives you most pleasure? Which one is your treasure?" "Croak, croak..." "The Starlight is the most precious to me INKWENKWEZI" "In my lake the Liembu fish I can see them glitter like diamonds and I live for their light. Croak... croak... it makes me so happy." And Starlight was well pleased with the answer.

Roaming the hot desert plains and bushlands of the West, Sunlight met INGONYAMA, the Lion, who came bounding along. He warmed himself in her golden light, and so she asked: "Dear beast whose name is like fire. Which light is your heart's most precious desire?" And he roared: "The Sun gives me my strength and my courage and power. It is precious like gold - even in my darkest hour." And the sun was well pleased with the answer.

Passing through the forests and mountains of the North, Moonlight saw ISIKHOVA, the Owl, came flying through the trees and settled on a branch. UKHANYO INYANGA asked: "Dear INTAKA YOMOYA, bird of the air, which light is for you the most precious and fair?" "Whoo, whoo ... the moon is my friend - when I fly by its precious, silver light I live and I die... whoo – whoo" And the moon was well pleased with the answer.

When they returned once again to the South each believing theirs to be the most precious light of all, they found the Earth cold and so very near death. So each in their turn gave her the brightest shine that they had ever given – thinking that theirs would be the one to make her well again. But no, she remained as still as she could be. Then, the old people say, the Sun, Moon and the Stars called out to the Great one UTATAWEZULU.

"Help us O father, what now shall we do?" And He answered: "The time has come to give up your light. It will shine on the Earth from above. Live as her children and give her your love." And that was the day, the old people say, that the Starlight, Moonlight and Sunlight were returned to the sky and there they shine to this day. And with great love, Mother Earth's children warmed her and warmed her and warmed her and she began to get well again. She also began to glow and shine with the brightest light that was ever seen, the light that was the most precious of all.



The Lesedi Waldorf School in Madietane, South Africa shared this story with us.

Madietane, in the province Limpopo, is a four-hour drive north of Johannesburg. The Lesedi Waldorf School has been there in seclusion for 25 years. Today 150 children attend the Lesedi school, most of them in their boarding school. The boarding school enables especially children from the surrounding villages to attend school, as the daily journey is too long for many and most of the parents' houses cannot afford daily transport to school.



**Freunde der
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The collection of tales from all over the world is the result of the single-day campaign Waldorf-One-World-Day, short WOW-Day.
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