

The Daughter
of the
Moon

and the Son
of the
Sun



Дочь Луны и сын Солнца
Сказка северных народов
На английском языке

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The Daughter of the Moon and the Son of the Sun

All through the long, long day the Sun rides over the blue sky in his single-runner boat sledge and surveys his world. In the morning the Bear pulls him, in the afternoon the Reindeer Bull and in the evening the Reindeer Doe. There are many many things the Sun must do: he must give life to all which is to live, he must help the trees and the reindeer moss and the grass to grow, he must give light to animals, people and birds so that they will grow strong and fat and multiply, increasing the wealth of the Sun.

By evening the Sun is tired and sinks wearily into the sea. All his desire is to rest, to sleep. But one day his son Peivalké-Sunbeam

began to pester him.

"Father, the time has come for me to marry."

Well, that was true – it was high time.

"Have you chosen a bride?"

"There is none. I tried my golden boots on all the maids on earth, and not one could wear them. Their feet are heavy, they can't leave the ground. But I must fly through the sky."

"You have sought in the wrong place, Peivalké," said the Sun.

"I will ask the Moon. I've heard that she has given birth to a daughter. Of course, the Moon is poorer than we are, but like us she lives in the sky."

The Sun waited for the day when







the Moon rose in the morning, then approached her. "Tell me, neighbour," he said, "is it not true that you have a fair daughter? I have a suitor for her, my son Peivalké-Sunbeam."

Mother Moon's shining face dimmed. "My child is still small. When I hold her in my arms I cannot feel her weight. How

can she marry?"

"That doesn't matter," said the Sun. "My house is wealthy. We shall feed her well and she will grow. Come, let my son Peivalké see her."

"Oh – no!" cried the Moon in affright and drew a cloud over her child. "He will scorch her, your Peivalké. To tell you the truth, she is already betrothed to Nainas Northern Lights.



There he is, walking over the
sea."

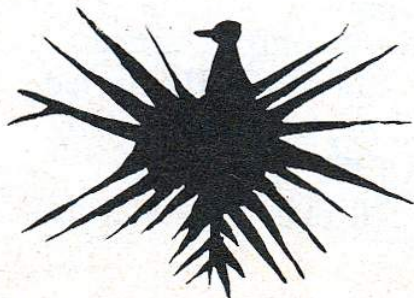
"Ah, so that's it?" said the Sun angrily. "So you refuse us for a miserable strip of colour? You seem to have forgotten, neighbour, that I give life to all things. I have wealth, I have strength!" "Your strength, neighbour, is but the half of strength," said the Moon. "When dusk

comes, then where are you? And in the night? And all through the long winter – where is your strength? But Nainas Northern Lights shines in the winter too, and gives light at night."

These words only infuriated the Sun still more. He hurled fiery arrows, he seethed with rage. "All the same," he roared, "I'll marry my son to

your daughter!" Thunder
roared, the wind howled,
waves rose high on the
sea and the hills trembled.
Everything on earth shook
and swayed. The reindeer
huddled together and
people hid in *vezhas*,
their summer shelters.
The Moon hurried away
into the darkness of night.

I must hide my child
securely from the Sun's
eye, she thought. On a
lake she saw a floating
island where lived an old
man and his wife, both
good, kind people. To





them, she thought, I can
entrust my daughter.
The Sun tired of his
raging, the thunder
muttered into silence, the
winds died down. The old
man and his wife went
into the forest to strip
birch-bark. And there they
saw, hanging from a fir
branch, a silver cradle.
There was nobody in it,
yet they heard a child's voice.
"Niekia - I'm not here!
And now - here I am!"
They looked again and
there lay a child in the
cradle, just like an



ordinary human child
except that she gleamed
with moonlight.

The old people carried the
cradle home, glad that now
they had a daughter. They
tended her and brought
her up, and she obeyed
the old man like a father
and the old woman like a
mother, but at night she
would leave the *vezha*,
raise her face to the
Moon, hold up her arms
and shine more brightly.
She learned to make
curtains and quilts of
reindeer skin and to
embroider them with
beads and silver. When
she wanted to play she
would call, "Niekia - I'm



not here!" and vanish, but her laughter would ripple close by. So the old people called her Niekia. Niekia grew into a maid. Her face was round and rosy like cloudberry, her hair was a mist of silver threads, and she stood slender and shining. In time a rumour reached the Sun that on this island lived a maid unlike the daughters of men. The Sun sent his Peivalké to her. Peivalké flew to the island, and looked into the old people's *vezha*. He saw Niekia and fell in love with her.







"Fair
maid," he said,
"try on my golden
boots." Niekia blushed.

She pulled on the boots and
then cried out. "Oh, oh, they
burn, they hurt me!" "Never mind,"
said Peivalké reassuringly, "you'll get used
to them." He wanted to pick Niekia up in his
arms and carry her away, but she cried, "I'm not here,
I'm not here, I'm gone!" and like a shadow she melted
away and vanished. The golden boots stood empty by the door.

Till night fell Niekia hid in the forest thickets. But when the Moon
rose in the sky she followed her beam through the woods, over the
mountains and across the tundra. Mother Moon led her to the sea and
to a lonely house standing on its empty shore. Niekia entered the house,
but found nobody there. It was very dirty and untidy, so Niekia brought
in a bucket of water, and washed and tidied everything. When she
had finished she felt tired, so she turned into an old spindle,
thrust herself into the wall and fell asleep. When dusk
fell Niekia heard heavy footsteps. Then warriors
in silver armour entered, each stronger and
fairer than the other. These were the
Northern Light brothers led by the
eldest, their leader Nainas.

"Our house is clean," said
Nainas. "A good
housewife must
have come to
us. I don't







know where she is hiding,
but I can feel the gaze of
eyes."

The brothers sat down to
supper. When they had
finished they started their
play, a mock battle among
themselves, now slashing
with sabres, now coming
to grips. Their weapons
struck white fire, and
crimson flashes danced in
the sky. The brothers sang
a song about the warriors
of the sky and flew away
one after the other. Only
Nainas remained, a pale
shadow in the
house.

"Show yourself, whoever
you are," he pleaded. "If
you are an old woman you
shall be my mother,
if you are of my age
you shall be my
sister, if you

are a young maid I shall
make you my bride."

"Here I am," said Niekia
softly and stood before
Nainas in the dim light
of early dawn.

"Will you be my wife,
Niekia?" he asked.

"Yes, Nainas," Niekia
answered so softly he
could hardly hear her.
But now the sky blazed
and the edge of the Sun
appeared.

"Wait for me, Niekia!"
cried Nainas, and was
gone.

Every evening Nainas
and his brothers flew
to their home, every
evening they played
their game in the sky and
with sunrise flew away.

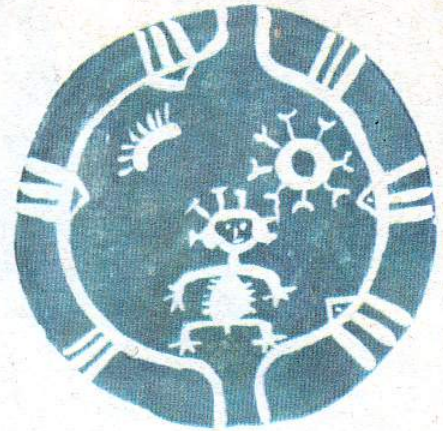
"Stay here, Nainas,"
Niekia begged. "Remain
with me for just one day."



"I cannot," said Nainas.
 "Over the sea the battle of
 the skies awaits me."
 Then Niekia pondered
 how to keep him. She
 made a curtain of reindeer
 skin and embroidered it
 with the silver Milky Way
 and great stars; this she
 hung beneath the ceiling in
 the house.

When night came Nainas
 flew home with his warriors.
 They played in the sky,
 amused themselves and lay
 down to rest. Nainas slept
 deeply, yet every now and
 then his eyes opened; but
 over him he saw a dark sky

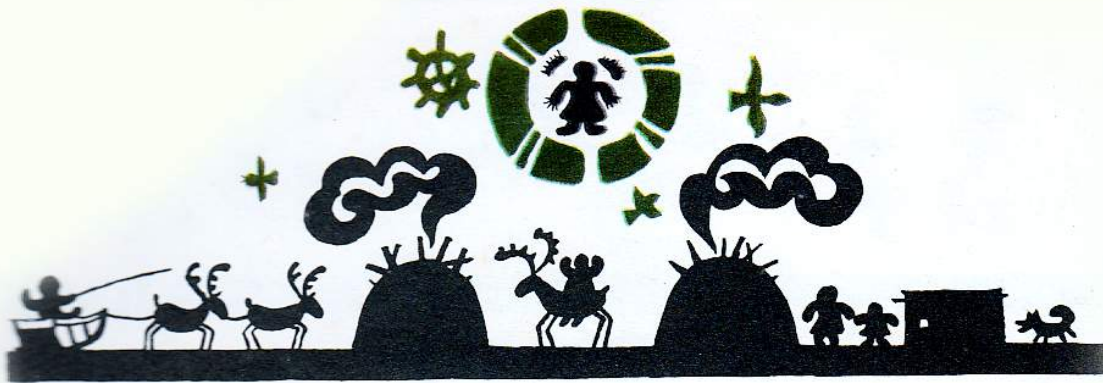




and the Milky Way, and
thought it was still night,
still too early to rise.
Niekia wakened and went
outside, but she forgot to
shut the door. Nainas
opened his eyes and saw the
bright morning through the
open door, and the Bear
pulling the Sun across the
blue sky. He ran out of the
house and called his
brothers, but the Sun saw
him, sent down a shaft of
heat and pinned him to the
ground. Niekia rushed to
him and shielded him from
the Sun with her
own body.







Nainas rose, became a pale
shadow and melted in the sky.

But the Sun seized Niekia
by her plait, burned her with
his fiery eye and called his
son Peivalké.

“You may kill me, but I
will not marry Peivalké!”

Niekia wept.

Then the Sun flung Niekia
into the arms of Mother
Moon.

And her mother
caught her, pressed her to
her heart, and still holds her
to this day. Can you see the
shadow of her face on the
face of the moon? She is
watching, watching the pale
strip over the sea, watching
the battle of the Northern
Lights in the sky, and
cannot tear her eyes away
from it.



