

# SUMMER KILLS AUTUMN AND IS HERSELF KILLED BY WINTER

[Told by John Armstrong]

THERE was a man called DO<sup>n</sup>WE<sup>n</sup>WA. This man wouldn't let anyone come into his house. He had two nephews old enough to hunt small game: birds, squirrels and coons. The boys lived in a house near their uncle's and each morning he called to them, saying, "Up, boys! Or the game will be gone." The boys jumped up and were off.

One day the younger boy heard something making a noise. He listened and listened and at last found that the noise came from the ground. He ran to his brother, and said, "Come and help me dig. I hear a noise down in the ground."

The brother went to the place with him and they began to dig with sharp sticks. When they got down some distance they found a hollow and in it a little child.

"This is the best luck we've had yet," said the elder boy. "This will be our brother, but I'm afraid our uncle will find out about him; if he does he'll kill him and eat him."

"We'll try to save him, we'll fix it so our uncle won't find him," said the younger boy.

They carried the child home. That night the uncle woke up, stretched himself, and said, "I think my nephews have found game, I hear it breathing. I'll go and ask them." He stuck his head in at their door, and asked, "Well, boys, have you any game?"

"No," answered the younger brother.

"I hear it breathing."

"How can you tell? There are two of us here."

"I hear three breathing."

"If you know there are three, you may as well kill us."

"Our people don't allow a man to kill his nephews."

"Well, you'll not kill our brother," said the younger nephew. "If you kill him you must kill us."

The old man went home but came back and stuck his head in again. "You might as well give me that boy," said he.

"If you kill him, you'll kill us," answered the elder nephew.

When the old man found that his nephews wouldn't give him the child, he promised not to harm it.

All went well for a time, then the younger brother said, "I think we had better go away and leave our uncle."

"We can't leave him," said the elder.

"Why can't we?"

"He would follow us."

"We can try to get away. We are not safe here."

They gathered dry sticks and piled them up near the house. Then one morning they set the sticks on fire and running around on the house top they jumped into the smoke, and it carried them up and away. After a while they came to the ground and hid under a big stone.

That night DO<sup>n</sup>WE<sup>n</sup>WA thought the boys were very quiet. He went to their house, stuck his head in and found that they were gone.

"Oh, my poor nephews!" said he. "They think they can get away from me."

He tracked them to the top of the house and found that they jumped into the blaze and went off in the smoke. Then he went straight to the stone where they were and struck the stone with a *dadishe* (sort of cane). The stone split open and he found the three boys.

"Come out, boys," said he, "we'll go home. You should stay at home, not try to go away from me."

When the boys were back in their own house the second brother asked, "Haven't we any relatives except this old man?"

"We have," said the elder brother. "We have another uncle worse looking and crosser than this one, and we have aunts."

"Can't we go and see our uncle?"

"We can, but we must ask this uncle how to go."

The younger brother went to the old man, struck him with a mallet, and said, "I want you to tell me how I can go and see my uncle in the East?"

"You have no uncle in the East."

"Yes, I have."

"You have no uncle there, or if you have he is very cross. He is HATDEDASES (Whirlwind maker). He'll kill us all if he comes here. But you can go and see him if you are able to draw a bow that I will make for you."

The old man made a strong bow and a big double-headed arrow and told his nephews to try it. The elder brother took the bow first and couldn't bend it; the younger brother bent it easily. Then the uncle gave him the arrow, and said, pointing to a great hickory tree, "Shoot that." He shot, and the arrow split the tree.

Then the old man said, "That will do. You may go and try to see your Uncle DAGWANOE<sup>n</sup>YENT (or HATDEDASES). If he sees you before you shoot him, he'll say '*Ogongahgeni*,' and fly off. If you succeed in shooting him before he sees you, pick up the arrow and shoot again then he'll ask you what you want, and you'll answer 'I want you to come and live with us. We'll give you plenty of rocks and hickory sticks to eat, and make you a nest to lie in.'"

The boy started and after traveling a long distance came to a place where he heard a great noise; cracking and gnawing. He called his medicine mole and told it to make a trail under the ground to the place the noise came from and he would follow in the trail.

DAGWANOE<sup>n</sup>YENT stopped gnawing and listened; the mole stopped. The old man gnawed again; mole went on. A second time the old man stopped and listened; the mole stopped. And so it went on till mole was straight in front of DAGWANOE<sup>n</sup>YENT. Then he made a hole and the boy came to the top of the ground, drew his bow and hit his uncle in the middle of the forehead; the arrow rebounded, he caught it and shot again. The third time he shot DAGWANOE<sup>n</sup>YENT called out, "I give up, what do you want?"

"I want you to come and live with us, we'll give you plenty of rocks and hickory sticks to eat and a good nest to live in. If you don't come, I'll shoot you again."

DAGWANOE<sup>n</sup>YENT said, "Go and fix the nest, and gather rocks and sticks for me to eat, and I'll come."

The boy went home and he and his brother and uncle put up a strong platform and on top of it they made a nest. When all was ready the old man came and settled on the nest.

Once when the two boys were out hunting the younger boy heard a noise off in the South. While he stood listening, a False Face ran toward him. The boy was frightened; he darted around trees and tried to get away. At last, when he was getting tired, he called loudly, "*Haknose*" DO<sup>n</sup>WE<sup>n</sup>WA *gadjionegaq dianh* (DO<sup>n</sup>WE<sup>n</sup>WA, if you don't come, I shall be killed)."

That minute DO<sup>n</sup>WE<sup>n</sup>WA was there, and saying, "I'll save you," he struck False Face with his *o<sup>n</sup>we* and killed him.

Now the old man told his nephews never to go toward the South, that in the South there were bad women, who would kill them.

After a time the elder nephew thought he would go toward the South and see if anything would happen to him. When he had traveled a long distance, he heard some one singing, and, going toward the voice, through the dense woods, he came to an opening, and at the farther end of the opening saw the singer. Her song said, "A young boy is coming for me. He has no power; he can't come where I am."

When the boy heard this he was angry, and said, "She isn't strong enough to keep me back, I'll go there and pound her."

He doubled up his fist and ran toward the woman. She didn't look up, kept on singing. When he came to where she was sitting, he struck her a heavy blow, but instead of falling over, she said, "Ha! ha! who touches me?" That minute the boy fell to the ground dead.

The woman straightened out the body and talked to it, saying, "Poor boy, you thought you could kill me, now you are dead." She pushed the body a little to one side and kept on singing.

When the boy didn't come home, his brother went to hunt for him. He tracked him till he came to where he had stood and listened to the singing. He heard the same song and looking across the opening saw the woman and his brother's body. He was angry and doubling up his fist he ran across the opening and struck the woman a heavy blow on her head.

"Ha, ha! Who touches me?" growled she. That minute the boy fell to the ground, dead. She straightened out the body and kept on singing.

The third boy, the boy the brothers had dug out of the ground, went to look for the other two and was killed as they had been.

That night DO<sup>n</sup>WE<sup>n</sup>WA wondered why he heard no breathing at the other house, wondered if the boys had run away again. Going to the house he stuck his head in and seeing no one, said, "They can't get away from me, I'll find them, wherever they are."

The next morning he went toward the South till he came to the place where the boys stood and listened to the woman's song. When he saw the woman and the three bodies he said, "You've killed my nephews, now I'll kill you!" And running to the woman he gave her a terrible blow and before she had a chance to say anything he gave her a second and a third blow; but then she got a chance to call out, "Ha! ha! who touches me?" and that instant the old man grew weak and died.

Now DAGWANOE<sup>n</sup>YENT missed his brother and nephews. "My brother," said he, "thinks that he has great power but he hasn't, maybe he has been killed by that woman in the South, I'll go and find him."

He followed the tracks of his nephews and brother till he came to the clearing and saw the woman sitting on the ground singing. He flew at her and struck such a heavy blow that she had no chance to speak, he hit her a second and third blow then his hair began to fall out, his strength was in his long hair--but he kept striking. The woman had no chance to speak and at last he killed her. Then he called to his brother and nephews, "Get up, you ought to be ashamed to lie there."

The four came to life and went home. They lived on; quietly for a while, then the younger brother said that he was going to travel around the world and see what he could find, and he started off toward the East. After traveling some distance, he saw a hut and going into it found an old blind man, and began to torment him.

The old man said, "My brothers will come soon and then you'll stop abusing me."

The boy thought he would go before the other men came. He spent the night under a tree and the next day he traveled till nearly sundown, then came to a house. There was an old man in the house, who said, "I'm glad you have come; I want to gamble with plum stones."

"What will you bet?" asked the boy.

"I always bet heads. If you beat me, you'll cut off my head; if I beat you, I'll cut off your head."

The old man had a stone bowl and some plum stones. The boy threw first, and lost, then the old man threw and lost, but in the end the boy won, and cut off the old man's head; then he went on. Soon he saw a wasp's nest hanging from the limb of a tree. He stopped up the hole in the nest, and cutting off the limb carried it along with him in a bundle. He hadn't gone far when he saw a great many people coming toward him. He wanted to pass them but they caught hold of him, and said "You are only a boy. We are going to kill you."

"You must wait a while," said the boy. "When any one is going to be killed it is the custom to let him do something first." He put down his bundle, and said, "Tear it open if you want to."

They snatched up the bundle and tore it open. The wasps flew at them, and in the excitement they forgot the boy, who ran off as fast as he could, and this time he ran toward home. When he came in sight of his uncle's house things looked strange; he didn't see DAGWANOE<sup>1</sup>YENT's nest. Then he found that his uncles and brothers were gone, He searched for tracks and finding none he began to mourn and he mourned till at last he changed to a red fox.

The woman in the South was Summer, the boys Autumn and old Cyclone, who at last conquered her was Winter.