

## The Land of the Northern Lights



**Suggested Age Range: 10 - 11 years; 11 - 12 years; 12 - 13 years; 13 - 14 years; Adult;**

**UK Curriculum: Key Stage Two; Key Stage Three;**

**Suggested UK Year Group: Year Six**

**UK Primary Curriculum Link: Light**

**Science Subject: Aurora**

**Science Question: What are the Aurora?**

**Suggested Science Activity: Aurora**

**Children with SEND: Use to boost speech and language development**

**EAL children: For confident older learners**

**Country of Origin: First Nations of America - Abenaki Nation**

**Source: Turtle Island, Tales of Algerian Nations by Jane Louise Curry**

Long ago,

It was said that of all the Nations of America, that the people of the Abenaki Nation were the best at hunting. As soon as the children were old enough to walk, they learned to walk so softly upon the ground, their feet never made a sound. As soon as they could hold a bow, they learnt to hunt and to kill with just one shot of an arrow

And it was said that the greatest hunter of them all, was Chief M'Sarrto, who's name means Morning Star. And Chief M'Sarrto had one child, a son.

At first it seemed that his son would grow to equal or even better his father's skill at hunting but as he grew older, he started to change. No longer would he go and hunt with the other children, but instead he wander off on his own.

"Its too dangerous" his parents said. "You must stay with the other boys"

But he would not. As time passed he spent longer and longer away from home. And when he returned - he brought back nothing, no skins, no meat, not even a used or broken arrow came home with him.

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"Where did he go and what was he doing?" His parents worried.  
But the boy would never tell.

So at last Chief M'Sarrto decided he must follow his child and find out the truth.  
So, the next time the boy went off to hunt, his father waved him goodbye. And then, as soon as the boy disappeared into the long, long grass of the prairie, he followed him. And his feet barely seemed to touch the ground.  
Like a ghost he moved so softly, so silently that his son never heard a sound, and never once turned around. The father followed always keeping him in sight.  
They walked day and night, following first the sun and then the stars, through prairie grass and into the forest. And wherever the boy went, his father followed until ...

The boy disappeared!

The father could not believe his eyes! One moment the boy had walked out of the forest ahead of him and then the next moment - he was gone.  
What to do? The father knew he had to follow him. So he walked on, following the path his son had made. Out of the forest and then .....  
Nothing! The ground fell away beneath his feet.  
All went dark and the air seemed to swirl around him. He felt dizzy and confused.  
But he knew what he must do.  
He closed his eyes and through the nothingness ... he walked on.

And then, just as suddenly - he was back on solid ground.  
He felt the earth beneath the soles of his feet. And he opened his eyes once again.  
But, as he looked around him, he realised he was in no land that he had ever seen.  
Where was he? And where was his son?  
For the first time in his life, he was utterly lost.  
Would he ever see his son, his home again?  
But he knew there was one thing only he could do, and so he walked on...

Until he saw lights ahead of him. Strange lights. Not the glow of the fire, or the shimmer of the Moon, but these lights shone green-gold and seemed to dance in the air.  
He followed the lights until he came to a clearing and saw...

A field of boys!

They were playing a game he had never seen before.  
Each of them had sticks with a circle of wood at the top, that was covered with a net.  
And they were throwing a round ball back and forth. And as he walked closer he realised that there was two sides each trying to throw the ball to opposite ends of the field.

Each player, had a braided belt tied around their waist that shone with with green-gold light. And the light seemed to dance as they moved around the the field.  
And, oh, how they moved! It was like watching a hunt!

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The boys moved so fast as they ran around each other, that it seemed to the watcher that they moved faster than thought. Yet they always, instinctively seemed to know where one another was on the field. They jumped into the air, like leaping deer, and when they threw the ball towards their goal, it was like watching a shooting arrow.

The old chief stopped and stared. For a moment, he felt such joy to have come across such a beautiful game. And such talented players!

But then the joy fell away and he remembered.

Where was his son?

He missed him so much, it hurt him like a physical pain.

He just wanted to find him, hold him, and take him home.

But where was home?

"I think you are a stranger here?" He heard a voice behind him.

He turned. A man stepped out of the shadows.

"Who are you?" the old chief asked. "And where are we?"

"We are in the land of the Northern Lights" said the man. "To reach here, you must follow the spirit path, what those down below, call The Milky Way"

"Few people from Earth ever venture so far. What are you doing here?"

"I am looking for my son" said the Chief. "Have you seen him"

"Is he the boy who comes and goes from this land?"

"Yes" said the Chief "I think that must be him!"

"Then he is there" said the Man, and he pointed at the field.

At that moment, a boy leapt up in the air, grabbed the ball and with a twist of his body, he shot the ball towards the goal. And scored!

"Is that my son?"

The man nodded.

The old chief felt his heart swell with pride.

And then, then he ran. He ran towards his son.

And then, at the edge of the field he stopped.

He did not want to disrupt the game.

He was a stranger here. He did not know the rules.

He just wanted his son.

"I will take you to our Chief" The man had followed him.

And now he led the chief to the side of the pitch, where an old man sat with an eagle feather in his hair. But the eagle feather was no ordinary feather, it shone with a green gold light like Chief M'Sarrto had never seen on a bird before.

He knelt in front of the chief of the land of the Northern Lights.

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"Please" he said. "I come in search of my son"

"The boy who comes and goes from our land?"

"Yes, that is him!"

"But he plays our game as if he was born to it!"

"Yes I know. But he is my son. He does not belong here. Please let me take him home."

The Chief of the Northern Lights looked at him: "Very well. But - he must never return"

"He will not" said his father. "I will make sure of it"

"Then in return, I will give to you, this game as a gift and as a memory of what has been lost. Go home. And let your son teach this game. And tell people that this game is a gift from those who live above."

"We will"

And the boy and his father returned home.

Along the spirit path, hand in hand they walked on, down to Earth and through the forest and through their prairie, towards their home. Where the boy's mother stood by the fire, waiting to hold her son.

And from that day on, the boy never returned to the Land of the Northern Lights. Instead he travelled across the land, teaching the Round Ball game to all the Nations who lived on the land that some now call America.

And so the game, and the memory of the Northern Lights, lives on.

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