

Hekiti y la Luna- A Taino Legend

Long before there were stars in the sky at night, and even before the arijuna from faraway lands had arrived in the island of Borikén, speaking macori, a Taino boy ran free.

Hekiti lived in the yucayeque of Guayaney, with his bibi and baba. Like many young Taino boys, he liked playing batu with his friends. Since he was an only child, Hekiti also enjoyed fishing with his father in the river nearby, or hunting jutias around the village during the day.

At night, and especially those nights when the Moon rose, round and full over the bohios, Hekiti loved to go out for a solitary walk. He was amazed by the soft blue shadows that the Moon cast over the trees and the ground.

Many times, he ended up at the bagua of Emajagua's bay. There, he would get in his canoe and row near the middle of the bay, where he often went for a swim in the warm Caribbean Sea.

Hekiti felt fascinated by the Moon and the way she seemed to hover up in the quiet, starless sky. He liked contemplating the scenery and absorbing every detail that surrounded him at night.

*He felt mesmerized by the accompanying sound of **small waves that caressed the shore**, and often times he would get lost in thought while watching the kaleidoscope of blue-white surf drawing and erasing itself on the beach, not too far away from him.*

He thought he heard someone calling from nearby.

Moon: "Hekiti..." "Hekiti..."

The voice said again, yet louder and clearer.

Hekiti: "Who is it?"

There was no one there.

Moon: "Hekiti, please look at me, I'm up here..."

Hekiti looked up and saw the Moon coming out of a curtain-like, translucent cloud.

Moon: "Don't be afraid, Hekiti, I just want some help from you."

Musical Themes:

Stars

Night

Hekiti

Moon

Bagua/sea

Hekiti: 'This is not happening.' *Hekiti told himself.* 'The Moon doesn't speak, so I must be dreaming.'

Moon: "Hekiti, I'm so lonely up here. I want you to find me some company..."

The Taino boy looked up at the sky and clearly saw it was the Moon who talked to him.

Hekiti: "Tell me, pretty Caraya! How can I help you?"

He asked while trying to stand up in his canoe.

Moon: "Go and find me some friends, so I don't have to be alone up here every night..."

Hekiti: "Which friends do you want me to find, and why do you ask me, Caraya?"

Moon: "You're a smart kid, Hekiti, you'll know which friends I need around me..."

Hekiti looked around him and noticed that the ocean's surface shone with thousands of sparks that almost covered the entire bay. In a heartbeat, he grabbed a fistful of water and threw it up to the sky. The water drops seemed to multiply endlessly and sparkled beautifully around the Moon, but they died off as they fell back into the ocean. (Sea, Night)

Moon: "Try again, Hekiti, water with cucubana is not what I'm looking for..."

The Moon said in a sad and somewhat grave tone. Hekiti sat down to think for a moment and grabbed his fishing lance from his canoe. He had carefully observed how his father stood perfectly still, waiting for a fish to swim by, and then catch it with the lance. The boy stood up and waited patiently for a fish to pass by. After a while, he caught one and threw it with all his might, up to the Moon. The fish twisted and turned violently in the sky, then slipped over the Moon's head and fell back into the sea. (Sea, Night)

Moon: "Search again, Hekiti, fish belong to the sea, not the sky."

the Moon said, now looking even sadder. Hekiti sat down on his canoe again. He placed his elbows on his knees and grabbed his chin, while his gaze lost itself in the blueish darkness. The sea was calm. It looked like a sleeping canvas surrounding and protecting his thoughts. Hekiti pondered for a while and then looked down, over his canoe, through the surface of the water to the bottom of the ocean. (Sea, Night, Moon)

Hekiti: "I know, Caraya. I think I know where I can find you some friends!"

*Without waiting for the Moon to speak, Hekiti **jumped from his canoe and swam to the bottom of the sea.** With the Moonlight's help, he could see some starfish lying on a bed of kelp. He grabbed all he could get hold of, and carried them to the surface. He placed the starfish inside his canoe, and then he jumped back in. He stood up again, as fast as he could, and proudly addressed the Moon: (Sea, Night, Moon, Hekiti)*

Moon: "Caraya, you won't be alone anymore. I have found many friends that will be with you each and every night from now on."

Hekiti grabbed the starfish, one by one, and began throwing them up to the sky. The starfish flew quite high, but this time, they didn't fall down like the water droplets, or slipped out like the fish. Instead, they got attached to the sky. Some of them crashed and split as they hit the sky, but they quickly grew new arms that held fast and strong, giving way to new stars. When the Moon saw what was happening all around her, she looked at the boy and said: (Sea, Night, Moon, Hekiti, Stars)

Moon: "Thank you, Hekiti. Your name will be forever remembered. I will never be alone, and there shall never be another starless night..."

Glossary of Taino words

1. arijuna — foreigner
2. macori — strange language
3. Borikén — great land of brave and noble men
4. hekiti o jekiti— one
5. bibi o bibi — mother
6. baba - father
7. yucayeque — village
8. batu — ball game
9. jutias — small species, family of Capybara, now extinct
10. canoe — Taino small boat
11. bohio — Taino house, made of sticks and plants
12. Guayaney — old Taino village, nowadays is the area that covers Maunabo and Yabucoa.
13. bagua — sea
14. Emajagua — Maunabo bay, there are beaches in the area.
15. caraya — moon
16. cucubana — luminous insects

