

# A MAN CHASED BY THE ANCIENT OF LIZARDS

## *Characters*

DAGWANOE <sup>n</sup> YENT	Big Head (Whirlwind)
OGE <sup>n</sup> HWAN	Gnat
SWE <sup>n</sup> GEDAIGEA	Hawk (Hen-hawk)
GASYONDETHA	Meteor
NYAGWAIHE	The Ancient of Bears
OSHADA	Mist or Dusty Vapor
DZAINOS GOWA	Blue Lizard, the Ancient of Lizards

ONCE there was a large village where people lived happily and had plenty of meat. At the end of the village lived a man whom few persons noticed.

One night that man had a dream. His dream said, "Something is going to happen to the people of this village. You must tell them to move away within ten days."

The next morning the man went to the center of the village, gathered the people and told his dream. Some believed in the dream others did not. Five days later, those who had believed joined those who had not, and paid no heed to the dream.

The fifth night the man dreamed again and his dream said, "We know that the people do not heed your warning. But save yourself. Three days from now take all your arrows and climb the hill on the east side of the village till you come to a large rock. The rock is hollow. Go inside of it and you will find a hole in the ground. Look through the hole and you will see all that is going on in the village."

"The people will be destroyed by Big Head. Five days from now, at midday, there will be a terrible outcry. When the cry dies away, you must begin to shoot through the hole, for as soon as the people are destroyed the monster

will track you. You will save your life if you shoot all your arrows at it before it reaches the hole.

"When the monster is dead, take from the back of its head a piece of skin together with the hair, which is very long. The skin will be of use to you, for it has great power. Wind the hair around your body next to your skin and declare that there is nothing that you cannot do.

"At night, when it is dark enough not to be seen, go North a short distance and you will find a tree turned up by the roots. You must not be frightened. I shall give you something which will be of great use to you."

After this dream the man was gloomy and unhappy. When the time came, he took his bundle of arrows and left the village. He didn't take his wife or children for they did not believe in the dream. Just at sunset he came to a large rock on the side of the hill. He found the opening and going into it crept along till he thought he was under the center of the rock. There he found a space high enough for him to stand in. He lay down and slept.

The next morning a deer was standing near the opening. He killed it, roasted some of the meat and ate it.

The fifth day, as the man sat on the rock, he heard a great noise coming from the South. As the sound approached the village he saw something that

looked like smoke, saw that trees were falling, and falling toward the village.

When the noise reached the village, the man took his position opposite the opening in the ground. It seemed to him that the village was right at hand. He heard the screaming of the people and saw the cabins torn to pieces and hurled into the air.

Big Head missed one man, and when all the others were destroyed he laughed, and said, "This world is not large enough for him to hide in."

When the man saw that trees were falling toward the East, he knew that Big Head had found his trail, and he strung his bow and began to shoot through the hole as rapidly as possible. When only two arrows were left, he saw a great black Head not far away. He shot his last arrow; the roar ceased, the Head fell and he heard it say, "You have killed me!"

The man went to where the Head lay and found in it every arrow he had shot. "I must do as my dream said," thought he, so he took a part of the scalp, tied it around his body and said, "You must always help me. You must not let me be overpowered by anyone."

He climbed to the top of the hill quickly, for now he could go very fast. He found a good place and built a brush hut. "I must have plenty of meat," thought he, and going out he saw deer, bears and all kinds of game. He killed what he wanted. To skin the deer and bears he had merely to take hold of the skin of the head and pull; with no effort the skin came from the whole carcass. He made a brush shed and hung the meat up to dry.

When it began to grow dark, the man started toward the North, as his dream had told him to do. He had not gone far when he came to a fallen tree, the roots turned out of the ground. When half way around the tree, he saw Meteor with his great mouth open.

When Meteor saw that the man wasn't frightened he laughed and said, "Take one of my teeth, it will be of great use to you. It will

enable you to change yourself into any form you like."

The man took a double tooth, the one farthest back in Meteor's jaw.

Then Meteor said, "You will live always and you will have great power, but you and I must always counsel with each other. Now we will part."

Meteor flew off through the air and the man went back to his hut. He made up his mind that the hut would be his home. He stayed there a long time then getting lonesome, he said to himself, "I will go and see if I can find people anywhere."

He turned into a hawk and flew toward the southwest. As he rose high in the air he looked down on the ground. After a while he saw, in the West, something that made him think people were living there. Then he began to come down. He came lower and lower and when near the ground saw a village. He said to himself, "I will eat up the people who live in that village."

He turned into a great bear and, beginning at the first house, ate up every person he could find. When he thought he had eaten everybody, he saw, off at the edge of the village, a little hut with smoke rising from it. In the hut he found a man and woman and several children. He ate them all.

"I have finished," said he, and changed himself to a man.

He stood around a while, then, seeing a trail he followed it, but had not gone far when he met a woman who was very handsome.

"Where do you live?" asked he.

"Over there in the cabin at the edge of the village."

"You had better go home with me for there is no one living in that cabin. All the people are dead."

"I must see first," said the woman.

They went back to the village and to the hut where he had found the man, woman, and children. She was the eldest child of the family. Seeing blood on the ground she began to cry. The man put his hand on the top of her head. That minute she was senseless. He shook her and as he shook she became a gnat. He changed himself to a hawk and putting the gnat under his wing flew up and off in the

direction of his hut. He got there quickly, then he changed to a man and shook the gnat back to her natural form and size.

"This is your home," said he, "You must take care of the meat and the house."

One night while the two were sitting in the hut, the man heard a noise outside as though someone were coming on a run. The door was pushed open and a man came in, and said, "I have come to warn you. You have made yourself into two. NYAGWAIHE (the Ancient of Bears) is jealous of you and has said, 'There is a man over there who is very powerful, but I will overpower him and eat him.'"

"To-morrow the Bear will come. You must go East till you reach a high stony hill. When the Bear tries to attack you, jump from one rock to another. It will spring after you. When it falls, you may feel safe. This is what I had to tell you. Now I will go."

The next morning the woman saw that her husband was gloomy and sad.

"What is the matter?" asked she.

"I am thinking of what will happen to me at midday."

The woman had neither seen nor heard the man who spoke to her husband though she was right there in the hut. He and the man who came to him were so powerful in spirit that they alone heard and saw each other.

When it was nearly midday, the man started for the rocks, leaving his wife. He seated himself on the highest rock and waited. Just at midday he heard a great noise, then another nearer; the third was right at the rock.

There was a whoop and a voice said, "I am the strongest of the strong. Nothing can overpower me."

It was NYAGWAIHE (the Ancient of Bears). The Bear leaped on to the rock where the man stood. The man sprang to the next rock, the Bear close behind him. In this way they sprang from one rock to another till the man was tired. As he looked ahead, the next rock looked farther off than the others had been. He made a

great effort and just reached it. The Bear was right behind him. It sprang, but falling short, hit its jaws on the edge of the rock and went down.

The man jumped to the ground. As he struck the ground he looked back and saw the rock he had just left turn over on to the Bear.

"That is what I said," thought the man. "There is nothing that can overpower me."

He went back to his hut. He was very happy.

One day when the man and woman were sitting by the fire, they heard somebody approaching the hut. The man opened the door and saw the friend who had twice warned him of danger. The woman saw him too.

The man said, "Your life is in danger but I will try and save you. Rub your wife's head with your hands, she will turn to *oshada* (*oshada* is like the dusty vapor flying on a road in dry weather). Tell her to follow you wherever you go, but she must leave the hut before you do, you will stay here as long as you can, then run directly South. I am going now, but I will come to you again."

In the morning the man rubbed the woman's head and said, "Let my wife become a dusty vapor."

While he rubbed, she became a vapor on his hand. With his other hand he brushed the vapor off in the direction it was to go. Then he piled up his meat and said in a loud voice, "I give this meat to you flesh-eating animals that live in the woods."

He went southward from the hut to an elm tree that was smooth up to where it branched off. He climbed the tree and sat in the crotch. Soon he began to feel weak, and he thought, "There must be something near." He looked everywhere but saw no one.

Taking out the Meteor tooth he dampened it with saliva, rubbed his finger over it, then rubbed his eyes, and said, "Now I can see everything that is going on, even down in the ground."

He looked into the earth and saw, deep down, a tree and on the tree was a monster Lizard. He watched it as it climbed slowly up the tree. When it was near the top, the man grew very faint.

The Lizard was the largest of the ancient blue Lizards (DZAINOS GOWA). It came out of the

ground in the heart of the tree that the man was sitting on. The man leaped to another tree.

That instant the Lizard was where the man had been sitting and it called out, "You are smart but I shall overpower you."

It sprang toward the man; the man leaped to another tree and then from tree to tree, the Lizard following.

At the edge of a hill was a great rock. The man ran to the rock and from the rock leaped into the air and came down on a mountain far away. He ran directly south along the ridge of the mountain, then went down on the opposite side to a wide valley. He ran across the valley and had begun to climb a second mountain when he heard the Lizard coming down the mountain he had just descended on the other side of the valley. It was dark now but the man continued to run, ran all night.

In the morning he saw an opening on the other side of which was a low hill, and smoke of some kind. He reached the foot of the hill and turning saw the Lizard had just come to the opening. It raised its paw and struck the man's footprint on the trail. That instant the man fell to the ground. As he fell his friend was there and said, "Get up! You will die if you fall in this way."

He lifted him and pushed him into a run, urging him to hurry. The man felt stronger and again ran fast from valley to valley, the Lizard always about the same distance behind.

All at once the man fell again. Right away his friend was there. He lifted him to his feet saying, "Keep up courage," and pushed him into a run. Again, he felt stronger and ran faster.

It was a very dark night; he ran against a great maple tree. As he hit the tree he went straight through. This happened many times in the night. Whenever the man hit a tree he went through it.

For eight days and nights the Lizard chased the man. When it found out that he went through trees it threw its power ahead and made the

trees so hard that the man could no longer go through them.

The ninth night the Lizard commanded a terrible rain storm to come and the night to be so dark that the man couldn't see where he was going. The man ran till midnight without once hitting a tree. Just at midnight he hit one and was thrown far back.

That moment his friend was there, and said, "Do all you can," and taking hold of his hand, he led him and they went faster than the man had gone alone.

The two ran together till daylight, then the friend left and the man went on alone. He began to be very weak. The Lizard was coming nearer and its strokes on the tracks were more frequent; the man fell oftener.

Night came and the Lizard made it terribly dark. The man ran against a tree and bounded far back. The Lizard was so near that the man fell behind him. The Lizard struck the tree and was thrown back also. The man was up and running forward again. The Lizard was just upon him and was reaching out to seize him when the man fell, as it seemed to him, into a hole in the ground. He thought, "Well, I am near my end; when I strike I shall be dashed to pieces."

He kept falling and as he fell he got sleepy. Looking up he saw the Lizard coming down on the side of the hole, winding around and around. The man fell asleep. After a time, he woke up and was still falling and the Lizard was still pursuing him.

At last the man landed on his feet. He seemed to have come out of the hole. He looked around and saw a beautiful country. "My friend told me to go toward the South," thought he, and he ran on in that direction.

As the man ran he knew that the Lizard was behind him coming very fast. "Now I shall die," thought he. He closed his eyes and kept on, thinking, "I will not see when it reaches me."

He ran a long time, then opened his eyes and looked around. He didn't see the Lizard but he kept running. Soon he came to a house and going in found an old man.

The old man looked up and said, "My grandson, I am glad you have come. I have been waiting for you. You are bringing with you what I have wanted

to eat. Stand back there, Lizard and I will fight alone. We will see if he is as powerful as he thinks he is."

The Lizard came to the house and asked, "Where is the man I have been chasing?"

"Here I am," answered the old man.

"You are not the man."

"I am, but if you think there is another man here, you will not hunt for him till you overpower me."

"Come outside," said the Lizard, "there isn't room in here."

"Very well," said the old man and getting up he went outside. They began to fight. The Lizard tore the old man's flesh. It came together again and healed. The old man tore off Lizard's forelegs, but Lizard didn't give up; the two fought till Lizard was torn to pieces.

When the old man convinced himself that the pieces were not alive, he hung them up in the house and called to his grandson, "Come out! I have killed the Lizard that you were afraid of. I have been wishing for this kind of meat for a long time."

The old man boiled some of the meat in a large kettle. In a small kettle he cooked bear meat for his grandson.

While the meat was cooking, he put corn in a pounder and with a few strokes it was flour. Then he made bread and began eating.

When he had eaten every bit of the great Lizard, he said, "I thank you, my grandson, this meat will last me for many years. You

must stay here till you are rested and cured, for you have been poisoned by the power of the Lizard."

The old man was the oldest of the Flying Meteors. One day he said to the man, "I want you to see what I have planted."

They went a short distance from the cabin to a field where something was growing.

"This is ones (corn)," said the old man.

There were tall stalks with ears on them as long as the man was tall and the kernels were as large as a man's head.

The old man said, "Let us go to the other side of the field."

There the man saw a field where different kinds of corn were growing.

They went to a third field where something was growing and the old man said, "These are squashes." They were very large.

They passed the squash field and went back to the cabin.

The next day the man said good-bye to his grandfather and started for home. He traveled till he came to a village. He went to the chief's house and a woman who was there looked at him, then asked, "Have you ever heard of a man who sent his wife away in the form of vapor?"

He thought a little while, then remembered, and answered, "I have. I did that myself."

"I am your wife," said the woman.

The man had had so much trouble that he had forgotten about his wife, but he was glad to find her. They went home together and lived happily.