

## Thunder and Lightning.

### **Folktales and stories from Africa.**

A long time ago, both Thunder and Lightning lived among the people on this earth.

Thunder was a mother sheep and Lightning was her son, a ram.

Neither one was very popular with the people, for when somebody offended Lightning, he would fly into a furious rage and begin burning whatever he came across. This often included huts and corn bins, and even large trees.

Sometimes he damaged crops on the farms with his fire, and occasionally he killed people who got in his way.

As soon as Thunder knew her son was behaving this way, she would raise her voice and shout at him as loudly as she could, and that was very loud indeed.

Naturally the neighbours were very upset, first at the damage caused by Lightning and then by the unbearable noise from his mother that always followed his outbursts.

The villagers complained to the king on many occasions, until at last he sent the two of them to live at the very edge of the village, and said that they must not come and mix with the people any more.

However, this did no good, since Lightning could still see people as they walked about the village streets, and so found it only too easy to continue picking quarrels with them.

At last the king sent for them again. "I have given you many chances to live a better life," he said, "but I can see that it is useless. From now on, you must go away from our village and live in the wild bush. We do not want to see your faces here again."

Thunder and Lightning had to obey the king, and agree to abide by his ruling; so they left the village, angry at its inhabitants.

But still there was plenty of trouble in store for the villagers, since Lightning was so angry at being banished that he now set fire to the whole bush, and since it was the dry season this was extremely unfortunate.

The flames spread to the little farms of the people, and sometimes to their houses as well, so that they were in despair again.

They often heard the mother's mighty voice calling her son to order, but, since it was always after the fact, it made very little difference in his actions.

The king called all his counsellors together and asked them to advise him, and after much debate they hit on a plan.

Why not banish Thunder and Lightning completely away from the earth, and send them to live in the sky.

And so the king proclaimed this order.

Thunder and Lightning were sent away into the sky, where the people hoped they would not be able to do any more damage.

Things did not work out quite as well as they had hoped, however, for Lightning still loses his temper from time to time and cannot resist sending fire down to the earth when he is angry.

Then you can hear his mother rebuking him in her loud rumbling voice.