



Video Story Transcript

Tewas Go Home

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Link to YouTube Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2KXHDp8O2DE>

Note: The following is a transcription of a spoken story performance and may not reflect textbook perfect English. It will guide you as you listen (or read) along.

Hello, my English name is Eldrena. My Tewa name is Khuu Tsawa. It means blue corn. I come from three Southwest Pueblo tribes in the United States. They are the Laguna, the Tewa and the Hopi.

I would like to share with you a personal story that occurred many years ago. It was during a time of awakening for me. It empowered me and gave me a sense of pride and belonging. It was a gift that I realized, later on, that my Saiya, which means grandmother in the Tewa language, she gave me so many years ago.

It happened when I was out on recess in the fourth grade. And all of a sudden, through the chattering and laughter, I heard, "Tewas, go home." And I looked around, and I thought, "Why would somebody tell us to go home. School is still in session. If you go home, you could get in trouble." So, I just didn't pay attention.

But then later on, when my grandmother and I, Saiya, we were walking down to the trading post. It was a long ways from our house. It took about a mile of walking, and we lived in desert country so it was very hot. And when Saiya and I got to the trading post, she took her pottery in to sell. And the owner determined how much that pottery would cost and give her an idea of how much she could spend on groceries or whatever else she needed.

And as we were leaving the building, we started to walk up that long hill. Now remember, I said I was living in the desert country. So off to the left, there was, uh, sand that when you walked in it, it's almost like it took you forever to go anywhere, so soft! And there were brush and cedar trees and not very many rivers or creeks. And if there were any, they were dry.

My Saiya... when we were leaving I noticed on a wooden post, there was stapled... This post held the streetlight. We didn't have very many. So, it kind of stood out like a blinking light. This poster and it said, "Tewas, go home."

I, I mentioned that to Saiya and I pointed it out to her. But when she read it, all she did was put her head down. She nodded; kinda made a sigh. And we walked on, but it would never leave me. They could never leave me, those words, I didn't understand them. I was just a young girl, and so later on that evening, I brought it up again. I said, "Saiya, what does it mean by 'Tewas go home?' Isn't this our homeland? Isn't this where we come from?"

And she said to me, Granddaughter, "I'm gonna tell you a story that has been passed down among our people for over hundreds of years. Now sit and, and I will speak it to you.

A long time ago, there was a war that was called the Pueblo Revolt. And it happened where New Mexico is right now. That is where we Tewas came from. Now this war was not very good at the time. And when it ended, everything was peaceful. And so, our group of Tewas, our community, we were living with all the rest of the people.

But then the Hopis, where we live today, they were being attacked by raiding tribes. And they needed help. They remembered us as a warrior tribe. And so, they came a long ways to seek us out. And when they found us, they asked us to come and help them. But it took them several vili...visits before we understood what they were asking of us. This was gonna be a long journey of our people of long ago. And when an agreement happened, and the Tewas said, "Yes, we will come," we had to leave behind the rest of the Tewa people from many different Pueblos. And so, we journeyed to the west to go make our new home among the Hopis. And the job that we were given was to protect them.

Now when the people came to the Hopi land there was one mesa that we came to. It is called First Mesa today, and on fa... First Mesa, there was only one village named Walpi. No other village was up there. It was high off the ground. The Spaniards used to call these things, uh, they call them today, mesas because they look like flat tables from a distance. And so, Walpi was on top of one of these mesas. Now, when the raiding tribes came, our people took care of them. It didn't take long before they knew they were no longer going to keep attacking the Hopis because the Tewas were there now, and they were their protectors.

Now before our people had traveled to this land of the Hopis, they were told that they would be given new land. And, um, they would be taught how to grow crops off the fields... in the fields, and, um, they would be given clothes to wear until they could make their own.

Well, the Tewas thought that was gonna happen, but after a while, when everything started to settle down and no more fighting took place, the Hopis, um, started to rethink about what they had spoken. And instead of good land, they didn't give us very good land. They didn't take care of us at first very well. They didn't give us food to eat that, that could nourish our bodies. And so, the Tewas began to think, "Well, maybe we need to move on. These Hopis are not keeping their word."

Well, somehow, they say, the Hopi men found out about this, and it worried them. So, there was a meeting that was called between the two groups. And the Tewas thought about it and they prayed about it. And in the end, they decided that the only way they were going to stay, there at First Mesa, something had to happen. And so, they dug a hole right in the middle, and they asked the Hopi leaders to spit inside that hole. The Tewas spit on top, and it was covered up.

To this very day, there are rocks placed on top of each other to mark the spot. The Hopis asked, "Why was that done?" And they were told that the only way we would stay is from here on out, we will keep our word to never leave this land and to always be your protectors. But from here on out, you Hopis, even though we live side by side and we speak two different languages, you will never know our language. You will never know the ways of the Tewa.

And so, you see, Granddaughter, even to this very day, that word is still true. Now in my young mind, I thought to myself, "Well, that's just a story. How could that still be true even to this day? Because up high on the mesa, the, the Walpis lived on the southern end and they gave land, uh, to the northern end of the mesa. And in the middle, the people got married and they built their houses there. And there was a combination of Tewa and Hopis that lived in that middle village. How could they not learn each other's language?"

And then I remembered my aunt was married to one of my favorite uncles. And so, I went down, and I asked him. And I told him the story that Saiya said to me, and I said, "Uncle, is that true? You're a Hopi man. You live with my aunt. She speaks Tewa and Hopi. Have you not learned anything from her?"

And then he thought about it and he said, "Now, Drena, whenever we are in the house, and I'm in the house, and your relatives come to visit, what language is spoken?"

I said, "Mmm, Tewa?" (*"Yes" or... I'm sorry, not Tewa*) "Hopi."

"Yes, that's right, Hopi. And so, when I leave, then what do they speak?"

"Tewa."

"Um huh! So that is how they protect the language. As long as a Hopi is around, they do not speak Tewa. They speak the language of the Hopi, and me, I am not Tewa. So, I do not take part in anything that the Tewas do because that is not of my understanding, and it's not for me. And that is why I don't participate in the Tewa ways, in the ceremonies. Those are for your people, and I honor that."

Well, that story happened a long time ago. And all I remember is my Saiya, when she finished her story, she said, "Drena, you know these things happened so many years ago, over 100 years ago, hundreds of years ago but this story is still told. It's told in words, and it's told in song. One of these days, we old ones are gonna be gone. And this story has to live on. The people have to be reminded that no matter, no matter how many time, uh, passes that we have to remember that our word is kept. And our people remain strong. And even though we're separated from the Tewas of New Mexico that our cultural identity still stays intact. And all of these things, Drena, I give to you to pass on and to carry and to continue to tell."