

The Mother River
by Austin Mitchell

Once, hundreds of years ago, there was a great river.

It
was called the Mother river. Some said that it was in the
north
of the island, others said that it was in the middle of the
island,
but others disagreed, saying that it was in the west.

Although it
was known as the Mother river, people called it the magic
river, the golden river and many other names. One of the
main
villages the river passed through was reportedly called
Dunklet. The people of Dunklet worshipped the river. They
depended for their very lives on this river. They bathed,
swam
and caught fishes in its waters. They often wondered at the
size
of the fishes they caught. They were so big and juicy. They
used its waters to irrigate their fields. From their fields they
got the finest crops. Nobody in Dunklet went hungry as
there
was always lots of food to go around.

But there was a reason why the river was also called the
Magic river. Whenever it rained, and the river became
flooded,
a lot of precious metals and stones were washed upon its
banks. These the people used to fashion into all kinds of
jewelry to be worn by both men and women. People
wondered
where these precious metals came from. Some of them even
tried to find the river head, but got lost and had to turn back.

The first village chief, realizing how valuable this river
was

to his people appointed a man named Tull as the caretaker
of
the river. Together, he and Tull fashioned out certain rules
concerning the people and the river.

The people were not to dump their refuse in the river,
they
were not to dig in the river or its banks looking for precious
metals. They were also not to sell the precious metals.

Some of the people were dissatisfied with the village
chief, Abucadizer and Tull's ruling. At a meeting in the
village

a week later, a man called Neddy got up and asked.

"They are people willing to give us good money for
the
precious metals. Why stop us from selling it and making
money?"

A young girl, Yashimaje, remarked.

"We need things to fix up ourselves. We can't eat the
jewelry."

But Abucadizer told them that it was the will of the
gods that they not sell the jewelry they found in the river.

Several of the villagers including Neddy and
Yashimaje
left the meeting dissatisfied.

Just like how people wondered
when the river came from they were also wondering where
it
went when it left the village. They found out that it escaped
into some canyons. Some people believed that after it left
the
canyons it went underground and into the sea.

The river also had healing qualities and people came
from far and near to bathe in its waters. Some of the villages
including a man called Lud, a woman called Selmaje and
another young girl named Taroona were dissatisfied with
what
was happening. They said that all outsiders should pay to

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