

Stooping beside the river bank, with his great strong arms, Cardiddy raised an immense stone that had long lain imbedded there and hoisting it upon his head, with a mighty effort, he turned and strode along the course of the dry river bed. With awe the tribe watched the movements of their chief as they followed him in single file for some distance. Muttering some unintelligible anthem, Cardiddy eventually stooped and hurled his burden into the centre of a shallow pool beneath an overhanging tree. Then, seizing his spears from one of his attendants, he crossed them there to mark where the rainstone lay. Two days later the flood from afar rolled down the Alberga, filling the crevices in the sun-baked channel, flowing over the dusty reeds and dead branches until with its mighty power it surged over the rainstone of Cardiddy. The warriors clapped their hands, and rejoiced, and danced mad dances around the tiny fire heaps, for surely the Warrior King was most powerful among men.

But Wye Wye, the poor little brown-haired quei, threw her arms over her head and wept bitterly, she did not love the Chief who was bravest among the fighting men.

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All was silent in the mulga scrub. The children of the bush lay asleep in their wurleys. The tame dingoes slumbered beside their masters, and the scattered fire-heaps smouldered into ashes, for it was night.

Suddenly a stealthy footfall broke the stillness, and Gulcoonda, the medicine man, crept out of the shadows. Softly he stole across the camping ground to the wurleys of the flour-heads. From one sleeper to another he passed noiselessly, only stooping with a slight movement to touch the neck of each aged father with the point of a curiously sharpened bone, partly concealed in his sinewy hand. Quietly the silent figure with the cat-like tread

turned aside again into the shadowy trees, his mission fulfilled—and all was still.

No human creature awoke, no eyes watched the prick of that poisoned bone—the terribly merciless weapon of certain death; but before the moon grew round and red, every white-bearded flour-head lay buried beneath the mulga trees, and their children built new wurleys far from the place where the dead men lay, and further along the river bank chanted their sorrowful wailing songs of lamentation to the memory of the good old fathers.

Gulcoonda, the medicine-man, the unsuspected murderer, lived in honour and esteem among his people, for he had prophesied what had now come to pass, and the warriors murmured one to another that the medicine-man had a stronger power than the Warrior King; but Wye Wye, the pretty native girl, frowned and tossed her curly head in contemptuous bitterness.

About this time Mooloolie the young Corroborree-maker who like Cardiddy, had wandered afar in the scrubland, returned to the camping-ground of his people.

What power could Mooloolie possess by which he might hope to excel the prowess of his rivals? Cardiddy had knowledge of the secrets of the earth. Gulcoonda looked into the great secrets of life and death, and Mooloolie? Ah! In the beautiful eyes of the brown-haired maid he had recognised the wonderful sceptre of love, and he knew that power was the most wonderful in the wide, wide world. A strange light was in his eyes as he called his fellows about him; they gathered around willingly, men and women and little children, to listen to what he had to tell them, for the young poet was a favourite. Then Wye Wye lifted his spears from the ground and stood beside him with a smiling face.

“I go where the great Sun Ball tumbles down in the West,” he said quietly, “no man shall look upon my face, or see where my foot