

# Mason Judy

TREVOR TODD  
*Illustrated by Robert Juniper*



# Mason Judy

Mason Judy is lonely and unhappy when his family move to a new suburb. Wandering alone, he finds a strange black and white stone, which he hides.

The magic stone transports Mason to the Dreamtime – to the mysteries of Aboriginal legend surrounding the great red rock of Central Australia. He meets Aranda, the Mighty Warrior, who tells him that he has been chosen to return the stone to the Father at his dwelling-place, Alcheringa. He warns Mason not to be tempted to part with it and then leaves him resting between rocks.

The trials that Mason undergoes against the mean trickery of Japara, and with Aranda against the dreaded evil spirit, the Mamu, test the child's strength of will. Even with the help of the delightful Spirit Children, their journey to the Father is frightening and dangerous.

Trevor Todd has blended the legendary past with the real present, and brought together the Aboriginal and white races, with insight and inspiration. The spirit of the story is mirrored faithfully in the beautiful paintings by Robert Juniper.

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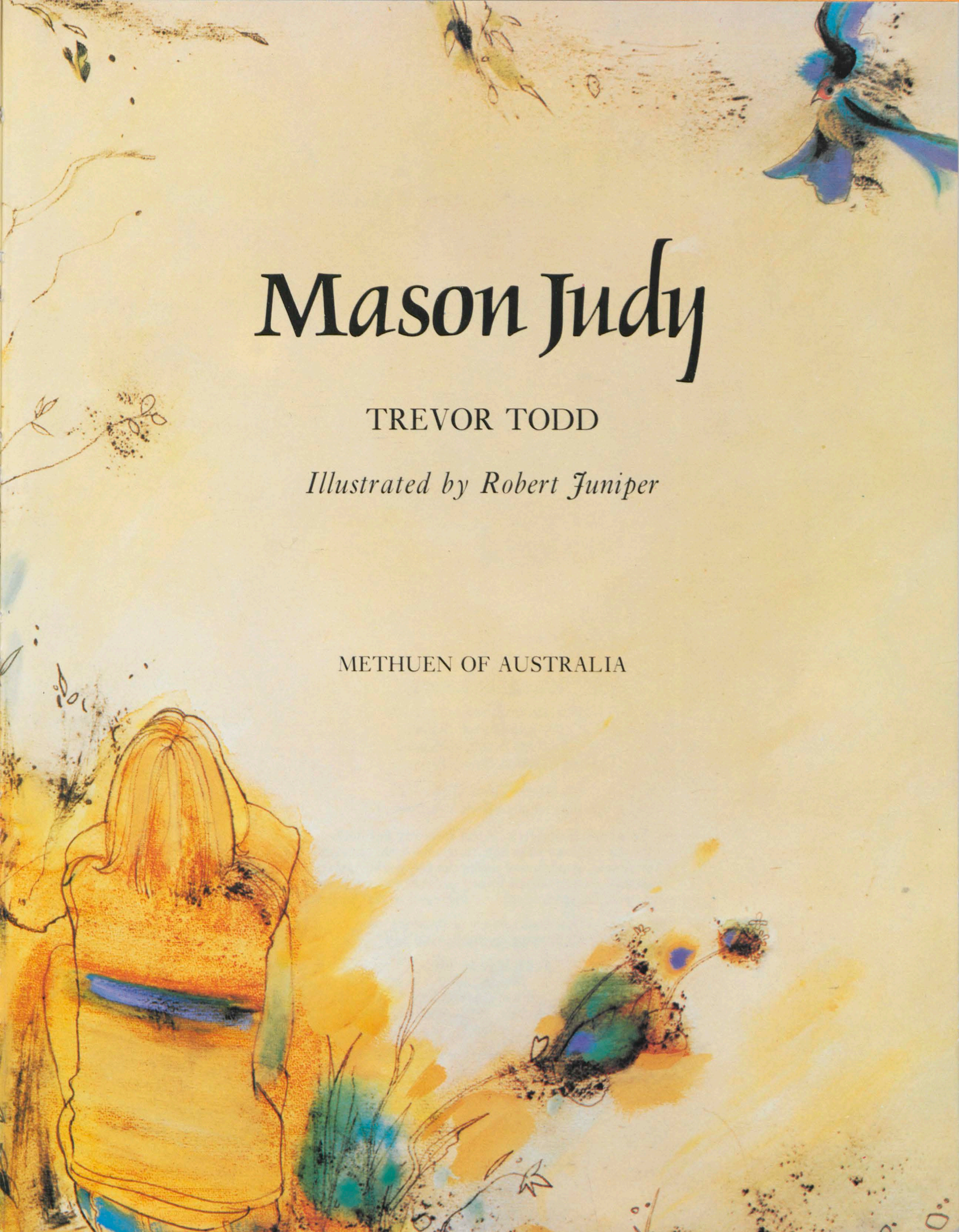




*Mason Judy*





The background of the cover is a watercolor illustration. In the upper right corner, a bird with vibrant blue and black feathers is shown in flight. In the lower left corner, a person is depicted from behind, wearing a yellow-orange garment with a blue horizontal band. The overall style is soft and artistic, with various washes of color and fine line work scattered across the page.

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METHUEN OF AUSTRALIA

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To Charles P. Mountford

“But as yet our writers, musicians, dramatists, and artists, still dominated by the influences of overseas cultures, have been but little inspired by the beauty of the mythical beliefs of our native people.”

Charles P. Mountford  
from *The Dreamtime*

TIME PAST

TIME PRESENT

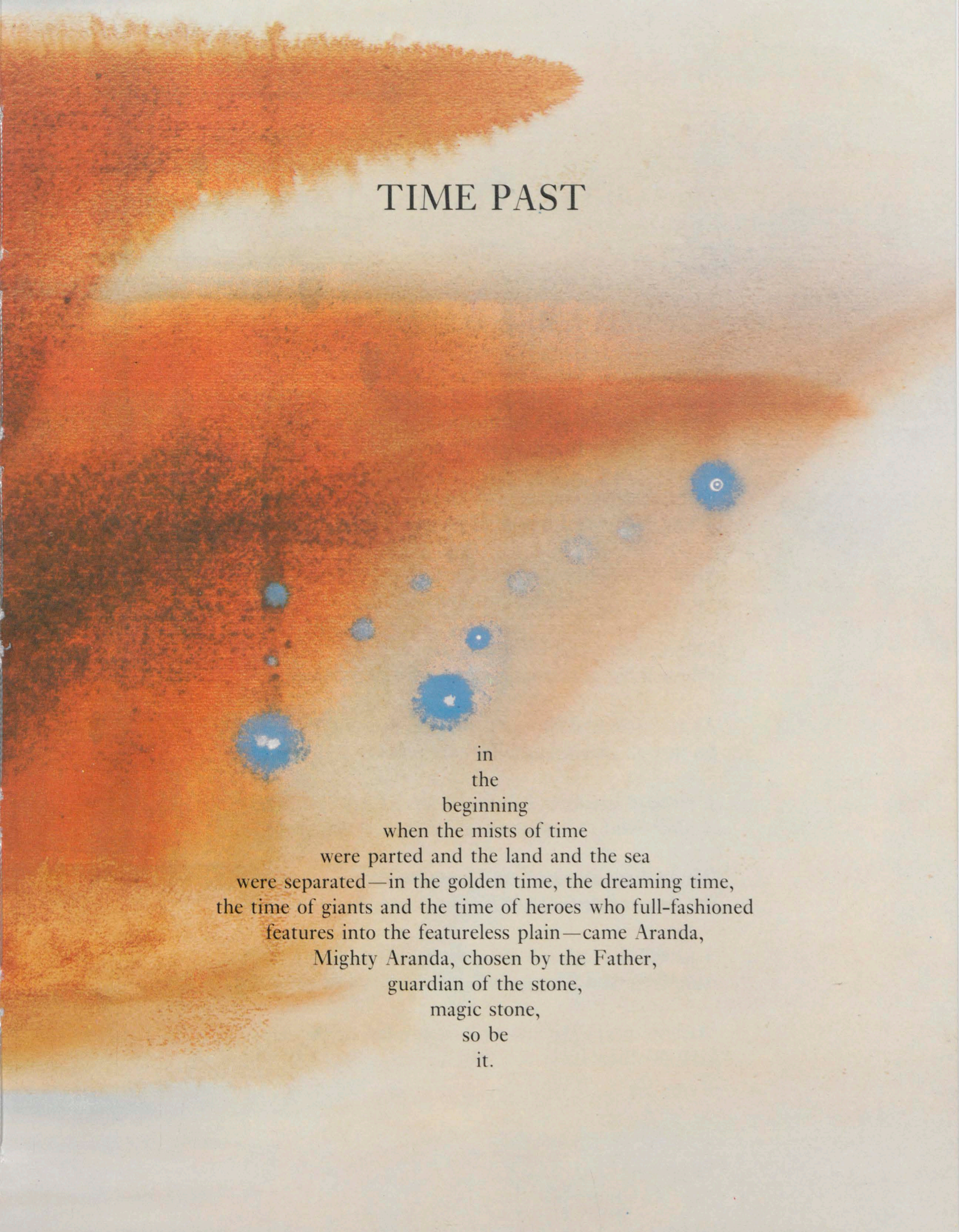
Byamee Gardens  
The Magic Stone  
That Night

DREAM TIME

Aranda  
Mr Change Man  
Aranda's Return  
The Spirit Children  
The Mamu  
The Stone People  
Good-bye Japara  
In the Arms of the Father

MASON JUDY





# TIME PAST

in  
the  
beginning  
when the mists of time  
were parted and the land and the sea  
were separated—in the golden time, the dreaming time,  
the time of giants and the time of heroes who full-fashioned  
features into the featureless plain—came Aranda,  
Mighty Aranda, chosen by the Father,  
guardian of the stone,  
magic stone,  
so be  
it.

# TIME PRESENT

## BYAMEE GARDENS

Into a house completed newly  
Comes the family of Mason Judy,

Eight years old and ever so lonely.  
There once was a friend whose name was Tony.

Mum and Dad and Mason Judy  
Come into a house completed newly,

Into a place where all houses are new,  
Where a big bulldozer has pushed right through

All the trees and the scrub and the farming land,  
So that all that is left is flat white sand.

A place of bricks and builder's scraps,  
A place, said the salesman, too new for most maps,

Where there are roads and houses plenty,  
But most of them, finds Mason, unfinished or empty.

A place far away from Grannie and Grandad  
And Tony and Mandy and friends which he once had.

Mason finds cubbies and places to play,  
But, all alone, it's a very long day:



No children's voices and no running feet,  
Only some grown-ups—no children to meet.

In their new home Mum and Dad are not happy;  
Dad has been shouting and Mum has been snappy.

Mason heard Dad say, "Work's hard to find",  
And wishes that Dad and Mum would be kind

As in the days just past when they knew they could be  
The friendliest, happiest, warm family.


Aloud wonders Mason alone in a room,  
"I wonder if Grannie can visit us soon?"

From the back garden a sound can be heard:  
Mason's one friend, an old cuckoo bird,

Whose song calls Mason out to play  
For an hour or two at the end of the day.

From the back fence a sign can be seen,  
With a picture and letters in bright gold and green,

Which shows happy children and a traffic guardian:  
YOUR PLACE IN THE SUN—BYAMEE GARDENS.



## THE MAGIC STONE

Our friend, the lonely Mason Judy,  
Has moved from his home to a place far away,  
To a place which is new and known as Byamee.

Breakfast with Mum and Dad starts the day,  
But Mason sees Mum's eyes are red  
And Dad tells Mason to run out and play.

Although outside, he can hear what is said,  
And Mum says, quite loud, "I don't like it here."  
Dad starts shouting and Mason is ready





To run far away, stop the sound in his ears.  
His feet start moving and sobs come quick  
To the eight-year-old boy in his first taste of fear.

He stops, out of breath, near some trees which grow thick  
And almost falls over a man with brown skin,  
Who, startled, jumps up with a kick

And runs, looking back, as if frightened of him.  
Puzzled, young Mason turns back to the trees,  
Sees a place in the leaves and goes in.

It's cool, finds Mason, among the leaves  
As he glances, amazed, at the sun  
And feels a strange, unusual breeze.



His eyes are moist because of the run,  
But still he can see a shape in the ground.  
So he digs with his hands at some

Sand till he forms quite a mound,  
And there, revealed, to his human eyes  
A sight so strange that he makes a sound

Of amazement as he surveys his prize—  
A black, unusual stone  
With white lines running down through the sides.

Mason decides to carry it home.



muyang





## THAT NIGHT

Mason Judy, our lonely friend,  
Has taken home his unusual find  
And won't show Mum and Dad till they're kind;  
Hides his stone in bed at the pillow end.

Sleep will not come to his troubled mind.  
All of a sudden a sound comes through,  
The light turns brighter and then turns blue,  
The magic stone begins to grind.

And his heart, uplifted, flew  
Like the first hand guiding the first joystick,  
For that moment, trembling, when the heart beats quick  
As in man's first flight in a place which is new.

Through the clouds, rolling, all puffy and thick,  
“I opened my eyes—far below was my town.  
I called out to Dad and moved my head round,  
So frightened and shaking, I nearly was sick.”





Unlike Icarus, whose wings broke down,  
The fear-filled voyager rose upwards and on.  
The home, which he needed, was far away, gone!  
Till he stopped, all amazed, his eyes big and round.

No more could the boy see the land he'd come from.  
Instead was a new land of rich brown-red dust  
So dry yet not hot, so different from the last.  
The light was so bright yet unlike the sun

And the air was alive and shimmering fast.  
In the distance was a mountain, or was it a rock?  
Like a big lump of clay it was round at the top,  
With trees at the bottom which did not go past

A line of great boulders lined up in a block.  
But the trembling voyager, his mouth open wide,  
Turned as he saw a brown figure glide  
Towards him and smile and stop.

DREAM TIME





## ARANDA

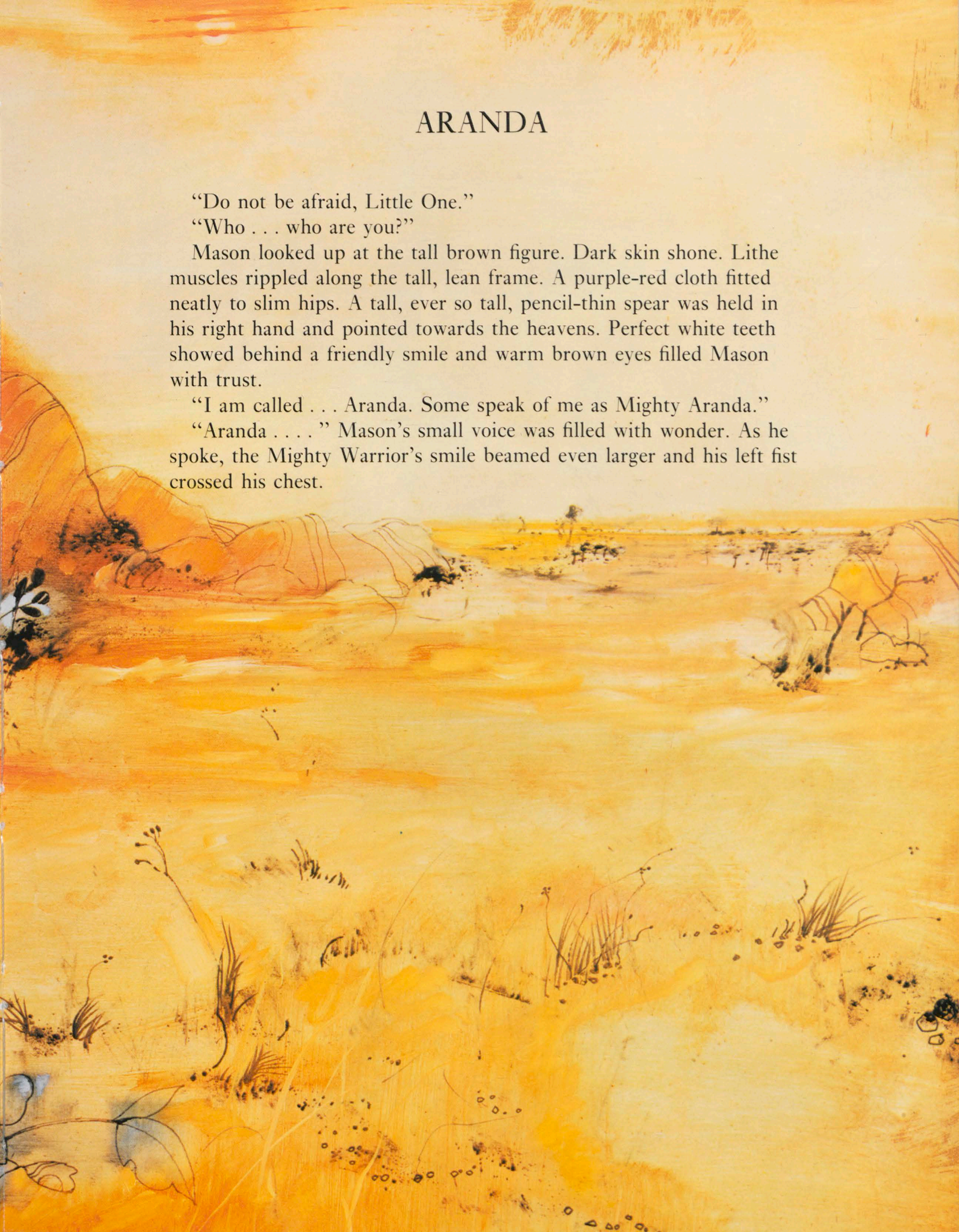
“Do not be afraid, Little One.”

“Who . . . who are you?”

Mason looked up at the tall brown figure. Dark skin shone. Lithe muscles rippled along the tall, lean frame. A purple-red cloth fitted neatly to slim hips. A tall, ever so tall, pencil-thin spear was held in his right hand and pointed towards the heavens. Perfect white teeth showed behind a friendly smile and warm brown eyes filled Mason with trust.

“I am called . . . Aranda. Some speak of me as Mighty Aranda.”

“Aranda . . .” Mason’s small voice was filled with wonder. As he spoke, the Mighty Warrior’s smile beamed even larger and his left fist crossed his chest.



With his fears diminished, Mason suddenly remembered the happenings in his bedroom, the swishing clouds and the strange land he now saw.

“Where’s Mum and Dad? How did I get here? What place is this and . . . ?”





Mason was silenced by Aranda's raised hand.

"What is your wish, Little One?"

Mason didn't understand. "Wish . . . ?"

Warm reds, deep reds, rich reds and tawny-reds filled the eye. Even the sky, which looked unreal, had a reddish tinge. Huge round boulders, like scattered marbles, showed smooth granite faces. Shimmering on the horizon, through the pinkish tinge of distance, was a huge rock, an enormous rock. All life seemed to centre on this rock. A soft yellowish glow appeared to shine from the top and hang, like a crown, round this massive jewel.



“What is your wish, Little One?” Aranda’s deep brown eyes looked inquisitively down at Mason.

“I . . . I don’t understand Mr . . . er . . . I don’t understand, Aranda. What wish do you mean?”

“Little One, *you* are the holder of the Magic Stone. In the beginning the Father chose Mighty Aranda as the guardian of the Magic Stone. Through the mists of time it has been you, Little One, *you* have been chosen to return the Magic Stone. For its return you are granted one wish.”

Mason’s mouth was open wide. For the first time he remembered the black stone which he had found. He noticed, almost with surprise, that the black stone was still in his hand. It was shiny-black and smooth and had strange white lines in squiggly patterns down the sides.

“I don’t understand everything that you say, Aranda, but I do understand that I am to receive one wish.”

“That is correct, Little One.”

“Are you the person who grants this wish, Aranda?”

The Mighty Warrior threw back his head with laughter and his white teeth flashed in an even wider smile. Becoming serious again, he replied, “No, Little One. Not even the Mighty Aranda can do that. I must take you to the Father.”

## MR CHANGE MAN

Our friend, bewildered and confused, asked the Mighty Aranda many questions, about Mum and Dad and this strange place and the Father, but to no avail. Aranda raised his hand slowly, the boy grew quiet and the Mighty Warrior spoke.

“Little One, I have not the time for your questions. I must leave you, for I go now to prepare for your meeting with the Father. Truly, you are to be honoured among mortal men. There are dangers along the way, Little One. Many dangers. But do not fear. Be brave of heart, for the Mighty Aranda has been sent to protect you on your voyage. But remember this, Little One.”

Aranda squatted down on his heels so that his face was level with Mason's. He spoke slowly and deliberately.

“Remember this with all the strength that your few years allow you. Do not lose the Magic Stone. Do not give it away. Do not hide it in any place. Do not let it out of your hand.”

When Mason spoke his voice seemed very small.

“Aranda, if you have to leave me for a short time and there are dangers, could you take the Magic Stone and look after it for me?”

Aranda slowly shook his noble head from side to side. His voice, when he spoke, was strong and kind.

“No, Little One. Not even Aranda can do that for you. I must leave now. Make your bed in the hollow among these rocks. Try to sleep, Little One, for you have a journey ahead of you. Remember that which I said.”





The Mighty Warrior tucked Mason into a comfortable place between two rocks. He stood up, then ran off in long powerful glides heading towards the enormous rock which was as big as a mountain and had a glow of light coming from it. The young voyager suddenly felt very sleepy. With his head spinning with questions without answers, our friend went to sleep.

“Hey, boy!”

A black finger jabbed at Mason.

“Hey, boy. Wake up.”

Sleep slowly seeped from Mason’s mind. For a moment he couldn’t remember where he was. Was he at the new house at Byamee Gardens, or was he at their old house near Grannie and Tony and Mandy? No! He was in this strange land. The stone, the Magic Stone. Did he still have it? Yes! Mason’s hand gripped the stone tightly, then he turned to see who had awoken him.

Mason found himself face to face with a squat black face. It wasn’t nearly as nice as Aranda’s face. It was grinning wickedly, and beady eyes seemed to laugh at Mason.

“Who are you and what do you want?”

“Hey, boy. I’m your friend, see. I’ve come to look after that stone for you.”

Mason shrank back in horror.

“You give me that stone and I’ll look after it for you.”

“What is your name?” Mason wondered if he could be a friend of Aranda. Should he give the Magic Stone to this person for safe keeping?

“My name is Japara. You give me that stone, boy. I’ll look after it.”

The grinning black face was coming closer and closer to Mason. Our friend remembered, just in time, Aranda’s warning about the Magic Stone.

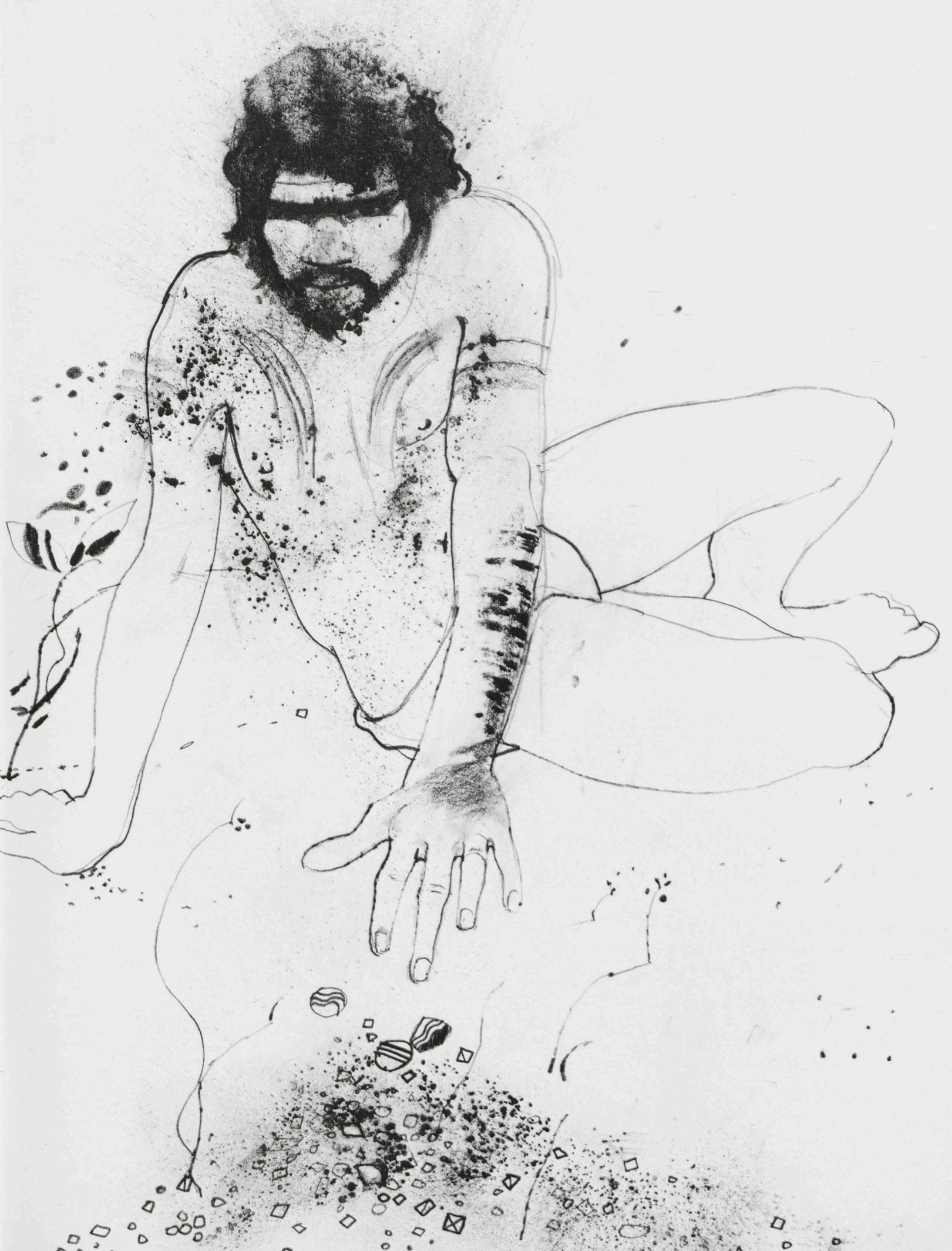
“No! You can’t have the Magic Stone. I won’t give it to you.”

The black face grinned even wider. The man giggled feverishly.

“So it *is* the Magic Stone! Just as I thought, boy. Look, boy. See this . . . ?”

The man pointed to a mound of small pebbles near where Mason had been sleeping. He waved a black hand over the pebbles and instantly they were changed into diamonds, opals and other gleaming precious stones that Mason had never seen before.

“You give me the Magic Stone, boy, and you can take them home for your Mum. You’ll be rich for the rest of your life.”







Mason's eyes grew wide at the sight of the jewels. Mum and Dad would be happy with these. Then he again remembered Aranda's warning and said, "No, you cannot have the Magic Stone."

Instantly the jewels changed back into dusty pebbles. Not to be put off, Japara said, "If you give me the Magic Stone, boy, I'll show you the most beautiful things you've ever seen."

At that, the man changed into a brightly coloured bird, took wing, and brilliant, amazing colours flowed out behind the bird. The sky was filled with hundreds of birds, all flashing the most beautiful colours that any person had ever seen. The sight was breathtaking.

With the spectacular colours saturating the sky, Mason's eyes glazed and his head reeled, but still he could shout, "No, no! You can't have the Magic Stone!"









Once again, the amazing things disappeared and there stood Japara, still grinning feverishly.

“Look, boy, there are plenty of Magic Stones. Why do you want just that one? Look!”

And to Mason’s astonishment Japara had two Magic Stones, one in each hand. Suddenly another Magic Stone appeared in Mason’s right hand. He felt another appear in his pocket. The man now had an armload of Magic Stones. They were all around Mason’s feet. He couldn’t move. They covered the rocks where Mason had slept. Mason’s head was dizzy. His mind swam. Japara’s face seemed to loom forward, wickedly, amid an ocean of Magic Stones.







“THIS IS THE REAL MAGIC STONE!” Mason, now frightened, shouted at the top of his voice and flung the fake Magic Stone, as hard as he could, into the dust.

Instantly all the imitation Magic Stones disappeared and Mason was left gripping the real Magic Stone in his left hand. Japara still grinned wickedly. He did not give in easily.

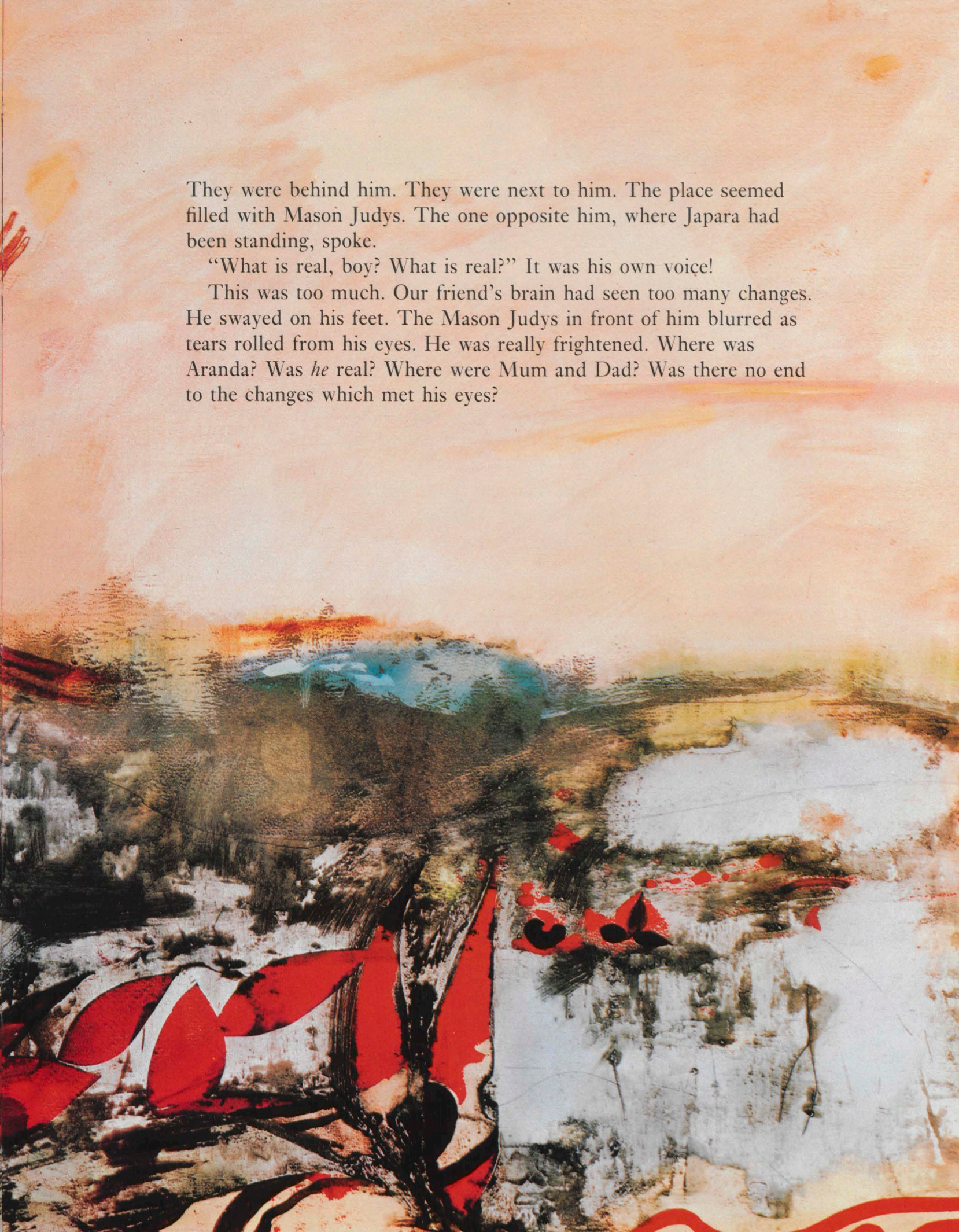
“Hey, boy. What do you mean by the *real* Magic Stone? What is real? Look . . . .”

Mason nearly fell over.

As he looked he could see himself, yes, himself! Dressed the same way, holding the Magic Stone in his left hand. Hair the same, face the same. He even moved. As he looked, more appeared. There were ten Mason Judys on the left. Even as he watched, Japara changed into Mason Judy. Exactly the same! A dozen or so appeared on his right.





A painting of a landscape. In the foreground, a tree with dark, gnarled branches and large, vibrant red leaves stands on a rocky outcrop. To the right, a white, textured area, possibly a cliff or a path, leads down towards a body of water. The water is dark and reflects the sky. In the background, a range of mountains or hills is visible under a vast, cloudy sky with warm, orange and yellow tones. The overall style is expressive and somewhat abstract, with visible brushstrokes and a rich color palette.

They were behind him. They were next to him. The place seemed filled with Mason Judys. The one opposite him, where Japara had been standing, spoke.

“What is real, boy? What is real?” It was his own voice!

This was too much. Our friend’s brain had seen too many changes. He swayed on his feet. The Mason Judys in front of him blurred as tears rolled from his eyes. He was really frightened. Where was Aranda? Was *he* real? Where were Mum and Dad? Was there no end to the changes which met his eyes?

*What shall I do next . . . ? I may as well throw away the Magic Stone and put an end to it . . . . I can't think what to do next . . . . I'm thinking . . . .*

“I am thinking, I am thinking. I can't hear the other Mason Judys thinking. I am thinking, so *I* am real!

I AM THINKING, SO I AM REAL!

I AM THINKING, SO I AM REAL!”

Our friend blinked, and blinked again. Sitting in front of him was Japara, looking very sad. There was no sign of any other person or any magic thing. The place was just the same as when Aranda had left him. Japara spoke.

“You're a good boy, you're a good boy. You're too good for me. From now on I will help you and Aranda.”

“What do you mean?” asked Mason.

“No more tricks.”

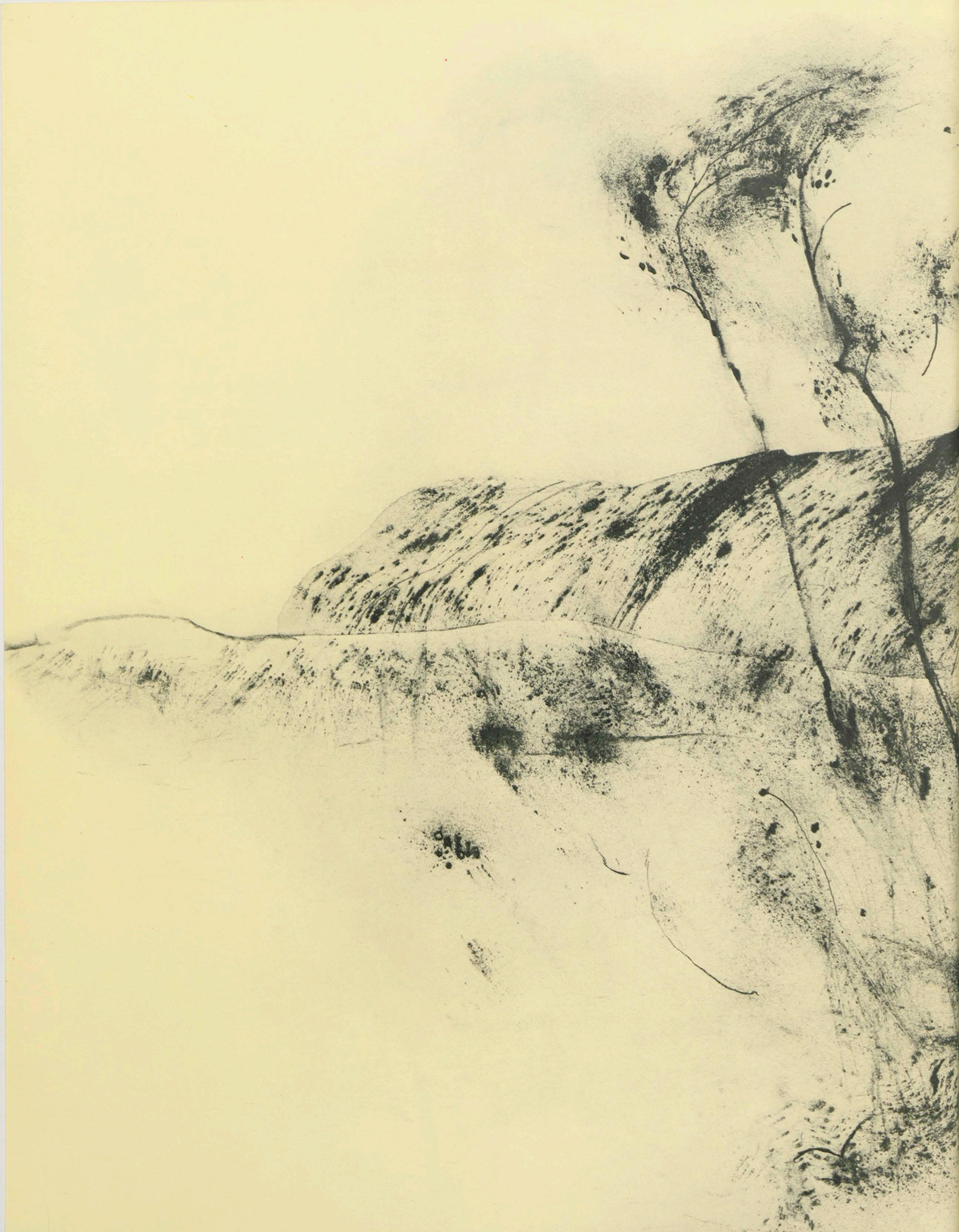
Mason still held the Magic Stone.

“No more tricks, boy. I was watching from behind a rock when Aranda left you and I thought that I could get the Magic Stone for myself. But you were too good for my magic. From now on, I will help you.”

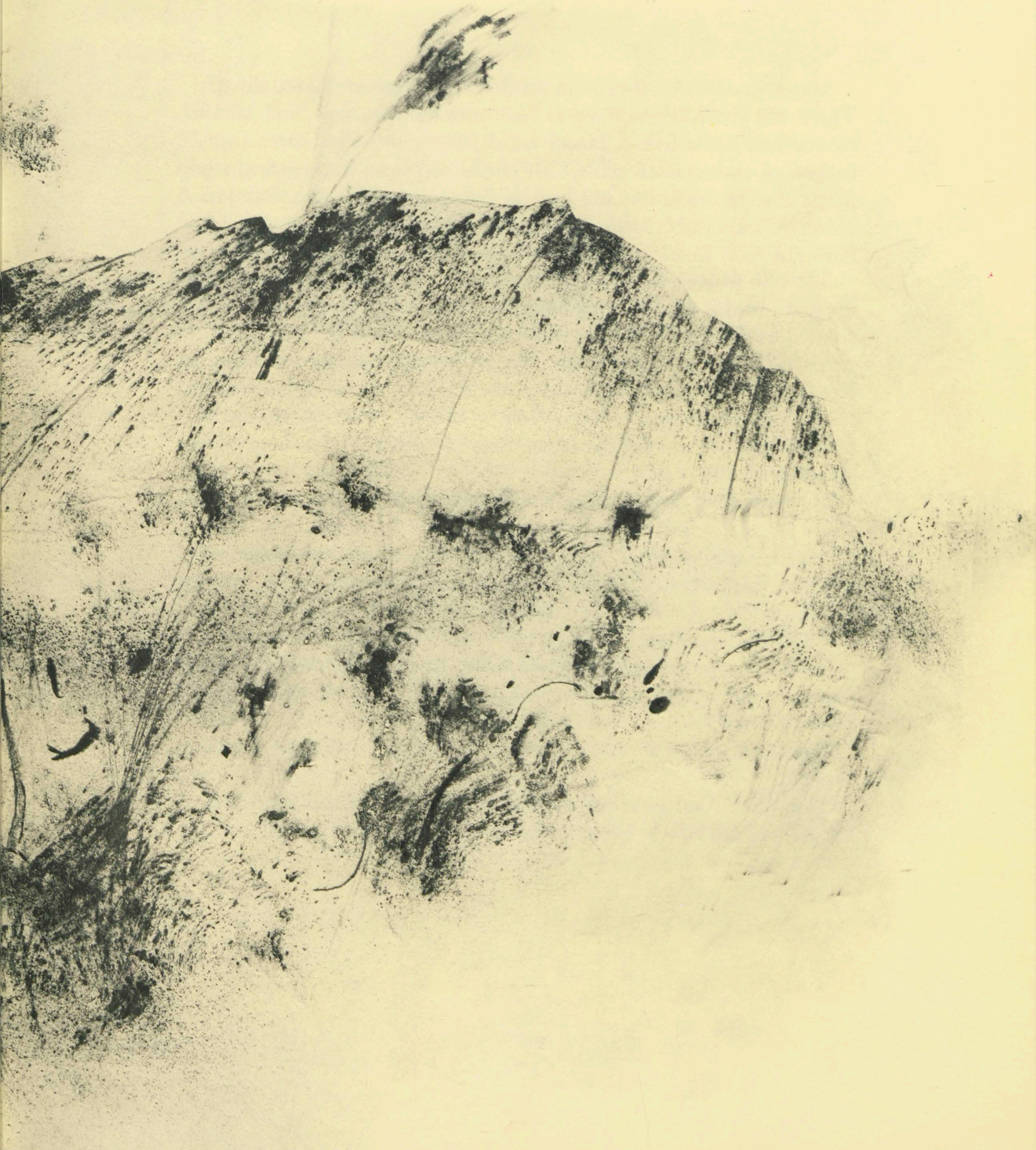
The man's face didn't look wicked any more. He sat forlornly in the red dust. It was really quite a funny face. Mason gave a deep sigh after all the trickery he'd just come through.

“I forget your name, but after all the tricks you played, I shall call you Mr Change Man.”





ARANDA'S RETURN



Mason and Mr Change Man sat down together in the red dust. There was absolutely nothing to fear from the man now, and Mason treated him like a friend. Japara asked Mason about his home and flashed an embarrassed smile. Our friend had been up against the best magic that Japara knew, and had proved too good for him. But Japara didn't sulk about being beaten by the boy and truly intended to help him. His face, so wicked before, was now a cheeky, friendly face.

The two friends were sitting there when they noticed a figure moving towards them from across the plain. A tall brown figure which seemed to glide. Did his feet touch the ground, or was he gliding through the air? It was Aranda, Mighty Aranda! Mason jumped to his feet and ran towards him, joyful to see the strong, warm, brown, friendly face once again. Aranda looked pleased to see Mason again, too, but his face creased into a worried frown when he noticed Japara squatting in the dust.

"Oh, it's good to see you again, Aranda. It really is. I have missed you."

Aranda stared squarely at Japara. His face was set and his strong arm held his mighty spear in the throwing position.

"Little One, do you still have the Magic Stone?"

"Yes, Aranda. Here it is, see!"

Japara rose to his feet and stood there, shuffling awkwardly.

Aranda's serious face moved to look at Mason. Immediately a puzzled frown creased Aranda's brow.

"Japara has been with you, Little One, and you still hold the Magic Stone?"

"That boy's too good for me, Aranda. I tried to get it from him, but he was too clever. I'll help you from now on, if you want me. He's a good boy."

Aranda was astonished. Mason tried to help by saying, "Yes, Aranda. Mr Change Man did a lot of funny tricks to try to get the Magic Stone, but I didn't give it to him. He is quite friendly now and wants to help us. Can he stay and help us?"

Aranda realized the boy had beaten Japara and threw back his head with laughter. Aranda laughed and laughed. Mason giggled quietly, because he was pleased that Aranda was happy. And even Japara had a huge, embarrassed grin on his face. The Mighty Warrior's laughter finally died down and he wiped the tears from the corners of his dark brown eyes. He put his arm round Mason. "Oh, Little One! I said to be brave and you have done that well. From now on, I shall call you Little Warrior."

Mason's eyes shone. He felt as happy as could be. Aranda liked him and was going to call him Little Warrior. That huge, strong man was going to call him LITTLE WARRIOR! From now on he was going to be as brave as he possibly could be. He loved having Aranda saying good things about him.

Aranda became serious once more. "Japara, there is a way in which you can help." Mr Change Man looked pleased. "I am to take our Little Warrior to the Father. It is said that the Mamu may try to stop our passage. We must find out where the Mamu hides. Gather the Spirit Children here and we will send them to all corners to find where the Mamu hides."

Aranda placed a hand on Japara's shoulder. "Take care."

Japara was pleased at being allowed to help and raced off into the purple distance.

Mason spoke. "Aranda, I always seem to be asking you questions, but what is the Mamu and who are the Spirit Children?"

"Be seated, Little Warrior, and I shall tell you."







## THE SPIRIT CHILDREN

A gentle breeze stirred the red dust. Japara was now a black speck in the purple distance, and Aranda, mightiest of warriors, settled down to tell Little Warrior the dangers which he must soon face.

“The Mamu,” he began seriously, “is that awful thing which all must fear. When speaking of the Mamu, one must lower his voice lest the evil spirit hears its own name.”

“Aranda, are *you* afraid of the Mamu?”

“A warrior does not know fear, Little Warrior, but, yes, even the Mighty Aranda respects the Mamu. Its powers are terrible. I have never looked upon its face. I have only heard it growling in the blackest darkness, or shaking the very ground with its hunger or its temper. I have been asked by the Father to take you to the Father’s dwelling-place, Alcheringa.”

Aranda pointed to the rock which was as big as a mountain and which had an eerie glow at the top.

“Even the Mamu fears to go there. The Father is all-powerful, but if the Mamu should possess the Magic Stone, who knows what evils the beast would dare to do? So you see, Little Warrior, if the Mamu learns that you have the Magic Stone, it will stop at nothing in its frenzied efforts to possess the Stone. You would be in the gravest danger.”

Mason’s mouth was wide open and he had a dry feeling in the back of his throat.

“Aranda, are you sure I can’t let you hold the Magic Stone for me until we get to Alcheringa?”

“Little Warrior, *you* have come from the other world, *you* have been chosen. The strange powers of the Magic Stone are such that not even Mighty Aranda can dare to possess it, not even for a moment.”

“Oh. Who are the Spirit Children that you sent Mr Change Man to find?”

“The Spirit Children, Little Warrior, are the spirits of unborn children waiting to find a good mother through whom to be born. But enough now, Japara returns. He has done well, for he brings the Spirit Children with him.”

A strange sight greeted Mason’s eyes. There in the purple twilight strode Mr Change Man, as proud as could be. Behind him, darting this way and that like excited fireflies, came the Spirit Children. Their tiny faces wore happy grins, they laughed and giggled at one another, they left behind them silver, flickering trails which wisped into the night air. They neither walked on the ground nor completely flew in the air, but darted like dragonflies, leaving their silver trails to disappear behind them. Their twenty—or was it thirty?—beautiful faces showed delight at every turn as they followed the grinning Japara in happy procession.

His face creased in smiles, Japara stopped in front of Aranda, and the Spirit Children hustled round the great warrior. Aranda bent down, his face beaming as he extended his strong brown arms to hug each of the happy Spirit Children. They became even happier as Aranda hugged them and greeted them, and his brown warrior’s face radiated joy like a father meeting his own children after he has been away for a long time. Mason felt that Aranda must be one of the best and kindest people he had ever met. Aranda rose and spoke.

“Most beautiful and happy Spirit Children, it pleases me deeply to see your happy little faces once again. I want you to meet a friend of mine.”

Aranda moved an arm towards Mason.

“You may call him Little Warrior.”

Immediately the Spirit Children flew to Mason and pressed their grinning faces towards his. It was strange to try to touch them. Were they real, or was it air that he touched? Silver trails wisped close to him and dazzled the air around him. Aranda spoke again.

“My beautiful Spirit Children, I have been asked by the Father to take our Little Warrior to Alcheringa. Our Little Warrior holds the Magic Stone.”



Immediately twenty or thirty pairs of brown, sparkling young eyes pressed closer to Mason to have a look.

“If the Mamu were to hear of this, it is certain it would try to stop us and possess the Magic Stone for itself. You all know what that could mean.”

For the first time the little faces grew serious. Their brown eyes, deep as a rainy-season pool, stared solemnly at Aranda.

“I ask you, my beautiful ones, to search all corners and find where the Mamu waits. Be swift, my beautiful ones, for when we know that the Mamu is at a far distance, Little Warrior can be taken to the Father. You are too fast and fleet for the Mamu to catch you and do you harm, but do not let it see you, for then it will know, surely, that something is to happen. Be off, little ones. Safe journey.”

The Spirit Children bustled round Aranda for a final hug, then sped off at an incredibly fast pace, faster than the eye could see, leaving only thin, dissolving trails of silver to show the direction they had passed.

Pinpricks of light blinked in the purple distance. Aranda turned and suggested that Japara and Little Warrior should sleep, for they would need all their strength for the following day. The Mighty Warrior, Aranda, would stand guard. Sleep came to Mason, and he dreamed of the happy, smiling Spirit Children chasing each other merrily all over the dusty red plain.

## THE MAMU

Fingers of red touched the grey morning sky when Mason awoke. Alcheringa, the dwelling-place of the Father, was glowing in the distance. Would he be able to reach Alcheringa and see the Father? What wish should he choose? Would the evil Mamu somehow manage to spoil Aranda's plans? And what of Mum and Dad? Would they have missed Mason by this time? These questions whirled, unanswered, round Mason's head as he became aware of a conversation in whispers close by.

Aranda was bending low and listening to an excited Spirit Child. Mason could not hear what was being said, but by the worried looks on faces the message was urgent. Finally Aranda hugged the Spirit Child and stood up. The Child sped off into the morning at an incredible speed. Aranda turned and walked towards Mason and Japara. Japara still slept, but Aranda noticed that Mason was awake.

"Is anything wrong, Aranda?"

"There are dangers, Little Warrior. Our little friend, the Spirit Child, found the Mamu in a creek-bed a long way from here. But the Mamu saw our Spirit Child as he left to come and tell us his news. It is feared, Little Warrior, that the Mamu will now know that we are here. Time is short. Wake Japara, for we must set off at once."

Mason woke Mr Change Man, and his grinning face grew serious when the news was told to him. The three set off for Alcheringa.

Aranda carried Mason in his strong left arm. He held the mighty spear in his right hand. Aranda moved in powerful glides. Mason could not tell, from his position, whether Aranda's feet touched the ground, but his pace was swift, smooth and effortless.

Japara, on the other hand, definitely touched the ground. His movements were jerky, and he seemed already to be falling behind Aranda's swift pace.

“Why don’t you change into a bird, Mr Change Man?” called Mason from his high position on Aranda’s arm. “It looks as if you’re too slow to keep up with us.”

Japara flashed a big smile after Mason’s cheeky comment, but kept running. The party grew serious once again.

Alcheringa was much closer now. Mason could clearly see ridges and grooves on its huge surface. Japara was running a short distance behind. He was puffing quite a lot. Aranda had not spoken for some time, but kept on gliding, his face set with grim determination.

When it came, all three almost fell over with terror and surprise.

A roaring, a growling, a thunder! Its angry snarls and throaty rumblings made the very ground shake. Fully grown trees could be heard being snapped off in its path. For the first time Mason did not have to ask Aranda what was happening. But Aranda spoke, not to anyone in particular, more to himself in disbelief.

“The Mamu!”

Japara’s eyes were wide open. Aranda grew even more grim and purposeful. Mason’s heart beat fast. He remembered Aranda’s words about the Mamu stopping at nothing to possess the Magic Stone. He felt the Magic Stone in his pocket and wished, at that moment, that he had never found it.

He gripped Aranda’s strong left arm tightly and tried to hide his face in Aranda’s chest. They could not yet see the Mamu but only feel and hear the terror of its presence. Aranda moved. He guided the fearful Japara to a large outcrop of curious, rounded boulders which were near by. They moved swiftly among the strange rocks, disappeared from sight, and Aranda spoke.

“The beast has not yet seen us!”











## THE STONE PEOPLE

“Japara!” The Mighty Warrior spoke in urgent whispers. “Because we are in danger, we must call upon the Stone People for help.”

“Yes, Aranda,” replied the serious-faced Mr Change Man. “The Father would agree that now is the time of times when the Stone People are needed. My magic is not good enough to help you, Aranda. Only your Magic Spear has the power which is needed.”

“Take Little Warrior and stand back.”

Mason was handed to Japara, and they moved a few paces away from Aranda. The air was filled with the savage snorts and deep, angry rumblings of the Mamu. They had not yet laid eyes on the beast, but it was very close. Then Mason almost forgot about the Mamu as he watched Aranda.

For the first time he looked closely at the rounded boulders where they were hiding. If he let his imagination wander, he could almost see the vague shapes of people formed in the solid stone. Aranda was kneeling at the face of the rounded boulders. His spear, long and sharp, was busily working, tracing the outlines in the stone. Then, to his utter amazement, movement could be seen coming from the stone! An arm stretched, a brown head moved, a long brown leg straightened. Fingers flexed. Everywhere that Aranda's spear had traced suddenly came to life. Tall, strong brown figures—men and women—coming from the stone stood erect, flexed new-formed muscles, and faced the Mighty Aranda. Even Japara, who knew quite a deal of magic, was amazed at the wonderful sight. The tall, handsome brown people stared straight at Aranda. They didn't seem to notice Mason and Japara, or the terrible sounds from the Mamu.

Aranda spoke.

“You will be known for ever as the Aranda People.”

He held his spear high and the Stone People nodded gently in agreement.

“You were born from stone to face a danger. We must help Little Warrior . . . here . . . to reach Alcheringa and the Father. Listen to the terrible sounds. That is the Mamu. It will try to stop us in our task. Come, we shall face the Mamu.”

## GOOD-BYE JAPARA

Mason had faced many fears since he first arrived in this strange land. He had seen weird magic performed: his eyes had witnessed things that no other human person would ever see. But now he was more frightened than he had ever been. The Stone People, led by Aranda, were going to face the Mamu. Japara, carrying Mason in his arms, followed the procession out of the rounded rocks.

The noise was terrible. The earth was shaking. The sky had grown dark. Aranda headed straight for the huge mountain of rock known as Alcheringa. There was only a short distance to go. Mason could see the trees at the foot of the mountain. If he stretched his neck back and looked up high, he could see the eerie glow of light coming from the top. Would they make it?

Mason dared to look towards the direction from which the awful noise was coming. Close by was a dry creek-bed. Between two clumps of trees he saw something moving. It was like a caterpillar's body, except as tall as two houses. It jerked forward, its slimy body snapping huge trees as it moved. It was too big. He couldn't see its head or its tail. A small hill hid the beast's head. Mason knew the head must be behind the hill, because the awful noise seemed to come mainly from there—a snorting, growling, deep, booming, snarling and coughing noise.

It was too much. Mason buried his head into Japara's chest and shook with fear. Japara's whole body was quivering. Then something made Mason dare to look again. From behind the low hill, coming directly towards them, was the head of the Mamu. Huge eyes—evil, red! Huge, great nostrils, trumpeting and slimy! Mouth—the most terrible of all!





The brave Stone People—oh, how brave they must be—stepped forward and threw their spears. Every spear hit the Mamu—but nothing happened. It still came on, spears sticking from its face, groaning and growling terribly. Then Aranda stepped forward, alone, his Magic Spear raised high. Mighty Aranda! Would he come to harm? It was too terrible to think about.

Mason gripped Japara even more tightly. Japara, Mason noticed, gripped Mason more tightly too. Even the Stone People stepped back. The Mamu, incensed at the impudence of Aranda standing in its way, looked ready to strike.

Mighty Aranda leant back, balanced for a second, then flung the Magic Spear with all the strength and determination that a warrior could muster. The spear flew true and straight. Like a thin fork of lightning the spear rammed deep into one of the Mamu's eyes. A deafening, earth-shaking roar filled the night. A bubbling black liquid seeped from the Mamu's right eye. But still it came forward, seemingly unstoppable. Aranda jumped backwards, out of the way of the enraged Mamu.

Mason thought that this must surely be the end of them all.

Japara ran forward, still clutching Mason. Our friend felt a hot snort of foul air from the beast's nostrils blast down his back. Japara literally threw Mason into Aranda's arms and then shouted above the noise, "Alcheringa—quick!"

Japara stepped towards the Mamu, his arms outstretched. Suddenly his arms turned into two huge white-feathered wings. The Mamu was poised, ready to sink its evil yellow teeth into this strange creature. Mason didn't see what happened next.

Aranda made a huge leap, over the trees, and landed on the side of Alcheringa—the home of the Father. With Mason in his arms, Aranda started gliding, slowly, upwards. This time Mason was sure that Aranda's feet weren't touching. As they rose slowly towards the light, the pair looked down upon the scene below. The Stone People had taken their chance and were disappearing among the trees.

Poor Japara! A terrible scream rose up, even to Mason's ears. The Mamu had slashed him with a deadly blow from one of its clawed feet. The terrible jaws were about to close on Japara. The dying Mr Change Man flew into the air, leaving a silver trail just like the Spirit Children.











“Good-bye, Japara!” Tears streamed from Mason’s eyes. “Good-bye, Japara!”

He was gone. His silver trail disappeared into the night air. At that moment the moon came out. Mason looked, and looked again. Surely . . . the face . . . the face of the Man in the Moon. He knew that cheeky face.

“Good-bye, Japara!”

Upwards and on. Into the light. To the dwelling-place of the Father . . . Alcheringa . . . the faint noise of the Mamu far below . . .



## IN THE ARMS OF THE FATHER

Upwards, slowly, surely, they rose, feet dangling down into thin air. The soft yellow light grew brighter. Mason could no longer see the ground. Mist swirled around them. The light seemed to come from inside the mist itself. Thicker and thicker, it brushed against their faces. A deep humming noise could be heard coming from . . . Mason didn't know where. At last they stopped, suspended, hanging there with mist so thick you could touch it, rolling ceaselessly like great masses of mashed potato. The yellow light was now very bright, but, strangely enough, it didn't hurt Mason's eyes.

A face appeared slowly through the mist. A huge face. A face bigger even than the Mighty Aranda. A warm face, an all-knowing face. A happy face . . . a secure face. Love, strength, power and happiness shone from this face. His beard seemed to be part of the swirling thick mist.

MASON.

The sound was loud, very loud, and deep. But it didn't hurt Mason's ears. Mason should have felt afraid, but he wasn't. A great, misty arm came round them both. Aranda looked like a very small child, cradled in the great arm.

YOU HAVE DONE WELL.

Aranda's face shone. Mason remembered the Magic Stone. He took it out of his pocket. The white lines down the side seemed to be glowing on and off. Mason tried to speak. Nothing would come out at first. When he did speak, he was sure his tiny voice would not be heard.



“Here is the Magic Stone, Father.”

The Stone flew, by itself, towards the Father and was lost in the mist. Mason was not sure, but could he see a faint smile on the Great Face?

WHAT IS YOUR WISH, MASON?

Our friend looked to Aranda.

“Aranda lost his Magic Spear when he was very brave. He might like another one?”

Aranda smiled and, yes, he was sure that the Great Face smiled too.

ARANDA HAS DONE WELL, AND WILL BE REWARDED.  
WHAT IS *YOUR* WISH, MASON?

He thought very hard.

“I wish . . . that Mum and Dad would be happy and that our house will be a friendly house. Oh, and that Mum and Dad won’t have worried about me while I’ve been away.”

The Great Face looked pleased, and Aranda gave our friend a hug.

YOU SHALL BE HAPPY, MASON . . . .

The Great Face began to disappear among the swirling mist. Aranda held Mason tightly. The mist was now turning pink and swishing past very fast. It was the same feeling he had when he first left his bedroom.

Suddenly, there it was—his own bedroom in the new house. Aranda placed Mason gently in his bed and tucked the covers round him.

“Good-bye, Little Warrior. You have indeed been brave. Good-bye . . . .”

He gave our friend a final hug.

“Good-bye, Aranda, good-bye . . . and thank you . . . .”

Before Mason’s tears had time to form, the Mighty Warrior vanished in a clóud of swirling mist.



# MASON JUDY

Into a house completed newly  
Came the family of Mason Judy,

Eight years old, but never is lonely  
With friends like John and Mandy and Tony.

And in the night when the dark fills his room  
He sees an old friend—the Man in the Moon.

Into a place where all houses are new,  
Where Grannie and Grandad now live too:

The friendliest, happiest, warm family  
In a place which is known as Byamee.

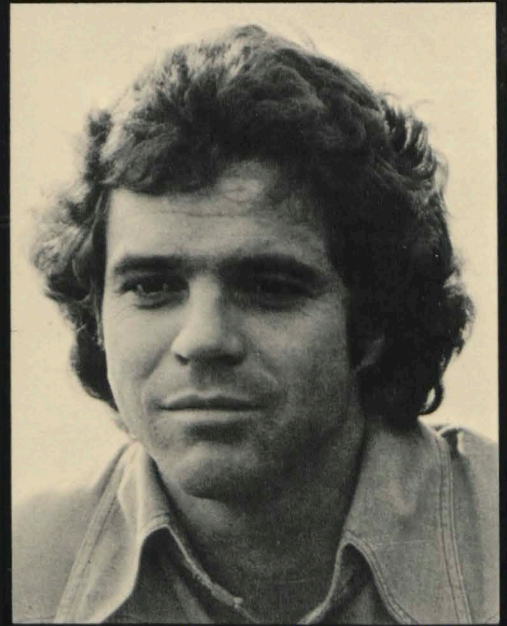












*Photograph by Frances Andrijich*

Trevor Todd was born in England in 1947 and migrated to Australia in 1952. He lives in Perth, where he is a primary school teacher. His interests are music and writing; some of his poems have been published.



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