

The Legend of Savuri and the Rain Bull



There was drought upon the land. The clouds that carried the rain sailed high above, not seeming to notice the suffering of Africa. No fruits, no fodder and hardly anything to drink.

But then came a day that the rain sniffed at the scents of the earth and he sensed the enticing fragrance of a young woman, Savuri. He looked down on her. Savuri's skin looked like shining wet rock, her hair was as dark as dew-moist berries and the rain desired her. So the rain made himself in the shape of a bull, though he had the thoughts of a man. On the shaft of lightning, the great Rain Bull came down from the sky and he trod the earth like rippling thunder. He stood by the low hut where the young woman slept, and the place became misty with his breath like cloud heavy with moisture. The sweet smell of rain filled the hut and Savuri woke. She watched as the Rain Bull laid his ears back, lowered his lashing tail and bent his forelegs to kneel before her. She gathered up her kaross, made of the soft skins and covered herself with it, tying it around her body. Savuri could smell the Bull's sweat of desire.

The Rain Bull stamped his hoof and the earth rumbled with thunder. He wanted to take Savuri away, his eyes were dark and clouded. Somewhere, behind the bull's shape and the man's mind, she caught the sweet smell of rain - and Savuri knew that any hope of rain must be welcomed with love, she smiled and climbed up on his back. The Rain Bull trotted away and the sound of his hooves was like rain pattering on dry ground. Across the field he went with her, trotting, trotting, trotting towards the far distant mountains where the rain comes from. As the rain fell lightly on the thirsty earth, life-giving rain that filled up the empty waterholes, Savuri's people admired her. She had not angered the Rain Bull when he was a man, but she had given herself to him for the hope of rain.