



## THE SACRED STONE OF NAMUNCURA

Hidden in the depths of the Amazon rainforest, somewhere along today's border of Peru and Bolivia, there once lived an old tribe. The chieftain's family possessed a sacred stone that was said to have magical powers. Long ago, an ancient chieftain found it as a child in the waters of the river Bio-Bio. According to many legends, this stone was able to perform miracles and it was worshipped every year by the whole village because the tribesmen believed that during these ceremonies, it came to life. The stone was passed on from generation to generation, along with the responsibility of taking care of it.

One day, the responsibility fell into the hands of the chieftain's oldest son, Namuncura. He spent many years taking good care of the stone and showing it respect. But as the time passed, Namuncura was more and more convinced that the stone is nothing but an ordinary rock and it seemed pointless to show it any devotion. And so he said to his father: "The stone isn't any good. Everything has been revolving around it for years and yet it's nothing but a curse for our family. I won't take care of it anymore. I'll leave with my wife and child and we'll go somewhere far away, where the stone won't have any power over us." Namuncura and his family packed their things and set off to the mountains to find a new place to live. After a long journey, they reached the river Neuquen in Argentina. They were tired but happy, because they had faith in their new life

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away from the influence of the stone.

Two days after Namuncura and his family left, strange things started happening in their old house. The stone, kept in a sacred vessel inside a wooden box, started cracking and thudding. The chieftain and his wife were frightened because they had never seen the stone do anything like this. After a short while, the chieftain started feeling very ill. His heart was racing, his neck was swollen and before dawn, he passed away.

The next morning, the stone appeared in front of Namuncura's new house by the river Neugen. Namuncura was furious because he thought his father had sent him the stone to make him take care of it, but in the evening he received a message of his father's death. He got scared, as he was convinced the stone must have killed his father in its wrath and now it came to kill him and his family, too. He realised that he was the new chieftain now that his father was gone, and that he had to return to his village. He found his father's house in ruins, as if nobody lived there in decades. Namuncura started repairing it and out of fear began worshiping the stone again and tending to it every day. The rest of the village also returned to all the ceremonies devoted to the miraculous stone.

As the years went by, white men entered the Amazon rainforest. They heard the legend about the stone and wanted to see it with their own eyes. The new chieftain knew well about their taste for conquering and decided to hand the stone over to them willingly, even though he suspected the stone would be furious and defend itself. The white men knew the story of the stone well and had heard of its rage, so they brought an iron chest and locked the stone tightly inside before spending the night in Namuncura's house.

That night, a terrible thunderstorm struck, and the whole sky teemed with lightning. The earth shook and cracked. Something inside the iron chest thumped and thudded before the chest broke into tiny pieces. The stone was twice as big and red-hot, and skipping through the room as if it were about to explode. When the white people saw it, they fled in terror into the rainforest. Then the stone calmed down and Namuncura placed it back in the sacred vessel.

Ever since then, no white man came to the village and Namuncura became a great and respected chieftain. He was later the chief negotiator in the peace treaty between the native tribes and the white people because wherever he went, he carried his magical stone, of which the white men were so very afraid of.