

All this while, Lila had been making her way through the jungle towards the sacred volcano.

Mount Merapi lay far to the north, and she had never seen it until, late that afternoon, she came to a bend in the jungle path, and found herself beside the river.

The size of the great mountain made her gasp. It was far away on the very edge of the world, but even so it reached halfway up the sky, with the bare sides rising in a perfect cone to the glowing crater at the top. From time to time the fire-spirits who lived there rumbled angrily underground and threw boiling rocks high into the air. A plume of eternal smoke drifted from the summit to join the clouds.