

‘Rona and the moon’

The story of Rona and the moon has been retold many times, in each version the story is slightly different. In my interpretation of the story I tried to keep to the most common themes.

One bright moonlit night Rona was sent to fetch water for her family. It was a long walk from the Pa to the river and she did not want to go. Rona dutifully, although reluctantly set off down the winding path to the water’s edge complaining to herself all the way.

Once at the river Rona filled her gourd with the clear refreshing water. As she turned to head back to the Pa, Marama the moon slipped behind a cloud. Suddenly Rona was in complete darkness. Rona scrambled to get her bearings and, in her haste, to get back she tripped on a tree root, spilling the heavy contents of the gourd. In her anger Rona cursed at the moon “Wicked moon, not to come forth and shine.”

The conduct of Rona displeased the moon very much, and at once he came down and lifted her through the sky toward him.

Rona tried to resist by grabbing on to the branch of a Ngaio tree that stood by the river’s edge. However, the moons strength was too great. Marama broke the branch off the tree and seized Rona along with the snapped tree branch and her water gourd. Rona has resided in the moon ever since.

It is said that on some evenings you can still see Rona and her broken branch in the face of the moon. In another version it is thought that when Rona upsets her calabash, it rains. Once Rona had felt the shame of what she had done she grew to love her place in the sky with Marama and was given the honour as a daughter of Tangaroa, to be the controller of the tides.