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Rita Joe Tells the Legend of Mud-Lane Once upon a time many moons in the past, there lived a King in a foreign country, with three daughters who loved him very much. Their way of expressing love would always be, the first daughter would say "Father I love you, more than all of the money in the world," the second daughter would say "Father I love you more than all of the finest silk in the world," the youngest daughter would say "Father I love you, more than all of the pork and strawberries in the world," because truthfully that is what she loved to eat most in the world. The King must have been cruel and vain, because he did not like the way Mud-lane expressed herself. He wanted to be loved more than all of the finest riches in the world. He told the guards "Take that girl out of my sight and chop off her hands, hang her on a tree until she blows away like dust." There she hung tied on a tree waiting for death, her grieving heart unconsolable because of the cruelty of her father. When she could cry no more, she sang, her mournful cry heard only by animals and birds of the forest. I loved him more than words can say, I loved him, only my way, It was not enough, it was not enough. Oh my, oh my I say I am dead. A young prince from another country happened to be passing by riding on horseback. He heard the grieving song, so sad but beautiful. He searched the area until he found her, but when he tried to untie her she cried: I loved him more than words can say I loved him only my way. It was not enough, it was not enough. Oh my, oh my I say I want to die. He loosened the bonds, took her down gently and took her home to his queen mother in the castle, curing the stumps that were hands before. Mud-lane wanted to die, feeling useless without hands. The prince told her that she was the most beautiful person that he ever knew, her songs made him happy, her presence made the castle a happy home. The queen loved her like a daughter she never had. Mud-lane agreed to stay. Then the prince had to travel to another country, to do service for his queen mother. That is the time he realized that he did not like to be away from Mud-lane. The longer he stayed away the more love he felt for the girl with no hands. When he returned home, he asked Mud-lane to be his wife. The queen mother gave her blessing. Now Mud-lane knew much happiness, being loved by the prince and his mother. She sang the songs of happiness. I love him more than words can say I love him only my way, It is enough, it is enough. Oh my, oh my I say I am loved. Then the prince had to go away again to another country, and knowing that Mud-lane was expecting their first-born, his thoughts were of a happier future. The prince stayed in the foreign country longer than expected. The queen mother looked after Mud-lane. Then it was time for her to have the child. The birth turned out to be twin boys. That made the queen mother so happy that she sent a messenger to the prince, stating that Mud-lane and twin boys were well. The messenger rode far and fast trying to get the message to the prince, but he got tired nearing night, he stopped at an inn by the wayside hoping to rest and to go on. But they put a sleeping potion in his drink that put him into a deep slumber. The innkeeper found the message in his pocket, but instead of the happiness relayed in the messenger's message he changed it to say



that the twins were ugly and half .jooge-gi.j (snake) and the queen mother hated them. The prince received the message. He was sad but promised to love Mud-lane and the twins as well. The same thing happened again to the messenger at the inn on his way back, and the return message was full of hate. When Mud-lane read the message of hate, she took a few clothes and the twins and went deep into the wood, making a promise to her? self that no one would ever hurt her or her children again. She walked a great distance. Becoming thir? sty and looking for water, she came to a Si- boo (river). She put one child in one pocket and the other one in another pocket. Then stooping over she tried to drink. One twin

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