

# *The Tree with the Agate Beads*

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Philippine

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*Advanced*  
*2 min read*

More than a hundred seasons ago, a Tinguian went one day to the mountains to hunt. Accompanied by his faithful dog, he made his way steadily up the mountain side, only halting where it was necessary to cut a path through the jungle. And the dog ran here and there searching in the thick underbrush.

On and on he went without seeing any game, and then, when he was almost at the top of the highest peak, the dog gave a sharp yelp, and out of the brush leaped a fine deer. Zip! went the man's spear, and it pierced the animal's side. For an instant he waited, but the deer did not fall. On it ran with unslackened speed, and a moment later it plunged into a hole in the ground with the man and dog in close pursuit.

A short distance from the entrance the cave opened out into large, spacious rooms, and before he realized it the man was hopelessly lost. In the distance he could hear the baying of the dog, and with no other guide he hurried on through the darkness.

Following the sound, he went for a long time from one unfamiliar room to another, stumbling in the darkness and striking against the stone walls, and then suddenly his outstretched hands grasped a small tree on which berries grew.

Astonished at finding anything growing in this dark place, he broke off a branch, and as he did so the shrub began to talk in a strange language. Terrified, the man ran in the direction he had last heard the dog, and a moment later he found himself in the open air on the banks of the Abra River, with the dead deer at his feet.

When he examined the twig which he still held in his hand, he saw to his great surprise that the berries were agate beads of great value. And packing the deer on his back, he hastened home where he told his wonderful story.

The sight of the beautiful beads convinced the people that he told the truth, and a number of men at once returned with him to secure the tree.

Their quest, however, was unsuccessful, for ere they reached the spot the evil spirit had taken the tree away and on the walls of the cave it had made strange carvings which even to this day can be seen.

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