

# The Volcano

Rick Wakeman

Dumb with astonishment and amazement which bordered on stupefaction, they fled the forest. Instinctively, they made towards the Lidenbrook Sea. Discovering a rusty dagger on the beach, and the carved initials of the explorer before them on a slab of granite, they realised that they were once again treading the route of Arne Saknussemm. Following a short sea journey around a cape, they came ashore where a dark tunnel plunged deep into rock. Venturing down, their progress was halted by a piece of rock blocking their way. After deciding to blow their way through, and setting the charge, they put out to sea for safety. With the explosion, the rocks before them opened like a curtain, and a bottomless pit appeared in the shore. The explosion had caused an earthquake, the abyss had opened up, and the sea was pouring in to it. Down and down they plunged into the huge gallery, but on regaining their senses found their raft rising at tremendous speed. Trapped in the shaft of an active volcano they rose through the ages of man to be finally expelled out on a mountain-side riddled with tiny lava streams. Their journey was completed and they found themselves 3000 miles from their original starting point in Iceland. They had entered by one volcano and they had come out by another. With the blue mountains of Calabria in the east they walked away from the mountain that had returned them. The frightening Mount Etna.