



**SOME MYTHS AND  
LEGENDS OF THE  
AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINES**

**W. J. THOMAS**

Global Grey ebooks

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OF THE AUSTRALIAN  
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**BY  
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1923

Some Myths And Legends Of The Australian Aborigines By W. J. Thomas.

This edition was created and published by Global Grey

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## WHY THE CROW IS BLACK

One day, a crow and a hawk hunted together in the bush. After travelling together for some time, they decided to hunt in opposite directions, and, at the close of the day, to share whatever game they had caught. The crow travelled against the sun, and at noonday arrived at a broad lagoon which was the haunt of the wild ducks. The crow hid in the tall green reeds fringing the lagoon, and prepared to trap the ducks. First, he got some white clay, and, having softened it with water, placed two pieces in his nostrils. He then took a long piece of hollow reed through which he could breathe under water, and finally tied a net bag around his waist in which to place the ducks.

On the still surface of the lagoon, the tall gum trees were reflected like a miniature forest. The ducks, with their bronze plumage glistening in the sun, were swimming among the clumps of reeds, and only paused to dive for a tasty morsel hidden deep in the water weeds. The crow placed the reed in his mouth, and, without making any sound, waded into the water. He quickly submerged himself, and the only indication of his presence in the lagoon, was a piece of dry reed which projected above the surface of the water, and through which the crow was breathing. When he reached the centre of the water hole he remained perfectly still. He did not have to wait long for the ducks to swim above his head. Then, without making any sound or movement, he seized one by the leg, quickly pulled it beneath the water, killed it, and placed it in the net bag. By doing this, he did not frighten the other ducks, and, in a short time he had trapped a number of them. He then left the lagoon and continued on his way until he came to a river.

The crow was so pleased with his success at the waterhole, that he determined to spear some fish before he returned to his camp. He left the bag of ducks on the bank of the river, and, taking his fish spear, he waded into the river until the water reached his waist. Then he stood very still, with the spear poised for throwing. A short distance from the spot where he was standing, a slight ripple disturbed the calm surface of the water. With the keen eye of the hunter, he saw the presence of fish, and, with a swift

movement of his arm, he hurled the spear, and his unerring aim was rewarded with a big fish. The water was soon agitated by many fish, and the crow took advantage of this to spear many more. With this heavy load of game, he turned his face towards home.

The hawk was very unfortunate in his hunting. He stalked a kangaroo many miles, and then lost sight of it in the thickly wooded hills. He then decided to try the river for some fish, but the crow had made the water muddy and frightened the fish, so again he was unsuccessful. At last the hawk decided to return to his gunyah with the hope that the crow would secure some food, which they had previously agreed to share. When the hawk arrived, he found that the crow had been there before him and had prepared and eaten his evening meal. He at once noticed that the crow had failed to leave a share for him. This annoyed the hawk, so he approached the crow and said: "I see you have had a good hunt to-day. I walked many miles but could not catch even a lizard. I am tired and would be glad to have my share of food, as we agreed this morning." "You are too lazy," the crow replied. "You must have slept in the sun instead of hunting for food. Anyhow, I've eaten mine and cannot give you any." This made the hawk very angry, and he attacked the crow. For a long time they struggled around the dying embers of the camp fire, until the hawk seized the crow and rolled him in the black ashes. When the crow recovered from the fight, he found that he could not wash the ashes off, and, since that time, crows have always been black. The crow was also punished for hiding the food which he could not eat by being condemned to live on putrid flesh.

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## WHY FLYING FOXES HANG FROM TREES

A Legend of the Striped-Tail Lizard.

The Flying Fox and the Striped-tail Lizard were friends. They lived in the same gunyah and hunted together. One day the lizard said: "I will visit a tribe of blacks with whom I am very friendly, and bring back a bundle of spears." The fox was very doubtful about the truth of the lizard's remarks, and said: "I would not like to wait for food until you get the spears." This annoyed the lizard, and, without replying, he set out on his journey. He wandered through the bush all day, but failed to find the blacks. He then followed the winding river for many miles, but without success. Towards nightfall, a storm swept down from the mountains; the wind howled eerily through the swaying trees, and the rain fell in torrents. The lizard was in a sorry plight. Weary and wet, he wandered through the bush and at last arrived at his gunyah. The door was closed, and, when he asked the fox to open it, the fox asked a question. "Have you any spears with you?" he called. Now the lizard knew that if the fox was aware of his unsuccessful journey, he would make great fun of it, so he replied: "I have a big bundle of spears. I met my friends at the in the land that lies beyond the sunset. Many dangers are there, O my brother. The evil spirits sing soft and low through the trees, like the voice of a maiden calling to her lover, and he who follows the sound of the voices goes on for ever, and never returns. The great Black Bat waits for you in the forest. You are weary with your long journey. Stay with us and rest you awhile; then you can return to your tribe."

Yoonecara was very pleased with the friendly reception he received, but he could not be dissuaded from his journey, and, after bidding them farewell, he continued on his way. Through the trees he could hear the voices of the Dheeyabry people calling to him to return, but he would not heed them. As he journeyed on, the voices grew fainter and fainter until they were lost in the great silence.

After leaving the Dheeyabry, Yoonecara travelled many days and arrived at a place where the March flies and mosquitoes were larger and more

numerous than any he had seen before. The buzzing of the mosquitoes was like the sound of the bullroarer. They attacked him savagely, and, try as he would, he could not escape them. When he attempted to sleep, they settled on him in swarms and tormented him with their stings. In desperation, Yoonecara sat by a waterhole and built a fire. Then he considered his dangerous position. "If I cannot protect myself from these insects," he reflected, "my bones will soon be gleaming white in the sun. I have travelled far, but the journey is beyond the strength of man. I will return to my tribe." These were the thoughts passing through his mind. He then considered ways and means whereby he could protect himself against the mosquitoes, and at last discovered an excellent plan. He stripped a sheet of bark from a tree. It was as long as himself and of sufficient width to enclose his body. After tying bushes around his ankles and head, he doubled the bark around his body. With this protection, he journeyed through the Land of the Giant Mosquitoes. And, when he had no further use for his covering of bark he placed it in a waterhole in order to keep it soft, that he might use it on his return journey. After he had braved this danger, his courage returned, and he travelled on.

For some time, his journey was without adventure, but one day he came to the edge of a great boggy marsh known as Kolliworoogla. At the sight of this marsh, he thought further progress was impossible. After carefully examining the edge of the swamp, he discovered what appeared to be the trunk of a fallen tree that lay across it. He ventured along this dangerous bridge and safely reached the far side of the swamp. He then came to a place where there was a very high rock, which was hollowed out on one side like a cave. On approaching it, he found that it was a cave, and in it he could see his ancestor Byama, asleep. At last, Yoonecara had reached his long journey's end. Byama was a man of giant proportions-much bigger than the blackfellows of the present time. At the front of the cave, one of Byama's daughters, Byallaburragan, was sitting at a fire roasting a carpet snake. She offered a portion to the traveller, and said: "Long and weary has been your journey, O faithful one, and many the dangers that crossed your path. Like the light of the sun was the fire of your courage, and this shall be your reward. Your name shall be passed through the ages on the tongues of our

people. You shall be honored as the only man who travelled to the home of Byama, and returned; for no man shall ever do the like again."

Around Byama's dwelling the country was very beautiful, and was a dream of delight to the weary traveller. The tall, green trees leaned towards the cave, and their leafy branches gave cool shade on the hottest day, while the song of the birds at sunset was like a mother crooning her baby to sleep. The grass grew high on the plains, and, when the wind blew, it billowed like the waves of the sea. In front of the cave, a stream of water, clear as crystal, ran its course to a deep lagoon. The water of the lagoon teemed with fish, and in the reeds, there were many ducks, swans, and other water-fowl.

After he had rested for some time in this pleasant land, Yoonecara returned to his own tribe and related his wonderful experiences. Soon after his return he died, and, since that time, no man has travelled to the Land of the Setting Sun.

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## WHY BLACKFELLOWS NEVER TRAVEL ALONE

### A Legend of the Wallaroo and Willy-Wagtail

Alone, on a rocky ridge high in the mountains, a wallaroo made his camping-ground beneath the shady boughs of a mountain ash. He was very old and infirm, and too weak to hunt for food, so he sat by his camp fire all the day and lashed the ground with his strong tail. The low, rhythmic thud-thud-thud of its beating could be heard above the song of the birds. One day a paddymelon was passing close by the camp when he heard the beating of the wallaroo's tail. After following the direction of the sound, he came to the camp, and asked the wallaroo if he was in trouble. "I am very sick," the wallaroo replied. "Many times have I seen the snow on the mountains, and I am growing too old to hunt. My brothers have gone to the river beyond the hills to spear fish for me, but they have not returned, and I am very hungry." The paddymelon was sorry for the old wallaroo, and offered to go to the river in search of the fishermen. He walked a short distance from the camp when the wallaroo, called after him: "You had better take my boomerang with you, as you may meet some game on your way." The paddymelon turned around and said: "All right, I shall take it. Throw it to me!" The crafty wallaroo picked up the boomerang, and, taking careful aim, threw it with all his strength. It struck the unfortunate paddymelon a terrible blow and killed him. The wallaroo took the fur from the dead animal and prepared the body for cooking. He dug a hole in the ground, lined it with stones, placed the meat in it, and covered it with flat stones. He then built a fire over it, and in a short time had cooked a tasty meal.

When the paddymelon did not return home, his relatives became very anxious about him. At last an iguana offered to go in search of the missing member of the tribe. He followed the tracks of the paddymelon through the bush, and they led to the camp of the wallaroo. When the iguana approached the camp the wallaroo was beating his tail on the ground. The iguana asked him if he needed any assistance, and, in a plaintive voice, the wallaroo told him the same tale that had been told to the unlucky

paddymelon. The iguana was sorry for the old wallaroo, and offered to seek his relatives for him and tell them of his plight. When he turned to go, the wallaroo asked him if he would take a spear with him in case he met with any game on his way. The iguana said, "I will take it; throw it to me." The wallaroo had been waiting for this opportunity, and he hurled the spear so swiftly that it transfixed the iguana before he could jump aside. The wallaroo then prepared another meal as before.

One day passed, and yet another, but the iguana did not return to the hunting ground of his tribe. They sent a bandicoot in search of the iguana, but he met the same fate at the hands of the wallaroo. After waiting anxiously for the return of the bandicoot, the head-men of the tribe called a great council. When all the members were assembled together a headman said: "Many moons ago our brother the paddymelon left the camp before the sun was over the hills, and when night came he did not return, and his shadow has not darkened the ground for many days. The iguana went in search of him. He is a great hunter, but he has not returned. Yesterday the bandicoot followed in their tracks, but I fear the shadow of death has fallen over them. We must find them." Many suggestions were placed before the council, but none of them seemed practical. Then the willy-wagtail, who was a clever medicine man, spoke: "Long have we waited for the return of our brothers, and yet we do not hear their call. I shall follow their footsteps even to the shadowy hunting ground of death, but I shall return to you." The council consented to the willy-wagtail's proposal, but they were afraid that he would walk to the Land of Silence and never return.

Before dawn the willy-wagtail started on his dangerous and lonely journey. When he reached the summit of the mountain, he could see, far in the distance, the grey smoke of the camp fires wreathing slowly above the trees. With a sad but brave heart he continued his journey. After travelling for some time he heard the sound of the wallaroo beating his tail on the ground. At first he thought it was a wallaroo hopping through the bush, but, as the sound did not grow louder or fainter, he became suspicious, and approached the camp very cautiously. The wallaroo saw him approaching, and, calling to him, told him the same story as before. The willy-wagtail offered to seek his relatives for him, and, with this intention, started on his



way. When he had gone a short distance the wallaroo offered him a boomerang. The willy-wagtail was very suspicious about his intention, and said: "Throw it to me; it will save me the trouble of walking back to the tree."

The wallaroo then threw the weapon with all his strength, but the willy-wagtail was prepared, and, as soon as the boomerang left the hand of the thrower, he jumped quickly aside. When the wallaroo saw he had missed his mark, and that his evil intentions were known to the willy-wagtail, he became furious, and threw all his spears and nullanullas at him, but failed to strike him. Then the willy-wagtail took the boomerang and threw it at the old wallaroo. It struck him a heavy blow on the chest and killed him. He then skinned him, and prepared to cook his flesh, but he was too old and tough to eat. He now took the skin and returned to the camp. When he told the tribe of the fate of their brothers they were sorely grieved, but their grief was turned to joy when the willy-wagtail showed them the skin of their enemy. The wagtail was rewarded by being made a headman of the tribe.

The headmen now decided that blackfellows should never travel alone. As a mark of remembrance, wallaroos have always had a strip of white fur on their breasts. It is an indication of the boomerang wound that killed the old wallaroo of Mountain Ridge.

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## HOW THE KANGAROO GOT A LONG TAIL, AND THE WOMBAT A FLAT FOREHEAD

Many years ago, Mirram the kangaroo and Warreen the wombat were both men. They were very friendly, and hunted and lived together in the same camping-ground. Warreen had a very comfortable gunyah made of bark and soft leaves, but Mirram who was a careless fellow-did not trouble to build a home. He was content to sleep in the open, by the side of a big fire, with the blue sky for a cover, and the green grass for a couch. This open air life was very nice in fine weather, when the stars twinkled in the sky like golden fire-flies, but it was extremely uncomfortable in the rainy season.

One night a great storm arose. The wind howled eerily, and rocked the tall trees to and fro as though they were shaken by the strong arms of an invisible giant. The rain fell in torrents, and darkness covered the light of the stars. The rain quickly quenched the glowing embers of Mirram's fire, and he was left to the mercy of the storm. After shivering in the cold for some time, he decided to seek the hospitality of Warreen. "Surely my friend would not refuse me shelter on such a night as this," he thought. "I will ask him."

Feeling very cold and miserable, he crept to the opening of Warreen's tent, and seeing there was sufficient space for both of them to sleep comfortably, he woke him and said: "The storm has killed my fire. I am very wet, and the cold wind has chilled me to the bone. May I sleep in the corner of your tent?" Warreen blinked his eyes sleepily and answered in a gruff voice: "No. I want to place my head in that corner. There isn't any room." With this rude remark he moved into the corner, but, as he could not occupy the whole space of the tent, another corner became vacant. Mirram went away and sat by the wet ashes of his fire, and his thoughts were as miserable as the weather. The fury of the storm increased, and looking anxiously at the rainproof gunyah of his friend, he decided to approach Warreen again. He entered the shelter, and, touching Warreen gently on the shoulder, said: "The wind is very cold, and as biting as the teeth of the wild dog. The rain is falling heavily and will not cease. I should be grateful if you would allow me

to sleep in that corner. I will not disturb you." Warreen raised his head, listened to the moaning of the storm outside, and then replied: "I will not have you here; there isn't any room. Go outside and do not keep waking me." "But," replied Mirram, "there is room in that corner. Surely you wouldn't drive me out into the storm to die!"

Thereupon, Warreen moved one leg into the corner and again a space became vacant. Seeing he could no longer hoodwink Mirram and hide from him his selfish intentions, he grew very angry and yelled: "Get out! Get out! I won't have you in my tent. I don't care where you die." This harsh treatment exasperated Mirram and he left the tent in a terrible rage. Outside the tent, he groped around in the dark until he found a large flat stone.

Then he crept silently to the gunyah. By the sound of heavy breathing he knew Warreen was asleep. Moving very silently, he entered the tent, and, raising the stone high in his arms, dashed it on the head of the sleeper. The terrible blow did not kill Warreen but flattened his forehead.

When he had recovered from his pained surprise, he heard the mocking voice of Mirram saying:

"That is your reward for treating a friend so cruelly. You and your children and their children's children will wander through the land with flat foreheads that men may know them for your selfishness."

As Warreen was no match for his opponent, he did not answer, but nursed his sore head and some very bad thoughts. From that moment, he was always planning revenge for his injury.

Some time later, Warreen was hunting in the forest, and, through the shadow of the trees, he saw Mirram a short distance ahead. He crept noiselessly towards him, and, when Mirram was looking for the marks of a possum on the bark of a tree, he threw a spear at him with all his strength.

The spear struck Mirram at the bottom of the back, and so deeply did it enter that he could not pull it out.

While he was struggling with the spear, Warreen walked up to him, and, in a bantering voice, said: "Aha! My turn has come at last. I have waited long to

repay you. You will always carry the spear in your back and wander without a home while you live. Your children will carry the spear and be homeless for ever. By these tokens, men will always remember your attempt to kill me while I slept."

From that time the kangaroo has had a long tail, which makes a low, thudding sound as he wanders homeless through the bush, and the wombat still has a very flat forehead as an everlasting sign of selfishness.

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## WHY THE EMU HAS SHORT WINGS AND THE NATIVE COMPANION A HARSH VOICE

An emu with very long wings once made her home in the sky. One day she looked over the edge of the clouds, and down on the earth she saw a great gathering of birds dancing by a reed-grown lagoon. High in a gumtree the bell birds were making sweet music with their silvery chimes; the kookaburra, perched on the limb of a dead tree, was chuckling pleasantly to himself; while the native companion danced gracefully on the grass nearby.

The emu was very interested in dancing, so she flew down from her home beyond the clouds, and asked the birds if they would teach her to dance. A cunning old native companion replied: "We shall be very pleased to teach you our dances, but you could never learn with such long wings. If you like, we will clip them for you." The emu did not give much thought to the fact that short wings would never carry her home again. So great was her vanity that she allowed her wings to be clipped very short. When she had done so, the native companions immediately spread their long wings-which they had previously concealed by folding them close against their backs-and flew away, leaving the emu lonely and wiser than before. She never returned to her home in the sky, because her wings would not grow again. They have remained short and useless ever since. This is the reason why emus run very fast, but never fly.

After wandering alone for a long time the emu reconciled herself to a home on the earth, and reared a large family. One day she was walking through the bush when the native companion-who also had a large family-saw her in the distance. The native companion immediately hid all her chicks in the undergrowth, except one; then she approached the emu in a friendly manner, and said: "What a very weary life you must have feeding such a large family. You are looking very ill, and I am sure you will die. I have only one chick. Take my advice and kill your chicks before they kill you." The foolish emu again listened to the soft words of the other bird, and destroyed all her chicks.

Thereupon the native companion called in a low, sweet voice, "Geralka Beralka, Geralka Beralka," and all her fluffy little chicks came running to her from the bushes in which she had hidden them. The emu was frantic with grief when she realised what she had done; but once again she paid the price of vanity and idle flattery with a sad and lonely heart. The native companion was so eager to call her chicks after the cruel trick she had played on the emu that she twisted her neck, and lost her beautiful voice for ever. And now she can call with only two harsh, discordant sounds.

The seasons passed, and once again the emu had a big clutch of eggs. One day the native companion paid her a visit and pretended to be friendly, but the sight of her old enemy made the emu very angry. The emu made a savage rush at her, but the native companion hopped over her back and broke all the eggs except one. After dancing around for a little while, the native companion made a determined rush, and, seizing the remaining egg, threw it up into the sky.

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## HOW THE SUN WAS MADE

Dawn, Noontide and Night.

When the emu egg was hurled up to the sky it struck a great pile of wood which had been gathered by a cloud man named Ngoudenout. It hit the wood with such force that the pile instantly burst into flame, and flooded the earth with the soft, warm light of dawn. The flowers were so surprised that they lifted their sleepy heads to the sky, and opened their petals so wide that the glistening dewdrops which night had given them fell to the ground and were lost.

The little birds twittered excitedly on the trees, and the fairies, who kept the snow on the mountain tops, forgot their task, and allowed it to thaw and run into the rivers and creeks. And what was the cause of this excitement?

Away to the east, far over the mountains, the purple shadows of night were turning grey; the soft, pink-tinted clouds floated slowly across the sky like red-breasted birds winging their way to a far land. Along the dim sky-line a path of golden fire marked the parting of the grey shadows, and down in the valley the white mist was hiding the pale face of night.

Like a sleeper stirring softly at the warm touch of a kiss, all living things of the bush stirred at the caress of dawn.

The sun rose with golden splendor in a clear blue sky, and, with its coming, the first day dawned.

At first the wood pile burned slowly, but the heat increased, until at noonday it was thoroughly ablaze.

But gradually it burnt lower and lower, until at twilight only a heap of glowing embers remained. These embers slowly turned cold and grey. The purple shadows and white mists came from their hiding-places, and once again the mantle of night was over the land.

When Ngoudenout saw what a splendid thing the sun was, he determined to give it to us for ever. At night, when the fire of the sun has burnt out, he goes to a dark forest in the sky and collects a great pile, of wood. At dawn he lights it, and it burns feebly until noonday is reached, then it slowly burns away until twilight and night falls. Ngoudenout, the eternal wood gatherer, then makes his lonely way to the forest for the wood that lights the fire of the sun.

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## THUGINE, THE RAINBOW AND THE WANDERING BOYS

Far to the west in the deep blue sea there dwells a great serpent named Thugine. His scales are of many shimmering colors. When a rainbow appears in the sky, it is Thugine curving his back and the sun reflecting the colors of his scales.

Many years ago, a tribe of blacks camped close to a sea beach. One morning they all went out to fish and hunt, with the exception of two boys, whom the old men left in charge of the camp. Wander not into the forest lest the wild dogs eat you, or to the beach, where Thugine the serpent is -waiting for children who wander alone." This was the parting advice of the old men to the boys.

When the men had departed, the boys played about the camp for a while, but they soon grew tired of their games. The day was very hot, and in the distance the boys could hear the dull, deep booming of the surf. Both the boys were longing to go to the beach, but were afraid to speak their desire. At last the elder boy spoke, and said: "The fires of the sun are burning bright to-day, but on the breeze I can feel the cool breath of the sea. Let us go to the beach, and we shall return before the shadow of night has fallen. The men will not know." The other boy hesitated and was afraid, but at last he yielded, and together they wandered hand in hand through the bush.

After walking for some time they came to an opening in the trees, and, before their expectant gaze, a wonderful scene unfolded. A golden beach stretched far away until it was lost to view in the dim distance. The cool waves rolled lazily in great green billows from the outer reef, and dashed in a haze of sparkling white foam on the hot sands of the palm-fringed beach. The song of the sea rose in a deep, loud booming, and gradually died away to a low, soft murmuring. The boys were lost in wonder at the beauty of the scene. Never had they seen such an expanse of water sparkling in the sun like the blue sky. Over its rippled surface the shadows ,of the clouds floated like sails across the sun.

Thugine, the serpent, had seen the boys coming from afar, and, while they played on the beach, he swam swiftly and silently to the shore and seized them. When the men arrived at the camp, they discovered the absence of the boys. They searched the bush all through the -night, and at dawn came to the beach. Far from the shore they saw two, black rocks jutting out of the sea. Then they knew that Thugine had taken the wandering boys and turned them into rocks. The men turned their faces again towards the camp; their hearts were heavy and their thoughts were sad.

To this day the rocks remain between Double Island Point and Inship Point, When a rainbow appears in the sky, the old men of the tribe tell the story of the disobedience and punishment of the wandering boys.

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## MIRRAGAN, THE FISHERMAN

A Tale of the Wollandilly River, Whambeyan and Jenolan Caves.

NOTE.--The Jenolan are wonderful subterranean caves of limestone formation, situated in the Blue Mountains, New South Wales. They are set in the midst of wild and rugged mountain scenery, where rivers wind away like silver ribbons to the distant sea, and the mountain kings are crowned with snow. In these deep, mysterious caves of crystalline wonder Nature has surpassed herself in artistry.

Ages ago, in the dream-time, many of the animals now on earth were men. They were much bigger than the blackfellows of the present time, and were possessed of wonderful magic power, which allowed them to move mountains, make rivers, and perform many other feats of extraordinary strength and daring. At this time, Gurangatch lived in a very deep waterhole at the junction of what we now know as the Wollondilly and Wingecaribee Rivers, in New South Wales. Gurangatch was half fish and half reptile, with shimmering scales of green, purple and gold. His eyes shone like two bright stars through the clear green water of his camping ground. At mid-day, when the sun was high, he basked in the shallow water of the lagoon, and at nightfall retired to the dark depths of the pool.

Mirrigan, the tiger-cat, was a famous fisherman. He would never trouble to trap or spear small fish, but would wait for the largest and most dangerous. One day he was passing by the waterhole, when he caught a glimpse of the gleaming eyes of Gurangatch. Instantly he threw a spear at him, but Gurangatch swam to the bottom of the waterhole, which was very deep. Mirrigan sat on the bank for some time, and wondered how he could catch such a splendid fish. At last he hit upon a plan. He went into the bush and cut a lot of bark, carried it to the waterhole, and placed it under the water at several positions around the bank. He intended to poison the water with the bark, and thus cause Gurangatch to rise to the surface. The water made Gurangatch very sick, but it was not sufficiently poisonous to cause him to rise to the surface. After waiting for a considerable time, Mirrigan realised

that his plan had failed. He was sorely disappointed, but again went in search of more bark.

When Gurangatch saw his enemy depart, he suspected some other trick. In order to escape, he commenced to tear up the ground for many miles, and the water of the lagoon flowed after him. In this manner he formed the present valley of the Wollondilly River. He then burrowed underground for several miles, and came out on the side of the valley by a high rocky ridge, which is now known as the Rocky Waterhole. When Gurangatch reached this lagoon, he raised his head and put out his tongue, which flashed like summer lightning across a stormy sky. From this vantage place he saw Mirragan following swiftly in his trail. Gurangatch then returned along his burrow to the Wollondilly, and continued to make a channel for himself. When he arrived at the junction of the Guineacor River, he turned to the left and continued its course for a few miles. At last he arrived at a very rocky place, which was hard to burrow through. He therefore turned on his track and continued his former course, which is the long bend in the Wollondilly at this point. He then made Jock's Creek-which flows into the Wollondilly-and, on reaching its source, he again burrowed deep beneath the mountain ranges, and came up inside the Whambeyan Caves.

Let us now return to the adventures of Mirragan. When he arrived at the waterhole with the second load of bark, he saw that Gurangatch had escaped. He then following him many miles down the river, until he overtook him at the Whambeyan Caves. Mirragan was afraid to follow Gurangatch along the dark underground passages of the caves. He now climbed on top of the rocks and dug a very deep hole, and then poked a pole down as far as it would reach in order to frighten Gurangatch out of his safe retreat. However, he did not succeed with the first, hole, and so he made many of them. These holes still remain on the top of Whambeyan Caves.

One morning, at daybreak, Gurangatch escaped through his tunnel to the Wollondilly again. Now, Mirragan's family lived a few miles down the river and, when they saw Gurangatch coming, with the water roaring and seething after him like a great river in flood, they were terrified, and ran up the side of the mountain for safety. At this time Mirragan appeared on the

scene of trouble, and his wife upbraided him for disturbing Gurangatch, and begged him to leave his enemy in peace. Mirragan listened very patiently, but would not be dissuaded. He again took up the relentless chase, and overtook Gurangatch at a place called Slippery Rock. Here they fought a desperate fight, until they made the rock quite smooth with their struggles—hence its name. After fighting for some time, Gurangatch escaped and continued his course. The water flowed after him in a roaring torrent. Mirragan followed, and, every time he overtook his enemy, he struck him with a heavy club, while Gurangatch retaliated by striking him with his tail.

This battle continued down the course of Cox's River to the junction of Katoomba Creek. He then doubled on his course, and again travelled up the Cox. Mirragan was close on his trail, and, in order to escape, he again burrowed underground, and came out on Mouin Mountain. Here he made a very deep waterhole, which, even to the present day, is a danger to cattle, on account of its depth. After much travelling he at last arrived at Jenolan Caves, where he met many of his relations. Gurangatch was tired and weary from his long journey, and very sore from the blows he had received. Turning to his relations, he said: "I am weary and very sore; many days have I travelled, and many nights have I watched the moon rise over the mountains and again sink beneath the earth. My enemy continues to hunt me, and will surely kill me. Take me, O my brothers, to a dark, deep waterhole that lies beyond the mountains, and I will rest." They then took him from the eaves to a waterhole beyond the mountain ranges.

Mirragan was very tired when he arrived at Binnoomur, so he rested himself on a hill. When he had regained his strength, he searched about the caves and saw the tracks of Gurangatch and his relations, and the direction they had taken to the waterhole. Being very tired, he decided that the best thing to do was to seek his own friends and ask their help. Mirragan then travelled far to the west, where the camping ground of his friends was set. On reaching their camp he found them eating roasted eels. They offered him a portion, but he said: "I do not want such little things. I have been hunting a great fish for many days and nights. His eyes shine like stars when the night is cold, and his body shimmers like the noonday sun. His friends have taken him over the mountains to the Joolundoo waterhole. Will you send the best











cockatoo, you will remember how fire was stolen from him. He still has a beautiful red crest, and is known as Leadbeater's cockatoo. The robin redbreast also retains his scorched feathers in remembrance of his great feat.

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## WHY THE FISH-HAWK WAS DRIVEN TO THE SEA

One day a Fish-hawk decided to catch some fish in a waterhole close to his camping ground. He gathered some bitter bark in the bush and placed it in the water. He knew that the bitter taste of the water would make the fish sick, and they would float to the surface and be easily speared. Having arranged the layers of bark in the water, he went to sleep beneath the shade of a tree for a little while. But a pheasant happened to be passing that way, and noticed the fish floating in the water. He therefore quickly took the opportunity of spearing them.

When the hawk returned, he met the pheasant carrying a string of fish tied to a bundle of spears. "Those are nice fish you have," remarked the hawk. "Where did you catch them?"

"They were floating in the waterhole, and I speared them," replied the pheasant.

The hawk claimed the fish as his property, but the pheasant only laughed at him and said: "You did not poison the fish. When I passed you were asleep in the shade of a tree. You cannot sleep and catch fish at the same time."

The hawk was very annoyed, and determined to be revenged for the mean trick played on him. One day he watched the pheasant place his spears on the bank of a river while he set some fish traps. The hawk crept along cautiously, and, stealing the spears, hid them in the branches of a tall tree. When the pheasant returned, he discovered his loss, and began to search for the missing spears. He saw the tracks of the hawk in the sand, and, following them, came to the tree in which the spears were hidden. The marks on the trunk of the tree made by the axe used in climbing directed him to the branch, and there he recovered his lost spears.

The hawk did not think of waiting to see the pheasant return, but went to his camp in high glee at the thought of the trick he had served the pheasant. Some time later the pheasant passed his camp with a string of big fish tied to a bundle of spears. The hawk was surprised at the sight of the spears, but

determined to follow the pheasant and steal them again. When the pheasant reached his camp, he lit a fire and prepared his evening meal. After he had eaten it, he nodded drowsily by the fire, and in a short time was asleep. The hawk crept from his hiding-place, and again stole the bundle of spears. He then searched until he found a very tall tree, and, climbing it, placed the spears in the fork of the highest branch. When the pheasant awoke, he discovered the loss of his spears, but it was not long before he found traces of the hawk in the bush close to the camp. He followed the tracks for a long distance through the bush, but lost them in the thick undergrowth. After searching long into the night, he at last found the tree in which they were hidden, but he was too lazy to climb for them. He then travelled over the mountains until he reached the source of the river that flowed into the waterhole in which the hawk fished. The pheasant was possessed of magical powers, so he caused a flood at the head of the river that swept down the mountain side, and drove all the fish and the fish-hawk into the sea. Since that time the fish-hawk has been forced to live along the coast, and eat no other food but fish.

The pheasant returned to his camp when he had settled with his enemy, but he had no spears. He again set out to find the tree in which they were hidden. The flood had swept away all traces of the hawk's tracks, and his search was fruitless. He travelled again to the mountains in search of a tall tree with foot holes cut in the bark. He found a number of trees with such marks, and was forced to climb all of them in search of the missing spears. His efforts were, however, unrewarded. The pheasant never found his bundle of spears. In the bush you will see him flying from branch to branch in the tall trees. He is still searching for the stolen spears.

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## HOW THE NATIVE BEAR LOST HIS TAIL

The native bear and the whip-tail kangaroo were very friendly. They shared the same gunyah, and hunted together, and were very proud of their long tails. At this time a drought was over the land. Water was very scarce, and the two friends had camped by a shallow waterhole which contained some stagnant water. It was very nauseating to have to drink such water after the clear springs of the mountains. Nevertheless, it saved them from dying of thirst. At sunset banks of dark clouds would float low across the sky, and give promise of heavy rain, but at sunrise the sky would be as bright and clear as before, At last even the supply of stagnant water was exhausted, and the two friends were in a desperate plight.

After some time the kangaroo spoke and said: "When my mother carried me in her pouch I remember such a drought as this. The birds fell from the trees, the animals died fighting around dry waterholes, and the trees withered and died. My mother travelled far with me, over the mountains and down by the river bed, but she travelled slowly, as hunger and thirst had made her very weak, and I was heavy to carry. Then another kangaroo spoke to her and said: 'Why do you carry such a heavy burden? You will surely die. Throw him into the bush and come with me, for I will travel fast and take you to water.' My mother would not leave me to die, but struggled on, and the other kangaroo left her to die from thirst. Wearied by her heavy burden, she struggled on until she again came to a sandy river bed. She now dug a deep hole in the sand, which slowly filled with cool, clear water. We camped by this waterhole until the rain came. I shall go to the river and see if I can dig and find water, for if we stay here we shall surely perish from thirst."

The native bear was delighted at the suggestion, and said: "Yes! Let us both go down to the river bed. I have very strong arms, and will help you." They made their way to the river, but, before reaching it, stumbled across some of their friends who had died of thirst. This made them very serious and determined. When they reached the river, the sun was very hot and they were very tired. The native bear suggested that the kangaroo should start

digging, as he knew most about it. The kangaroo went to work with a will, and dug a deep hole, but no signs of water were visible. The kangaroo was exhausted with his work, and asked the native bear to help him. The native bear was very cunning, and said: "I would willingly help you, but I am feeling very ill; the sun is very hot, and I am afraid I am going to die." The kangaroo was very sorry for his friend, and set to work again without complaining.

At last his work was rewarded. A trickle of water appeared in the bottom of the hole, and gradually increased until it filled it to overflowing. The kangaroo went over to his friend, and, touching him gently on the shoulder, said: "I have discovered water, and will bring some to you." But the native bear was only shamming, and dashed straight to the waterhole without even replying to the surprised kangaroo. When the native bear bent down to drink the water his tail stuck out like a dry stick. The kangaroo, who could now see the despicable cunning of his friend, was very angry, and, seizing his boomerang, cut off the tail of the drinker as it projected above the waterhole. To this day the native bear has no tail as an evidence of his former laziness and cunning.

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