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WARRINGAN'S REVENGE

Warringan was a very jealous yogga and though her korda beat her and beat her with his dowuk and his kaili, she still wished to keep him for herself, so whenever she saw him pay attention to other women, she invariably fell upon them and half killed them with her wanna. As she was his only wife, Joocerung was desirous of obtaining some more, and to that end he hunted assiduously and brought much game to the camp, most of which he sent to his mother's brothers possessing daughters of marriageable age who had been allotted to men who had either died or had sufficient wives of their own and therefore delayed to accept new responsibilities. Joocerung finally fell deeply in love with a big young widow and by paving the way with her father and mother with many presents of game food, and also by placating her husband's brothers, the eldest of whom would be entitled to her when the days of her widowhood were over, by gifts of kaili, hairbelts and karrarr, Joocerung made the way easy for his ultimate courtship of Maialau.

Warringan watched the growing interest between Maialau and Joocerung, measured the former's big, strong proportions, knew of her strength in other fights and her command of her wanna as a hitting and a thrusting weapon, and decided that a wanna fight would give all the advantage to Maialau.

Now Maialau was goomal borungur, that is, she had the goomal (opossum) for her "elder brother" or totem, as we call it, and every jungar and yogga knows that there is a spiritual "family" connection between all jungar and their borungur, so that if a goomal, warr or yonggar be found dying or dead, the finder knows that a goomal borungur man or woman or a warr or yonggar will soon die. Warringan did not wait for anything of this kind to happen. She went out as usual hunting for vegetable root and fruit food, and each morning she hunted in hollow trees and logs, and watched for the scratchings of a goomal, for she was anxious to catch one alive and put it to death slowly by piercing its body with a pointed bone or stick and leaving the stick in the wound, carry the goomal in her goota until it died, so that she could listen and be glad

over its sufferings.

One lucky morning she found fresh scratchings in a hollow tree, and putting her ear to the trunk, she made a slight movement and listened for a sound that would tell her in what part of the hollow trunk the goomal had made its nest. The slight sound the goomal made inside the tree, as it raised its head to listen to the small movement Warringan had made, told her that it would be easy to reach it, and very soon she had the struggling goomal in her grasp. She had a strong beendee (wooden skewer or pin) ready for her purpose, and with this she pierced the goomal through the tongue and throat, taking care that it should not be an immediate death thrust, but that the goomal should linger and suffer, yet be unable to cry out, so that she could keep it in her goota till it died, for she wanted to hear it gasping and feel it moving with pain in her goota. As the goomal suffered, so would Maialau and as it died so would Maialau die also.

Warringan put the pierced goomal in her goota, which she filled with the vegetables and roots she had gathered, and returned to camp. She placed the goota in a bush near her camp, so that the goomal's laboured breathing should not be heard by Joocerung, for had he heard he would have known instantly what Warringan's revenge was to be, and he could have thwarted her design by getting a bulyaguttuk to render her measures impotent by placing magic kula between the wounded goomal and Maialau. Warringan carefully kept the goota and goomal hidden and took them out with her during her daily hunt. Sometimes she would sit in the shade of a thick bush and taking the starving goomal out, would gloat over it, and think how soon Maialau would be suffering in the same way.

One morning she heard a yogga say, "Maialau won't come out hunting today. Her throat is mindaitch (sick)." Warringan went off by herself and sat down again to look at the goomal which she had not seen since the previous evening, when it was still alive. When she caught hold of it, she knew that it was dead; all the fat had gone off its bones and the skin was sticking right against them.

Maialau was big and fat, and Warringan said to herself, "Now I will see her getting thinner and thinner every day, and she will die just the same as goomal." She put the dead goomal in a hollow first taking care to pull out the beendee, which she buried by sticking it into the ground.

Maialau's throat became very bad, but she did not sigh or moan, only she got leaner and leaner every day, for she could not eat even the soft warrain or still softer flesh of young birds and animals, which Joocerung feverishly hunted for and brought to her people. Day by day she lay in her maia, but no one thought of Warringan killing the borungur until one day the bulyaguttuk of the local group was called in, and he told Maialau's people she was bulya-ed. He then went away by himself to find where the bulya came from, and seeing Warringan's tracks near by he followed them up and came to the hollow log where she had thrown the goomal. He picked it up with his spear and saw what Warringan had done.

He returned to the camp, but he did not tell Maialau's people what he had found. He only said that she would die for he had come too late to take the bulya from her. So Maialau starved to death just as the goomal did and Warringan rejoiced that the punishment was effective. But Joocerung suspected her of compassing Maialau's death, and he beat her more fiercely than ever and one day he hit her near the heart so that she fell down senseless.

Now the bulyaguttuk was her own mother's own mother's brother, or what we would call maternal great uncle, and he came to where Warringan lay and sat by her till she came out of her swoon. Then he said, "'You killed Maialau's borungur, now you will die yourself, for I saw a dead woorark (small marsupial, now extinct - Warringan's borungur) and it was a yogga woorark. Goomal bulyaguttuk has discovered your crime, and now you are bulya-ed.'" Something hurt Warringan's heart just then, like a beendee being struck through it, and she died.