

THE NGARRI JANDU AND THE TWO NIMMAMOO

THE SPIRIT WOMAN AND THE TWO BOYS

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In Yamminga time, two nimmamoo (boys who have had their noses pierced) went out one day looking for geerrbaiju (honey). The little bees that make this honey are so tiny that they are much smaller than a house fly. The nimmamoo could see the little bees in the flower cups but when they flew away to the hollow tree with their bags full, they were so small that the boys could not see them to follow them up. So the older nimmamoo caught one and picked up a little white feather to fasten on to the bee which he could then see going to its home in the hollow tree. He pricked his arm with a thorn and with the little drop of blood that came out he fastened the down of the feather to the little bee's back and then both nimmamoo could see the bee and follow it up. They did this whenever they could not hear the bees working at their hive, by putting their ears against hollow trees, or see the bees flying round the tree. They had gathered a great deal of geerrbaiju which they put into a little black bowl. They had both climbed up a big tree where they hoped to find enough to fill their black bowl, when a ngarri jandu came and stood at the foot of the tree. She had been tracking the nimmamoo up all the time.

When the boys saw her they began to cry aloud and their tears fell down like rain, but the ngarri jandu stood there and waited for the nimmamoo to come down. She had a big big goordeen (bark vessel) under her arm, and by and by when the boys came down from the tree, the ngarri jandu caught them and put them in her goordeen. She took them to her baalu (tree where she lived) and put them inside the baalu where there were a great many ngarri babba (spirit boys) and when she had put the nimmamoo inside she pulled the bark down over the hole and shut them all inside.

Then she went out and hunted langoor, ^{apossu}snakes, iguanas, and a lot of other wallee and brought them back to the baalu and fed the nimmamoo and ngarri babba with them and kept them in her

baalu and fattened them up and then ate the fattest. She was going to fatten the nimmamoo and turn them into ngarri babbi too and then kill them and eat them.

Every day Ngarri jandu went out and brought home plenty wallee which she gave the boys so that they grew big and fat. The ngarri babba - her own boys - grew big and fat too and she killed and ate them first. The nimmamoo saw her eating her own ngarri babba and they said to each other, "She might kill and eat us too." And they were greatly frightened but did not cry for they wanted to escape and so they sat quite quiet.

Ngarri jandu finished eating her ngarri babba and again went out hunting wallee. When she was gone, the nimmamoo pulled their nose bones (kardimba) out of their noses, and blew through the hole of the bone at the bark that closed them in the baalu. The older nimmamoo tried first but he couldn't move the opening. He blew and blew till his cheeks swelled but the bark kept fast and would not move. Then the younger nimmamoo blew through his kardimba and the bark moved away.

Ngarri jandu was a long way off, for she thought the boys could not get out and so she went far away to hunt and try and pick up more boys. As soon as the younger nimmamoo blew away the bark away, the two boys came out of the baalu and ran ran Koonian (north) where their father's booroo was and where all their relations - many womba among them - lived.

Ngarri jandu came back in the afternoon with her load of wallee and saw the bark pushed away and she knew that the nimmamoo had gone. She tracked them and tracked them always Koonian where the boys had gone. As the boys ran they met many womba and they called to them, "Ngarri jandu is following us, you spear her so she can't catch us." The womba said, "ngowai," and the boys ran on. When the ngarri jandu came along tracking the nimmamoo the womba saw her and when she came up to their camp along the boys' tracks they rushed at her and speared her all over with their spears and hit her all over her body with their nowloo (clubs) but they couldn't kill her because she was a ngarri and different. They speared her in the eye but it was like a stone and wherever they hit her it was like hitting a stone.

They went on spearing and hitting her till sundown, but their spears and nowloo had no effect. They could not kill her. Then she went on tracking the boys, and came to other womba's camps and met more womba who tried to kill her but could not. She tracked and tracked and at last came to a camp where there were a great many womba whom the boys had asked to spear her, and when she came up to the camp, all the womba got their spears and speared her all over and one of the spears having a little mirruru (magic) in it, speared her in the nyee-wal nimbal (instep) where her heart was and so killed her. Now a ngarri jandu is not allowed to come close to womba or jeera (little boys), as if she came and caught the jeera she would take them away to her baalu and fatten them up and make them ngarri babba and then kill and eat them.

The ngarri jandu was white like the sun and when it is a jandu (for there are ngarri womba as well) it always carries a goordeen (bark vessel) into which it puts the children it steals, to turn them into ngarri and eat them. When it takes the shape of a woman it shouts and makes noises like the jandu, but when it takes the form of a womba, it makes a noise as it goes along like the kalleegooroo (*bullroarer*)