

NGARGALULA

THE COUNTRY OF THE SPIRIT BABIES.

When I was a little girl, (and that ^{was} a long time ago,) some grown up, must have told me a fairy story which I loved, because I was a lonely child and wanted company to play with. All the stories to me were of fairy children or fairy animals and birds and wolves and things that were nice to every child who was a goodchild, who never hurt any of the little creatures who loved them. I was taken to haunted bushes and lovely little flowering hollows that were fairies' playgrounds where fairies might be seen sometimes by a little girl who loved little birds and animals and never hurt them.

Our beloved Homeland which the grown-up calls Great Britain, has little fairy places all over it. A place called "Cornwall" was full of them and other places called Wales, Scotland and Ireland, And the Island of the Man who had three feet, and many "hidey" places where little creatures only came out to see me in the Moonlight nights. I was never afraid to go and look for them but I never saw any of them though the stories about them were all entrancing to me. They always came to me in dreams and often when I was being told a story sitting by the window in the moonlight. I would see something floating or flying about or someone would say they all love the moon and play about in her light. I could only think I saw the shadow of their little wings.

All sorts of little fairy creatures were to be seen by children and stories of fairy tales were kept in the minds and hearts of the grown-ups and I know if you were to go to-day to a Welsh place, called by a big name "Peumaumawr" there will be a little, little welsh woman, very, very old and wearing a darling little white cap and on top of the cap wearing a big black hat, she will welcome you by saying "Sitheriduk", which means "how do you do", you will say "thank you" and I am sure if you ask her nicely she will tell you a fairy story that she had been told when she was a little child like you.

If you love fairy stories as I did you will always listen to them even when you are growing old. And that is how I learnt this beautiful story of the little fairy black babies of their own land in the North West of this great land called Australia that British people found for England.

Billing'g was a Spirit baby of Jimbin Booroo, a fairy land which was owned by little Spirit Babies called "Ngargalula". In this country the babies lived with all their little brothers and sisters and fatty birds, animals, fishes, flowers, and trees. Billing'gi was a little Ngargalula (spirit) baby there.

Grown-ups call Billinggi's people "the black or dark people of Australia. Billinggi lived in the place which white people call "Broome", but his baby land was the dreamland that all the little black babies come from and which is called Jimbin. No black man can see Jimbin except in dreams because the Babyland is underneath the ground.

In the Yamminga time of long, long ago there were three countries in Jajjala, the area which white people now call "Broome". There was the sky country (Koorrwal, the ground country (Kalbu) and the underground country (Jimbin), and it is of the Jimbin country this story tells. *Because it was the country of fairy babies only.*

Jimbin was the beautiful home of the Spirit babies - Ngargalula- and of all young ^{baby} animals, young ^{baby} birds, and young plants. There were little hills, plains, rivers, and murmuring streams and lovely flowers and grasses, seeds and fruit. By the little streams and pools the Ngargalula sat and played with each other and with the tiny fishes and crabs and all the little creatures living along the banks and all along the banks grew flowers and sweet smelling baby bushes. All the flowers and sweet smelling plants opened their leaves and leaned down to touch the babies as they floated down the stream. The little birds sang and called to them and all the Ngargalula would sit with the birds on the tree branches or hide among the thickly leaved shrubs. The birds, tiny animals and reptiles would all play with each other among the leaves and Ngargalula would float with the leaves along the creeks and streams. When Ngargalula came to the sea the little sea creatures came up to them and fondled them and nothing ever hurt the Ngargalula or the birds or animals, for no anger, no hurt of any kind or death ever came to Jimbin.

There were no dark nights in Ngargalula land. The sun, moon

and stars dat down with the babies and the little snakes, reptiles and turtles and all sea creatures fondled the little spirit babies.

No grown up from Kalby Booroo (earth country) could visit Jimbin except in dreams. When the Jajjala booroo men dreamed of Jimbin they ~~saw~~ the babies playing with the land and sea creatures - going down with them to the bottom of the sea and floating among the deep sea fishes and the babies would stroke their little deep sea friends and swim with them. A little Ngargalula would join the porpoises and turtles in their play in the sea or on the beach and the birds would come and join the groups on teh sea-beach and tell their little Ngargalula friends to come and rest with them in their shady branches. Ngargalula and the birds would play at chasing each other round the flowers and the flowers would lean over and touch their little baby friends.

Jimbin was filled with Spirit babies and flowers, plants and all the young of the edible foods of tree and bush that grew in Booroo country above them. When the flowers and all edible foods stopped growing in Booroo land they all went down to Jimbin land until it was time to go up to Booroo land again. The little Ngargalula could always see Kalbu land for they were spirit babies and were free to go everywhere, under the sea, in all the trees and all around about, but the grown up mwn could only see Jimbin in their dreams. Every grown up person in Broome was once a Ngargalula belonging to Jimbin land and all the li tle Ngargalula knew all this and knew all the grown ups in Broome. When the Ngargalula wanted to be a real person they would go up and they would always choose their own father and go to their real father in dreams.

The Booroo man was perhaps sleeping under a tree and in his dreams he saw a little Ngargalula standing close to him and he said "Who is your father?" and Ngargalula said "You are my father". "I am "Kaimera" and you are my "Boorong" father" and then the Booroo man would look round ~~to~~ the place where the Ngargalula was standing and he would see some good edible food or some young emu or turtle. The dreamer would remember every thing he saw round and about and while he was noticing all these things Ngargalula would go over to where his future earthly mother lay asleep and going inside her he was carried by her until by and by he was born in Broome.

For al little while after he was born he remained a Ngargalula until a day came when he smiled at his earthly mother and then he was a Ngargalula no more but a wee dark baby.

All the things his father saw round and about the Ngargalula in his dreams became his Ngargalula totems. His father knew where these things were plentiful in the part of Broome. He said those things I saw when Ngargalula came to me are all my little son's totems and by and by when he is a big man he will dream the increase of all his edible foods because that is the spirit power that every little spirit baby brings with it from Ngargalula land to its earthly home.

When Ngargalula grew up to manhood and dreaming time he dreams the increase of his totems and no-one else could dream but himself because they belonged to his baby ground and had been seen there by his father whom he had chosen. If his totems were a favourite food of his people they would eat and eat and come to time and say "dream more, dream more" so that they could have plenty of it. If the Ngargalula totem were some specially liked seed he would dream he was in Jimbin land again sitting near his totem and he would pluck the seeds and chewing them would scatter all about him. When his people and friends saw beautiful rays coming from the setting sun they would laugh happily and say "Yeergili seeds will be many". No little Ngargalula who became an earth boy or girl ever hurt their Ngargalula totems or the young of animals, birds or reptiles and so their totem foods were always plentiful.

No man could dream of a Ngargalula baby unless he possessed a ranjee (soul, s pirit) within himself, and no man could claim a baby as his own if he did not dream the Ngargalula came to him in his dream. When Wallungan of Jajjalaboaroo accompanied a white man from Jajjala to perth in the early days of the white man's coming, he dreamed while in Perth that a Ngargalula came to him, told him he was his father and Wallungan looked aroung in his dream and saw a great lot of Wanjulain (long edible bean) near the Ngargalula. When he returned to Jajjalaboaroo some years later he knew the little boy his woman carried was his own Ngargalula dream baby.

All the Ngargalula babies knew all about their Jimbin laws and avoidances and totems while they were Ngargalula. No Ngargalula ever came to the wrong father. If the dreaming man was Boorong Ngargalula said "I am Kaimera and you are my father" and if the dreaming man was "Kaimera" the little Ngargalula said "I am Boorong and you are my father", for Kaimera and Boorong were fathers and sons for ever.

If the dreaming man saw Ngargalula on the sea beach he looked round and about and while he looked he saw a little turtle or porpoise come up and play with the little Ngargalula and the man would say "They are Ngargalula totems.

Baby Ngargalula could see their brothers and sisters who had gone up to earth before him but they could not see him because he was a Ngargalula and he would go inside their Mother and if he had chosen a Boorong father his mother would be a ~~Boorong~~ ^{Banakk} mother and he would be a Kaimera baby. If he was a Boorong Ngargalula then he comes to his Kamera father and goes inside a Paljan mother.

Many Ngargalula babies came to Kalby land for the Jajjal booroo men kept their straight marriage laws and lived good lives.

Every Kalby man knew that if he broke the strict marriage laws that had come down to this people from far off Yamminga time he would be killed by his brothers or his father for breaking their great marriage laws. Even if he ran a long way away with the wrong woman and found some distant mates to sit down beside, no Ngargalula baby would ever come to him in his dreams and he would be thrown away by his Kalbu land people for ever. The babies that might come to him would be picked up anywhere and they could have no totems unless he gave them a totem from the strange laws of the new country he had fled to.

Kalbu land boys had to pass through nine trying periods before they became full men like their fathers. During these stages they were separated from their brother and sisters and mothers and were always learning the laws and avoidances, totems and responsibilities of Kalby land men, and superiority over all women.

Every one of these nine periods had its own special lessons to be learned, and at one period of his probation the young learner was given a sacred board called "Kalleegooroo" carved with Yamminga markings and with some special totem mark that his father had seen when the little spirit baby came to him. The Kalleegooroo must never be seen by women or children. The boy kept it with him night and day in his period of solitude and the spirit within him the board protected him always.

A great moment came when as a young man he first dreamed of his Ngargalula boorooa and saw the babies playing round and about. When he told his dream to his grandfather the old man knew that his grandson had a ranjee (sould, spirit) and was a worthy Booroo man.

By and by when all his probation period were over and he was "Thalloorgurra", a fully initiated man, the little Ngargalula girl babies who had come to their fathers in dreams and had been born into Kalbyland and had been betrothed to him would be grown up and given over to him.. He would again dream of his Ngargalula country and a baby would come and say "I am Boorong and you are my Kaimera father."

The Kalleegooroo or sacred board that the boy was given to comfort his solitude had a great history which he learned when he became a man. It was a great, great long Kalleegooroo that had been sent up from earth land to sky land to make a road so that Kalby man and woman and children could go along the road from earth to sky and back again. Along this road they travelled but the women and children did not know that it was Kalleegooroo road. They went to and fro but always reached Kalbu before the sun had set. One day some women and children were going to sky land but they were lazy and walked and sat down and walked a little and then they saw that the sun was setting and they were afraid to go further so they sat down and lighted a fire on the road. The fire ~~xxxx~~ they made burned the Kalleegooroo so that the road was no longer there and those who were in the sky land had to remain there always and those at Kalbu were also prevented from going to the sky any more.. Whenthe Kalleegooroo road was burned is now what white people call the "Dark Spot in the Milky Way" and no young boys or girls can ever look towards that spot because it is part of the Kalleegooroo that had made the road from Koorwall to Kalby.

When the white man came to Jajjala booroo all the Kalby land people were very frightened and thought the men still dreamed and the

Ngargalula came to them in their dreams it was only a little while until the Kalby land men died and went to Loomrin the home of the Jajjala beyond the great dea that beats on the shores of the country that is now Broome.

Every little baby that was born in the great northern coastal area of Western Australia (Broome, Beagle Bay, Sunday Is.) was the incarnation of a spirit baby - a Ngargalula - and all these coastal Ngargalula were white or fair haired and the booroo under which their country lay was also caast country. The Sorcerers of the Kalbu people would often see the little Ngargalula playing with a turtle on the beach. The Koolibal (great turtle) was specially connected with and attached to the little Ngargalula and when a sorcerer saw a Koolibal asleep on the beach and went towards it to catch it and turn it over he would see Ngargalula pulling the turtle back into the water.

The little Ngargalula always kept by the sea in their Jimbin home and no other babies than lammar-nalma babies were to be seen in Ngargalula land. Only men could see them, no woman could see Ngargalula land, she only carried the baby who had chosen its own father and she only knows that he has seen the Ngargalula when she is conscious of its presence within her.

Should it happen that the woman carries a baby without its having been dreamed first by the father she is immediately sent away to find the man whose Ngargalula she is carrying, as the husband repudiates the fatherhood of the baby since the Ngargalula did not first come to him.

The little Ngargalula remains a spirit baby until it smiles at its earthly mother. Gradually the spirit merges into the boy or girl. This spirit does not return to its Ngargalula booroo any more and if it dies in youth or adolescence or old age its spirit goes to Loomurn the place of the dead Jajjala booroo which lies beyond the western sea. Therefore a Ngargalula can never be a reincarnation of any ancestor. Ngargalula were put in Jimbin by Yamminga in Yamminga time but they are not Yamminga coming back again.

When pelicans were men in Yamminga time they also dreamed that Ngargalula babies came to them but the Ngargalula are not the re-incarnation of pelicans. Although the Kalby land people were buried in their own ground the spirits of all their ancestors went to Loomurn and no dead spirit returned from Loomurn and nothing dead could enter Jimbin land. Nothing dead and nothing old - it was the ~~people~~ peopled with young spirit babies and young birds, animals and all babies playing in the sea and on their Jimbin land.

Jooarree is the name given to the "spirit of the newly dead". Later when the body has become skeleton it is given other names, but no dead Kalby land man was ever re-incarnated in Ngargalula land. The Ngargalula once they come above ground and claim their father can never return to Jimbinland except in dreams. The little Ngargalula enters the class into which it is born.

A Kaimera man is sleeping in the sahde & a little Ngargalula comes to him in his dreams. He asks it "Yang'gee eebala jooa" (Who is your father) / The Ngargalula may reply "A Kaimera" and it becomes at once the Boorong son of its Kaimera father. Also no matter where the baby is born the place where it was seen in the dreams is its booroo even if its is born a thousand miles away. "Wooba babba Kal'wara yoonjoo Kabboola (the little baby was only born there). Its own booroo is the dream ground which has its counterpart - in some spot in the dreamers own group area and its individual totems come with it from its own booroo. The class totems (kaimera, Boorong, Paljeri or Barraka) are determined by the class into which it enters when born and its inherited totems are those of its father given sometimes during his lifetime. Its father's totems go away with him for a time but the young of these totems may become the son's inherited totems when his father goes to Loomurn.

Pajjalburra (purpose) was Leeberr's totem and when he died his Boorong son abstained from Pajjalburra, because all the old Pajjalburra went away with Leeberr. In the following season young Pajjalburra only were eaten.

Every Jajjala booroo man is so thoroughly familiar with every feature of hill, brook, rock or valley in "the country of his father's" that when he dreams of the Ngargalula he easily locates its booroo on somepart of his own ground. The totems he has seen on the ground may or may not be plentiful but wherever such totem is that seed totem is the Ngargalula totem and its owner can dream its increase on his father's group area.

There is no instance known or remembered by the old Jajjalabooroo men of any visible 'sacred' object being found on any Ngargalula ground. When the father dreams he often sees on the ground the weapons, implements, utensils etc. of his group people "above ground" but he never even looks for one of these dream weapons.

When the father dreams of a girl Ngargalula he sees on the booroo the Mai (vegetable totem) she will eventually have and which she collects in their season. When asked what would happen if a girl came instead of the boy Ngargalula which the father has seen, the answer always was "if the father had seen a boy the boy must come, girl babies are often promised as wives."

In the case of a betrothal before birth, if a boy happens to come instead of the girl it is because the Ngargalula had not come to the father when the promise was made and when it came and was a boy Ngargalula, the father could not change it. Sometimes but very rarely, twin Ngargalula - always a boy and a girl) come to the father in his dream but apparently twins are rare in the North. As it is stated that the boy will go into the mother and later on the girl will come looking for her brother and will go inside another wife of the same man. A man may dream of Ngargalula before he is married.

A Kalbu man may be staying for a time at a place some distance from his home ground and he dreams of a Ngargalula. A short while after his dream a little bird designated by a special name "jeera-jeer" alights near him. He knows that the Jeerajeer is the spirit of the Ngargalula of his dream and he calls out to it. "Go and stay with your mother" and the spirit goes to the booroo where his wife ~~is~~ is and enters inside her.

There is a mysterious connection between a species of turtle called "Koolibal" who is the special friend of the Ngargalula. They are often seen playing together on the beach and the Ngargalula a rather mischievously disposed at times. All turtle totems are sorcerers and there is a turtle dance in which the male and female turtles are figured. The male turtle being about some fifteen feet long and the female broad and shorter than the male. A turtle totem man will see a turtle asleep on the beach and he goes over to it and turns it on its back and then goes to camp to tell his friends of his find. When they hurry to the beach the Koolibal has gone and the Men know that the Ngargalula has taken his friend back to the sea again.

THE QUEER FISH AND THE QUEER BABY.

Two Kaimera women, Wanjallin and Marrura, (oldest and Youngest) went out fishing one afternoon and Wanjallin caught a very curious looking fish. The Paljiri husbands of the sisters were not far away and the women called to them to come and see the strange fish they had caught. Wanjallin cut it open and found that inside all brown coloured and like a baby so that none of them would cook or eat the fish and it was thrown back into the sea.

When Marrura's man slept that night he dreamed he was back at the place where this strange fish had been caught and a Ngargalula came to him out of the water and followed him in his dreams to his camp. The Ngargalula went over to Marrura who carried it till it was born. When it was born it was not only the same colour as the fish but it had a cut down along its breast in the same way as the opening had been made in the fish Wanjallin had caught. The baby was born at Jir-ningingan, another area - but its own Ngargalula booroo was that part of the sea coast where it had come to its father out of the water.

The baby died before very long for its mother feared it and its father was ashamed of it and the little baby was left alone and neglected in the camp. But when it died it did not go to Loomurn but went inside its mother again and tugged and tore and bit at her vitals. It had changed into a "Weerra Ngeering neelerr" (spirit baby with sharp teeth) and its fingers were like sharp claws and it was thin like a skeleton. The Jaengangooroo of the Mothers group was asked to take the baby out and burn it. He tried and tried to do so but its teeth and claws hung on and would not let go and so at last its young mother died and so mother and baby went to Loomurn. The father could not kill it as it was his Ngargalula baby.

The father must always dream of the Ngargalula baby before he can have any children. The mother can never dream of Ngargalula, she only carries them when they follow their father home.

The three countries which the Jajjala people had in Yamminga time were all good countries.

JIMBIN (under the earth) which was the country of Ngargalula only and where the young of all totems were to be found - a country where no dead could enter and where no dead thing ever came out.

KALBU which is the present day ground of the living people of Jajjalaboaroo or Kalby boaroo (Broome)

Koorrwal - the sky between which and Kalbu there was once a road made of a great long carved board but "Koorrwal road" was burnt one day by some women who were travelling between Kalbu and Koorrwal .

The story was often told in the firelight or moonlight by the old men of Kalby land and they always blamed the women for burning the road .

After a man kills another and eats the kidneys he has the kidney strength of the man he has eaten as well as his own. When they had all eaten to stomach full the elders of the group would begin old tales and legends of stars, moon and sun and lightning (which was a spirit). All would sit round and listen to these stories. These stories had been heard from the old grandparents and they would be carried on by young listeners who had listened eagerly to them. All camp restrictions between the old men and young men in various stages of initiation would be strictly observed. The women and children always kept behind the boundaries of the groups.

One night I heard the story of two young boongana (young men in the 7th period of their initiation). ~~There~~ They were stalked by another group in revenge for two of their own people having killed and eaten .

At the boongana period the hair is often a yard in length as it is the next stage to when the hair is worn in a thick mob. These two young boongana who had been resting after hunting suddenly saw a group coming towards them. They rose instantly and raced for their lives - each had a shield but no spears. They ran swiftly in great fear but still their enemy were getting nearer. All the enemy had spears in readiness

One young boongana was tiring as as great affection always obtained during such periods the other said the the tired one "Are you tired?" "Yes you go on quickly and I will stop" "We will both stay " said the other and while their pursuers were still some distance away they sat down and rested. They sat side by side on the ground and faced their enemies who at once speared them and carried them away to their group. The long hair of boongana is greatly valued for hair string which is braided. These young boongana were a great feast for the enemy.

PINDANA NGARGALULA.

The Pindana people lived on the east of the Jajjalaboaroo, in wild bush country and they could not come to the sea coast unless they came for barter of goods or new dances. The Pindana people had Ngargalula babies of their own who lived in a Ngargalula country of their own. These babies were dark haired while the Jajjala coast babies were fair haired. The Pindana people's country was the country of their ancestral grandparents and it was underneath the pindana country that their Ngargalula lived. A Nyimherr Nalma Ngargalula can never come to a seacoast man neither will a sea coast Ngargalula come to a Nyimherr Nalma. If when a Pindana man had dreamed of a proper Ngargalula and a fair haired baby came the mother and baby were sent away and the mother must find the seacoast man who had dreamed of the Ngargalula she carried. Mother and baby will again return to their own camp where she will be beaten and ill used and the father may either give another daughter to the Pindana man or if he has not got one will promise one because his daughter had not carried her man's own Ngargalula.

A man may dream of a Ngargalula that does not belong to his own children's class division. It has sometimes happened that a Ngargalula will come who is of a different class. The following story illustrates this.

Wandagara was a Barraka and one day he was sleeping besides a spring near Weerraginmarri, when he dreamed he was at Jirnginngan and a Ngargalula came to him. Wandagara said "Who or what is your father?" The Ngargalula said "Paljari, my father belongs to Maljarragoon Water"/ Wandagara knew that Maljarragoon belonged to a man named Leeberr, who was called by the name of his birth ground. Now Leeberr was a Paljari and therefore the Ngargalula was a Barroka and the little brother of Wandagara. The Ngargalula however followed him home and was carried by his wife and by and by the baby was born and must enter the class Paljari as his father who dreamed him was a Barraka. Sometime after the baby was born and when he could walk Wandagara met Leeberr at a big ceremony and Wandagara said, showing his boy to Leeberr "That is your Ngargalula baby. I stole him from you". Leeberr looked at the boy and said "He is Paljeri now and I cannot take him back from you" and as he watched the little boy running round among his playmates he said "He is not like me, he is like you, like your wald, I see him walk like you." And so the boy remains a Paljeri and stayed with his Barraka father and by and by when he grew up he was given a Kaimera girl for his wife and his Ngargalula children were Barraka like his own father.

Wandagara's own Ngargalula totem was the Koolibal (turtle) for his father had seen him playing with the Koolibal on the beach. When the Ngargalula comes to the man in his dreams the little spirit baby knows all about the class divisions and it will give the man it comes to the proper title of relationship between them. Yet when it is born it goes into the division that the father's other children belong. Dreaming of the Ngargalula is called Boorgarri. The Ngargalula walk about Jimbin but the man can only see them in dreams. The foods that the Ngargalula is given are on the Jimbin ground but when the boy is a man and dreams his totems these will grow and multiply on the Kalbu land ground because the boy dreams their increase and they must come up for they are his Ngargalula totems.

All men who dream of Ngargalula must have a ranjee (spirit) There is another ranjee which is the spirit of the lightning and a sorcerer can catch hold of the lightning and hold it and only then the lightning wont hurt any body.

Yet another ranjee and an evil one is the Spirit of the dead native who, instead of going to Loomurn the home of the dead Jajjala people, returns halfway and finds a large shady tree and under its thick branches he will remain to haunt the people. He returns to do evil always and the places he haunts must be avoided by the young children. This ranjee lives too in the thunder and lightning and burns trees down. It is also in caves and rocks and springs all of which must be avoided by the women and children.

The ranjee that men have that enables them to see Jimbin land and the Ngargalula in their dreams goes back to its own home. When they die the ranjee that gives the man power to dream his Ngargalula babies will remain always on the same ground as the man who had a ranjee and dreamed Ngargalula but the ranjee does not go to Jimbin land.

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