



Gheeger Gheeger the Cold

West Wind

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Intermediate

6 min read

Durroon the night heron lived near a creek in which was an immense hollow log; this he used both as a fish and a man trap. He was by choice a bunna, or cannibal. The immense log was hollow and was under the water. In the middle of it Durroon had cut an opening.

When a Daen came to his camp Durroon used to ask him to go fishing with him, saying he wanted a mullayerh, or mate, as he was like a gundooee, one emu living alone. He wanted some one to go to one end of the log and drive the fish to the other, where he could catch them.

Seeing sense in this the Daen would agree, and off they would go, Durroon armed with his spear, to spear the fish when they came to his end of the log, so he said. But as soon as he had sent his mullayerh off to the far end, he would go along the log to the opening in the middle.

Unsuspecting treachery the Daen would come through the hollow log, driving the fish ahead of him. Directly he was under the opening Durroon would drive his spear swiftly into him, killing him on the spot. Then Durroon would drag his victim out, and, dismembering him, cook him.

In this way many men disappeared mysteriously until at length a clever crow wirreenun determined to solve the riddle of their disappearance.

Wahn the crow went to Durroon's camp. Durroon asked him to go fishing with him, but first offered him some good fat goodoo, or cod, he already had cooked.

Wahn agreed, and when they had finished their meal Durroon proposed they should go fishing, but Wahn said: "I ate too much goodoo. It was very fat. I ate a great deal and must have a sleep first before I start."

"All right. Plenty of time," Said Durroon, feeling sure of his man-flesh supper.

Wahn went to sleep that he might send his Mullee Mullee, or dream spirit, to find out what was the trap Durroon had in the creek. The Mullee Mullee soon found out all about the opening in the top of the log, having done which back he came. Then Wahn, having learnt all, woke up, and said he was ready, so off they started. Durroon showed Wahn where to enter the hollow log, at the far end.

Now Wahn was a great wirreenun whom Durroon had no power to hurt, so he fearlessly went in. Durroon waited until he appeared under the opening, then down went the spear, evoking yells of "Wah! Wah! Wah!" from Wahn, who nevertheless went on and came out at the other end with the spear.

"What made you do that?" he said, pulling out the spear from where it had stuck in him.

"I did not mean to spear you," said Durroon. "I thought it was a big goodoo."

"Well, come on, I have had enough fishing," said Wahn. "You might make a mistake again."

On came Durroon, thinking Wahn really believed it was an accident, but no sooner had he caught up Wahn than he found himself speared in his turn, and fatally, as Wahn struck to slay.

About this time, Gheeger Gheeger the cold west wind had been blowing such hurricanes that the trees had

been blown in all directions, and the crows' humpies scattered everywhere. "Now," thought Wahn, "I will catch Gheeger Gheeger and shut her up in this immense hollow log, but first I must dry the water off it."

This he set to work to do, and soon, one day when Gheeger Gheeger was tired out, after having blown down miles of trees, and cut the tribes with her cold blasts, Wahn sneaked upon her and drove her into the hollow log, which he blocked up at both ends and also at the hole in the middle.

Gheeger Gheeger roared and howled, but to no purpose.

"You only go about destroying things; you shall stay where you are," said Wahn.

Gheeger Gheeger promised to be more gentle in future if only he would let her out sometimes. For a long time Wahn would not trust her and kept her closely imprisoned, but after a while he let her come out occasionally, after she promised to blow no more gales. Sometimes she breaks her word and blows destructively as of old, but Wahn quickly captures her again, and hurries her back to her log prison.

There are holes now in this log and the breath of Gheeger Gheeger comes through, so unless Wahn finds a new prison for her, one day she will burst forth, and then there will be such a gale as never blew across the western plains before. Gheeger Gheeger will blast with her breath everything that stands in her way as she rushes to meet her loved Yarrageh, the spring wind which blows from the east Kumbooran, and which had of old been wont to meet Gheeger Gheeger as she blew from Dinjerrah the west, tempering, where they met, her cold with his own balmy warmth.

Twice a year the winds all met, holding great corroborees and wild revellings. Dourandowran came with his scorching breath from Gurburreh, the north, to meet his loved Gunyahmoo, the south-east wind which came from Bullimedeehmundi, to fan him with her softer, cooler breezes until his heat lessened, and he scorched those in his path no longer. Then from Nurrooboan, the south, blew Nooroonoorobin to meet Mundehwuddah, the north-west wind.

After the big corroboree the winds parted, each to return to his own country, hoping to meet again in another few months to again corroboree.

Hence the unrest of Gheeger Gheeger in the hollow log, and her much wailing that she could not break forth

from her prison and rush to mingle her icy breath with the balmy one of Yarrageh.

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