

# The Hunt for the Dhinawan



William Lettice  
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ENVIRO  
stories



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# The Hunt for the Dhinawan

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This book has been published as part of the 2020 Healthy Plants, Healthy Me Enviro-Stories program. Students used their imagination to write and illustrate stories that highlight the importance of plants for the planet, our biodiversity and our bodies. This program was supported by the Cotton Research and Development Corporation and CSIRO. Additional funding support has been provided by Petaurus Education Group for this book.

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ISBN: 978-0-6450381-1-8

Enviro-Stories is a Peekdesigns initiative, [www.peekdesigns.com.au](http://www.peekdesigns.com.au).

Lettice, W. 2020. *The Hunt for the Dhinawan*. Cotton Research and Development Corporation, NSW.





My name is Will Lettice. I am a young birray (boy) of the Gamilaraay (Kamilaroi) people. I live with my family in a town called Narrabri. I enjoy going out in the bush walking, hunting, fishing and exploring.

My baagii (grandmother) Pattie, and dhaadhaa (grandfather) Noel have taught me my culture through stories, song and dance. When we sat around the campfire, they told us about skills on how to survive off the land if we are ever lost out in the bush.





One day my dhagaan (brother) Jarmarl and I decided that we would go out hunting for some dhinawan (emu) eggs to eat. Nan and Pop said when you go out hunting for the eggs and see the male bird standing alone, you can bet female would be laying on the walaay (nest) of grass and sticks close by.



We knew that it was a good time to go hunting for eggs because we saw the emu in the sky. The *Emu in the Sky* is part of the Milky Way that looks like an emu laying down and this always appears in April and May when emus lay their eggs. We set off across the back baadi (paddock) and into the bush.



While walking through the garaarr (grass) and bindiyaa (prickles), we saw many giidjaa (ants) crawling and balabalaa (butterflies) flying off the flowers of the dhulan (wattle) bush. Dhulan (the black wattle) is the common name for a species of trees that are native to Australia. Nan and Pop also said that the green leaves are used to make soap. To make soap they rubbed both hands together with the green leaf and then added water. This made suds and foam.

We then started to come into wild bushland walking along the miimii (river's edge), through the milimili (mud) and down the steep бага (bank) to the other side of the bagay (river).

We had been walking for quite a while when we heard a loud noise, which startled us, coming from the bushes. We turned to see that a gigantic, black, wild biguun (pig) had started charging at us.

We both panicked in fear and ran as fast as we could to the nearest dhulu (tree) we could find and climbed high for safety.







Jarmarl found the first giyirrwa (coolabah) dhulu (tree) and I continued running to the next. I found a warran (tree trunk) that I was able to climb up as high as I could. As I sat there, I started feeling stings. I looked up in shock and saw that there was a warrul (bee) hive in the dhulu (tree).

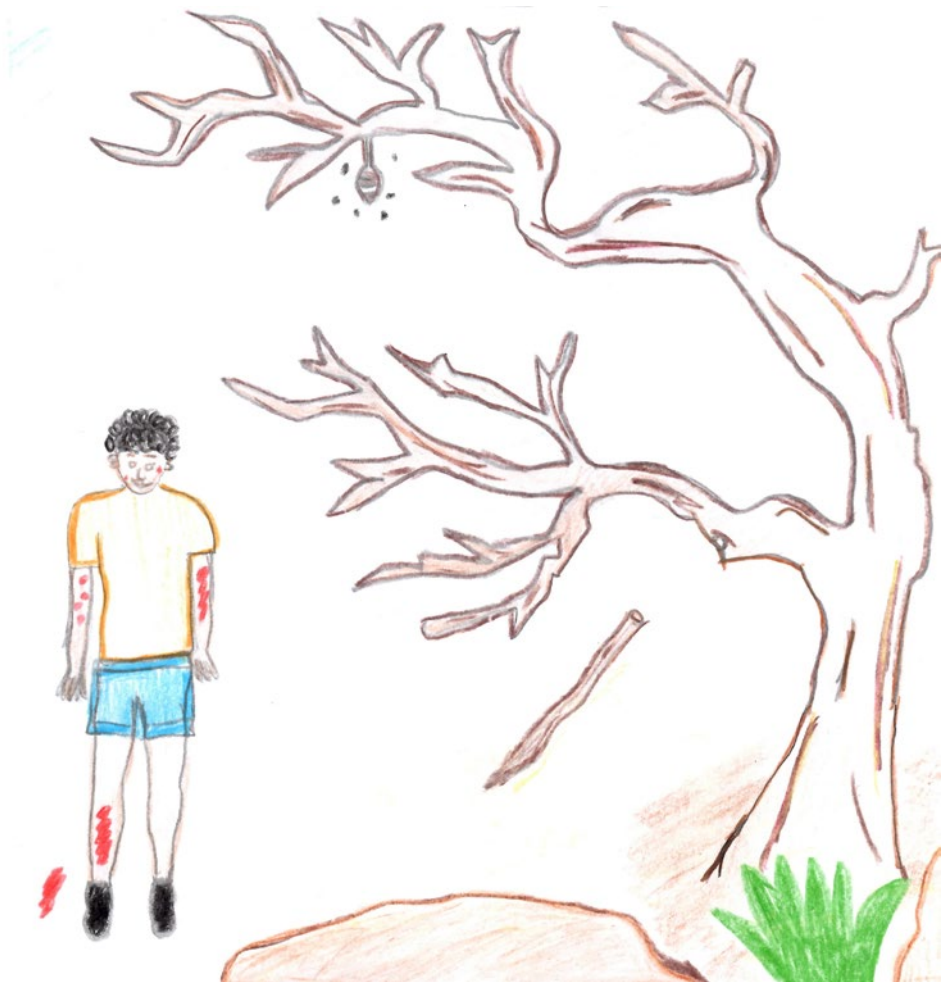


We were in seeing distance of each other in the dhulu (trees). Jarmarl was yelling and telling me to hang on as he watched and heard the gigantic, black biguun (pig) snorting, grunting and circling the tree that I was in.

It had big, long, pointy tusks. They looked so sharp that they would rip you to bits if it attacked. The biguun (pig) hung around for a while, but he eventually moved on.

From holding on so tight, waiting for the biguun (pig) to leave, I could feel how weak I was. I could feel every sting from the guni (bee). As I slid and fell down the dhulu (tree), I cut both of my bungun (arms) on the way down. I also had a deep cut on my buyu (leg).

Once we got down out of the trees and realised how injured I was. We decided we would have to walaay (camp) for the ngurru (night) to treat the injuries.



My Aboriginal baagii (Nan) told me about the many plants and trees our people use for all sorts of things. The one I remember baagii (Nan) telling me about is called Yuurraa (eurah) ngawil (bush).

In Aboriginal culture, Yuurraa (eurah) has a yellow flower with pale green girra.girra (leaves), which is the dhalbin (medicine). It is used for the treatment of skin ailments. I knew I had to smell the bush to make sure it was the right one as it has its own distinct smell, a soft smell like mint.







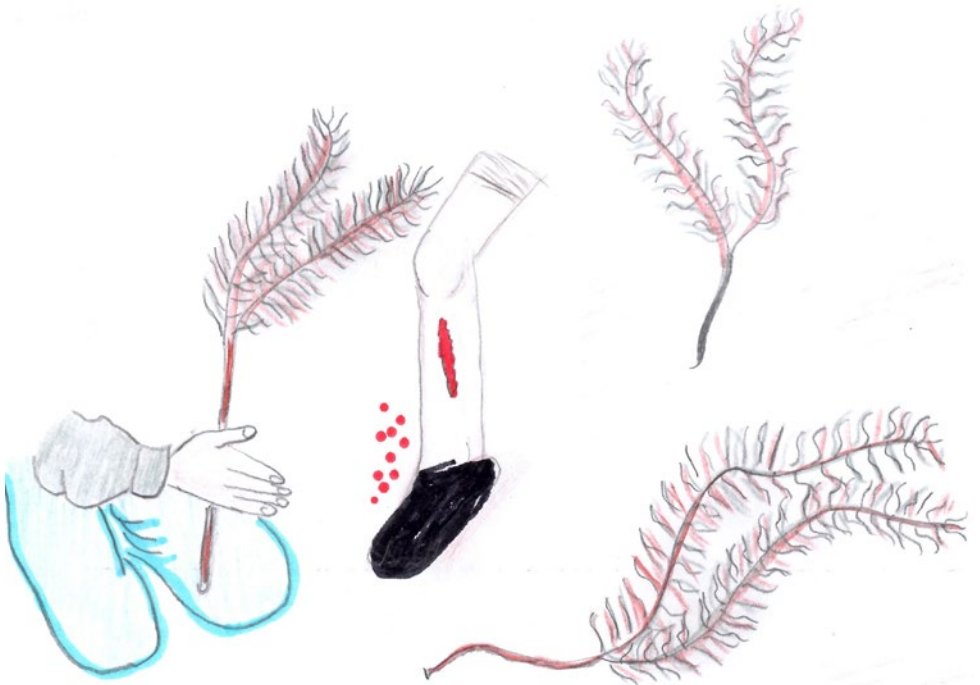
Jarmal searched for the Yuurraa (eurah) bush. Once we found it, he then boiled the girra.girra (leaves) and used the liquid to place on my stings. Jarmarl said we needed to find dhinawan (emu) yadhaarr (feathers) to stop the bleeding of the cut.

Jarmarl came back with dhinawan (emu) yadhaarr (feathers) and two dhinawan (emu) gawa (eggs) that he found close by.



Jarmarl applied all the dhinawan (emu) yadhaarr (feathers) to the cut to soak up the blood. The feathers sealed the wound and stopped the bleeding.

Dhaadhaa (Pop) said that all our Aboriginal soldiers who fought in the war, used this technique to stop the bleeding when they ran out of bandages.





It was getting bangalaa (dark) quickly, so we started collecting some wugan (sticks) and bark to start a wii (fire) to stay warm. Jarmarl started a wii (fire) by twirling and rubbing a dhulu (stick).

This caused friction on the bundle of gula-li (bark) that you strip down to make finely shredded hair-like material that catches alight. This process took maa (5) to banay (10) minutes. In the meantime, I helped by finding some wungala (witchetty grubs) in the black wattle trees for us to eat.



We then started looking for material to build a walaay (humpy) for shelter. Jarmarl came back with some bushes, long dhulu (sticks), logs and wild wudhugaa (vines).

Jarmarl got the logs and placed them into a lock in the shape of a teepee, tying the tips of the logs together with the vine. He then put the dhulu (sticks) in between the logs of the walaay (humpy) and used the wudhugaa (branches) with the girra.girra (leaves) for cover.



In the buliyaagu (morning), at the break of ngarran (dawn), we woke from the sound of the muraays (cockatoos) echoing through the dhulu (trees). We also saw the mangun-gaali (tree goanna) resting lazily in the hot glistening sun on the yarral (rocks).



I said to my dhagaan (brother) Jarmarl that it was time to head home. We got up and dusted ourselves off from lying on the ground and walked together.

As I hobbled along beside Jarmarl he said, "Thanks to Baagii (Nan) and Dhaadhaa (Pop) for teaching us about our culture and how to survive on the flora and fauna in the bush. With this knowledge we are now able to carry this tradition on to our future generations to keep our culture alive."







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