

# Mooie's Stories: Malamiyayu gurang, in the Dreamtime

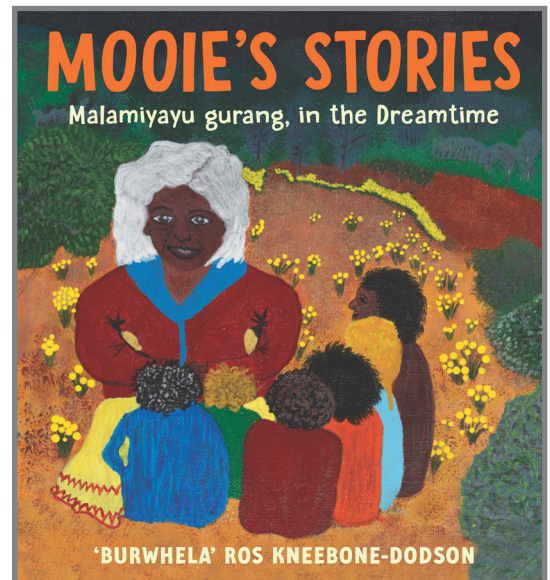
AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

'BURWHELA' ROS KNEEBONE-DODSON

SCIS: 5445406

ISBN: 9780855751258

RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower to Mid Primary



## SYNOPSIS

*Dja Dja Wurrung Ancestors' stories as told to me by my mother, my grandmother, my great-grandmother and my great-great-grandmother before her.*

*How did Wabbee, the freshwater crayfish, get its bright red spots? Why does Wehla, the ringtail possum, have a curly tail?*

*How were Waripi Yaluk, the backwaters of Bulatjal Yaluk Woodlar, the Loddon River, formed? Why does Yern, the moon, light up the night sky? Bunjil, the all-powerful, knows the answers.*

'BurWhela' Ros Kneebone-Dodson learned these kiki stories of Malamiyayu Gurang, the Dreamtime from her mother, Mooie. BurWhela's words and images bring to vivid life these stories of her Ngurar Gurrk, her Ancestors, from Djandak, the Country of the Loddon River of Central Victoria.

## ABOUT THE CREATOR

Ros Dodson 'BurWhela' is a descendant of the Bpangarang and Dja Dja Wurrung peoples of Victoria and the Worrimi and Birripi peoples of the lakes district of NSW.

As a child, Ros's family called her 'Possum' in Dja Dja Wurrung language—this means 'Whela'. Once becoming a mother, Ros took on the kin name of 'BurWhela' meaning 'mother possum'.

'Being able to know my oral history through the privilege of storytelling, passing this historic account from my "Apical Ancestors" to my children and grandchildren, I have been entrusted to preserve our "Cultural Stories" as told to me by my mother and my grandmother before and her mother before in the passage of time.'

## STUDY NOTES

- Using the AIATSIS map of Indigenous Australia, ask students to locate the Dja Dja Wurrung language group that is a part of the Kulin nation (Dja Dja Wurung). Suggest to students they use landmarks such as the city of Bendigo and the Loddon River to help locate the language group.
- Copy or create a word bank using the Glossary of Dja Dja Wurrung words in the back of *Mooie's Stories* and refer to these words when sharing the stories in *Mooie's Stories* with students.
- Use Google Earth to search for the Loddon River. Ask students to describe the landscape surrounding the Loddon

River and record their observations using a mind map. Ask students to compare this landscape with the one they currently live in. What are the similarities and differences between the two landscapes? Use a Venn diagram to record students' observations.

- Ask students to look at the map of *Mooie's Stories* titled 'My Country, Djandak'. Ask students to interpret the symbols and images that appear in the map. Students can then create a key using all images and symbols and seek understanding of the meaning of each of the symbols. What could they represent?
- Take the students outside and suggest that they work together to recreate the 'My Country, Djandak' map on the ground using chalk. Using directional language, ask the students a series of questions, for example:
  - What animals or features exist to the north/south/east/west of Djandak country?
  - Where do possums live?
  - Where would you find freshwater crayfish?
- Side by side, align the map in the book and a Google Earth image to locate the rivers, forests and features as identified on the Djandak map.
- There are four main characters in this story. Introducing each, one by one, develop mind maps with students to identify the features of each character. Include a family tree and label family members using language terms. Create a learning wall featuring all of the characters and landscape features from the text. Students can use this learning wall to retell the story and visualise the connections of characters.
- Research the local Traditional Custodians, Bushcare or Catchment Care groups in your area and connect with Land and Sea Rangers for further local information and guidance. What projects are they involved in to care for Country? How can your class become involved?
- Talk to students about how they could create a habitat for the local species within and near your school grounds. Students can engage in research about life cycles, food chains and ecosystems to create the ideal conditions.
- Discuss with students how to create awareness about caring for Country in the school community. Students may wish to share information about their experiences of how they can care for Country. Encourage students to create signs or display their stories on classroom windows, or on school community noticeboards, or they can write a local news story for the school newsletter, and share their experiences on your school's social media sites.
- Invite First Nations Seniors and Elders from the community to join in your caring for Country projects.

### **Story 1—How Wabbee, the freshwater crayfish, made Waripi Yaluk, the backwater channels, of Bulatjal Yaluk Woodlar, the Loddon River**

- What kind of animal is Wabbee? Students can then draw a picture and label body parts or colour in the picture.
- How is this animal unique?
- What environment/ecosystem does Wabbee live in?
- What do Wabbee need to thrive and survive?
- What type of personality did Wabbee have?
- What emoji would this personality look like? Students can create a character profile.
- What happened to Wabbee and who was involved?
- What evidence can be found today to support this creation story?
- Who is Piyerng?

### **Story 2—How Wabbee, the freshwater crayfish, got its bright red spots**

- Why do Wabbee have red dots on them?
- Play 'rob the nest' using colourful bean bags. (The teacher calls a colour and all those students with that coloured bean bag run to the central nest and take that coloured bean bag back to their nest.) Red bags cannot be taken from the nest.
- Where is Wabbee located on the Djandak country map? What other symbols are also located near it? Ask students to complete a paragraph detailing their observations.
- What kind of animal is Bunjil (creator)? They can then draw a picture and label the body parts or colour a picture.
- How is this animal unique?
- Encourage students to create a life cycle and food chain diagram with Wabbee, the water birds, Bunjil the creator and the environment around them.
- What does Bunjil need to thrive and survive?

**Story 3—How Willa, the brushtail possum, became Wehla with a curly tail**

- Ask students to create a family tree to show connections between the characters in this story.
- What does this story teach us?
- How was Bunjil (creator) involved in this story?
- What are the advantages of having a brush tail or a ring tail?
- Provide pipe cleaners, feathers, natural fibres, sticks, wood and clay/playdough for the students to recreate this story as a play.

**Story 4—How Yern, the moon, came to be, and the story of the little girl, Ghingobon**

- How was Bunjil (creator) involved in this story?
- How did Ghingobon help her family?
- Ask students to share two examples of how Ghingobon could be safer next time she collects berries.
- Explore the phases of the moon and ask students to record their observations the following day at school. With students, then investigate the moon cycles online.
- Recreate this story using mime and create a movement piece.