

Thukeri

Two men set off in their canoe to go fishing on the lake. They travelled along on the calm, cool waters until they came to their favourite fishing place called Loveday Bay, where they always caught the best and most delicious bream fish. In their language, this fish is called Thukeri.

5 They found a good, sheltered spot among some high reeds. They had made their own fishing lines, called nungi, from cords they had made from the reeds. They used very sharp bird bones for hooks. They knew the women were collecting vegetable plants to eat with the fish.

As the day went on, the two men sat there catching more and more fat, juicy Thukeri. They were having such a wonderful day catching so many fish and wanted to keep catching more and more, but the canoe was almost full and looked like it would sink.

10 As they paddled closer to the shore, they could see a stranger. He seemed to be walking straight towards them. The two men looked at each other. What if this stranger wanted some of their beautiful, juicy Thukeri? They were greedy and decided not to share with the stranger. They decided to keep all the fat, lovely, silver bream for themselves and quickly covered the fish up so the stranger would not see them.

15 When the stranger came up to the two men, he said, "Hello brothers, I haven't eaten anything at all today. Could you spare me a couple of fish?" The two men looked at each other and at the mats hiding the Thukeri. They turned to the stranger and one of them said, "I'm sorry friend, but we caught only a few fish today. We have to take them home for our wives and children and the old people because they are depending on us. So you see, we can't give you any."

20 The stranger stood there for a long while and then started to walk away. He stopped, turned around and stared at them. "You lied," he said. "I know that you have plenty of fish. Because you are so greedy you will never be able to enjoy those Thukeri ever again."

The two men stood there puzzled as the stranger walked away. They shrugged their shoulders, then began to gut the fish. But as they did this, they found the beautiful, silver Thukeri were so full of sharp, thin bones that they couldn't eat them. "What are we going to do? We can't take these home to our families, they'll choke on them."

25 So the two men had to return home in shame, with only the bony fish. When they got home they told their families what had happened. The old people told them that the stranger was really the Great Spirit called Ngurunderi. Now all the Ngarrindjeri people would be punished forever because the two men were so greedy!



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