Crocodile and Blue Tongue Lizard

A Story from Groote Eylandt

told by Gula Lalara and Nabilia Lalara

illustrated by children from Angurugu, Umbakumba and Bickerton Island schools

Compiled by Jan Teagle Kapetas
This story is told by the Aboriginal people of Groote Eylandt at Angurugu, Umbakumba and Bickerton Island. It was told in the Anindilyakwa language by Gula Lalara and Nabilia Lalara and translated into English by Dugururru Lalara assisted by Julie Waddy.

The illustrations are based on paintings of the story done by the children at Angurugu, Umbakumba and Bickerton Island Schools.

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The original story remains the property of the Anindilyakwa people.

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told by Gula Lalara and Nabilia Lalara

English text adapted from a translation by Dugurru Lalara

Compiled by Jan Teagle Kapetas
A long time ago in the Dreamtime

Crocodile and Blue Tongue both made houses.
It was the rainy season and so they both made houses. Crocodile made her house the way she makes her home, and Blue Tongue made her house the way she makes her home.
Then they both went out hunting for food.
Blue Tongue stayed out in the bush for a while
Crocodile came back first.
She went to her house but it was no good.
"Let me go over to Blue Tongue's house," she said.
She went to Blue Tongue's house.
She was very happy there so she lay down and slept near the fire.
Blue Tongue Lizard came home. She looked in Crocodile's house but Crocodile was not there.
She went to her house and there was Crocodile

“Wa! Dadija! Dadija! Get out, Crocodile,” she said. “This house is mine”
No way. Crocodile kept still and wouldn’t listen.

Blue Tongue poked her all over, but Crocodile wouldn’t move.

“Go to your house, Crocodile,” she said, “I’m cold now. I want to stay by my fire. Get moving. This is my house, not yours.”
Still Crocodile took no notice.
Blue Tongue had an idea. She got a baler shell and scooped up some hot coals and earth.

She picked up hot coals and threw them on Crocodile. She scooped them up and roasted Crocodile.
"Ouch! Ouch! What are you doing to me, Blue Tongue?" cried Crocodile.

Blue Tongue didn't stop. She threw more coals on Crocodile.
Crocodile ran splash into the water where a pandanus log was floating.

"Ang! Ang!" said the Crocodile. She bit the pandanus log many times.
"Ang! Ang! I will bite things. I will keep doing this. I will bite people. I will bite animals. I will hide myself in the river and make myself quiet and float like a pandanus log, and then I will bite. Ang! Ang!"
"I will go into all the rivers and hide in the sea and be very greedy. I will bite all the people and all the animals and I won't be ashamed," she said. "Ang! Ang! Ang! Ang!"
Blue Tongue was frightened. She said, "I'll live in the grass and be shy and quiet. I'll poke around and hide in the grass and holes, in logs and under rocks and stones."
Blue Tongue does the same today as she did when she had the argument with Crocodile.
And Crocodile still hides in the big rivers and little waterholes and waits to bite people and fish and turtles. She floats and she waits, and then, Ang! Ang! Ang! she bites them.

Just as they told each other in the story, they do the same today.
DINGARRBIYA-LANGWA AKWA YIMARNDAKUWABA-LANGWA

as told by Gula Lalara and Nabilia Lalara
recorded on tape by Judith Stokes in 1972 and written down by Dugururru Lalara


