

Why the Koala Has a Stumpy Tail

The following story is based on a traditional Aboriginal Dreamtime story of how the koala came to have a short, stumpy tail.



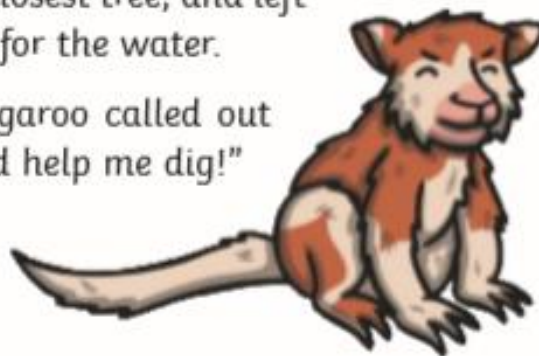
Long, long ago in the Dreamtime, there lived Koala and Tree Kangaroo. They were the very best of friends. Back then, Koala had a very long, furry tail just like his friend, Tree Kangaroo.

One year, there was no rain. All of the streams, rivers and lakes were dried up and no water was found anywhere. Even the leaves in the trees were dying. Koala said, "What are we going to do? We are going to die if we don't get some water to drink." Just then, Tree Kangaroo

had a plan. He remembered back to the last dry season when his mother dug a hole in a dry stream bed. "She dug for hours until water began to fill the bottom of the dry hole," said Tree Kangaroo. "Let's try that!" said Koala.

So, Tree Kangaroo and Koala walked until they came to a dry stream bed. It was as dry as the desert. Koala said, "I am so thirsty and tired. Before I can start digging, I need to have a rest." So Koala climbed up the closest tree, and left Tree Kangaroo to start digging for the water.

After lots of digging, Tree Kangaroo called out to Koala, "Hey Koala, come and help me dig!" Koala began to climb down from the tree until he let out a big, "Ouch!"

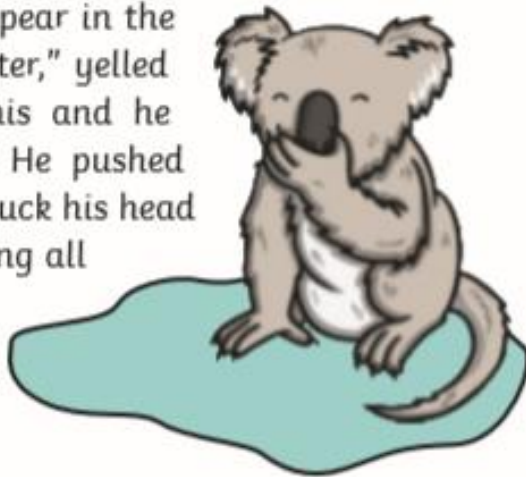


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Koala had got a thorn in his foot. He couldn't possibly dig with a sore foot, so Tree Kangaroo kept on digging and let Koala rest.

Tree Kangaroo was getting really tired after all of his digging. "Koala!" he yelled. "I am so tired and I need a break. It is your turn to come and dig." Koala began to climb down the tree until he called out, "I am so dizzy. I need to rest longer." Tree Kangaroo was starting to get very angry, but he kept on digging.

At last, some water began to appear in the dry hole. "Hooray, I can see water," yelled Tree Kangaroo. Koala heard this and he quickly jumped from the tree. He pushed Tree Kangaroo out of the way, stuck his head down the hole and began drinking all of the water. Tree Kangaroo was furious! "Save some for me," he said, but Koala just kept on drinking.



Tree Kangaroo grabbed Koala's tail to pull him out of the hole. He pulled and pulled until Koala's tail broke off, and this is why the koala has a short and stumpy tail.



