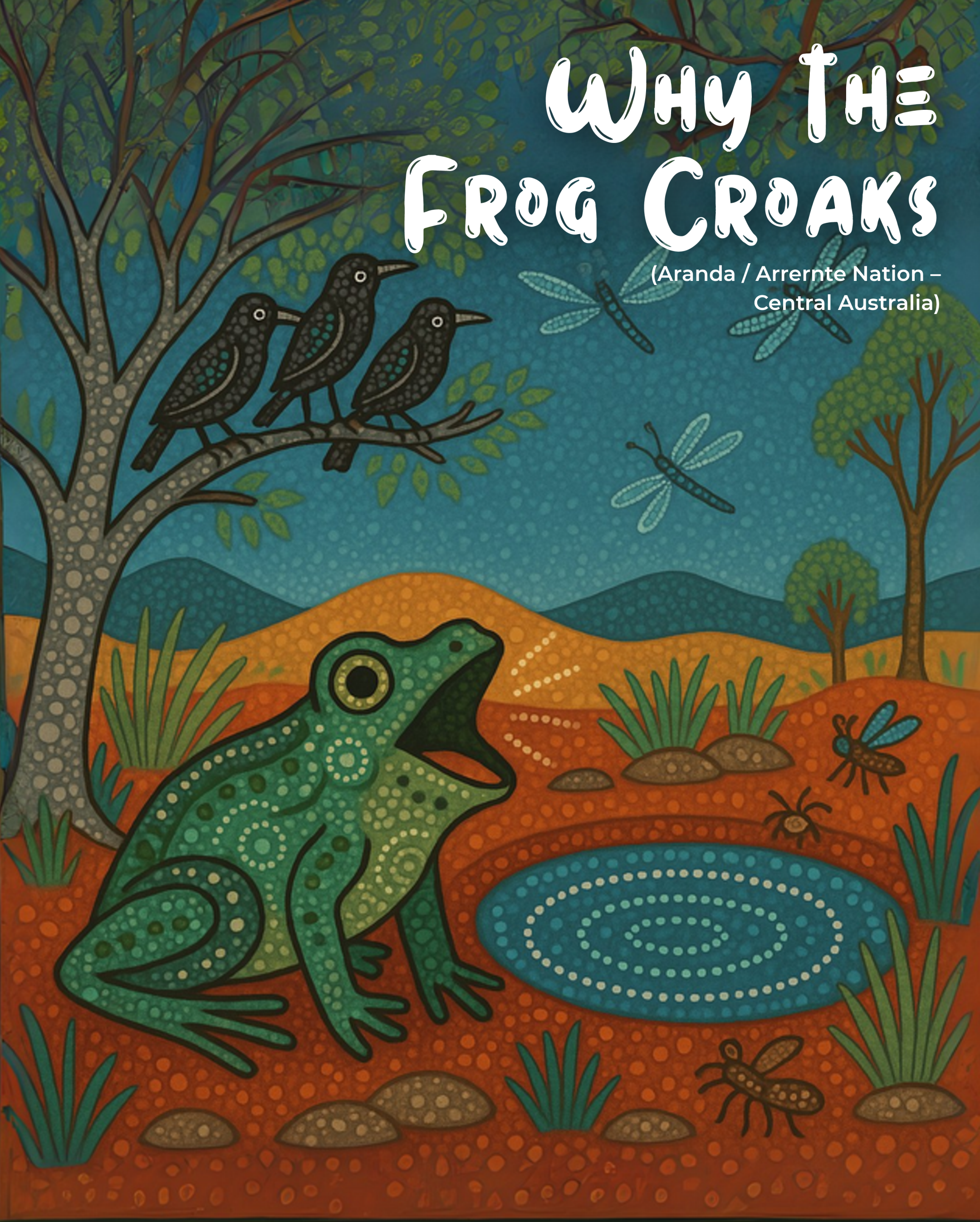
Why The Frog Croaks

(Aranda / Arrernte Nation – Central Australia)



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A long time ago, in the Dreaming, Frog was very quiet. He lived by the big waterhole where the reeds grew tall, but he never made a sound. Kangaroo thumped his tail, Emu flapped her wings, Kookaburra laughed in the trees — yet Frog stayed silent.

One hot day, the sun blazed down. Frog hopped to the waterhole. “Ah, how thirsty I am,” he said softly to himself. He bent down and began to drink.

He drank, and drank, and drank. The more he swallowed, the rounder his belly grew. Soon, every drop of water was gone. The waterhole lay dry, and Frog sat with a huge belly, too full to move.



The other animals came running.

“Kangaroo is thirsty!” called Kangaroo.

“Emu is thirsty!” called Emu.

“Kookaburra is thirsty too!” laughed Kookaburra.

But Frog only shook his head. “The water is mine. I drank it all.”

The animals were sad. “What shall we do? Without water we will grow weak.”

Then one clever animal — Lizard — had an idea. “Let us make Frog laugh. If he laughs, he will let the water out again.”

So the animals began to dance. Kangaroo hopped high, Emu flapped about in circles, and Kookaburra laughed his loudest, “Koo-hoo-hoo-ha-ha-ha!”

Frog watched, his eyes wide. At first his mouth twitched. Then his belly began to shake. Finally, he burst out laughing.
“Ha! Ha! Ha! Ho! Ho! Ho!”
And as Frog laughed, the water poured out of his mouth. It splashed across the ground, filling the waterhole once more. The animals cheered and ran to drink.

Frog wiped his mouth and croaked, “That was funny! Ha! Ha!”

From that day on, Frog was never silent again. He croaked and croaked by the waterhole, as if he still remembered the day he laughed so hard the water came rushing out.