ike wild honey. As time passed he spoke first: 'Don't stay lying down, Nabiwu and Gadderi: he had lying dead after they had speared the bulls they saw bees crawling about; but their spirits flew up like a cloud, as they spoke to one another: we, and go off to find separate waters; with their spearthrowers and djang, and still they stand there. Swelled (sent away) one another, ples, we human beings, taste it; tasted it, long ago. They showed it, following their lead. All these meats: they showed us, those ato being, we eat all those things.


Crocodile Man, Bindagbindag, was married to Whistle Duck Woman, Balmad. Two daughters were born to them, both crocodiles: but when the girls were old enough Bindagbindag neglected Whistle Duck and had sexual relations with them. This was at Banggar, on the western side of the Daly River.

He used to go out fishing in his bark canoe, and when he returned he would call out from the bank for them to come and pick up the fish. The two girls would come down, followed by their mother. As they waded out to get the fish Bindagbindag would have intercourse with them in the water. Their mother saw this, but made no trouble. Every day when he went out fishing the same thing happened: and she just watched.

But at last she decided what she would do. She made a rope of grass, secretly, when the two girls were out looking for bush foods. When they came back, she hid it. She was angry.

One day the old man said, 'I'll leave you now, before daybreak, and I'll be back at sundown': he went out in his canoe. While he was away the mother showed the rope to the two girls. The three of them climbed into a banyan tree, and so up into the sky.

On his return Bindagbindag found the camp empty. He called out to the two girls. At last the elder girl called back from the sky, 'My mother and sister and I are up here.' 'What am I going to do?' he asked. The younger sister cried, 'Look for the rope. My mother is going to lower a rope. She will throw it to you—take hold of it.'

The old man replied that he would go back and get the fish. But what he did was to stick 'nails' (scales) all over himself, just as a crocodile has knobs on its back. Then he went back to the banyan tree, and called out that he was ready. Whistle Duck lowered the rope: as she threw it, it made a noise like a swinging bullroarer. He jumped up to catch it. Whistle Duck began to pull up the rope; but the elder sister didn't want her father, because he was always having intercourse with her. Only the smaller sister wanted him. When at last they had drawn him up quite close to them, Whistle Duck took from her belt a musel shell 'knife' and started to cut the rope. The younger sister snatched the knife from her hands, but she had others. She tricked her daughter into looking the other way, and cut the rope quickly.

Crocodile fell back on to the ground, smashing all his bones. He lay there for a long time. Then he began to fix up his body. 'It's better that I should stay in the water,' he said. 'Before, I was like a man. I'm nothing now, all broken up. So I'll remain in the water, and everyone will be afraid of me.' He sang himself into a crocodile. He waited until a wild dog came down to drink, grabbed it, and killed it. 'Well, this is what I'm going to do all the time—that old woman did me an injury, so now I'll frighten everyone.' The rope is still in the sky, as the Milky Way; a black patch is the banyan tree, with the old woman and two girls camped under it. And Crocodile's spirit is up in the sky too.
"You know the city Shurrupak, it stands on the banks of Euphrates? That city grew old and the gods that were in it were old. There was Anu, lord of the firmament, their father, and warrior Enlil their counsellor, Ninurta the helper, and Ennugi watcher over canals; and with them also was Ea. In those days the world teemed, the people multiplied, the world bellowed like a wild bull, and the great god was aroused by the clamour. Enlil heard the clamour and he said to the gods in council, 'The uproar of mankind is intolerable and sleep is no longer possible by reason of the babel.' So the gods agreed to exterminate mankind. Enlil did this, but Ea because of his oath warned me in a dream. He whispered their words to my house of reeds, 'Reed-house, reed-house! Wall, O wall, hearken reed-house, wall reflect; O man of Shurrupak, son of Ubara-Tutu; tear down your house and build a boat. abandon possessions and look for life, despise worldly
 onslaught your house, I say, and build a boat. These are the measurements of the barque as you shall build her: let her beam equal her length, let her deck be roofed like the vault that covers the abyss; then take up into the boat the seed of all living creatures.'

"When I had understood I said to my lord, 'Behold, what you have commanded I will honour and perform, but how shall I answer the people, the city, the elders?' Then Ea opened his mouth and said to me, his servant, 'Tell them this: I have learnt that Enlil is wrathful against me, I dare no longer walk in his land nor live in his city; I will go down to the Gulf to dwell with Ea my lord. But on you he will rain down abundance, rare fish and shy wild-fowl, a rich harvest-tide. In the evening the rider of the storm will bring you wheat in torrents.'

"In the first light of dawn all my household gathered round me, the children brought pitch and the men whatever was necessary. On the fifth day I laid the keel and the ribs, then I made fast the planking. The ground-space was one acre, each side of the deck measured one hundred and twenty cubits, making a square. I built six decks below, seven in all, I divided them into nine sections with bulkheads between. I drove in wedges where needed, I saw to the punt-poles, and laid in supplies. The carriers brought oil in baskets, I poured pitch into the furnace and asphalt and oil; more oil was consumed in caulking, and more again the master of the boat took into his stores. I slaughtered bullocks for the people and every day I killed sheep. I gave the shipwrights wine to drink as though it were river water, raw wine and red wine and oil and white wine. There was feasting then as there is at the time of the New Year's festival; I myself anointed my head. On the seventh day the boat was complete.

"Then was the launching full of difficulty; there was shifting of ballast above and below till two thirds was submerged. I loaded into her all that I had of gold and of living things, my family, my kin, the beast of the field both wild and tame, and all the craftsmen. I sent them on board, for the time that Shamash had ordained was already fulfilled when he said, 'In the evening, when the rider of the storm sends down the destroying rain, enter the boat and batten her down.' The time was fulfilled, the evening came, the rider of the storm sent down the rain. I looked out at the weather and it was terrible, so I too boarded the boat and battened her down. All was now complete, the battening and the caulking; so I handed the tiller to Puzur-Amurri the steersman, with the navigation and the care of the whole boat.

"With the first light of dawn a black cloud came from the horizon; it thundered within where Adad, lord of the storm was riding. In front over hill and plain Shullat and Hanish, heralds of the storm, led on. Then the gods of the abyss rose up; Nergal pulled out the dams of the nether waters, Ninurta the war-lord threw down the dykes, and the seven judges of hell,
the Annunaki, raised their torches, lighting the land with their livid flame. A stupor of despair went up to heaven when the god of the storm turned daylight to darkness, when he smashed the land like a cup. One whole day the tempest raged, gathering fury as it went, it poured over the people like the tides of battle; a man could not see his brother nor the people be seen from heaven. Even the gods were terrified at the flood, they fled to the highest heaven, the firmament of Anu; they crouched against the walls, cowering like curs. Then Ishtar the sweet-voiced Queen of Heaven cried out like a woman in travail: 'Alas the days of old are turned to dust because I commanded evil; why did I command this evil in the council of all the gods? I commanded wars to destroy the people, but are they not my people, for I brought them forth? Now like the spawn of fish they float in the ocean.' The great gods of heaven and of hell wept, they covered their mouths.

"For six days and six nights the winds blew, torrent and tempest and flood overwhelmed the world, tempest and flood raged together like warring hosts. When the seventh day dawned the storm from the south subsided, the sea grew calm, the flood was stilled; I looked at the face of the world and there was silence, all mankind was turned to clay. The surface of the sea stretched as flat as a roof-top; I opened a hatch and the light fell on my face. Then I bowed low, I sat down and I wept, the tears streamed down my face, for on every side was the waste of water. I looked for land in vain, but fourteen leagues distant there appeared a mountain, and there the boat grounded; on the mountain of Nisir the boat held fast, she held fast and did not budge. One day she held, and a second day on the mountain of Nisir she held fast and did not budge. A third day, and a fourth day she held fast on the mountain and did not budge; a fifth day and a sixth day she held fast on the mountain. When the seventh day dawned I loosed a dove and let her go. She flew away, but finding no resting-place she returned. Then I loosed a swallow, and she flew away but finding no resting-place she returned. I loosed a raven, she saw that the waters had retreated, she ate, she flew around, she cawed, and she did not come back. Then I threw everything open to the four winds, I made a sacrifice and poured out a libation on the mountain top. Seven and again seven cauldrons I set up on their stands. I heaped up wood and cane and cedar and myrtle. When the gods smelled the sweet savour, they gathered like flies over the sacrifice. Then, at last, Ishtar also came, she lifted her necklace with the jewels of heaven that once Anu had made to please her. 'O you gods here present, by the lapis lazuli round my neck I shall remember these days as I remember the jewels of my throat; these last days I shall not forget. Let all the gods gather round the sacrifice, except Enlil. He shall not approach this offering, for without reflection he brought the flood; he consigned my people to destruction.'