

It is said that there was some family trouble at Alex's home. At any rate, one night Alex got a rifle and shot his wife. It is said that he went mad.

After the slaying, he took his lantern in his hand, climbed a certain tree near a tiny inlet lagoon now called the Alex, and there hanged himself.

There is an odd sequel to this story. From the day that Alex died, local Aborigines began to see a strange light that danced and weaved in a fantastic corroboree over the waters of the Muiree and would dart like a fiery spirit between the boles of the sacred trees of the old burial ground. It wasn't too long before Aborigines wouldn't go near the place. But if strangers chance to walk alone on the Muiree, they shouldn't be surprised to see a dancing light pass over them, or around them and touch eerily upon the waters of the Muiree. And from the banks of the lagoon emerges, it is said, a small greyish dog that trots towards a stranger as if to greet him. As the dog approaches the intruder, he

will notice that the light grey colour of the little dog becomes darker and coming nearer still, becomes as black as night. The blackness is only relieved by the red glowing embers of the dog's eyes.

He passes the stranger and it is only then that the intruder will realize how immensely bigger the dog has become as it has approached and passed him. Should the man then dare to look back at the large black shape behind him, he will notice the eyes calling him, pleading with him to follow, and he will see the small dancing light flickering and skipping along like a beckoning finger alongside the dog. Then both slowly disappear into the base of a gnarled old burial tree that has been hollowed out by fire and time. The Aborigines say that in the base of the tree something is buried which is precious beyond all understanding. . . . Others say that perhaps Alex's secret lies there, too horrible to be told? Only the dog knows and dogs do not tell tales.



*Ron Merritt and
family—Condobolin*