

# THE COLOURED ECHIDNA

EUNICE  
DAY









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# THE COLOURED ECHIDNA



Dedicated to my three sons, their children  
and their children's children.  
I am proud to be your mother, grandmother  
and great grandmother. ED



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# THE COLOURED ECHIDNA



## EUNICE DAY





A long time ago, a group of echidnas lived close to the blue and green mountains. All the echidnas were black and white with a little grey.

All except one . . .





*The Coloured Echidna.*





Coloured Echidna was not happy.  
Wherever he went, his quills changed to match  
the landscape.  
But he could never look like the other echidnas.  
No matter how hard he tried, his rainbow colours  
always shone through.

Coloured Echidna just wanted to be like his family  
and friends.

‘Why am I different?’ he asked his parents.

‘We do not know,’ his dad said.

‘We love you just the way you are,’ his mum said.





He decided to ask the Elders if they knew.  
'Only Wise Old Owl knows why you are so  
colourful,' the Elders told him.  
Coloured Echidna decided to ask Wise Old Owl.  
'Head towards the east. That is where she lives,'  
the Elders said.

His parents came to see him off.  
'Remember, we will always love you just the  
way you are,' they said.  
Coloured Echidna walked towards the east,  
where the mountains looked dark yellow and blue.  
The moon seemed to follow him every step  
of the way.







Coloured Echidna walked all night.  
Black Crow and his brother flew down to him.  
'I like your glossy black feathers,' Coloured Echidna said.  
'I like all your beautiful colours,' said Black Crow.  
'What are you?'  
'I am an echidna.'  
'Why are you so colourful?' asked Black Crow's brother.  
'I do not know. But I heard that Wise Old Owl can tell me.'  
'Good luck!' said Black Crow and his brother.  
Coloured Echidna kept walking towards the east.





Along came Goanna.

'All of your colours make everything look so bright,'  
said Goanna. 'What are you?'

'I am an echidna,' said Coloured Echidna.

He noticed Goanna's beautiful, shiny yellow spots.

'I have never seen an echidna so colourful in all my  
days,' said Goanna.

'I am going to find Wise Old Owl. She will tell me  
why I have all these colours.'

'Good luck!' said Goanna.

Coloured Echidna kept walking towards the east.







Up ahead, Coloured Echidna saw Mother Emu and her two chicks.

He loved the blue colours of Mother Emu's feathers.

He loved the striped lines of Young Emu and Baby Emu.

'Mum, what is that?' Young Emu said.

'It looks like a very colourful echidna!' Mother Emu said.

'Why are you such pretty colours?' Baby Emu asked Coloured Echidna.

'I do not know,' said Coloured Echidna. 'But I heard Wise Old Owl can tell me.'

'Good luck!' the family said.

Coloured Echidna kept walking towards the east.



Coloured Echidna walked and walked until  
he arrived at the yellow and blue mountains.  
He got there just as the sun was setting.







His heart beat fast.

This was it! He would finally find out why he was all these colours.

Maybe Wise Old Owl could even teach him how to look like everyone else.

Coloured Echidna saw Wise Old Owl in the branches of a gum tree.



She flew down.

'Are you looking for me, Coloured Echidna?'

'Yes. Please, can you tell me why I am these colours?'

Why am I not like everyone else?'

'You are different for a reason. Your colours make people happy. Everyone has only a few colours, but you have them all. That is special.'

'So my colours are not a mistake?'

Coloured Echidna looked at his colours.

He saw how beautiful they were.







'Your colours were given to you by the Great Spirit,'  
said Wise Old Owl.

'And He never makes a mistake. You need to accept  
your difference. Go back to your family and spread  
your colours of the rainbow everywhere you go.'

Coloured Echidna was now excited about all his colours.

'Thank you, Wise Old Owl.'

He also thanked the Great Spirit, who never makes  
a mistake.



The next day Coloured Echidna walked back home.

He thought about Black Crow and his brother.

He thought about Goanna.

He thought about Mother Emu and her two chicks.

He thought about Wise Old Owl and how all the animals were beautiful just the way they were.







Coloured Echidna smiled.  
He knew for the first time in his life that he was  
special just the way he was.

He looked up and saw a beautiful rainbow in the sky.  
The rainbow glowed.  
Coloured Echidna glowed too.  
What a wonderful feeling to be who he was!





## ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR

Eunice Day was born in Clermont, Queensland. Her tribal name is Una Kanji. She is an Elder in Blackwater, where she now lives. Eunice has participated in NAIDOC committees and has used her art to bridge the gap between her people and non-Indigenous peoples. She has been doing workshops in arts and storytelling for over fifteen years. She loves the colours on canvas. She has worked in schools with whoever wants to know more about the Culture. Her ideal is that they learn that sharing and caring was a part her people's Culture and still is.



## ABOUT FIRST 5 FOREVER

In the first five years, little moments make a big difference.

Children learn best from those closest to them – and by talking, reading, singing and playing together every day, families support their child's brain development and help them build a lifelong love of learning and discovery.

First 5 Forever is an early literacy program supporting families to make the most of this time. The program offers free sessions for children 0–5 and their families throughout Queensland's public library and Indigenous Knowledge Centre network, and provides fun, informative and hands-on tips and advice online.

First 5 Forever is an initiative of the Queensland Government, coordinated by State Library of Queensland and delivered in partnership with local government. Each year, public libraries and Indigenous Knowledge Centres across Queensland welcome thousands of families to First 5 Forever activities.

To find out more about First 5 Forever, visit [www.slq.qld.gov.au/first5forever](http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/first5forever)

## ABOUT THIS SERIES

State Library of Queensland has published twelve new children's picture books for Queensland's littlest readers as part of First 5 Forever. The books promote strong early literacy foundations through a range of subjects and styles: the amusing antics of Queensland's faunal emblem, the koala; educational aids such as counting and alphabet books; stories of belonging; journeys of discovery; true-life tales; and much more.

Produced exclusively for State Library of Queensland and First 5 Forever, this series reflects the diversity of Queensland, celebrates the uniqueness of our state, and aims to inspire a love of reading and discovery in a new generation of little Queenslanders.

The books also showcase writers and artists with a Queensland connection who are based throughout the state. They feature emerging and established talent, as well as First Nations writers and artists whose books were developed with State Library of Queensland's black&write! editorial team.









Meet Coloured Echidna. His quills can change to match the colours of the rainbow. But all he wants is to look like everyone else. So Coloured Echidna goes on a journey to the yellow and blue mountains to find out why he is so colourful. Along the way, Coloured Echidna meets all sorts of beautiful and unique animals.

Will Coloured Echidna also discover how special he is?

