

Tales from the Bush Mob: The Sweetest Egg of All

Written and illustrated by Helen Milroy

OVERVIEW

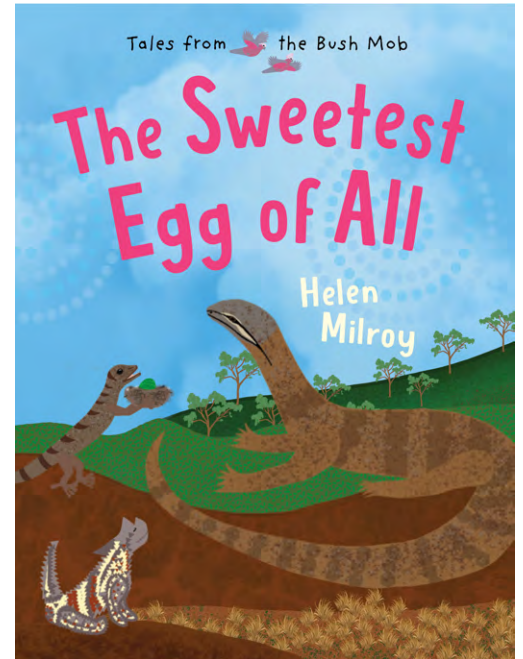
'Tales from the Bush Mob' is a series of books about the Bush Mob, a group of animals who work together to solve problems. Each book shares a rich landscape of characters and places, including Lofty the emu, Willy-willy Wagtail, Eagle, Sugar Glider, Bat, Platypus, Koala, Wombat, Kookaburra, Echidna, Kangaroo. These stories emphasise the value of respect for First Nations culture and country, as well as the importance of courage, perseverance, and wisdom to bind communities together.

The Sweetest Egg of All is the third book in the series, and follows Gecko, Thorny Devil and Scrubby Python, who admire Bungarra and want to find a special birthday present for their friend. When they hear from King George Brown (KGB) that Willy-Wagtail's egg is the sweetest egg of all, they hatch a plan to steal an egg for Bungarra's birthday. But KGB and King Toad have different plans for the sweetest egg of all and now Dingo and the Bush Mob go into action to save Willy Wagtail's egg. Filled with gorgeous illustrations and exciting tales, this will be a popular book for the whole family.

- Award-winning author
- The third in a unique series of books featuring Australian animals and First Nations philosophies
- Highly illustrated in full colour

ABOUT THE AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR

Helen Milroy (MB BS CertChildPsych W.Aust., FRANZCP) is a born storyteller and a talented artist. She is a descendant of the Palyku people of the Pilbara region of Western Australia but was born and educated in Perth. She studied Medicine at the University of Western Australia, worked as a General Practitioner and Consultant in Childhood Sexual Abuse at Princess Margaret Hospital for children for several years before completing specialist training in Child and Adolescent psychiatry. Helen is the WA State Recipient Australian of the Year 2021 and joint winner of the 2020 Australian Mental Health Prize.



THEMES

- Respect
- Friendship
- Action
- Honesty
- Problem-Solving
- Teamwork
- Aboriginal Australians - Social Life and Customs
 - Stories
 - Community

AUDIENCE AND WRITING STYLE

Tales from the Bush Mob: The Sweetest Egg of All is a story told in three short chapters, making it suitable as both a read-aloud and independently read text. Through the misadventures of Thorny Devil and Gecko, this moralistic tale shows how doing things for friends comes with the responsibility of doing so in the right way. It also explores the pitfalls of being led astray by others. The wisdom of the Bush Council as it helps right these wrongs, reflects the importance of Elders and community in First Nations' cultures. In addition, the Epilogue helps readers make direct connections between the narrative and its themes. The characters and their traits are recognisable and relatable, making this text easily accessible to early childhood audiences.



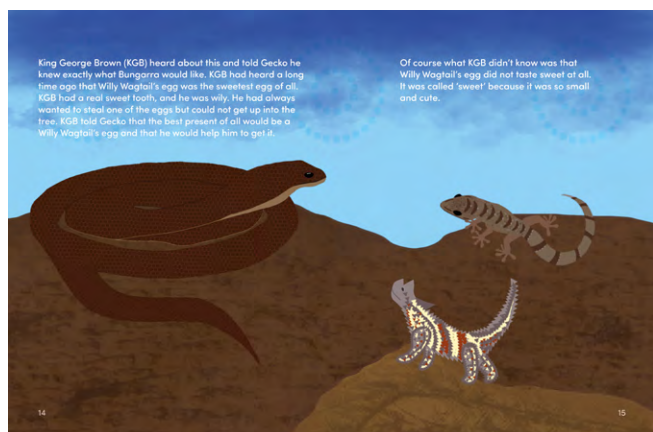
LINKS TO THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

This book and the classroom activities provided are primarily relevant to the following areas of the Australian Curriculum:

Learning area	Year level	
English	F-3	The appendix highlights relevant content descriptions, cross-curriculum priorities and general capabilities that relate to the text and classroom ideas provided.
HASS	2	
Science	3	

CLASSROOM IDEAS

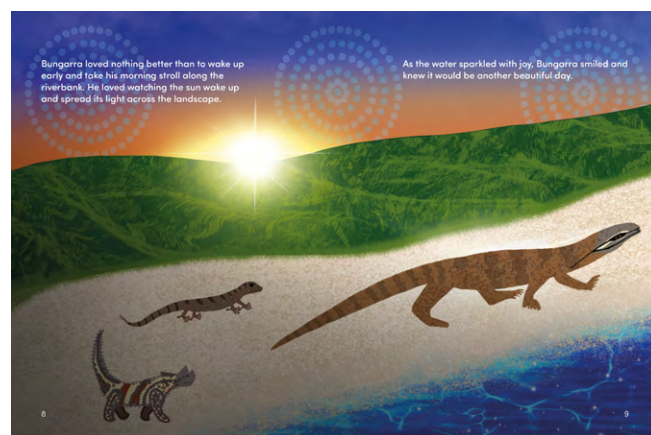
- Before reading, discuss the title and cover of the book. Examine the end papers and character pages. If this is your first experience with the 'Tales from the Bush Mob' series, what do you think the Bush Mob might be? How do the illustrations help us to recognise this as a First Nations story?
- With reference to the page opening below, discuss how the illustrations tell us about the power imbalance between KGB and the two lizards. How are camera angle and body language used to create meaning?



- How is *The Sweetest Egg of All* a book about honesty and friendship?
- Create a character profile of KGB. What are his character flaws? What evidence of these can you find in the text?
- What does *The Sweetest Egg of All* share about the importance of teamwork and community?
- Why do Thorny Devil and Gecko want to be friends with Bungarra so badly? What mistakes do they make in their efforts to be his friend? What makes a good friend? What advice would you give them about friendship?
- At the end of each chapter, make predications about what might happen next. Give reasons to support your ideas.
- What are the character strengths of Boss Dog Dingo? How is he a true leader, as opposed to KGB and King Toad who claim they should be the bosses of the community? What makes a good leader?
- How significant is it that Willy Wagtail goes straight

to the Bush Mob for help when she finds her egg missing? What does this share about the importance of community?

- Discuss the characteristics of King Toad. Why does the text say he is not 'a real king'?
- Create a story map of the events that take place in the story. How do the actions of the Bush Mob help Thorny Devil, Gecko, Bungarra and Willy Wagtail?
- In a reflection, share a time when you made a bad choice to impress someone. How did you feel? How did you resolve the situation?
- How does the illustration on the following page opening reflect the strong connection that Bungarra has with Country? How is figurative language used on these pages to help show this special connection?



- How do characters such as Koala, Platypus, Echidna and Kangaroo play important but 'quiet' roles in *The Sweetest Egg of All*?
- What motivates Thorny Devil and Gecko to act as they do? What advice would you give them?
- KGB is described as 'wily'. What do you think this means? Use a dictionary to define wily. After finishing the text, describe why KGB is described in this way.
- Both Scrubby Python and KGB are snakes, but they are very different from one another. On a piece of



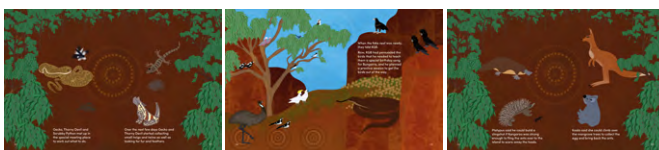
CLASSROOM IDEAS CONT.

A3 paper, draw a line diagonally from one corner to the other. On each side of the line, describe each character. Use examples from the text to support your thinking.

- Discuss the body language of Willy Wagtail in the page opening below. What is happening in this part of the story?



- King Toad is an introduced species. Find out more about the threats to native species caused by introduced species. How is this shared in *The Sweetest Egg of All*?
- Why are councils such as the Bush Mob needed in communities? How are they represented in your community? How do different members of the Bush Mob contribute to its success?
- Retell the *The Sweetest Egg of All* in the role of Willy Wagtail.
- Use *The Sweetest Egg of All* to enquire into various types of lizards found in the Australian outback. In particular, find out unique features of thorny devils and geckos.
- In the role of Thorny Devil, create a journal sharing what you've learnt about yourself from this experience.
- Retell the events of *The Sweetest Egg of All* in your own words.
- Create a retelling of one of the three chapters by using illustrations, but no words.
- In pairs or small groups, role-play a scene of your choice from *The Sweetest Egg of All*.
- Throughout *The Sweetest Egg of All*, the illustrations feature concentric circles. What do these represent in Aboriginal artwork?



- What advice would you give Thorny Devil and Gecko about friendship?
- Discuss the important role the bull ants play in the story. What is special about the relationship between them and Echidna?
- How does KGB learn a lesson in the story?
- Role play the scene in which Gecko apologises to Willy Wagtail for taking her egg. Discuss the importance of both offering *and* accepting genuine apologies.
- Why do Gecko, Thorny Devil and Scrubby Python feel shame? Why is feeling shame an important emotion for them to experience? How will this help them to grow and change?
- In the role of Gecko, write a reflection about the events of *The Sweetest Egg of All*. Why do you feel foolish for being tricked?
- Create a Word Wall of new and interesting vocabulary encountered in the text. Use these words in your retelling of this story.
- Using cut out figures of the characters below, retell this story. Alternatively, use these cut-out figures in a finger puppet retelling of *The Sweetest Egg of All*.



- Read the other two stories in the Bush Mob series as companion texts to *The Sweetest Egg of All*.
- What would you like to say to KGB and King Toad?
- How does the community work together to cheer Bungarra up?
- What are the main lessons shared in *The Sweetest Egg of All*?



APPENDIX – LINKS TO THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

Year	Curriculum Area
F	English Literature <ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify some features of texts including events and characters and retell events from a text (ACELT1578)Retell familiar literary texts through performance, use of illustrations and images (ACELT1580)
1	English Literature <ul style="list-style-type: none">Discuss how authors create characters using language and images (ACELT1581)Discuss features of plot, character and setting in different types of literature and explore some features of characters in different texts (ACELT1584)Recreate texts imaginatively using drawing, writing, performance and digital forms of communication (ACELT1586)Innovate on familiar texts by using similar characters, repetitive patterns or vocabulary (ACELT1832)
2	English Literature <ul style="list-style-type: none">Discuss how depictions of characters in print, sound and images reflect the contexts in which they were created (ACELT1587)Discuss the characters and settings of different texts and explore how language is used to present these features in different ways (ACELT1591)Innovate on familiar texts by experimenting with character, setting or plot (ACELT1833) HASS Geography <ul style="list-style-type: none">The ways in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples maintain special connections to particular Country/Place (ACHASSK049)
3	English Literature <ul style="list-style-type: none">Discuss how language is used to describe the settings in texts, and explore how the settings shape the events and influence the mood of the narrative (ACELT1599)Create imaginative texts based on characters, settings and events from students' own and other cultures using visual features, for example perspective, distance and angle (ACELT1601) Science Biological Sciences <ul style="list-style-type: none">Living things can be grouped on the basis of observable features and can be distinguished from non-living things (ACSSU044)

