



How the Birds Got Their Colours

The following story is a traditional Aboriginal Dreamtime story from the Bardi people of Broome, WA





Long, long ago in the Dreamtime when all of the land and animals were being created, all the birds were black in colour. They did not have any bright or fancy colours on their feathers. They were all just one colour.



Until one day, a little bird flew around looking for food. The little bird flew closer to the ground to catch a big, juicy and delicious-looking grub. When the bird flew close to a tree, he landed on a big, sharp branch. It cut deep into his foot and made him very, very sick.



For days and days, the little bird was in so much pain. He lay on the branch with a big swollen foot. It kept getting more swollen and more painful. He was dying! Soon after this, all of his friends came to see if they could help.



They all gathered around the sick little bird, wondering what they could do to save him. All except for one bird...the crow. The crow just wandered back and forth, not doing anything to help.



Then suddenly, a parrot rushed forward towards the sick little bird. With her very sharp and pointy beak, the parrot burst the little bird's swollen foot. Many different colours rushed out and splashed all over the parrot. There were reds, greens, blues, yellows and all the other colours of the rainbow. All of the wonderful bright colours ran down her chest, wings and tail.



The colours also splashed out onto the other birds. Some were red, some were blue, some were brown and some were yellow. Some birds were lucky and even got spots and stripes too! All the animals looked around to see how lovely and colourful they all looked. All of the birds were happy and excited, except for crow, who was standing far away from them all. Crow didn't get any colours at all.



The sick little bird soon became better. He thanked the parrot for helping him with his swollen foot and then flew away. And that's how the birds got their colours!



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