



A Waltz for Matilda

Jackie French

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The story behind Banjo Paterson's iconic Australian song. Ages 10-14 'Once a jolly swagman camped by a Billabong Under the shade of a Coolibah tree And he sang as he watched and waited till his Billy boiled You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me...' In 1894, twelve-year-old Matilda flees the city slums to find her unknown father and his farm. But drought grips the land, and the shearers are on strike. Her father has turned swaggie and he's wanted by the troopers. In front of his terrified daughter, he makes a stand against them, defiant to the last. 'You'll never catch me alive, said he...' Set against a backdrop of bushfire, flood, war and jubilation, this is the story of one girl's journey towards independence. It is also the story of others who had no vote and very little but their dreams. Drawing on the well-known poem by A.B. Paterson and from events rooted in actual history, this is the untold story behind Australia's early years as an emerging nation. 'Jackie French has a passion for history, and an enviable ability to weave the fascinating minutiae of everyday life into a good story.' Magpies Magazine

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