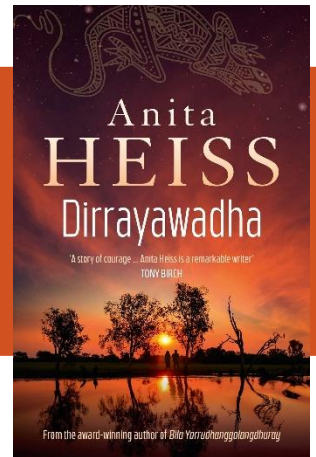




Dirrayawadha

Anita Heiss



Author Background

Dr Anita Heiss OAM is an internationally published, award-winning author of non-fiction, historical fiction, commercial women's fiction and children's novels. She is a proud member of the Wiradyuri Nation of central New South Wales, an Ambassador for the Indigenous Literacy Foundation and the GO Foundation, and Professor of Communications at the University of Queensland. Anita is also the Publisher at Large of Bundyi, an imprint of Simon & Schuster cultivating First Nations talent. As an artist in residence at La Boite Theatre, she adapted her novel *Tiddas* for the stage. It premiered at the 2022 Brisbane Festival and was produced by Belvoir St for the Sydney Festival in 2024. Her novel about the Great Flood of Gundagai, *Bila Yarrudhanggalangdhuray*, won the 2022 NSW Premier's Indigenous Writers' Prize and was shortlisted for the 2021 ARA Historical Novel Prize and the 2022 ABIA Awards. Anita's first children's picture book, *Bidhi Galing (Big Rain)*, also about the Great Flood of Gundagai, was released in 2023. Anita enjoys running, eating chocolate and being a creative disruptor.

Message from Dr Anita Heiss to the Bathurst book clubs

Yiradhu marang (good day)

I just wanted to take this moment to thank you for your interest in and engagement with *Dirrayawadha (Rise Up)*. As a reader, I hope this story speaks to your heart and your conscience, and that you can talk to others about our shared history and the importance of truth-telling for all of us.

Yindyamarra bu ngurrbul (respect and love),
Anita Heiss

Book Summary

Dirrayawadha (Rise Up) is a groundbreaking historical novel about resistance, resilience and love during the frontier wars. Told through the eyes of Miinaa, a young Wiradyuri woman, the story follows her life while she is working at Cloverdale for a white family who have settled there.

Miinaa's brother is the Wiradyuri leader Windradyne. He visits her when he can to share news about the unrest across their Country – they hope the violence stays away from Cloverdale. Miinaa falls in love with an Irish convict, Daniel O'Dwyer, and their lives are transformed together. As a convict, Dan has a deep understanding of being misplaced, and as an Irishman, he also desires sovereignty from the British. We read of the couple's trials and tribulations as they navigate the colonisation and resistance by the local Aboriginal people.

Discussion Questions

- ❖ What do you understand by the term colonisation?
- ❖ There was a resistance by Aboriginal people to the invasion, colonisation, massacres and destruction of culture that is often left out of history books. Why do you think colonisers did this?
- ❖ Share what your understanding is about how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were affected by and responded to the arrival of colonisers.
- ❖ How was Australia affected by colonisation?
- ❖ Why and how were the Nugents different to other colonisers?
- ❖ What is a character trait you would use to describe Daniel O'Dwyer?
- ❖ Do you think that Miinaa felt the same as Dan did when he first saw her? Do you think their love would even be possible during these times?
- ❖ How do you feel about Miinaa and her loss of family, connection and culture? How would you feel?
- ❖ What similarities do Dan and Miinaa have in common?
- ❖ What are your thoughts about Windradyne and his values?
- ❖ What did winning look like for Windradyne and Miinaa? Is that different to how people feel about stopping wars of today?
- ❖ How do you think Windradyne and Miinaa felt while walking back to Cloverdale to share the news of peace and an end to Martial Law? How would you feel?
- ❖ What did the introduction of Martial Law mean to the colonisers and the Wiradyuri people? How would they have felt?

References and further reading

- ❖ Simon & Schuster Dirrayawadha information: bibliography; glossary of Wiradyuri words; Teacher's resources (with great follow up questions and insights)
<https://www.simonandschuster.com.au/p/Dirrayawadha-byAnita-Heiss>