



A Commonwealth of Thieves: The Improbable Birth of Australia

Thomas Keneally

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In this spirited history of the remarkable first four years of the convict settlement of Australia, Thomas Keneally offers us a human view of a fascinating piece of history. Combining the authority of a renowned historian with a brilliant narrative flair, Keneally gives us an inside view of this unprecedented experiment from the perspective of the new colony's governor, Arthur Phillips. Using personal journals and documents, Keneally re-creates the hellish overseas voyage and the challenges Phillips faced upon arrival: unruly convicts, disgruntled officers, bewildered and hostile natives, food shortages, and disease. He also offers captivating portrayals of Aborigines and of convict settlers who were determined to begin their lives anew. *A Commonwealth of Thieves* immerses us in the fledgling penal colony and conjures up the thrills and hardships of those first four improbable years.

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