



### 3. THE JOURNEY INTO THE DREAMTIME

#### 1 Memory game

Read this introduction, then close your book and say which words you remember.

#### The Dreamtime: definition

The Aboriginal traditional way to educate about Aboriginal history, culture and law was storytelling, using a combination of art forms such as painting, singing, music and dancing to illustrate the ancient "Dreamtime stories". During the Dreaming, ancestral spirits came to earth and created the land-

forms, the animals and plants. Because the "Stories of the Dreaming" have been handed down through the generations, they are not owned by individuals.

10 They belong to a group or nation, and the storytellers of that nation are appointed by the elders<sup>1</sup>, with an obligation to pass the stories along, ensuring that young people build and retain a sense of who they are.

1. *les anciens*

#### 2 A lost culture **WB**

Read the text below and answer the questions.

- a. What was the impact of the white settlers on the Aborigines' culture?
- b. What is the Aborigines' relationship with the land?



#### WE ARE ALL ONE

These elders speak limited English. But even so, their words, spoken softly in short sentences, have a poetic directness. Neidjie has said, for example, "First [white] people come to us, they started and run our life... quick. They bring drink. First they should ask about fish, cave, Dreaming, but... they rush in. They make school, ... teach. Now Aborigine lose... everything." To understand the Gagudju<sup>1</sup> is to understand their Dreamtime – to us a very complex concept, to the 10 Gagudju a simple one that explains the cohesion and interdependence of all living things.

"Dreaming" and "Dreamtime" are direct translations from Aboriginal words but, in fact, have little to do with dreams as we know them. Dreamtime refers to the beginnings of life and its continuation into the future. [...]

"Aboriginals have a special connection with everything that is natural... We see all things natural as part of us. All the things on earth we see as part human." [...]

In all these things, Neidjie stressed, all living things are as one. He said, "Earth our mother, eagle our cousin. Tree, he is pumping our blood. Grass is growing. And we are all one." He 20 added that when the ancestral beings had completed their creation, they told the people: "Now we have done these things, you make sure they remain like this for all time. You must not change anything."

Thus the people were charged with the custodianship<sup>2</sup> of the land and all living things. It is 25 what the Gagudju call "looking after the country." The Dreamtime is the cohesive force that keeps man and his environment in harmony. It has done so for perhaps 2,000 generations.

■ *The National Geographic*, February, 1988

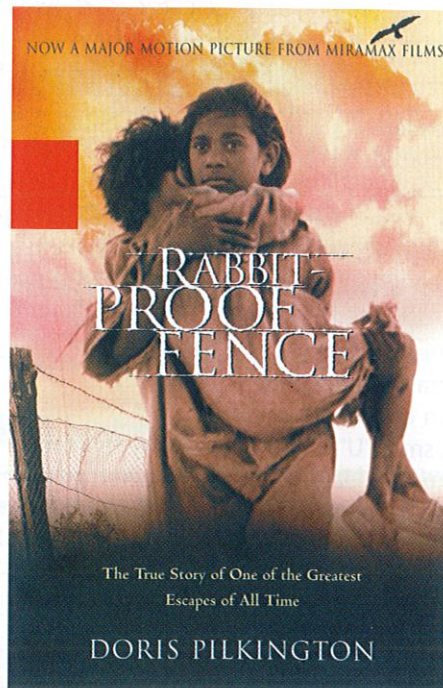
1. *peuple aborigène dont la langue est aujourd'hui disparue* 2. *conservation*



## 4. THE STOLEN GENERATION

### 1 A true story

a. Read the text on this back cover.



### Rabbit-Proof Fence by DORIS PILKINGTON

THE REMARKABLE TRUE STORY OF THREE YOUNG GIRLS WHO CROSS THE HARSH AUSTRALIAN DESERT ON FOOT TO RETURN HOME.

Following an Australian government edict in 1931, black Aboriginal children and children of mixed marriages were gathered up by Whites and taken to settlements to be assimilated. In this book, award-winning author Doris Pilkington traces the captivating story of her mother Molly and of three young girls uprooted from her community in South Western Australia.

b. Here are six extracts from the novel. They have been jumbled. Read each of them.

**A** Molly and Gracie sat silently on the horse, tears streaming down their cheeks as Constable Riggs turned the big bay stallion<sup>1</sup>, and led the way back to the depot. A high pitched wail<sup>2</sup> broke out. The cries of agonised mothers and the women, and the deep sobs<sup>3</sup> of grandfathers, uncles and cousins filled the air. Molly and Gracie looked back just once before they disappeared through the river gums<sup>4</sup>. Behind them, those remaining in the camp found strong sharp objects and gashed themselves and inflicted wounds to their heads and bodies as an expression of their sorrow.

The two frightened and miserable girls began to cry, silently at first, then uncontrollably.

1. étalon 2. gémissement  
3. sanglots 4. gommiers (arbres)

**B** When they saw the camp site they almost ran but they didn't have the energy. They knew exactly where to find their aunt's camp as they had both been there before. Their aunt greeted them in the traditional manner by crying with them and for those who had passed away since their last meeting. "Where did you girls come from? Where have you been?" she asked. Their aunt and other relations couldn't believe what the girls told them. They were amazed and intrigued by their story. "You poor silly girls, you could have died in the bush somewhere and no one would have known." She began to cry loudly.

**C** Instead of a residential school, the Aboriginal children were placed in an overcrowded dormitory. The inmates<sup>1</sup>, not students, slept on cyclone beds with government-issue blankets. There were no sheets or pillow slips<sup>2</sup> except on special occasions when there was an inspection by prominent officials. Then they were removed as soon as the visitors left the settlement and stored away until the next visit. On the windows there were no colourful curtains<sup>3</sup>, just wire<sup>4</sup> screens and iron bars.

1. pensionnaires 2. ni draps, ni taies d'oreiller 3. rideaux 4. fil de fer

**D** As soon as the other girls left the dormitory, Molly beckoned the two sisters to come closer to her, then she whispered urgently. "We're not going to school, so grab your bags. We're not staying here." Daisy and Gracie were stunned and stood staring at her. "What did you say?" asked Gracie. "I said, we're not staying here at the settlement, because we're going home to Jilagong." Gracie and Daisy weren't sure they had heard correctly or not. "Move quickly," Molly ordered her sisters. She wanted to be miles away before their absence was discovered; time was of the essence.

Her two youngsters faced each other, both looking very scared and confused. Daisy turned to Molly and said nervously, "We're frightened, Dgudu. How are we going to find our way back home to Jilagong? It's a long way from home."

Molly leaned against the wall and said confidently. "I know it's a long way to go, but it's easy. We'll find the rabbit-proof fence<sup>1</sup> and follow that all the way home."

"We're gunna walk all the way?" asked Daisy. "Yeah," replied Molly, getting really impatient now. "So don't waste time."

1. a boundary between certain Australian States, marked by a fence through which rabbits are unable to pass

**E** One day about midday, when the sun was high in the azure sky, Daisy and Gracie heard an excited shriek<sup>1</sup> from Molly who, as usual, was walking ahead of them.

"Here it is. I've found it. Come and look," she yelled as she laughed and waved her arms.

"What is it?" asked Gracie. "What are you shouting for?"

"I've found the rabbit-proof fence. See," she said, pointing to the fence. "This will take us all the way home to Jilagong."

1. cri perçant

**F** Molly, Daisy and Gracie were very much at home in this part of the country. They evaded capture by practising survival skills inherited from their nomadic ancestors.

"My legs are sore, Dgudu," cried Gracie. "I can't walk."

"My legs hurt too," chimed in Daisy.

"Mine are sore, too," said Molly. "But we can't hang around here all day, we gotta walk on further."

"I'll carry Daisy first, have a rest then it will be your turn, Gracie," said Mollie.

"Alright," both agreed.

The progress was slow and laborious but they persisted.

c. Re-organize the different parts in chronological order. Which clues helped you?

d. Sum up the story (80 words).

e. Justify the title of the book and the title at the top of page 218.

f. React to the story you have just read.

### 2 Closing the gap

CD WB

a. Listen to the speech delivered in Parliament by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd on February 13, 2008 and turn to your Workbook for help.

b. Listen to the testimony of an Aboriginal woman.

c. An Aboriginal woman writes a letter to the Prime Minister in answer to his speech (150 words).



A C D - F - E - B