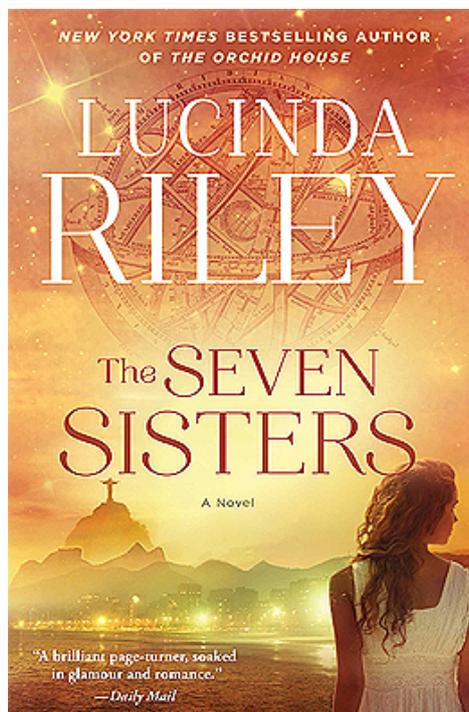


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Fiction

***The Seven Sisters* by Lucinda Riley (2014) (Thanks Kristi)**



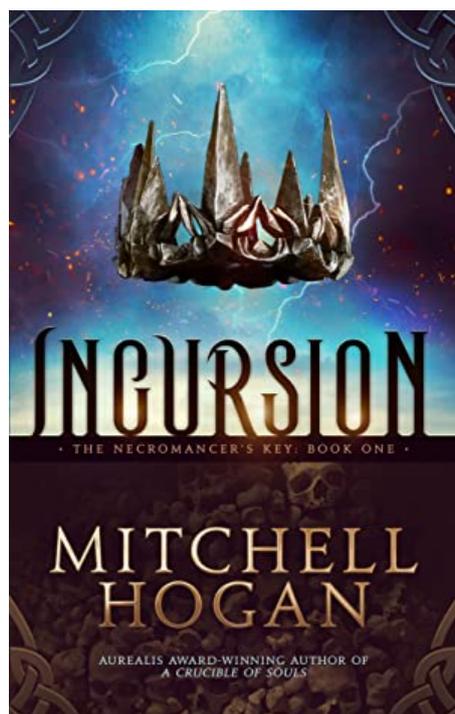
The Seven Sisters series, a sweeping epic tale, tells the story of adopted sisters and is based allegorically on the mythology of the famous star constellation.

This first book begins with Maia D'Apliese as she and her five sisters gather together at their childhood home, "Atlantis"—a fabulous, secluded castle situated on the shores of Lake Geneva—having been told that their beloved father, who adopted them all as babies, has died. Each of them is handed a tantalizing clue to her true heritage—a clue which takes Maia across the world to a crumbling mansion in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Once there, she begins to put together the pieces of her story and its beginnings.

Eighty years earlier in Rio's Belle Epoque of the 1920s, Izabela Bonifacio's father has aspirations for his daughter to marry into the aristocracy. Meanwhile, architect Heitor da Silva Costa is devising plans for an enormous statue, to be called Christ the Redeemer, and will soon travel to Paris to find the right sculptor to complete his vision. Izabela—passionate and longing to see

the world—convinces her father to allow her to accompany him and his family to Europe before she is married. There, at Paul Landowski's studio and in the heady, vibrant cafes of Montparnasse, she meets ambitious young sculptor Laurent Brouilly, and knows at once that her life will never be the same again.

***Incursion* by Mitchell Hogan (2020) (Thanks Shane)**



A corrupted power stirs from beyond the grave.

A sacred order of knights sworn to protect the world from evil.

The Necromancer Queen will rise again.

Seventeen years have passed since the Necromancer Queen Talia was overthrown and slain, and her capital city destroyed by the Knights of the Order of Eternal Vigilance.

Anskar DeVantte, raised in the sacred disciplines of the Order, is now ready to face the brutal initiation trials to become a consecrated knight-sorcerer.

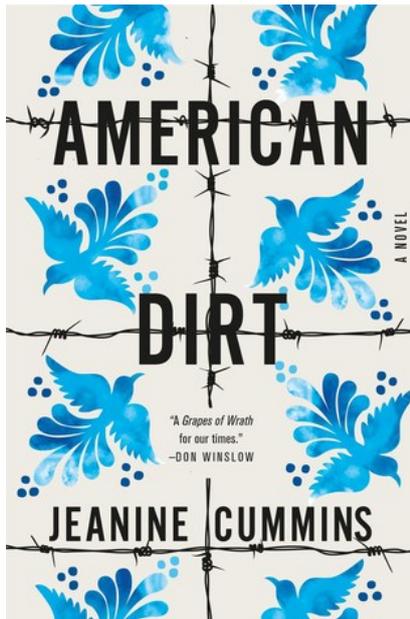
But the further Anskar rises in the ranks the more his faith wavers, and he is beset by harrowing dreams and uncertainty. As troubling powers awaken within him, a schism grows between Anskar and his hallowed Order, and he draws the hungry gaze of the vanquished queen's fanatical followers.

As Anskar pieces together the mysteries of his early life, and begins to understand the malevolent forces gathering in his path, he finds himself with a crucial choice to make:

Remain loyal to the Order's righteous mission, or control the dark powers growing within him.

Either way, his destiny is steeped in war. The only question is, which side will he be on? (*Book 1 in The Necromancer's Key series - Ed*)

American Dirt - Jeanine Cummins (2020) (Thanks Lois P.)

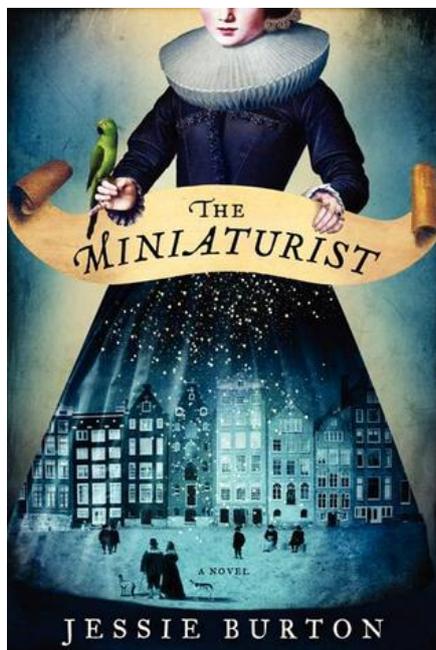


Lydia Quixano Pérez lives in the Mexican city of Acapulco. She runs a bookstore. She has a son, Luca, the love of her life, and a wonderful husband who is a journalist. And while there are cracks beginning to show in Acapulco because of the drug cartels, her life is, by and large, fairly comfortable.

Even though she knows they'll never sell, Lydia stocks some of her all-time favorite books in her store. And then one day a man enters the shop to browse and comes up to the register with a few books he would like to buy—two of them her favorites. Javier is erudite. He is charming. And, unbeknownst to Lydia, he is the jefe of the newest drug cartel that has gruesomely taken over the city. When Lydia's husband's tell-all profile of Javier is published, none of their lives will ever be the same.

Forced to flee, Lydia and eight-year-old Luca soon find themselves miles and worlds away from their comfortable middle-class existence. Instantly transformed into migrants, Lydia and Luca ride *la bestia*—trains that make their way north toward the United States, which is the only place Javier's reach doesn't extend. As they join the countless people trying to reach *el norte*, Lydia soon sees that everyone is running from something. But what exactly are they running to?

The Miniaturist / Jessie Burton (2014) (Thanks Ann)



There is nothing hidden that will not be revealed ...

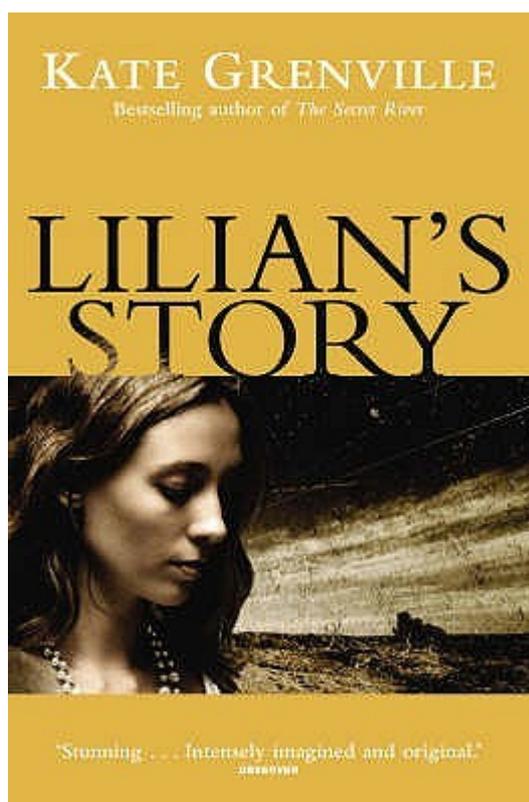
On an autumn day in 1686, eighteen-year-old Nella Oortman knocks at the door of a grand house in the wealthiest quarter of Amsterdam. She has come from the country to begin a new life as the wife of illustrious merchant trader Johannes Brandt, but instead she is met by his sharp-tongued sister, Marin. Only later does Johannes appear and present her with an extraordinary wedding gift: a cabinet-sized replica of their home.

It is to be furnished by an elusive miniaturist, whose tiny creations mirror their real-life counterparts in unexpected ways ... Nella is at first mystified by the closed world of the Brandt household, but as she uncovers its secrets she realizes the escalating dangers that await them all. Does the miniaturist hold their fate in her hands? And will she be the

key to their salvation or the architect of their downfall? Beautiful, intoxicating and filled with heart-pounding suspense, *The Miniaturist* is a magnificent story of love and obsession, betrayal and retribution, appearance and truth. Enchanting, beautiful, and exquisitely suspenseful, *The Miniaturist* is a magnificent story of love and obsession, betrayal and retribution, appearance and truth.

(Book 1 – Book 2 The House of Fortune due for release 2022 - Ed)

***Lilian's Story* / Kate Grenville (1997) (Thanks Lois P.)**

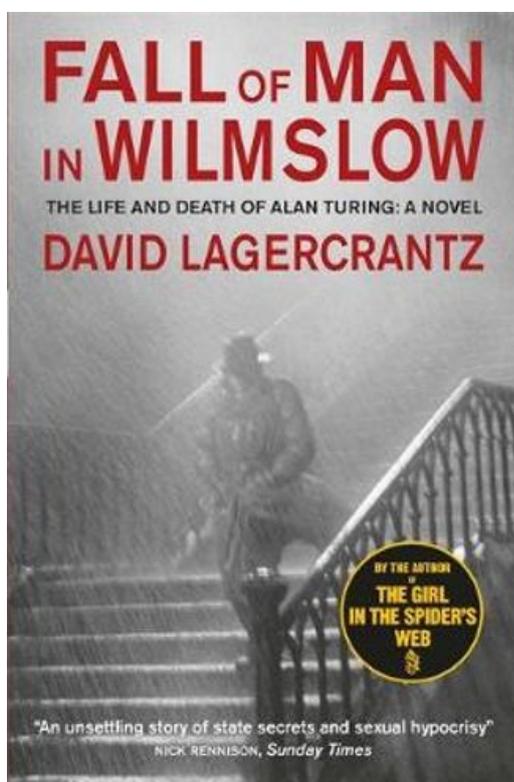


Shielded from emotional and physical abuse by layers of fat, Lilian struggles to escape a suffocating existence in the home of her tyrannical Victorian father and her elegant but ineffectual mother.

Madness, cruelty, and sexuality permeate the family's upper-crust Australian world. Lilian Una Singer starts life at the beginning of the 20th century as the daughter of a prosperous middle-class Australian family. She ends it as a cheerfully eccentric bag-lady living on the streets, quoting Shakespeare.

This book traces the progress of her life's journey, and why she made the choices she did. She's a person large in spirit as well as body, who wants to invent her own story, rather than allow it to be invented for her. Life presents her with many obstacles, including the sinister advances of her father—but in spite of this she succeeds. Triumphant she makes her life her own, savouring every moment with the reminder that "everything matters."

***Fall of Man in Wilmslow* / David Lagercrantz (2016) (Thanks Marianne)**



June 8, 1954. Alan Turing, the visionary mathematician, is found dead at his home in sleepy Wilmslow, dispatched by a poisoned apple.

Taking the case, Detective Constable Leonard Corell quickly learns Turing is a convicted homosexual. Confident it's a suicide, he is nonetheless confounded by official secrecy over Turing's war record. What is more, Turing's sexuality appears to be causing alarm among the intelligence services - could he have been blackmailed by Soviet spies?

Stumbling across evidence of Turing's genius, and sensing an escape from a narrow life, Corell soon becomes captivated by Turing's brilliant and revolutionary work, and begins to dig deeper. But in the febrile atmosphere of the Cold War, loose cannons cannot be tolerated. As his innocent curiosity takes him far out of his depth, Corell realises he has much to learn about the dangers of forbidden knowledge.

Turing's most notable work is as a computer scientist. In 1936, he developed the idea for the Universal Turing Machine, the basis for the first computer. He also developed a test for artificial intelligence in 1950, which is still used today. His most famous work was helping to crack the Enigma Code in WW2. (Ed)

Non Fiction

Stalin's Wine Cellar / John Baker & Nick Place (2020) (Thanks Cherry)

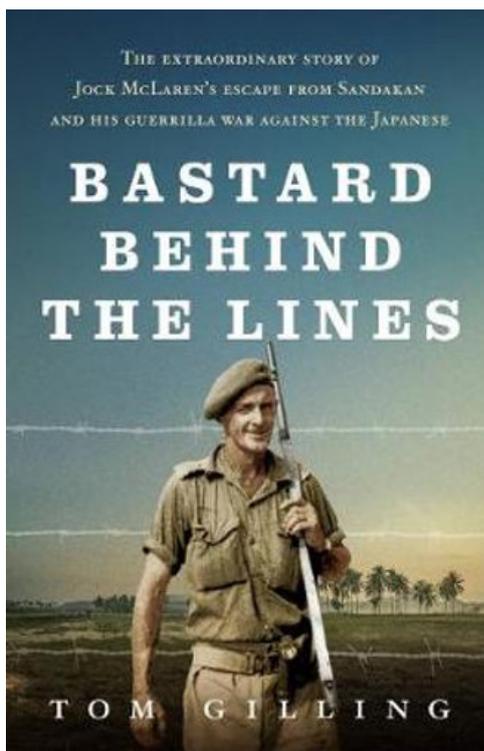


In the late 1990s, John Baker was known as a purveyor of quality rare and old wines. Always entrepreneurial and up for adventure, he was the perfect person for an occasional business partner to approach with a mysterious wine list that was foreign to anything John, or his second-in-command, Kevin Hopko, had ever come across. The list was discovered to be a comprehensive catalogue of the wine collection of Nicholas II, the last Tsar of Russia. The wine had become the property of the state after the Russian Revolution of 1918, during which Nicholas and his entire family were executed. Now owned by Stalin, the wine was discreetly removed to a remote Georgian winery when Stalin was concerned the advancing Nazi army might overrun Russia, and inevitably loot artefacts and treasures. Half a century later, the wine was rumoured to be hidden underground and off any known map.

John and Kevin embarked on an audacious, colourful and potentially dangerous journey to Georgia to discover if the wines actually existed; if the bottles were authentic and

whether the entire collection could be bought and transported to a major London auction house for sale. *Stalin's Wine Cellar* is a wild, sometimes rough ride in the glamorous world of high-end wine. From Double Bay Sydney to Tbilisi Georgia, via the streets of Paris, the vineyards of Bordeaux and iconic Château d'Yquem.

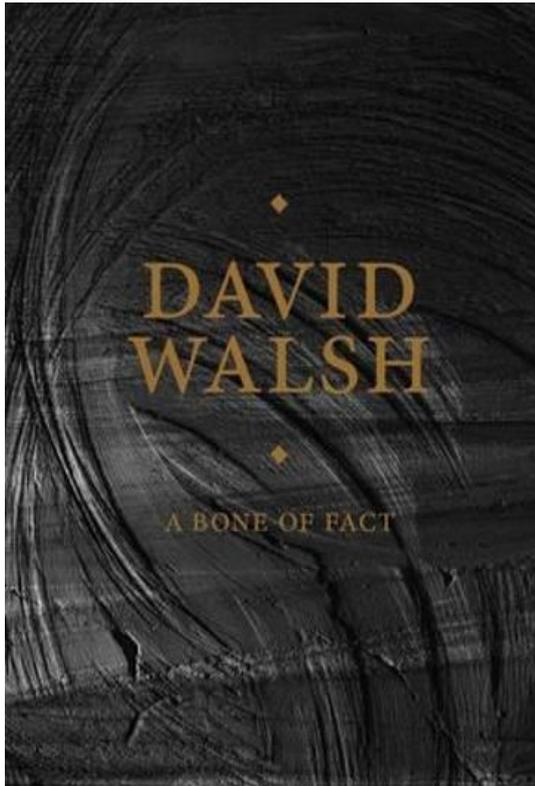
Bastard behind the lines : the extraordinary story of Jock McLaren's escape from Sandakan and his guerrilla war against the Japanese / Tom Gilling (2021) (Thanks Sue)



He escaped from Singapore's Changi prisoner of war camp to become one of Australia's great World War II guerrilla fighters.

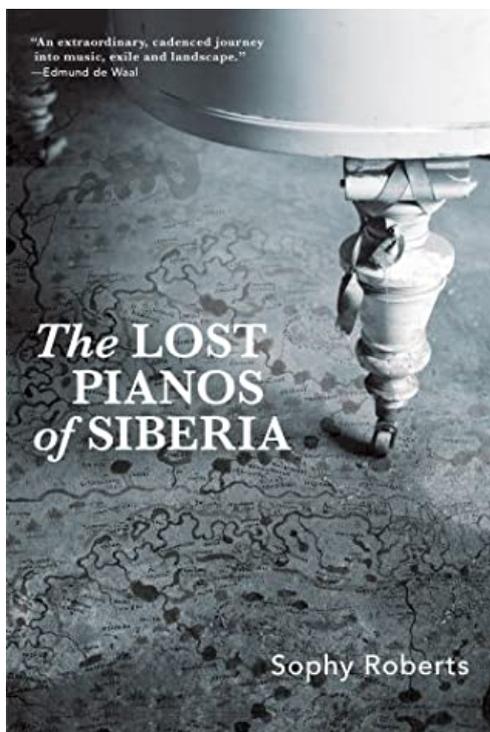
Scottish-born but a Queenslander to the bone, Jock McLaren was a prisoner of war. He escaped twice, first from Changi and later from the infamous Sandakan POW camp in Borneo. After paddling a dugout canoe across open sea, he fought for two years with Filipino guerrillas. At the helm of his 26-foot whaleboat, he sailed into enemy-held harbours, wreaking havoc before heading back out to sea. In early 1945 he joined Australia's secretive Z Special Unit, parachuting into Borneo to carry out reconnaissance and organise anti-Japanese resistance ahead of Allied landings. He cheated death on numerous occasions and saved his own life by removing his appendix without anaesthetic. Drawing on Allied and Japanese wartime documents, *Bastard Behind the Lines* brings the story of a courageous digger vividly to life and throws light on a rarely explored aspect of Australia's Pacific war.

***A Bone of Fact* / David Walsh (2014) (Thanks Cherry)**



David Walsh - the creator of Mona in Hobart - is both a giant and an enigma in the Australian art world. A multi-millionaire who made his money gambling, David has turned a wild vision into a unique reality; he is in turns controversial, mysterious and idolised. *A Bone of Fact* is his utterly unconventional and absorbing memoir. He says that if it weren't for good fortune, his exhilarating and "successful" life might've been a complete disaster. Walsh insists that despite his wealth and fame he isn't special or gifted, just absurdly lucky. If, in the game of life, heads wins, Walsh is yet to toss tails. *A Bone of Fact* is consistent with the persona Walsh has cultivated since MONA's opening in 2011 made him a figure of public interest. It is over the top, unconventional, unashamedly ego-driven, ironic, often a little inappropriate, and, like everything Walsh does, a big risk. *A Bone of Fact* reads like a personal manifesto as much as a memoir, meaning that Walsh is opening himself up to a type of direct and personal criticism he has never risked before.

***The Lost Pianos of Siberia* / Sophy Roberts (2020) (Thanks Suzanne)**

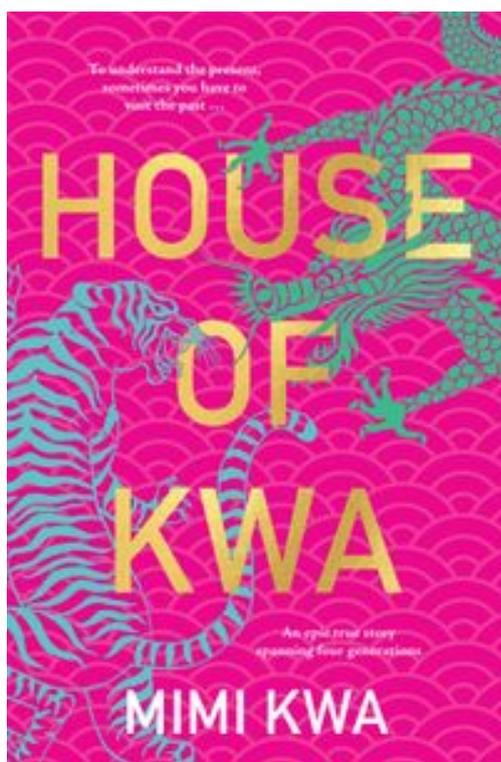


Siberia's story is traditionally one of exiles, penal colonies and unmarked graves. Yet there is another tale to tell. Dotted throughout this remote land are pianos — grand instruments created during the boom years of the nineteenth century, as well as humble, Soviet-made uprights that found their way into equally modest homes. They tell the story of how, ever since entering Russian culture under the westernizing influence of Catherine the Great, piano music has run through the country like blood. How these pianos travelled into this snow-bound wilderness in the first place is testament to noble acts of fortitude by governors, adventurers, and exiles. Siberian pianos have accomplished extraordinary feats, from the instrument that Maria Volkonsky, wife of an exiled Decembrist revolutionary, used to spread music east of the Urals, to those that brought reprieve to the Soviet Gulag. That these instruments might still exist in such a hostile landscape is remarkable. That they are still capable

of making music in far-flung villages is nothing less than a miracle.

The Lost Pianos of Siberia is largely a story of music in this fascinating place, following Roberts on a three-year adventure as she tracks a number of different instruments to find one whose history is definitively Siberian. Her journey reveals a desolate land inhabited by wild tigers and deeply shaped by its dark history, yet one that is also profoundly beautiful — and peppered with pianos.

House of Kwa / Mimi Kwa (2021) (Thanks Jenny)



A riveting true story spanning four generations.

Mimi Kwa ignored the letter for days. When she finally opened it, the news was so shocking her hair turned grey. Why would a father sue his own daughter?

The collision was over the estate of Mimi's beloved Aunt Theresa, but its seed had been sown long ago. In an attempt to understand how it had come to this, Mimi unspools her rich family history in *House of Kwa*.

One of a wealthy silk merchant's 32 children, Mimi's father, Francis, was just a little boy when the Kwa family became caught up in the brutal and devastating Japanese occupation of Hong Kong during World War II. Years later, he was sent to study in Australia by his now independent and successful older sister Theresa. There he met and married Mimi's mother, a nineteen-year-old with an undiagnosed, chronic mental illness. Soon after, 'tiger' Mimi arrived.....

Riveting, colourful and often darkly humorous, *House of Kwa* is an epic family drama spanning four generations, and

an unforgettable story about how one woman finds the courage to stand up for her freedom and independence, squaring off against the ghosts of the past and finally putting them to rest. Throughout, her inspiration is Francis's late older sister, the jet-setting, free-spirited Aunt Theresa, whose extraordinary life is a beacon of hope in the darkness.

A Father's Plea / Kamalle Dabboussy with Mic Looby (2021)



When Mariam married her childhood sweetheart in a fairytale Sydney wedding, her father Kamalle dreamed of a beautiful future for his family. When the young couple and their baby daughter went on an overseas holiday, he couldn't have been happier. But a dark secret was lurking on the horizon. They would not be coming home.

Mariam disappeared. Months later, Kamalle was informed by the Australian government that his daughter had been coerced into Syria. He later learnt that she had been forced at gunpoint, by her husband, across the border into Syria and into the clutches of ISIS. When her husband was killed, Mariam was forced to marry another ISIS fighter, with whom she had another child. When he was killed she was forced to marry again; she was trapped. But since the defeat of ISIS, instead of being brought home, Mariam and her three young children have been demonised as 'foreign fighters', forced to languish in refugee camps while their home country refuses to repatriate them.

Kamalle has been working with international agency Save the Children for over two years trying to bring home his daughter and grandkids, who have been abandoned amongst the 20 Australian adults and 47 children. Interacting with law enforcement and government agencies in Australia, he was told that keeping quiet would be in their best interests. That has achieved nothing. Now he tells his story.