



The Man from Snowy River (Australian Classics)

A B Banjo Paterson

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The Man from Snowy River. A. B. ("Banjo") Paterson. With a Preface by Rolf Boldrewood. "The Man from Snowy River" is a poem by Australian bush poet Banjo Paterson. It was first published in The Bulletin, an Australian news magazine, on 26 April 1890, and was published by Angus & Robertson in October 1895, with other poems by Paterson, in The Man From Snowy River, and Other Verses. The poem tells the story of a horseback pursuit to recapture the colt of a prizewinning racehorse that escaped from its paddock and is living with the brumbies (wild horses) of the mountain ranges. Eventually the brumbies descend a seemingly impassably steep slope, at which point the assembled riders give up the pursuit, except the young hero, who spurs his 'pony' (horse) down the "terrible descent" to catch the mob. Two characters mentioned in the early part of the poem are featured in previous Paterson poems; "Clancy of the Overflow" and Harrison from "Old Pardon, Son of Reprieve". The poem was written at a time in the 1880s and 1890s when Australia was developing a distinct identity as a nation. Though Australia was still a set of independent colonies under the final authority of Britain, and had not yet trod the path of nationhood, there was a distinct feeling that Australians needed to be united and become as one. Australians from all walks of life, be they from the country or the city (Clancy of the Overflow), looked to the bush for their mythology and heroic characters. They saw in the Man from Snowy River a hero whose bravery, adaptability and risk-taking could epitomise a new nation in the south. This new nation emerged as the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901.

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