Outback: Short Story Anthology

This collection of short stories about the Outback is the result of the inaugural writing competition for the Outback Writers' Festival held in Winton on 21-23 June, 2016.

A Prayer for Blue Delaney, by Kirsty Murray

A Prayer for Blue Delaney follows the outback adventures of orphaned Colm, who runs away from the cruelties of Bindoon Boys' Home and goes in search of a family of his own. The Children of the Wind is a much-acclaimed quartet that makes history leap off the page, with vivid characters, strong emotions and page-turning action.

Thirst, by Lizzie Wilcock

Karanda Hooke doesn’t need anybody or anything. On her way to her sixth foster home, a crash leaves her stranded in the outback with only a backpack, a bottle of water and a stained picture of the mother she hasn’t seen in years. This is her chance to escape her old life. There's only one thing in her way ... eight-year-old Solomon.

The December Boys, by Michael Noonan

The December boys is set in the 1930s at the time of the Great Depression. The 5 December boys, so named because it is thought their birthdays all fell in that month, are residents of a Catholic orphanage in the Australian outback but we observe their Christmas holidays at the seaside. There we meet a Dickensian collection of unique characters as the boys become engaged in a series of exploits which they hope might lead to a new home for one of them.

The Sundowners, by Jon Cleary

The epic tale of the outback Australian family, the Carmody's. The Carmody's live in the outback, travelling around, shearing, droving, making ends meet and looking for that one special place they can settle down in. Along the way, Paddy, his wife Ida, and their son, Sean, meet some of the most memorable characters in fiction. The Sundowners is a novel filled with kindness and happiness, as well as toughness and danger and is set against the magnificent backdrop of the wild, harsh and beautiful Australian landscape.

Stolen, by Lucy Christopher

Gemma, 16, is on layover at Bangkok Airport, en route with her parents to a vacation in Vietnam. She steps away for just a second, to get a cup of coffee. Ty—rugged, tan, too old, oddly familiar—pays for Gemma's drink. And drugs it. They talk. Their hands touch. And before Gemma knows what's happening, Ty takes her. Steals her away. The unknowing object of a long obsession, Gemma has been kidnapped by her stalker and brought to the desolate Australian Outback. Stolen is her gripping story of survival, of how she has to come to terms with her living nightmare—or die trying to fight it.

Great pioneer women of the outback, by Susanna de Vries [True Stories!]

Short biographies of outback women who faced hardship, danger and deprivation.

The Shiralee, by Darcy Niland

Everyone has their cross to bear - their swag, their shiralee - and for Macauley, walking across New South Wales in search of work, it is his young daughter who has to suffer his resentment at having her in tow. But then, he discovers that the ties that bind can be as much a comfort as a burden, and what he thought of as his Shiralee could be the one thing that will save him from himself. This classic Australian novel perfectly captures the spirit of the bush and the tough, resilient people of the outback.

Red Dust, by Fleur McDonald

Red Dust opens with Gemma Sinclair grieving the death of her husband, Adam, in a horrific plane crash and learning she's inherited the 10,000 hectare station his family has worked for generations. Despite huge scepticism from surrounding landowners, Gemma decides not to sell Bilibinya, disregarding Adam's dying words that he's in trouble and she must sell the station. As if the job of keeping the station going isn't enough, a wave of innuendo sweeps through the local community about Adam's involvement in cattle and sheep duffing. There are even whispers the plane crash was no accident.