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## About the Author

Catherine Jinks was born in Brisbane, Australia in 1963. She grew up in Papua New Guinea and later studied medieval history at the University of Sydney. She is now a full-time writer, residing in the Blue Mountains of New South Wales with Peter and their daughter Hannah.

Catherine is a four-time winner of the Children's Book Council of Australia Book of the Year award, and has also won a Victorian Premier's Literature Award, the Adelaide Festival Award for Literature, the Ena Noel Award for Children's Literature and an Aurealis Award for Science Fiction. In 2001 she was presented with a Centenary Medal for her contribution to Australian Children's Literature.

# Shepherd

by

## Catherine Jinks

## About the Book

Tom Clay was a poacher back in Suffolk. He was twelve when he was caught, tried and transported to New South Wales.

Now, assigned to a shepherd's hut out west, he is a boy among violent men. He keeps his counsel and watches over the sheep; he steers clear of blowhards like the new man, Rowdy Cavanagh. He is alert to danger, knowing he is a foreigner here – that the land resists his understanding.

The question is: how fast can he learn? Because a vicious killer named Dan Carver is coming for Tom and Rowdy. And if Tom can't outwit Carver in the bush – and convince Rowdy to keep his stupid mouth shut – their deaths will be swift and cruel.

## Other books by the author

Visit <http://catherinejinks.com/books-2/> for other books by the author

## Discussion points

- What does the cover tell you about *Shepherd*?
- What elements of the novel make it into an adventure story?
- How important is the relationship between Tom Clay and his sheepdog, Gyp? What does it represent to Tom?
- Would you say Tom is a sympathetic hero? Why, or why not?
- Dan Carver is as villainous and determined as they come. Discuss the violence he employs in the novel. There are some very graphic scenes, how did you react to them as a reader? Did the same scenes stand out to your fellow readers? What would you imagine it is like to write this?
- How does your opinion of Rowdy Cavanagh change as the novel progresses?
- How does the author conjure up the environment of the bush in the 1840s? Do you think it would be any different today
- How does the author convey a mounting sense of tension throughout the novel?

## Suggested further reading

Preservation by Jock Serong

Half Moon Lake by Kirsten Alexander

The Making of Martin Sparrow by Peter Cochrane

The Escape Room by Megan Goldin

Blood in the Dust by Bill Swiggs

## Useful Links

Catherine Jinks' website: [www.catherinejinks.com](http://www.catherinejinks.com)

Australian Metro article by Catherine Jinks: [Land of Risks and Rewards](#)

Australian Book Review: [review of Shepherd](#)

[The Wilbur & Niso Smith Foundation](#)