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Dancing with Strangers: Europeans and Australians at First Contact

Inga Clendinnen

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In January 1788, the First Fleet arrived in New South Wales, Australia and a thousand British men and women encountered the people who would be their new neighbors. Dancing with Strangers tells the story of what happened between the first British settlers of Australia and these Aborigines. Inga Clendinnen interprets the earliest written sources, and the reports, letters and journals of the first British settlers in Australia. She reconstructs the difficult path to friendship and conciliation pursued by Arthur Phillip and the local leader 'Bennelong' (Baneelon) that was ultimately destroyed by the assertion of profound cultural differences. A Prize-winning archaeologist, anthropologist and historian of ancient Mexican cultures, Inga Clendinnen has spent most of her teaching career at La Trobe University in Bundoora, Australia. Ambivalent Conquests: Maya and Spaniard in Yucatan (Cambridge, 1989) and Aztecs: An Interpretation (Cambridge, 1995) are two of her best-known scholarly works; Tiger's Eye: A Memoir, (Scribner, 2001) describes her battle against liver cancer. Reading the Holocaust (Cambridge, 2002) explores World War II genocide from various perspectives.

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