

A MOST PECULIAR ACT

By Marie Munkara

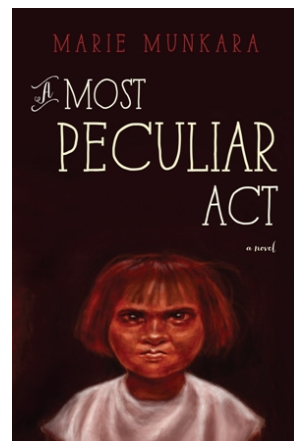
Published by Magabala Books, 1 May 2014, \$24.95

A Most Peculiar Act is the hilarious new novel from award-winning indigenous author Marie Munkara. It takes a look at the ludicrous and bizarre nature and interpretations of the Aboriginal Protection Acts of the early twentieth century – and makes merciless fun of the characters involved. The story follows the trials and tribulations of Sugar, a 16 year-old Aboriginal fringe-camp dweller.

Set in Darwin during the Japanese bombing raids, we meet characters such as: Horatio Humphris (Horrid Hump), chief protector of Aborigines, teetotaler and 42 year old virgin; Ralphie Brown, who has the unedifying honour of being the only public servant to ever be sacked; Drew Hepplewaite, redneck racist and female patrol officer armed with balls of steel; and the Administrator's wife, Penelope, who has a fetish for anything oriental. Then there's Sugar's mate Nig Nog, who teaches Sugar a few useful tricks of the "trade" while they do time at the Half-Caste Compound; Fuel Drum's suspicious death at the hands of his six-month-old granddaughter, Honey; and Horseshoe with his wayward and slutty wife, Brumby.

With the Aboriginal Ordinances Act and the 'White Australia' policy as a backdrop, Sugar's resistance to assimilation, and the attempts by Horrid Hump and his henchmen to enforce it, becomes a protracted battle that ends at the Christmas party from Hell. Interspersed with illicit affairs, stolen children, leprosy and "f***ing foreigners," this story sees Sugar and her oppressors finally meet on a level playing field that none of them ever expected – a Japanese bombing raid.

Set at the time when World War Two was raging through the Pacific *A Most Peculiar Act* gives unusual satirical treatment of a serious subject – segregation - under the various Aboriginal Protection Acts and the ludicrous circumstances they gave rise to and offers a new (and Indigenous) spin on usual WWII stories.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Marie Munkara was born on the banks of the Mainoru River in Arnhemland. Her first book *Every Secret Thing* won the 2008 David Unaipon Award and the 2010 NT Book of the Year. She lives in Darwin with her menagerie of cats, dogs and frogs.

For more information or interview requests contact either:
Laura Rae at DMCPRmedia | Tel: (02) 9550 9207 | laura@dmcpr.com.au
Debbie McInnes Tel: 02 9550 9207 | Debbie@dmcpr.com.au