

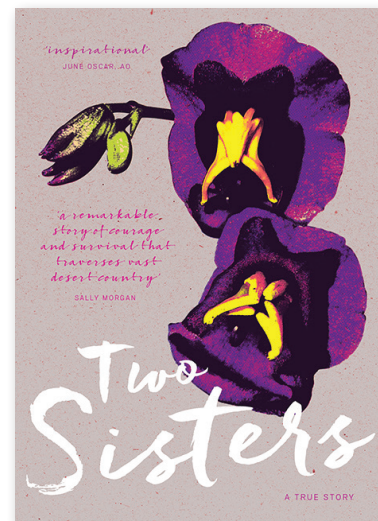
TWO SISTERS

The gripping true story of young Walmajarri sisters, Ngarta and Jukuna and their exodus from the Great Sandy Desert during a period of extraordinary change

Ngarta lived in terror of the two men. She had seen them spear her mother and kill her grandmother and then her brother ... she kept wondering who would be next. When she had the chance, she took her mother to one side. 'I said to my mother: "You and me'll have to go, run away in the night. They might kill us." But my mother wouldn't listen.' ... The next afternoon, when the two brothers were out of sight, Ngarta ran away.

Ngarta and Jukuna lived in the Great Sandy Desert. They traversed country according to the seasons, just as the Walmajarri people had done for thousands of years. But it was a time of change. Desert people who had lived with little knowledge of European settlement were now moving onto cattle stations. Those left behind were vulnerable and faced unimaginable challenges.

In 1961, when Jukuna leaves with her new husband, young Ngarta remains with a group of women and children. Tragedy strikes and Ngarta is forced to travel alone. Her survival depends on cunning and courage as she is pursued by two murderers in a vast unforgiving landscape. Jukuna's rich account may be the first autobiography written in an Aboriginal language. Presented in English and Walmajarri, her determination to see her language written has made her one of our most valued authors.



'A remarkable story of courage and survival that traverses vast desert country.' – Sally Morgan

About the authors

Ngarta Jinny Bent spent her early years as a hunter and gatherer. As a young woman, she moved onto stations in the Kimberley. Ngarta's art work has been exhibited in Australia and overseas. She died in 2002.

Jukuna Mona Chuguna walked out of the desert in 1961. She worked on cattle stations and moved to Fitzroy Crossing in the 1970s. She was one of the first women to attend Walmajarri literacy classes and learn to write English. Jukuna travelled in Australia and overseas to exhibit her paintings. She died in 2011.

Pat Lowe migrated from England to Australia in 1972. She worked as a psychologist in Fremantle and later moved to Broome. In 1986, Pat lived in a desert camp with artist Jimmy Pike, where she came to know Jukuna. Pat Lowe has published widely.

Eirlys Richards first studied Walmajarri with the goal of teaching literacy and Bible translation in the late 1960s. She moved to Fitzroy Crossing and has maintained her link with Walmajarri people ever since. She has published several texts on the Walmajarri language.

Available August 2016 in all good bookshops and online from Magabala Books RRP \$24.99.

Launched in 1987, Magabala Books is a not-for-profit publishing house that aims to promote, preserve and publish Indigenous Australian culture.

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