Rabbit Proof Fence

Doris Pilkington Garimara

The True Story Of One Greatest Escapes All Time

In 1922 a group of three girls, Doris Pilkington, Dolly and Trudy, escaped from the Moore River Native Settlement, an institution designed to assimilate Aboriginal girls into the culture of white Australia. The three girls were part of a larger group of Aboriginal children who were systematically removed from their families and placed in government-run institutions, known as "residential schools," where they were forced to adopt the culture and language of the dominant society. This policy was part of a broader program known as "assimilation," which aimed to eliminate Aboriginal culture and integrate Aboriginal people into mainstream Australian society.

The three girls were given the numbers 82, 83, and 84 by their parents before they were forced to leave their homelands. They were then taken to the Moore River Native Settlement, where they were separated from their families and forbidden to speak their native language. After regular stays in solitary confinement, the three girls planned and executed a daring escape from the grim camp. They crossed the Perron River using homemade rafts and then walked for days, finally making their way to the coastal town of Geraldton, where they were promptly arrested and returned to the settlement.

Despite these challenges, the three girls remained committed to their quest for freedom. They continued to resist the assimilation policy and eventually managed to return to their homelands. Their journey is an inspiring testament to the courage and resilience of Aboriginal people in the face of oppression and the determination to maintain their cultural identity.

The story of the three girls is told in Doris Pilkington Garimara's book "Rabbit-proof fence," which is a true account of their escape from the Moore River Native Settlement. The book offers a fascinating insight into the lives of Aboriginal people during this period and the challenges they faced in the struggle for their cultural identity.

The book has been widely acclaimed for its powerful storytelling and its role in raising awareness of the abuse and neglect suffered by generations of Aboriginal children in residential schools. It has been a catalyst for change and has contributed to the ongoing debate about the effects of assimilation policies on Aboriginal culture and identity.

In conclusion, "Rabbit-proof fence" is a moving and powerful story that highlights the resilience of Aboriginal people and their determination to maintain their cultural identity in the face of oppression. It is a must-read for anyone interested in the history of Aboriginal people in Australia and the challenges they have faced in the struggle for their cultural identity.