Can you anchor a shimmering nation state via regional indigenous roots? Kim Scott talks to Anne Brewster about That Deadman Dance

Anne Brewster

ABSTRACT

This interview focuses mainly on Kim Scott’s new novel That Deadman Dance which won the regional Commonwealth Writers Prize (Southeast Asian and Pacific region) and the Miles Franklin Award. The topics of conversation include Scott’s involvement in the Noongar language project (and the relationship of this project to the novel), the novel itself, the challenges of writing in English, the resistance paradigm and indigenous sovereignty and nationalism.

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DEADMAN WUNDERLAND Lyrics. 

[Hook] Deadman on the inside
Still got both my wrists tied
She wants all her wrists iced
I see what her end's like.

[Verse 1] Me, you
And the bottom
Meet you at the bottom
Other side of that bottle
She wants more Muscato (yeah)
I need more Picasso
Fuck your friend that man's a bitch
Probably wish I don't exist
Felt that same way at some point you ain't the only one who did
Look who just started here
Brown boy with parted hair
Finally departed
Swear I got a halo, mistake that for a target.

[Chorus] Deadman on the inside
Still got both my wrists tied
She wants all her wrists iced
I see what her end's like.

Australian writer Kim Scott’s novels include True Country, Benang and That Deadman Dance. He was the first Indigenous person to win the prestigious Miles Franklin Award and is highly regarded as a member of the Noongar community working towards language maintenance and renewal. He was trained as a teacher and worked in the northern part of Western Australia before settling in Fremantle. He was the Western Australian of the Year in 2012 and is currently a Professor at Curtin University. Our conversation focused on his new work, Taboo, which was released in July 2017. Can you talk about the presence of the supernatural or the fantastic or the mythic in your work? There is a bit of genre hopping in the new one, Taboo. Fairytale, there’s a bit of gothic maybe, a bit of zombie too, and so on. Anne Brewster, “Can You Anchor a Shimmering Nation State via Regional Indigenous Roots?” Kim Scott talks to Anne Brewster about That Deadman Dance, Cultural Studies Review, 18.1 (2012). Jane Kennedy, ‘Maman and Noongar Mambara Bakitj: Noongar stories keeping heritage strong’, ABC.net.au, 13 October 2011. Accessed July 2017.