

THE SILK MERCHANT'S SON

by **PETER BURKE**

ABOUT THE BOOK

The road to hell is paved with good intentions, silk and sermons. In 1845, linguistics professor Fabrice Cleriquot is despatched from Lyon to the Swan River Colony, sent away with a box full of silkworms, to stop him from bringing more disgrace upon the family. Accompanying him on board the *Elizabeth* are twenty-eight mismatched and misguided Catholic missionaries, including Dom Salvado, who seeks to create a Spanish Benedictine monastery deep in the bush, and the Irish Sisters of Mercy, who are fleeing a dreadful famine.

Given the job of distributing a huge donation from a wealthy benefactress, Fabrice bears witness to the folly of his travelling companions whose presumptuous attempts to rescue the colony and the original inhabitants from themselves can only lead to tragedy.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Peter Burke is a Perth doctor and writer of Western Australian historical fiction, his novels being enjoyed for their filmic quality and humour. Professionally, he divides his time between Murdoch University medical clinic and the hospitals of the Kimberley region of the North West.



KEY POINTS

- Peter's first novel, *The Drowning Dream*, was shortlisted for both the *Australian/Vogel's Literary Award* and the *WA Premier's Book Award*. His second book, *Wetwening Auralia*, followed the life of C.Y. O'Connor.
- Peter is passionate about Western Australia's history and this book provides an engaging, alternate version of the New Norcia story.

PRAISE FOR THE BOOK

'In *The Silk Merchant's Son*, we travel with dubiously motivated colonials through wonderfully detailed landscapes, encountering the perils of the missionary dream in the Swan River Colony and beyond. With a satirical eye and compassionate heart, Peter Burke potently and engagingly stories the damage wreaked in the name of good intentions.' Josephine Taylor, author of *Eye of a Rook*



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