

BOOKS

HORSE LOVERS' HEAVEN

Jesse Blackadder's *Paruku, The Desert Brumby* is quite simply a must-read for every horse-loving pre-pubescent girl. The book has a broader appeal too and would be appreciated by anyone who loves good stories about the Australian bush.

Paruku tells the story of 12-year-old Rachel who lives on a farm near Armidale, NSW, where her father is a vet, her mother a horse-breaker and her sister a champion endurance rider. A twist of fate enables Rachel to accompany her father to the Kimberley, WA, where he goes to catch desert brumbies for a Dubai sheik. She is torn between helping her Dad and allowing the wild creatures to have their freedom. Paruku is a young bay stallion captured as part of the Middle Eastern shipment, despite Rachel's best efforts. The rest of the novel follows the family's journey with the horses, including following them to their final destination at the sheik's plush Arabian endurance stables.

Jesse Blackadder was a contributor to **OUTBACK** in the past when she wrote a regular column about Landcare projects around the country. Since then her writing career has gone from strength to strength with the award-winning *Chasing the light: A Novel of Antarctica* for adults and *Stay: The Last Dog in Antarctica* for children. With *Paruku* she explores quite a different environment, both in the remote desert of Western Australia and the rich, exotic, urban backdrop of Dubai.

Paruku hooks the reader in from the very beginning and kids will enjoy a dose of education about horses and the outback, without even knowing it.

Paruku: The desert brumby

By Jesse Blackadder

www.harpercollins.com.au

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