



No Way Back

Valerie Wilding

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The riveting true story of thirteen-year-old Mary Wade – one of the first and youngest British convicts to be transported to Australia. Raised in the slums of eighteenth century London, Mary is sentenced to death for a petty theft at the age of just eleven. While she is shut up in Newgate prison awaiting execution, her sentence is commuted to transportation to an Australian penal colony. So Mary sets sail aboard a prison ship to the other side of the world. Australia brings the promise of a new life, but it is also harsh and wild. Does Mary have what it takes to survive in this land of danger and opportunity?

No Way Back Details

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From Reader Review No Way Back for online ebook

Rebecca says

Eleven-year-old Mary Wade is the oldest of seven children in a poor family living in London in 1789. Her father is usually away working, leaving her mother to care for the children alone. There is never enough money, and they are often cold and hungry. One day, hoping to help her mother, Mary makes a terrible decision that will change her life forever. With the help of her friend, Mary steals some clothing to sell. The next day, she is caught and arrested. At trial, she is convicted and sentenced to death, all for stealing a few pieces of clothing.

Mary spends the next few months in filthy Newgate Prison, wondering what will happen to her. She misses her family and is terrified she won't live to grow up and try to have a better life and have children of her own. Then her sentence is commuted to transportation to the new colony of New South Wales (present day Sydney, Australia). Mary is grateful for a chance to survive but sad she will never see England or her family again. The sea voyage is very long and Mary wonders what will await her at the end.

No Way Back is a bit different from the other books in the My Story series, since it is based on the life of a real person, unlike the other books, which describe real historical events from the point of view of a fictional main character. Mary Wade was one of the youngest convicts to be transported to Australia. She survived and thrived and grew up to have so many children that she now has thousands of descendants living today. It is also not an actual diary like the other books in the series (since Mary would not have had a diary to write in) but is written in the style of one. I enjoyed this book but I wish it had been a bit longer and more detailed. It ends with Mary's arrival in New South Wales and I would have liked to read about her life there. I think readers who enjoyed other books in the My Story series (or other similar series such as Dear America and Dear Canada) would enjoy this book as well.

Jen says

another really interesting story
about the life of Mary Wade http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_Wade
easy to read and hard to put down

Abby says

Loved this book. Love history and diaries this combination really works and is educational at the same time.
Great for me, about to take my SATS

Reading-Girl2 says

It was sad at some points but overall well-written.

Rebecca says

pretty good book it was interesting

Annick says

“No Way Back” by Valerie Wilding is a novel based on a true story set in 1789 and is presented as the diary of a girl convict.

It is about a poor English girl called Mary Wade who makes a mistake and steals some clothes and ends up in the filthiest prison of London where she is awaiting death by hanging. However her sentence is later changed and she is sent in a huge ship to Australia as a prisoner, where she begins a new life.

Mary Wade is a kind and helpful girl as even as she stole, it was out of kindness because she wanted money to buy her mum’s bible back. Another example is on page 107 where the author wrote that she stitched the hole in the Captains sleeve. Also on page 132 Mary helped another prisoner who was poorly to recover.

I think it is a very nice book with an interesting story which I would highly recommend especially if you are interested in the history of England and Australia. Although this book is a diary it is written with a mixture of narrative and dialogue which you wouldn’t usually expect. It would be good if there was a follow up to tell her new life in Australia.

By Annick

(age 9)

Piper says

Not my favourite book, but quite good for a My Story book.

Joey Susan says

What a fascinating story, I could have continued reading from this story I’d of loved to have read the story of her settling in Australia properly. Wow so so interesting and so different.

Mary Wade a poor girl who was only ever trying to help her family seemed to be doing the wrong things, as she goes one step too far one day she finds herself given the death sentence and is put in the worst jail in England. As the King decided to trial every convict she gets an offer of a freedom of sorts; to be sent to a new scary land called New South Wales. Her long and tiresome journey on Lady Juliana is filled with its good and bad parts but though an incredibly long journey she feels the heat, the air and is being fed, getting to see new lands as they stop and having an experience she never dreamt of having. As they eventually land in Australia ready to start their new lives she finally doesn’t feel so alone.

I seriously adored this story and would love to have so much more of it as it's amazing and thrilling and so so different. So far I think this is my favourite from this series.

Prina says

a very heart touching book for all good readers and i hope that whoever reads this book likes it very much

Autumn says

This book is one of the "My Story" books which are short "historical" books. It is about a young girl called Mary Wade who wants to get her mothers bible back by selling an item she stole from an 8-year old.
