

# Miles Franklin Literary Award 2009 *shortlist*



## *Wanting* Richard Flanagan

Knopf (Random House Australia)

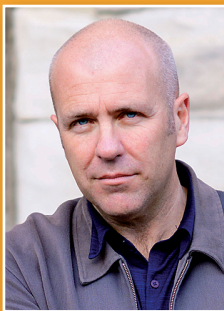
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*And like the great moral ringmaster himself (Dickens), Flanagan marshals his diverse characters, ideas, and locales – physical and metaphorical – with gusto and compassion.*

Bass Strait, 1839. A young Aboriginal girl, Mathinna, runs through the wet wallaby grass of a wild island at the edge of the world to get help for her dying father. Eighteen years later in Manchester, the great novelist Charles Dickens is a sensation, starring in a play that more and more resembles the frozen landscape of his own inner life.

The most celebrated explorer of the age, Sir John Franklin, and his wife, Lady Jane, adopt Mathinna as an experiment to prove that the savage can be civilised – only to discover that within the most civilized can lurk the most savage. When Sir John disappears in the Arctic while searching for the fabled Northwest Passage, Lady Jane turns to Dickens for help.

Inspired by historical events, *Wanting* is a haunting meditation about love, loss and the way life is finally determined never by reason, but only ever by wanting. It confirms Richard Flanagan's growing reputation as one of the most original and powerful novelists working in the English language today.



## About Richard Flanagan

His multi-award-winning and bestselling novels *Death of a River Guide*, *The Sound of One Hand Clapping*, *Gould's Book of Fish* and *The Unknown Terrorist* are published in twenty-six countries.

He directed a feature-film version of *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* and more recently co-wrote the screenplay of Baz Lurhmann's movie *Australia*.

Richard lives in Hobart, Tasmania with his family.