

TATIARA: The good country

Synopsis – One Page

Tatiara: ‘the good country’ in the language of the indigenous Bindjali people. It has a special history. *Tatiara*: the name of a once powerful wool-growing dynasty in the good country. It, too, has a special history.

Following her estranged father’s near-fatal accident, Katherine Spencer, successful thirty-something marketing executive is summoned to the family property, now fallen into decline. She finds that her father, ailing Old Tom Spencer, ever the chauvinist, has inexplicably appointed an apparent stranger, Cory Hamilton, as manager of the property.

Upon her father’s death Katherine is bequeathed the property with certain curious provisos; the financial affairs are to remain in the hands of the family lawyer, city-based Raymond Hartmann while management of the operations is assigned to Cory for as long as he so desires – or lives. It is a nebulous and an unwieldy arrangement, aspects of which do not sit comfortable with both Katherine and Hartmann, albeit for different reasons.

Notwithstanding these complications, Katherine is determined to exercise her executive skills and oversee the rebuilding of *Tatiara* and bring it into the Twenty-first century, undertaking extensive research to that effect. With a renewed faith in the wool industry, she enlists the astute Cory and together they set about building a new generation of breeding stock; one primed to take advantage of the new markets...and in the process they develop an intimate relationship.

Her continued research exposes anomalies concerning the world record sale price of a prize ram three decades earlier, Hartmann’s intrusive influence in the district, and particularly, the diminishing size of the *Tatiara* land holdings. Where has the land gone, to whom and why!

The evidence points to a conflict of interest and Katherine officially dismisses Hartmann - but he will not go quietly. Hell-bent on removing Cory from the scene, he confronts the lovers and exposes Cory’s indigenous Bindjali heritage. Katherine is forced to question the sincerity of her emotions and challenge her latent prejudices - but when Cory tenders his resignation, she finds she cannot remove him completely from her heart; nor from the scheme of things.

Enlisting the archival services of the regional newspaper for assistance in unravelling the circumstances of the sale of the prize ram, Katherine sets in motion a train of events that exposes a culture of deception, blackmail, commercial greed and misplaced loyalty that implicates a web of players.

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