

# My Convict Diary



Written and illustrated by  
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I am Claudia and I am a convict. After my mum and I stole a loaf of bread we were sent on the Lady Penryhn to Van Diemens Land. My dad did not come because he didn't steal anything. When we arrived at Port Jackson the land was full of trees, birds that I had never seen before and these native people. They talked in a confusing language that was unfamiliar. They were so new to us. I felt a new feeling. It felt cold and dark. I was nervous, spooked and afraid.



Today after we got to Port Jackson the captain said we had to build our own huts and had to grow the crops. My mouth was wide open in shock because I had never built a hut before. We built our huts with rocks, sticks and branches. Even though we tried our best, the huts were smelly and had spiders and bugs in them. When I complained to the captain guess what happened?? I got the strap! It felt like my hands were on fire!



I was assigned the job of helping a woodcutter chop wood. I got splinters and bruises all over my hands. I chopped wood for hours and got even more splinters and bruises. I became hot and exhausted. The axe was sooo heavy I could hardly swing it. I had to carry the wood back to the colony to build huts. The captain saw me struggling to lift the wood and I got another strap! I don't know how I am going to do this job without getting another strap!

After a few more hours of this, another convict named Ben came to chop wood. Ben became my friend. Ben helped me chop the rest of the wood. Exhausted, we finally went to eat dinner. While I was eating, the captain strolled in and gave me a certificate of freedom! He said I had been very good on the ship. He even gave one to my mum too!

Now that we were free, my mum and I went to a place full of trees and started to look for rocks, sticks and branches to build a hut with. I had a lot of experience building because I had built a hut before. By the time we had finished the sun had gone down. We picked apples from a tree and peas from a crop. After that we went to sleep on a soft bed of leaves. The next day I decided to be a farmer. When I was free I felt excited about my future.

