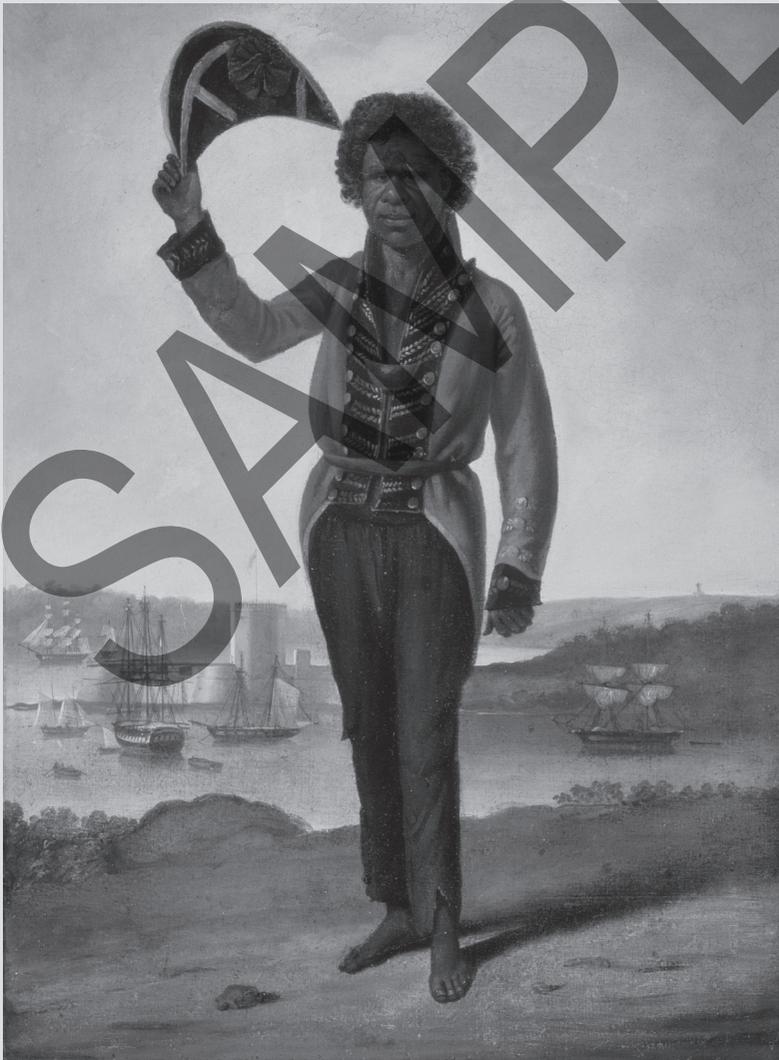

The First Australian



Characters

BUNGAREE

CAPTAIN MATTHEW FLINDERS—explorer and all-round hero

HARRIET—Flinders' biographer

BERT—museum storeperson

GOVERNOR LACHLAN MACQUARIE

HISTORIANS—at least three

GEORGE HOWE—editor of *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*

WILLIAM BUCKLEY—escaped convict

Setting

The dark and dusty storeroom of a long-forgotten museum.

Note: where quotation marks are used in the script, the text is from original source materials and includes original spellings. See for example words such as *seymetar*, an attempt at spelling 'scimitar' (a short sword with a curved blade).

The First Australian

[BUNGAREE stands shrouded in a dustsheet, eyes closed. Underneath the dustsheet, he is wearing ragged calico pants and a simple calico shirt. He is barefoot. Only half his face can be seen. He is surrounded by a collection of objects.

On the wall a large reproduction of Flinders' map of Australia hangs prominently.

A shaft of light, as if from a high window on the side, cuts across BUNGAREE. A grandfather clock chimes.

BUNGAREE'S eyes snap open and he stares at the audience.]

BUNGAREE:

Who am I?

I was the first person ever called 'Australian'.

The first Australian to circumnavigate Australia.

I was a pioneer.

I helped map the continent's coastlines.

No, I'm not Captain Cook.

I was a diplomat, an ambassador, a spokesman.

No, I'm not Abel Tasman or Dirk Hartog or William Dampier.

I was a celebrity known throughout the colony, and the talk of European courts and coffeehouses.

Only two portraits were painted of Governor Macquarie. My portrait was painted at least eighteen times.

No, I'm not Matthew Flinders, or his friend George Bass—though you are getting warmer.

I held a position of power in a fledgling colony on the other side of the globe from the mother country.

I was a landowner. I was granted all of what is now Georges Head on Sydney Harbour.

Need more clues? In the best-known portrait of me I am wearing a naval uniform and I hold a bicorn hat—this one.

[BUNGAREE shrugs off the shroud, which drops to the floor. He sweeps the bicorn hat up and holds it aloft, as if it is a boomerang he's about to throw.]

I am Bungaree!