



# Scatterheart

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~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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The unusual title of this novel is taken from a Norwegian fairytale, sections of which head up each chapter. It is 1814 and, following her father's ruin, Hannah is thrown into jail, tried and sentenced to deportation to Australia. The voyage to Van Dieman's Land which takes up the greater part of the story is hard and comfortless, especially for a girl used to the best things in life. The reality of life on board a convict ship, particularly one carrying a large number of women convicts who are used by the sailors in return for food and other necessities is not glossed over, and some of the very harsh treatment is quite shocking.

Before her arrest, Hannah's tutor, Thomas, asked her to marry him, but she turned him down, a decision she later bitterly regrets despite the attentions of one of the ship's officers, James. It seems implausible that a seemingly well brought up, if not very nice, young man could really take enough interest in an unwashed and dishevelled convict to ask her to marry him. Hannah finds out through this voyage that she really wishes she had accepted Thomas' offer and fate offers the pair another chance. Despite some good historical detail, the events in this rather overcharged debut novel have an implausibility about them. Wilkinson has an engaging narrative voice, however, which promises well.

Running Order:

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