



The House that Jack Built - Gavin Bishop

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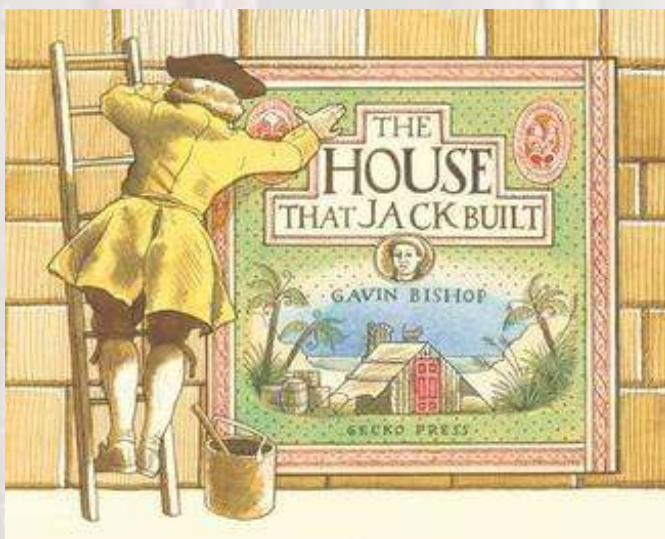
This is a welcome reprint of an award-winning book with a Kiwi twist to the well-known rhyme. It follows the story of Jack Bull who travels from London to New Zealand in 1798 and the house he built. Gavin Bishop's powerful artwork explores the effects of colonisation with the arrival of European settlers. Sailing ships, period clothing and subdued colours depict the historical setting.

Elements of traditional Maori art show the creation legend of Papatuanuku and Ranginui. The watchful eyes of the earth mother and sky father oversee the rapid cultural and environmental changes taking place. The timespan encompasses the changing face of Aotearoa through to the onset of the Land Wars. Bishop's illustrations are evocative and thought-provoking. Background details and intricate borders emphasise the interaction between Maori and Pakeha settlers. Different lifestyles, beliefs and activities are contrasted and blended together.

A red door is a connecting feature of many illustrations. The door was shipped from England with Jack Bull's household goods. It starts out as the entrance to a humble home and becomes a symbol of Trader Jack's prosperity as the building expands upwards and outwards. The eventual fate of the door will provoke many discussions amongst thoughtful readers.

The author says in an endnote about the book: "It speaks of the things I care about – identity, family, turangawaewae."

Reviewed by children's book author, Jean Bennett.



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