

2015
WINDHAMMER PRIZE
FOR SHORT GAMEBOOK FICTION

After The Flag Fell

AN ENTRY IN THE 2015 WINDHAMMER PRIZE FOR
SHORT GAMEBOOK FICTION

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After the Flag Fell

This interactive story is an original piece owned and written by Felicity Banks 2015. It takes place in a history similar to our own, but with magic. No historical knowledge is needed.

Thank you to the beta readers James Walker, Ben Crispin, Chris Banks, Ann Jensen, Selina, Chris Northey, Helen Northey, Brian Rushton, and Julian Fleetwood. Any remaining mistakes are mine.

This is the page where you keep records of your item/s, personality, and skills.

You can print physical copies of this page to write on, or just type X into the document.

You begin this story with a single magical item made from one of the following metals (choose one and mark it) – listed in order from least to most precious in 1854 Australia.

This is the only thing you need to choose before beginning the story on Page 2.

- Tin Spoon:** Has rudimentary communication ability.
- Iron Tea Caddy:** Makes you physically stronger.
- Brass Goggles:** Fine-tunes the senses in useful ways.
- Lead Ball:** Increases your emotions, for better or worse.
- Silver Pocket Watch:** Can connect with organic life, which is medically useful.
- Gold Nugget:** Makes you more charming.
- Aluminium Locket:** Neutralises your weight, making you unusually graceful.

During the tale you'll need to keep track of the following by marking them with an X.

Trust: _ _ _ _ _

Caution: _ _ _ _ _

Sharpshooting: _ _ _ _ _

Mechanical Skill: _ _ _ _ _

Poor Health: _ _ _ _ _

If you have marked off all five of your poor health lines, go to Page 14 regardless of other instructions.

Possible Goals:

It is possible to achieve all of the following in a single play-through, but it's far from easy. You might prefer a different path; a different story and a different life.

The real-life equivalent of the protagonist achieved three of these goals.

1. Your arm is better (either healed or improved).
2. You are married.
3. You have helped Australian become independent of Great Britain.
4. You have gained the right for all Australians to vote.
5. You have remained committed to your ideals of democracy and justice.
6. You are rich.
7. You are in possession of magical items made from seven different metals.
8. You live happily ever after.

There are three "good" endings, two of which can be achieved in various ways.

Or you can collect all of the six gruesome ways to die. _ _ _ _ _

Enjoy!

Page 2

I saw the flag fall. That glorious Southern Cross, shining with hope for every man who'd been grubbing in the gold-studded dirt for so long. . . gone. One of the soldiers - one of those blasted redcoats that attacked us on the Lord's Day - climbed our flagpole and tore down our stars.

The battle was lost by then, and our stockade was broken in a dozen places. Our rebellion was finished, though I couldn't bear to admit it yet. We had our guns and a little magic here and there, but they had more. I felt my eyes burn with anger, and was unashamed to let my tears fall.

We were just diggers looking for gold and hope and a new life in Australia. By 1854 the only ones getting rich on the goldfields were the redcoated soldiers fining the rest of us for not paying their exorbitant license fees. In the end we'd burned our licenses and built a rough boundary fence: the Eureka Stockade, a gathering-place on Bakery Hill where Irish and Scottish and English and Chinese and all the rest joined together as one. It wasn't a fort, it was a symbol: we deserved better. We were willing to fight for our lives, but we weren't ready. So when the redcoats marched to crush us our stockade was quickly breached, our numbers decimated, and our flag torn down.

I didn't even hear the gunshot that sent a musket-ball my way. It hit the metal of my waistcoat and slid upwards, lodging in my shoulder and shattering the bone. I tried to move my fingers, but I couldn't. Nor could I lift my arm. My part in the fight was done, and I knew it. If I was lucky, I'd lose my arm rather than my life. I looked around for our flag, hoping for one last glimpse before we were overrun, but it was gone.

The dead lay in slag-heap piles. More than a dozen men I'd encouraged to make a stand would never stand again. Others lay moaning, and I decided that since I could still walk I'd best make myself useful. I headed towards the closest wounded man, wondering what I'd do for bandages when my own shoulder was dripping blood down to my fingertips. Two redcoats reached him first – and killed him.

In another life I'd have been too shocked to move, but this was Eureka, and I understood instantly that the redcoats would kill anyone who wasn't quick enough to flee. I still had my gun, but it was no use against the crushing tide of history.

I spotted a pile of slabs nearby – big enough and untidy enough to keep me hidden.

If you choose to hide under the timber, add a mark to Caution and go to Page 4.

A hot air balloon drifted across the battlefield, and a wealthy-looking woman reached out her hand to invite me aboard.

If you choose to trust her, add a mark to Trust and go to Page 5.

A Scottish acquaintance of my friend Duncan Gillies saw me and yelled, "Peter! Mr Lalor! I have a horse for you."

If you choose to trust him, add a mark to Trust and go to Page 6.

There were tunnels beneath the hill. I knew I could escape and hide in the bush and no-one would ever find me.

If you choose to hide in the bush, add a mark to Caution and go to Page 7.

If this is your second visit to Page 2 within one play-through, go to Page 54.

Page 3

Easter Egg #1

If you'd like to make the same choices as the historical Peter Lalor, the sequence is as follows (except, sadly, with no magic or mechanical limbs): 2, 4, 6, 9, 7, 10, 8, 16, 20, 17, 22, 32, 33, 36, 60, 61, 40, 38.

I happen to know one of Peter Lalor's descendents. If Lalor had made different choices, she might not exist. Of course, if he'd truly believed in democracy (as people assumed he did until he emphatically proved otherwise), Australia might be a better nation today.

Page 4

Someone had discarded a sword nearby and I used it to lever up a crucial slab that shifted another, and another – allowing me to crawl inside the pile of timber before releasing the sword so the slabs fell back into place with a knocking that I could only hope was drowned out by the cries of the dying.

I heard redcoats calling, “Where is Peter Lalor? Tell us!”

Staying perfectly still, I watched in horror as the blood from my shoulder pooled beneath me, leaking out from beneath the slabs to where it could easily be seen. Outside, I heard women screaming at the soldiers to spare their husbands and sons. Close by, I heard laboured breath. I wasn’t the only wounded man hiding as the soldiers butchered our companions. My heart stuttered in my chest, shaming me twice – once for the terror stealing my breath, and once for my uselessness when good men most needed my help.

At last the soldiers were all gone, and brave women searched the battlefield for survivors. I crawled out from my shelter and pulled the shirt off a dead man to staunch my bleeding shoulder. He was one of mine: a common man trying to scrape a living from the goldfields only to lose it to the greed of the wealthy. Now he’d lost his life as well. I didn’t even know his name.

My vision blurred from pain and loss of blood, but my legs held me up well enough.

Add a mark to Poor Health.

Add a mark to Mechanical Skill.

My acquaintance with the horse was calling for me. I went with him.

Add a mark to Trust and go to Page 6.

I headed for the bush to keep out of the way of the redcoats. They were bound to continue looking for me.

Add a mark to Caution and go to Page 7.

Page 5

The rich woman assisted my awkward scramble into the hot air balloon just as the soldiers spotted me and immediately fired several shots, careless of who or what they hit. I saw blood staining the wooden floor of the basket, and it wasn't mine. The rich woman hurled her portmanteau over the wicker edge of the basket in order to save me instead of her belongings, and I realised it was her blood on the floor. I was too dazed to thank her, or to protest that I'd caused such trouble. The balloon was packed with people, and they'd all risked themselves to save me.

Together we drifted away from Ballarat, flying low and travelling at the mercy of the wind. The pilot was Irish, like me, although the woman who had hauled me aboard was British. An Aboriginal woman tended to her wound as the pilot bound my shoulder. I still couldn't move my fingers, and my whole arm was a dead weight.

To distract me from the pain, the pilot showed me the mechanism of the balloon – using a controlled flame to lift or lower the varnished silk of the enormous black balloon. Strange, to think that we were flying like birds based on nothing but the power of warm air. I had expected to feel afraid to be in the sky, but instead it was strangely calming.

The British woman's friend gave me an aluminium locket. She said she hoped the unnatural grace it provided might help me in future battles. So she was wealthy too – or had been until the battle. I felt a surge of pride that our Southern Cross had brought together such an array of good people.

"Where to?" said the pilot. "It's looks like we're heading for Geelong."

Add a mark to Mechanical Skill.

Add Aluminium Locket to your items.

"I have friends in Geelong," I said.

Go to Page 20.

"The sooner we separate the safer we'll all be," I said. "This area looks familiar – if you're able to let me down I'll go to my friend Mr Mason for shelter."

Go to Page 9.

"Is it possible for you to let me down a little farther in this direction?" I asked. "My friend Stephen Cummins is definitely loyal to me."

Go to Page 10.

Page 6

I couldn't remember the Scottish man's name, but I remembered he was a single man, like myself. That was a relief, when I could hear women sobbing over their dead all around us. I couldn't bear to look at them, but as I stared at the ground I caught a glimpse of a calico skirt soaked with blood. One pale hand still curled around a fold of cloth. I wrenched my gaze away before I saw her face. One of her shoes had been cast off as she attempted to flee, and it lay a stone's throw away, still as clean as when she put it on. The other shoe was torn, broken, and soaked with her blood.

"This way, Mr Lalor," said my red-headed friend, and ducked into a low tin structure that had been somebody's makeshift home before Bakery Hill was chosen as the location for our gathering. I couldn't help noticing it was smoking gently, like many other rude hovels and tents unfortunate enough to be blasted by howitzers that morning.

To my surprise, most of the inside floor was taken up with a gaping hole, and the little ground that remained barely fit a rather clunky stove and boiler attached to a winch. My companion stepped down into the hole, landing on a wooden platform within. With few options for escape, I stepped down with him and watched as he flipped a switch on the engine and waited expectantly.

The stove and boiler was in fact a steam-powered winch for our platform, but the release valve was blocked by a piece of shrapnel. Reaching up, I pulled it out and our platform immediately moved down into the dark, creaking in time with puffs of steam above.

Once we reached the base of the shaft, Mr Gregor – that was his name – led me through a dark tunnel on foot until we finally emerged into bushland, where the promised horse was waiting.

"Thank you, Mr Gregor," I said, desperate to prove I remembered his name after all.

"You should ride," he said, directing a sympathetic grimace at my shoulder. "The horse is yours, if you want her. She'll find her way home again once you dismount. Are you sure you're all right on your own?"

Add a mark to Mechanical Skill.

"This area looks familiar. Thank you for the horse." I went to my friend Mr Mason for shelter.

Go to Page 9.

"I know my way from here. The horse will be very helpful, thank you." My friend Stephen Cummins was definitely loyal to me. I went to him.

Go to Page 10.

Page 7

I wandered in the nearby bushland for a full day and night, so thirsty I didn't feel hungry. My shoulder turned red and swollen, stretching the skin painfully. I still couldn't move my left arm, and I doubted if I'd ever be able to use it again.

The trees around me whispered and cackled, and I heard creatures scuttling all around. Half-metallic abominations chittered and clanked in the branches above. In the darkness, I sometimes saw glowing eyes – or perhaps they were stars glimmering through the trees. A pack of dingoes found me just as the sun greyed the Eastern sky. I shot and wounded one of them before they dispersed.

It grew harder to remember what was real. I didn't have any more bullets, and I needed a doctor. And water.

Add a mark to Poor Health.

Add a mark to Sharpshooting.

I made my way to the Mason family's house.

Go to Page 11.

I made my way to the Cummins' house – it was farther, but he was a better friend.

Add another mark to Poor Health, and go to Page 10.

I stayed in the bush.

If your Trust is higher than your Caution, go to Page 12.

If your Caution is higher than your Trust, go to Page 13.

(If your Trust and Caution are equal, choose which page to go to.)

Stephen Cummins rapidly found a surgeon who could be trusted. At that point, I'd have accepted a passing redcoat if he'd said he could make the pain stop.

The surgeon was a tall man, grey-haired, with a stoop that made him look like a mountain with legs. After cutting away the bloodied rags of my shirt, he swore in a leisurely fashion before directing me to lie down on a wooden pew.

"I have good news and bad news," he told me, sharpening a long knife with a whetstone.

"Oh?" I said.

"I don't have any chloroform," he said cheerfully. "Or ether, for that matter. And I'll have to use salt to clean the wound, too. That won't be pretty. Not even a drop of whiskey, which is sad indeed. If you didn't want any, I'd have drunk it myself. Oh, and I doubt you'll see that arm again in this life. That's the other bad news."

I smiled weakly, wondering if he was entirely sane. "You mentioned good news?"

He grinned, setting the knife down beside a hack-saw that I wished I hadn't seen. "I'm very fast."

My friends distributed themselves all around me, pinning me to the pew with all their strength. It didn't seem quite right having surgery on a wooden bench above a dirt floor, but what else could I do?

"Ready?" said the doctor.

"Ready," said Stephen.

I closed my eyes and willed myself to remain still. It was no use. When the knife sliced through my skin and muscle I convulsed wildly despite the best efforts of everyone present. The doctor switched to the saw and cut through the bones of my arm near the shoulder, hissing through his teeth as he did so, and happily announcing, "Almost done!"

When he'd tied off my arteries so I didn't bleed to death, he pronounced himself to be finished. I took a ragged breath, only to scream it out as the salt he poured on my bloody stump sucked away all the moisture in the area. He signalled for a bucket of water, and slopped it over me, leaving me soaked from beard to britches – but at least it washed away the salt.

"Now I'm really finished," he said. "You look great!"

I was too shaky to sit up, and it took all my remaining strength not to hurl myself at him in a blind fury. If I'd tried, I'd have fallen on the floor.

The entire operation took less than a minute, but that fifty-three seconds left me more shaken than the entire battle, including the moment when the bullet first hit me.

If your Poor Health is zero, go to Page 57.

If your Poor Health is one or two, go to Page 16.

If your Poor Health is three, go to Page 21.

If your Poor Health is four, go to Page 45.

If your Poor Health is five, go to Page 14.

Page 9

I soon wished I'd stayed hidden on Bakery Hill. The distance to the Mason's house had grown five times longer overnight. My shoulder throbbed, and my arm was a dead weight.

There weren't many houses outside of the gold-rush town of Ballarat, and those that existed stood empty as their owners sought their fortunes elsewhere. I wondered if they'd all return to their homes now we'd lost our chance at a fair go. It was hard to go on as the weight of our failure pressed down on me.

When I arrived at the Mason's mud-and-timber house, only Mrs Mason was there. She blanched at my bloodied appearance and immediately pressed a cup of lukewarm tea and a fresh bandage into my good hand. I felt greatly restored at once.

"Thank you for your kindness," I told her. "You're a true--"

"I'll go and get my husband at once," she said, and left before I could say another word.

Add a mark to Poor Health.

I waited for their return.

Add a mark to Trust and go to Page 52.

I fled to the bush instead – she could have been fetching anyone, even soldiers.

Add a mark to Caution and go to Page 7.

Page 10

Mrs Cummins recognised me as I staggered from the trees near their house. She called Stephen at once and together they helped me through their wilted vegetable patch and into their slab hut, applying a fresh bandage and giving me plenty of much-needed water. It was tinged red from the iron in the soil, and reminded me uncomfortably of the battle – but I drank it gratefully.

Stephen cooked fresh damper for me, lacing the dough with sugar and telling me to eat as much as I wanted and then to sleep in their bed.

When I awoke some time later, Stephen and Mrs Cummins re-dressed my shoulder, glancing at one another with silent horror as they bared my wound to the full light of day.

Stephen was concerned that our friendship was too well known, so he'd crossed the gully while I slept to ask Father Smythe's permission to shelter me at the Presbytery. There was already a two hundred pound bounty on my head.

"What do you say, Peter?" he asked.

I went along with his suggestion and moved to the church under cover of darkness.

Mark Trust and Caution and go to Page 8.

I went and hid in the bush instead.

Mark Caution and go to Page 7.

I went to the Masons instead.

Mark Trust and go to Page 11.

Page 11

If you have a Tin Spoon, go to Page 28.

Otherwise, go to Page 29.

Page 12

I wandered through the bush until an Aboriginal family found me. By then I was barely rational, and slipping in and out of consciousness. In a delirious dream, I imagined universal suffrage – not just landowners, but all colonial and British men. Not just men, but all colonial people. Maybe even, someday, all Australians – landowners, ordinary men, women, and Aboriginals.

I woke up screaming as the Aborigines sliced through my upper arm with a machete, switching to a hacksaw when they reached the bone. They'd tied me securely while I slept, and I was unable to move. Women stood by with burning pieces of wood, and they burned what was left of my arm until I passed out. When I woke up a second time, they gave me water and sweet fruits and nuts, and I realised they'd saved my life. With my one arm, I untied the remaining laces of my metal waistcoat, and offered it to them.

Using fire-warmed rocks and pieces of wire, they flattened the moulded metal and, after a great deal of discussion, carved a hunting scene into the back piece. A herd of kangaroos sprang for the upper corners of the vest as stylised hunters ambushed them. It was complicated, delicate work and I revised my opinions of their metalworking skills.

As night fell, they held the picture before their cooking fire and it danced with light through miniscule holes evidently pierced through the scene for maximum effect. Then they gave it back to me, keeping the front pieces of my waistcoat for themselves.

A few already spoke a little English, and they laughed without malice at my first attempts to communicate. They washed and re-dressed my wound every few hours, and it soon became clear that they possessed their own brand of medical knowledge.

I realised I was waiting for the noise of gunshots, and made an effort to calm myself. This world had its dangers, but I was far safer than I'd been in some time. I curled up and slept peacefully under the starry sky.

I chose to stay with the Aborigines for as long as they'd let me.

Go to Page 15.

I went to my acquaintance Mr Mason.

Go to Page 11.

I went to my friends at Geelong.

Go to Page 22.

Page 13

I stood at the lip of a deep gorge that still had a few muddy patches indicating that it only carried water after heavy rain. It hadn't rained in days. Christmas was yet to arrive, and the Australian Summer was already stifling. I wondered if the mud far below could sustain my life a little longer.

As I considered my situation, the shadows under the trees opposite me shifted, and I realised there were people on other side of the gorge. They were Aborigines, so they could have been locals or trackers. If they were trackers, I was done for.

I shrank back into the spiky underbrush and fled. They didn't pursue me, as far as I could tell. Unfortunately, I couldn't stay awake forever.

Add a mark to Poor Health.

If you have an Iron Tea Caddy, go to Page 12.

Otherwise, go to Page 14.

Page 14

My wound stank with putrescence. In my delirium I fought redcoats, but no matter how many I fought there were always more. I struggled mightily, and fell face-down on the dirt. My lifeblood muddied the hard ground, and I died there in the dirt.

Over time, the Lalor legend grew. People said my ghost still walked the bush and wailed from abandoned mines all over Victoria. They said I was angry that Britain still ruled the land where my soul was doomed to wander.

Ten years later, Australia became an independent nation, and my ghost was finally laid to rest. . . or was it?

THE END

You have achieved Goal 3 and Goal 5.

Page 15

Instead of urging me to leave, the Aborigines adopted me. It was a strange new life, and I often wondered what my ten brothers and sisters would think of me – but I eventually settled down. I even married and had children, and as the years passed without major interruptions from the outside world, I grew less and less concerned with laws, and gold, and political systems. My children grew up, and I even learned to speak the language. . . more or less.

I lived happily ever after.

THE END

You have achieved Goal 2 and Goal 8.

Page 16

I woke up slowly from a dead faint, confused to find myself in a church, and missing an arm.

"Hello?" I croaked.

Stephen burst into congratulations and questions about how I felt, and the Eureka battle came back to me – as did the memory of the musketball in my shoulder.

"I feel. . . all right. Actually, I feel quite well!"

"That surgeon saved your life! Unfortunately, you have several bits of lead still lodged into what remains of that left shoulder." He lifted his hand to squeeze my shoulder for comfort, then thought better of the action and let his hand drop back to his side. "Normally I'd advise leaving them there, but I can already see redness and swelling in the area, and the surgeon didn't have the right implements to dig any deeper. You're still infected, and I doubt your body has the strength to overcome it without another surgery."

I tried to smile, but my muscles were spasming with shock all over my body. All the same, I was alive and still at liberty, so I was grateful for that.

He smiled. "Once we're done taking measurements for your new arm, shall we arrange a second operation to remove that lead for you?"

"No thanks," I said. "I can't go through that again."

If you have a Silver Pocket Watch, go to Page 17.

Otherwise, go to Page 14.

"Yes," I said, working hard to keep the tremor from my voice. Better to face another operation than a painful death.

Go to Page 20.

Page 17

My Geelong friends fitted me with a new mechanical arm, controlled by a number of cogs and levers that enabled me to operate it quite skilfully with my right hand. Alternatively, I could set it into a fixed position, or do certain basic actions by steering it with my chin.

The craftsman they'd hired was talented enough to have built several hidden compartments into the metal "bones" of the frame, and my friends gave me a little money and some bandages to keep inside my arm at all times, as well as a small bag of top quality tea leaves.

My arm creaked somewhat and was uncomfortable to sleep on, but it smelled wonderfully of Chinese tea. It overheated in the sun, but it could stop a bullet - and each finger could take considerable weight on its own. All things considered, it was better than ever.

You have achieved Goal 1.

Add a mark to Mechanical Skill.

Go to Page 18.

Page 18

Some instinct made me keep the fragments of the musketball that almost killed me. In time, my arm fully healed.

Add a Lead Ball to your items.

Go to Page 22.

Page 19

Easter Egg #2

The Eureka Stockade happened in 1854.

Peter Lalor's arm was amputated due to the musketball wound in his shoulder. He married Alicia Dunne - the woman who secretly nursed him at Geelong - just seven months after the Eureka Stockade battle. The following year he was elected to politics and promptly fell out of popularity when he voted in favour of a repressive land bill that was detrimental to the poor. 17,745 Ballarat people signed a petition against the bill. He ignored them.

The Welcome Nugget was found in a tunnel under Bakery Hill in 1858. At the time it was the largest gold nugget ever found, weighing almost seventy kilos. The first two men who saw it immediately fainted.

Australia achieved Federation in 1901 (twelve years after Lalor's death), although the queen is still technically our head of state. Australia had an unusually peaceful path to independence.

Universal suffrage, while also a largely peaceful process, was a long time coming.

Non-landowning men began to acquire the ability to vote soon after the Eureka Stockade battle - probably as a direct result of that conflict.

Landowning South Australian women were given state voting rights as early as 1861 (six years after the Eureka Stockade battle).

Some Aboriginal people only achieved the vote in 1965.

Page 20

In Geelong, my friends quickly found me a surgeon. He was Chinese, shorter than me but with an imperious manner, like a well-fed cat. If my friends trusted him, so did I. After all, I had no better options. I noticed he'd taken off his shoes and his bare feet were soiled from the dirt floor, but I didn't say a word.

He soaked a cloth in chloroform and held it to my face. In his bag I saw several large knives and saws along with pliers and syringes. He saw me looking and quickly shut the bag. I couldn't help noticing a second, larger bag beside it, that clinked as he knocked it with his foot, but I didn't say anything.

After just a few breaths of the sickly-sweet rag I felt consciousness slipping away. The doctor was still talking, but I couldn't hear what he was saying. Within seconds, I was asleep.

When I woke up, all the infected tissue had been sliced away from my body. I was terribly grateful for modern medicine, knowing that a similar operation would probably have killed me if it had been attempted just twenty years earlier.

Go to Page 17.

Page 21

I glanced down at the bloodied stump where my left arm had been and passed out. When I woke up two days later, my arm had been thrown down an abandoned mine shaft.

The operation was declared a great success.

Go to Page 17.

Page 22

My friends moved me to Young Queen Hotel in South Geelong, where they kept me hidden until my health was fully restored.

A woman named Miss Alicia Dunne nursed me back to health there, and talked to me when the view of the four walls and single narrow window felt like a cell. She was extraordinarily patient with me as I slowly regained my health, all the while risking her own reputation to tend to an outlaw. I soon realised she was also growing prettier every time I saw her.

Right when I most needed eloquence, I became a stammering fool.

Set Poor Health back to 0.

I decided she probably didn't want a man like me, and it was best not to say anything at all.

Go to Page 33.

I was sure she was in love with me too, so I kissed her.

Go to Page 23.

I suspected she might harbour some feelings for me too. Maybe. I gave her my original metal item to show how grateful I was for all her selflessness.

Unmark your original metal item and go to Page 32.

Page 23

If you have a Gold Nugget or Brass Goggles, go to Page 30.

Otherwise, go to Page 24.

Page 24

I moved to kiss her and she jerked away in shock, trailing loose bandages across the floor.

My heart sank as I realised what a blockhead I'd been. "Please forgive me, Miss Dunne. That was presumptuous."

"Yes," she said, and approached warily to continue her work. Clearing her throat, she said, "Is your family well?"

"They are," I said, keeping my voice steady with an effort. "Thank you. And how is your mother?"

"Much better, Mr Lalor."

"I'm pleased to hear it, Miss Dunne."

She pushed back a golden strand of hair that had escaped her bonnet, and gave me a wan smile as she packed up her bag ready to leave. "You're healing nicely. I'm not sure you have any further need of my help."

I talked to her about my feelings.

Go to Page 25.

I gave her my original metal item as an apology, and a sign of my sincerity.

Remove your original metal item, and go to Page 32.

Page 25

"I will not bother you again after this conversation," I said, and heard the note of begging in my voice as she paused in the doorway, "but my foolish actions have given you the wrong impression. If you would ever consider having a man such as myself, I would marry you."

She stared at me, unconsciously pulling out a long curl of yellow hair. It was some time before she spoke: "If you are a lothario, you're certainly not good at it."

"Not at all," I assured her.

If your Trust is higher than your Caution, go to Page 32.

If your Caution is higher than or equal to your Trust, go to Page 62.

Page 26

Sometimes my thoughts turned to my many brothers and sisters scatted throughout the British Isles, America, and Australia. Longing for the grey sky and green grasses of my Irish homeland made my heart ache. But then I'd look around me at grey-green trees and a blazing blue sky, and the burning kiss of the Australian sun on my skin would comfort me.

At night the rain on the roof sang me the same old Irish lullabies Mam used to sing to me, long ago. It wasn't so different after all.

My heart was at peace and my conscience clear, and I lived long enough to appreciate how special that was.

THE END

You have achieved Goal 5 and Goal 8.

Page 27

My friends gave me a new gun, and I practiced shooting as my left side continued to heal.

The quiet made me think often of the family I left behind in Ireland. Three of my ten siblings lived in America, fighting on opposed sides of the civil war. I prayed they never met in battle.

Add a mark to Sharpshooting.

Fighting to change a nation was pointless. I decided I'd fight only for myself.

Add a mark to Caution, and go to Page 34.

We lost at Eureka, and still won hearts. I decided to gather men around me and fight for independence for Australia.

Add a mark to Trust, and go to Page 35.

Page 28

“Parp-parp-parp!”

It was my tin spoon. Something was badly wrong. I shushed it, and listened. There were voices outside, and far too many footsteps. Soldiers!

I peeked out through gaps in the wooden door to make sure they didn't have the house surrounded – yet – then I slipped quietly out the back door and away into the bush.

My heart was pounding but I forced myself to tread slowly and carefully until I was out of hearing distance – then I ran until my chest burned and I no longer knew where I was.

That was too close.

Go to Page 7.

Page 29

I heard a branch snap, and the careful crunch of human footsteps attempting to make as little noise as possible. The footsteps stopped and someone spoke in a low voice, giving orders.

Soldiers!

Holding my breath, I attempted to creep away through the bushland.

“Lalor!” one of them yelled. “There! By that rock!”

I gave up on hiding and crashed away into the trees. Branches stretched across my path and long silver leaves whipped at my face. The world filled up with the smell of eucalyptus and sweat, with the noise of my own harsh breath and the yells of the men pursuing me. Before I could get out of sight one of the younger soldiers cannoned into my legs, sending both of us sprawling onto a carpet of dead leaves. I reached for my gun but he stomped on my wrist, breaking it. The leaves were sharp against my skin, like ants already crawling on my broken body.

I howled in pain and fury, though I knew better than to expect kindness. The rest of the soldiers caught up and congratulated one another for my arrest. They forced me to walk back into town where I spent the next two days in an oven of a cell, utterly helpless and low on water. A doctor did what he could for me, but he avoided my eyes. He didn't expect me to live long.

The trial was a sham, and I was rapidly sentenced to death. I spent my last night standing at the high window of my cell, my eyes lifted to a clear and shimmering sky. When the stars faded with the coming dawn I turned away, unable to bear the sight of my last sunrise.

Within the hour, I was hung from the neck until dead. So much for justice.

My friends requested my body, and buried me in a ceremony that soon turned into a bloody riot. I had become a martyr for the cause of suffrage: a symbol greater than any one man could be.

Many more ordinary, desperate people were arrested, and some hung. It only added fuel to the fire. The fight for universal rights grew greater than even I could have imagined. The first Australians became united with miners, ex-convicts, and even women.

Five years later, all Australians were given the right to vote. The nation was changed forever.

THE END

You have achieved Goal 4.

Page 30

I went to a show once, long ago, where a man demonstrated the power of electricity to make my hair stand on end. Kissing Miss Dunne was a little like that, and a little like finding gold, and a little like finding that the slabs I'd carved for my hut were perfectly measured and fit together like a glove.

She kissed me back.

If you have a Gold Nugget, go to Page 31.

If you have Brass Goggles, go to Page 32.

Page 31

“Oh!” She pulled away, her eyes wide. “I shouldn’t have done that. I know you have gold magic so it doesn’t mean a thing. My apologies! It won’t happen again.”

“No, I-- Alicia!”

She fled, trailing bandages, with her bonnet clasped in one hand.

“Miss Dunne!” I cried, attempting to follow her despite my weakened state.

The last I saw of her was a flash of silk skirts as she hurried around a corner. I never set eyes on her again.

Go to Page 33.

Page 32

Miss Dunne understood me perfectly, despite my lack of eloquence. "Oh!" she said, with a blush that made her more beautiful than ever. "I'm so glad you feel the same way I do."

She took my hand in hers, turning it palm-upwards and thoughtfully tracing the fine lines with her finger. "I had an idea the other day. . . do you trust me?"

"With my life," I answered honestly.

"Perfect," she said. "In that case, I have a lot of work to do tonight."

She packed her things and left before I had time to ask what she was going home to do.

Go to Page 63.

Page 33

I disliked idleness, especially when it was mixed with real danger to anyone who remained my friend. The two hundred pound bounty on my head rarely left my mind as I wondered if a cell might be preferable to a hotel room I was unable to leave.

Time passed, eventually, and Stephen Cummins burst into my room one afternoon so excited he was barely able to draw breath.

"Calm down man!" I said. "What is it? Is your wife safe?"

He took several deep breaths. "Your arm looks good!"

"That's not why you came all this way!"

"No," he said. "It isn't. You've been exonerated – you, and all the rest."

"Do you mean to say I'm not an outlaw any more?" I asked.

He shook his head happily. "No more running or hiding. You're a free man."

I dived for my clothes and made myself respectable as hastily as possible.

"There's more," said Stephen. "The mining tax is virtually abolished."

"Oh!"

"And you and I just became eligible to vote – along with every other miner in Victoria."

"We did? Fantastic!"

Together Stephen and I ran outside, as energetic as children, and danced on the dirt road in front of the hotel. The clear sunlight warmed me from the outside in.

I was no longer an outlaw, and my whole life stretched out ahead of me. Stephen stopped suddenly as the same thought occurred to him.

"What will you do now?" he asked.

I was no stranger to guns and bloodshed. If I'd helped achieve so much, I could achieve more if I continued to fight.

Go to Page 27.

I was famous, and no longer in danger of arrest. I decided to become a politician, and make a difference that way.

Go to Page 36.

I went back to my previous job as a railway worker.

Go to Page 47.

Now that mining was viable, I returned to the goldfields to try once more to make my fortune.

Go to Page 50.

Page 34

I became a bushranger, robbing travellers and stealing horses at every opportunity. The friends who sheltered me as a fighter still cared for me, and when my crimes didn't keep me fed my friends looked after me, hiding me from the authorities and giving me any food and supplies they could spare. I'd abandoned my morals, but they never did.

If you have an Aluminium Locket/Iron Tea Caddy/both AND at least 2 Sharpshooting marks, go to Page 38.

If you have an Aluminium Locket/Iron Tea Caddy/both OR at least 2 Sharpshooting marks, go to 55.

Otherwise, go to Page 56.

Page 35

We made a new flag and took over the same old section of Bakery Hill where we lost – yet won – our first battle. It was never an ideal place to fight, but the ground there was already baptised with my blood, and it reminded everyone of the cost we'd soon have to pay – as well as the chance we had to truly make a difference. We were a contradiction: sombre as dusk, bright as stars. This time, we were ready.

One of my men gave me a tin spoon for luck. It was the only magical metal he owned.

They attacked before dawn on the Lord's Day, but this time we were expecting it. I'd set men on sentry duty all around our new, stronger stockade, and had hidden more than half of our men in an extensive network of tunnels and compartments below the hill.

It wasn't the shouts that woke me – it was the tremendous crash of our primary trap collapsing under the weight of some hundred redcoats, who fell screaming into the hole we'd made for them. The men I'd chosen for that part of the battle set to, shooting and stabbing any that tried to attack. Most of the trapped men didn't fight back – they were wounded, or dead, or too afraid.

I heard the horrible squelching and choking of battlefield deaths as I ran to my own station near the flag. My breath came in gasps, and I realised belatedly how utterly terrified I was. But it was far too late to remedy that. My life was no longer my own: it was an idea. The idea of a new nation of free democratic Australians. So, silently cursing my own hubris, I followed the plan I'd outlined two days earlier – and climbed on top of the wall.

There, silhouetted neatly against the dawn sky, I stood tall and tried not to think about what a perfect target I made as I shouted at both sides, "Leave behind your old ideas of home and hearth. This red land is ours now, and we can shape it to our will – together! We will lay down our arms and stand together under this Southern Cross – forever!"

There was a hush as I stopped speaking. All I heard was a single man quietly moaning, down in the trap. I didn't know whose man he was, but the main force of redcoats was already close enough that I could see their faces. For a moment, I thought they'd really lay down their arms and the entire battle would turn to friendship.

Then I saw the rifle lifted to point right at me, and the *crack* as it fired split the silence.

Add a Tin Spoon to your items.

If you have an Iron Tea Caddy/Aluminium Locket AND 2 or more Sharpshooting, go to Page 39.

If you have an Iron Tea Caddy/Aluminium Locket OR 2 or more Sharpshooting, go to Page 58.

Otherwise, go to Page 56.

Page 36

I was elected easily – almost too easily. Eureka had made me a hero, and no-one even asked what I stood for. My brother Richard had long since gone back to Ireland and became a member of the House of Commons. I told myself that if he could be a politician, I could at least try.

Soon I forgot all about my initial doubts. I owned land and had a steady and decent income for the first time. I was given a brand new silver pocket-watch so I'd never be late. Strange, to think that such a small thing would once have been my greatest treasure.

Add a Trust mark.

Add a Silver Pocketwatch to your items.

If you are in a relationship, go to Page 60.

Otherwise, go to Page 61.

Page 37

I returned to the goldfields and took my time reconnecting with old friends and deciding where to stake my claim.

If you have Brass Goggles AND at least 2 Mechanical Skill, go to Page 43.

If you have Brass Goggles OR at least 2 Mechanical Skill, go to Page 26.

Otherwise, go to Page 49.

Page 38

I retired well before accident or old age brought me low. My wealth only grew as I carefully invested in other men's sheep farms. As a result, I lived in peace and comfort until the end of my days.

THE END

You have achieved Goal 6 and Goal 8.

Page 39

I twisted sideways and drew my own pistol as I leaped down inside the stockade. The shot struck a glancing blow to my left shoulder. There was a roaring in my ears and it wasn't until one of my own men gently took the pistol from my hand that I realised the redcoats were yelling "Southern Cross! Southern Cross!"

I'd expected to become a martyr to the cause – yet I lived.

Our battle for independence was over, and the story of that day spread from coast to coast at lightning speed. Soldiers in every colony went on strike, and men and women from all over Australia travelled to join us, until I had to personally ask them to leave as our water supplies couldn't support such crowds.

Australia became an independent nation exactly two years after the first Eureka Stockade.

You have achieved Goal 3.

Add a mark to Trust.

After that I turned to politics. It was time for me to get real power.

Go to 36.

I returned to my previous work as a railwayman.

Go to Page 47.

I went back to the goldfields.

Go to Page 50.

Page 40

One of my assistants had the gall to present me with a petition signed by 17,745 Ballarat citizens asking me to reconsider the bill.

“Forgive my impudence, sir, but are you sure you want to prevent women from voting? Your people elected you because they believed you would uphold democratic values.”

I refused to risk the good life I had. Letting women vote was too much.

Go to Page 38.

Under the circumstances, I signed the bill to let women have the vote.

Go to Page 26.

Page 41

I supported the bill to let women vote, and it passed. My investments plummeted in value, but it was worth it.

Go to Page 26.

Page 42

If you have a Lead Ball and/or a Gold Nugget, go to Page 51.

Otherwise, go to Page 41.

Page 43

A funny feeling made me head right back to Bakery Hill, where I bought up most of the old claims there and spent my days wandering the tunnels remembering all the time I'd spent digging them out such a long time ago. I hired other engineers to build steam engines for hoisting and lowering men and soil from the increasingly-deep pits. They were so deep that they blocked the sunlight completely. I didn't mind – it meant I could look up and see the stars throughout both day and night.

One afternoon my torch caught a glint of light in the soil, and when I took a closer look I discovered what appeared to be an enormous gold reef. I dug with my hands until my fingers bled, although I didn't feel the pain.

It was the largest gold nugget I had ever seen, and I fainted dead away. When I came to and knew it was no dream I fainted a second time. After I awoke again, I sat on the dirt floor and breathed steadily for a long moment, glancing at my prize only briefly until I felt sure I could trust myself not to swoon a third time.

It was the largest gold nugget anyone on Earth had ever seen.

It was the Welcome Nugget, and it weighed almost as much as I did.

Add a Gold Nugget to your list of items.

You have achieved Goal 6.

If you have all seven metal items, you have achieved Goal 7.

Go to Page 38.

Page 44

Easter Egg #3

Peter Lalor's Bakery Hill Speech:

Fellow diggers, outraged at the unaccountable conduct of the camp officials, in such a wicked licence hunt at the point of the bayonet as the one this morning, we take it as an insult to our manhood and a challenge to the determination come from the monster meeting yesterday. Now I call on you to fall into divisions of eighty men, according to your weapons, and to choose your captains from the best men among you. It is my duty now to swear you in, and to take with you the oath to be faithful to the Southern Cross. Hear me with attention. The man who, after this solemn oath does not stand by our standard, is a coward at heart. I order all persons who do not intend to take the oath, to leave the meeting at once.

Let all divisions under arms fall in, in their order round the flagstaff.

We swear by the Southern Cross to stand truly by each other, and fight to defend our rights and liberties!

Page 45

When I saw so much of my blood and flesh and bone scattered across the dirt floor I lost consciousness.

I never woke up.

THE END

You have achieved Goal 5.

Page 46

“I’m so sorry, Mr Lalor,” she said. “This is not what I want.”
I never saw her again.

Go to Page 33.

Page 47

If your Trust is higher than your Caution, go to Page 48.

If your Caution is higher than your Trust, go to Page 26.

(If Trust and Caution are equal, choose which you prefer.)

Page 48

It was a sunny day like any other when my friend Tommy hammered an iron spike off-kilter. Instead of fastening the rail before him it shot from his hand and into my left eye.

I was dead before the apology formed on his lips.

THE END

Page 49

Bakery Hill inevitably drew me in, and I worked with other engineers to use steam engines to hoist and lower men and soil from the increasingly-deep pits there. They were so deep that they blocked the sunlight completely. I didn't mind – it meant I could look up and see the stars throughout both day and night.

Our work improved mightily and our spirits were high until one day I was drenched in boiling water as the engine above me blew its boiler.

I groped for the wall, knowing that if the winch failed I was done for – but I wasn't fast enough. The entire shaft collapsed, with me inside.

So I was killed and buried on Bakery Hill after all.

THE END

Page 50

If your Trust is higher than your Caution, go to Page 49.

If your Caution is higher than your Trust, go to Page 37.

(If Trust and Caution are equal, choose which you prefer.)

Page 51

My passionate speeches ultimately gave all adults the vote.

I was promptly voted out – but I'd changed Australia for the better.

After such a contentious achievement I lost my home and my land, but I gained friends. On my 50th birthday, those friends gave me a beautiful pair of brass goggles that I wore constantly around my neck. They reminded me that I'd kept to my ideals of democracy and justice, and I when I looked at them I was grateful for all I still had.

Add Brass Goggles to your items.

You have achieved Goal 4 and Goal 5.

After that, I lived moderately for the rest of my life.

Go to Page 26.

After that, I tried the goldfields one last time.

Go to Page 37.

Page 52

If you have a Gold Nugget, go to Page 53.

Otherwise, go to Page 11.

Page 53

Mrs Mason returned, flustered, and showed me into her wardrobe. "There's a reward for your capture of two hundred pounds. Use my husband's razor to shave your beard, and get dressed in my clothes. It could save your life. I'll be back as soon as I can."

I dressed with difficulty, and was scowling at my bonneted face in the mirror when I heard a knock at the door. When I opened it a crack, praying the dim light within would shield me, I saw an entire troop of soldiers.

"Is Peter Lalor here, ma'am?" Their leader was already looking at the next house. I gathered he didn't have a high opinion of women's good sense. My own opinion of Mrs Mason was rapidly rising.

"Certainly not," I said, trying desperately to sound feminine. "Miss Wiggins said he was an outlaw now, and I mustn't speak to him. Would you like to come in and check?"

"Thank you ma'am, we'll be on our way."

They left in good order, and I sagged in relief. My arm was bleeding again, ruining Mrs Mason's dress.

When the Masons returned, they were both terribly apologetic that they didn't know anyone who could operate on my shoulder. "We have a horse. Is there someone else who might be able to help you?"

"Yes," I say. "My friend Stephen Cummins. He'll know what to do."

Mr Mason walked beside me all the way, talking quietly to help me stay conscious.

Add a mark to Poor Health.

Go to Page 10.

Page 54

That was the second time I'd been shot in my left shoulder. I tried to crawl to safety, but I passed out. Much later, I discovered that one of the soldiers recognised me, and let his fellows know I was dead. No-one was looking for me.

I woke up several days later with a brand new metal arm. It was obvious from the light weight and the indented shape along the inner arm that it contained someone's melted-down aluminium locket. I was impressed.

Desperate to be well again, I practiced sharpshooting with my good arm while I recovered.

Add a mark to Mechanical Skill.

Add a mark to Sharpshooting.

Add an Aluminium Locket to your list of items.

I was no stranger to guns and bloodshed. It was time to fight for more.

Go to Page 27.

I'd had enough fighting for a lifetime. I went back to my previous job as a railway worker.

Go to Page 26.

I deserved a better life. I returned to the goldfields to try once more to make my fortune.

Go to Page 50.

Page 55

You are rich.

If your Trust is higher than your Caution, go to Page 56.

If your Caution is higher than your Trust, go to Page 38.

If your Trust and Caution are equal, you can choose either page.

Page 56

I was woken from a dead sleep by the sound of soldiers on horseback fast approaching. Leaving all my possessions behind, I fled madly through the dark bushland, knowing that it was hopeless.

“Lalor!” someone yelled. “Stop or I’ll shoot!”

But I couldn’t stop. It wasn’t in my nature. When I heard the shot, I thought they’d missed – but then my legs folded under me, and I fell to the ground. I struggled to crawl away, but none of my limbs obeyed me.

Instead I breathed my last lying flat on my back, watching the stars through the leaves as the blackness spread over my vision, blocking out the distant lights one by one until there was nothing left.

THE END

Page 57

My arm remained attached thanks to the speed of treatment. It was good to think I might soon have two working hands again!

Eventually, my arm got better.

You have achieved Goal 1.

Go to Page 18.

Page 58

The bullet struck me a glancing blow, knocking me from the stockade wall as the soldiers remembered themselves and our battle began in earnest.
It all felt strangely familiar. . .

Go to Page 2.

Page 59

Easter Egg #4

There's only one way to get every achievement in a single play-through.

Here's some clues to help you:

Firstly, choose your original item wisely. Timing is everything.

Secondly, remember the lesson of Eureka: Sometimes, you have to be willing to bleed – a lot – to ultimately win.

Rich friends are useful, but even bad friends can teach good lessons.

Thirdly, when it comes to love, don't be presumptuous. Or cowardly.

Fourthly, peaceful negotiation takes time. And you ain't got enough of that.

And finally, power corrupts – but I hope it won't corrupt you.

Good luck, and welcome to your history!

Page 60

I enjoyed being a landowner, and my darling Alicia bore two children – Annie and Joseph. I'd never been happier.

For our 10th wedding anniversary in 1865, Alicia commissioned a painting of our whole family. It was worth more to me than any treasure or magic.

Go to Page 61.

Page 61

In a flush of democratic enthusiasm, one of my fellow politicians wrote a bill proposing to give women the vote. I was never quite sure if he was serious, but female suffragettes embraced the concept with marches and pamphlets distributed throughout the land. It was time to make a decision – for better or worse.

I knew I'd be at a disadvantage if women could vote. It was better to shut it down.

Go to Page 40.

It put my whole lifestyle at risk, and had the potential to ruin my family – but that was what I got into politics for. I supported the bill.

Go to Page 41.

It put my whole lifestyle at risk, and had the potential to ruin my family – but that was what I got into politics for. I cast my lot and wrote an amendment to the bill that gave the vote to all adults – landowners, ordinary men, women, and Aborigines.

Go to Page 42.

Page 62

"I've lingered too long," she said to me. "Shall we part as friends?"

"Thank you," I said, with just enough honour to keep my voice from betraying the depth of my dismay.

Go to Page 33.

Page 63

The following day she returned with a leather bag almost as large as she was tall. Judging by the way she dragged it along on an array of tiny wheels, it was as heavy as her too.

She unlatched the bag and produced a piece of metal with a flourish. It was a little larger than her hand, and inexpertly beaten into an incomplete cylinder.

"Is that --" I asked.

"A tea caddy?" she smiled. "Yes. It was my grandmother's, and it's magical. I thought your arm could use the extra strength."

"That's. . . thank you," I said.

"Thank me if I can fit it properly," she said, bending over her bag to draw forth a travelling stove, flint, brass goggles, and an array of tools. She packed my linens around the door and opened the window to vent the smoke, then removed my shirt and took some measurements of my arm before heating the iron caddy over the stove and improving the shape to fit me.

I watched her, rapt, for some hours, making myself useful by fanning the smoke outside. At last she declared herself satisfied and slid the flattened and rounded tea caddy onto my upper left arm, making a few minor adjustments while it was still warm.

"Is that fitted correctly now?" she asked, frowning in concentration as she checked for rough points.

I was somewhat distracted by the sensation of her breath against my bare chest. "Will you marry me?"

She looked up. "Is that a yes?"

"Is that?" I asked, feeling lost but determined to have an answer to my proposal. I'd spent enough of my life waiting for good things, and from now on I'd seek them out and catch them when I could.

"I asked you about the caddy first," she said with a cheeky smile.

"It's wonderful," I said. "Yes."

"I thought so," she said, comfortably aware of her skill.

"And. . . ?"

"Yes," she said. "Yes, I will marry you."

Add an Iron Tea Caddy to your items.

You have achieved Goal 2.

Go to Page 33.