

“The Man from Snowy River” starring Tom Burlinson, Sigrid Thornton, Kirk Douglas, 1982, PG, 102 minutes

Major themes:

- Adventure
- Family
- Social class
- Manhood
- Love
- Horses
- Horsemanship
- Hard work
- Honor

Major characters:

- Jim Craig
- Jessica Harrison
- Harrison / Spur
- Banjo Paterson
- Clancy
- Mrs. Bailey
- Curly

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Background info:

- This movie is set in the Australian state of Victoria in 1888. At that time, Australians used the pound sterling as their unit of currency.
- The taglines for this film are: *"The story of a boy suddenly alone in the world. The men who challenge him. And the girl who helps him become a man."*
- Some Australian terminology:
 - A brumby is a wild, free-roaming horse, especially one descended from runaway stock. A group of brumbies is known as a mob or a band.
 - A cattle station is a large farm (known as a ranch in the U.S.), whose main activity is the rearing of cattle. The owner of the station is known as a grazier.
 - "The bush" refers to any sparsely populated region or any populated area outside of the major cities. A bushman is one who lives or travels in these areas.
- The Snowy River is located in southeastern Australia. It starts on the slopes of Australia's highest mountain, Mount Kosciuszko, in the Australia Alps.
- Tom Burlinson (who plays Jim Craig) had never ridden a horse before being cast in the film, and did all of his own stunts in this film. The climactic scene was amazingly a one-take shot.
- The character of Clancy is named after another well-known Banjo Paterson poem, *"Clancy of the Overflow."* Here is a link to a reading of "The Man from Snowy River" by actor Jack Thompson, who plays Clancy in this film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oyd8F4pF6FI>
- *"The Man From Snowy River"* is a narrative poem written by Andrew Barton "Banjo" Paterson, and published in 1890. The Australian \$10 note includes an image of Paterson and the words of the poem in microprint. Paterson also wrote Australia's most widely-known bush ballad, "Waltzing Matilda" (which is known as the unofficial national anthem).

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Scriptures:

1 Corinthians 1:7 – 9 (The Message) – *“Just think—you don’t need a thing, you’ve got it all! All God’s gifts are right in front of you as you wait expectantly for our Master Jesus to arrive on the scene for the Finale. And not only that, but God himself is right alongside to keep you steady and on track until things are all wrapped up by Jesus. God, who got you started in this spiritual adventure, shares with us the life of his Son and our Master Jesus. He will never give up on you. Never forget that.”*

1 Corinthians 13:11 (NIV) – *“When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me.”*

Job 39:19 – 22a (NIV) – *“Do you give the horse its strength or clothe its neck with a flowing mane? Do you make it leap like a locust, striking terror with its proud snorting? It paws fiercely, rejoicing in its strength, and charges into the fray. It laughs at fear, afraid of nothing”*

Proverbs 14:23 (NIV) – *“All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty.”*

Proverbs 15:31 (The Message) – *“Listen to good advice if you want to live well, an honored guest among wise men and women.”*

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Discussion points:

1. Spur points out to his brother Harrison, *"He's not a lad, brother, he's a man. He's a man."* Who or what defines a person having attained manhood or womanhood? What is the significance of this kind of statement?
2. What kinds of social divisions or classes exist in our culture today?
3. An adventure is defined as *"an exciting or unusual experience; a bold, usually risky undertaking, with an uncertain outcome; an activity with some potential for physical danger."* Helen Keller went as far as to say, *"Life is either a daring adventure or nothing."* What is it about adventures that appeals to us? What keeps us from embarking on adventures?
4. One of the taglines mentions *"the men who challenge him [Jim]."* What are some of the qualities of the people who challenge you in your life?
5. Where in this film do we see the *"thrill of the chase"*?
6. What characteristics of horses and their relationships with people do you appreciate? Why?

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The Man from Snowy River (A. B. "Banjo" Paterson)

There was movement at the station, for the word had passed around
That the colt from old Regret had got away,
And had joined the wild bush horses - he was worth a thousand pound,
So all the cracks had gathered to the fray.
All the tried and noted riders from the stations near and far
Had mustered at the homestead overnight,
For the bushmen love hard riding where the wild bush horses are,
And the stockhorse snuffs the battle with delight.

There was Harrison, who made his pile when Pardon won the cup,
The old man with his hair as white as snow
But few could ride beside him when his blood was fairly up -
He would go wherever horse and man could go.
And Clancy of the Overflow came down to lend a hand,
No better horseman ever held the reins;
For never horse could throw him while the saddle girths would stand,
He learnt to ride while droving on the plains.

And one was there, a stripling on a small and weedy beast,
He was something like a racehorse undersized,
With a touch of Timor pony - three parts thoroughbred at least -
And such as are by mountain horsemen prized.
He was hard and tough and wiry - just the sort that won't say die -
There was courage in his quick impatient tread;
And he bore the badge of gameness in his bright and fiery eye,
And the proud and lofty carriage of his head.

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But still so slight and weedy, one would doubt his power to stay,
And the old man said, "That horse will never do
For a long a tiring gallop - lad, you'd better stop away,
Those hills are far too rough for such as you."
So he waited sad and wistful - only Clancy stood his friend -
"I think we ought to let him come," he said;
"I warrant he'll be with us when he's wanted at the end,
For both his horse and he are mountain bred.

"He hails from Snowy River, up by Kosciusko's side,
Where the hills are twice as steep and twice as rough,
Where a horse's hoofs strike firelight from the flint stones every stride,
The man that holds his own is good enough.
And the Snowy River riders on the mountains make their home,
Where the river runs those giant hills between;
I have seen full many horsemen since I first commenced to roam,
But nowhere yet such horsemen have I seen."

So he went - they found the horses by the big mimosa clump -
They raced away towards the mountain's brow,
And the old man gave his orders, "Boys, go at them from the jump,
No use to try for fancy riding now.
And, Clancy, you must wheel them, try and wheel them to the right.
Ride boldly, lad, and never fear the spills,
For never yet was rider that could keep the mob in sight,
If once they gain the shelter of those hills."

So Clancy rode to wheel them - he was racing on the wing
Where the best and boldest riders take their place,
And he raced his stockhorse past them, and he made the ranges ring
With the stockwhip, as he met them face to face.
Then they halted for a moment, while he swung the dreaded lash,
But they saw their well-loved mountain full in view,
And they charged beneath the stockwhip with a sharp and sudden dash,
And off into the mountain scrub they flew.

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Then fast the horsemen followed, where the gorges deep and black
Resounded to the thunder of their tread,
And the stockwhips woke the echoes, and they fiercely answered back
From cliffs and crags that beetled overhead.
And upward, ever upward, the wild horses held their way,
Where mountain ash and kurrajong grew wide;
And the old man muttered fiercely, "We may bid the mob good day,
No man can hold them down the other side."

When they reached the mountain's summit, even Clancy took a pull,
It well might make the boldest hold their breath,
The wild hop scrub grew thickly, and the hidden ground was full
Of wombat holes, and any slip was death.
But the man from Snowy River let the pony have his head,
And he swung his stockwhip round and gave a cheer,
And he raced him down the mountain like a torrent down its bed,
While the others stood and watched in very fear.

He sent the flint stones flying, but the pony kept his feet,
He cleared the fallen timber in his stride,
And the man from Snowy River never shifted in his seat -
It was grand to see that mountain horseman ride.
Through the stringybarks and saplings, on the rough and broken ground,
Down the hillside at a racing pace he went;
And he never drew the bridle till he landed safe and sound,
At the bottom of that terrible descent.

He was right among the horses as they climbed the further hill,
And the watchers on the mountain standing mute,
Saw him ply the stockwhip fiercely, he was right among them still,
As he raced across the clearing in pursuit.
Then they lost him for a moment, where two mountain gullies met
In the ranges, but a final glimpse reveals
On a dim and distant hillside the wild horses racing yet,
With the man from Snowy River at their heels.

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And he ran them single-handed till their sides were white with foam.
He followed like a bloodhound on their track,
Till they halted cowed and beaten, then he turned their heads for home,
And alone and unassisted brought them back.
But his hardy mountain pony he could scarcely raise a trot,
He was blood from hip to shoulder from the spur;
But his pluck was still undaunted, and his courage fiery hot,
For never yet was mountain horse a cur.

And down by Kosciusko, where the pine-clad ridges raise
Their torn and rugged battlements on high,
Where the air is clear as crystal, and the white stars fairly blaze
At midnight in the cold and frosty sky,
And where around The Overflow the reed beds sweep and sway
To the breezes, and the rolling plains are wide,
The man from Snowy River is a household word today,
And the stockmen tell the story of his ride...