



# Illywhacker

*Peter Carey*

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## **Illywhacker** Peter Carey

In Australian slang, an illywhacker is a country fair con man, an unprincipled seller of fake diamonds and dubious tonics. And Herbert Badgery, the 139-year-old narrator of Peter Carey's uproarious novel, may be the king of them all. Vagabond and charlatan, aviator and car salesman, seducer and patriarch, Badgery is a walking embodiment of the Australian national character—especially of its proclivity for tall stories and barefaced lies.

As Carey follows this charming scoundrel across a continent and a century, he creates a crazy quilt of outlandish encounters, with characters that include a genteel dowager who fends off madness with an electric belt and a ravishing young girl with a dangerous fondness for rooftop trysts. Boldly inventive, irresistibly odd, **Illywhacker** is further proof that Peter Carey is one of the most enchanting writers at work in any hemisphere.

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