



Touchstones: A Memoir

James McNeish

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A memoir that is at once a self-portrait, a hymn to a vanishing New Zealand, and a record of a varied cast of influential people. A young man leaves home a deckhand on a Norwegian freighter, to travel the world. He returns to New Zealand changed almost beyond recognition. Along the way he meets nine people who influence his life and help make him the writer he becomes. James McNeish's *Touchstones* has a cast of characters who include 'the Mother Courage of the English theatre', an anti-Mafia reformer in Sicily, a Kanak revolutionary who is assassinated, a rejected cousin and 'Mr Punch in naval uniform', the New Zealand poet Denis Glover. All are larger than life. Some of them, like the author's mysterious Maori aunt, are good enough to bottle. The book is witty, poignant and in the words of its editor, Emma Neale, 'rich in astonishing anecdote'.

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