



School Journal

August
2019



TITLE	READING YEAR LEVEL
Checkmate	6
In Colour	5
The Mohawk	6
Trespass	5
Instructions for Travelling without Touching the Ground	6
Tupaia: Master Navigator	6
Smash Hit	5

This Journal supports learning across the New Zealand Curriculum at level 3. It supports literacy learning by providing opportunities for students to develop the knowledge and skills they need to meet the reading demands of the curriculum at this level. Each text has been carefully levelled in relation to these demands; its reading year level is indicated above.

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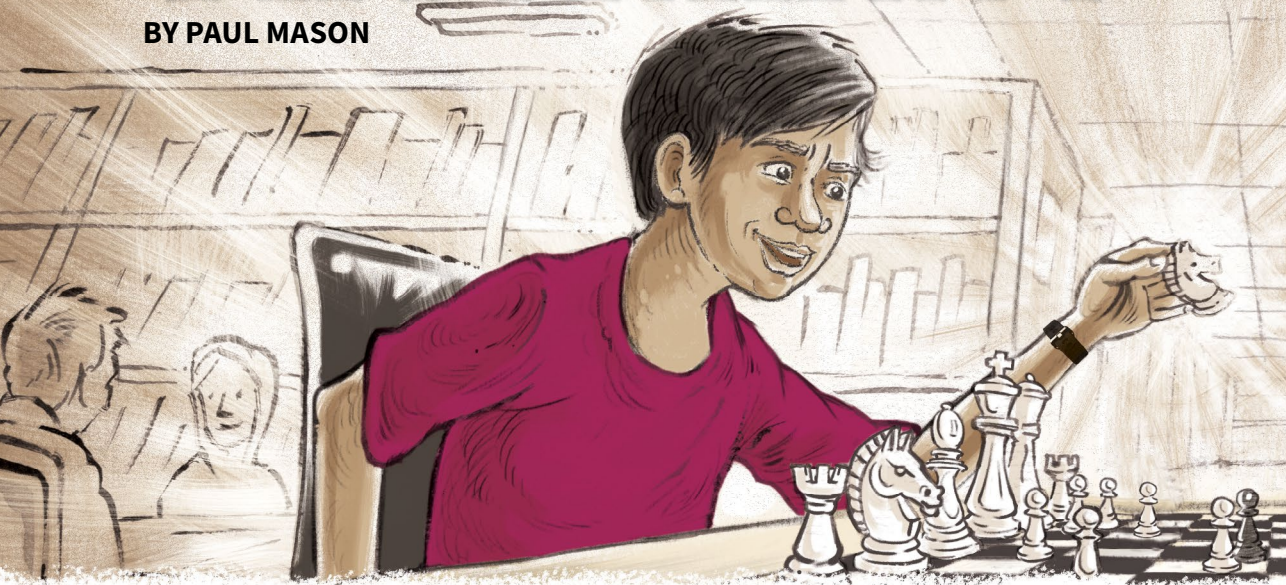
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Checkmate

BY PAUL MASON



Liam charged with his knight, plunging the white rider and mount headfirst into enemy lines, then swiftly darted to the side. He let his fingertips rest on the horse's ears for a moment, feeling the points of wood press into his skin. Was it safe? He scanned the battlefield before lifting his hand.

"Check," Liam said.

The word burst into the quiet of the library. He loved that. Ch-e-c-k-k-k. Sharp, like the snap of a twig. He glanced round to see if the others had heard, but no one looked up.

Across the table, Mr Squires thought for a moment, one wiry eyebrow raised. Slowly, he brought his tea to his lips, the liquid sloshing a little from the shakes in his hand.

"You sure you want to do that?" Mr Squires asked.

Liam winced and frantically searched the board. Then he spotted the danger: a bishop, dark and scheming, hidden across the battlefield, hungry to strike. How had he missed him? The bishop would glide in and cut him down, guaranteed. His knight was stuffed.

"You can take it back if you want."



Liam shook his head. “My fingers left the piece.”

Mr Squires tugged at his earlobe. “You’re learning.”

“You learn from mistakes, right?” Liam said, knowing what was coming.

“Fair enough.” Mr Squires lifted his bishop. With a cruel swipe, Liam’s knight was gone – dropped to the side like a corpse.

Mr Squires always lost the shakes when he went in for the kill. The rest of the time, the old man trembled all over – but not when he was collecting pieces. Two of Liam’s pawns and a bishop already lay in the graveyard. He needed to read the board. Regroup. Hit back. Instead, Liam glanced at his watch. He was almost out of time. Dad was picking him up for rugby practice. No wonder he couldn’t concentrate.

Liam dreaded practice. The drills, the tackles, the pressure of not mucking it up. Match days were worse – his stomach in a constant knot, the worry about letting down the team. The shouts from spectators on the sideline always filled his ears, and he could never think straight. The truth was he just wasn’t much of an athlete. Not like his brother. Nick was a natural. He couldn’t wait to get on the field – owned it, too.

Liam checked the time again.

“Focus,” said Mr Squires.

Liam nodded. He looked at the board.

What were his options? There was his queen, towering over her subjects. Merciless. She could move in any direction, over any distance. Liam itched to get her into the attack.

“Have a plan,” the old man reminded.

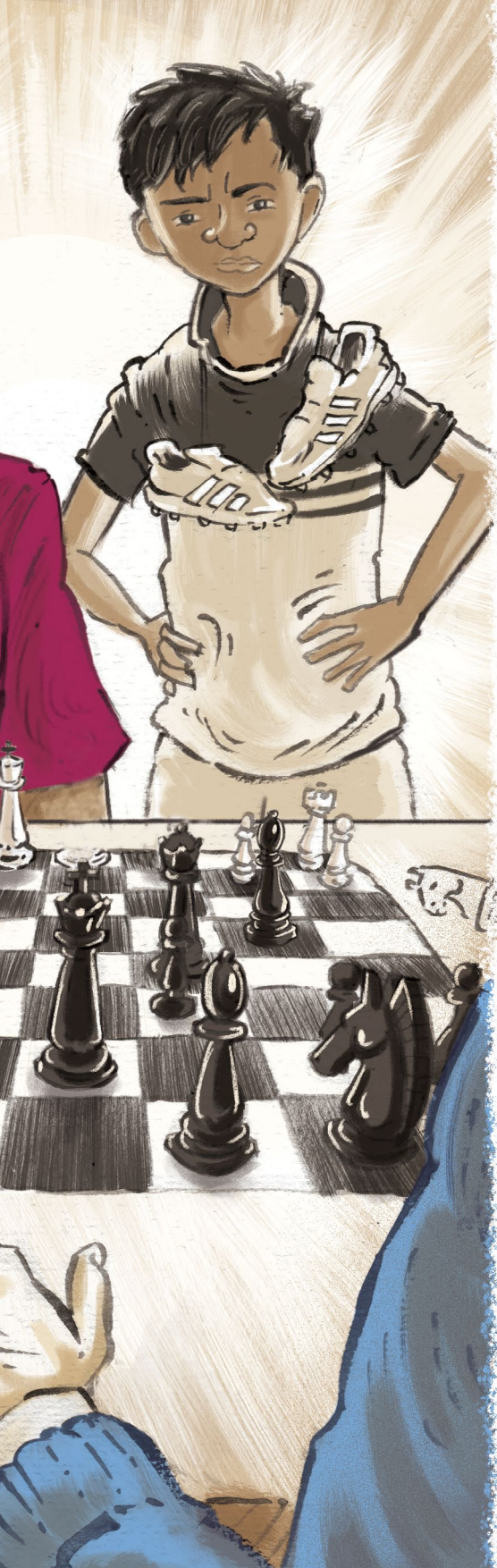
Liam liked that about chess – that you had to have a plan, a strategy. The moves had great names too: the Sicilian Defence, the Queen’s Gambit, the King’s Indian. And it was brutal sometimes – the way opponents hunted down his king, ripped through his pieces, dropping them to the side one by one. Chess was like life, Mr Squires said. It could be plenty tough.

Dad didn’t see it like that. “You don’t have time for chess club,” he’d said – just that morning. “Focus on your footie.” Dad had played on a rep team when he was a kid – a prop.

“I don’t even like rugby,” Liam answered back, only the words didn’t leave his mouth.

Now, holding his breath just a little, Liam took hold of his queen. He slid her out from her royal court, straight to the middle of the board. She would command the centre, seeking out weakness. Again, he left his finger on the piece, making sure it was safe before taking it away.





“Hmm, good move,” said Mr Squires. But if he was worried, he didn’t look it. The kids in the chess club called him the Ice Man. When Liam first started coming, he thought maybe it was some kind of joke name. A playful dig. Only it wasn’t like that. Mr Squires really was the Ice Man. He might’ve been old, but he didn’t hold back.

Mr Squires moved a pawn forward one space. Suspicious, Liam was trying to work out what he was up to when a shape appeared at his elbow.

“You done?” It was Nick, rugby shorts on, ready to go.

Liam shook his head. “Game’s not finished.”

“Dad said to hurry up. He’s waiting in the car. Practice starts in ten minutes, and you still need to change.”

“Can’t I just skip it?” Liam said.

“You better hurry,” said Nick, turning round and padding back through the library in his long green socks.

Liam shrugged apologetically. “Sorry, Mr Squires.” He reached over and toppled his king. It was one thing to lose, another to give up. He hated doing that.

The old man shrugged. “Next week?”

“For sure.”



In the back seat, Liam struggled into his rugby gear.

“It’s not OK to be late,” said Dad. “You’re letting down the whole team.”

“It’s just a practice.”

“That’s not the point. If you were on my team and you turned up late, I’d have you on extra laps.”

“Extra laps,” said Nick with a grin. He poked Liam in the ribs. Liam slapped his hand away.

The others were already at the sports ground, boots on, smiles smudged by mouthguards. Liam watched through the window as they churned up the field – more mud than grass this time of year – doing the first drills. Nick clambered out of the car and was gone, but Liam wasn’t ready. Avoiding his father’s impatient gaze, he finished lacing his boots. Then he searched his bag. Mouthguard, water bottle ... finally, he was ready.

“Have fun,” said Dad. He wasn’t even being funny.

Liam splashed through a puddle and ran onto the field.

“You’re late,” growled Shane, the coach. “Give me five laps.” He wasn’t really late – Nick had only just got there, too. But Liam was last, and Shane liked to make a point.

Liam didn’t bother to protest. He broke into a slow jog as the others lined up. Soon they’d be chasing the ball, flinging themselves into tackles. And his brother would easily be the best.

As Liam ran further from his team, the players began to vanish. All he could see were rooks and pawns, knights and their king. Attack and counter-attack. The pieces in his mind were clean, precise. They weren’t covered in mud – and right then, Liam decided. He would get through this one last practice, then chuck it in. No matter how much Nick hassled him. No matter what Dad said. Team sports weren’t his thing.

Already, Liam was thinking about next Thursday in the library. He’d take on Mr Squires, and this time, no one would interrupt their game.



illustrations by Kieran Rynhart



Instructions

for Travelling without

- 1 Discover a love for butterflies
 - a. Become a butterfly collector
 - b. Learn facts about butterflies, for example:
 - why butterflies are prettier than moths
 - why butterflies don't fly at night
 - why butterflies taste with their feet
 - c. Bore your family with these facts over dinner (don't worry about boring them – they'll get over it).
- 2 Buy a kitset model of a plane
 - a. Spend two days and two nights putting it together on your bedroom floor (listening to podcasts about famous aviators)
 - b. Paint the plane (don't let your brother/sister touch it).
- 3 Put the plane beside your bed
 - a. Keep one eye open when you go to sleep (so you can watch if the plane lifts off)
 - b. Sleep
 - c. Dream (of flying)
 - d. Repeat.
- 4 Grow your own wings ASAP
 - a. Research food that contains the protein needed to do this
 - b. Add these items to the shopping list
 - c. Eat these foods (eggs? tuna? chocolate yoghurt?) in vast quantities
 - d. Be patient.



Touching the Ground

- 5** Join an online forum about growing wings
 - a. Do everything anyone has ever suggested (“anyone” especially means old people)
 - b. Introduce yourself to this new community
 - c. Share progress.

- 6** Locate a handheld mirror
 - a. Stand in front of the bathroom mirror
 - b. Check for obvious changes around the collarbone (aka wingbones)
 - c. Arrange handheld mirror so you can see your back
 - d. Take photos to track progress – if possible.

- 7** Whenever you’re alone, simulate flight
 - a. Close your eyes
 - b. Make a whooshing sound with your mouth
 - c. Imagine this sound in your ears (air passing over your wings)
 - d. Do this regularly.

- 8** Make sure all your friends and relatives know you’re growing wings
 - a. Request flying-related things for your birthday and Christmas
 - b. Share the wing thing with long-lost relatives
 - They may come out of the woodwork
 - This will help you understand your identity
 - They may become the role model you have been looking for.

Lynley Edmeades



In Colour

by Thomasin Sleigh



Grace wrapped a tea towel round the handle of the kettle and carefully poured hot water into the teapot.

“That’ll need two minutes before you take it in,” reminded Mum.

But Grace was already at the door, school satchel slung over her shoulder. “I’m going to be late,” she grumbled.

“Two minutes never hurt anybody.” Easy for Mum to say. She wasn’t the one who’d be told off by Mrs Spencer, and Jim was bound to dawdle, making them even later.

Grace waited impatiently. After one minute, she balanced the strainer over Grandma’s favourite cup and poured the tea. Then she hurried down the hall. Tea slopped into the saucer, but Grandma wouldn’t mind.

The room smelt of talcum powder. It was like dusty flowers. In the dim light, she could just make out Grandma’s false teeth. They were in their usual glass on the bedside table, her own personal science specimen.

“Hello, Gracie,” Grandma said. She sat up and switched on the bedside lamp. “Tea in bed – aren’t I spoilt!” She took a tentative sip. “Lovely.”

“Aren’t you going to put your teeth in?” Grace asked. It was the first thing her grandma always did, but she looked tired this morning.

Grandma took the glass and gave it a little shake. Then she put the teeth on top of her head. “How’s this?” she asked with a grin.

Grace laughed. “In – not on,” she said.

Grandma shrugged. “You know best. Now shouldn’t you be off? We don’t want you in Mrs Spencer’s bad books, do we?”

Grace nodded. Grandma knew all about her troubles with Mrs Spencer – unlike Mum. She only ever half-listened.



When they got home from school, the house felt empty. The hall clock ticked loudly in the silence. "Mum?" Jim called, but there was no answer. "Where's Mum?" he asked.

"How should I know?" Grace said. She was more interested in afternoon tea. It was Monday. Baking day. There should be loaf. Maybe even afghans. After a snack, she'd visit Janey, the horse in the paddock next door.

Mum appeared in Grandma's doorway. "Not so much noise! How many times have I told you?"

Grace frowned. They'd barely made any noise at all. Mum was irritable. She'd probably looked after Grandma all day and got nothing else done.

Mum put her arms round Jim. "You need to look after your brother," she said to Grace. "Something quiet ... a story, perhaps. Grandma isn't well."

"What's to eat?" Jim asked.

"Toast," said Mum. She went back into the room, closing the door with a sharp click.



Toast! Grace flung her satchel on the floor. As she went past the sideboard, she noticed something – the photo of Grandma was missing, the one where she wore the big hat with the ribbon. It was an old-fashioned photo, from a time Grace couldn't imagine.

In the kitchen, the porridge pot was still soaking in the sink. They usually sat in here after school while Mum got tea on. Grandma liked to help Grace with her arithmetic. She could do sums in no time, closing her eyes while she figured them out. They had competitions to see who got the answer first.

Grace had a sudden, terrible thought. What if Grandma didn't get better? There would be no help with arithmetic, no one to talk with about school and Mrs Spencer. It was a thing Grace couldn't even contemplate.



The following evening, Grandma was up and well enough to set the table. They had a routine: Grace took care of the plates and glasses, Jim filled the water jug, and Grandma laid out the salt and pepper and cutlery.



“Are you having a cake for your birthday, Bess?” Dad asked while they ate dinner.

“Oh, no need for that,” said Grandma. “You know I don’t want a fuss.”

“Of course we’ll have a cake!” said Mum. “It’s not every day a person turns eighty. I was thinking chocolate. What do you say, Mr Jim?”

Jim nodded. “I’ll help.”

Grace pushed her beans to one side and looked at Grandma. Eighty. How could anyone be that old? She closed her eyes to do the arithmetic. It was 1958, so that meant Grandma had been born in 1878 – a different century.

“Grace ...,” said Mum. “Beans.”

Grace looked down at her plate. If she hurried, it would still be light enough to go out to the paddock. She shovelled the loathsome things in, then asked to be excused.

“People haven’t finished,” said Dad. He nodded towards Grandma. Her plate was almost full. She’d been eating like a bird lately.

“And Grace, don’t talk with your mouth full, either,” added Mum.

Grandma scrunched up her nose. She didn’t like beans, either.



On Saturday, Aunty Pam and Uncle David came over with the cousins. There were enough kids to have a game of stuck in the mud. Grace and Jim knew all the shortcuts – around the back of the water tank and through the orchard – and they laughed and ran until Mum called everyone inside to watch Grandma open her presents.

In the sitting room, Aunty Pam was passing tiny sandwiches on the best plates. “Happy birthday,” said Mum, handing Grandma a flat package.

“I don’t need any presents,” Grandma tutted. “No fuss, remember.”

Grace stood around the back of the sofa to watch. Slowly, Grandma removed the violet ribbon and wrapping paper. Inside was a photograph, the one from the sideboard – only it wasn’t black and white anymore.

“What on earth!” Grandma exclaimed.

“I had it coloured,” said Mum, pleased. “By a woman in town.”

“How wonderful!” Grandma held the photo close to take a better look.



“She used special paint and brushes,” Mum explained. “It’s quite something, isn’t it.”

“I remember this hat,” said Grandma. “It was my best one ... and the ribbon really was blue.” She touched the glass for a moment, then turned to Mum, her eyes full. “How did anyone know?”

Mum smiled. “You told me.”

Now it was Grace’s turn for a proper look. In the photo, her grandmother’s hair was a dark, glossy brown. Her lips were a rosy pink. She looked so young. She looked like Grace.

“How old were you, Grandma?” Grace asked.

“Twenty-one exactly. I rode into Whanganui to have my portrait taken. It was my birthday present ... just like this is today.”

“What was your horse’s name?” Grace asked. “Do you remember?”

“Topaz,” said Grandma. “She was my favourite.”

Topaz. It was the perfect name, Grace thought.



Later that night, Grace woke to the sound of voices. She found Mum in the hall in her dressing gown. “What’s wrong?” Grace asked.

“Grandma’s not so good,” Mum said. “Dad’s gone to collect the doctor.”

Grace felt a rush of fear. “But it’s the middle of the night!”

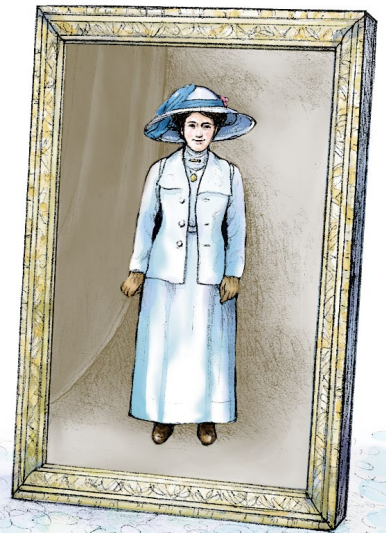
“That’s right,” said Mum, “so back to bed, there’s a good girl.”

“Will she be OK?” Grace asked.

“Let’s just wait for the doctor,” said Mum.

It was cold in bed. Grace turned on to her stomach and bunched up her legs. Then she stayed very still, straining to hear. Mum was moving around in Grandma’s room – but there were no voices. Why weren’t they talking? Grandma always talked.

Grace lay quietly in the dark. It was a long time before she finally heard her father and the doctor at the front door.



illustrations by Elspeth Alix Batt

Tupaia

Master Navigator

by Hanahiva Rose



The Polynesians have always honoured their navigators. Their creation stories tell of gods crossing the night sky in canoes, each one a star. These same stars guide travellers down here on Earth, showing them the way.

This is the story of Tupaia, a navigator and high priest from the island of Rā'īatea who died in Indonesia in 1770. How he came to be so far from home involved a remarkable journey, one that took him to the very edge of the Pacific ...

A man of mana

Tupaia was born on Rā'īatea – the second-largest island in East Polynesia – around 1725. He was from a high-ranking family and showed talent from a young age. Because of his gifts, Tupaia was chosen to train with the 'aroi – an exclusive group of priests, navigators, warriors, musicians, and artists who worshipped the war god, 'Oro.

The 'aroi were based at Taputapuātea. This great marae was at the centre of a large group of islands and home to the temple of 'Oro. Here, Tupaia studied his people's history and culture, specialising in star navigation. He travelled widely and spoke a number of Polynesian languages. This knowledge, along with his intelligence, made Tupaia a man of great mana.



Drawing by Tupaia of 'aroi musicians

A prophecy

In the 1750s, warriors from nearby Bora Bora invaded Rā'iātea. A local priest named Vaita went into a trance and uttered a prophecy. One day, more people would come – a different kind of people altogether. They would arrive on a canoe with no **outrigger** and would change everything: “And this land will be taken by them,” Vaita said. “The old rules will be destroyed.”

Vaita's prophecy eventually came true. On 18 June 1767, a strange vessel was seen off the coast of Tahiti, where Tupaia now lived. The next morning, 'aroi priests paddled out to investigate. The boat was the *Dolphin*, a British ship searching for the **unknown southern continent**. Samuel Wallis and his crew were the first Europeans the Tahitians had ever seen.

outrigger: a wooden float attached to the side of a canoe to make it more stable

unknown southern continent: a large area of land Europeans once thought existed



Jakarta

Indonesia

Australia

Nauru

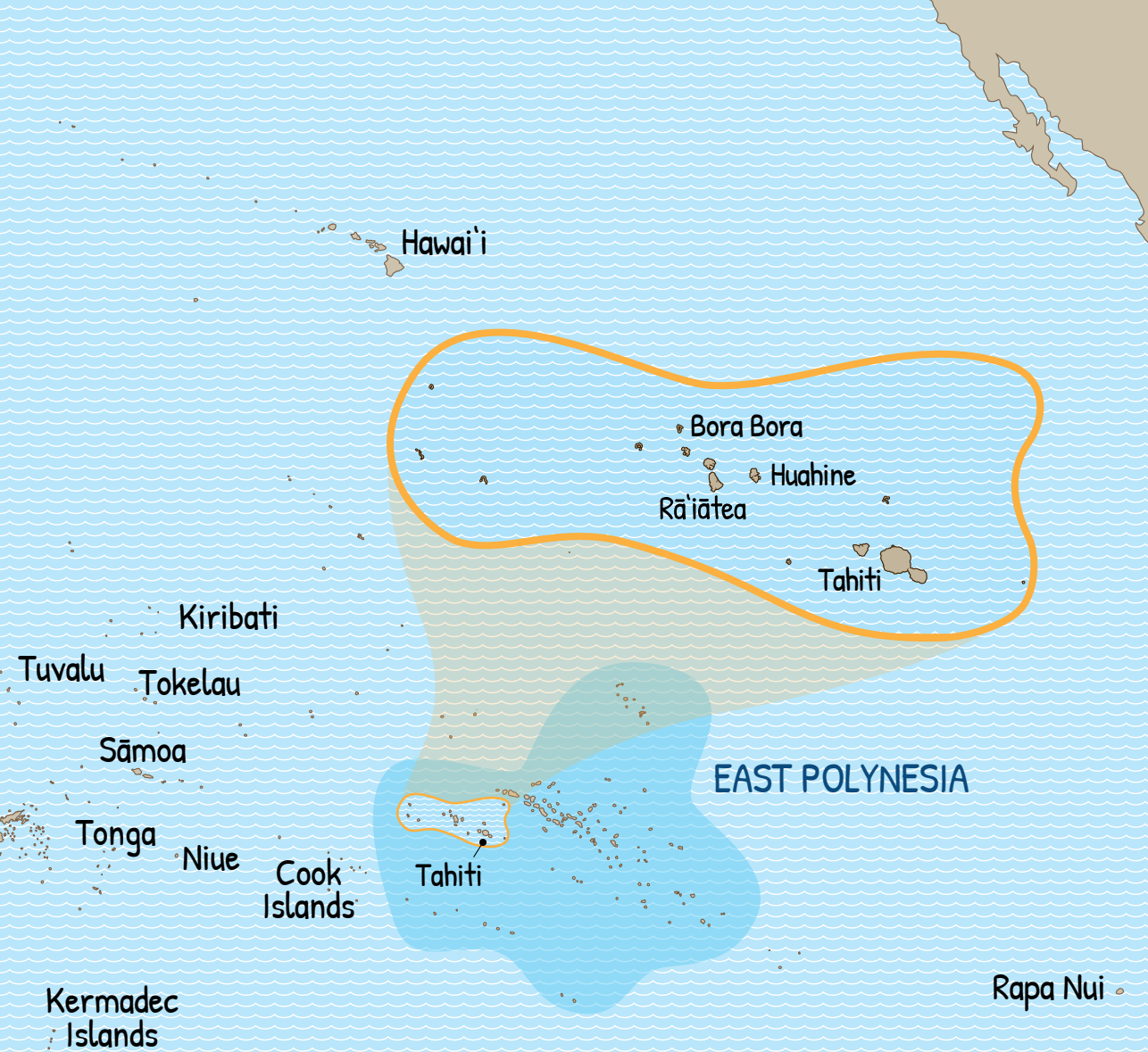
Solomon
Islands

Vanuatu

New
Caledonia

Fiji

Aotearoa



THE FIRST PACIFIC TRAVELLERS

The Polynesian ancestors were voyagers. Guided by the stars and the tides, they crossed the Pacific, from west to east, until they reached the islands of West Polynesia, including Sāmoa and Tonga. Later, these people continued on to East Polynesia. Finally, in the last wave of migration, they settled in Hawai'i in the north, Rapa Nui in the east, and Aotearoa in the south. Over time, as these voyagers adapted their lifestyle and culture to each new environment, they became Polynesian.

The Endeavour

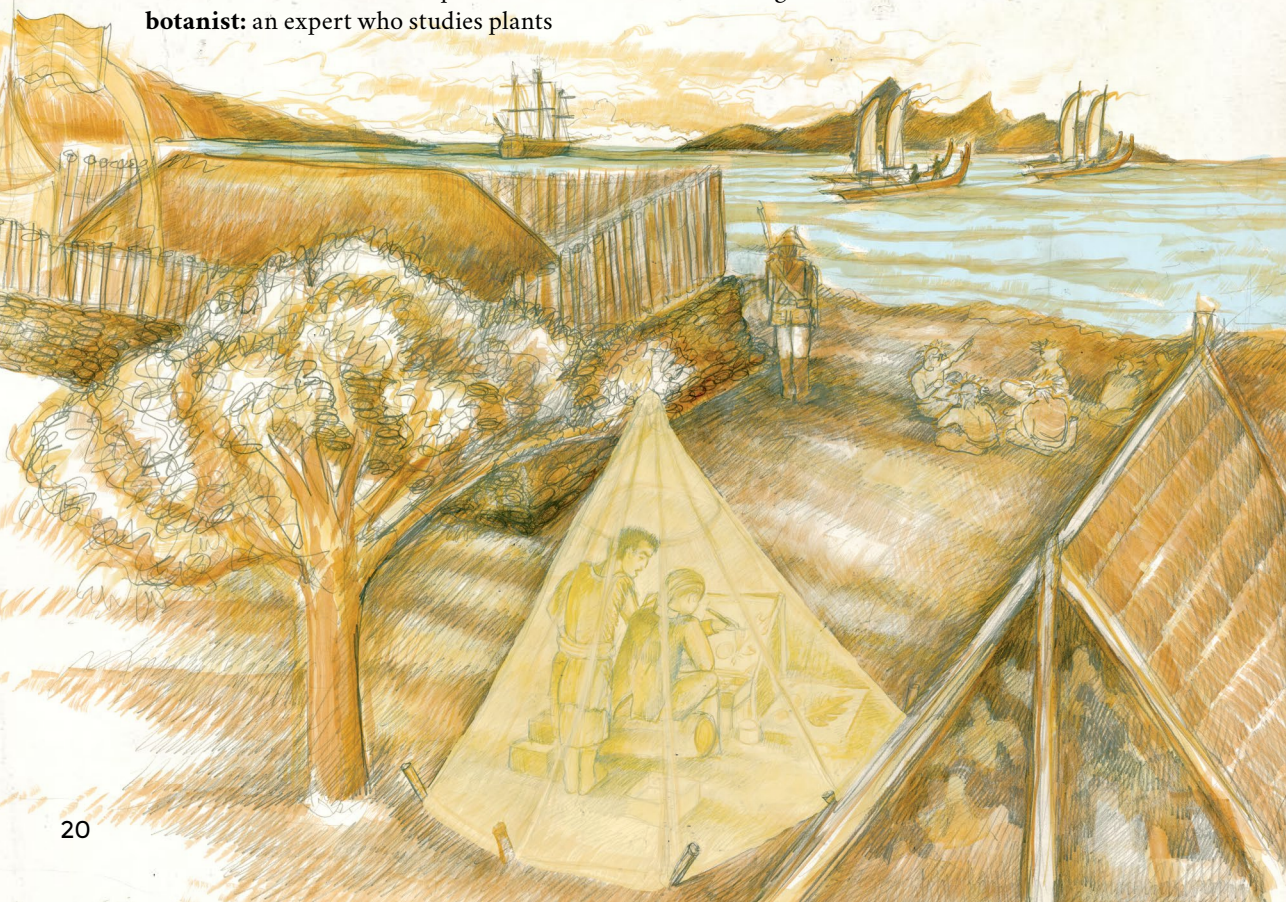
Samuel Wallis and his men stayed in Tahiti for five weeks. During this time, they got to know Tupaia. When James Cook's *Endeavour* arrived two years later, some of Wallis's sailors were on board. They remembered Tupaia as an important, well-connected man, so Cook asked for Tupaia's help as an interpreter and a guide.

Cook had come to the Pacific to observe and measure the **transit of Venus**. This information was for a project run by scientists who hoped

to work out the distance between Earth and the sun. But Cook was also on a secret mission. Like Samuel Wallis, he was hoping to find the unknown southern continent. The *Endeavour* was on an epic journey, and to help record it, many skilled people were on board, including astronomers, scientists, and artists. One of these men was the **botanist** Joseph Banks, and he and Tupaia became friends. Tupaia also spent time with the ship's artists, learning to draw and paint the European way.

transit of Venus: when the planet Venus can be seen moving across the sun

botanist: an expert who studies plants



Adventure

Cook encouraged Tupaia to share his knowledge of the Pacific. Tupaia could identify more than a hundred islands – their sizes, the positions of their reefs and harbours, their populations, the names of chiefs, and the food that might be available. As a master navigator, Tupaia also knew how to get to these islands and how long it would take. When the *Endeavour* left Tahiti in July 1769, Tupaia and a young **apprentice** companion named Taiato were on board.

Before they headed south, Cook wanted to explore the nearby islands.

Tupaia guided the ship first to Huahine and then to Rā'iātea. Wherever they went, Tupaia made sure contact between the British and locals was as smooth as possible. He also worked with Cook on a chart of the South Pacific. When finished, it named an impressive seventy-two islands. One place the chart didn't name was Aotearoa, which had been settled by Polynesian navigators about seven hundred years earlier. Tupaia told Cook that he knew of no great lands to the south – yet this distant place would be the *Endeavour's* next stop.

apprentice: a kind of student





Aotearoa

The British sailed into Tūranganui-a-Kiwa, near present-day Gisborne, on 8 October 1769. The first time Cook went ashore, he didn't take Tupaia – a mistake that ended in tragedy. Te Aitanga-ā-Hauiti warriors challenged some of Cook's men, and one of them, Te Maro, was killed on the beach when a British sailor fired his musket.

The next day, Tupaia did go ashore, saving the crew from attack when he called out to a large party of warriors. Because of the similarities between te reo Mā'ohi (the Tahitian language Tupaia spoke) and te reo Māori, the warriors were able to understand. A long conversation followed. Where were these men from? Why had they killed Te Maro? What did they want?



The diplomat

Over the following months, word spread about the high priest from Tahiti travelling in a strange waka with pale companions. Now, when the British had contact with Māori, Tupaia often took a leading role. Using his skills as a diplomat, he would speak to both sides, sharing his knowledge to prevent confusion and conflict. Tupaia was greeted as an honoured guest and given cloaks and other taonga. He was from the homeland after all. Māori wanted to hear his stories. They wanted to connect with their ancestral past.



Tupaia continued to draw in Aotearoa. His only surviving artwork from his time here is thought to have been made in Ūawa (now called Tolaga Bay), where Tupaia spent a lot of time ashore. The drawing shows a Māori and Joseph Banks trading a crayfish and white tapa cloth. The British also offered iron and beads, but Māori were more interested in cloth, nails, and especially guns. These goods were exchanged for food and sometimes pounamu.

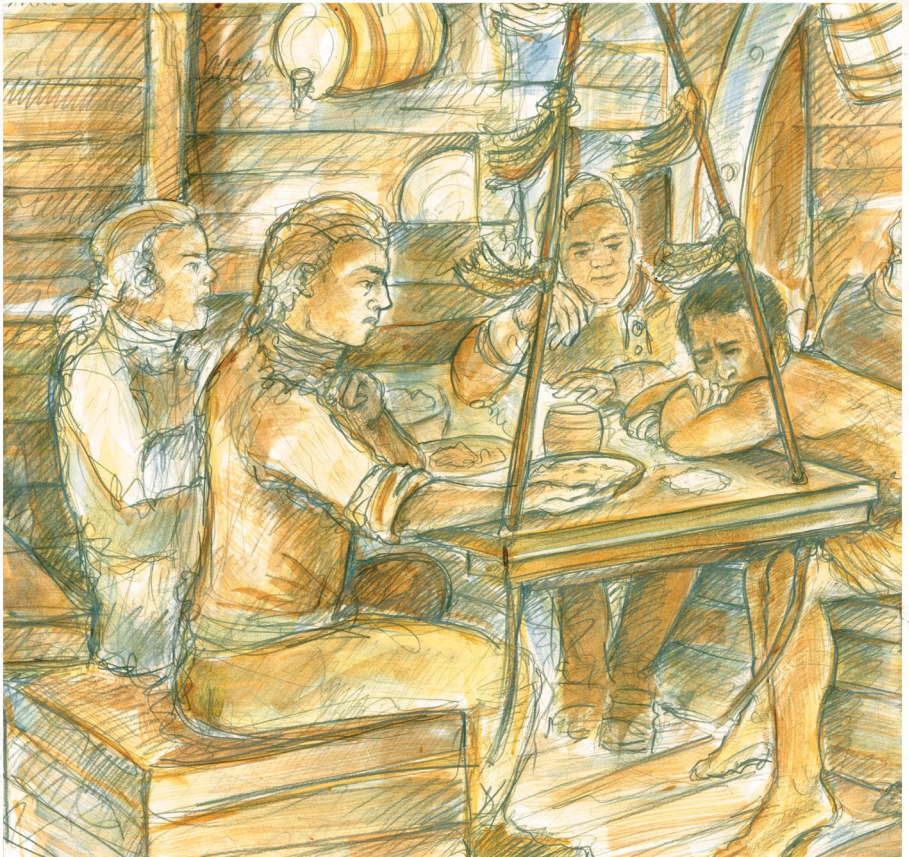


Indigenous Australians drawn by Tupaia in 1770

Australia and Batavia

Cook and his men spent six months in Aotearoa. In April, the *Endeavour* sailed west, arriving off the east coast of Australia four weeks later. Cook had hoped that Tupaia would be able to communicate with the indigenous people of Australia, but the languages were too different. “We could know but very little of [Aboriginal people’s] customs as we were never able to form any connections with them,” Cook wrote in his diary.

Not being able to talk with locals changed things for Tupaia. He was no longer of any use to the Europeans, and the crew began to ignore him. He was also sick with scurvy, a serious disease caused by a lack of vitamin C that was common among sailors at the time.





When the *Endeavour* arrived in **Batavia** in October 1770, Tupaia was suffering badly from the effects of scurvy. Along with other sick sailors, he was sent ashore to eat fresh fruit and vegetables. As their health improved, Tupaia and the young Taiato were said to be fascinated by the local people and their customs. Although Tupaia had worn Western clothing during the voyage, in Indonesia, he decided to wear Tahitian bark-cloth.

Batavia: an old name for the city of Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia



Farewell, Tupaia

Taiato and Tupaia recovered from scurvy but then fell seriously ill again. This time, they had either dysentery or malaria. Nothing could be done. The young Tahitian died first; Tupaia a few days later. They were buried on an island in the harbour – the exact site now unknown. When Cook returned to Aotearoa in 1773, Māori were expecting to see Tupaia. On hearing of his death, they were greatly upset. Priests at Ūawa, where Tupaia had spent so much time, chanted a lament.

Up until recent times, there was little mention of Tupaia in the history books – although he was remembered in Māori oral history. We now know the importance of all that Tupaia shared and did during his time on the *Endeavour* and in Aotearoa. His skills were especially crucial when it came to building relationships between Māori and Pākehā.





The Mohawk

by Sarah Johnson

Leo sat, eyes closed, head fixed straight ahead. There was a sound like swarming bees as the clippers moved up from the base of his skull to follow round his right ear. The buzzing stopped and then restarted as the barber shifted the clippers and began again. This time, he worked closer to the middle. Leo screwed his eyes tighter. He wasn't ready to look.

Now the barber started plucking at the top of his head. He spent ages, pulling and tweaking. When he'd finished, he placed a hand on Leo's shoulder. "Take a look," he said.

Leo opened his eyes. The sides of his head were closely clipped, the hair almost gone. The rest had been sculpted into sharp spikes that jostled all the way from his forehead to the back of his neck. A mohawk, just like he'd asked. "Awesome," he said.

The barber handed him a small tub. "You'll need this. Gel. Super strong."

Leo went to meet his mum and brother at the library. "Wow," said Mum, smiling. "Do you like it?" Leo ran his hand over the stiff spikes and nodded uncertainly.

"Radical," Matthew said. "You'll slay it at school tomorrow."

"Thanks," said Leo. He didn't feel rad – he felt shaky. Like someone had cut off a limb. He'd spent the whole summer growing his hair, and now it was gone.

That night, Leo slept carefully, his head propped high on the pillow. In the morning, he woke with a stiff neck and a mohawk that was now lopsided. He used the gel to spike it back up. Soon the points were as sharp and defined as yesterday. Leo examined himself carefully in the mirror. He looked good.

At his old school, Leo hadn't really been anyone. It was a big place; he and his friends hadn't stood out. They hadn't been the bad kids or the cool kids. They hadn't been the kids who were good at sport or were always getting certificates at assembly. They were the kids who were just there.

But today was Leo's first day at intermediate. Things were going to be different. For a start, this school was way bigger than South Central Primary. Something drastic was called for – otherwise, he'd fade into the background the way he always had. His haircut was it.

Leo felt taller on his way to school. The mohawk was like having a puppy on his head – he could feel it bounce and wag as he walked. He had to resist the urge to give it a pat.

Apo and Dylan were waiting near the corner. Apo laughed when he saw Leo, but Dylan frowned. "What's that?" he said.

Leo touched one of the spikes. "It's a mohawk."

"I know that." Dylan was still frowning. "But why?"

Dylan's hair was cut short at the back and sides. The top was longer, with a thick fringe that hung in his eyes. Apo's black hair was wavy. He wore it short. Leo's own hair had been pretty much the same as Dylan's – before the haircut.

Leo shrugged. "I wanted to do something. You know ... a change."

Dylan looked at Apo, an unasked question on his face. Apo looked at his feet. Leo could feel his face heat up.

"It's weird," Dylan finally said.

"I thought you'd like it."

"Well, I don't," Dylan said flatly.





There was an assembly first thing so that the principal could welcome the new students. Leo noticed a couple of kids looking; a few smirked. He hadn't expected that. He searched the room, heart pounding. He wasn't the only one with a different look. One girl had purple streaks. Another kid had a rat's tail.

At the end of assembly, the class lists were called out. Leo's teacher was someone called Matua Glen. Neither Apo nor Dylan were in his class, and he felt another stab of panic.

"See you at lunchtime," Apo said. "We'll play football."

Dylan said nothing.

In his home room, Leo sat at the back. It was only nine-thirty, but already he'd had enough for one day. Matua Glen had a kind face and the greenest eyes Leo had ever seen. He noticed those eyes flick his way as Matua Glen read out the roll. "Had he checked out the other kids too?" Leo wondered. "What was his teacher thinking?"

Shyly, Leo dropped his head. Even then, he could sense his hair sticking up a mile, shouting for attention.



Leo tried to find Apo and Dylan at break. Instead, he ran into Milo and Sean, cool kids from his old school. Ava spotted them, too, and came over.

“What’d ya do to your hair?” Milo asked.

“Had it cut,” said Leo.

“Obviously!” Milo said. “Did you think it would make you look cool or something?”

Leo shrugged. He didn’t know what to say. The mohawk was cool – but he didn’t think he was. That wasn’t the idea.

Ava studied Leo’s head. “You could flatten it, you know. In the bathroom. You could use water to make it lie flat.”

Leo touched the spikes again. “Nah, I’m good,” he said.

After break, Matua Glen explained the term’s topic: protest and social action. They spent time discussing what this meant, then Matua Glen asked whether anyone in the class had worked for change.

Leo had done the forty-hour famine last year. He began to raise his hand, then thought better of it. Too late.

“Leo, isn’t it?” Matua Glen said. Leo nodded. “You had something to say?”

The whole class was looking now. Some of the kids seemed interested, but Leo shook his head. His face burned.

After social studies came maths. Leo liked maths. There was an easy handout, and he finished just as the bell went. As he was packing up, Matua Glen stopped by his desk. “It’s a shame we didn’t hear from you earlier,” he said.

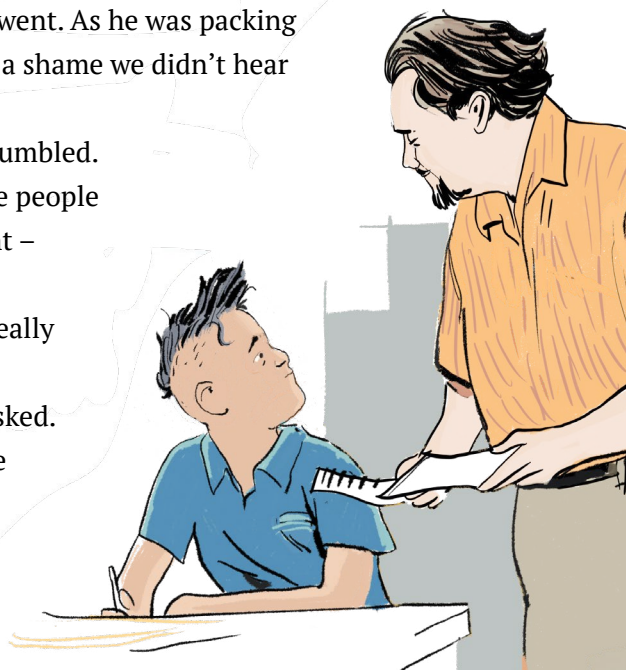
“I forgot what I wanted to say,” Leo mumbled.

Matua Glen raised his eyebrows. “I like people who have something to say. It’s important – don’t you think?”

Leo nodded. Matua Glen’s eyes were really intense. They were hard to look at.

“What’s with the hair?” Matua Glen asked.

“It’s a mohawk,” Leo muttered, unsure what he was getting at.



Matua Glen smiled. “I know. I just wondered what it’s about ... whether you’re making a statement of some kind?”

Leo shrugged. “Not really. It’s just a haircut. I felt like a change.”

“*Just* a haircut,” said Matua Glen. “You think?” He handed Leo a piece of paper. It had two website addresses. “Take a look after school,” he said. “Tell me what you think.”

At home, Leo answered Mum’s questions about the day, then he went straight to the bathroom mirror. The mohawk was still there, prouder than ever. He wondered if he should wash out the gel, like Ava had said, see what was left. Perhaps he could swish his hair to the side ... or have a part like Bart Simpson’s. “What’s the best option?” he wondered.

In the meantime, he looked up Matua Glen’s websites. The first was on the history of mohawks. There was a drawing of a Pawnee warrior, another of a Huron. There were also black-and-white photos of soldiers with mohawks from the Second World War, most of them American paratroopers. Leo hadn’t known about them. Lastly, there were photos showing punks. They wore coloured mohawks, short mohawks, crazily long mohawks. But Leo wasn’t so interested in their style. What he noticed most was their pride. These people knew what they were about. They had something to say.



The second website was about animal rights in New Zealand, with photos of protesters. Leo was still studying the page when Matthew got home.

“How was your day?” he asked.

“Kind of strange.”

“First days are like that,” said Matthew. “It gets better.”

“Some kids didn’t like my hair,” Leo said. “They think I’m weird.”

Matthew laughed. “Forget them. It’s great. I might get a mohawk myself.

In solidarity.”

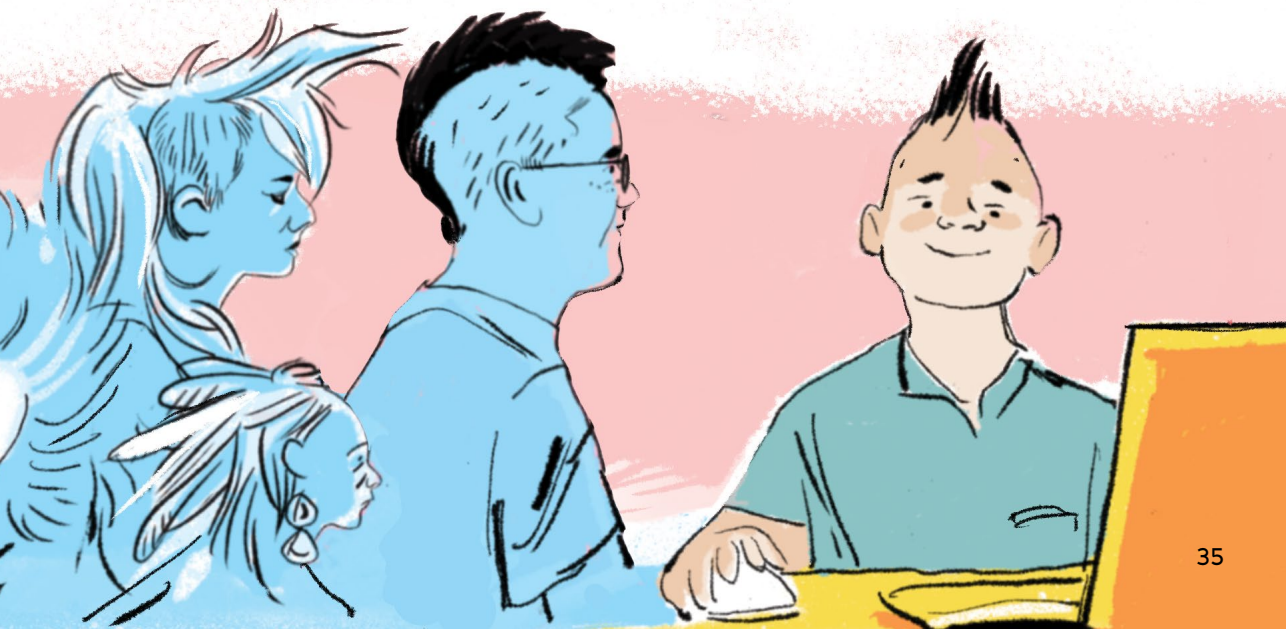
Leo smiled. “A brohawk.”

“Exactly. We can be weird together.”

Leo flicked back to the animal rights website. He wanted to take a closer look. Something had caught his eye. It was in a photo of an animal rights march. One of the protesters had a bright red mohawk – and intense eyes. They stared straight at the camera. The photo had been taken a long time ago, but it was clearly a younger Matua Glen.

Leo would talk to him tomorrow. First, he wanted to read about mohawks. Who had first worn them and why? He raised his hand to touch his hair again. The mohawk was still there, part of him now. Maybe he did have something to say, after all.

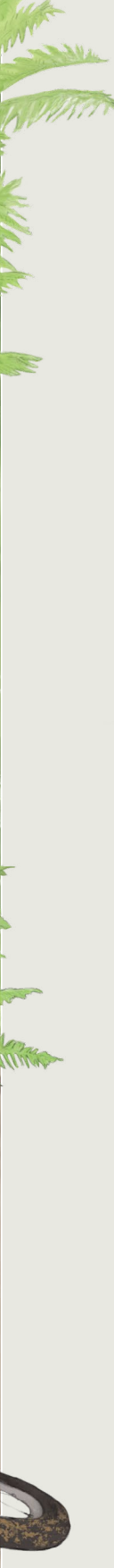
illustrations by Elliot Elam



TRESPASS

by Vince Ford





Raj had come over after school. He and Jordie were talking about what they might do. "I'm going for a ride at the reserve," said Jess, helping himself to a second cold sausage. "You guys should come."

Jordie frowned. He didn't want to hang out with his little brother. Jess had his own friends. "There's not enough bikes, bonehead," he said.

"You could ride Dad's new bike," said Jess, "and Raj could take yours."

"Sounds like fun," said Raj.

Jordie hadn't ridden the new bike yet. Grudgingly, he agreed.



"The track joins an old tramway," Jess said, pointing to a map on the sign. "They used it in the olden days for bringing out timber."

"Cool." Raj leant in closer to take a proper look.

"Forget that," said Jordie. "Come on!" He pulled a wheel-stand along the gravel path. "Race you to the bridge."

"You've got a head start!" Raj called, standing on his pedals.

"Not fair," agreed Jess.

They raced for a bit, but Jordie pulled away, so Raj and Jess slowed to have a look around. Huge trunks forced their way through clinging webs of supplejack. Tree ferns spread like green umbrellas.

"It's epic in here," said Raj.

"I know, right," agreed Jess.

Jordie was waiting in a little dip. "I thought we would have lost you by now," he said, looking at Jess.

"Where's the bridge?" Raj asked.

"Had a better idea," Jordie said. He nodded towards a second route, marked by pink tape. It plunged off into the trees. "That trapline will take us to a waterhole."

Raj frowned. "I've never heard of a waterhole here."

"It's on private land. The locals have used it for years. It's fine."

"If you say so," said Raj.

"I do," Jordie said.

They hid their bikes and followed the pink tape, weaving and ducking for ten minutes before they came to a fence. Jordie got there first. He stopped, scowling. Beside the track, there was a sign: "No Trespassers".

Raj shrugged. "That's OK. We can just go back."

"No way!" Jordie crossed his arms. "There's a farm track further on – it drops down to the same waterhole. I bet there's no sign there."

"We'd still be trespassing," said Jess.

Jordie snorted. "We'll just say we didn't know. Let's go."



There wasn't a second sign. Jordie put his hand on the fence post and leapt over. The other two stayed put.

"We're just going to a waterhole," said Jordie.

"I dunno ...," said Jess.

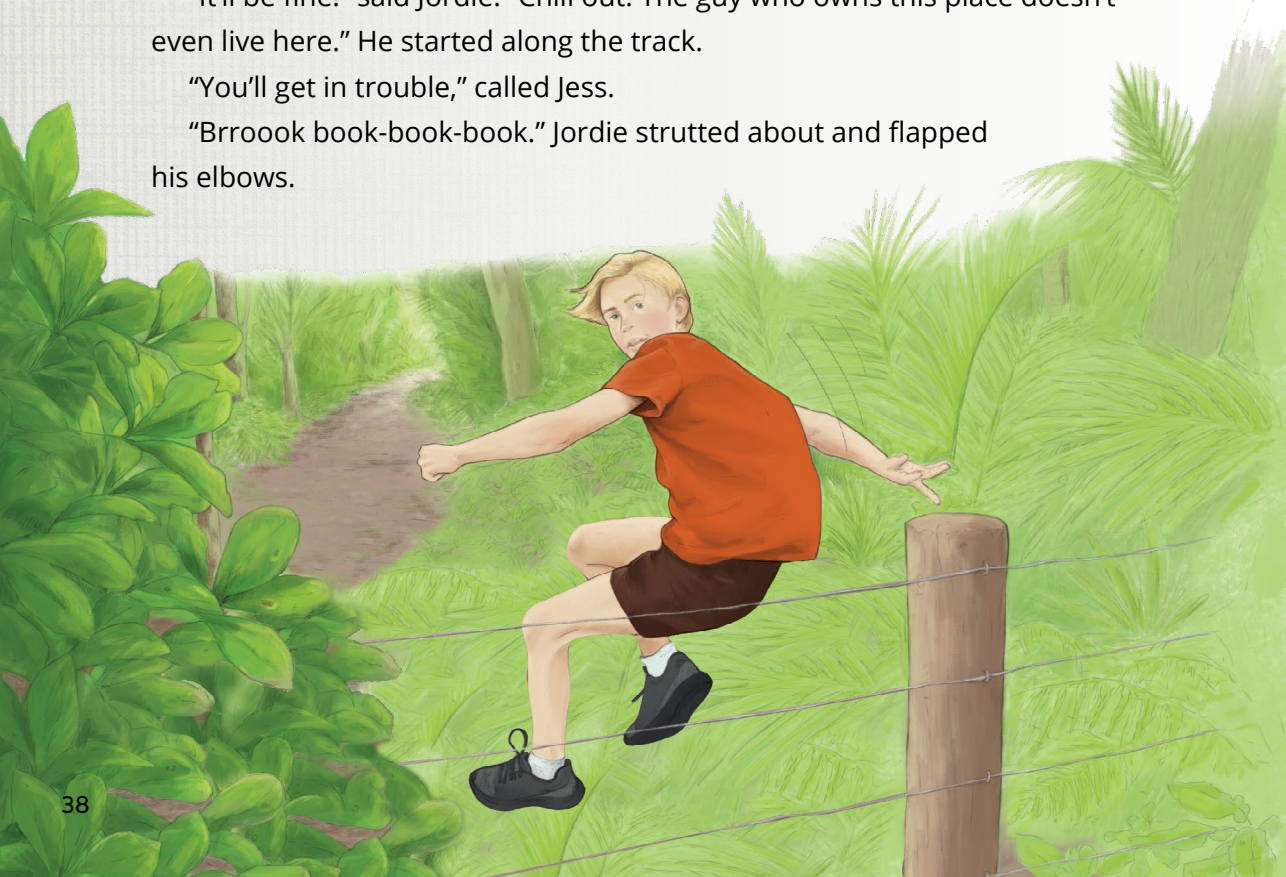
"Well, you can stay here if you want," Jordie sneered. "C'mon, Raj."

"We shouldn't be on private property."

"It'll be fine!" said Jordie. "Chill out. The guy who owns this place doesn't even live here." He started along the track.

"You'll get in trouble," called Jess.

"Brrook book-book-book." Jordie strutted about and flapped his elbows.



Jess glanced at Raj. "I'll go if you go."

"It'll only take five minutes," Jordie coaxed. Then he started walking – not looking back.

"Arrr," Raj cried. "I give up." He climbed the fence. Jess hesitated before slipping through the wires after him.

Jordie laughed when he saw them. They raced a few hundred metres, then slowed to a shambling jog as they began a sharp descent. The bush was similar here – only now, there were signs of people. A black plastic pipe snaked beside the track. Up ahead, beehives squatted in a small clearing.

"Not far," said Jordie. He grinned, eyes bright ... but Raj had spotted something. Barely 20 metres away, a four-wheeler bike was parked on the track. Beside the bike, a man was bent over the water pipe – a big man, with close-cropped hair and thick stubble. He wore denim shorts and cut-off gumboots. A pair of big pliers dangled from one hand.

The three boys halted as the man straightened. He looked at them, deep lines wrinkling his tanned brow. "You're trespassing," he said.

The boys glanced nervously at each other. "We ... um ... we didn't see the sign," said Jordie, thrusting his hands awkwardly in his pockets.

"Bull. You need to get off my property – now."

Jordie's face reddened. He half-shrugged and began to turn away.

Then Raj spoke. He raised his hands, palms out. "We're really sorry. We were going to the waterhole."

"You saw the sign, didn't you?" It was more a statement than a question.



Raj glanced at Jordie, but his friend was no help. Instead, Jess stepped forward. "Yeah, we did," he admitted.

The man nodded slowly. "And you decided to push on anyway?"

"It was a bad idea," said Raj.

"It was," the man agreed. "I'm sure you kids don't mean any harm, but that hole's dangerous after rain. Someone's going to get themselves in trouble. And with health and safety rules the way they are, I'll end up copping it."

Raj nodded. "We didn't mean to cause trouble. We'll go."

"Have you fixed the pipe?" asked Jess. The older boys froze.

The man frowned. "Why?"

"We could help. The water pump's down there, right?" Jess nodded along the track. "We can turn it on. Save you going back and forth."

The man snorted. "You've got a cheek."

Jess shrugged, a tiny gleam in his eye. "It hasn't rained for a while – I think I can stay out of trouble."

The man started to turn away, then changed his mind and swung back. He seemed to be holding back a smile. "Go on then. Pump shed's by the river."

Jess jogged down the track. After a moment, Jordie and Raj followed. "I'll wait a bit after the pump's on," Jess called. "Yell out if the pipe's still leaking, and I'll turn it off."

The man grinned. "At least one of you has some brains."

Jess made straight for the little green pump shed. Raj and Jordie went to check out the river. In the middle, water flowed over boulders, forming a large pool. The waterhole. The boys stood for a while, watching dragonflies hover. Behind them, the water pump started its low hum.

"That was a bit freaky," Raj said eventually, glancing at Jordie.

"Yeah. I shouldn't have lied to that guy. I thought we were the ones who were going to cop it ..."

"He was all right," said Raj, "and we still got to see the waterhole."

Jordie smiled. "True."

"Your brother's pretty sharp."

"I guess," said Jordie. "It's a shame we can't come back here," he added.



Jordie picked up a stone and skimmed it across the pool. "Did you see that?" he said. "It skipped four times!"

"If we got that guy's number," said Raj, "we could ring him sometime – get permission to come to the waterhole ..."

"Maybe," said Jordie.

"Although Jess probably has it already," said Raj with a laugh. "Come on – let's go see what's happening."

Jordie scowled, then squatted down to splash the heat from his face. After a moment, he turned to join the others.

illustrations by Leilani Isara

Smash Hit

BY JO RANDERSON



SCENE: *School camp. The last night. The students are being briefed about the concert.*

MS HONG. Right, tamariki. So, you all know about the concert tonight. I want you to write a skit – a smash hit.

ANIKA. A what?

MS HONG. A skit. It's like a short play.

NIKO. No way! We're not Shakespeare.

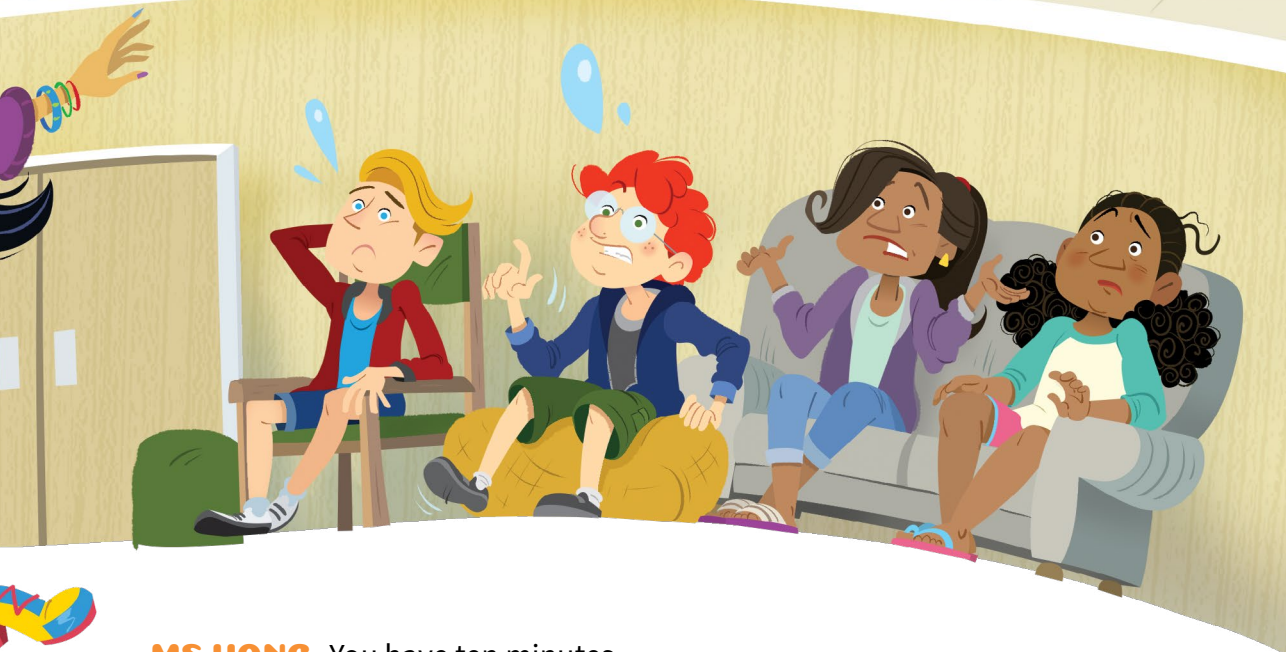
PAULA. Who's Shakespeare?

MAGNUS. He's one of Beyoncé's back-up dancers. He moves like this.
He does a great dance move.

PAULA (to **ANIKA**). Did she say we have to write our own skits?

MS HONG. She did. In groups. Whakarongo mai. I want your skit to be dynamic. I want it to be grounded in reality – but also fantastical. Or possibly mythical. It needs to be slow in places, fast in places, and work towards a climactic ending. The drama needs to be high stakes, but keep it real!

ANIKA. Whaaah ...?



MS HONG. You have ten minutes.

PAULA. Whaaah ...?

MS HONG. Surprise me. Surprise everyone – but be yourselves. Try using colloquial language, but don't forget metaphor ... onomatopoeia ... alliteration! You'll be fine. Relax. You have ten whole minutes. Go!

She leaves.

ANIKA. What the heck?

Ms HONG pops back in.

MS HONG. I'm so excited to see what you come up with.

She gives a friendly wave and leaves.

PAULA. I've never written a skit.

MAGNUS. I hate writing. And what even is "oh no matto payer"?

ANIKA. It's when words sound like themselves. Like crash. You say crash, and it also sounds like a crash.

MAGNUS. Nah, a crash sounds like this.

He pushes over a chair.

PAULA. How do you spell that?

NIKO. Don't worry about spelling – we only have ten minutes to write a great skit with an even better ending.

MAGNUS. Everyone should die. That's always a good ending.

NIKO. That's too over the top. Ms Hong said keep it real. No one dies.

ANIKA. What about someone lets someone else down. *Deeply.* Like they *really disappoint* that person.

PAULA. That's lame.

MAGNUS. I know, I know! There's a dog. It rolls in a dead possum and smells so bad everyone dies.

NIKO. No!

MAGNUS. I'll be the dog.

He pretends to roll in road kill. The others start groaning and collapsing from the terrible smell.



ANIKA. Arrggh! That's the worst smell ever!

PAULA. I'm dying!

NIKO. I said nobody dies. Anyway, that's childish. Let's do something complex, with high stakes.

ANIKA. OK. How about this? There's a bio-tech engineer. She's developing an eco-sustainable product that stops kauri die-back but doesn't harm native species.

PAULA. What are the high stakes?

ANIKA. Excuse me! The high stakes are that unless she makes a scientific breakthrough, all the kauri trees will die.

MAGNUS. The high stakes are if she doesn't invent the product in time, a big dog will roll in dead possums and everyone will die.

NIKO. There will be no big dog and no road kill in our skit! There will, however, be aliens.

ANIKA. I think it should be *emotional* ... about people's emotions.

PAULA. Yeah, like there's this girl. She's always wanted to see where her grandfather was born, but his village was bombed in the war. So she does this big speech about ... you know ... life. The generations being connected like ... umm ... a tree. A family tree! (*She sways like a tree in the breeze.*) And leaves falling off the tree are a metaphor for time passing. And the girl cries.

She cries. There's an awkward silence.

NIKO. Yeah, maybe. Or what about there's this alien with ninety-eight legs.

ANIKA and MAGNUS *try to be an alien with ninety-eight legs.*

NIKO. Our alien plans to take over another planet because the aliens there only have eighty-six legs. But there's an accident in the spaceship and –

MAGNUS (*interrupting*). This big dog comes in, and it stinks of dead possum, and everyone dies!

NIKO (*to MAGNUS*). Why does everybody always have to die in your skits?

ANIKA. That's what happens in Shakespeare's plays, and he's good. Apparently.



MAGNUS. Shakespeare! He's the best!

He repeats the dance move from earlier but does it even better.

NIKO. Listen, there is not going to be a big dog in our play, and that's final!

MS HONG *comes back in.*

MS HONG. One minute to go. I can't wait. I am so excited. This is going to be great.

She leaves again. The students panic.

NIKO. One minute? Has that been nine minutes already?

ANIKA. We haven't even got an idea yet!

MAGNUS. Yes, we have – the big dog and road kill.

PAULA. No, it's about a girl trying to understand her grandfather.

NIKO. No way! It's about aliens – definitely the most high-stakes idea, and it has the best climax.

ANIKA. I think a skit about a bio-tech engineer is better.

MS HONG *comes back in.*

MS HONG. Great work, people. Let's see what you've done.

She sits down. The students look at each other nervously.

ANIKA *(stepping forward and making a grand gesture).* Ko Bryony Manaaki ahau. I am a leading bio-tech engineer. This is my assistant *(gesturing to MAGNUS)*, Rufus.

MAGNUS. Woof! I'm a dog by the way.

ANIKA. Yes, this is my dog assistant, Rufus. The dog. Dogs are actually very helpful to scientists, you know.

MAGNUS *(agreeing).* Woof, woof.

ANIKA. I'm very intelligent. I have invented a secret serum that will save kauri trees. They're dying from a mysterious and terrible disease.

PAULA *(starts swaying).* Ahh, the trees. The mighty kauri trees. They remind me of my grandfather.

ANIKA. Almighty tree, can I save you? I am a leading bio-tech engineer.

MAGNUS. No, it is too late ... the tree is dying!

NIKO (to **MAGNUS**, irritated). The tree can't die. I don't want any dying.

MAGNUS (to **NIKO**). We need dying for the high stakes.

ANIKA (reassuring **NIKO**). The tree isn't dying. It is just deeply disappointed.

PAULA. The leaves flutter to the ground ... it is a message from my grandfather. (calling) Grandfather! Time passes, but we will always be connected.

ANIKA and **NIKO** gather round **PAULA** and shimmy their hands as if they are leaves dropping to the ground. **MAGNUS** pretends to be a dog.

MAGNUS. Woof! Woof! Woof!



NIKO (*cupping a hand round his ear*). I have just received a message from the aliens with eighty-six legs. They said please could they sign a peace treaty – and also, please bring the play to a climactic end!

The students all take a dramatic pose and speak more loudly.

ANIKA. Don't worry, kauri. I will save you!

NIKO. It is time to write a treaty and head back to my home planet!

PAULA. Grandfather. They shouldn't have judged you because you have eighty-six legs! I wish there was no more war!

MAGNUS *runs around the room and rolls several times.*

NIKO. Pooh, what's that terrible smell?

PAULA. Worst ever! The smell of sixteen dead possums. I'm dying.

She falls to the floor. NIKO and ANIKA remain standing.

NIKO (*stubbornly*). I'm not dying. I have no sense of smell.

ANIKA. I'm not dying either. However, I am very, very disappointed.

MS HONG (*leaping up, clapping*). Tino pai, tamariki mā! That was excellent. But one thing – where was the onomatopoeia?

The students look at each other. MAGNUS picks up a chair and drops it.

Loud music plays. He leads a dance, based on his earlier moves.

The students finish in a pose as the music ends.

MS HONG (*clapping*). Brilliant. The perfect skit.

ANIKA. Yeah, better than Shakespeare.

THE END



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