
The New Zealand Curriculum
LEVEL
3
SCHOOL JOURNAL
NOVEMBER
2022

TITLE	READING YEAR LEVEL
The Kaukalaikiki Girl	5
Living by the Maramataka	4
A Good Kaitiaki	6
Balancing Act	6
Best Wedding Ever	6
Kāinga	5
All Rise	6

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▲ LEVEL 3 ▲ NOVEMBER 2022 ▲

CONTENTS

ARTICLES

POEM

STORIES

STUDENT WRITING

PLAY

Ministry of Education

The Kaukalaikiki Girl

by Olive Wilson

When she was a girl, Pusi Urale was often told she was kaukalaikiki. The word is informal Samoan and means cheeky or naughty. Mostly it's used to describe girls who don't quite behave the way society expects them to. But Pusi doesn't see being kaukalaikiki as a bad thing.
She says it's a way to think for yourself, to make sense of the world; girls who are kaukalaikiki learn to ask questions.
It was this part of Pusi – the curious, fearless part – that helped her become an artist.

▲ *Nuʻu Fīlēmū*

The coconut trees

When she was growing up in Sāmoa, Pusi was often told not to do things. She especially remembers being told that girls weren't to climb coconut trees. Pusi noticed that boys were allowed. By the time she was eleven, she'd become frustrated by the double standard. "Why?" she asked. "Why can't I climb the coconut trees?" It was explained that when girls climbed trees, it ruined the meat of the coconuts. Pusi didn't believe this, so when no one was looking, she ran to a tree and scrambled all the way to the top. Pusi remembers she got in a lot of trouble.

Pusi didn't set out to be kaukalaikiki, yet she often heard a little voice in her head. This voice questioned things other kids just accepted – but to Pusi, these things seemed unfair or unreasonable. The more she was told "Don't do that" or "Wrong!" or "Just do what I say!", the more she wanted to ask questions.

The girl who made dye

Pusi is eighty-three now … and still exploring and asking questions. She says that as an artist, being curious is very important to her work. Having an open mind means a person will be more open to possibilities. And Pusi says inspiration can come from anything, anywhere. Her curious nature also means she's always trying new ways to make art.

Pusi didn't paint when she lived in Sāmoa. The closest she got was helping her mother make dye for siapo (tapa). She fondly recalls stripping bark from the blood tree to make ʻoʻa (a brown dye) and getting the fire ready to burn candlenuts. Pusi would help mix the soot from the candlenuts with the ʻoʻa to make a black dye called lama.

Girls were allowed to help make the dye, but only the older women did the actual painting. Pusi always stuck around to watch. She was curious to see what designs her mother and the other women would choose. She still remembers all the talking. "Put a gogo there," the women would tell one another, "like that." It was very collaborative. Although Pusi didn't realise it at the time, helping to make the dyes meant she *was* part of the creative process – and by sitting and watching the women paint, she became familiar with the motifs and patterns that are painted on tapa.

Swirling patterns

Over the years, the tapa cloths stayed with Pusi, swirling in her head. Sometimes the motifs and patterns flowed out, filling whatever piece of paper was in front of her. Pusi became a teacher, and she'd find herself doodling while her students worked. They were always the same designs. Pusi began to talk about these designs with her students, and that's when she decided to learn more about art and go to art classes.

Pusi wanted to know everything: how to use acrylic paints, how to use watercolours, how to make stained glass, how to carve, and how to frame a picture. She studied different ways of making art and different kinds of art. She was especially interested in art that was new to her. She wanted to see things she'd never seen in Sāmoa.

Pusi says one of the best things she learnt was to trust her creativity. "I wasn't taught to paint, I was taught to be free." In the art class she liked best, they played loud music of all kinds: country, hip-hop, rock, pop. They talked about where inspiration came from. Once again, Pusi's connection to tapa came bubbling out, but this time, she decided to teach others about making tapa. She used the money she earnt doing this to help pay for her own lessons.

◂ *'O le Faga (middle) and details of 'O le Faga (top and bottom)*

Kaukalaikiki

Just go!

Taking art classes empowered Pusi. Finally she was encouraged to try new things. “It was a beautiful feeling,” she says, “because I grew up being told the opposite. No, no, no. Now my teachers were saying ‘Don’t be scared, just go!’” Pusi had found a way to explore all aspects of herself – even her kaukalaikiki-ness.

Pusi couldn’t wait to unleash her creativity in whatever form it took. She felt a push to experiment with colour, materials, shapes. Her desire to make art was unstoppable. Pusi remembers coming home one afternoon and going straight to her painting. She completely lost track of time. Her husband came to check on her. “It’s eleven o’clock,” he said … and later still, “Pusi, it’s two in the morning!”

“Suddenly,” Pusi says, “it was 5 a.m. I was so inspired I couldn’t sleep.”

Because Pusi’s art is her freedom, she doesn’t follow any rules. Some of her work uses pointillism, a way of making an image using countless tiny dots. It’s probably no surprise that Pusi doesn’t always use a paintbrush. She likes to experiment. Sometimes, she paints with spoons – and shaved chopsticks work well when she’s using pointillism.

The subjects of Pusi’s paintings are also unique. She likes to paint Samoan women, showing them “big”, as Pusi puts it, “like the way we look”. Pusi says it’s important that her women look real, including the malu on their legs.

Family

Pusi began making art later in life. When she first went to an art class, she was the mother of six children. She says she still has things she needs to do: write a book about her life, make a film. Two of Pusi's daughters are film-makers, and she sometimes helps them with Samoan translation. One of her sons is the hip-hop musician King Kapisi. Another daughter is a digital artist. Pusi is proud to have raised creative children. When she was growing up, Samoan children weren't encouraged to think of art as a career. "It wasn't seen as 'bread and butter'," she says.

Pusi is also very proud of her grandchildren. She lives with one of her daughters and two granddaughters and says it's a real privilege to be able to spend so much time together. Pusi teaches her grandchildren all the things she knows, including Samoan values and knowledge. In return, they teach Pusi what they've learnt – and are still learning. Plus they get to make art together!

▲ *Pusi with her granddaughters Manamea (left) and Anivanuanua*

In a hurry

Unlike her children and grandchildren, Pusi says she’s “in a hurry”. She doesn’t feel old, but her body is growing old. She has lost the sight in one eye. Pusi wants to paint, creating as much as she can, before her other eye goes too.

These days, Pusi paints from the minute she gets up in the morning. “It’s an honour,” she says, “to still be able to do what I do.” She has a message for other older people, but it’s really a message for everyone. “You don’t just have to sit there and wait until you die. Do something fun!”

A Good Kaitiaki

When I was six, I got the kaitiaki award
for saving a bee that landed in the school pool,
and Mum's held it over me ever since.

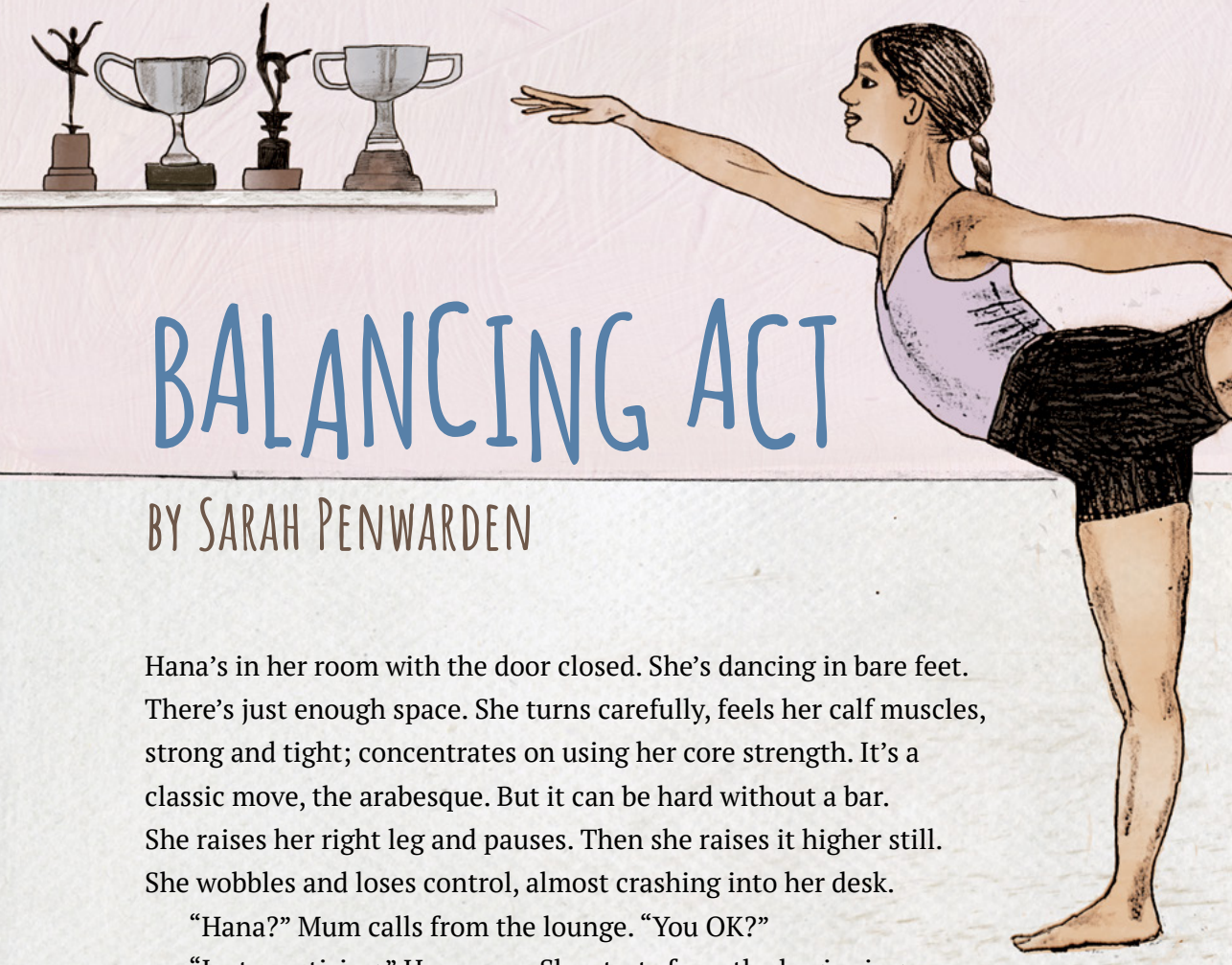
She says, "Hey, son. How about you
be a good kaitiaki and tidy your room?"

If I complain about the way the peas squish
like slugs and taste like grass, she says,
"That doesn't sound like my good kaitiaki."
I say, "You don't even know what it means."
She says, "Fred's tank needs a clean.
Here's a brush. Here's a bucket.
Make sure you scrub it properly."

Fred throws his green-and-golden-bell self
around his algaed home.
I read him the *Ultimate Bugopedia*.
He listens carefully, blinks three-lidded eyes.
I feed him a freshly hatched blowfly.

A good kaitiaki knows when to leave a thing alone.
The bee flew away, sting intact.

Amy McDaid



BALANCING ACT

BY SARAH PENWARDEN

Hana's in her room with the door closed. She's dancing in bare feet. There's just enough space. She turns carefully, feels her calf muscles, strong and tight; concentrates on using her core strength. It's a classic move, the arabesque. But it can be hard without a bar. She raises her right leg and pauses. Then she raises it higher still. She wobbles and loses control, almost crashing into her desk.

"Hana?" Mum calls from the lounge. "You OK?"

"Just practising," Hana says. She starts from the beginning.

Hana's mum says she's always wanted to get things right. When she was little, she ate boiled eggs perfectly, one careful spoonful at a time. Her T-shirts never got dirty at day care. Or her gumboots. And she had a place for everything. Now, at twelve, her room is always tidy, her clothes still clean. She looks even neater when she's off to dance class, dressed in her black leotard and pink skirt, her hair in a tight bun. All the neatness helps her, Hana thinks.

She tightens her lips, looks for her reflection in the small mirror on the wall. She can hear voices in the lounge, footsteps moving towards her room. Then a gentle tap.

"Can I come in, love?"

Grandma looks a lot like Mum. They have the same blonde hair, though Grandma's is silvery blonde now. They have the same smile and laugh,

the same long legs. But Grandma is different somehow. Softer. Calmer. She's never in a rush. Hana's always loved spending the weekend with her. They do craft together – paint mugs or knit – or they go for walks, talk about whatever. As Hana has got older, they chat about things she's learning at school: coral reefs, gravity, chimpanzees, anything. Seeing Grandma always makes Hana feel like things don't matter quite so much.

Now she sits on the bed and leans over and gives Hana a kiss. "How's your ballet going, dear?"

"Good, I guess …"

Grandma glances round the room. Hana can see what she's seeing: all her things in their place. There are the medals that hang by their ribbons; her certificates, pinned just so; the photos arranged on the corkboard, showing Hana in all her recitals and shows. In the wardrobe, her clothes hang smooth and straight. "But?" Grandma says.

Hana sighs. She doesn't know what to say. She likes dance a lot – loves it, mostly – although lately, it's felt like a chore. She's not sure any more … Her mum would probably just remind her how good she is. Hana knows she's good. But it's hard being good. It takes a lot of effort.

"Sarah Grayson practises two hours a day," she blurts out.

"Every day?" Grandma raises her eyebrows. "Really? That's an awful lot."

"She's talking about the exam already."

"How are you feeling about it?" Grandma asks, reading her mind.

Hana says nothing.

"I know you're focused on doing well," Grandma says. "But just remember, you can only do what you can. No one's perfect."

Hana opens her mouth to say more and stops.

Ballet is all about perfect. Every move. Hana's feet, calves, legs, arms, hands … even her neck … they all have to be positioned *just so.* She needs to have perfect posture, perfect balance. And yes, it might hurt sometimes. But sloppy won't get you anywhere, and being great at something doesn't just happen. You have to put the work in. That's what Ms Martine, her dance teacher, says.

Ms Martine always moves like a ballerina: graceful, in control. Hana wants to be like that, too. She's done ballet forever. For every birthday, her presents have been ballet-themed – dolls, books, movies. And then this year, the best gift of all: the pink satin slippers wrapped in tissue, ready for when she could finally go on point. But now, being on point just feels like more hard work.

Her last ballet exam had been especially bad. She'd hardly slept the night before, her mind churning through all the things that might go wrong. Forgetting her gear, falling over, an unkind look. She hadn't eaten breakfast. Her stomach was rolling like the sea. On their way to the exam, Mum had been sympathetic. She'd said all the right things … until she'd said the wrong thing. *You can do it, love. You're good.*

She's at her Thursday dance class. Ms Martine is counting them in. They're practising for the dance recital. Their feet squeak a little on

the wooden floor, and the room is hot and still. One whole wall is a mirror, and Hana can see Grandma watching. Mum has a deadline at work. Most of the parents talk quietly among themselves, but Grandma sits alone, knitting. She's wearing her favourite pink trousers, her feet stretched out in front. It's her favourite position. It helps her sore hip.

Grandma smiles, but Hana is frowning. She looks at her feet. Her big toe on her right foot is throbbing. She takes a deep breath. It's her turn to do a jeté. She springs off her right foot, ignoring the sore toe, and lands on the left. Then she does another, followed by a series of pirouettes. She fixes her eyes on a spot and turns and turns. As she finishes, she looks over and catches herself in the mirror. She's standing in fourth position, arms wide, toes pointing. Completely still.

"Well done, girls!" says Ms Martine. Hana feels a bubble of happiness. She hasn't felt this way in ages.

On the way home, Hana closes her eyes. The warm feeling is still there. It's like being in a bath. Or drifting half asleep. And that's when she knows what to do. She'll concentrate on the recital – and next year, she won't sit the exam. She can still go to classes. Ms Martine will be disappointed, but she'll understand. So will Mum, and Grandma will definitely agree.

She'll dance just for pleasure, just for herself. Hana sighs with relief. She thinks about doing the jeté: arms spread wide, neck straight, moving with grace. She had felt for a moment like she was skimming over water. She needs to remember that.

illustrations by Lisa Baudry

Some people are really into the lovey-dovey stuff at weddings. Or they get excited about what everyone's wearing or who's going to be there.

Me? I just wanna know about the cake. If it's a fruit cake, like the one at Uncle Joe's wedding, then it's not normally a great wedding.[1] But if it's a chocolate cake, like the one at Uncle Malo's wedding, then it's normally an excellent wedding.[2] So when my dads told me they were getting married, I had one question. Were they having a chocolate cake?

Papa Pita seemed disappointed. "Aren't you excited we're getting married, Levi?" he asked. He and Dad both looked at me in the same way: kind of hopeful but scared at the same time. If I was being completely honest, I would have said I think weddings are pretty boring until it gets to the cake. But because they're my dads, I said, "Of course I'm excited!" And I gave them both a hug.

But I'm telling you this now: if I ever get married, you can forget about any of that down-the-aisle and exchanging vows stuff. I'm just gonna cut straight to the cake.

---

1 Though actually, Uncle Joe's wedding was a great wedding! The best man kept yelling at the DJ to play "What Does the Fox Say?" before he fell asleep on top of a bowl of ambrosia.

2 All the guys did this dance routine, and Nanny Nu'a got up and joined in.


RED SOX

My dads wanted their wedding to be perfect. They spent a lot of time deciding things like when to send out the invitations and who was going to come.[3] Only things didn't go to plan.

For starters, Dad emailed his brother Joe and asked if he'd be one of his groomsmen. Joe emailed him right back and said he'd be *honoured* to be the best man. Papa had already asked his brother Stone to be the best man, so then he had to un-ask him![4]

Then Papa asked Dad's niece Sophia to be the flower girl. But Papa's mum, Nanny Nu'a, hit the roof. She insisted it should be his own niece, Sepela, so then he had to un-ask Sophia to be the flower girl, which made Sophia cry, and that made Dad's mum, Granny Annie, really cross. She even accused Nanny Nu'a of being a control freak.[5]

That night, Papa stood at the fridge and ate coconut ice cream straight out of the container.

"Careful," warned Dad. "You won't fit into your wedding pants, and we both know they're pretty tight already."

"I'm eating my feelings," Papa said.

"Then you should *definitely* wear your 'ie faitaga for the wedding," said Dad. An 'ie faitaga is a formal lāvalava. Dad said it would let Papa eat as many of his feelings as he liked.

"Maybe we should just elope," said Papa.

---

3 To be honest, I think they spent more time deciding who *wasn't* going to come.

4 I won't get into the details, but figuring out who would be un-asked was a major drama that went on for days …

5 Papa and Dad agree that both their mothers are control freaks.

The wedding was in Kaikōura on the farm where Dad grew up. It was a sunny day with clear blue skies, and all the guests said it was a beautiful place to get married. It was *just so peaceful* … apart from the sandflies.

They were everywhere that day – and vicious. Everyone was slapping and scratching and itching. Even the marriage celebrant was distracted. All Nanny Nu'a could find to swat off the sandflies was her fan. My dads were saying their vows when Nanny Nu'a accidentally swatted Granny Annie right in the face.[6] Papa and Dad had to stop talking and just sort of stand there until Granny Annie calmed down. But you could tell Papa was rattled. When he went to put the ring on Dad's finger, he dropped it. Papa bent down to pick the ring up. Suddenly, there was this almighty *rip*.

A look of pure horror appeared on Papa's face. He had split his pants.

"How bad is it?" he whispered to me.

I looked down. "Um, pretty bad."

6 At least she *said* it was an accident.

"I *knew* you should've worn your 'ie faitaga," hissed Dad.

"Stay right there," Papa whispered to me. "Don't move till I say so." So I had to stand behind Papa for the rest of the ceremony so no one could see his red undies.

When the celebrant finally announced that Papa and Dad were married,[7] it was time for them to walk down the aisle, past all the guests. Papa walked like his thighs were glued together, with me scurrying behind, just in case.

He got changed into his 'ie faitaga, and we went and posed for the photos. This involved the photographer taking lots of shots of Papa and Dad gazing at each other like they'd just had the best wedding ever, even though we'd been attacked by sandflies, Nanny Nu'a had swatted Granny Annie, and Papa Pita had split his pants.

7 Just after slapping himself in the face to get rid of a sandfly.

When we finally got to the reception, I was so hungry I didn't hear any of the speeches. I could only think about one thing. It was right there on the table: all five tiers of it, with two miniature men in suits plonked on top. I was wondering if they were made out of chocolate, too, when I heard Papa say my name.

"Levi?"

Everyone was looking at me: Papa, Dad, Nanny Nu'a, Granny Annie (with her one good eye), Uncle Joe, Uncle Stone, Sophia, Sepela, and all the rest of them.[8]

"Sorry … what did you say?" I asked.

"I said Dad and I have a surprise. Will you join us, please?"

He beckoned me over.

"I bet you've been thinking all day 'I wish we'd just get to the cake.' So we're going to break with tradition and cut it right now, before dinner, just for you."

I thought for a second I was dreaming, but then my dads found a knife, and together, the three of us cut a huge slice.

"There you go, Levi," said Papa, handing me a plate. "That's for you. Because we know how much you love chocolate cake … and we hope you know how much we love you."

My two grandmas started to clap.

I took the cake and had a bite. It was fudgy, with a thick layer of chocolate icing. Hands down, it was the most delicious chocolate cake I'd ever eaten in my life. I smiled at my dads. They were looking at me again with that same combination of fear and hope.

I had three words for them.

"Best. Wedding. Ever."

8 The final guest list had 110 people.

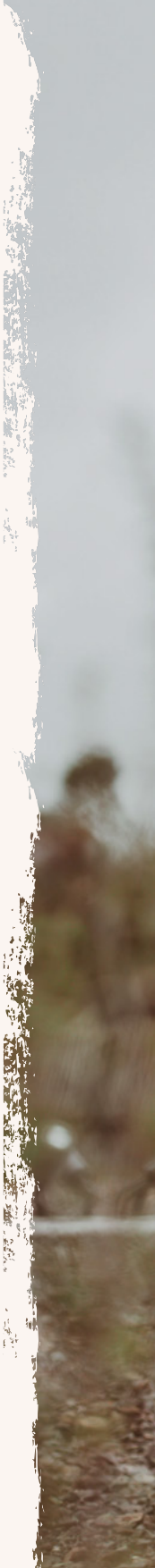
illustrations by Paul Beavis

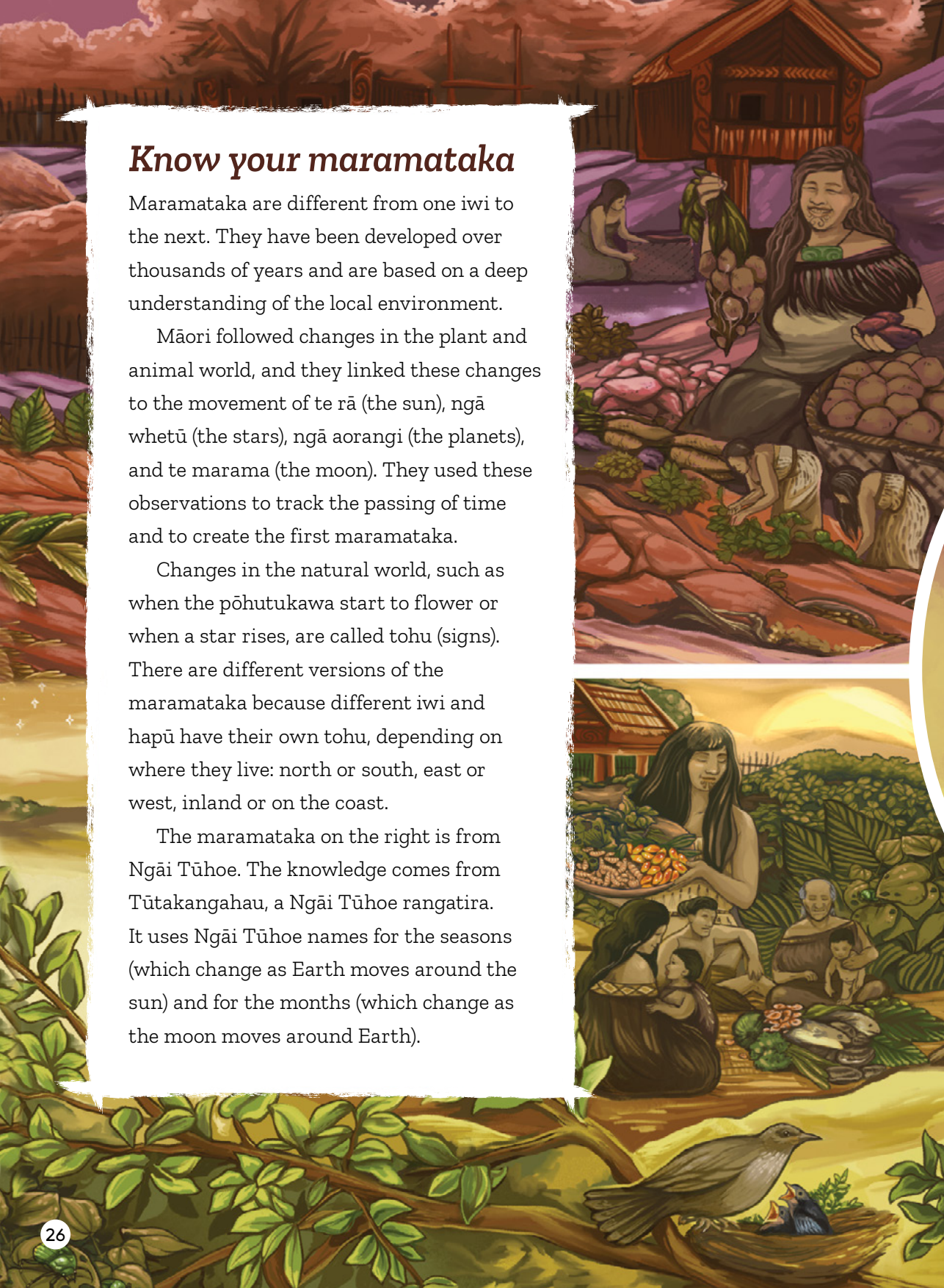
LIVING BY THE MARAMATAKA

by Haukura Jones

Heeni Hoterene grew up in Horowhenua. (On her mother's side, one of her iwi is Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga.) The area is famous for its good climate and good soil, and Heeni's whānau had a big vegie garden. Heeni learnt a lot about gardening from her koro. He traced what he knew back to their tūpuna, who lived on the same land. Heeni's koro called this "taonga tuku iho" – knowledge passed down from the days of old. He said it had to be used and shared or else it would perish. The knowledge needed protecting so it wouldn't disappear. It needed kaitiaki.

Heeni's koro and her tūpuna lived by the maramataka – the Māori calendar. They watched for changes in the natural world, and they used these changes to make everyday decisions, such as when to weed the garden, when to catch īnanga, and when to take time off to rest. The ancestors brought this knowledge from Hawaiki, and it was added to by later generations who lived in Aotearoa.





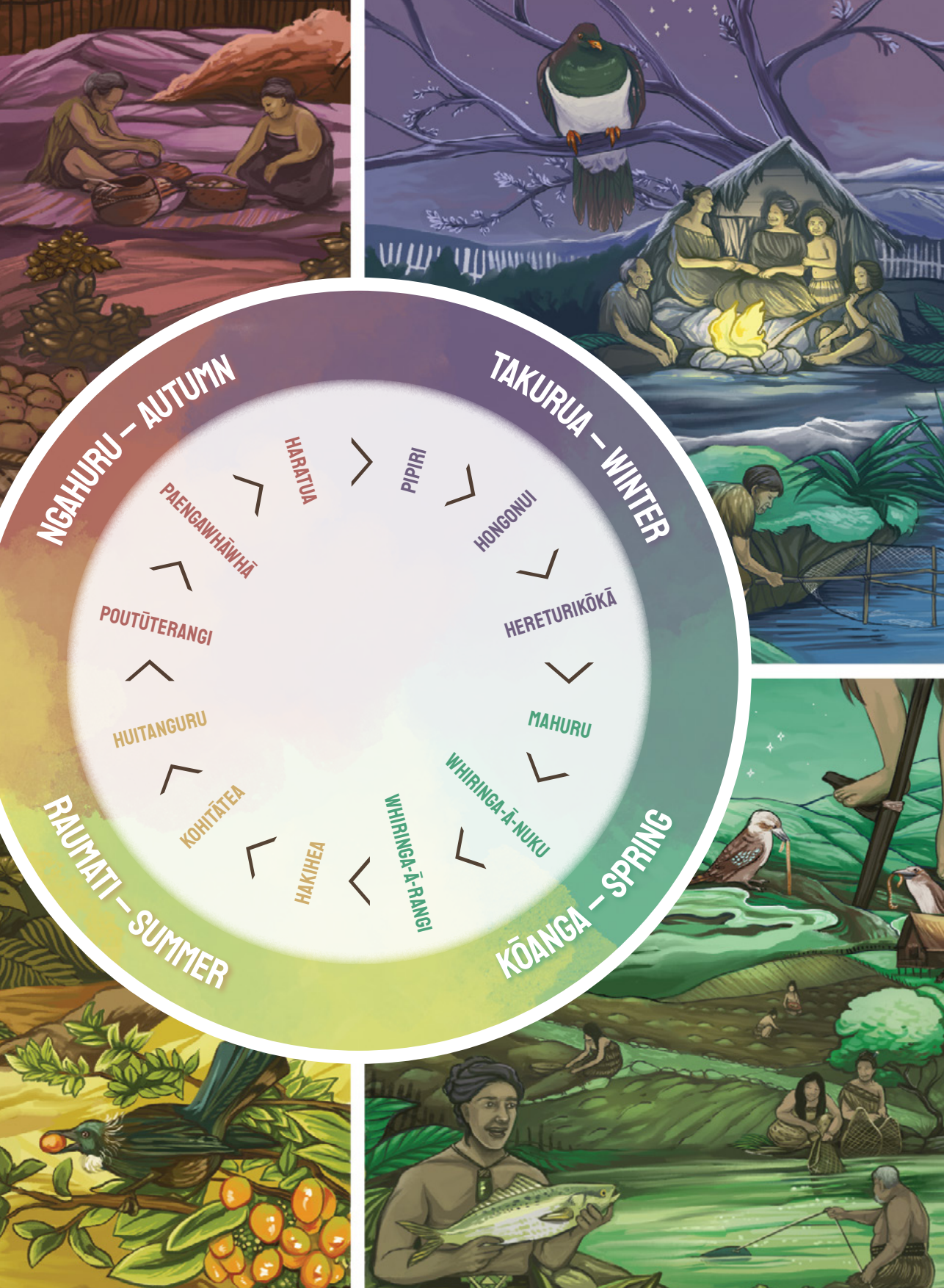
Know your maramataka

Maramataka are different from one iwi to the next. They have been developed over thousands of years and are based on a deep understanding of the local environment.

Māori followed changes in the plant and animal world, and they linked these changes to the movement of te rā (the sun), ngā whetū (the stars), ngā aorangi (the planets), and te marama (the moon). They used these observations to track the passing of time and to create the first maramataka.

Changes in the natural world, such as when the pōhutukawa start to flower or when a star rises, are called tohu (signs). There are different versions of the maramataka because different iwi and hapū have their own tohu, depending on where they live: north or south, east or west, inland or on the coast.

The maramataka on the right is from Ngāi Tūhoe. The knowledge comes from Tūtakangahau, a Ngāi Tūhoe rangatira. It uses Ngāi Tūhoe names for the seasons (which change as Earth moves around the sun) and for the months (which change as the moon moves around Earth).


NGAHURU – AUTUMN
TAKURUA – WINTER
RAUMATI – SUMMER
KŌANGA – SPRING
HARATUA
PIPIRI
HONGONUI
HERETURIKŌKĀ
MAHURU
WHIRINGA-Ā-NUKU
WHIRINGA-Ā-RANGI
HAKIHEA
KOHITĀTEA
HUITANGURU
POUTŪTERANGI
PAENGAWHĀWHĀ

Heeni's koro ... kept Māori knowledge alive through his work in the garden. Heeni had to find her own way ...

KEEPING KNOWLEDGE ALIVE

When Heeni was growing up, her whānau didn't use their maramataka every day. It was mostly used by her grandparents. Heeni's koro was from a generation who never left the land; he kept Māori knowledge alive through his work in the garden. Heeni had to find her own way to be a kaitiaki.

Heeni went to university and got a degree in Māori studies. Then she moved to Northland. There she met Reuben Taipari Porter, whose whānau lived on the land and *did* follow their maramataka every day. They helped Heeni learn more about the Māori calendar. She saw how it could help with all parts of daily life.

FINDING AND GROWING FOOD

When the tūpuna arrived in Aotearoa, they worked hard to survive. They had to do the right things at the right time so there would be enough to eat. Maramataka were especially important as a guide for when to plant, harvest, fish, and hunt. A lot of the work around growing and finding food depended on the season. In fact, the first maramataka only used ngā kaupeka o te tau (the seasons).

"Māori always harvest kūmara during ngahuru, when there's less water in the soil," Heeni explains. "This means the kūmara will be dry." Kūmara were an important crop. They were stored in pits to supply food over winter. If they were too wet, they rotted and people would go hungry.

Alongside the four seasons, the days of the month are also important. It's best to catch tuna, for example, on days when the moon is only partly lit and the nights are darker. Tuna don't come out when the moon is full. They don't like bright light.

Harvesting kūmara near Awanui in the Manawatū

Nights of the month

It takes the moon around thirty days to travel around Earth. Each night, the moon looks different from the night before. The changing moon helps people know what day it is and good things to do on that day. Each night has its own name. The names below come from Ngāti Kahungunu. The knowledge was recorded by Paraire Tomoana.

LEARNING FROM THE TŪPUNA

People still use maramataka to find and grow food. Heeni says a lot depends on where they live, the time of the month or year, and what food is around. “People who live near the moana like to eat seafood,” she says. “They use their maramataka to see what days are good to fish or go for a dive. And people who grow their own food use a maramataka to see the best time for weeding and digging.” Heeni says Māori don’t dig their gardens when the ground is wet. “We’re taught that when we look after the land, the land looks after us.”

Heeni says we have much to learn from the ancestors. “Our tūpuna didn’t change the environment. They used it in a respectful way.” On her father’s side, Heeni is Ngāti Hine. Many of the nights in the Ngāti Hine maramataka are about eeling. “We catch the big tuna to eat, but we also have a tradition of helping the young tuna return from their breeding ground,” Heeni says. “We carry them in baskets past a waterfall so they can continue swimming upstream. If we miss the right time to do this, we might not have enough tuna to eat during winter.”

Gathering kaimoana around 1900

Matariki

The most important time in all maramataka is Te Mātahi o te Tau (the Māori new year). This starts in winter, during the coldest months. For some iwi, the new year begins when people see Matariki reappear in the sky just before dawn in Pipiri (June–July). At first, the stars are low on the horizon. This can make them hard to see, especially from places in the west. Some iwi in Northland and Taranaki mark Te Mātahi o te Tau with the rising of the star Puanga (Rigel in English). So do Ngāi Tahu, who call this star Puaka.

The meaning of Matariki isn't the same for all iwi and hapū. It was often celebrated when the crops had been harvested and food was ready for the winter. The hard work was over, and people could spend time with their whānau and enjoy some rest.

Matariki is still a time to celebrate life. People look ahead and make plans. They also look back, remembering the year that is over and loved ones who have died. Some Māori believe these people become stars that shine down from the heavens.

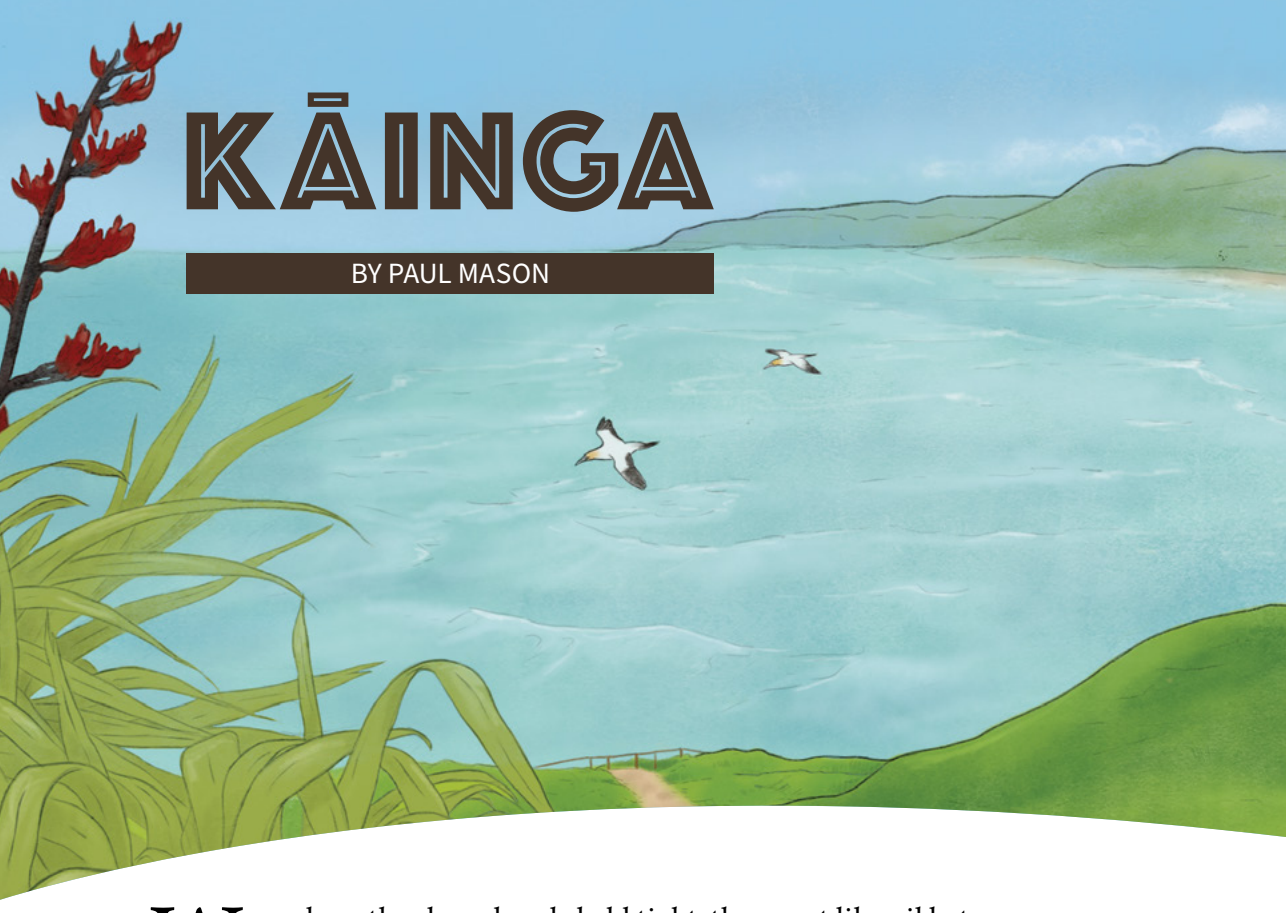
The Matariki stars can be seen from most places in the world, where they have different names. In English, they're known as the Pleiades or Seven Sisters.

TAONGA TUKU IHO

Heeni says it's important to look after the environment – and maramataka help us do this. "Maramataka connect us to the natural world. They encourage us to notice change, and they teach us the right time to do things. This means we can act as kaitiaki and be good to the planet, something that's more important than ever because of climate change."

Now Heeni is working to teach other people about maramataka. She enjoys sharing what she's learnt, but best of all, she likes knowing that she's helping to keep the knowledge of her tūpuna alive. "Using taonga tuku iho means it will never perish, just like my koro said."

> *"Using taonga tuku iho means it will never perish, just like my koro said."*



KĀINGA

BY PAUL MASON

We push up the slope, hands held tight, the sweat like oil between our palms. I squeeze harder. If Grace gets away, she'll break free and dash up the track. The ground's hard as concrete. She can run faster than me.

I'd lost my grip earlier when we crossed the wide, flat rock to get to the steps at the start. Grace yanked free to run to the blowhole, the sea blasting up like a whale's breath. I managed to grab her T-shirt before she got too far away. I told her off for scaring me and said not to do it again. Grace just stroked my cheek.

"Take Grace to the birds?" Dad had asked after lunch. "Would you mind, honey, just for a bit?"

I did mind. "You know I don't like going up there," I said.

"Half an hour."

"It's never just half an hour," I moaned. *Why do I always have to go? I've got stuff to do.* I managed to stop the words from getting out.

"I just need to get some work done." Dad found a crushed note in his pocket and put it in my hand. "Get some ice blocks."

I pushed the money away. "I don't take bribes."

"I owe you," said Dad.

"With interest."

The track is steep, and Grace half pulls me along. She's older – and stronger. One day, she'll work that out. Then there'll be trouble. Grace has brought Issa. Issa's full name is Clarissa. She's half-duck, half chewed-up flannel. Maybe that's where Grace got her whole bird thing.

We climb the hill, following the track one way, then the other. It's hot, but the wind coming off the sea is cool. It's an onshore breeze, and the smell of rotten fish hits us before we reach the top. I cover my nose and mouth. The stink's awful – fishy bird poo. Grace grins. She knows the birds are close.

The track heads along the top, out towards the sea. Beyond the railing, the hillside meets the edge of the cliff. It's a long drop to the waves below. We can see the colony now. Nesting birds cover the slopes – hundreds of them – guarding their little mounds. The cliffs are bare earth, dark grey. Against the dirt, the gannets are white specks. They call to each other in a deafening jumble of noise.

Just offshore, a pillar of rock sticks out of the water. More birds cover the stack on top. They fly above our heads too, riding the wind. They look sleek in the air, beaks pointed like arrows – but when they land, they walk about like clowns. Foolish birds.

Near the viewing deck, Grace almost rips my arm from its socket. I'm starting to get tired and let go, and she runs over and leans on the railing for the best view. I know she can't run off now.

A boy and his mother are on the deck. The birds don't seem to notice all the attention. Grace turns and smiles, one that takes in her whole face. She searches the spread of golden heads, holding up Issa so she can see better. All I can think about is how short I can cut this walk without causing a fuss. I check my phone. Clara said she would message. I'm supposed to go round later. The sun and the stink are giving me a headache.

Now Grace is running her finger over the sign, pretending to read. She babbles to Issa, explaining things. I notice the boy glance over, taking in Grace as she gives her flannel duck a lesson on gannets. She doesn't see the boy's look, but his smirk makes my head pound. I feel the heat rise up through my chest. It grows until it bursts.

You think my sister is funny? Because she's different? You don't know anything about her. You don't know what she's like. I keep my mouth shut and swallow. I want to break something.

The boy looks past me. Then he points to a nest right in front of Grace. "Hey, Mum," he says. "Look at those two!"

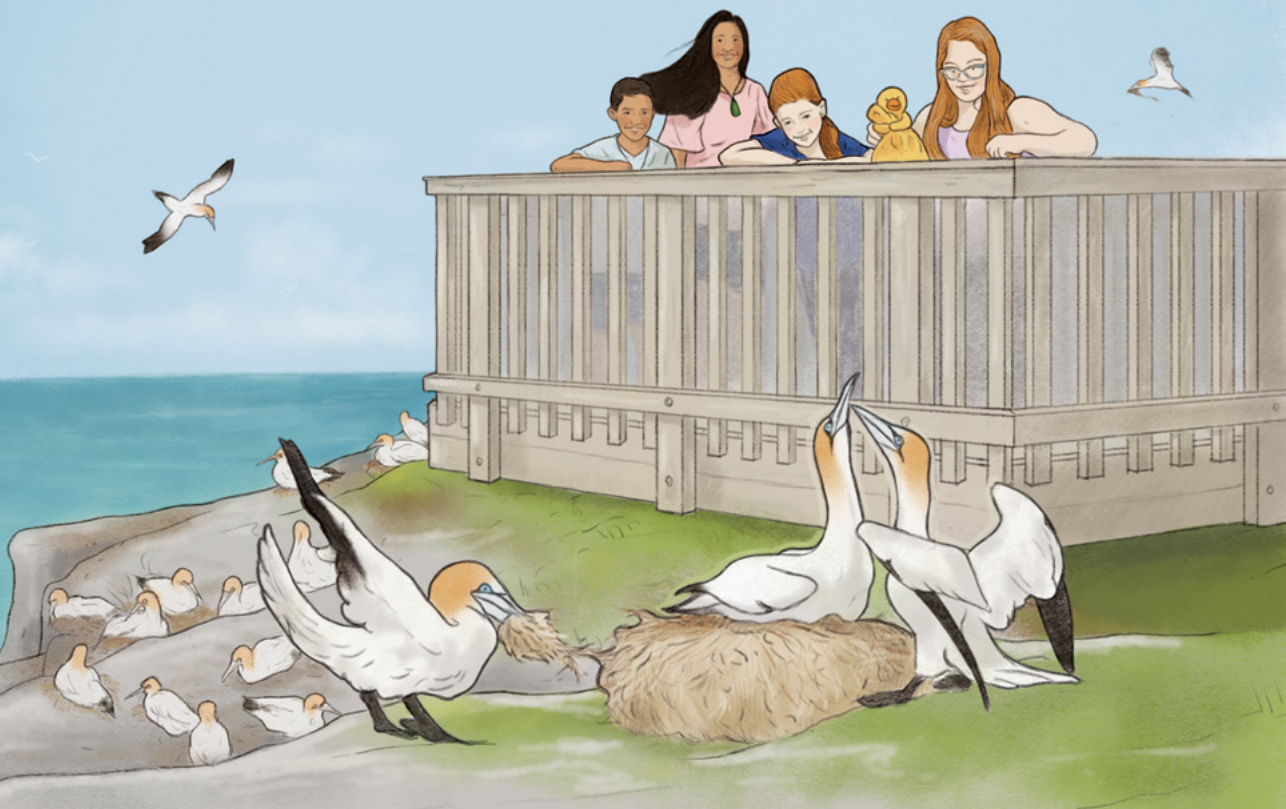
Grace is looking, too. I follow their gaze. One of the birds is sitting on a huge nest. It's an impressive arrangement of seaweed and dried grass, and its gannet neighbour is trying to pinch some. The bird is caught every time, gets a beaky jab, but it doesn't learn. The gannet with the flash nest is really annoyed. It *is* funny. I let my shoulders drop. The boy wasn't laughing at Grace – it was the birds. My cheeks flame. Did he see my glare before?

As we watch, another gannet swoops in. It waddles over to its mate on the big nest. The two of them do a kind of dance, heads moving from side to side, beaks clacking together. While they're busy, the other bird sees its chance, grabbing some of the straw. We all burst out laughing.

"They always make me smile," says the boy's mum.

"They're Grace's favourite, too."

"Well, your sister knows what she's on about." Grace holds Issa up in greeting. "Kia ora," says the woman, and Grace gives another one of her huge smiles.



We turn back to watch the birds. The mates are still dancing. They stop for a moment, neck resting on neck, two heads of soft gold. The black lines around their eyes look like they've been drawn on with a marker.

"Tākapu are just so lovely," says the mum. I nod. They are. I see it.

"Gannets fly to Australia," says the boy. "But this is their kāinga. They always come back."

"Us too," I say. *Sorry about before.*

When we get home, Dad's at his computer, fast asleep, his head bobbing. I decide to let him rest, but Grace gives him a hug, startling him.

"Hey, girls." He gives the top of Grace's head a kiss.

"Hard at it, eh?" I tease.

"I must have nodded off." Dad grins. "How were the birds?"

I shrug. "You know, Grace might be right about them."

"You heading over to Clara's now?"

Grace reaches up and gently strokes Dad's neck. She sometimes likes to touch his Adam's apple while he speaks.

"Maybe later," I say. "No rush."

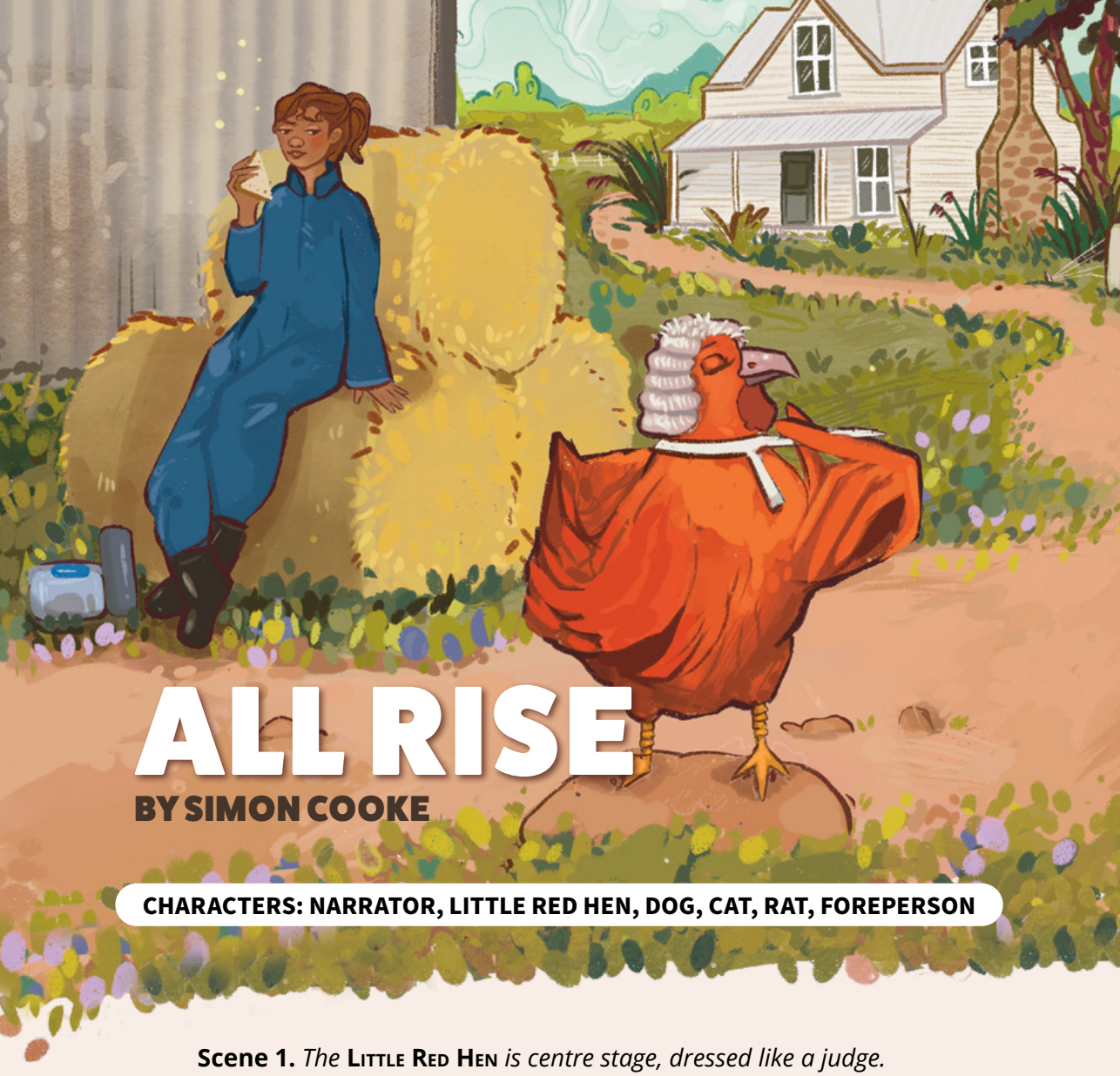
illustrations by Leilani Isara

Sumner Beach

Gentle waves brush onto my feet.
Grey sand crunches between my toes.
Chunks of driftwood lie like lazy cats.
Crabs sprint like wind-up toys
over scattered seaweed.
Sea sparkles like silk scarves.
Seagulls dive for hot chips,
screeching like nails on a chalkboard.
Sea salt whifts under my nose.
The moana crashes like cymbals.
Bright pink clouds cover the sky like cotton candy.

Picking up pāua shells,
I slowly walk across the beach
looking back at the sunset,
hoping when I return to this magical place
it will be the same.

by Elise Mackay
year 5, Russley School



ALL RISE

BY SIMON COOKE

CHARACTERS: NARRATOR, LITTLE RED HEN, DOG, CAT, RAT, FOREPERSON

Scene 1. *The* **Little Red Hen** *is centre stage, dressed like a judge. The* **Narrator** *is sitting to the side, eating a sandwich.*

NARRATOR (*to the audience*). Everyone knows the story of the Little Red Hen. Undervalued. Overworked. A feathery legend from down on the farm.

LITTLE RED HEN. Thanks, Narrator. It's good to be appreciated.

NARRATOR. Little Red Hen worked selflessly, without help from the lazy dog, the lazy cat, and the lazy rat – her friends! So what happened *after* the story ended? Did Little Red Hen eat the bread by herself, or did she share it? Did her friends learn their lesson?

LITTLE RED HEN (*to the narrator*). Would you please not scatter crumbs? I'm the one who has to sweep up.

NARRATOR. Sorry. I have one final question. Why are you dressed like a judge?

LITTLE RED HEN. Because the court of the Little Red Hen is now in session. All rise. Judge Little Red Hen presiding.

NARRATOR (*to the audience*). How exciting. A courtroom drama! We can watch justice in action.

LITTLE RED HEN (*to the narrator*). Bring in the guilty criminals.

NARRATOR. Um, I'm not sure that's my job … and isn't it a bit early to say they're guilty? We haven't heard the charges or seen the evidence.

LITTLE RED HEN. That's what I'm about to do. Now can you please just help, or do I have to get them myself?

NARRATOR (*muttering*). Fine, fine.

The **Narrator** *goes off-stage and returns with* **Dog**, **Cat**, *and* **Rat**.

LITTLE RED HEN. Dog, Cat, and Rat: you are charged with two crimes. The first – laziness. You three never help out. I have to do *everything* around here. Cleaning, cooking, sitting on the eggs … the list is endless! The second, more serious charge is theft. Someone stole my bread.

DOG. What bread?

LITTLE RED HEN. *The* bread. The loaf I'm famous for. Remember?

DOG. She bakes one lousy loaf and acts like a celebrity baker. I rolled in something smelly the other day, but you don't hear me bragging.

CAT (*to Little Red Hen*). Oh, *that* bread. I thought you ate it?

LITTLE RED HEN. I was going to, but I had to make butter first. All by myself. Then jam … *by myself*. And while I was busy doing *all* that, one of you lazy good-for-nothings stole my bread!

DOG. We wouldn't do that!

CAT. We're friends!

LITTLE RED HEN. Friends? Friends would help plant the wheat. Friends would help harvest the wheat. Friends would help bake. Friends would … help! I'm overworked. My feathers are falling out. I'm a wreck.

RAT. Get a grip – it was only a loaf of bread.

LITTLE RED HEN. That's it! I find you guilty –

NARRATOR (*interrupting*). Ah, excuse me, Little Red Hen. No one's guilty yet, remember? The trial's not over.

LITTLE RED HEN. Fine. First defendant, Dog. Regarding the charge of laziness: do you deny you ignored my plea to help plant the wheat? Do you deny you said "Not I" because you wanted to chase a ball?

DOG. I don't –

LITTLE RED HEN (*interrupting*). Lies! There speaks a guilty conscience! Second defendant, Cat. Do you deny that when I asked for help to harvest the wheat, you said "Not I" because you wanted to catnap?

CAT. I –

LITTLE RED HEN (*interrupting*). See! Cat can't deny it!

CAT. But I didn't –

LITTLE RED HEN (*interrupting*). And third defendant, Rat. Do you deny that when I asked for help to grind the wheat, you laughed and said, "I'd rather stick my head in a bucket of rotten fish"?

RAT (*shrugging*). If I remember rightly, it was a bucket of –

LITTLE RED HEN (*interrupting*). A-ha! Four confessions.

NARRATOR. Actually, I think there were only three. And they weren't confessions. They weren't even complete sentences. They haven't had a chance to defend themselves.

LITTLE RED HEN. Rubbish. What we've heard today is enough for any jury to deliver a guilty verdict.

NARRATOR. This isn't justice. Judges are meant to be impartial.

LITTLE RED HEN. Fine, let a jury decide. Their decision will be impartial. Narrator – get the foreperson.

NARRATOR. What foreperson?

LITTLE RED HEN. There's a foreperson off-stage. Just get them!

The **Narrator** *goes off-stage and returns with the* **Foreperson.**

FOREPERSON. Yes, Mum?

LITTLE RED HEN. I know you and your jury heard the pathetic excuses of Dog, Cat, and Rat. What is your verdict?

NARRATOR. This is –

LITTLE RED HEN (*interrupting*). Be quiet, Narrator, or I'll have you thrown out of court. Foreperson of the jury (who is certainly not my chick), has the jury (definitely not my eleven other chicks) come to a decision?

FOREPERSON. Yes, Mum … I mean not-Mum. The jury has found the defendants three clucks.

NARRATOR. Three clucks? That's nonsense. Three clucks isn't a verdict!

FOREPERSON. Yes, it is. We decided one cluck means not guilty, two clucks mean guilty, and three clucks means really guilty.

NARRATOR. This is ridiculous. This is a kangaroo court!

LITTLE RED HEN (*insulted*). I'm a *chicken*, as you know. Now, shall we move on to the more serious charge of theft. Dog, how do you plead?

DOG. Definitely not guilty. I might be lazy, but I'd never steal from you. You're my friend.

LITTLE RED HEN. We'll see about that. Cat, how do you plead?

CAT. Not guilty. Dog's right – we'd never steal from you.

LITTLE RED HEN (*sarcastically*). Huh. And, Rat, how do you plead?

RAT. I'm gluten intolerant. I couldn't eat your bread even if I wanted to.

NARRATOR (*to the audience*). It looks like Little Red Hen and her jury are in trouble. There's no evidence, and the defendants sound genuine.

LITTLE RED HEN. But if it wasn't one of you lot, then who?

NARRATOR. Sometimes in life, mysteries are never solved. Which seems to be the case of Little Red Hen and the Stolen Bread.

DOG. Little Red Hen, we know you're upset, and you have every right to be …

CAT. From now on, we promise to help more.

RAT. Yes, you won't need to lift a feather.

LITTLE RED HEN. That sounds wonderful!

RAT. Doesn't it?

FOREPERSON. Can I go, Mum?

Scene 2. *Later that day. The* **Little Red Hen** *is resting, and the* **Narrator** *is eating another sandwich.*

NARRATOR (*to the audience*). And so the Little Red Hen finally gets some well-deserved rest. She can put her feet up while her friends do the work. Mind you, I haven't seen them for a while.

LITTLE RED HEN (*to the narrator*). This is wonderful. I should rest more often. Although …

NARRATOR. What is it, Little Red Hen?

LITTLE RED HEN. The grass is getting long. Maybe I'd better get a –

NARRATOR (*interrupting*). No, your friends promised to help.

LITTLE RED HEN. You're right. (*Calling*) Rat! Can you mow the grass? (*Silence*) Where's Rat gone? And Dog? (*Calling*) Dog, can you put out the recycling? (*Silence*) This isn't fair. (*Calling*) Cat? You went for my lunch three hours ago …

NARRATOR. Oh, dear. Old habits die hard.

LITTLE RED HEN. That's it! I'm going to reconvene the court, Judge Little Red Hen presiding!

NARRATOR (*to the audience*). And there you have it. The end! If there's a moral, maybe it's that you can't teach an old dog (and their friends) new tricks. But the mystery remains. What happened to Little Red Hen's bread?

LITTLE RED HEN (*pointing at the narrator's sandwich*). Hold it, Narrator. Where did you get that bread?

NARRATOR (*looking around, guiltily*). What bread?

LITTLE RED HEN. The bread in your hand. It looks exactly like *my* bread! You've been caught bread-handed!

NARRATOR. It was just lying around, unwanted.

LITTLE RED HEN. Unwanted! Haven't you been listening?

NARRATOR (*rolls eyes*). It's just a loaf of bread. Get a grip, Little Red Hen.

LITTLE RED HEN. That's it! You're first up in the guilty witness stand.

The **Narrator** *runs off-stage.*

illustrations by Zak Komene

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