THE MATAWEHI FABLES

MEARIKI
THE QUEST FOR TRUTH

Written by Helen Pearse-Otene
Illustrated by Andrew Burdan
The village of The Kūwai.

Watch how my daughter and her beloved sneak away. Where do they think they're going? Don't spoil their fun. I remember watching a certain warrior do much the same.

These are dark times. It is folly to allow Hineamuru to go too far from home. Send her slave to bring her back.

Yes, my chief.

Meāriki, go and fetch Hineamuru.

Come, Mākura. Let's talk awhile.
HINEAMURU! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

OH!

WHAT'S IT TO YOU?

MEARIKI, IT'S HOT. WE'RE GOING TO THE RIVER.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

OH!

WHAT'S IT TO YOU?

MEARIKI, IT'S HOT. WE'RE GOING TO THE RIVER.

WHAT'S IT TO YOU?

MEARIKI, IT'S HOT. WE'RE GOING TO THE RIVER.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

OH!

WHAT'S IT TO YOU?

MEARIKI, IT'S HOT. WE'RE GOING TO THE RIVER.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

OH!

WHAT'S IT TO YOU?

MEARIKI, IT'S HOT. WE'RE GOING TO THE RIVER.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

OH!

WHAT'S IT TO YOU?

MEARIKI, IT'S HOT. WE'RE GOING TO THE RIVER.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

OH!

WHAT'S IT TO YOU?

MEARIKI, IT'S HOT. WE'RE GOING TO THE RIVER.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

OH!

WHAT'S IT TO YOU?

MEARIKI, IT'S HOT. WE'RE GOING TO THE RIVER.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

OH!

WHAT'S IT TO YOU?

MEARIKI, IT'S HOT. WE'RE GOING TO THE RIVER.
IDIOT SLAVE! WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

PĒHI, YOU HURT HER FEELINGS!

SLAVES DO NOT FEEL; THEY WORK.

WHEN THEY DON'T WORK, THEY GO TO THE EARTH OVEN.

PĒHI!

YOU CAN'T TREAT IT LIKE AN EQUAL. A SLAVE IS LIKE A SPIDER ...

POOR SPIDER.

LOOK AT HOW IT WATCHES US LIKE A LONELY DOG.

MEARIKI, GO BACK TO THE VILLAGE.

I'LL SEE YOU TONIGHT AT THE FIRESIDE.

WHEN WE MARRY, IT WON'T COME TO LIVE WITH US. I HAVE MY OWN SLAVES!
Meanwhile, at the village.

TE MIHIAU! GREETINGS, YOU MUST HAVE MISPLACED MY INVITATION ...

VILE DEMON! WHAT DO YOU WANT?

MĀKURA, I CAN SMELL HER SCENT, HER INNOCENCE.

JUST GO! SHE IS NOT HERE.

SHE WILL COME WILLINGLY WITH MY DARK MAGIC!

MY OATH WILL NEVER BE BROKEN!

NO!

YOU FOOL! YOUR WORDS CANNOT HARM ME!

WHY, MY BETROTHED OF COURSE. THAT IS ALL.

WITH YOUR BLACK MAGIC.

BE GONE TĀNEKIKIWA, RETURN TO THE OTHER SIDE ...
BACK AT THE RIVER... 

DID YOU HEAR THAT? YOU'VE RUINED HER DAY. NOW GET LOST!

NO! YOU GET LOST!

PEHI, I LOVE MEARIKI AS A LITTLE SISTER.

STOP IT! NOW!

BUT MEARIKI, WHEN I MARRY, YOU WILL STAY BEHIND.

PEHI, I LOVE MEARIKI AS A LITTLE SISTER.

WON'T YOU TWO STOP!

NO, SHE STAYS HERE WITH ME ...

... CRAYFISH HEAD!

... FARTY BREATH!

IN THREE DAYS' TIME I WILL MARRY HINEAMURU.

THAT IS A PROMISE!

MY DAUGHTER!
Then, kind sister, when you leave, release me!

Finally, we agree on something.

You have mana, meariki. Release yourself.

Don't make fun of me. Slaves have no mana.

I'm sick of your silliness.

You have mana, meariki. Release yourself.

Don't make fun of me. Slaves have no mana.

When you leave, release me!

You have mana, meariki. Release yourself.

Don't make fun of me. Slaves have no mana.

I'm sick of your silliness.

Don't make fun of me. Slaves have no mana.

FLAP

FLAP

FLAP

FLAP

FLAP

FLAP

FLAP

FLAP

FLAP

MUAAHAHAHAHA!!!
HUH?

DIVE!

NO! RUN!

AIIIIIIII!!

BUUUT, IT'S TOO LATE.

NO!

!!
The village is in uproar. She's what?! She's what?!

She is not lost to us, not yet. Remember what he said.

They will marry in three days.

I instructed you to bring her back to the village, slave. This is your fault!

No... no! I... I tried ...

And she still didn't return!

Go to Te Wao, to the cave of the crone, Whatupao.

She will lead you to the lair of Tānekikiwa.

I will go. I will defeat the demon bird of Tānekikiwa.

Kill the demon bird, so that Hineamuru may escape.
TAKE MY DAUGHTER’S SLAVE. SHE IS WORTHLESS TO ME.

HMMM ... WHAT’S THAT I SENSE?

WHO ARE YOU?

WHY CAN’T I READ YOUR MIND?

PÉHI! YOUR SLAVE.

YOU KEEP IT.

I DON’T TAKE ORDERS FROM SLAVES.

BOY, YOU WILL TAKE HER AND LOOK AFTER HER. BUT MORE THAN THAT, YOU WILL LISTEN TO HER.
AT THE CAVE OF WHATUPAO.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

ARE YOU BLIND? WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE I'M DOING?

OUCH!

JUST ASKING. YOU'LL NEVER GET A FIRE STARTED LIKE THAT, THAT'S ALL.

SHUT UP AND LET ME — OUCH!

LOOK WHAT YOU'VE DONE!

I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING.

STUPID SLAVE! LOOK AT THIS.

NOW I'VE GOT A SPLINTER!

SO? HERE, I'LL LIGHT THE FIRE.

NO!
BY THE TIME YOU GET THE FIRE GOING, HINEAMURU WILL HAVE DIED OF OLD AGE.

SHUT UP, WASTE OF SPACE.

YOU’RE THE WASTE OF SPACE!

SOME SORT OF PRINCE FROM A FLASH TRIBE CALLED KAITIPUA, AND YOU CAN’T EVEN START A FIRE.

MY SLAVES DO THAT FOR ME.

BY THE TIME YOU GET THE FIRE GOING, HINEAMURU WILL HAVE DIED OF OLD AGE.

OH, GIVE IT HERE!

USELESS LITTLE PRINCE. I SUPPOSE THEY WIPE YOUR BACKSIDE TOO!

THE FIRE... THE MEN... THEY'RE IN DANGER. WE MUST SAVE THEM!

STUPID SLAVE, YOU'VE INHALED TOO MUCH SMOKE!

WHAT IS IT NOW?
i’ll save them! you stay here!

WELCOME, LITTLE ONE, WHEN I ASKED YOUR FRIENDS WHAT WAS OUTSIDE, THEY SAID “NOTHING.”

SO WELCOME, NOTHING.
WHERE ARE MY FRIENDS? LET THEM GO!

I'M AN ORPHAN SLAVE. I HAVE NO PEOPLE.

WHO ARE YOU?

I AM THE SPIRIT-MIND OF THE GUARDIAN, BEHIND ME IS THE BODY. WE GUARD THE SACRED WATER ABOVE. IT'S JUST A DROP AT THE MOMENT, BUT IN TIME, IT WILL BECOME A SPRING.

ALAS, WE WILL NOT LIVE TO SEE THAT DAY, BUT WE WAIT PATIENTLY FOR THE NEXT GUARDIAN WHO WILL.
PEHI? PEHI, IS THAT YOU?

MEARIKI! SLAVE! HELP ME!

DON'T TOUCH THE WATER! LOOK WHAT HAPPENED!

WE TOLD HIM NOT TO DRINK IT, BUT DID HE LISTEN? NO!

AND NOW WE HAVE TO SIT HERE AND WAIT ANOTHER HUNDRED YEARS FOR THE NEXT DROP TO FALL.

I SEE. HE REALLY IS A PIG!

GET ME DOWN!

WE THOUGHT SO. NO, HE'LL STAY TO SUSTAIN THE HATCHLINGS.

UNLESS YOU WISH TO TRADE SOMETHING FOR HIM.

ARE YOU GOING TO EAT HIM? BE WARNED, HE'LL TASTE AWFUL.

PERHAPS ... WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT TANEKIWIWA?

HOW DO I DEFEAT HIM? TELL ME, AND I WILL TRADE WHATEVER YOU WANT.

WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO OFFER?

WE TOLD HIM NOT TO DRINK IT, BUT DID HE LISTEN? NO!

AND NOW WE HAVE TO SIT HERE AND WAIT ANOTHER HUNDRED YEARS FOR THE NEXT DROP TO FALL.

I SEE. HE REALLY IS A PIG!

GET ME DOWN!

WE THOUGHT SO. NO, HE'LL STAY TO SUSTAIN THE HATCHLINGS.

UNLESS YOU WISH TO TRADE SOMETHING FOR HIM.

ARE YOU GOING TO EAT HIM? BE WARNED, HE'LL TASTE AWFUL.

PERHAPS ... WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT TANEKIWIWA?

HOW DO I DEFEAT HIM? TELL ME, AND I WILL TRADE WHATEVER YOU WANT.

WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO OFFER?
The fire accelerates the hatching. The cave trembles. The basin is filled again!

My children! My beauties!

Mearik! Get me down from here!

But, that wasn't the plan.

Nothing, you are a funny child. But you have refilled the font!

Give me your hand.

Ooops!
You won't turn me into a pig as well?

You will not turn into a pig. Indeed, the truth about you will be revealed in the journey before you.

Quickly! Give her your hand!

Wear this drop around your neck. You will know when to use it.

"Follow the path to where the sun sets beyond the mountain Matawehi ..."

Choose three treasures!

"... there you will find the doorway to the lair of TāneKīwa"

Quickly slave. Choose me!!

That knife there. Homai.

That is Te Wero, a fire-tipped weapon that was made by the children of Mahuika, the fire goddess.

"Be warned, the path is long and dangerous."
Quick, choose me!

That shield there, it's pretty. I like it.

I'm pretty. Choose me instead!

A diamond scale, from one of the daughters of Tangaroa, a great taniwha.

Do not look into it for too long or you will be trapped by its power of beguilement.

Hurry up, I think I've just been bitten.

Quiet, pig.

I know what you're doing. You're taking revenge on me, aren't you, slave?

I may be a slave, but I do not humiliate others.

Hmm ... Umm ... Oh, the pig too.

Click!

Your choice, nothing.

Uh!
Go quickly, for my children are hungry, and they must feed.

If you succeed, you must promise to return.

Thank you. I will fulfill my quest and return the gifts to you.

You misunderstand child. You will lose them all, and you will never see us again. But if you succeed, you will return to this place. You will come back with nothing, except the one who will take my place.

No! Hineamuru is meant to marry me and come with me to Kaitipua. You can’t make us promise that!

If we fail, she might die or worse, live out her days as the wife of Tānekīkiwa. We won’t see her again anyway.

But, you have my promise. We will bring her back.

Thank you. Now go!

Come my beauties!

Eat! Feed!

NOM
NOM
NOM
NOM
NOM
NOM
NOM
NOM
HELLO, HINEAMURU.

TĀNEKIWA! I THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD.

THOUGHT OR HOPED?

I AM NOT FOR YOU. LET ME GO.

NO. NOT WHEN I’VE WORKED SO HARD TO PROVIDE YOU WITH A HOME, A KINGDOM, A RETINUE OF SERVANTS.

HERE YOU SHOULD EAT!
FOR A MOMENT, SHE IS TAKEN IN BY THE BEAUTY OF THE BLOSSOMS ...

... UNTIL SHE TOUCHES THEIR FOOD ...

... AND THE ILLUSION DISAPPEARS.

RAHH!

HIDEOUS CREATURE!

GET AWAY!

HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD YOU? YOU CANNOT EAT HER! THIS ONE IS MINE!

NEVER. I WILL NEVER BE YOURS. I WOULD RATHER STARVE TO DEATH!

PERHAPS YOU WILL. HOWEVER, UNLIKE YOUR FATHER, I AM GENEROUS. I WILL GIVE YOU TWO DAYS TO CHANGE YOUR MIND.

IT WOULD BE A PITY FOR YOU TO END UP AS BIRD FOOD.
Meanwhile …

“Sweet worm, sweet worm, be careful where you wriggle. There’s a hungry pig, and he’s looking for a nibble!”

Pehi, slow down!

Are those treasures heavy? Why don’t you give them to me?

Yeah right!

I’m stronger, so give them to me. I can carry them as well as lead us to Tānekīkīwa.

You have no hands, pig.

At least give me the trinket around your neck. I can carry that for you, surely?

Don’t pretend to be nice to me. You want to use the water to turn you back into a boy. But it’s not for you!

She would’ve given it to you if it were.

Stupid slave. How do you know it’s not for me?

Stop nagging me.

Then give it to me. Let’s find out.

No.

Then give it to me.

Give it!

Gimme, gimme. Give it to me!
IF YOU STOP NAGGING ME, I'LL GIVE YOU THE WATER WHEN WE REACH THE LAIR OF TĀNEKIKIWA.

AS MUCH AS I DISLIKE YOU, I WILL NOT LET HINEAMURU MARRY A PIG.

ALRIGHT, BUT YOU COULD ALWAYS GIVE IT TO ME NOW ...

SLOW DOWN! WE MAY LOSE THE TRAIL.

GRUNT! GRUNT!

SNIFF!

GRUNT! GRUNT!

SNIFF!

SNIFF!

WHAT?!

DON'T WORRY. WE'LL JUST GO AROUND HER.

NO, I THINK WE SHOULD TALK TO HER.

NO. LET'S AVOID HER AND GO STRAIGHT TO THE LAIR OF TĀNEKIKIWA.

AND I SAY WE SHOULD TALK TO HER BECAUSE SHE MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP US.

TRUST ME, I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING. I MAY BE A PIG, BUT I FEEL SO ALIVE ...

... THE COLOURS, THE SOUNDS ...

... THE DANGEROUS PONATURI THAT'S HIDING IN THE SPRING AHEAD, WAITING TO AMBUSH US ...
HELLO, I AM WAHAPE, THE BEAUTIFUL MAIDEN OF THE SPRING.

AND YOU MUST BE MY NEXT MEAL.
STUPID SLAVE!

Hey you!

What are you doing?

Hey you!

I'm punishing it for laughing at me.

She said she was the beauty of the spring, and I looked at her...

...and couldn't help myself. Hahahaha!

But why did you laugh?

He said she was the beauty of the spring, and I looked at her...

...and couldn't help myself. Hahahaha!

You see!

I am not beautiful. I am ugly and lonely. You lie to save your friend.

She's my slave, not my friend.

Yes, it was cruel to laugh at you. When I see you are very beautiful.

Your slave has diminished my mana. I demand satisfaction.
If you let her live for a while, I will stay and listen to your story.

Sit and listen.

Once, a very long time ago, I was very beautiful.

But I was proud and vain, and no mortal man was good enough for me.

But then, one day ... he came.

Who?

He came with a magic flute, the warlock from the west!

He tricked my sisters into cutting my hair, and my hair was the key to our beauty and youth.

He took my sisters as his servants and wives. He crippled me so that I would not be able to follow him.
But we are hunting that same warlock. Perhaps his enchantment will break when we defeat him.

No, my vanity has entrapped me.

It is too late for me, but perhaps not for my sisters.

Tānekikiwa wears a vial around his neck that holds a special perfume.

He took it from my sisters.

It enslaves them so that they are forced to serve him.

They falsely hope that one day he will gift it back to them.

Go now and slay the warlock, but let Waehape have her food in peace.

Let me trade with you for my slave.

I can give you beauty.

Waehape, take this shield and look into it. Look!

I have nothing I want.

Waehape...

The beautiful maiden once more.

Huh!
MEARIKI! WAKE UP!

WAKE UP!

HURRY! WAKE UP!

HUAARGH!

YUCK!

I thought you’d be far away by now.

But it’s more fun arguing with you.

Where’s the diamond scale?

WHERE’S THE DIAMOND SCALE?

IT’S A LONG STORY.

It is nightfall when they make camp at the edge of Te Wao. Pēhi returns the teardrop to Meariki.

Really? But you lost the diamond scale.

How long do I have to stay like this? I’ve proven myself to you.
I traded it for your life. I could be more useful if you changed me back into a person.

We should put aside our differences. For the sake of Hineamuru.

I was not born to be an animal.

I'm a warrior, a future chief. I should be holding that knife. Give it here!

Two gifts, lost in one day. You're dreaming...

You think that I was born to be your slave?

You're dreaming... We should put aside our differences for the sake of Hineamuru.

I was not born to be your slave?

I'm a warrior, a future chief. I should be holding that knife. Give it here!

Do you like your new-found power? Look at you...

...you're a fake!

Or else what? You'll beat me? Listen to you. You even sound like a slave owner. A spoilt brat. You sound like... like me!

I will never be like you. Leave me alone!

Not until you grow hands, pig.

You're dreaming... We should put aside our differences for the sake of Hineamuru.

I was not born to be an animal.

I'm a warrior, a future chief. I should be holding that knife. Give it here!

Do you like your new-found power? Look at you...

...you're a fake!

Or else what? You'll beat me? Listen to you. You even sound like a slave owner. A spoilt brat. You sound like... like me!

I will never be like you. Leave me alone!

Not until you grow hands, pig.
YOU WANT THIS KNIFE?
TAKE IT!

SWISH!

YOU WANT THIS KNIFE?
TAKE IT!

PEHI?

THWUMP!

PEHI? ... PEHI! WHAT HAVE I DONE?
I'M SORRY, DON'T DIE!

PEHI? ... PEHI!
WHAT HAVE I DONE?
I'M SORRY, DON'T DIE!

KATHUNK!

PEHI?...
OUCH, THAT REALLY HURT!
PÉHI!

SORRY, IT WAS WRONG OF ME TO DO THAT. HERE!

I CAN TEACH YOU HOW TO USE IT.

THANK YOU, MEARIKI. I WILL LOOK AFTER IT AND USE IT WELL.

I'LL DEFEAT TĀNEKIWIWA, AND THEN WE'LL RETURN HOME AS HEROES.

AND EVERYTHING WILL GO BACK TO HOW IT WAS.
I know the food is cursed. He can't make me eat.

I know you're not evil. I can tell you're a prisoner, just like me.

Maybe we could become friends and fly home together.

What's this?
COME BACK!

HINEAMURU, MY LOVE, I AM SORRY THE BIRD DID NOT BRING YOU FOOD.

DON'T HURT HIM. I TOLD YOU THAT I WILL NOT EAT.

HE WILL BE PUNISHED, SEVERELY!

DEMON! I WILL NEVER MARRY YOU!

YOUR RESISTANCE IS BEGINNING TO ANNOY ME.

YOU WILL MARRY ME AND BE MY WIFE.

THE BLOSSOMS WILL BE YOUR HANDMAIDENS. THEY WILL PREPARE YOU FOR THE CEREMONY TOMORROW.

GET AWAY FROM ME! GET AWAY!

I MUST PART COMPANY WITH YOU. THEY WILL SEE TO YOUR NEEDS.

AIIIIII!
BACK IN THE FOREST.

Huh?

Let me go! Put me down!

THE LAST THING I REMEMBER WAS A CAGE, A FLUTE AND A TWO-HEADED DOG ...

... like that one down there!

IS THAT THE THANKS I GET? YOU HAD A NIGHTMARE LAST NIGHT. YOU WERE CRYING AND WHIMPERING.

I WAS?

YOU SAID WE HAD A LONG MARCH TODAY.

YOU'VE BEEN WALKING ALL THIS TIME?

YES, I HAVE.

THANK YOU FOR LOOKING AFTER ME.

WHAT WERE YOU DREAMING ABOUT ANYWAY?

YOU HAD A NIGHTMARE LAST NIGHT. YOU WERE CRYING AND WHIMPERING.

I WAS?

YES, I HAVE.

THANK YOU FOR LOOKING AFTER ME.

WHAT WERE YOU DREAMING ABOUT ANYWAY?

YOU HAD A NIGHTMARE LAST NIGHT. YOU WERE CRYING AND WHIMPERING.

I WAS?

YES, I HAVE.

THANK YOU FOR LOOKING AFTER ME.

WHAT WERE YOU DREAMING ABOUT ANYWAY?

YOU HAD A NIGHTMARE LAST NIGHT. YOU WERE CRYING AND WHIMPERING.

I WAS?

YES, I HAVE.

THANK YOU FOR LOOKING AFTER ME.

WHAT WERE YOU DREAMING ABOUT ANYWAY?

YOU HAD A NIGHTMARE LAST NIGHT. YOU WERE CRYING AND WHIMPERING.

I WAS?

YES, I HAVE.

THANK YOU FOR LOOKING AFTER ME.

WHAT WERE YOU DREAMING ABOUT ANYWAY?

YOU HAD A NIGHTMARE LAST NIGHT. YOU WERE CRYING AND WHIMPERING.

I WAS?

YES, I HAVE.

THANK YOU FOR LOOKING AFTER ME.

WHAT WERE YOU DREAMING ABOUT ANYWAY?

YOU HAD A NIGHTMARE LAST NIGHT. YOU WERE CRYING AND WHIMPERING.

I WAS?

YES, I HAVE.

THANK YOU FOR LOOKING AFTER ME.

WHAT WERE YOU DREAMING ABOUT ANYWAY?

YOU HAD A NIGHTMARE LAST NIGHT. YOU WERE CRYING AND WHIMPERING.

I WAS?

YES, I HAVE.

THANK YOU FOR LOOKING AFTER ME.

WHAT WERE YOU DREAMING ABOUT ANYWAY?

YOU HAD A NIGHTMARE LAST NIGHT. YOU WERE CRYING AND WHIMPERING.

I WAS?

YES, I HAVE.

THANK YOU FOR LOOKING AFTER ME.

WHAT WERE YOU DREAMING ABOUT ANYWAY?
WE HAVE TO FREE HIM. MAYBE HE IS MEANT TO HELP US.

I AGREE, BUT HOW?

HEH UGLY DOG! HEY!
CAN’T CATCH ME!

RRR! RUFF!

RRR!

GRR!
Thank you for trying to rescue me. Your friend is brave, but his sacrifice will count for nothing. My pet will outrun and eat him...

Tell me. Did Tānekiwiwa do this to you?

I am Te Moepapa, the Dream Weaver, and yes, I was tricked by Tānekiwiwa. He offered to trade me his flute if I would weave a cord for the large anklet from the red hair of a Ponaturi.

But, when the Warlock returned to collect the Pōria, he put me in this cage and set my own dog to guard me.

My dog will not listen to my call until I get out of this cage.

Well you are free now, Te Moepapa. Come out and call off your dog.

But that is the cruel trick! If I step out of the cage...

...and then return here, and I will be forced back into this prison again.

Tell me. Did Tānekiwiwa do this to you?

Tell me. Did Tānekiwiwa do this to you?

Tell me. Did Tānekiwiwa do this to you?

SLAP! SLAP! SLAP!

Tell me. Did Tānekiwiwa do this to you?

Tell me. Did Tānekiwiwa do this to you?

Tell me. Did Tānekiwiwa do this to you?

SLAP! SLAP! SLAP! SLAP!

Tell me. Did Tānekiwiwa do this to you?

Tell me. Did Tānekiwiwa do this to you?

Tell me. Did Tānekiwiwa do this to you?

SLAP! SLAP! SLAP! SLAP!

Tell me. Did Tānekiwiwa do this to you?

Tell me. Did Tānekiwiwa do this to you?

Tell me. Did Tānekiwiwa do this to you?

SLAP! SLAP! SLAP! SLAP!

Tell me. Did Tānekiwiwa do this to you?

Tell me. Did Tānekiwiwa do this to you?

Tell me. Did Tānekiwiwa do this to you?

SLAP! SLAP! SLAP! SLAP!

Tell me. Did Tānekiwiwa do this to you?

Tell me. Did Tānekiwiwa do this to you?

Tell me. Did Tānekiwiwa do this to you?

SLAP! SLAP! SLAP! SLAP!

Tell me. Did Tānekiwiwa do this to you?

Tell me. Did Tānekiwiwa do this to you?

Tell me. Did Tānekiwiwa do this to you?

SLAP! SLAP! SLAP! SLAP!

Tell me. Did Tānekiwiwa do this to you?
Don’t be scared. I have an idea. Call your pet, then run and hide.

Quick! Run!

Here we go...

Kee!

Kee! Kee!

Craa!
That anklet is magic, made from the red tresses of Waehape, and you've been trapped in its spell.

You're not the monster.

No! I am!

MUAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!

Where is Hineamuru? Give her to me!
YOU WEAR THE DREAM WEAVER'S CLOAK, BUT YOU ARE NOT HIM. YOU STAND BRAVE BEFORE ME, BUT YOUR VOICE WETERS.

IS THIS ALL TE MIHIAU COULD SEND AGAINST ME? A NOBODY?

COME, LITTLE ONE. I SHALL KNOW WHO YOU ARE.

NO ...

NO ...

NOO!

WHA ...

NO, YOU WON'T ...

... DEMON SCUM!

... NO!

YOU HAVE FEY ANCESTRY, FROM THE PAREHE, MOST LIKELY.

WHAT WAS THAT?

FROM WHO?
HMMM. YOU DON'T KNOW? YOU ARE A CHILD OF TE WAO ... ... BUT THE KUWAI KEPT YOU AS AN IGNORANT SLAVE.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN? MEARIKIII ...

HINEAMURU!

HINEAMURU IS STUBBORN AND CONTINUES TO RESIST MY SPELLS TO FINISH HER TRANSFORMATION. YOUR DEATH WILL FINALLY BREAK HER.

BRING ME HER BLOOD!

YEEEHEEEE!

RAAA!

RAAA!

RAAA!

RAAA!

OH!
Come my pet, it is time to collect our gift!

Ruff!

The anklet, it’s magic! Cut it with Te Wero!

Grab the flute!

BANG!

Aiiie!

Aiiie!

Pēhi!

Ahaha!

Go free the bird!

Ruff!

AAAAAAA!!

Aiiie!

Heee!

Grrrr!
mine at last!

Bird, kill them!

My pet! nooo!

Please, young chief.

Waehape told me about the hold you keep over her sisters. Give me the vial, then you will leave here.

Thank you. Thank you, kind chief.

Leave and never return.
NO MEARIKI. HE’S UNARMED AND ON HIS KNEES.

Pēhi, don’t let him go. Finish him off!

He’s evil. You have to kill him.

Do it!

I can’t, Meariki. If I am to be a good and wise leader, I have to respect life. You taught me that.

By my word, young chief.

THE BATTLE IS OVER.

ERRRRR ... COME ON. LET’S GO

Eh?

AAAAIIIIIEEEEE!!! BRRZZT!
HINEAMURU!

NO, DON'T!

BUT IT’S TOO LATE.

What happened?

She’s gone.

My dear, you’ve taken the life of an innocent fairy child and set off years of enmity between humans and the fey folk of Te Wao.

Farewell, lovebirds.
BUT WAIT, TÅNEKIKIWA.

DON'T FORGET YOUR WIVES.

SWISH!

NO!

SPAT!

NO, NO!

AAAAAAAAAA!!
She’s dead! No breath, no heartbeat.

Wait, what did the old woman say?

“You will return here, with the new guardian.”

No, it can’t be! … It must be!

Please, before you return to your home, take us to Te Waipono.

What are we doing? Fulfilling a promise.

Kee! Kee!
It's too late, Pēhi. You tried, but we can't help her any more. Let's take her home to the resting place of the chiefs.

No, she will stay in Te Wao.

Rest easy...

...my friend.

Here lies the new guardian of Te Waipono.

Care for her.

The giant arachnid looks on.
As they depart, a mist descends silently, like a veil, over Meariki.

Cocooned in the spider's thread...

... she is then taken into the cave...

... to lie in state.

The betrothed ones leave, never to return.
IN THE CAVE, A NEW ENERGY BEGINS TO SPREAD THROUGH THE AIR AND THE EARTH...

... THE BODY STARTS TO GLOW AND TREMBLE...

... THE STRANDS UNRAVEL.

AN ARM EXTENDS...

... A BODY STIRS...

... AND A SINGLE BREATH.

HAA!
AS ONE FALLS, ANOTHER RISES IN HER PLACE.

THE GUARDIAN...

... KATIPÔ.

TO BE CONTINUED