



Kakaha Pā was situated on the headland between the Waiwera and Puhoi Rivers. It commanded uninterrupted views over these important rivers and was close to the Mahurangi Shark fishing grounds. It was abandoned after a devastating attack by a northern tribe in the 1820s.

My mother explained that my Māori name was bestowed upon me at birth. When she sensed that I was ready to come into the world, she dug a deep hole in the sand of Waiwerawera Beach to capture the hot, healing waters that flowed from Rūaumoko, god of volcanoes, and Papatūānuku, Earth mother. Here she soaked, the pains of labor dissipated somewhat by the heat, awaiting my arrival. As she lifted me to her breast, she noted that I was clutching a blood clot, a sure sign in her eyes that I would lead a long life, filled with many victories - Wikitoria. It was a name that has proven to be a fitting one, although I am unsure if my mother knew of how unnaturally long my life would be.

I was not born into privilege. My mother, Āhere, was taurekareka, what today might be called a slave. She had been taken from her tribe during a raid, losing her mana when captured. She would no longer be accepted by her old tribe so she forged a new life. It was my strong and determined mother that taught me how to survive in a world that had not been kind. My earliest memories are of being carried by her on our long treks around the region looking for bird trails, following them and seeking out their nests. My mother's name, Āhere, means to snare birds. Some of our catch made for good eating but my mother's main role in our Ngāti Rongo tribe was to provide feathers for the making of korowai (cloaks) that were worn by rangatira or traded as taonga (treasures).

The first Pākehā that I knew was my father. For a few weeks a year, when he was onshore away from the whaling ship that he called home, he would spend time with his family. Mother and I could smell his arrival well before we ever saw him. He was never greeted with a kiss or a hug, just wrinkled noses, kūmarahou flowers that we used as soap, and a deep hole on the beach well away from everyone else! We would scrub him from head to toe, removing the smell of the salty sea brine and whale blubber that he wore like a cloak. The skin on his face, neck and hands was darker than my own, but the rest of his body was ghost-like, having pale-white skin and little spots that he called freckles.

My mother at first had only a transactional relationship with this Englishman, Jack Jones. She provided the intimacy he craved after many months at sea with only men for company. She entered into a three week marriage (the length of shore leave) with Jack and provided him with her body and a warm bed. In return she helped the tribe gain a musket, the price of the purchased marriage. Over the years their strange marriage would

reignite for three weeks at a time. When Jack left for his first love, life on the high seas, he would leave a token of his affection such as a comb made from whale bone, a dress or on one occasion a mirror. Inevitably he left a gift that would be more long lasting - a seed that would grow into me.

Jack named me 'Eliza' after his ship that carried him across the oceans and back to us each year; however he rarely used either of my names, instead referring to me as his 'speckled potato,' a reference to my skin colouring. I looked different to the rest of my tribe with lighter coloured skin and what my father called sun kisses on my cheeks and shoulders. During summer I made sure that I got so much sun that my sun kisses would increase in number, joining together so my skin was almost as dark as my mothers.

Jack taught me two important life skills; the ability to be a very effective catcher of fish, and the language of the pākehā. Mother never realised that I knew she watched us down at the estuary or on the beach when we fished together. I knew that my time spent with Jack made her happy, although not when Jack and I spoke in English. Then she would scold us for holding conspiratorial conversations that she could not understand. As I grew up I used the language that Jack had taught me to become a Go-Between.

The elders of my Ngāti Rongo tribe had realised that our world was changing. Some of our rival tribes had grown bolder with the arrival of the musket, a weapon that could kill from a great distance. Our strongly defended Kakaha Pā that overlooked two rivers and the shark fishing grounds of Mahurangi was safe, but more and more ambushes were made on small groups that were out gathering crops, or shellfish from the beaches. This new threat resulted in all of the tribe's efforts going into cutting flax, growing potatoes and kumara and raising pigs to trade with the Pākehā for the weapons we needed to survive the period called 'The Musket Wars.' My knowledge of both te reo Māori and English saw me become the main Go-Between, going between the two groups to help negotiate trades that would benefit our tribe.

When the most heavily armed tribe in the land, Ngāpuhi did come to our place, they did so with overwhelming numbers and with weapons of superior quality. Our defensive ditches and wooden palisades on the headland we called Maungatauhoro, that had protected our people for nearly 600 years, were no match for their attack, resulting in many casualties and deaths. My mother and I helped the wounded from the back of the pa, taking them down the steep hill to the waiting waka, ferrying them to visit Te Rata (the doctor). Musket shots, cries for help and wails of anguish filled the air as we lowered the wounded into the healing waters on the beach. My mother and I held the hands of the dying, trying to provide comfort, yet knowing the whispered words of a bright future ahead, were hollow.

And that was where my childhood was lost. That fatal shot rang out, seeing me slump into the waters and lose my mother, lose my friends and say goodbye to my childhood.

- 1) Briefly explain how Wikitoria gained her Māori name.
- 2) What tribe was Eliza's mother from?
 - a) Ngāti Rongo
 - b) Ngāpuhi
 - c) She was English.
 - d) The story does not say.
- 3) What was the name of the ship that Jack served on?
- 4) In what decade did Eliza's tribe suffer the devastating attack?
 - a) 1420s
 - b) 1800s
 - c) 1820s
 - d) It does not say.
- 5) Why were muskets seen as important?
 - a) They were of superior quality.
 - b) They could kill from a distance.
 - c) They were the price of a purchased marriage.
- 6) What were the two skills that Jack taught Wikitoria Eliza?
- 7) List four things that Jack left Āhere when he went away to sea.
- 8) How did Eliza's mother gain her name?
- 9) How do we know that Eliza did not always like being called a 'speckled potato'?
- 10) Briefly explain what the role of a Go-Betweener was.
- 11) List at least three things that Māori traded with whites to gain muskets.
- 12) How do we know that Māori considered the waters of Waiwerawera as healing?

Word Salad

There are many unusual words and phrases in the story you have just read. Complete the following tasks to ensure your understanding:

1) Find the definitions of the following English words.

- a) bestowed
- b) dissipated
- c) forged
- d) intimacy
- e) conspiratorial
- f) negotiate
- g) anguish
- h) hollow

2) Using at least five of the words above, write a series of sentences in a similar style to the story. Underline the words you chose to use.

Parts of speech - Nouns

Nouns are naming words. Identify each noun in the following sentences:

- a) I discovered the nest.
- b) She held the tattooed hand tightly.
- c) His ship sailed away.



This is the merchant ship Eliza that was a British owned ship, constructed in India, and was seen in NZ waters in the early 1800's (most probably after her main job of taking convicts to Australia).