



*For over a century sperm whales were hunted to the very brink of extinction and now they are a rare sight in the waters around the land that bears their name. Orca and Dolphin are still regular visitors in and around the coastline that we now call home.*

I spent a good deal of time after I had died figuring out why I was still alive. I was confused. And I was alone - avoiding contact with others wherever possible in case I was recognised or ran across a Ngāpuhi raiding party. My mind had scars but my body remained seemingly unchanging season after season, year after year. It appeared that I would be forever stuck as an almost 15 year old.

An area of my life that still brought me great joy was time spent on the ocean, fishing in my little waka. Perhaps it was the genes that had been passed onto me by Jack, perhaps it was the hope that he would return once more and reunite with me, but whatever the reason I found myself spending more and more of my days on the water. I launched my waka into the ocean each day from my new home, the sheltered Te Haruhi Bay, right at the tip of the Whangaparaoa Peninsula. Ngāti Kahu had abandoned this special place after raids by Ngāpuhi warriors during the Musket Wars. The soil conditions of this sheltered bay were ideal to grow food in and it marked the halfway point on the well travelled route between the Waitemata Harbour and Mahurangi. Occasionally whales would beach here too, providing an abundant resource for the Ngāti Kahu people who had built a Pā here, the only major settlement on the entire peninsula. Over time this place would take on the name of new Pākehā owners, Shakespear.

My father Jack had always told me that the waters of my home were rich with whales (although I knew this to be true as Whangaparaoa literally means bay of whales). I always made sure to look out for these magnificent creatures of the deep that visited every year. I felt an almost spiritual connection with them, even more so now that I shunned the company of people. I no longer wanted to forge a close connection with anyone as I knew I would lose them too. Whales though were fellow creatures of water, destined to live long mysterious lives.

One quiet morning, a light mist hovering over the calm bay, I spotted a spout of water blowing high into the air not far from me. It was soon followed by another billowing stream, meaning that a whale mother must have a calf with her. I slowed my waka, drifting toward the spot where I had seen the plumes of spray emerge from the dark green waters of the bay. Looking into the depths I saw the long white underbelly of the whale glide under me but I felt no fear. Surely this was curiosity at play, coming to see

me, a stranger in their world. The size of the whale gave me a sense of wonder. Perhaps only the mighty kauri trees were longer.

For what seemed like forever, the mother and her calf explored my waka and heard my waiata (song) given in praise of them. Occasionally they would nudge me and the mother would slap her tail on the surface, sending sea spray over the waka. Maybe this was a blessing from my new friends. I felt strongly connected with my own parents as I watched the two whales make their way into deeper waters. I tried hard to reconcile how my father could ever kill such creatures, and I yearned for my own mother who I knew still had many life lessons to teach before we were cruelly separated.

The signing of the Mahurangi Purchase in 1841 affected my new home too. The peninsula was included in land claimed by Hauraki tribes that was sold by them to the Crown. The survivors of Ngāti Kahu returned to their traditional home in that year to dispute the claim. I made myself scarce and fought the land deal from my own home at Waiwerawera and Wenderholm. In 1854 the sale went through, leaving the remnants of Ngāti Kahu homeless and penniless. Many continued to live on the land as the Pākehā that bought the land found it difficult to access by any transport other than boat, with land that was not conducive to growing crops, or filled with hardy scrub deterring sheep and cattle farming. It was not until the 1880's that the first of the Shakespear family that would go on to dominate the area arrived from England. They built a large homestead, with felled kauri trees near the site of the old Pā, which still stands today. The matriarch of the family, Blanche Shakespear, would live on in the house until her death in 1950, although her grandson continued to farm the land until he sold it to the Auckland Council in 1967, which has run the land as a regional park ever since.

Sperm whales are no longer a common site in the waters of the Whangaparaoa. For over a century they were hunted to the edge of extinction and it is only in the last few decades that the slaughter has slowed to a trickle. Time is finally hunting me down too, catching up and taking its toll. I can no longer launch a waka by myself, but I often take one of the ferry trips around the Waitemata to engage again with the waters of my youth, still trying to spot the dolphins and orca that now call this place home.

Te Haruhi Bay is now enjoyed by all sorts of people and it is great to see that this beautiful place is embracing its shared history. The large pest control fences that surround the park will mean a return of some of the bird species that I grew up with returning, some for the first time in generations. Thousands of native trees have been planted and there are many thousands more to go. The legacy of the Shakespear family and the Ngāti Kahu people, the main custodians of the land, is secure for all the people of the now heavily populated Whangaparaoa Peninsula.

- 1) What is the term for a baby whale?
- 2) Why did Wikitoria's interaction with the whales make her think of her parents?
- 3) What reasons did Wikitoria state for her almost spiritual connection with whales?
- 4) Which of these dates do you believe brought the biggest change to the area? Explain your reasoning.
  - a) 1967
  - b) 1880s
  - c) 1854
- 5) According to the story, who are the 'main custodians of the land'?
  - a) The Shakespear Family.
  - b) The Ngāti Kahu tribe.
  - c) Auckland Council.
  - d) Both A and B.
- 6) How did Ngāti Kahu members continue to live on the peninsula, after it was no longer deemed to be their land?
  - a) The Shakespear family let them stay on their land.
  - b) Pākehā landowners were not on their land to know they were there.
  - c) They rejected the findings of the court.
- 7) List three reasons why pākehā struggled to succeed on the peninsula.
- 8) What evidence shows us that Wikitoria has aged significantly by modern times?
- 9) State at least three reasons why Te Haruhi Bay was an ideal place for the Ngāti Kahu tribe to make their home.
- 10) Wikitoria gives three reasons in the story to indicate why she avoided people when she was young. What were they?
- 11) Have you been to Shakespear Regional Park? Share a memory from one of your visits to this beautiful part of our community.

### 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) reunite
  - b) magnificent
  - c) shunned
  - d) billowing
  - e) reconcile
  - f) deter
  - g) matriarch
  - h) custodian
- 2) Use at least five of the words above in a series of creative sentences. Underline the words you chose to use.

### Parts of Speech: Verbs

Verbs are used to name action/doing words. Identify each verb in the following sentences:

- a) The waka slid smoothly into the bay.
- b) The mighty kauri furiously shook the ground when cut.
- c) The pest control fences stood tall around the park.



*Whales that beached at Te Haruhi Bay were used as a food source but their bones were made into many useful objects such as combs, clubs, fish hooks and jewellery.*