



*Governor George Grey's mansion House still stands where he built it, using recycled materials from the copper mine buildings that had been abandoned. A few of the exotic animals introduced by Grey are still there including wallabies, kookaburra and possums.*

The job seemed like it would be perfect for me - *Governess wanted to teach children all academic subjects including te reo Māori on Kawau Island.* Kawau is one of the largest islands in the Hauraki Gulf and close to the area I called home. The island had very few residents, none of whom were Māori, increasing the chances that my identity could remain a secret, but most importantly, it would give me a chance to banish the loneliness that had crept into my heart. One certainty I had deduced in my many years was that children are a great way for you to forget about your troubles!

I dressed in my best pākehā attire, with a beautiful korowai cloak over the top, catching the ferry from Sandspit. It was a gorgeous day with clear blue skies and just a gentle breeze. As we approached Kawau Island I thought of my ancestors that had inhabited this land since the original migration here across the Pacific. It had always been an important place for Māori tribes to control, as it was perfect for seeing any passing vessels, ensuring control of the surrounding area. Now no Māori called this place home. Pākehā had bought the island from some nearby Māori after the signing of the treaty, clearing the land for farms before the discovery of copper, which was mined extensively.

Our yacht entered the bay and my eyes set upon the large white building that dominated the landscape, the grandest structure I had ever seen. Green lawns that looked like smooth carpet flowed from its foundations down to the long pier that extended out into the glassy water. At the end of the pier a well dressed, frail, white haired man who leaned on a walking stick, stood waiting. He offered me his hand as I hopped off the ferry, and once on solid ground he looked me up and down and then introduced himself in te reo Māori; "Hello Wikitoria, my name is George. Please, come up to the house for a cup of tea." As we walked up to the main house, two striped horses ran past unlike any I had seen before. I could not tell if they were black or white as their striped hindquarters disappeared from view. George looked very pleased with himself and announced to me that these were his zebras all the way from Africa. We walked on, I am sure with my mouth open in astonishment - I had never seen such creatures in the 60 years I had lived!

George called his home the Mansion House, and it definitely lived up to its name. We walked through grand, wood panelled rooms that housed ornate furniture, large portrait paintings (some of George in uniform) and floor to ceiling windows with beautiful views.

He described the large shields and spears from South Africa and the many throwing sticks he called boomerangs from Australia as we climbed the stairs to the second floor verandah. Tea and small cakes were served by a round-faced pākehā woman with a white frilly hat on. George and I were getting along very well, conversing almost solely in te reo. I thought his language was too good for a pākehā man of his generation and wealth. I had a sense of nagging alarm. He pointed out the bird call of the kookaburra from Australia and the beauty of the peacock from India that he had also introduced to the island. Soon other alien noises filled my ears, echoing across the lawn from the exotic looking trees of the forest. The calls grew louder with multiple animals returning the original hoots which bordered on screams. I was quite unnerved at the echoing sound of the cries. George, sensing my discomfort, patted my hand and said, “those are just my monkeys, damn noisy things!”

As we stood so that he could introduce me to his great nieces and nephews who would be in my care, he took my arm and said, “You know, you were named after the Queen that I used to serve.” He explained to me that he used to be Queen Victoria’s representative in New Zealand and that Wikitoria was used by many Māori to honour the queen. A lightbulb lit in my head. Could George be Sir George Grey? Ex Governor General of New Zealand? The man responsible for crushing the Māori grievances and opposition of Hone Heke, the Duke (and me) in the Northern Wars? The man responsible for ordering British troops to cross the Mangatāwhiri Stream, beginning the invasion of the Waikato?

The elderly man who spoke in te reo was not the same man I blamed for the unjustified and ruthless persecution of many Māori. In as calm a voice as I could manage I asked him why he wanted his grand nieces and nephews to learn te reo? Showing me to his extensive library he explained his personal philosophy which he had carved above one of the bookshelves - ‘Learn from the Past. Use Well the Present. Improve the Future.’ He went on to explain that he saw a bright future embracing the partnership between our two cultures. To that end he had produced volumes of information about Māori culture including waiata, poems and stories so that he could better understand and communicate with Māori. He wished that his mokopuna would have a better relationship than his, explaining that to build a new nation he had needed to bring order through force by civilising many Māori that did not wish to amalgamate with pākehā.

Despite enjoying his company, and even wishing for the similar shared future he had outlined, I politely declined Sir George’s offer of the job. I explained that in all good conscience I could not overlook his actions of the past, on which he hoped to build his brighter future. He walked me down the long slope towards the pier and his boat which he had arranged to take me back to Sandspit. Animals called wallabies stopped to stare at our progress, each of them possessing a ludicrously long pair of back legs. This had undoubtedly been one of the strangest days of my entire life!

- 1) Why was Kawau important to Māori?
  - a) It was near the shark fishing grounds.
  - b) It had many strange animals.
  - c) It was great to see passing boats.
- 2) What was the first intended pākehā use for Kawau island?
  - a) Housing
  - b) Farming
  - c) Mining
- 3) What were two reasons why Wikitoria wanted to work at Kawau Island?
- 4) Which animals were introduced to Kawau Island from India?
  - a) Monkeys
  - b) Wallabies
  - c) Peacocks
- 5) Why did Wikitoria become unsettled?
  - a) George made her frightened.
  - b) She was afraid of some of the animals.
  - c) She was worried she would not get the job.
- 6) Which individuals mentioned in the story do we know fought in the Northern Wars?
- 7) List three pieces of evidence that indicate that Mansion House was an appropriate name for George's home.
- 8) In your own words explain how George justified his forceful actions against Māori?
- 9) State three reasons why George had invested a good deal of time to learn Māori and gather waiata, poems and stories about Māori culture.
- 10) Briefly state why Wikitoria decided to turn down the job at Kawau Island?

### 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) foundations
  - b) astonishment
  - c) frail
  - d) grievance
  - e) amalgamate
  - f) ludicrous
- 2) Use each of the words above in its own sentence - check to see that it makes sense!
- 3) Wikitoria stated that her trip to Kawau Island was one of the strangest in her life. Briefly describe a day that you consider to be the strangest in your life so far.

### Parts of speech

The following sentences have many different parts of speech. Identify an adjective, an adverb and a pronoun in each sentence:

- a) Eyes wide, she watched with amazement.
- b) Their loud cries echoed through the tall trees.
- c) The white mansion stood proudly before them.



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