



*If you choose to visit Mahurangi West Regional Park today you can access great beaches, good surf, the odd sheep and heaps of native birds in the regenerating bush. You can of course visit Mahurangi East Regional Park too!*

The seas boiled with movement, fins dancing, circling and charging through the surface of the water. I remained as still as I could and waited for sharp teeth to find me, surely bringing my life to an end. That was when the strong hands of a young warrior scooped me up and dropped me in the bottom of the waka with the rest of the crew's catch. I lay unmoving, showing no fear to my rescuers/captors, unharmed but surrounded by squirming and gasping sharks.

Once ashore, the men were greeted by young boys and girls of the tribe who took a shark each, dragging them by their tails up to the pā. I joined them in dragging the sharks up the steeply stepped sides of the headland, avoiding the kumara pits that had been excavated into the terraces. The pā was new to me although I knew who the inhabitants had been, Ngāti Rongo, my people, who had held significant positions of power near the Mahurangi shark fishing grounds, but they had left in the 1820's.

I walked through the rear palisades of the pā following the children, dumping my shark with the rest, in front of a group of stern-faced women with sharp tools. Their eyes however were filled with mirth and they chided the children for getting the sharks dirty, threatening that they too would find themselves under the knife if they did that again. One of the girls took me by the arm and led me through the pā that commanded grand views across the Mahurangi River and inner Hauraki Gulf Islands. We stopped in front of the largest whare where a man in a korowai, filled with intricate patterns and colours, sat smoking. His hair was grey and his wrinkled face was heavily covered in tattoos. I could tell that he had mana, great standing within his group. I sat down next to him, a mere slip of a girl, covered in shark blood; I am a big believer that first impressions count so goodness knows what he thought of me!

The elder explained that in the past he had fought and killed but now he sought to create peace between tribes. He explained his fears that Māori were weaker than before, losing many of our young to warfare and many more to the alcohol bottle. He feared that soon we may also lose all of our land to the pākehā and that it was the responsibility of all Māori to join the fight for our continued existence. He urged me to have hope that with wise words and actions that our people could once again gain strength. When I left the pā, in what is now Mahurangi West Regional Park, it was with a renewed purpose.

- 1) How did Wikitoria know that the pā was once held by Ngāti Rongo?
  - a) That was where the warriors were from.
  - b) Ngāti Rongo had controlled this area.
  - c) Wikitoria is Ngāti Rongo.
- 2) What was the attitude of the women towards the children?
  - a) They were very angry with them.
  - b) They were happy and joking with them.
  - c) They did not really acknowledge them.
- 3) What do you think a **korowai** is based on the clues from the sentence in the story?
- 4) How did Wikitoria know to go to the old man outside his whare?
  - a) The shark woman told her to go there.
  - b) Wikitoria knew the pā and so knew where to go.
  - c) One of the girls led her to the whare.
- 5) What is the strongest reason to suggest that the man Wikitoria talks with is old?
  - a) He is smoking.
  - b) He has wrinkles.
  - c) He had grey hair.
- 6) The first line of the story states that 'the **seas boiled**'. The sea cannot boil. Explain why the author used these words.
- 7) List two characteristics of the pā that show that it was still in use by a tribe.
- 8) In the first paragraph Wikitoria is unsure if the warriors are rescuers or captors. Which do you think they were? Explain your answer.
- 9) The old man explains to Wikitoria that he has fears for the future of Māori. List three of his fears.
- 10) The old man suggests to Wikitoria that Māori should join together to fight for their continued existence. What does he hope Wikitoria will do to achieve this goal?

### 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) renewed
  - b) palisades
  - c) stern
  - d) mirth
  - e) 'slip of a girl'
- 2) Use each of the five words/phrases in five separate sentences using your own words.

### Parts of Speech:

The following sentences have many different parts of speech. Identify a pronoun, a verb and a preposition in each sentence:

- a) She slipped over the edge of the waka.
- b) Afterwards, they laughed under their breath.
- c) Walking quickly, his tobacco smoke wafted behind him.

### Did You Know?

*The oral histories of one of this area's local tribes, Ngāti Manuhiri, state that the Marutūahu tribes from the Hauraki region had little interest in occupying the land, rather they wanted the famed tauranga mangō or shark fishing grounds at Mahurangi. Here thousands of school sharks were caught and dried in late summer for winter food. The Te Kawerau hapū (which included Ngāti Manuhiri, Ngāti Rongo and Ngāti Kahu) clashed with the Hauraki tribes up until they were displaced from the land during the Musket Wars.*



*Māori Origins, Voyaging and Adaptation  
Produced by Paul Tucker@Orewa College (2023)*