

## THE WHALE RIDER

The whale rider, the title of the novel, refers to principally Kahu, the daughter of Porourangi and partly to a mythically whale Rider called Paikea.

Paikea said to have ridden on the whale of a bull whale as it broke the surface of the ocean. The whale has “..... swirling taboo imprinted on his forehead” {pg 5}. The man Paikea riding on his head seems to be pulling it sky wards as he realize small wooden spear randwards, amid lyrics of song.

You have called and I have come bearing the gift of gods. This song is said to have been sung by the whales. The last spear realized by the whale Rider is said to be a sacred spear as it is “..... to flower when the people are troubled and it is mostly needed.

The reference of the Whale Rider is replicated later in the novel when the girl Kahu swims towards the ancient bull whale that lies on the sandy beach dying. Somehow she manages to wax it into returning into the deep ocean an miraculously creates a fleshy stirrups on its head just like those of a rider on an actual horse. The girls steps into those and dutching “Pommel” created by the bull whale rider away just as the ancient whale Rider Paikea did.

Later, the old mother whale, “the wife of the bull whale” reminds her “husband” that whoever is riding on his head is not Paikea but rather his descendant and a girl. After much convincing the whale to bring Kahu bank to the surface of the ocean where hs is found unconscious after three days surrounded by dolphins. Thus the title of the novel is found.

### The setting

- This story is set among the superstitious, Maori community of new Zealand where mythical character Paikea and Kahu makes the story legendary.
- It is set on the East Coast of New Zealand in a place known as Whangara. The people and events described in the novel are all a work of fiction but the plot makes a authentic reference to the ocean and its deep sea life. The challenge associated with living in close proximity to the ocean also appears real and makes the story uncannity believable and intriguing.

## **PLOT ANALYSIS**

### **PROLOGUE**

#### **THE WHALE RIDER**

##### **CHAPTER ONE**

This section explains the ancient mythical and magical Maori folklore. It is said the land and the sea felt a great emptiness yearning. This sea is said to be the “whale of the bottom of the world” {pg 2}.

The Tautura, the ancient lizard with its third eye is said to be standing guard (sentinel) thus creating impression that the land and sea had life. The birds such as the Moa, Kiwi and Weka paraged in the rainforest. There were all of noise from the forest including charter, murmurs and laughter.

The fish in the sea were said to be waiting all manner of fish including Hapuku, Manga, Kahawai, Moki and Warehou as well as Shaka. The atmosphere is electric with anticipation and the tension culpable. All are waiting for their blessings as sing in the song.

*We have found*

*The news being taken to the place of the ancient*

*Our blessings will come soon.*

The suddenly, the sea was filled with awesome singing, a song that was said to portray eternity.

*You have called and I have come*

*Bearing the gifts of the gods*

This is said to have been Paikea, song riding on the lead gigantic ancient bull whale. The whale had a tattooed imprinted on the forehead.

The man then saw the land he had fought for so long and began to throw small spears on the sea and on the land.

Some of the spears are said to have turned pigeons, while others became eels, all those are amid the song. The last spear left from his hands after the prayer “let these spears be planted in the years to come for there are sufficient spears already implanted. Let this be the one to flower when the people are troubled and it is most needed. Pg 5. The spears hit the earth and waited for 150 years until the time it was needed.

## **SPRING**

### **THE FORCE OF DESTINY**

It is the mating season for the giant whale in Patagonia, the valdes Peninsula. The whales have migrated there for the past four months from their Antarctic feeding range.

From the place they will calve and raise their young ones into large calm boys. They produce whale song as they watch over the young ones until they are strong enough to their usual long journey.

It is said the ancient bull whale has found memories of his own "birthing" when his mother was eaten by sharks, three months after his birth in the shallow waters of Hawaiki.

He is befriended by the flute playing golden human being who became his master's and remain under his care after the hard travels on.

The whale learns to respond to his master's tune on the flute and comes to him. The male whale in turn sent his own song of mourning to attract female whale who then come to him.

The bull whale communicates his nostalgia to his human master. "In an welfer of sorics" and he hear his master flute in response and speed toward him though is elderly and cannot leap out of the sea as he used to when he was younger.

His elderly female companion fears that the master flute may turn out to be like a siren call for their impending visits to the dangerous island to the south West (pg 7).

### **THREE**

The narrator, Rawiri, says their story has a beginning and an ending with the little girl, Kahu. It is she who saves them all.

He says they (community) have always known there will be such a child but they ignored her when she was born because she was a girl.

The grandfather, the chief Koro Apirana is unhappy with the birth of a girl because he has been expecting a male heir.

She is the first born child of his grandson, Parourangi and his wife Rehua. Koro Apirana blames this birth on his wife Nani and says her female side has always been strong.

The birth of Kahu has been difficult for Rehua but she is comforted by Nani flowers who informs Rawiri that he has a beautiful niece.

Koro Apirana, who cannot stay to listen to his story says he has nothing to do with her and storms out of his house, rows away and makes out to sea.

Nani flowers, after yelling after him in vain, take her own boat and follows him out of the sea and they yell to each other the whole afternoon. Because her boat has a motor engine, she ties the old man's boat onto hers and pulls him back to the beach against his will.

Koro Apirana unhappiness stems from the fact that he cannot reconcile his traditional beliefs about Maori leadership and rights, with the birth of a girl. By Maori customs,

leadership is hereditary so that it runs from the eldest son. Unfortunately his eldest grandchild, Parourangi first born is a girl, Kahu to his disappointment.

He says about her "she won't be of any good to me...." I won't have anything to do with her. That Paourangi better have a son next time {pg 12}.

Anytime his wife, Nani flower brings up the subject, the old man refuses to listen.

Despite her threat to divorce him and her boasting that she descends from the greatest chief of their tribe Muriwai, Koro Apirana simply refuses to give in.

#### **FOUR**

Porourangi names his child Kahu, which displeases his grandfather Koro Apirana. He thinks Nani flowers his behind this, an allegation which is correct because she called Porourangi to suggest the name Kahu after Kahutia te Rangi.

The name Kahutia te Rangi is a man's name, moreover that of an ancestor of the village.

Naming the girl child after he found out the tribe was according to Koro Apirana, belittling Kahutia Te Rangi's prestige. He tells his wife

*"You stepped out of the line, dear, you shouldn't have done it" Pg 15*

Nani Flowers asserts herself despite being a woman because she belongs to the lineage of Muriwai, who come to new Zealand on the Maataatua canoe and managed to save their boat which almost capsized. This incident hardens Apirana's heart against his firstborn great grandchild Kahu.

Nani Flowers confides in Rawiri that it was Porourangi's wife Rehua decision to get a name from her husband's side in case she died after having a caesarian section. This way, the child her firstborn would be linked to her father's people and land. Rehua came from the same tribe as Nani Flower and has the same Muriwai blood.

Porourangi calls to say Rehua wants Kahu's birth cord and afterbirth to be put in the earth in her husband village. Rawiri takes Nani Flowers to the town to receive the afterbirth in a convoy of motorbike ridden by his friends. She meets the narrator's aunt who passes her birth cord and they ride back to Whangara quietly.

They secretly place the birth cord in a hole in front of the meeting house in sight of the status of Kahutia Te Rangi after whom Kahu has been named.

The boys are beseeched by Nani Flowers to keep the place where the cord has been placed a secret.

The narrator this he has seen a small spear flying through the air and a whale sounding far out to sea "let it be done". Pg 18.

## **SUMMER**

### **HALCYON'S FLIGHT**

#### **FIVE**

The whales, about sixty of them, are on the move organized by their ancient leader. The elderly female shepherds, the newborn while the young males keep guard on the horizon. They watch for danger from their greatest enemy-man. They often hide from man underneath the sea.

The ancient bull whale remembers he once had a golden master who had wooed him with flute songs and had used a conch shell and had used his commands over long distance. The whale remembers that his golden master would swim with him the olen. One day the golden master mounted on him and became the whale rider. Memories of his golden master make the null whale cry in grief.

#### Six

Kahu's mother, Rehua dies three months after her birth. The funeral's is held in narrator's village. Rehua's mother ask to be allowed to raise Kahu and Porourangi agrees.

Nani Flowers is not worried about the child particularly because her birth cord in there in the village.

The people's ancestor is Kahutia Te Rangi who was a high Chief in Hawaiki at the time when man had power over the creatures of land and sea. Kahutia Te Rangi on a whale at apex. This is a source of pride in their ancestor and an acknowledgement of his importance to them.

When he landed outside their village, Kahutia Te Rangi was given another name Paikea. He named the place Whangara.

Paikea married the daughter of Te Whironui and they had many sons and grandsons. The people lived peacefully cultivating vegetables and sweet potatoes.

The fourth generation saw emergence of great ancestor Porourangi after whom the narrator's brother is named. The chieftanship was passed to Koro Apirana and the Porourangi whose daughter is named Kahu.

The narrator says he is fond of his motorbike so much that he sometimes rides it above human relation. He says it is his first love. Porourangi normally brings his daughter

during summer holidays to stay with him and the family even though Koro Apirana does not approve of the girl.

The narrator says that Kahu's encounter with his grandfather must have been love at first sight. The narrator said that Kahu and Koro Apirana resembled each other.

The family discovers that Kahu adores Maori food and dreads it at all. Secondly, the girl crawls under the table and bites Koro Apirana's toe while making small sneering sound like a puppy.

## **SEVEN**

Kahu comes back to the village at the age of two accompanied by her father Porourangi and a woman known as Anna.

Kahu does not like soft drinks instead she takes cold water. She greets her great grandfather by calling him "Paka" and he blames everyone else using the name in the presence of the child.

The boys in the village fondly refer to Koro Apirana "Super Maori" he begins language nest where young children can learn the Maori language.

**The boys take lessons every weekend and does Kahu who had occasionally sneaks to** the door and stares at him.

The whale is said to have held a special place in the order of things before even Paikea. It was the lord Tangawa who ruled the kingdom of the ocean. He was second in the rank only to the Lord Tane the father of man and forest.

This is how great kingship between with the inhabitants of the ocean was established. The whale became known as helpers of man lost at the sea because they would attend for their calls so long as the marines knew the way of talking to them.

One of the few people who still retained the power to speak to the whales known as "the power of interlock" was their ancestor Paikea. He asked the whale to bring him to land and this was done.

The descendants of Paikea increased and still paid homage to their ancestor and the whale in the island.

Whenever man was granted opportunity to fish to the sea as acknowledgement of supremacy of Tangoroa.

Women did not go out with the men. SEVEN

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The descendants of Paikea increased and still paid homage to their ancestor and the whales island. Whenever man was granted the opportunity to fish he would return the first fish to the sea as acknowledgement to the supremacy of Tangaroa. Women did not go out with the men as the fishing grounds were steeped in special rituals. Unfortunately, man finally turned on the beast which had been his companion and whale killing began. Koro Apirana refused to allow the women to attend the school which is exclusively for men.

Nani flowers is unhappy with Koro Apirana for rejecting his great grand daughter thus causing the girl to suck. This provokes a quarrel with Nani Flowers, his wife

The narrator ends up being left with Kahu to look after thus interfering with his date with Cheryl Marie to take her to the movies. The girl is so jealous that she hangs the phone on the narrator. The narrator goes to the movies with Kahu even though children are not supposed to be there. He takes advantage of the darkness to sneak her in but she promptly falls asleep.

The scene about the wounded and dying whale with its cries in its death wakes up the girl who weeps hysterically. Nani Flower literally beats the narrator for daring to take Kahu to the movies and orders him to accommodate Koro Apirana in his room. Kahu makes sounds from her throat of a whale as if she is warning them. Rawiri is confused/surprised.

EIGHT

The village is almost running out of water for drinking and this concerns Koro Apirana a great deal. He is considering bringing it in by road tanker. The old man is still resentful toward Kahu until Nani Flower asks him to stop blaming the girl even if her Mariwai blood appears to be superior to his own. Koro Apirana is still hopeful that Porourangi and his new girlfriend Ana might still give him a great grandson.

The narrator says that the lore Apirana has for Kahuis like crumbs that drop off the edge of the table after everyone has had a big meal. However the girl loves her great grandfather so much that the narrator she would have barked like a dog just to please him were to discover that he likes that sort of things. The school sessions continued to become with the boys and men much to the annoyance of Nani Flowers as women are not allowed to attend. Some lessons were held on the sea, Koro Apirana teaches that their fishing areas have been placed under the protective custody of the guardians. The fish have

thus been protected and attracted to the fishing grounds and plentiful supply has been assured. To overfish would be to take advantage of Tangaroa who would revenge.

The Maori's people fishing changed the situation such that there are very few protectors of the fish left. Koro Apirana reminds about the past when he was but a boy during whale-hunting, the fishermen would harpoon a whale and take it to the shore where it would be but cut up the meat would be shared among the people present.

During these tales, the narrator hears Kahu weeping by the door, she dashes in shouting, "peka no! pg41. The little girl is still crying, three hours after the meeting while lamenting "my blame ..." pg 41. The next morning, the narrator sneaks into Kahu's room only to find it empty. The girl is found on the sandy beach facing the sea.

## AUTUMN –SEASON OF THE SOUNDING WHALE

### NINE

Whales assemble and wait for a sign from their ancient leader that they should descend between the protective walls of the trench and flow with the thermal stream away from the island of the place of the gods. A flash of lightning had hit the sea the previous two weeks shuttering the ear canals of eleven young calves that died. The ancient whales recall this and mourn while leading the herd away, noticing more cracks in the ocean floor, indicating serious damage.

The ancient bull whale suspects that there could be radiation from underneath the earth's crust. The elderly female whales try to nurse the old bull whale out of this nostalgia to no avail. The whale remembers how the golden whale rider was able to convince it flex its muscles to create space for him to travel on his head. There is even an opening for breathing.

The whales are said to be right that the water is poisoned because ..."the place of life and the God's, had now become a place of death" pg 46

### TEN

The narrator decides to travel to see the world and he saves money for over four months to be able to purchase a piano ticket. He flies to Australia and stays away from home for four years. He meets Kingi whom he stays with. He contracts Sydney with Whangara which are two worlds apart. He bumps into his Maori cousins from time to time and exchanges greetings with them. Some of Maori people he meets lead strange lifestyles. The narrator says he takes them still as Maori cousins despite the changes they make in their lives.

They caution him "Flow is our Nani? How is our Nani? if you write them, don't tell them that you saw us like this" pg 49. About their bad lifestyles, the narrator says "in the search for fame, fortune, power and success some of my cousins have opted for the base metal and not gold" pg 49. Their lives have been

turned upside down in the process. The narrator starts playing Rugby League and gets a job as a brick-layer and moves in with Jeff as he is looking for someone with whom to share his apartment.

Jeff comes from Mount Hagen in Papua New Guinea and Rawiri in turn, tells him about Kahu, about whom he creates the impression is an adult until, Jeff believes him they quarrel when Jeff realized he has been pulling his leg after receiving his brother, Porourangi's call.

Porourangi gets married to Ana and Jeff gets a call from Papua New Guinea to return home to assist his ill father to run the farm. He requests Rawiri the narrator to come along and he accepts. Rawiri informs Nani about it and she accepts

## ELEVEN

Rawiri the narrator stays in Papua New Guinea for two years which were both productive but not always happy years. Jeff's mother, Clara is taken a back when she learns that he is a Maori and is too dark for her liking "oh my goodness, how am I going to explain this to the women of the Bridge Club" pg 53. Tom, Jeff's father has Parkinson's disease which has truck his limbs and rendered him partially blind.

Rawiri's says it takes a long effort before for Jeff and himself to put the plantation back to stability. The writer says Papua New Guinea is fractionalize into hundreds of tribal groups with a thousand different tongues and these are so many different outside influences on the country's inheritance. New technology implies that the people have to adopt fast to changes as the narrator puts it "...from loincloths to the three piece suit and computer knowledges in a single step" pg 54. The narrator has matured through his experience in Australia and Papua New Guinea.

Porourangi informs the narrator that Koro Apirana has settled on him as the heir but is still looking for a boy to take the place of Kahu whom he had wished was a boy. Kahu is finally coming to stay at home with her parents, her mother's people. Jeff observes that Rawiri is becoming homesick. The narrator says he has on his own considered going back home because of a number of reasons. Jeff parents are pushing him to to seek company of more whites than the likes of Rawiri who is a little dark.

Rawiri has become close to people like Bernard and Joshua who are natives and this has changed Jeff's family's attitude towards him. Porourangi informs the narrator about Ana expecting a baby and the whole family is hopint that the child will be a boy. It turns out that it is a girl again much to Koro Apirana's disappointment.

## TWELVE

Nani Flowers barates the narrator for being away for too long. He gives him a present size, Rawiri realizes that Kahu has grown so quickly, she is seven years old. The girl rhots away easily and tells her uncle about her baby sister Putiputi. She shows him his gloaming motorbike which she had Nani Flowers have kept in near perfect condition

Koro A pirina's disapproval of the girl child is proven when HE she shows scanty intere in porourages second born child he is reprimanded by Nani's flowers

Kahu announces that she has come first in her Maori class but her great grandfather ;Koro Apiriana dismisses her. The narrator says The old man is pushing away the one who always adored him.

The narrator gets a job in town starting timber in yard and delivering ideas to contractor in the site.

Ratiwi became almost an everyday champion for Kahu who sometimes waits for him in the evening after school. She engages him in a conversation and occasionally takes a ride with her on a bike.

On the night of the break-up ceremony at Kahu's school She invited everyone including her great grandfather, Koro Aspirana who she reserves a seat next to Nani flower.

Kahu reads the speech that has won the east coast primary school contest in her Maori language to applause of the packed auditorium. Her great grandfather fails to turn up.

### THIRTEEN

Koro Apiriana put the young boys from the school into his boat and takes them to the sea. He prays and through carved stones into the sea which asks the boys to bring back to him.

They all fail to refer it to his utter disappointment he shut himself to his bedroom and limit.

Kahu requests to accompany her uncle Rawiri to the sea, Nani flower joins them.

Kahu surprises them by diving into the deep sea, in an attempt to retrieve Koro Apiriana's carved stones. They are not able to stop her. The narrator dives in after her but cannot go far. Nani flower is beside her and tries to swim after the girl in vain. Together they witness the girl being assisted by dolphins to search for Koro Apiriana's carved stone which she retrieves. She also picks a crayfish which she wants prepared for Koro Apiriana's tea.

Both Nani flower and Rawiri agree not to let anyone know the story of Kahu's underwater exploits.

### WINTER

#### WHALE SONG, WHALE RIDER

### FOURTEEN

There is a sound of underwater thunder like a door opening.

The sea is filled with awesome singing a song with eternity

The whale bursts through the sea and strides the head is a man, the whale rider. The rider talks to the whale thus, "Friend, you and I should get the gifts of life to the new land, life giving seeds to make it fruitful" pg 76e

The journey is long and arduous but the whale is filled with joy at the close companionship they share.

At the place called Whangara, the golden rider dismounts and takes a gift of Hawaki to the people and the land and the sea blossom. The whale rests in the sea but his master makes a woman and marries her. The whale takes his master on one last ride and sings to him.

His master says to the whale "I have been fruitful and soon children will be born to me. My destiny is here, as for Ojoi return to the kingdom of Tangaroa and to your own kind" pg 77. The heartache of that separation has never left the whale. He has the remembrance of that touch of brow to brow.

The narrator takes us to the world of the whales deep in the sea and the ancient ball whale's dilemma of not knowing where to swim to towards the surface and know that there is a dangerous journey to the Island has begun.

They know that their leader is intent on meeting his golden master and hence their last journey has begun and might end in death.

#### FIFTEEN

A young man jogging along Wainai beach notices a great disturbance on the sea, "The horizon all of a sudden got lumpy" pg 79. There is a great advance of whales to the beach. News reached the town and there is a stampede as everybody heads to the beach to witness two hundred whales stranded along a three kilometer stretch, waiting to die.

Men are already at work hacking the stranded whales into chunks of meat which they load onto trunks for transportation into town. However, images of this butchery inspire feelings of anger and sorrow among coastal people who organize to return the stranded whale back to deep sea.

The narrator gets into his motorbike and goes round raising the boys help to push the whales back to the sea and discourage those who are butchering them. There is a European lady who visits on a whale guarding it against the savage butchery that is taking place but the men cutting it keep up pushing her away.

The narrator and the boys keep fighting the butcher they destroy the tyres of one of the trunks. The police join them and inform them that they await the arrival of the navy from Auckland. The boys and the police clear the beach and amount a patrol. Despite the people's efforts to push the whale back to the deep sea, they keep coming back and have to be zoned from the beach.

The whales sing a plaintive song which eventually fades away as they all die on the beach. The narrator finds Kahu on the beach calling out to the sea by making a strange mewling sound and he knows they have to prepare for their final challenge. She is not ordinary child as he and Nani Flowers witnessed earlier.

## SIXTEEN

Whangara has its own encounter with whales the following night. The narrator says there are no cameras this time as perhaps, this was only meant to be seen by the tribe and nobody else. Rawiri, Nani Flowers and Kahu are not at the airport waiting to pick Koro Apirana and Porourangi and the weather is bad.

Earth moving machinery is digging deep trenches and burying the carcasses of the dead whale. Koro Apirana says the event is a sign of a tattoo. The narrator collects the boys again and informs the men to come to the meeting house. The main task is to return the whales back to the deep sea.

The main herd remains in the deep water but about five or six elderly female whales detach themselves from the rest to keep the ancient bull whale company. Koro Apirana explains that God gave his ancestors like Paikea special powers to talk to the whale and to command them. This way man, beasts and gods live in close communion with one another.

Koro Apirana says the ancient bull whale with a tattoo is a reminder of both the natural and supernatural world, of oneness which the world on a head, the birth cord joining past and present and reality and fantasy. It tells the main thing about the ancient bull whale, "If it lives, we live if it dies we die" pg 94. The people drive all available trucks, motorbikes and tractors to the beach to eliminate the whales.

The men tried to return the whales to the sea and unsuccessfully, the narrator and Billy tie a rope around it to pull it away from the beach using tractors but the rope breaks rendering their efforts ineffective.

The woman joined them but their collective efforts do not bear fruit, the whale is willing itself to die. Kahu sympathises with her great grandfather and the rest of the people.

## SEVENTEEN

Kahu slips away quietly and stealthily and swims towards the whale. The narrator runs after her and plunges into the sea. "If the whale lives, we live" are the words in Kahu's mind as she swims towards the whale.

Porourangi after Koro Apirana and Nani Flowers to let them know what has happened to Kahu's and bring them back to the beach. Kahu in the meantime talks to the whale "call me" she tells it "karanga mai". The whale's eye seems to indicate that it is acknowledging the girl's presence.

She hangs on the whale's jaws and after the name "Paikea" and "Kahatua Te Rangi" at which the whale shudders. It recognizes the name, the whale communicates joy to all parts of its body. The herd out in the sea begins singing.

The whale rider slowly turns on its belly fighting itself up as Kahu hangs on its fins. As she strokes it the whale begins to reason, "It is my Lord, the whale rider" pg 103. It creates intentions like footholds and

handholes on its head on which Kahu climbs up. The skin forms a saddle with fleshy stirrups for her feet and pommels her. She settles herself astride the whale

Kahu kicks the whale like a rider kicking a horse and it begins to move into the deep sea, "Let the people live" the whale replies "Yes my Lord" pg 105

## EIGHTEEN

Kahu becomes the whale rider as the whale breaks into the deep water. She is surrounded by the whale herd, she is now Kahutia Te Rangī: the ancient bull whale dives for a few seconds and surfaces. When Kahu presses her head against the whale she realizes it has opened for her a small breathing chamber.

She says goodbye to Paka, Nani her father and mother, her uncle Rawiri and prays for good health. The whale locks her feet and slides into a deep dive

The tribe is left weeping on the beach, mourning the loss of the girl.

## NINETEEN

### EPILOGUE-THE GIRL FROM THE SEA

The herd of the whales keeps on diving deeper into the sea with the ancient bull bearing its rider. The seven elderly female whales sing along as they escort their leaders. The old mother whale notices something on her husband just behind his head and asks him what he is carrying and he replies: "I am carrying my Lord, Paikea"

The warrior whales close ranks around their leader to watch the old mother whale keenly. Despite living many "whale ears" together, the old mother whale is not blind to the bull whale's faults like mistaking a small Kahu for her Lord Paikea. She reasons with him that "...the rider you carry is not Paikea" pg 113

Despite his instances that he is indeed carrying Paikea, he begins to assess the figure on his head "perhaps it is descendant of your Lord" pg 113

He assesses the weight of his rider—the legs were shorter and the rider was lighter "If the seed of Paikea ...and we must return it to the land" pg 112. She says the seed is yet to fulfill its purpose.

The bull whale remembers the words of his lord then, "Let this be planted in the years to come when people are troubled it is most needed" pg 114. He commands a quick return to the surface where they take back Kahu.

## TWENTY

Nani Flowers collapses and is hospitalized. She recovers consciousness after five days. Nani is told that Kahu is alright. They had found her floating and conscious on the sea three days later. She is however sufficiently regained his stability although not yet awake.

Koro Apirana blames himself for what befell Kahu. He says he should have seen the signs that she was not ordinary child especially when she bite his toe. Nani reminds him that he never even helped with her birth cord.

Kahu comes to find her great grandfather arguing "You two are always arguing" pg 118. The ancient bull whale asks the rest whether the rider still lives and the old mother whale confirms this "very well ...then let everyone live and let the partnership between land and all humankind remain" pg 119

## TWENTY ONE

Apirana talks to Kahu for the first time ever. He has completely changed.

Kahu tells them that the whales instructed her not to wake up until both her great grandparents are present. She thinks this too sound just like the old mother whale and the ancient bull whale arguing.

There is a great reunion beside Kahu's bedside between herself and her two great grandparents. She declares that Paka is the best granddad in the whole world

The girl remembers the huge tail fins of the whales waving farewell as they sang. She says she still hears the whales singing just as she has heard them for ages, meaning she is truly direct descendant to Paikea, the last wooden opera he threw.

## THEMES

### MYTHOLOGY/MAGIC

The Maori people believe in their direct communication with the whale is mythical. Their ancestor, the golden man Paikea or Kahutia Te Rangi is said to have ridden on the head of the whale on the land and this forms the pivot of their history.

The golden whale rider is said to have realized wooden spears that flew onto the land as designed and projected. The last wooden spear is said to have been designed to spring life at some point and save the people when the opportunity arises. This particularly wooden spear is what the people have been forcefully waiting for. It appears that Nani and the narrator Rawiri have an idea what this particular spear represent especially when they play a big role in placing Kahu's cord and afterbirth in a place just outside the tribes meeting house. They agree to keep it a secret.

Kahu's behavior under water while diving for her great grandfathers caused stone is mythical. She swims effortlessly without the benefit of swimming gear, she even talks to the dolphins and kisses them when they direct her to the cursed stone. She waves them and seems to have control over them. She is guarded by the dolphins while unconscious after being realized by the ancient bull whale until she is found by the tribe floating on the sea.

Kahu too is capable of talking to and listening to the whale talk .She communicates to the ancient bull whale and convinces him that she is her Kahutia Te Rangi,The Whale Rider.The whale creates a stirrup ,footholds and handholds and even pommels for her to grasp and sit comfortably on his head.This is a mythical story.

The whale debate in yhe ocean about the identity of the whale rider is mythical .After an argument between the ancient bull whale and the old mother whale it is agreed that rider is too light and small to be the real Paikea the whale rider.They decide that she is his descendant who is yet to fulfill her purpose on the land and they bring her back.

The fact that whales have families ,wives and children is mythical.There are sentiries or guards too,they respect their leader just as humans do.Kahu is escorted and protected by the dolphins and they show her where the stone is.It is mythical that the last spear thrown by Paikea flew across a thousands years and when it hit the earth ,it didn't change but waited for another four thousands years to pass until it was needed.

### **TRADITION/CUSTOM**

It is customary for leadership to pass from one men descendants to the next.The first born child of the heir a parent ought to be a boy for this lineage to propose.Porourangi's siring of daughter's in succession is seen as iilack that is the reason for Apirana's anger.He says he does not want anything to do with the girl Kahu.

Naming a child is also a partilinent tradition issue ,Apirana is liked by the decision made afer their great ancestor ,Kahutia Te Rangi.He sees this as a great injustice and total disrespects for their ancestor.It is also a man's name.

When Nani Flower makes a decision to burry Kahu's afterbirth cord in the village ,this is viewed as dimly by Apirana but Nani Flower sees this as traditional connection between the girl and his people.She belong to her father's people and she will always come back to them.

The men of Whangara community converge in their meeting house to learn more about their traditions.Man is able to communicate and dives the whales .Paikea must have directed his whale where to go.The whale have always occupied a special place in the order of things.The peoples traditions states that when the sky father and sky mother had been separated ,the God of children of both parents divided up between themselves the various kingdoms of the earth.

The Lord Tangaroa took the kingdom of the ocean and he was second in his rank only to the Lord tones of fathers of a man and the forests and so was established by them the close kinship of man with inhabitants ot the ocean and land with the sea.

The whale family is referred to as helper of men lost at the sea .Whenever they are asked the whales respond to call as long as the mariner possess the necessary authority and knows how to talk to them

When the ancient bull whales get stranded on the beach the people of Whangara believe that if it dies then them too will die, but if it lives then people will live too. When Kahu steps into the deep ocean the people will live even though they mourn her loss.

Kahu is named after the founder of Maori village Koro disagrees with the name of a man who was belittling Paikea. Tradition is also seen where the umbilical cord of Kahu was brought to Koro's place and buried beside the meeting house.

The Maori believed that the whales were close to gods therefore shows blessing to man. For one to become a leader he was to undergo some test e.g. biting the toe of a prestige store.

### **REJECTION AND HATRED**

When Kahu is born, Koro is not happy because she had broken a family male lineage of descendant thus rejects her and says she is of no use to him.

Rawiri is hated and rejected by Clara when she remarks that Jeff always brings home stray dogs referring to Rawiri.

Koro is rejected by Kahu and always sent her away from attending lessons at the meeting house. Koro didn't want Kahu to be given the name Kahutia Te Rangi which is the name of the founder of the tribe because according to him that would be belittling the founder of the tribe. Koro refuses to help Nani bury Kahu's umbilical cord.

### **THE PLACE OF WOMEN IN THE SOCIETY**

This is clearly a patriarchal society that believes in the supremacy of boys over girls or men over women. When Kahu is born, it is evident that in her great grandfather's reaction that her birth does not mean much. Being the eldest child of Porourangi the great grandfather is disappointed that she is a girl. From the point onwards, he rejects her and shows no affection to her. He keeps telling her that she is of no use to him. Even when the girl openly tells that she loves and adores Apirana, he does not appreciate her love. He is looking for a male heir to the chieftancy and will not settle for a girl.

The birth of a girl child to Porourangi with his new wife Ana does not make things any better, instead Apirana becomes obsessed with looking for a boy to inherit the chieftancy he even begins to look into other royal families to get the chosen one.

It is not only Kahu who is looked down upon by her great grandfather but also other women in the village. They are not, for instance, allowed to join in activities like fishing which was considered sacred, they were not included in the school sessions where Apirana taught the boys and men the wisdom of the tribe. Each time Kahu went to the school session even to peep from the door the great grandfather would send her away with cruel.

Kahu has to work very hard to prove her worth to Apirana, she learns the Maori language and writes a special speech which shows how much she loves and respects her great grandfather, Koro but this is not acknowledged by the old man

After her birth she is given the name Kahu after their ancestors Kahutia te rangi. Koro Apirana is against this because she is a girl and according to him doesn't deserve such a respectable name.

Women were not supposed to do sacred jobs like fishing, Koro Apirana tells them during the lesson that fishing is a sacred job done by men. They were not supposed to attend lessons in the meeting house where they were taught people's culture it's seen when Apirana chases Kahu whenever she is seen near.

Women were not supposed to take up leadership role, Kahu is the first great grandchild of Koro thus was to be the next kin but Koro is against that just because Kahu is a girl. Women were not supposed to do sacred jobs like pushing the whale back in the sea it was reserved for men, when the whales are stranded on the Island Nani offers to help but Koro tells her that it's men's job because it was sacred

We are told of story of Mihi who was commanded by a chief to sit down because women were not allowed /supposed to stand up and speak on a sacred ground.

### **COMMUNITY WORK/UNITY**

Rawiri goes to mobilize all strong boys in the community to help push the whale back to the sea. Nani Flower also leads in the pushing of the whales.

Kahu also participates in the community work when she helps to push the bull whale back to the sea when everybody is unable.

Apirana does community work when he conducts lessons for the boys, in the meeting house to teach the Maori language and culture.

Koro does community when he represents the community in the court over land disputes. He was worried over the judge's decision

Koro is also concerned about the community drinking water and was considering to bring some by road tanker.

### **RACISM**

It's evident to Rawiri's experience at Papara New Guinea, Clara his friend's mother is obviously disgusted by his son's choice of friends when they attend the reception for expatriate couple who had just been wed she introduces Rawiri, "He is a friend of Jeff, you know Jeff always brings home dogs and straits, but at least he is not a native" pg 57-58

The same night as Jeff drives them home, he hits a man on the road. The mother prevents upon him to release the man on the road because he is only a native, it turns out that it is Rawiri's cousin Benard and

Rawiri feels bad, Rawiri says Jeff had been getting along fine but his parents were pushing him gently counseled his own kind in the clubs and all the parties of aggressive expatriated pg 56-57

When he opts to socialize with the native he is accused of breaking a cardinal rule. Jeff's parents did not also want him to associate with the natives they want him to associate with people of his own kind.

## **CHANGE**

It is said that change is inevitable, many traditions of the people of Whangara change. The old represented by Koro are slowly being replaced by the young. They believe the leadership is hereditary the mandate is passed on from the oldest son to the youngest son disintegrating when Kahu became the chosen one. When resistance, Koro rejects Kahu and insists on getting a boy to inherit the chieftancy, when girls are born to his son Poraroungi he is upset and does not believe, they can be of no use.

Through characters like Nani and Rawiri there is acceptance of the girl child. They love Kahu and recognized that she has special abilities and they encourage her.

Man relationship with God has changed, where as he used to fish what needed, he was not now become commercial and greed and this course does not please Tangaroa, the Lord of the ocean. Man begins to kill the whales which has been companion to him for a long time

Rawiri travels to Australia brings him into contact with different world. Their culture is different from Maori ones but those who go to Australia learn to live a new life, the way of dressing changes.

The technology demanded that people have to live one thousand years in one life time, from lioneth to the three piece suit and computer knowledge in the simple step pg 53

The narrator that the New Zealand journey is probably difficult because it has undertaken with European terms with acceptability. The Maori are minority group and for them to go through this changes they have to depend on Europeans good will. They need to fit in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and fly the same time remain Maori.

This why Koro is persistence about the school sessions but he is described as "an old whale stranded in an alien present, but that was how it was supposed to be because it also had his role in patents of things in the tide of the future" pg 56

## **LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP**

It is optimized by Kahu and her grandfather, Koro. The great love that Kahu has for Apirana is rejected in equal measure right from when she was very young she adores Apirana. He faces lies up when she sees him she run up to him calling "paka! Oh paka" but Koro does not reciprocate these love. Instead he keeps telling the girl she is of no use to him.

Porourangi witnesses an incident where Apirana is sitting in his chair and Kahu come up to him and put her hand in his ,the old man pushes her away and “she dissolved into the dark” pg 64

Apirana observation with finding a boy to take over the chieftancy blinds him to the fact that Kahu is right to be the chosen one for this post.Even when Porourangi and his new wife Ana gets a baby girl he is disappointed ,he strongly believes that power belongs to the male.

During the school break up ceremony Kahu had dedicated the speech to her great grandfather .She even reserves a sit to him next to Nani.She invites every member of the family to the girls eye is beyond words but Kahu seems to love Apirana despite the rejection.She live to prove to him that she can do as well as a boy.She goes to extend of jumping into the sea to retrieve the sacred stone that the boys had not been able to retrieve ,she even says that she does not blame him.

There was strong love and friendship between the ancient bull whale and its golden master,Kahutia Te Rangi .The bull whale recalls the friendship with nostalgia that he risked his life to go the island hoping to meet its master.

Kahu stares with lust as the boys are taught at thr meeting house .She wishes to be part of this school but the ancient bull whale realizes that Koro realizes that Kahu is actually the chosen one .He tells her when he comes at the hospital that she is the best grandchild in the world and that a boy or a girl it does not matter

Kahu loved her great grandfatherso much that she wrote nin a tribute for him and welcomed him to school although Koro didn't turn up insoite of being reserved a seat.

Kahu loved her uncle Rawiri that he wrote him a letter ,she also takes care of his motorbike when Rawiri is away in New Papua Guinea.

Nani loved Apirana inspite of her threat of divorcing him.She cares for him as shown when she fells .

## **STYLE AND LANGUAGE USE**

### **ORAL TRADITION NARRATION TECHNIQUE**

There are various aspects of oral tradition presented in the novel.

The participating narrates Rawiri tells us the story of Kahu Who was there att the beggin and at the end.He also presents the world of the whales and there interaction with humans.

Most of the chapter referring to the whales have an ending formular “let it be done”

The story of Kahutia TE rangi is a myth. He is the founder of Hangaras community.He is said to be befriended a young male whale which he rescued from the shark three months after it's mother death. There friendship grows to the extent that he becomes the whale rider who transverse the ocean until he ends up at Whangara beach Kahutia Te Rangi “PAIKED” Threw small woolen onto the land and seas where they turn into a pigeon and eel' respectively. One spear refuses to leave its hands until he says a prayer and it leaps from his hand into the land and wait to flourish later.This spear vis personalized in kahu thbe first born child is expecting a male hier it is evident that kahu has expecting abilities.

The girl does many extra-ordinary things. She bites Kahu's toe as he tells the story that has a similar incident.

This shocks him as she drives deep into the sea to retrieve Koro carved stone which a number of boys have failed to do. She has a peculiar relationship with the whales. The incident at the movie when she is emotionally affected by the carrying of the whale and she is found on the beach by the narrator making mewline sounds.

Another extra-ordinary accomplishment in her communication with ancient bull whale which is stranded on the beach willing itself to die. The Whangara people have failed to get it back deep but she manages to do so. She coaxes the whale back into the sea to save the people from perishing.

When Kahu encounters the ancient bull whale, its fulfillment of prophetic prayer by paikera. She gets the ancient bull whale back to the sea to live so that her people may live.

The other characters are also captured in the legends e.g the story of the mish and the chief. Another legend is Mariwai who saved her people when the boat was capsizing

Chapter 1 the story about Kahu and whales begins with an opening formula, "In the old days..." Most of the parts of the story also ends with a closing formula "let it be done"

### **VIVID DESCRIPTION**

The author has used description of events, scenes and even creatures to make an otherwise unfamiliar subject easy to understand. He is quite vivid especially in his description of the whales for instance, "then one day, at its noon apex the first singing was made, as spume on the horizon. A dark shape rising from the green stone depth of the ocean... wider water the muted thunder boomed like a great door opening far away... pg 3"

The ancient bull is described as a gigantic sea monster with swirling tattoo imprinted on its forehead. The description of the whale rider is no less colourful, "he was wonderful to look upon the whale rider, the water streamed away from him and he opened his mouth... his eyes shining with splendor... he seemed, with all his strength to be putting the whale into the sky pg 4"

Kahutia Te Rangi is described as being nondescript to walk, with dazzling body small tattooed figurings dark brown glistening and erect pg 4

The movement of the herd of whales is so vividly described that one sees a family of the ancient bull the old mother whale and even the young one whale moving together in a spectacular manner. Their description of the action and coaxing of the bull white by mother whale the bull looks confused about the young whale rider. (Kahu)

Australia is described as being as big bold, brassy, burnt and beautiful pg 48. Bernard scene is vividly described that is the accident scene "the man turn"

The mountains are vividly described as being like a stair way to heaven with great forests. The sky is also said to be arched with swirling patterns of wind and clouds. Kahu is described as being by Rawiri, and Jeff as being fantastic with big brown eyes, a wonderful figure and lips just waiting to be kissed. pg 48

Jeff is also described by the narrator as being a friendly man quick to laugh, to believe and trust. The boy's sleeping posture is vividly described: one is said to sleep with a secret in his mouth, another with all his clothes. pg 87

The scene of the whales being cut into pieces is vividly described.

### **BIBLICAL ALLUSION**

Rawiri recalls that Jonah in the Bible had stayed in the belly of the fish for three days. pg 102

The song sung by Christian soldiers while trying to push the bull whale back to the sea also alludes to the Bible, the story of Jonah. pg 85. When Rawiri comes back to his family from Australia, his family organizes a party for him. During the party, Kahu tells Rawiri: "...see we love you uncle, we have killed the fattened calf for you just like the Bible says of the story of the prodigal son." pg 63.

### **EPISTOLARY/LETTER WRITING**

It is a style where the author uses letters to deliver a certain message. Kahu wrote a letter to her uncle Rawiri while in Australia expressing her love for him and that they had a baby sister, Pipipi.

Kahu writes an invitation letter to her family inviting them for a school breaking ceremony. pg 66. It is said that Porourangi wrote letters to Rawiri while in Australia telling him about the problems he felt were facing the Maori people.

### **PERSONIFICATION**

It is the giving of human qualities to non-human things or objects. The earth in the novel began to feel the sharp pangs ..... pg 3

The land and sea felt a great emptiness...a yearning ..... pg 1

The land and the sea sign with gladness.

The spears then left his hand with gladness. pg 5

The wind whistled over us as we sped ..... pg 81

The sea was filled with awesome singing. pg 3. The sea and land tremble from the impact of that in-world.

### **SARCASM**

It is a humourous ironical statement that is meant to hurt. When Nani flowers bites Koro Apirana Rawiri tells Nani flowers and she complains sarcastically...."kahu could have been poisoned" pg 28

When Rawiri apologises to Cheryl marie he wont make it to the movies because he is to take care of Kahu ,Cheryl Sarcasically says ...."And I hope she is not five feet too with eyes of blue" pg 33

When Rawiri was going to Australia she tells Nani flowers at the airport not to forget to look after his bike. When nanni flowers comments sarcastically...don't worry ...I will feed is some hay and give it some water everyday pg 47.

When nani flowers regains consciousness in the hospital and sees Rawiri, koro apirana and others she sarcastically comments "mmmh ..if you lot are still here that must mean I haven't gone to heaven...pg 116.

When Nani flowers says that she could have listend to th mother not to Mary Koro Apirana koro apirana mouths her words sarcastically.

## **LOCAL DIALECT**

When Kahu is invited to read her speech in school she reads it in her Maori language  
.....pg 68

When the mother whale notice the small light shape elasting her husband just behing tattoed head she sang 'ko wai to teketeke bee runga''

When the bull whale coming on Lnd was filled with awesome singing "karanga mai, karanga mai"

N/B Local dialect is used to give the story a local flavor and the setting e.g we get to know that the story is set among the Maori people in Newzealand

## **FLASHBACK**

The bull whale recalls of his birth when his mother was killed by the shark and latterv it was adopted by its golden master...Kahutia te Rangi.pg 8

The Bull whale also reacalls with nostalgia the happily moments when his golden master rode on its back and how he threw the last spear which was to flower and save the people in their time of trouble pg 14

Koro Apirana also flashbacks the instructions given to him by the priest and test one passed in order to become a leader for example when the priest made him to bite the prists big toe.

The ancient bull whale also recalls how its golden master taught him how to flex his muscle and sinew so that hand balls in the skin could appear enabling the rider to ascend to the bull whales head pg 45

The mother whale reminds the bullwhale how Paieka threw the last spear which was to flower and save the tribe in moments of trouble .

Koro Apirana also recalls his childhood when he went to stay with his uncle and one day a whale appeared on the surface of the sea and human beings started cutting them and eating their flesh.Koro Apirana also recalls the moment when Kahu was a baby and bit his toe pg 117-119

Nani flowers also tells Rawiri the story of Muriwai and how she saved her people when the boat was about to capsize because of the strong current.

## **IRONY**

It is ironic that kahu who was a girl is given a male name....Kahutia Te Rangi

It is ironic that Hebare..the narrators cousin puts on a dress yet he was a boy

It is ironic when jeff knocks Bernard accidentally and instead of taking him to hospital clara and jeff decide to speed away leaving bernards body on the ay because Bernard was a native.

The way clara treats Rawiri as friend of his son is ironic for instance she insists that Rawiri is not a family member ,should not go with them to the reception yet Rawiri has been helping them in the coffee plantation

Its as well ironic that Koro apirana is relentlessly looking for the chise one among the boys in his community yet the chosen one is Kahu who is in the family.

It is ironic for Kahu a girl, to bit koro Apiranas toe when he was narrating to the boys in the house of a story where Koro was made to bit the toe of the priest.

It is ironic for Nani flowers to keep telling Koro that she will divorce him yet in real senseshe really loved him.(koro)she told rawiri to take the coat to koro and ever called him an affectionate name "old pake"

It is also ironic for koro apirana telling Nani flowers to divorce him and marry old Waori over the bill towards the end of the novel yet he was always jealous of waori

It is as dwell ironic for kahu to invite koro Apirana to school ,write a speech praising Koro yet koro does not turn up for the invited function.

It si ironic that koro Apirana expected a boy for the first grand child but a girl,kahu is born instead.He expects porourangi and his girlfriend Ana to have a baby boy this time round but instead a girl putiputi is born.

It is ironical for the gods to choose on Kahu yet the whole community starting with koro apirana expected the gods to choose a boy since leadership was from father to first son.

It is also ironical for Kahu to love Koro apirana so much that she writes a praise speech for him yet Koro hated him with passion.

### **SIMILES**

We are told that Nani flowers dress was floating like a balloon when she was trying to rescue Kahu. When Kahu was brought to the water surface by dolphins her face gradually faded like a light bulb flickering pg 62

We are told that fish swarm in brilliant shoes like rain of glittering dust.

We are also told that as the years beckoned the happiness .....

### **HUMOUR**

Its humour when Nani Flowers spreads herself on the whole bed to make sure Koro does not back to the bed.

It is also seen how the narrator described to us the sleeping styles of the boys when when caught unaware, one with a cigarette in the mouth, another with a helmet on the head and a motorbike beside him.

Nani tells the boys that Porourangi said the child born her uncle that she wrote him letters while he was in Australia and took care of his motorbike.

Love between Rawiri and Nani Flowers ,we are told when the narrator called back from Australia to tell Nani Flowers that he was going to Papua New Guinea Nani cried over the phone.

In the beginning there was friendship between the whales and mankind which was broken when man began to eat the whales.

Kahu loved Koro Apirana so much that through Koro dismissed her and said she has no use to him she didn't give up ,she kept on loving Koro.

There is friendship between Jeff and Rawiri, Rawiri says that Jeff is friendly man, Jeff welcomed Rawiri to his house in Australia, and Rawiri helped Jeff in coffee plantation in Papua New Guinea.

### **SYMBOLISM/MOTIF**

It is the way in which an action or event is a sign of something more important than itself. Motif is an idea, subject pattern that is repeated frequently. The writer says

.....under the water the mutes thunder boomed

Like a .....door opening for a way.

This signals the approach of the herds of whales to fulfill the ancient prophecy of Paikea. This shows the connection between the human world and the whale world. Other references to the ancient are found on pages 39,76,86,90.

The bringing of Kahus umbilical cord to Porourangi's birthplace is a symbol of the connection between Kahu and the ancestors as well as signifies their inextricably intertwined destiny.

Kahu's biting of Koro Apirana's big toe is symbolic despite Koro brushing it off as a nuisance as the priest had asked him to bite his toe to signify that he was the heir. Kahu's actions clearly show that she is the chosen one despite the fact that she was female. Koro is only blinded by his chauvinistic tendency.

Kahu's behavior at various points in the novel symbolizes special and extraordinary abilities: eg diving deep into the sea, as she moves on the beach, she makes a mewling sound and her ability to communicate to the whales, she is able to get the curved stone with the help of the dolphin after all the boys were unable to,,,etc. All these incidents point to her later role as the people's savior.

The ancient bull whale is a symbol of the people's lives and prosperity. If it lives, the people live, if it dies, the people die too.

The last spear that Kahutia throws after saying a prayer symbolizes Kahu who later saved the tribe when the whales were stranded on the land.

The meeting house where Koro held meetings with the boys is a symbol of unity in the community. It was as well a point where the people would come into contact with the spirits of the ancestors.

The name given to Kahu, Kahutia Te Rangi, is also symbolic in that it was the name of their great ancestor, Paikea, and just as Paikea was great so would Kahu be.

The spear that Rawiri saw while burying Kahu's umbilical cord symbolizes Kahu as the last spear which was to flower and save the tribe in times of trouble.

The incident where Kahu cries while in the movies when the cutting of whales was shown symbolizes Kahu's close relationship with the whales.

Kahu's interest in Maori food is symbolic in that it symbolizes the great connection she had with her people's culture which is important for a leader.