



JOHN WHITE

REVENGE

A LOVE TALE OF THE
MOUNT EDEN TRIBE

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE STORY TOLD BY MARO'S MOTHER

Kapu organises the *kuaka* expedition. The visit to Awhitu is reported. Rehia's dream. The *kuaka* catching expedition. Popo leaves the party under cover of darkness. They search for him without success. Grief amongst all the people. Kapu prophesies that he will return and summons Rehia and the *kaka kura* to Mount Eden. On the way they meet a party of Nga-puhi people, amongst whom is Maro.

The red *kaka* had been taken to Rehia and the messengers had returned. The *whanake* leaves and the poles had been collected as ordered, and it was again a moonlight night. The people, old and young, were engaging in games of various kinds, and at the time all were about to retire, the gong Whakarewatahuna gave a loud boom. It was Kapu, the aunt of Popo, who had struck the gong this time and was to be the spokeswoman next day.

At dawn, when the *marae* had been cleared of every taint of the cooked food that had been eaten, Kapu rose and said, "Do you wonder that I struck the greenstone gong? I was the person who made bold to teach our god to talk. Why should I, a woman, be ashamed to make the god speak, seeing that it is not war that is proclaimed? It is to talk of that which not only gives life to a warrior, but makes even the young girls and the old women smile and be glad. O people, I say let the men of our tribe and those who occupy my

pa at Wairaka bring their men together to-day and go with me, and I will show them where to place the poles now lying at the mouth of the Whau creek. I have been watching ever since Koma spoke to you about the *whanake* and the poles. We will go to-day and you men will stick the poles firmly in the sand at the mouth of the Whau. After the birds have seen the poles for some days and have become accustomed to them, we will let those who are skilled at tying the *whanake* nooses on the poles do their work. Follow me, O ye strong men!"

She went down the road from the *marae* and took the path that led westward towards Wairaka. Having got near her own *pa* she halted, and in a loud voice called to her people, "O ye men, we are here. Come, and we will all go in a body, that the gods may see we are not like children, but are men and are certain in our own minds that we can do our work."

She had not ended her commands before a body of men came from the *pa* down to the flat where Kapu and the other men were waiting. They all followed her as she went towards the mouth of the Whau creek and along the isthmus made by the harbour and the creek, till they arrived at the end of the dry land. Here they collected the poles which had been laid there. Each man took four poles and carried them on his left shoulder. Kapu, still preceding the men, came to a spot which was to all appearances well trodden down by the feet of the birds. Here she said, "Let each man on this ground stick the poles he has well into the sand. Let the poles be about three fathoms apart, so that the space covered by them may be as large as a *kumara* plantation." When this was done and Kapu had approved the work, she said, "O men of Mount Eden, you can return to your *pa* and we will go to ours. Koma will tell us when we should meet again."

By the time the Mount Eden people had got back to the *pa* it was evening. Presently, Koma said, "The moon is now full so we cannot take the *kuaka*, as they see so well in the moonlight. When the moon does not rise until midnight, you, O people, the men of this *pa*, gather the ropes and the nooses ready to tie on the poles you have erected to-day. Let the ropes from which the nooses hang be strong. And now, as we have not heard what the messengers who went to Awhitu have to say, let them speak now."

One of the young men, he who was of the highest rank of the party, rose. He took a *tao* in his hand, and said, "O fathers, mothers, and all our people, the day was fine when we left you. We went down with the ebb tide from Onehunga and were soon at Puponga; but as we crossed from our side of the Manuka to Tipitai, a heavy shower wet us. Our mats were dripping, but we did not tremble, whereat we were pleased, for we knew that the shower was not an evil omen. As we landed we were welcomed by the people, who waved their garments and conducted us to the *pa*."

"The people collected, and as we sat down I stuck the perch of the red *kaka* in the ground in front of me, so that the bird might not be alarmed by the young people who came to look at it. It gave a loud scream and flapped its wings as if it would like to fly away. Then it sat as if it were sulky. I was watching it closely lest anyone should come too near to it, when old Tohi, the priestess mother of Ha Kawau, rose and looked at us. She waved her hands as all old people do, just as though she were weeping for the dead. She had on a *ngeri*, and underneath this a fine *kaitaka*, while she held a *mere pounamu* in her hand. 'Welcome, O my children from Mount Eden,' she said, 'welcome! Come to see me in my home. I am old, and the gods

come to speak to me sometimes. But I am not yet so old that I cannot receive the words of the gods. Welcome to my home, that you may listen to what I have to tell you. Rehia lived at our *pa* at Puketapu for many moons and she came back here a few days ago. I felt lonely without her, she is such a good talker and is so kind to old people like me, and she does not ignore the power of the *tapu*, nor the *mana* of the old people. I felt lonely, and yesterday I made up my mind that I would come here to see her.

"Last night I slept and had a dream. I thought I had started from the *pa* at Puketapu and was on my way here. I had got as far as the road on the top of the hill which leads down to the coast on the Manuka side of the range. I sat down opposite the *kauri*¹ forest in the valley on the right, and as I sat I saw a red *kaka* which was calling loudly and being pursued by a *kaeaea*.² The birds were flying as swiftly as they could and had got quite close to me when the *kaka* made a swoop down into the forest, and gave a triumphant yell at its escape. The *kaeaea* sailed about the tops of the trees, when a flock of *kaka* appeared, led by another red *kaka*. They were so bold that they attacked the *kaeaea* and drove him away. Then, although they called loudly, the red *kaka* which had gone into the forest did not appear. They flew down into the trees and made a loud noise, and at last he came out. Then they all went away together towards this *pa*, and I lost sight of them.

¹A tree. *Agathis australis*.

²Sparrow-hawk. *Nerierax novae-zealandiae*. "Its food is for the most part birds, all species being attacked. . . . In the forest all the commoner species including tuis, pigeons, kakas and parrakeets are its prey. It flies low over the surface of the ground or forest, pouncing with lightning-like suddenness on any hapless bird that fails to see it soon enough, and relentlessly pursues those that seek safety in flight." W. R. B. Oliver. *New Zealand Birds*.

"I awoke this morning and felt in doubt as to the meaning of my dream, so I came on here to find that you have brought a red *kaka* with you from Mount Eden. Welcome, O my children, welcome to my home."

"When the food was cooked we had a feast of shark and *kumara*, and when they had been eaten, the marae was cleared, and I rose and said, 'Salutations to you, O our younger fathers. We come from Popo and Koma, who have sent this *kaka kura* for Rehia. The bird was caught at Ngutu-wera by Tipa and given to Popo, who sends it to Rehia that she may keep it and feed it till Popo is brought to this *pa*. This he will do as soon as our people have taken a flock of *kuaka* at Te Whau. That is all we have to say.'

"Ha Kawau rose and said, 'Welcome, O young man from our fathers at Mount Eden. Welcome to Popo with the red bird you have brought from him for Rehia. We will feed the bird and keep it as a pet, and use it as a decoy to take the wild birds next year. That is all I have to say to you on that subject.'

"I will now say what I have to tell you of in regard to what Tohi has said. I am not the only learned man in our tribe. There are priests and priestesses in the midst of our tribe, but I do not like the omen given in the dream of my mother. She is one of high rank and the gods still tell her what will take place in the future. Listen to what I shall say. Do the gods wish us to unravel the meaning of this dream? Of course they do, or they would not have shown it to Tohi. Hearken! The red *kaka* seen in the dream is one of our supreme chiefs, and the hawk is evil, it is death or affliction. The *kaka* which came to the rescue are men, whether a war party or friends I do not know, but they are men who will not meddle with members of our tribe. They came from the north, as they returned

there, and the red *kaka* followed by the hawk is one of our chiefs as it was flying towards this *pa*. Rehia and I and some people came to this *pa*. We came as soon as we knew that Tiriwa had buried the dead, who were killed by my god. They were killed because they came like slaves and did not chant incantations to the god. They also came as men of war to take Rehia from us. It was for their deceit and their attitude towards the god that they were killed; but it was no weapon of man that destroyed them. The *mana* of my god did this. When I heard that Tiriwa had buried his dead and that he had said he would not come into the district again until I invited him, Rehia and I came here, as she had not seen any of you for so long. Welcome, O my children from our fathers and people at Mount Eden.'

"Rehia now rose. She wore several fine mats, and many feathers in her hair, but she was not strong. She held in her hand the greenstone *mere* Kaho-tea, but she did not wave it about. On her head she wore a widow's cap of seaweed which had been made by Tohi, who had said that if she would wear it, it would keep evil away not only from herself, but also from Popo. She said, 'I have not spoken to you, O our tribe, for many moons, nor am I yet strong enough to be able to make a speech. I welcome you, O young people from the home of Popo, and am glad that you have brought something that he has handled, as I can look at it and feed it as I think of him. Welcome, O young people.'

"I must speak now about the dreams of Tohi. What I say is this. If there is evil to come, the *kaka* which Popo has sent to me will tell. As long as this bird lives, so long will Popo live, and I shall see him in future years. I will ever think of him, and I know that he will ever look on me as one who will honour our

tribe with my conduct. Tiriwa was not of my choosing, nor will I allow my father or priests or people to dictate to me in the choice of a husband. Welcome, O young people. I cannot say more as I am not full of life. But I will not die. No! I will live till I see Popo again, even if it be in the future years. Welcome, O young people of Mount Eden. Tell Popo what I have said.'

"That, O Koma, is what we saw and heard."

Old Koma rose and said, "Your words are good, O young men. We have all heard your account of Rehia. Let our daughter live till we have been to the *kuaka* preserve, and then we will go and see her.

"Now I shall tell you what I wish you to do. You all know that we shall require a great number of torches when we catch the *kuaka*, so you must go out and get much dry brushwood and make it into torches. Let them be as thick as a man's hands can span with outstretched fingers, and let them be about half a fathom in length. They must be ready by the time the dark nights come. Let them be taken to the place where we shall require them, but build a *wharau* to keep them from the damp."

Everything was done as the old priest had ordered, and the young men waited impatiently for the dark nights, when the tide should be full in soon after dark.

In the afternoon of the day when the *kuaka* were at last to be taken, Popo and old Koma were sitting on the *marae* talking of days gone by, and of old-time wars. Popo said, "I had a dream last night. I was in a dense fog when I heard a loud noise, and heard the voices of men calling as though they were in the forest. I could not see anyone. I felt a pain in my head, and put my hand up to feel if there was anything on it, and, to my horror, I felt the cold skin of a lizard. It gave me

such a fright that I awoke. I often dream now, and I sleep so little that I but rarely take notice of my dreams."

"The amusement we will have tonight will cause you to sleep," Koma replied. "But you must not weary yourself lest you become over-tired. You might be so ill that I should have to repeat my incantations over you, and cause you to be *tapu*, which would delay our visit to Rehia."

At sunset all the ropes and nooses were ready, and Koma and Popo went with the men to the place where the poles had been erected. They did not take long to get to the Whau creek. The tide was about half in, and at once they began to tie the ropes from pole to pole with the nooses dangling from them, till the whole area was one roof of nooses. When they were all in place, Koma went to inspect them, and in some places he got the men to put in still more of the nooses. These nooses were about the height of a man from the ground.

Along the south side of this area and about two hundred fathoms away was a long line of rushes. Koma ordered each man to take a torch and hide amongst the rushes. On the bank of the creek a house had been built, in which a fire was kept going, so that they could light their torches when the time came.

It was now very dark, and the chattering of the *kuaka* could be heard as they were driven up by the tide to the bank where the nooses were placed. Nearer and nearer they came. When the water touched the rushes where the men were concealed, Tipa, who had caught the *kaka kura* for Popo, rose from where he had been concealed and went into the house. Koma told him to get the men to light their torches. The men, who were nude save for an apron of brushwood tied round their waists, came and lit their torches from the fire. Then,

at a signal from Tipa, they all rushed out, and with a loud noise ran to the place where the *kuaka* were, right under the nooses. The men waved their torches as they ran, and the startled birds rose straight up from where they were sitting and became entangled in the nooses. The men stuck the torches in the sand, and began at once to take the birds out of the nooses and kill them and put them in baskets. This did not take long, as fifty men were busily employed. When all the birds had been taken, they were carried to the house where the torches had been kindled, and there the first bird that had been taken was given to Koma. He split a stick and put the neck of the bird into the cleft. Then he put the end of the stick in the ground and left the bird in front of the house as an offering to the gods. Koma and Popo then led the way back to Mount Eden.

Popo had been sitting in the house all the time the men were catching the birds, and though he had been spoken to by Koma, he did not answer, so that Koma was rather downcast. As Popo was a chief of high rank, he had to go with Koma in front of those who carried the birds, as anything that was to be eaten by the people must not precede a chief on a journey. Popo did not speak until they got near to the Wairaka *pa*. Then, all at once, he left old Koma and asked one of the bird catchers to let him carry one of the baskets. The bird carriers were astonished, and their comments were heard by Koma. He stopped at once and called, "No, Popo must not touch the birds!"

Popo took offence, and he left the party, but the men assumed that he had gone on with Koma, and it was not until they arrived at the *pa* that it was discovered that Popo was missing.

When the birds had been taken to the place where the food is kept at the *kauta*, Koma called to the men

who had carried them, "Where is Popo?"

They answered, "We thought he had come on with you when we obeyed your orders not to allow him to carry a basket of birds. We could not let him have the basket, and he left us to come with you."

A great hue and cry ensued. All the men and most of the women collected dry brushwood and made it into torches, and soon they could be seen threading their way through the darkness everywhere. Some went to the various *pa* nearby, while others went to where the birds had been taken. Some went to the cave to see if he were there, but there was no sign of him anywhere. When the sun rose every creek was searched, but all in vain.

The night he had left them he was wearing an old mat which Koma had given to him. This was a sacred mat, which was not worn at home but only when he was out fishing or bird-hunting. This mat was usually left in the *tuahu* hut in the *pa*. This was sought for, as it was thought that perhaps he had left it at some place near where he might be found.

All that day men of the Mount Eden *pa* were out searching for Popo. Some went as far as the forest on the Titirangi ranges, at the mountains of Wai-takere. That night some of the men slept near the Titirangi forest and lit a fire. About midnight they heard a voice as of a man calling in the forest and saying, "Who, who shall carry the basket of *kuaka* for Rehia? They would not give any birds to me for her. She will die of hunger." The men were so frightened that they came back to Mount Eden that night. They were afraid that it was Popo whom they had heard crying in the darkness, for, as they said, he must have gone mad.

The following day all the people of Mount Eden went to the forest to seek Popo, but in vain. For days

and moons they explored the forest. At times they could hear twigs breaking in the woods, and some say they saw a man like Popo, but none could take him. At last the hearts of the people were so dead within them that they did not continue the search. All were bowed down with sorrow. Neither work nor play was thought of, and even the young people were grief-stricken, while the elders sat on the *marae* and wept.

At the west end sat all the women and girls. They sang songs of olden times and looked towards the west where they could see the Titirangi mountains in the distance. Not as in the days of mirth were they clothed, not in their best mats, nor with the *huia* feather nor with albatross feathers in their hair they sat, but with old mats covering their bodies and with dishevelled hair. Here and there some of the old women cut their faces and arms and breasts with pieces of *tuhua* till the blood flowed down their limbs and bodies.

One of the oldest women rose to her feet, and looking towards Titirangi, with waving hands she began this ancient chant:

*How the lightnings flash on Kapiti's peak,
O gloomy omen, these of death.
And thou, O Popo, thou of kindly face,
Go with our best beloved, beloved as was
The prow of our far-famed Tainui,
Fast receding to the south.
The rainbow spans the sky
And earthquakes shake the world
And tremble all thy tribes below.
And who shall follow thee,
Since thou hast riven earth
And sky apart, and yawn the
Shattered in gaping gulfs?
Press onward, then, O our beloved,
And open wide the gate above
That thou mayest onward go;*

*And in the presence of these gods
Who smote thy frame with death
And doomed us here to shed our blood
And weep and wail for thee our child,
Speak for thy female ancestor
And chant the deeds of Tutunui,³
And point to that doomed house
In which befell the wrath of those
Whose fierce revenge slaked gloating o'er
The death of those, who without cause
Killed the sacred fish of Tinirau.
But, Oh, we will our witching power
Call forth with swift and sudden
Irresistible force, let loose on those
Who blighted thy young life,
And women's voices shall their
Song of triumph sing, the victory
Of our full revenge for loss
Of our prized but loved lost one.*

The whole tribe sat in silence while the old woman chanted the song, but now and then a sob could be heard, first from one part and then from another of the people. When the chant was over, a number of young women got up and formed a ring in the middle of the *marae*, with one of their number standing in the centre. She commenced to chant an ancient song, while those who formed the ring joined in, with bowed heads and with their arms extended towards the leader. She waved her hands up and down, and at each emphatic word of the song bowed her head to the west in the direction of the Titirangi range, where Popo was supposed to be. As she waved her hands to and fro she kept time for the others. This was the song they sang:

³A reference to a well-known legend. A version will be found in Sir George Grey's *Polynesian Mythology*. "The Legend of Kae's Theft of the Whale." Tutunui was a whale which was subservient to the commands of Tinirau (the son of Tangaroa, and progenitor of fish), and was killed by Kae. This act was avenged by Tinirau.

How like yon distant flashing star
 My thoughts burst forth
 And overcome my soul
 As here I sing in sorrow;
 But, O my sons, think not
 That I am stricken to the earth.
 I sleep as sleeps the dozing bird,
 And as the giver of light
 Tells of the coming sun at dawn,
 Yet still I weep as widows weep,
 And look in vain for help
 Of kindred hands now lost to me.
 My heart is hot, but when the power
 To me shall come, to aid in war,
 I feel as scorched by fire;
 But ample scented oil
 Now pour upon my sorrowing frame,
 And though the blow of weapons
 Fall on me, though not a man,
 I'll bravely fight, nor yield one jot
 Till face to face I see my foe
 Who drank the blood of Kaka-tuwhera.

As they sang, the people gradually joined in the song.

Presently all was silent. From the east end of the *marae* an old, decrepit woman, clothed in a tattered garment, came towards the assembly. Her head was as white as the shells on the seashore, and her garment was smeared with red ochre. She hobbled along with the aid of two sticks. She sobbed as she approached, but when she got near the circle of young women, she attempted to stand erect. Looking round at the people, she said, "Woe is me, O my children. I am the oldest of all our people now in this world. I have seen all your fathers and mothers when they were children, and now I must weep for my lost one. I have been in battle. I have seen great men die. I have seen the moons of years die and live again; but will our child Popo ever

come to us again? I must chant my song for him. I learned it when I was a girl, when our fathers talked of the home of our people in Hawaiki. If any of you old chiefs know my chant, join in with me, that we may sing it to our child Popo."

She bowed her head and wept as her old, quivering voice uttered these words:

*Send the messenger to Tuatara,
 And ask the grandson of Ue-nuku^{*}
 To come from sacred peak of Rarotonga
 And meet me here.
 And thou, my child,
 Look to the plains of Owhata,
 And mountains towering high around that plain,
 And know that all I
 Hold of value here on earth
 Has gone from me.
 I call in vain, and ask
 My sons to meet, and hold
 The spear of war,
 Or voyage in war canoe,
 To answer call of those
 Whose hearts are reft
 With grief, and blighted now.*

As the old woman began her chant, some of the old men and women rose from the crowd and went and sat in front of the old Mihi Rangi (for she it was) and joined in the song, keeping perfect time with her in the tune and the utterance of the words. Not another voice was heard, nor did a sob escape from the crowd, till they had ended the chant, when a great cry of grief arose from everyone.

When all was quiet again, Kapu, the aunt of Popo, who still remained a widow, was seen to rise from the midst of the people. She had a sea-weed cap on her

^{*}The *ariki* at Hawaiki, to whom the responsibility of the great migration to Ao-tea-Roa was largely due.

head as mourning for her dead one, and she held a greenstone *mere* in her hand, while in her ear was a piece of the white down of an albatross.

"What is your sorrow?" she cried. "Do you weep for the dead? Do I wear the albatross down in my ear without meaning?"

"I dreamed, and in my dream I saw Popo as in days of old. He had a wife, and that wife was Ata. But then he vanished, and she sought for him. He had gone to war, or his enemy had come to him. Again I dreamed. I saw the war party of the north on the west coast, and Popo was like a *kiwi* in the forest ranges; nor did he live with his people. The war was evil, men were killed, and some came from it to this our *pa* and went back to the west coast. Popo saw them, and followed them till he was recognised by some of our people.

"Do I tell a tale of fiction? I will chant a song for him, so that when he stands, as he will do, on this *marae* again, it shall not be said that his aunt did not weep for him. You all know my song. Let us sing it in chorus, and then I will tell you what you are to do.

*How yearns my love for him my child,
And at the eventide I lonely sit
In silence in my house;
But, O my daughters, look and see
And watch the bird that comes to you.
'Tis not my bird, my bird was rare,
And beautiful feathers were its plume,
And, O my Popo, lost—
Does he now search for food,
Or thistle pluck to eat at night?
I start in sleep and gaze around,
And hear my voice repeated
From the mountain's peak,
But 'tis not his.
I turn and look for him*

*But see him not, I sigh
And hear my sigh
Repeated in his name.*

"You know that the chant we have just sung is of old, but the name Popo has been used instead of that of the young man for whom the girl who composed the song so often sighed. I am glad you all joined in with your voices. I have not heard so loud a chant, or so great a sound of voices on this *marae* since I was a child. Truly ours is a tribe which can chant! And ours the people who can join in perfect chorus, as the voice of one chanter!

"I will now tell you my commands. I am not a girl. I am not a stranger to Popo. His mother was my sister, and I can order as if he gave the command. I order that you all cease to weep for him. Send some of our young men and women to Awhitu to bring the loved one of Popo here. Let her bring the red *kaka* that was sent to her by Popo, and while they are away let our experts make the poles to strike the *kuaka* on the Whau portage, so that when the young people come back with Te Ata, you can go, now that it is spring and there is a mist in the morning, and kill the *kuaka* on the portage. I have said my words."

The people began to cook their food, looking as if a load had been taken from their shoulders. The old people talked together and the children resumed their games. When the meal was ready everyone partook of it with a new relish. Presently Kapu stood up and said, "It is not long until dusk, but some of the young people can go to Onehunga. As the tide is at high water, they can go with the ebb to Awhitu and do as I have ordered."

About ten of the young men and women rose and went out of the east gate and down the path leading

towards Onehunga. Having arrived there, they took a canoe seating about twenty-five people and pulled down the harbour. Long before dawn they arrived at Puponga. As they crossed the river, day dawned, and they were seen by the people of Awhitu.

The shout, "A canoe, a canoe from Mount Eden," was heard, and the whole tribe were on the *marae* as soon as the visitors. The older ones sat in the mats they had slept in, and nearly everyone was silent, as are those who have risen out of deep sleep. The young people alone were awake and active, and ready for anything that might happen. For some time the visitors sat in silence, until at last Ha Kawau gave a cough, whereat all but one sat down. The one who remained standing was the oldest of the young men. He looked round him and said, "I am here, my ancestors and fathers and mothers, I am here with you. We came to bring one very small word to you all. It is not a word of much worth, but Kapu ordered us to come and say that she and all our people at Mount Eden wish to see Ata there to-day. We are to take her back with us on the flood tide, and the red *kaka* is to come, too. That is all we have to say, O our ancestors."

Ha Kawau rose as the young chief sat down. "Welcome, O children from our parents at Mount Eden, welcome with your word from Kapu. We are all fully awake, and we do not wish to make the darkness of the cloud which lowers over your *pa* more black than it is now. Welcome to your own people, who have a word to say to you."

As Ha Kawau sat down, Ata got to her feet. She held a short *tao* in her right hand. She passed to and fro before the people, and as she went she changed the spear over to her left hand and waved her right hand above her head. "Men speak in times of war,"

she cried, "and women weep in times of sorrow, and children dance at feast times; but why should I utter many words in answer to the order of Kapu? I will go back with you and will take the red *kaka* with me. I do not know why Kapu has ordered the *kaka* to come, unless it is that red is the sacred colour of gods and priests. As Popo is away from his own place, and with the owl in the home of Tane, maybe the red bird will be an omen of good.

"We will start at once without waiting for food to be cooked for us. It is said, 'Men war and women cook,' but now it shall be, 'Old people order and young people defy hunger.' Rise. We go." She lifted the spear and put it in her right hand again, and walked out of the *pa*. At the same time one of her attendants took the *kaka* and its perch and followed her, saying, "*Kopere tatou.*"⁶ The young people who had come from Mount Eden rose together, bidding a hasty farewell to those of Awhitu as left the *pa* and embarked in their canoe.

Early the same morning Kapu, with a number of young people, both male and female, left the Mount Eden *pa* and went westward in the direction of the Titirangi ranges, in the forest of which each one of the company obtained a sapling of the thickness of a man's wrist. They cut them down with stone axes and brought them back to the ridge which is the water-shed between the Manuka and the Whau creek. There they were left, and the young people went back to Mount Eden to rest and sleep.

Fifty of the men went down to meet the canoe from Awhitu a little later, which they did about midway between Onehunga and Te Whau. The canoe was hauled up high and dry, fires were lit and fish and fern-

⁶We dart away.

root cooked and eaten. Then they slept. Ata did as she was told, and slept apart from the others with her red *kaka*. At midnight the oldest man in the company went over to the *kaka kura*. Holding a rod in his hand, he sat on the west side of the bird and pointed to it, and sang this incantation to the god of Tu-nui-a-rangi:

*It is Tu-nui-a-rangi,
It is Tu-nui-a-mata,
Tu-rama, Tu-ara and Tu-wairua,
Search for the battle field,
The face of the dead are elongated;
Seek, seek in night,
O son of the day,
And let me see
By the combative spirit,
By thy screaming spirit.*

(Here he touched the *kaka kura* with his wand, and it gave a great scream, which was a good omen.)

*So timidly standing
Before this, this evil man,
'Tis a flash, a crash,
And lightning, and death
Is in the darkest night,
Death in the supreme blackness.
Let me see, O Tuawhiti,
Let me see, O Tu-rama,
That we called Maiaia
And Whaka-rua-rua
And Rongo-mai-huia,
And stretch forth to the night
And lay hold of death.*

He touched the bird again with his wand as it uttered a scream, at which he rose. All the people had been wakened by the screams of the bird, so he called to them, "We go to the ridge of the land," and walked off in the dark to the place where the poles were laid.

When they reached the place, they stood in a long line. For a little space the oldest man looked towards

the east. At last he said, "The day will soon dawn. I see the light in the eastern sky, and the tide is half in on the Waitemata side. The *kuaka* will soon rise there and come over to the Manuka side. Let each of the men take a pole and sit down with it on the ridge of the hill and wait for the birds to come. If there are too many poles for the men, let the women take the spare ones, and act as the men.

The poles were quickly taken up, and the people sat along the ridge in a line extending about a hundred fathoms. They had not sat there long before a slight mist crept up from the Waitemata and covered the ridge. The day dawned, and soon a confused noise of the voices of birds could be heard on the Waitemata side. The word was passed from one to another along the line, and they stood up holding the poles aloft. Those who were without poles lay down on the ground and listened to the noise of the approaching birds.

Soon the flock were seen dimly through the mist, flying leisurely towards the ridge. As soon as they were overhead, the men and women who were holding up the poles struck at them savagely. Short branches had been left protruding from the poles, and the birds were beaten down in great numbers. They flew in a long line, so the killers were fully occupied. Those whose hands were free gathered up the dead birds and tied them up, six in a bundle, and suspended them from their necks.

By the time the flock had passed over, sufficient of the *kuaka* had been killed to burden all the carriers, so the whole party proceeded to the mouth of the Whau. Ata had not taken any part in the killing, and had sat at some distance from the others. Now she went before the others, carrying her red *kaka* on its perch. When they reached the Whau it was full day, but the

fog had settled down over the creek. As the bird killers arrived there they could see some people wrapping their mats round their heads and preparing to swim the creek. As Ata was in front of the others, she was the first to see these people. She at once stood still till some of the men of her party had come up to her, when she pointed to the strangers. At once they put their hands down on the ground and looked round at those who were behind them, and then sat down and waited.

The oldest man of the bird killing party threw off all but one of his mats and crept silently through the scrub towards the other party. His companions were prepared to fight, and to use their poles as weapons. Then the voice of one of the strangers was heard clearly, "Is this the road to Maunga-whau?" The reply came in the voice of one of Maro's companions when he went to visit the Nga-puhi, "Yes, that is the road." Having heard the voice, and knowing the man who uttered it, the bird killers at once stood up. They called the name of the man whose voice they had recognised, and at once the strangers crouched in the scrub in an attitude of war. But when the man's name was repeated, another of the strangers stood up so that everyone could see him. At once the Mount Eden people began to weep, while the women stood and waved their arms to and fro and wept.

At this point Maro paused impressively. "Now, my young friends, I was that man. Yes, it was me. Maro was my name. And now I can tell you the last of the story of Popo and of his love for Rehia."

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

MARO'S STORY

Maro now finishes the story from his own knowledge. He tells how Popo has been found by them as he recovers from his period of insanity. Popo returns to Mount Eden and a great meeting is held, to which all the tribes are invited. There is great rejoicing that Popo has been safely restored to them, and many valuable presents are given to him and to Rehia, with many speeches from the older people. Maro tells of his adventures with the Nga-puhi people, and their expedition to the south. Peace is made with these people, and Popo takes his place, with Rehia, as leader of his people. The Thames people arrive. Maro claims Rehu-tai as his wife, and so happiness comes at last to the young couples.

THE STORY MARO TOLD

When the weeping had ceased, we all sat down save one of the bird killers, who related the loss, and how it occurred, of Popo, and where they thought he might be. As this was taking place, a canoe with people from Wairaka *pa*, who were going up the creek on an eel catching expedition to Te Tatua, came near. The paddlers stopped to listen to the conversation. One of those in the canoe asked the bird killing party if they were going to Mount Eden, and offered to put them across the creek. This offer was accepted at once, and the whole party crossed in the canoe, and proceeded at once with their birds, and in company with our party from the west coast, to Mount Eden.

As there was only one man who had come from Mount Eden with me when I left, silence was main-