

## The Touchstone

### Chapter Twelve – Tonga Hake

The sun was now high in the sky, but no one showed any sign of tiring!

“Matakite!”

“Yes Tohanga Matapo?”

“You will go with the hunting toa. You are to watch and see everything. You will not speak to anyone or eat their kai with them. You are not to share their fire. Do you understand me Matakite?”

“I will do as you say tohunga!”

“And Matakite, Rua will accompany you.”

Rua tapped me on my shoulder and indicated with a nod of his head that I was to follow him.

“Come on Matakite! Let’s go and watch the toa prepare!”

Rua sprinted ahead of me. For a small guy he was as fast as a whippet and I had to run at full speed just to catch up with him. He called out to me as he ran;

“Let’s follow Tonga Hake around. He won’t mind it too much, just as long as we keep our distance and don’t get in his way!”

Tonga Hake was the guy that I’d noticed during the meeting. He walked with real swagger and you could tell that he was popular as a lot of younger boys followed him about trying to get his attention. He would have only been a about a year or two older than me. He didn’t even have any moko on his face yet and he wasn’t as big as the older men, but he had a real presence about him.

Rua lent in closer nudging me with his shoulder, “Matakite look at his girlfriend! Now she is atahuua!” He said grinning in the direction of the group of young wahine preparing some karaka berries. The ariki’s daughter sat in the middle of the wahine and man she was hot!

She had a cute heart shaped face and her long wavy blue-black hair was worn folded back from her face. I could smell the musky perfume coming from the leather pendant that she had soaked in fragrant oils hanging around her neck. Young Tonga Hake and the ariki’s daughter looked longingly at each other briefly before she dropped her eyes demurely.

I guess Tonga Hake was encouraged by the promise of her look because soon after he was bellowing the loudest as he slapped his chest and thighs to the rhythmic chant of the hunting haka’s!

Everyone who lived at Turuturu Mokai had come together where the small rounded hills joined to form a bowl shape like a Roman amphitheatre (arena).

The hunting toa were performing the special haka's that were only performed before going hunting. Their voices were loud and their muscular bodies glistened with fragrant oil. The tendons on their arms, legs and throats were all swollen and their eyes and tongues bulged out grotesquely making the perfect pukana!

Flanking either side of the chosen hunting toa were the rows of the men who weren't going on the hunt. They were also doing a haka. Their chants helped to goad the hunting toa into even more of a passionate frenzy!

There were also row upon row of wahine performing. Their cries were undulating and weaving in between the deeper notes of the men's haka which served to work them up into an even higher pitch of fever! The wahine were all waiving small bunches of green leaves as they moved together in unison stamping their feet and swaying their hips.

"Look at the young kids!" Rua shouted in my ear. This was all too much! All the young children were imitating all the haka's as well! Even chubby-limbed boys barely old enough to walk were copying the men by rolling their eyes and leaping in the air. The hill sides surrounding this natural arena were covered by the rest of the people who lived in the pa and they were all dancing, shouting and singing too!

The hairs on the back of my neck were raised and my arms were all goose-bumpy. The energy being created made me believe I could jump 100 feet in the air! Adrenaline was pumping through my body! I wanted to kill the moa!

Rua was pulling my arm and trying to lead me away, "what are you doing? Stop pulling at me you idiot!" I shouted angrily at him. I was just so engrossed in what I was witnessing that I didn't want to miss a bit of it.

"Come on Matakite! We have to go and prepare ourselves too!"

"But this is so cool! Can't we watch for a bit longer?"

"No! Hurry up or else we'll be too late to follow the hunting party."

We sprinted back around to the area where we lived with the tohunga. I quickly grabbed my light dog skin cloak and tied it securely around my waist so that it wouldn't grab onto anything and slow me down. Rua had a small kite that he could wear on his back. It looked like a small back-pack.

"Hey Rua is that bag for your lip-stick?"

"My what?"

"Lip-stick! You know, stuff to go on your lips to make you look pretty!"

"Listen to you!" Rua laughed while jabbing fake punches at me! Then we heard a conch horn blow from the other side of the pa! Rua and I looked at each other in horror!

"Run!" We shouted at each other!

Tohunga Matapo wouldn't be happy with us if we missed the hunt! We headed off on a side track away from Turuturu Mokai so that we could meet up with the file of twelve toa who were jogging at a steady pace away from the pa.

If you want to talk to someone about yourself or someone you know - These numbers are all available 24/7

**KIDSLINE** phone: 0800 54 37 54 \* Over 18? Call **LIFELINE** 0800 543 354

Young Tonga Hake was running at the very back of the file of men heading away from Turuturu Mokai. When we finally caught up with them we joined in at the back of the line. Tonga turned and looked behind him and the look he gave me was a bit weird as he kind of faltered in his step before resuming his pace. But every now and again he'd quickly glance behind to check that I was still there.

If I had to put a name to the look on his face it would've been 'surprised.'

Anyway, I didn't care! I was happier than I'd ever been in my whole life. I could see! I was having the coolest adventure without either one of my interfering parents or bossy sisters anywhere around! I was totally fit and was heading out with a hunting party in a totally different time period to hunt moa!

**Far man!**

**Could life get any cooler!**

*Free-style area* - mum/dad or other whanau: write or draw something for your kids or moko's.

If you want to talk to someone about yourself or someone you know - These numbers are all available 24/7  
**KIDSLINE** phone: 0800 54 37 54 \* Over 18? Call **LIFELINE** 0800 543 354