

## Lindy Kawiti - The Bell Bird

Lindy craned her neck so that she could see more of the neighbourhood she was moving into. She was going to another foster home.

The car pulled into the driveway. Lindy reckoned that the lady must've been watching for them as she was already standing by the letter-box to greet them.

Lindy's new foster parent was nice. Her name was Aunty Mae.

After Lindy had unpacked she sat on the front doorstep. She soon spotted a boy and girl hanging-out across the street.

"What's your name?" The boy called out.

I'm Lindy Kawiti.

"Kawiti?" The boy repeated. Where are you from then?

Um... we've lived all over the place.

Nah! I mean, like... where are you from? Where's your **whanau** from?

I knew he was sussing out my **iwi**, but I'd no idea what it was. I shrugged my shoulders, I'm not sure what iwi we belong to.

"Far-man! She may as well be a **pakeha** then!" The girl with the sporty looking shoes scoffed.

Lindy could hear them laughing about her as they walked away.

On my first day at the new school I found out that the two kids I'd met outside Aunties were in my split-year class. I could see that smart mouthed girl whispering to her friends, who were smirking at me. I just ignored her and her eggy mates.

Later, that day I found out that her name was Mariana and her twin brother's name was Jack.

At assembly two weeks later, the headmaster announced that our school was having an important visitor come in a weeks-time. He said that anyone who wanted to join the **kapa haka** welcome group to go and write their name on the list outside his office.

I loved kapa haka, but because I moved so often, I'd never bothered joining. But this was for a performance in just a week's time and so I put my name down to join.

Our first practice was set for the following day. My mum and I'd sometimes sang **waiata** together. But ever since I could remember, whenever I got tired or felt sad, I would hear an old

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kuia sing to me in my head. It wasn't weird or scary. I thought it was just kind of nice and comforting. No one else could hear her though.

"Okay you lot, who wants to call the karanga?" Mr Ihaka asked.

Everyone shuffled about to look at Mariana.

Mariana was the most popular girl in school. She was really-tall and had a powerful voice.

One kid called out, "Mariana will call the karanga Mr!"

Suddenly the hall became silent because I'd raised my hand too!

Mariana stood up and shouted angrily. Who is she? She has no iwi! And she's only just come to this school!

Everyone shook their heads in agreement and glared at me.

"Silence roared Mr Ihaka!"

Mr Ihaka stood there stroking his chin in thought.

"E noho, everyone sit-down and Mariana and Lindy come forward and stand next to me."

Standing next to Mariana I suddenly felt really-small and insignificant.

Mariana tell me why you think you should call the karanga?

She stood tall and proud as she spoke. I've always been at this school and this year I'm in year 8 and my whanau have always lived in this area.

And Lindy, what about you? Why do you think it should be you?

I felt every eye on me. My throat had clamped shut. But I still tried to force the words out.

"When I..."

"Speak up, we can't hear you!" Said Mr Ihaka!

I cleared my throat and began again. When I karanga or waiata I feel a connection with the old kuia in my head!

Everyone burst out laughing! I just stood there and felt tears run down my face. I wanted to run away and hide. But I didn't run as my old kuia was with me. I opened my mouth and sang...

*Whakarongo mai  
Ki te reo e tangi nei*

*Listen  
to the voice that is crying out*

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The tears were pouring down my face! But I could not stop! The words that my dream-time kuia had sung to me all my life would not be silenced. My voice was loud and clear.

*E ringihia mai ana  
Mai i aku kamo  
Nga roimata e*

*and see pouring out  
from my eyes  
the tears.*

When I'd finished my waiata the school hall was silent. Then I heard someone clapping! It was Mariana! Then like the rain, more people started joining in and soon everyone was clapping!

**Mariana shouted out "whakarongo mai!" This Maori girl sings like a Bell bird!**

The day of the visit came and Mariana's karanga made us all feel proud.

My Aunty Mae was in the audience waving out to me with a big smile on her face. She was getting in everyone's way taking heaps of photos so that I could send them to my mum.

After I had my audition on the first day I withdrew my request to call the karanga because it was true. I was still only new at this school and besides, there was still next year!

Afterwards Mr Ihaka told me that the waiata my dream-time Kuia had taught me was an old **Ngapuhi** waiata and that my surname, Kawiti was also a Northland name and had been the name of great chief.

**Besides said Mr Ihaka, "it doesn't matter if you identify as Maori, part-Maori, European, Asian or what-ever! If you live in Aotearoa, New Zealand or anywhere in this world you should always stand tall and be proud of your-self!"**



The NZ Bellbird's official name is: *Anthonis melanura* is a [passerine](#) bird that is endemic to [New Zealand](#). We know it as the 'bellbird' or by its Maori name which is Korimako. It has a bell-like song which is sometimes confused with that of the [tui](#).

**What's 'passerine'** = a perching bird  
**What's 'endemic'** = native to an area or country.